Nigerian Political Elite's Perception And Construction Of Security Strategies 1999-2013: The Case Of The Niger Delta Oil Conflict

By

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Thesis submitted to School of Economics, Politics and History at Kingston University, London in fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, September 2015.

Declaration

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Abstract

This study grounded within the discipline of conflict resolution in the field of international conflict is an empirical investigation and comprehensive analysis of the politics of security decision- making in an African petro-state called Nigeria. It explores how the Nigerian political elite perceive national security threat and the impact of this perception on the construction of security strategies in the oil producing Niger Delta region of the country. The study challenges the traditional thinking mode of national security and explores the transformative potential of the human security concept. In doing so, the study arrives at a central thesis that the specific interpretation of national security threat within the Nigerian political elite has escalated the level of insecurity in the state, especially in the Niger Delta region which is the research case study.

The issues are addressed in eight chapters with the central themes of elite and security illustrated with theoretical as well as empirical accounts of the making of political elite and the roots of threat perception in Nigeria. By injecting a theoretical framework that comprises both discursive and non-discursive approaches through the two variants of securitisation theory - Copenhagen and Paris Schools, the study strips bare the security perception of the Nigerian political elite. Through qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study explored three different groups' perceptions as its unit of analysis; and the specific nuances and commonalities within them analysed.

The central hypothesis is that state institutions are not just a consequence of early historical conditions, but because agency and structure do evolve over time, the contingent processes and events such as natural resource discovery, nationalisation and the timing of key historical events create a set of governance resources, political economy incentives and elite culture that frames the behaviour of state actors and policy-makers. Nonetheless, these critical junctures may open windows of opportunity to push for a far-reaching changes in frameworks for decision-making and re-shape the mode of governance.

The originality of the work is twofold. First, is its utility of an analytical framework that comprises both discursive and non-discursive practices as proposed by the Copenhagen and Paris Schools of securitisation theory to unravel elite perception of security. Second, is its application of a deconstructivist approach through qualitative data coding to analyse the evolving security dynamics in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The study concludes that the lack of a process to allow the views of those who prioritise state security over citizens security, and those who view security the other way round to communicate and find a common ground is a major problem that needs to be overcome.

Acknowledgements

The idea of investigating the politics of security decision-making occurred to me in the early stage of my graduate studies and more people contributed to its development than I can possibly acknowledge. Although some of them might not agree with my interpretive arguments, however, their discussions or intellectual analysis inspired this study in many ways. As a result, I will like to use this opportunity to thank and acknowledge them.

First is my supervisory team, Professor Francois Nectoux and Dr Andrew Higginbottom for their invaluable advice and academic guidance in delivering this research. In particular, for the time put in for reading through all the volumes of chapters and the insightful comments passed. Their total support and firm guidance cannot be over-exaggerated. Also, many thanks to Dr Atsuko Ichijo, Dr Sam Raphael and Professor Ilaria Favretto for the tremendous help and moral support. My gratitude also goes to Professor Philip Spencer, who as Director of Research in Politics was instrumental to my obtaining a studentship, that culminated into a teaching role for me at the department throughout my study. I am equally grateful to the non-academic staff at the faculty research office, whose help in several ways led to the completion of this study.

I will also like to extend my gratitude to Priscilla Nwikpo, a prominent international political journalist, who supported my work in many ways, her expertise and revelations on Nigerian politics proved valuable to this research. Those who participated in my interviews are hereby also acknowledged, even though they will not allow me to acknowledge their assistance because of the sensitivity of the topic or positions they hold or held. The work also benefitted from the accessibility provided by many libraries and information centres, most especially that of School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and Chatham House in London.

At the home front, the scholarship has been of suspense and anxiety because of its complex and sensitive nature. My mum (Maria), sisters (Florence and Rose), and their families were towers of strength in the difficult days. So is my twin, Peter, who became my research assistant while on fieldwork in Nigeria. Their various points of view has been of tremendous help to this work. Also in this group is my wife, Florence, who in the study gestation period, suffered above and beyond the call of duty. She not only acted as my in-house editor, reading and re-reading drafts meticulously, but also attended to our baby girl - Nicole and postponed other important things of life. The least I can do is to dedicate this scholarship to them all as a token of my gratitude.

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ACRONYMS

ACF	–	Arewa Consultative Forum
AG	-	Action Group
ARTAL	-	Actor, Role, Two Action Levels
AU	-	African Union
AFRICOM	-	United States Africa Command
BNAC	-	British National African Company
CHR	-	Commission On Human Security
CS	-	Copenhagen School
COC	-	Council Of Ogoni Churches
COP	-	Council Of Ogoni Professionals
COTRA	-	Council Of Ogoni Traditional Rulers
ECCAS	-	Economic Community Of Central African States
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community Of West African States
EFCC	-	Economic And Financial Crime Commission
EIA	-	Energy Information Administration
FOWA	-	Federation Of Ogoni Women
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GOG	-	Gulf Of Guinea
GWOT	-	Global War On Terror
ND-HERO	-	Niger Delta Human And Environmental Rescue Organisation
HDI	-	Human Development Index
HDR	-	Human Development Report
INC	-	Ijaw National Congress
INGO	-	International Non-Governmental Organisations
INYM	-	Isoko National Youth Movement
IYC	-	Ijaw Youth Council
JTF	-	Joint Task Force
JVO	-	Joint Venture Operation
LFN	-	Law Of The Federation Of Nigeria
MBF	-	Middle Belt Forum
MEND	-	Movement For The Emancipation Of The Niger Delta
MOSOP	-	Movement For The Survival Of Ogoni People
NADECO	-	National Democratic Coalition
NCNC	-	National Council Of Nigeria And Cameroon
NDDC	-	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDPVC	-	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNOC	-	Nigerian National Oil Corporation
NNPC	-	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NPC	-	Northern People's Congress
NRC	-	National Republican Congress

NUOS	-	National Union Of Ogoni Students
NYCOP	-	National Youth Council Of Ogoni People
OAU	-	Organisation Of African Unity
OEL	-	Oil Exploration Licences
OML	-	Oil Mining Licences
OPC	-	Oodua People's Congress
OPEC	-	Organisation of The Petroleum Exporting Countries
OTU	-	Ogoni Teachers Union
PDP	-	Peoples Democratic Party
PS	-	Paris School
PSC	-	Production Sharing Contract
RSISTF	-	Rivers State Internal Security Task Force
RSC	-	Risk Service Contract
SDP	-	Social Democratic Party
SMC	-	Supreme Military Council
TG	-	Targeted Group
TNOC	-	Transnational Oil Corporation
UK	-	United Kingdom
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNPO	-	Unrepresented Nations And Peoples Organisation
USA	-	United States Of America

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Conflict – is the struggle between opposing forces that often involves two or more actors over ideas, desires, values, resources or deep-seated needs. Oshita (2007:17-20) articulated it could be as a result of root causes, proximate causes or the triggers. The writer also note that conflict can go through stages of escalation and de-escalation in the conflict spectrum.

Conflict Management – is focused on de-escalating conflict and reducing its destructive nature. Rather than address structural conditions, conflict management assumes that conflict are long-term processes that cannot have a quick resolution (CORE Report, 2011).

Conflict Resolution – deals with the root causes of conflict by taking into consideration institutional changes, people's (including enemies') perceptions, and the need to satisfy basic needs. It is based on the assumption that conflict arises due to unsatisfied human needs such as the cry for justice and security (CORE Report, 2011).

Militants – a generic term used in this study to describe the Niger Delta youths involved in armed struggle. It describes the armed groups in the Niger Delta who have been using extreme violence in pursuit of their objective. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with insurgents throughout the study.

National Security – defined as the ability of states to ward off all forms of threats to its survival and sustenance and that of its citizens (Oladele, 2013) has been contentious within the discipline of international relations. Mogalakwe (2013) argued that the contention stems from the fact that national security threats does not exist in objectively definable or verifiable way, but rather are generally social constructs or perceptions of securitising actors that includes political leaders and security officials. The scholar further claimed that these actors can securitise issues by merely declaring a referent object (the state in this case) as being existentially threatened by a particular issue.

Oil Bunkering – the local parlance used for oil theft in Nigeria, most especially in the Niger Delta region. The high level of oil theft in Nigeria is now both a national and international concern.

Oil Rent – the taxes, royalties, compensation and profits accruing from oil production paid directly to the federal government in Nigeria by Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs). Oil and gas account for more than 90 percent of Nigeria's exports, and 85 percent of government revenues (Davis, 2009:50).

Peacebuilding – is the action to identify and support structures that will strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict. It is an intervention contrived to prevent the eruption or recurrence of violence through an all-inclusive approach alongside preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and greater cooperation (An Agenda for Peace – UN 1992 seminal document).

Security Apparatus – is a collective term that refers to the broad range of Nigerian security forces including military personnel and paramilitary agency elements deployed to the Niger Delta. It refers to all the security operatives or military Joint Task Force (JTF) in the oil zone in this study.

Securitisation – in international relations is the idea that something becomes a matter of emergency politics and a security issue not because it constitutes an objective threat, but because a securitising actor designated it to be so (Salter & Mutlu, 2013). There are two variants to the theory based on geographic prefix – Copenhagen and Paris Schools.

CHAPTER 1

א INTRODUCTION א

This thesis reports on a three year study into the perception and construction of security strategies by the political elite of a West African state. The research is partly an offshoot of a wider interest in the politics of security decision-making. An interest that arose from concerns about the various conflicts and political instability afflicting most African states. As widely debated, the study contends that the principal function of a modern state is that of protecting the territorial integrity of the state, lives and property of its citizenry, and the upliftment of the human condition. However, findings from the research reveal that some African states have not always held their responsibility to protect; rather, security has become extremely contested both in political thinking and practice. A state of affairs not only seen in government circles, but also within organisations and social groups that form the larger civil society. The contrasting notion of what security entails has shaped the security perception of these diverse players and in turn defined the competition, co-operation and conflict among these stakeholders in security.

The exact inspiration to delve into the Niger Delta oil conflict in Nigeria as a case study for the research was influenced by certain factors that have had crucial bearing on the orientation and capacities of the state within the domestic security environment. Historical, structural and external factors which have shaped and conditioned the capacity of previous and current Nigerian government administrations to address the insecurity faced by its citizens in its oil producing region. Since the security 'project' in the oil region comprise a range of economic, political and personal interests, the entire process of determining what real threats exist against the Niger Delta inhabitants has become increasingly complex. Even with the promotion of human security, which is the central focus of the new security-development thinking partly because it is more likely to guarantee peace and political stability; threat perception has become a major

issue in the Nigerian oil enclave. According to Fayemi (1994:14), who in his scholarly work on threats and national security in Nigeria argued that threat perception is often expressed in terms of acts against national interest - making it not an irreducible unit of analysis. Therefore, it becomes fundamental to throw a searchlight on those actors or discourse that determine national interest and what constitute threat towards it. In Furniss and Snyder's (1965:25) analysis, 'national interest' - the sum total of all the national values, is what the nationals believe it to be; however in reality, it is the state decision-makers that actually determine what forms the national interest. This does not dismiss the idea of national interest as a product of a country's culture and its expression of cohesion, however, it highlights that threat to it is a product of the interrelationship between objective and subjective forces in every society (Fayemi, 1994:14).

The study assumes that certain national interests are given and undisputable. The international relations community has made clear that every nation-state will endeavour to protect its territory and sovereignty as part of its national security objective. The means to achieving this may however open the state to further threats, likewise, the position a state may hold within the international environment in terms of its capabilities, vulnerabilities and/or geo-strategic attributes might compel the ruling elite of the state to make certain decisions that might affect state-civil society relations. This is apparent in highly stratified societies such as Nigeria where the cohesion and equilibrium of forces is not a given, and the relationship between the domestic security environment and international environment are treated in an exclusive manner. In such case, a potential national security threat becomes an abstract logic only recognisable by the state political elite and security decision-makers.

Though the gravity of threat possibilities to such nation-states is in no way underestimated, it is assumed that the identification of certain threats could place the political elites and security decision-makers in a security dilemma thereby overreacting in their response to dealing with such potential threats; threats that other independent observers might have viewed and responded to differently (Jervis, 1976:31). For instance, the Niger Delta oil conflict in Nigeria, a

detached outsider might view the essence of the conflict as a result of environmental insecurity perpetrated against the Niger Delta oil minorities by Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs), hence respond by implementing rapid socio-economic development programmes. Whereas the Nigerian political elite and security decision-makers perceived the militant activities of youths in the area to be the cause of the problem that has escalated to undermine national security, and as such have taken the view to address it with full force of the state. Research evidence will show later through the study in chapters 4 to 6 that this has yielded little positive results. This feeds into the main argument of the study that perception of national security threat is a construct that creates an image of reality. Given that in most African states, the political elite holds the monopoly of violence until recently, their perceptions of national security threats (rightly or wrongly) do have a great impact on national stability. Consequently, their mindset as perceivers becomes vital in academic inquiry.

Nigeria over the last decade has witnessed an unprecedented level of human and material insecurity that has escalated into a major national security crisis, causing the Nigerian government to allocate an estimated 19.5% of its annual national budget in 2014 to tackling national security issues (Ndubuisi, 2014). Paradoxically, in 1999 Nigeria witnessed the transition from military dictatorship to democratic governance, which brought about a resurgence of high hopes within its civil populace for a more secured society. However, research shows that since 1999 there has been an increase in insecurity arising from existing and emerging security threats such as sectarian conflicts, armed insurgency, piracy and domestic terrorism (Julius, 2011; Banjo, 2008). This has propelled the Nigerian government to seek a change in security policies that are sometimes inspired and supported by global powers (especially strategies of 'securitisation'), whose aim is largely to maintain security for the role of Nigeria within the international world order and international market (Luqman, 2011; Watts & Ibaba, 2011; Franke, 2009:259-260; Francis, 2006:112).

A lot has been written on national (in)security in Nigeria with two dominant perspectives (internal and external) emerging on a) how insecurity in Nigeria in the last decade and half poses a fundamental threat to the unity of Nigeria as

a country (Campbell, 2011:137; Uzodike & Isike, 2009); and b) the level of external influence in state security decision-making due to their geostrategic interests (Stokes & Raphael, 2010:145-176; Onuoha, 2010). These have opened up further discussions on the implications of state perception and response to security threats, and how these has exacerbated conflicts (Luqman, 2011). While it is imperative that a state maintains stability and possesses the capability to deal with any threat to its national security (Uzodike & Isike, 2009), how it responds to its perceived security threats can however be counter–productive if its actions are not commensurate with the nature and level of threat (Onuoha, 2005:155-160; Jervis, 1976:50-53). This view substantiates one of the main arguments of the study of why the spotlight should be put on those individuals responsible for managing national security issues in Nigeria - the 'political elite'.

The 'political elite' is a powerful element in the society and wields much influence in the governance fabric of the socio-political systems of the state. According to classical elite theory, every society can be broken into two main classes of political elements: the elite and non-elite (Zuckerman, 1977). Elites derive their power from access to key economic and political institutions, and what differentiates them from the non-elites are the personal resources available at their disposal, for example intelligence, skills, vested interest in government (Uzodike & Isike, 2009). The elite can be further broken into two categories, Pareto (1935) in *The Mind and Society* grouped them as "governing elite and non-governing elite", or according to Mosca (1939) in *The Ruling Class* the "ruling elite and sub-elites" (both cited in Bottomore, 1993:21-29). The ruling elite control the legislative and executive arms of a political system while the non-ruling elite are largely in the professional (military, administrative) and private economic sectors (Mosca, 1939:329). The perception of national security will differ among the different categorisation of elite classes in the society (Ezeoha, 2011).

However, it is the ruling elite's perception and interpretation of security challenges that will inform the policy options and strategies to be adopted to combat any national security threat. This is because threat perceptions create a view of the world that reflects and determines at least a part of our dealing

with it. As such, perceptions thus have real effects by influencing the definition of a problem and the nature of the proposed measure to tackle it (Owugah, 2010:186; Jervis, 1976:28). Thus, the study would aim to explore the Nigerian political elite (governing elite – elected and non-elected) by investigating the evolutionary development and structure of the political elite class in Nigeria, and what constitute their perception of national security threat in the face of Nigeria's struggle for peace and national stability covering the periods between 1999 and 2013; and using the restive oil producing Niger Delta region as its case study. The rest of the chapter outlines the aim, purpose and objectives of the study, the scope, insight into Nigeria's security issues, and an outline of how the rest of the study report will be delivered.

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many commentators agree that for many years the Nigerian political elite have undermined the notion of human security in its quest to maintain national security (Omodia, 2012; Omotola, 2009; Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008; Akanji, 2007). Perhaps, because the Nigerian political system is rooted on military ideals and the realist assumption that the state is the primary referent of security (Banjo, 2008; Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998:52). Since 1966 (except between 1979 - 83) the military had governed the country up until 1999 when power was transferred to the Obasanjo-led civilian government, a former Nigerian military ruler between 1976 - 1979. Subsequent ruling elites have been civilian political groups mainly formed by retired military officers. The current ruling elite party - Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which is the dominant political party in the country up until 2014, is alleged to be made up mainly of retired military officers (Ntiwunka, 2012; Ehwarieme, 2011).

Although the Nigerian political elite structure has evolved over time, not much had changed in terms of the elite composition. Individuals making up the elite circle appear to be drawn from similar and exclusive backgrounds; subsequently their perception of what constitute national security had not changed with time. Pre-1999 under the different military regimes, the military ruling elite had used

direct military response as conflict management approach, which many analysts argued was non-effective in solving the country's security challenges (Oshita, 2007; Owugah, 2010:179-198; Emuedo, 2012). Post-1999 when civilian rule began under a democratic dispensation, the hgovernment has increasingly relied on securitisation as a conflict management approach (Luqman, 2011; Watts & Ibaba, 2011).

The government securitisation strategy has often involved criminalising militant youths (like in the case of Niger Delta) in order to justify military response; and forming security cooperation with global powers and international allies particularly with the United States of America, United Kingdom, China and France (Omotola, 2009; Franke, 2009:259-260). Such security cooperation has often included the purchase of arms and re-training of Nigerian military forces to adequately respond to internal threats (Olonisakin, 2008) hence, maintaining internal security. Yet according to Ibeanu & Momoh (2008), the strategic role and interests of these global powers and international allies have brought about the interplay of oil politics and instrumentalisation of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) on what constitute security threat; in particular what constitute terrorism in the Niger Delta.

Some analysts view the labelling of militants as 'terrorists' by successive Nigerian governments as part of the agenda of GWOT that has led to increased insurgent activities across the country, and has exacerbated the Niger Delta oil conflict (Akinola, 2011; Obi & Rustad, 2011a:10). Others reckon it is the local grievance from lack of social development, poor governance and unequal distribution of resources that has increased the level of insecurity in the country (Dannreuther, 2007:74; Shaxson, 2009). According to Albert (2011), the fragility of the state is partly due to its deficit in human security. From this perspective, it can be argued that approaching the question of security from a state or militaristic angle by the political elite has been detrimental to national stability in Nigeria. However, it remains empirically unsubstantiated as to what factors must have influenced the Nigerian political elite's perception of national security threat within the last decade and half, and how these factors have shaped the

construction of security strategies in the Niger Delta since 1999. This will be addressed in chapter 4.

1.2. SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is intended to fill a gap in the analysis of state elite perception of security and how this has impacted on its construction of security strategies, and then suggest direction and elements for an alternative, more effective security planning. Filling this gap will provide knowledge where it is currently limited at the Nigerian local level because it has a very small security research community, and at international level because research into the subject area has often been unbalanced. The study intends to construe elite perception from state's security orientations and practices in the management of its oil conflict. By applying this approach and its correlated issues of security threat, the research community will benefit from having a new perspective on analysing African security issues; and also be able to determine if a monolithic or dualistic interpretation of security is best suited for Nigeria and other countries with similar circumstances in the developing world. Monolithic as in whose security should take priority between the state and the citizens or dualistic as in both?

Unravelling this macro-theoretical assumption is important for determining what could be done to achieve a proactive conflict prevention approach or security sector reform in Nigeria or other developing countries with similar circumstances. The point of departure in the study is an expansive understanding of security where individuals and social groups can exercise their legitimate rights and freedom within an atmosphere that is safe and just. Security is therefore approached through the 'human security' lens rather than just through the traditional realist militarist approach. This preferred approach was chosen because the study is more interested in how the Nigerian security decision-makers weigh the coercive and non-coercive policy options available to the state when deciding on how to address its security challenges. Specifically, the priority in the Niger Delta is the need for a different security strategy because the current approach is not effective. This necessitated the recommendation of a security framework

originally developed by the researcher in chapter 8, which is integrative, proactive and trilateral in nature to address the oil conflict.

Furthermore, with the surge for alternative source of oil in the Gulf of Guinea due to the volatility of the Persian Gulf, there can be far reaching socio-economic, political and security implications for many oil producing states in the region. Findings from this research can help in comparing and contrasting some observable trends in these developing countries and elsewhere that might lead to enduring solutions to the various oil conflicts in these states. The research is to introduce the concept of securitisation as it has evolved over the last decade and half in analysing the Nigerian government's approach to dealing with its perceived security threats, and review literature covering the period between 1999 to 2013, which reflects Nigeria's transition from military to civilian rule. This study period was also chosen to examine if there is peculiarity in national security management under military and civilian regimes. Kifordu's (2011) study 'Nigeria's political executive elite: paradoxes and continuities, 1960 - 2007' is cited in this research because of its qualitative and quantitative analysis of political elite composition in Nigeria post-independence. The study analysed elite composition in Nigeria through the theoretical framework of Classical Elite theories.

However, where Kifordu's study is limited is because it only covers the period up to year 2007. This study goes beyond 2007 and reflects a recent view on the subject. This allowed the researcher to maximise evidence in terms of the socio-political and economic implications of national and international security concerns in Nigeria. The scope of the research is limited to internal security threats in Nigeria and is to use the Niger Delta oil conflict as its focal point. The study is to discuss other forms of insurgency in Nigeria such as the Boko Haram militancy but will not explore these in great detail.

The originality of the work is twofold. First is the utility of the combined analytical power of the two variants of securitisation theory – Copenhagen and Paris Schools to unravel the evolving security dynamics in the Niger Delta. Most previous studies on the conflict are meta-narratives based on various grand

theories such as Marxist political economy approach, dependency theory, structural ecologism and diverse legal paradigms. These works despite their merits have a tendency to neglect issues about the security perspectives and practices of the Nigerian political elite. Even where they have been rarely appreciated, sweeping generalisations concerning the security perceptions of the elite are made. Second is its application of a deconstructivist approach through qualitative data coding to analyse the Nigerian oil conflict.

1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The Nigerian government's inability to fully tackle the problem of armed violence and general insecurity in the Niger Delta has often been questioned; and many observers have argued that the problem in the region will certainly rear its head again if there is no sustained paradigm shift in the perception and construction of security strategies in Nigeria (Owugah, 2010). Hence, the aim of the study is to examine the Nigerian political elite's perception of national security and how the perception has shaped the strategies adopted in handling security challenges in the Niger Delta region, its implications; and to explore a possible alternative security management approach to addressing the Niger Delta oil conflict. Therefore, the study has the following specific objectives: to

i. examine the perception of the Nigerian political elite of security;

ii. investigate how this perception has evolved over time through the transition from military to the civilian political era;

iii. identify the factors that have influenced this perception within the last decade and half, and how they have shaped the construction of security strategies in Nigeria;

iv. determine whether the oil conflict in the Niger Delta is a reflection of the state's perception of security;

v. examine how effective are the current measures adopted by the state to solve security challenges in the Niger Delta region;

vi. propose an alternative security framework for the Niger Delta oil conflict.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In accordance with the above objectives, answers to the following questions will be sought:

i. What is the perception of the Nigerian political elite of security?

ii. How has this perception evolved over time through the transition from military to the civilian political era?

iii. What factors have influenced this perception within the last decade and half, and have shaped the construction of security strategies in Nigeria?

iv. To what extent is the Niger Delta oil conflict a reflection of the state's perception of security?

v. How effective are the current measures adopted by the state to solve security challenges in the Niger Delta region?

1.5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The study is set out to test the hypothesis that: 'there tends to be a specific interpretation of security within the Nigerian political elite, which could lead to an increased level of insecurity in the state'.

1.6. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study on security cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG), Julius (2011:20) described a number of security threats facing the Nigerian state, and how these threats had resulted from the government's failure to fulfil its responsibilities towards its citizens. He highlighted some of these security challenges namely: the ethno-sectarian violence in the middle belt state of Plateau; the oil piracy in the GoG; the Islamic militancy in the northern part of the country and the

armed insurgency in the Niger Delta region. All security issues that have increased the proximity of violence against ordinary citizens coming either from their own community, the Mafias, or from the state security apparatus. Researchers on Nigerian security agree that the major security threats of the country are symptoms of bad governance, years of socio-economic inequalities and lack of development, which demands socio-political and economic solutions (Francis, 2006:80-84; Ahonsi, 2011:28-41). Most probably, it is this lack of adequate human security that is at the backdrop of a deep-seated crisis of poverty and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and elsewhere in the continent, which has made the human security project to be more appealing to Africans and Third World intellectuals, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and policy activists. However, the Nigerian political elite at the federal level appear to have a different perception of the situation, which certain analysts argues stem back to their military background.

Many analysts have written on the composition and evolution of the Nigerian political elite vis-à-vis its security strategies. Analysts like Iroanya (2008:105-136) who described the structural evolution of the Nigerian political elite in the post-colonial era. He provided insight into a) how the military elite came back to power in 1983 in an act to restore security to the country and b) how the military have continued to maintain influence on security policies post-1999 by re-emerging as civilian candidates for political offices. Though he did not attempt to establish whether the perception of security of this elite have changed by simply transforming from military officers to civilian democrats, this is a limitation of the study, which this study intends to address. Iroanya also described the political elite recruitment process as opened to a very limited group of individuals that once recruited, are there to serve the interest of their party and godfathers (military or ex-military officers).

Other analysts like Kifordu (2011) provided a detailed analysis on the composition of the political elite in Nigeria post-independence. He highlighted that the political elite are educated, share a socio-cultural, economic, military and political background, and are based on ethnic structure. The three main ethnic groups are the Hausas in the north, Yorubas in the southwest and the

Ibos in the southeast. The dominating ethnic groups tend to have greater influence on politics and the distribution of resources. The political elite hold positions as defined in the Nigerian constitution - president, vice president, federal ministers, state governors etc. The president is ultimately responsible for national security of the country, which is administered through different national organs within the executive arm of government.

Referring back to the point of how the government would address its security issues, Mutengesa and Hendrickson (2008) in their study of state responsiveness to public security needs identified three interrelated factors that have a direct bearing on how a state might respond to its internal security threat namely: 1) the state elite's perception of security; 2) the institutional capability of the state to address the citizen's needs; and 3) the nature of relationship between the government and its populations. The most relevant factor in this study is the first one. For instance, the Niger Delta oil conflict and national security crises on the outlook appears to be a clash of two security conceptions between the ruling/political elite and the non-elites of Nigeria (Uzodike & Isike, 2009). On one hand, there are the political elite who perceive security from the traditional state-centred view, which has led to the adoption of securitisation as a conflict management approach at federal level; and has often resulted into state suppression of dissent with brute force (Babasola, 2003). On the other hand are the Nigerian civil populace who perceive security from the non-traditional citizen-centred view that includes broad issues of human well-being, which has led the people into indulging in anti-state activities (Ikelegbe, 2011:125-135) and becoming a threat to national security. These extreme views of security has made analysts to query whether national security and human security are reinforcing and complementary (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008). More importantly, what conditions have brought about the conceptual clash?

First, analysts argued that it was the British colonial legacy that had left the state-centric perception of security on the consciousness of the evolved Nigerian political elite, and that the Niger Delta oil conflict is an outcome of that colonial legacy. This historical perspective has an ideological view that advocates for the secession of the Niger Delta from Nigeria (Akanji, 2007; Oyeniyi, 2007).

Second, is the incorporation of Nigeria into the global capitalist market and its impact on the Nigeria political elite's perception of national security (Ukeje, 2011:83-98; Soremekun, 2011:99-111). This globalisation perspective argues that the significance of oil as a natural resource and the rents accrued from it has left an indelible mark on the consciousness and discourses of the political elite and how they perceive security. The third argument is based on the long drawn out pressure from international political and economic forces on the Nigerian political elite (Idemudia, 2011:167-183; Zalik, 2011:184-199).

This dependency perspective sees the TNOCs' bad environmental practices and the state securitisation response as an outcome of external influence on the political elite and security decision-makers. The TNOCs are the transnational oil companies involved in oil exploration in Nigeria such as Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron-Texaco, Agip and more. Their role in the Niger Delta oil conflict will be covered in more detail under chapter 5. Nonetheless, whichever perspective one might consider, there appears to be a point of convergence in the different analysis of the various factors responsible for political elite's perception of security; which seems to be interrelated on the surface and has influenced key priorities and policies of the Nigerian state. Priorities and policies largely determined by likely hidden interests of its political elite because of their desire to control oil wealth, subsequently leading to a string of security issues.

In a different study on the Nigerian political elite, Adesola & Ako-Nai (2010) highlighted the issue of distrust of the political elite by the Nigerian people resulting from elite corruption, abuse of power and mismanagement of resources. Major factors that has contributed to insecurity in Nigeria, and leading to a string of tensions, conflict situations and security challenges such as armed insurgency and domestic terrorism (Amaraegbu, 2011; Shaxson, 2009; Banjo, 2008) as previously mentioned. Overall, researchers and analysts have all discussed the background, belief and behavioural patterns of the Nigerian political elite, a great effort has gone into understanding what factors influence and shape their perception of security. However, little effort has been put into understanding how all these combined factors transpire into policy-making and the consequence in maintaining national security.

This PhD research intends to fill the gap in the above studies, and provide a single source of information in understanding the relationship between the different factors that have shaped political elite's perception of security over time, and the way the elite have responded to security threats. This is important because the current research is interested in the conditions that shapes the state perception of security and determines if the state will adopt a coercive or non-coercive security approach in addressing its domestic threats? The research seeks to explore how state decisions are influenced by a particular understanding of security and the impact this has on how the state assert its demand for security. In doing so, other groups' perceptions aside the Nigerian political elite will also be investigated and critically analysed, because there is a contrasting notion of security and differing perspectives on the Niger Delta conflict.

1.7. OUTLINE OF THESIS REPORT

The study span across eight chapters, chapters one to five are mainly the literature review chapters and methodology chapter that documents the researcher's fieldwork. The remaining chapters six to eight comprises findings, analysis, proposal for shifting position to an alternative security framework and conclusion.

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter that introduces the reader to the researched subject area. It aims to provide a preliminary literature review and background information into the Nigerian security context and the need for the research. It also details the problem statements, research objectives, scope, significance and originality of the study.

Chapter 2 comprises an in-depth literature review on security and securitisation with special focus on Nigeria. It assesses Nigerian political elite's role in defining state/national security strategies. It seeks to establish the state of the art of understanding the topic and discussions around it by looking at the concept of security from different theoretical perspectives in the field of international relations. Since the concept of security is subjective and has changed over time, the chapter looks at issues raised by relevant literature

on the subject such as what constitute a security threat and revisits the issue in later chapters. Some of the merits and demerits of the various studies and perspectives were highlighted in order to demonstrate the gaps the study intends to fill and the contradictions it seeks to resolve. It also examines the dominant security strategy (securitisation) adopted by the Nigerian state since 1999 in the management of its oil conflict and how this has changed over time depending on social, economic and political evolution. The chapter draws on material already published in the article 'Re-assessing the Niger Delta Oil Conflict: A Securitisation Perspective', *African Journal of Social Sciences Volume 4 No 4 2014.*

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology adopted for achieving the objective of the study. It documents the data source, method of collecting and analysing the data. The chapter draws on material already published in the article 'Investigating Elite Security Dilemma in Nigeria: Issues and Methodology', *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review Volume 4 No 3 2013.*

Chapter 4 evaluates the particular characteristics of the Nigerian political elite by asking who are they and investigates the formation, composition and evolution of the elite from independence to 2013. The literature review aspect examines Marxism and classical elite theories and its applicability to the Nigerian context. The chapter draws on material already published in the article 'Rethinking Elite Transformation in Contemporary Nigeria', *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences Volume 5 No 1 2014.*

Chapter 5 focuses on a case study of the political elite security strategy in the Niger Delta oil belt, its implementation and challenges, and implications for human security in the region. It evaluates the dynamics of the Nigerian oil conflict through specific studies focused on the Niger Delta crises. It examines the colonial, political and socio-economic contexts of insecurity in the Niger Delta region and the possible contributions and responsibility of external actors in this conflict. In order to achieve this, the chapter incorporates a chronological analysis of the evolution of the Nigerian state and the development of oil as the life-blood of its economy and how these has been central to conflict and political instability. The chapter draws on material

already published in the article 'Reassessing the Niger Delta Oil Conflict: A Securitisation Perspective', *African Journal of Social Sciences Volume 4 No 4 2014.*

Chapter 6 is the research findings chapter, pulling together findings from the fieldwork carried out in Nigeria and the UK. It provides detailed analysis of data gathered on the Nigerian political elite. It further examines the (non)coerciveness of political elite's security strategies by exploring the elite and Niger Delta inhabitants perspectives on state security strategies between 1999 – 2013. This element of the researcher's work was presented in June 2014 at the British International Studies Association (BISA) annual conference in Dublin, Republic of Ireland.

Chapter 7 provides a synthesis of research findings with theories and existing literature. It also evaluates the research findings by further exploring the channels of influence in security decision-making in Nigeria.

Chapter 8 is the concluding section. It sums up the entire thesis and propose any observable agenda for future research. The final conclusion is that the lack of a process to allow the views of those who prioritise state security over citizens security, and those who view security the other way round to communicate and find a common ground is a major problem that needs to be overcome. The chapter includes the proposed alternative interpretative security framework which is a model security strategy in view of the findings and analysis. The security framework referred to as 'ARTAL' is an integrative, proactive and trilateral conflict resolution strategy. This element of the researcher's work also formed part of the presentation given in June 2014 at the British International Studies Association (BISA) annual conference in Dublin.

CHAPTER 2

ℵ THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ℵ

SECURITY AND SECURITISATION

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the theoretical framing of the thesis and has important implications for the study. First, it adopts a two-sided perspective to analysing security where the approaches of both the realist and human security schools of thought are taken into account. Second, the theoretical assumptions proposed by the Copenhagen and Paris Schools of securitisation will indicate which practices or object of enquiry to consider in order to unravel the dynamics of securitisation in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Third, there is a lack of empirical studies that supports the increasing claims of securitisation in the volatile Nigerian oil zone; a gap which this scholarship aims to bridge and contribute to the literature as empirical research on the securitisation of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Given the growing articulation of threat misperception in the Niger Delta by the Nigerian political elite, the purpose of this chapter is to establish the two presiding perceptions of security. Perception of security from the state perspective and perception of security from the human security perspective. The study objective is not to develop an instrument for rectifying a misperception, but acknowledge that threat perceptions create a view of the world that reflects and determines how we deal with the threat. As such, perceptions have a real effect on influencing the definition of a problem and the nature of the proposed measure to tackle it (Owugah, 2010:186; Jervis, 1976:28).

The emergence of new security threats in the last two decades has intensified the debate over what constitute insecurity. As a result, theories in security studies in different regions of the world have drifted apart and brought about a preponderance of concepts that not only attempt to reconceptualise security,

but also scrutinise how security is managed and the consequences on both national and international security. Traditionally, security is centred around the survival of the state and is perceived through the prism of inter-state military conflict. Nowadays, the debates have drifted beyond the traditional borders and is associated with a wide range of non-traditional issues that cut across international borders such as terrorism, climate change, environmental degradation and so on. Issues not only seen to threaten the existence of a state, but rather question the real or perceived capacity of the state to protect its citizens (Hameiri & Jones, 2013). This has narrowed the security discourse along two broad spectrums, putting the traditional state security on one side and human security on the other.

The preliminary literature review in the previous chapter provided insight into the nature of security threats facing the West African state of Nigeria, focusing on the Niger Delta oil producing region; and how the state have responded to security threats focusing on the political elite's perception of threat to national security as a major influencing factor. Likewise, the prelim provided explanation to possible factors that have shaped this perception, factors stemming from historical conditions (colonial legacy), effect of globalisation and the state political system structure. This chapter will problematise the Niger Delta oil conflict within the broad framework of securitisation theory. Literature review of the previous chapter highlighted the volatile nature of the domestic security environment in the Niger Delta, and how the notion of security which is a central theme in this study has become highly contested. The contest is not so much on the meaning of security but more on 'whose' security is paramount (referent object) and 'how' to provide security? The emphasis on whose and how to provide security has placed a premium on state's intervention in the Niger Delta conflict where elite are faced with the dilemma on how to construct specific threats thrown up by non-state actors such as the militant youths.

The theory of securitisation will provide the theoretical framework which will guide the empirical analysis of elite perception and construction of national security threat in Nigeria. In order to grasp a comprehensive analysis for understanding securitisation processes in the Nigerian oil region, an analytical

framework that comprises both discursive and non-discursive practices is adopted on the basis that certain securitisation moves are carried out in silence or in the absence of discourse. By evaluating the two strands of securitisation theory: the 'discursive analysis' model attributed to the Copenhagen School (CS) and the non-discursive 'security practice' approach inspired by the Paris School (PS), this chapter will present the argument to establish the theory's suitability in analysing the Niger Delta conflict. In the process, the rationale behind the Nigerian political elite's perception of what constitute a threat to national security hence, how they responded to it would be understood. The chapter begins by looking at the security decision-making in Nigeria, and appraising the different perceptions of security from the traditional realist school of thought perspective and the non-traditional schools primarily concerned with human security. Following which it discusses the securitisation theory and how the Nigerian state through its political elite have dealt with the issue of insecurity, highlighting on the identification and removal of threat to security of the state (referent object).

The chapter concludes with the argument that the CS framework of securitisation on its own is problematically narrow in understanding the Niger Delta oil conflict because of the focus on the 'speech act' of dominant actors; since it is difficult to analyse the silence or absence of discourse that precedes certain security practices in the delta region. Alternatively, the PS Bourdieusian-inspired international political sociology approach should be accommodated in the analysis of the Niger Delta oil conflict to fully understand how particular security strategies are authorised, legitimated or put into play by state actors.

2.2. STRUCTURE OF SECURITY DECISION-MAKING IN NIGERIA

The 1999 Nigerian constitution provides a good starting point in understanding how the Nigerian political elite's perception of security influence certain security strategies. The constitution defined a series of roles and responsibility to maintaining national security, and made a distinction of three areas, namely: a) public order, b) public security and c) defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Nigeria, in which security needs to be maintained. Figure 2.1 outlines the Nigerian security decision-making structure as defined in the 1999 Nigerian Federal Constitution - a more clearer organogram can be found in Appendix D. The structure shows that the National Assembly alongside the president has the ultimate security decision-making power. Thus, security matters are placed within the domain of the legislative and executive arms of government.

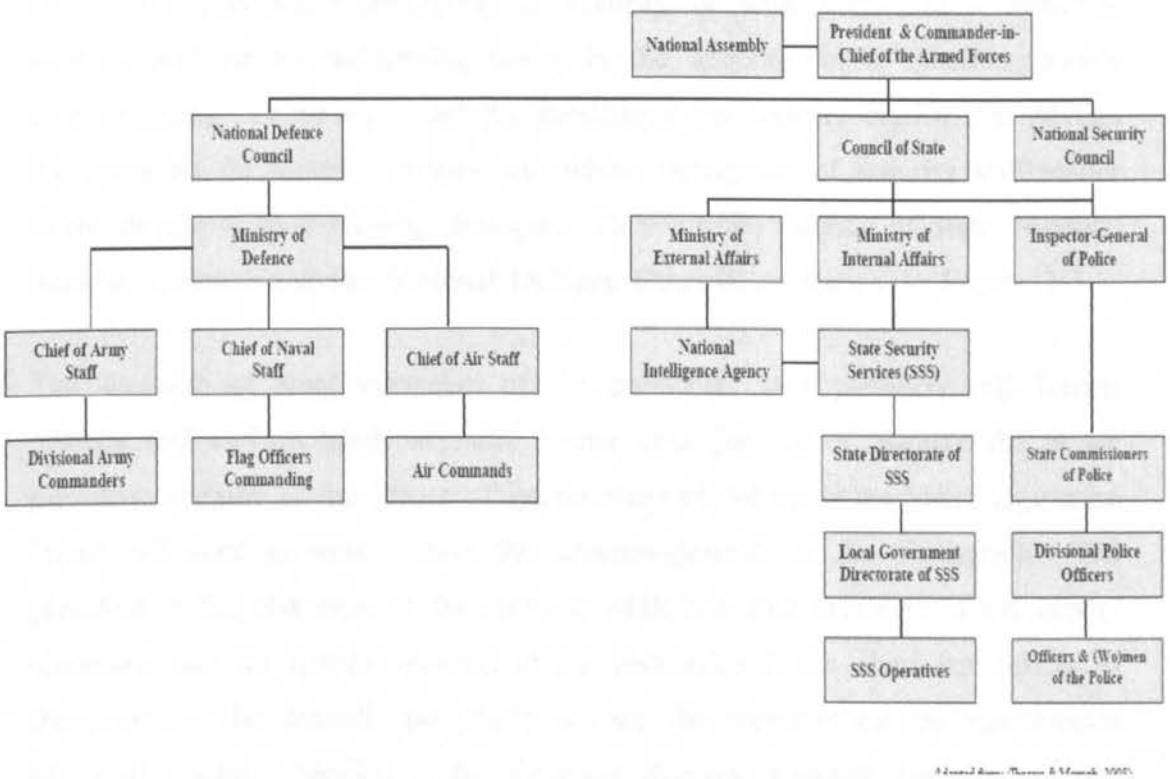

Figure 2. 1 – Organogram of Security Decision-Making In Nigeria

The *National Assembly*, which is the federal legislative arm, is empowered by the constitution "to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Federation or any part thereof with respect to any matter included in the

Exclusive Legislative List set out in Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the constitution". Likewise, the legislature is vested with the authority to approve executive decisions with regards to declaration of war, state of emergency or troops deployment in time of conflict in any part of the country. It also has the power to question security decisions made by the political elite and security officials through committees on appropriations, armed forces, police and others.

The *presidency* on the other hand, is the topmost executive security decision-making organ. Through leadership, it can initiate, formulate, co-ordinate and monitor all security policies. In conjunction with other security councils within executive arm of government, the president as the chief security officer of the state plays a leading role in public security decision-making by responding to political instability and internal security uprising. His office is the point of convergence when it comes to security policy formulation and articulation. Hence, the president's perception of security or what constitute a threat to security will be an influencing factor in the adoption of a specific security policy/strategy. However, under the presidency are security organs that advises the president on security matters and whose perception of security will matter in the design of state security strategies. They are the Council of State, National Security Council and the National Defence Council, as shown in Figure 2. 1.

The *Council of State* comprise of the president, vice president, all former military and civilian heads of state, former chief justices of Nigeria, the senate president, speaker of the House of Representatives, which is the lower legislative house, all state governors, and the attorney-general of the Federation. The president is the chairman of the council, while the vice president is the deputy chairman, and the attorney-general of the Federation is the chief law officer of the council. The council specifically advises the president on the maintenance of public order. Similarly, the *National Security Council* comprise of the president, vice president, chief of defence staff, federal ministers in charge of internal affairs, foreign affairs and defence portfolios, national security advisers, inspector-general of police who is the head of the police force, and other persons appointed at the president's discretion. The president is the chairman of the council, while the vice president is the deputy chairman. The council

specifically advises the president on public security matters including matters concerning security agencies established by law.

Like the first two councils, the *National Defence Council* comprise of the president, vice president, federal minister in charge of the defence portfolio and the four military heads (chief of defence staff, chief of naval staff, chief of army staff and the chief of air staff), and other persons appointed at the president's discretion. The president is the chairman of the council, while the vice president is the deputy chairman. The council advises the president on issues that relate to the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nigerian state. Section 153 of the constitution created all three organs as federal executive bodies, however, these were not replicated at state level therefore giving the federal government total control over all security matters within its domain.

While the constitution sets out the security decision-making structure of the Nigerian state, the above description outlines the different channels where political elite perception of security can be transmitted in attitude, discourse or practice. The issue is not so much on the constitutionalism of security decision-making, but on state security practices influenced by elite's perception of security. Since the end of the Cold War, global discourse within the field of international relations have been dominated by state security practices, generating different views over what constitute (in)security to a state (Buzan, 1991:7). This has led to various theoretical interpretations and a non-conclusive set of definitions of the concept.

2.3. PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY

There are those of the traditional power politics associated with Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes (Snyder, 1999:57); whose perspective on state security reflect the theoretical position of the realist school of thought, which is furthered in the neo-realist mode. The traditionalists fashioned in the realist mode view security from a state-centric perspective whereby state political elite believe that

what constitute security is the ability of the state to exploit and regulate all legitimate instruments of coercion (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008). The realists believe the state is the primary referent of security and that security should be conceived in terms of the management and control of real or perceived threats to the state from outside its borders (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998:52). Likewise, Walt (1991:212) a neo-realist expressed that security is largely about threat concern and the use and control of military power as part of the strategy a state adopts in order to prepare for, prevent or engage in war. According to Waltz (1979), military power is the ultimate means to achieving security against threats.

In light of the above, security in the traditional sense is mainly focused on external military threats and the ability of the state to maintain territorial integrity by protecting its institutions from external threats through its ability to deter and defend; therefore making the state the referent object of security. However, the problem with the realist state-centric perception of security is the lack of thought given to the internal non-military threats post-colonial sub-Saharan African states are challenged with. Security threats faced from diverse sub-national groups demanding for political participation, economic redistribution, problems of environmental degradation and issues bordering on national cohesion. The issue of environmental degradation that has threatened national stability in Nigeria is of particular interest because of the array of actors involved. The realist estimations rarely include non-state actors such as Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs), whereas TNOCs have been the perpetrator of environmental pollution incidents in the delta region; incidents that has been the catalyst for security threats in the region (Oluduro, 2014).

The virtual absence of environmental considerations in realist conception of security and its argument that a state must survive through maximising power by use of military force as an instrument of policy, shows a weakness in the realist reactionary state-centric assumptions. This has drawn criticism from scholars like Booth (2004:5; 2007:34-36) who critiqued the realists' external specification of threat as being 'overly statist' and 'privileging military power' in its rationale for providing security. Putting this into the Nigerian context, conceptually, the state political elite's view of national security is bereft of

environmental considerations and the consequent social concerns which has impelled the state to be hostile and repressive towards the people. Consequently, giving rise to the conflict in the Niger Delta region. This scenario tells that the official paradigm of national security in Nigeria is statist and reflects a lopsided power relations in the country. The theoretical challenge is to drive for an alternative framework that broadens the notion of national security beyond militarist and elitist perspectives, one that integrates environmental and social concerns into national security policy, and promotes sustainable development as modality of protecting the people.

Emerging from the changing circumstances of security came the concept of 'human security'. The changing nature of security threats to states, nations, groups and individuals meant security as a concept needed to be broadened in scope and definition to accommodate contemporary issues (Isike & Uzodike, 2010). Subsequently, rather than being viewed from a pure military hardware perspective, the world began to view security from more of a human perspective. The concept of human security was officially formulated in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR) of 1994; and expanded upon in the 2003 Commission on Human Security's (CHR) Human Security Now report. Both reports endeavoured to broaden the meaning and scope of security beyond the state-centric concerns, because in their analogy, the people became the referent object of security (Burke, 2007).

In addition, their multi-dimensional approach had combined components such as national security, economic development and human rights to advance the study of security in the contemporary world (Ball & Fayemi, 2004). Consequently, threats such as poverty, terrorism (both state and non-state sponsored), environmental degradation and civil conflicts came to be identified as constituting insecurity to the lives and livelihoods of people around the world most especially after the Cold War. The human security proposals centred on the physical safety, well-being and freedom of individuals. Smith (2005:52) identified seven categories that encapsulate the human security proposals: personal, political, health, community, environmental and economics.

Personal security relates to physical violence caused by state or individuals and threat to a life. **Political** security relates to freedom of expression where one can subscribe to political ideologies or join political parties. **Health** security relates to access to health facilities and protection from either communicable or non-communicable diseases. **Community** security relates to individual's right of association where one can join any community; and for the community to be free from violence or intimidation. While **food** security implies economic and physical access to food and nutritional requirements. **Environmental** security focuses on protection of environment and natural resources for the benefit of future generations. **Economic** security on the other hand addresses access to gainful employment and a sustained income. The argument for human security was further advanced by the Critical Security Studies (CSS). The school gave less prominence to state security arguing that states tend to pursue parochial elitist interests often disguised as national interest, thus becoming part of the problem of insecurity (Booth, 1997).

While the human security perspective has had a broad appeal and has been accepted as an alternative paradigm to the traditional mode of security, it has also been widely criticised for its meaning, scope and methodological construct (Akokpari, 2007:15). The main concern had been over the broad nature of its definition, which encapsulate almost every known and unanticipated discomforts making it too inclusive for analytical purpose (Paris, 2001:89). Despite this, critics of state-centric security such as Kaldor (2007:182-197) have called for a further enlargement to the concept to capture traditional ways of living aside its human referent. These two contending views (realism and human security) poses the question of whether human security can really supplant state or national security? It also raises the poser of whether a state can actually guarantee citizens security? In the Nigerian context, evidence suggests that while the state can author human security, it has also been known to engineer human insecurity (Luckham & Kirk, 2012; Olonisakin, 2008; Jackson, 2002). This will be further explored in the latter part of the thesis, where illustration of the violent Niger Delta oil conflict will demonstrate a linkage between state elite and conflict, the impact on human security, and the ensuing crisis of governance.

Having established the two main perceptions of security: those who prioritise state security over citizens security and those who view security the other way round, a third position emerges in the case of Nigeria – the lack of a process to allow these two views to communicate and find a common ground. This is addressed under the proposed ARTAL security framework in the concluding chapter of the thesis. At this point, the question may be asked, how does one determine what can be considered a security threat, and which practices regarding these issues can be established? Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998) through their theory of securitisation illustrated that national security concerns arise when certain issues are presented as existential threat to designated national security referent objects. Within this understanding lays social constructivist assumption that security threats exists as a result of the discourse that marks them as such.

2.4. SECURITISATION THEORY

Securitisation as a concept was developed into a theoretical tool for security analysis by the **Copenhagen School (CS)**. The CS school of security studies came about in the mid-1980s to counterbalance the realist traditional approach to security (Taureck, 2006), and was built on concepts advanced by its core members: Barry Buzan, a neorealist, and Ole Waever, a post-structuralist. Subsequently, many saw the CS framework as an amalgamation of different theoretical traditions (Burke, 2007). CS expanded the notion of security by introducing the three ideas of securitisation, sectors and regional security to the concept (Capie, 2007). Securitisation was specifically used to explain how political issues or threats are framed in terms of extraordinary measures, survival and/or urgency that distinguish the politics of security, and renders it into something outside of common politics (Gad & Petersen, 2011). In doing so, the theory had focused on language or discourse as a unit for security analysis to understand state political elite's perception of security and threat (Hameiri & Jones, 2013). CS sees (in)security as a process of social construction of threats that includes the securitising actor – the political elite in this case who declares certain issues as urgent and of greater threat to the survival of the referent

object (the state); with the aim to legitimise the use of extraordinary measures to neutralise the threat.

Therefore, in Buzan and Waever of the CS's opinion, the rhetorical structure that links the referent object which is that seen to be existentially threatened, the securitising actor that securitise issue by declaring it the referent object that is existentially threatened, and the issue that threatens the existence of a referent object, are key to analysing security threat. This implies that the CS views security as a self-referential social praxis because, security is not defined by the presence of a real existential threat but by the presentation of a threat as a security threat. It also implies that the CS perceive security to be socially constructed and inter-subjective, because a good securitisation move also requires a targeted audience that will accept the representation of a problem as a security threat. The interest of the analyst here is in the discursive production of security. Security policies in this sense could also contribute to threat manufacturing. Accordingly, the securitisation of an issue is best explained as a political choice and a social approval rather than an objective measure of security which the CS denies exist.

The security agenda of the CS further dealt with the content of the existential threats that might endanger the survival of a referent object of security through its sectoral analysis. The sectoral concept focused more on analysing the referent object of security to understand security perceptions. Buzan's (1991) approach to this was by looking closely at a collection of issues that could possibly endanger the survival of a referent object of security. Those issues that could either be military, societal, economic, political or environmental threats were referred to as 'existential threats' (Stone, 2009), and each is explained further:

The **military sector** embrace the offensive and defensive capabilities of the state, and the state is regarded as the most significant referent object of security. Its ruling elite are seen as the most conspicuous securitising actors. As such, the military security agenda will include external and internal military threats or even non-military threats but that might require the use of military power to maintain state or regime survival (Williams, M. C., 2003). In the **societal sector**,

the security of the society is considered paramount (Stone, 2009). Adelugba and Ujomu (2008:11) defined the society as a large self-sustaining identity group either national, religious or racial, with different attributes shared by its members. A society can be subjected to threat by either the state or non-state actors through practices that tend to interfere with its reproductive capability, or stop it from shifting its members loyalty to another identity group.

The **economic sector** encompass the global market and multi-national firms who are made the referent objects of security (Williams, M. C., 2003). It refers to the management of the economy, resources and the markets as its springboard. The situation differs with the **political sector** where threat to the referent object is seen to destabilise its organisational capability (Williams, M. C., 2003). Within this sector, the state, sub-state national groups that is tribes or minorities, and transnational movements are made the referent objects of security (Stone, 2009). If the state is the referent object of security, political threat might be in the form of a threat against its sovereignty either from an external or internal source like secessionist crusade or insurgency (Gad & Petersen, 2011) such as the case in the Nigerian Niger Delta oil conflict; or the threat might just be against the institution of the state such as its government. As a result, the political/ruling elite might perceive this as an affront to their legitimacy and present the threat as a national security issue (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998:141-161).

The last sector, the **environmental sector** comprise of both the scientific and political agenda; and are exposed to environmental threats resulting from a combination of natural disasters and man-made causes like greenhouse emission, ecological despoliation and so on (Stone, 2009; Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998:71-92). There is a body of research on environmental threats and its impact on security, but this have not been covered here as it is out of the scope of the study. Buzan's multi-sectoral security illustration have been applied to analyse security at different levels depending on the referent object, which could either be the state, nation, regime, community or individual. However, the challenge of conflict of securities still remain especially in scenarios where state political elite consider paramount the protection and maintenance of state sovereignty and its ruling elite over the security of the populace, that is better living condition,

access to farmland, job security and so on. When this happens, the civil society becomes the scapegoat and the military option becomes the preferred conflict management strategy of the state such as the case in Nigeria's Niger Delta oil region.

Despite the foregoing, effort to analyse the Niger Delta oil conflict using securitisation theory has raised growing concern because of its emphasis on discourse analysis. The criticism of the CS' speech act has raised questions on its viability when it comes to analysing security issues outside the Western border (Balzacq, 2011; Barthwal-Datta, 2009). The concern has been that in the developing world especially in Africa, where securitisation is sometimes conducted under the code of silence or absence of discourse, how does one account for such moves? Salter and Mutlu (2013) argues that this concern demonstrates the need and the utility of conducting historical research into securitisation where non-public securitising moves are illuminated through field analysis. Julius (2014a) in his published article "Re-assessing the Niger Delta Oil Conflict: A Securitisation Perspective", evaluated the theory and its viability as an analytical tool for analysing security issues in the Niger Delta region. He argued the fact that CS laid much emphasis on the utterances of the securitisation actors without considering other key factors like security perceptions and actual security practices conducted under the code of silence.

> *"the speech act theory of securitisation as articulated by the Copenhagen School laid so much emphasis on the utterances of securitisation actors at the detriment of other important factors such as security perceptions and actual security practices of state actors. A major consequence of this is the exclusion of a great deal of the security dynamic unravelling in the Niger Delta such as the extension of routine security operations from one conflict zone to another without any identifiable speech act by the state elite to legitimise the exceptional security measures as CS envisaged. This neglect of actual security practice is a major theoretical gap within CS version of securitisation that underestimates how practice can precede or*

supersede public discourse in the security scheming of state actors, especially in sub-Saharan Africa."[1] (Julius, 2014a)

The issue borders on the complex institutional field of security decision-making in Nigeria, identifying the key securitising speakers and the audience of the securitising discourse is extremely difficult. Also, the discursive space of CS can account for the words and images of securitisation moves; however, cannot account for the silence or absence of discourse that often dominates most securitising moves in the Niger Delta because of their very object of enquiry. The advice is to conduct a field analysis through socio-historical accounting of how particular security practices are authorised, legitimated, or put into play by actors to gauge their perceptions of security. Hence, the reason for looking beyond official discourse and considering non-discursive security practices of state actors and operatives of the military Joint Task Force (JTF) to truly understand the state's approach to security and threat management.

Criticism of the CS securitisation theory led to an alteration in the theory and saw the emergence of the **Paris School (PS)** version of securitisation. PS in same mode as the researcher built on the initial CS concept of analysing security through discourse and offered a more practical approach to analysing security in places like Africa, by means of combining discourse and state security practices as ways of security analysis (Waever, 2004). PS offered a relational understanding of discourse and practice by introducing the Bourdieusian notion of 'field' into its analysis.[2] Didier Bigo (cited in Salter & Mutlu, 2013:819) described the term field as network of professionals or security agents that can shape or define threats, or authorise the domestic deployments of the military to conflict zones. Within the context of the Niger Delta oil conflict, one could argue that apart from the securitisation moves of elected officials, the security

[1]The article was an interim deliverable from this doctoral research. All of the argumentation published in Julius 2014a is integrated in this final thesis.

[2]Bourdieu describe 'field' as a social universe, a microcosm that bring agents and institutions together who are engaged in the production of certain product, security practices and discourses in this case. By identifying the role of agents in the development of practices and discourse, Bourdieu has indicated that one should always look beyond discourse analysis as an analytical strategy and consider other forms of analysis - see Salter & Mutlu (2013) for more analysis.

acts of the military heads (service chiefs) and operatives of the military JTF stationed in the Niger Delta region should also be considered in the analysis of the violent conflict. This is because the PS provides a platform through which to assess the role of state agents as in their practices in the field of conflict in the name of protecting national security (Hameiri & Jones, 2013). Practices that have revealed patterns different to those found by solely studying official discourse in Nigeria, because security agents are alleged to often deviate from constitutional/laid down procedure or go beyond their brief.

Waever (2004) of the CS, similarly agreed that the PS approach is advantageous in analysing conflict situations because it maps security practices and documents routine deviation from official policies. The analytical effectiveness and theoretical value of the PS approach is its ability to unravel securitisation moves that preclude official discourse or one done in silence through field analysis, made possible by historical accounting (Salter & Mutlu, 2013). Therefore, in order to develop a theoretical tool capable of analysing the Niger Delta oil conflict in both theory and praxis, both the CS and PS strands of securitisation theory should be accommodated in the analysis of the Nigerian conflict (Julius, 2014a). The view is that threat definitions are embedded in more complicated linkages between policy issues and security strategies, and thus, insecurity is conceptualised both as a threat definition and a domain of practice. Subsequently, this study adopts both schools' perspectives in its analysis of the Niger Delta oil conflict going forward by analysing both discourse and field/actual security practice through historical account.

From a methodological point of view, the non-discursive viewpoint of the politics of security decision-making in the Niger Delta implies that the analysis move away from an exclusive focus on the political speech acts of the actors and extend the analysis to non-discursive security practices of state agents as highlighted in the study's critique of the Copenhagen School. Accordingly, the research has employed discourse analysis in conjunction with field analysis through historical accounting. Thus, to establish the securitisation moves and security strategies of the Nigerian state in the Niger Delta, official and non-official documents comprising government and non-governmental organisations

reports, journal articles, newspapers, biographies, online materials, interview notes and historical accounts were utilised. Developing a unique method of qualitative coding to extract research data from large body of documents using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods for its final analysis. This research framework allowed access to information that are not captured in official discourse or one that might have been difficult to obtain due to restricted access or elite not willing to talk.

Given the consequences of the Nigerian oil conflict on national stability, the question may be asked, does the political elite simply decide which issue is a security threat or make an issue a security threat? It is the argument of the study that relational dynamics do come into play as interacting actors and interconnecting security worries sometimes inform certain security perceptions and practices. Evidence will later show how historical conditions, common social background, and the political economy incentives created by the discovery of oil affected elite security thinking in Nigeria.

2.5. NIGERIAN THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SECURITISATION

Different theoretical approaches have provided specific lens through which the Nigerian political elite, non-elite and independent analysts have scrutinised the political and security dynamics in Nigeria. These perspectives include the historical approach, human needs approach, globalist approach and the internally driven approach.

The historical approach literature focused on the effect of colonialism on the notion of national security in Nigeria. This perspective is premised on the argument that pre-colonial Nigeria had a robustly diverse political structure that safeguarded against tyrannical use of political power, because the structure was founded on the principle of 'sovereignty belongs to the people' and not the political elite (Ubah, 1998). However, as soon as colonialism began, the governing structure became disrupted in favour of an autocratic and divisive one (Ubah, 1998:153-155). With the colonialists 'divide and rule' policies and

the eventual amalgamation of certain disparate entities, the people became fractionalised inside a forced entity (Imobighe, 2003:2-3). Consequently, the indigenous political elite that emerged from the British colonialists after Nigeria gained independence in 1960, inherited the autocratic character and securitisation practices of the colonial administrations (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008). Character and securitisation practices that has led to tension and conflict as the country continued to undermine its citizens' security.

Scholars have used the Niger Delta oil conflict to demonstrate how the Nigerian state political elite have continued to undermine the security of the Niger Delta inhabitants through the use of 'instrument of violence' as a conflict resolution strategy. Owugah (2010:179-198) in his "state's violent response strategy to the Niger Delta conflict: resolution or containment" analogy, remonstrated over the historical antecedent of the securitisation strategy and how the colonialists conquered autonomous ethnic nationalities/communities in Nigeria. Concluding that the amalgamation of the people into a broader polity made them lose exclusive right to exploit their environment and resources for socio-economic well-being. Britain, the subjugating power, laid claim to the people's resources, and monopolised the possession and use of arms to fend off any challenge. This security practice was what the Nigerian political elite inherited at independence, and has shaped the elite's security strategy ever since.

In contrast to the historical perspective, the human needs literature discarded the colonialism argument to focus more on the status and well-being of the society (Galadima, 2007:264-288). The school argued that majority of the insecurity to a state are as a result of unsatisfied human needs. Thus, the form of conflict resolution strategy adopted will either transform a violent conflict to a non-violent one or escalate it (Burton, 1979). The latter has opened up further debates on the Nigerian state conflict resolution strategies and their effectiveness, part of which is covered further down in the section. Drawing on the analysis of the human needs theory of social conflicts, scholars have argued that any society that does not provide or cater for the basic human needs of its citizenry, will at the long run face a revolt from the population - with or without colonialism (Ukeje, 2005). In other words, the acts of dissent against the

Nigerian state by its civil society is blamed on the Nigerian social and living conditions. This viewpoint has a resonant of the frustration-aggression theory, which perceive aggression as a consequence of frustration from a feeling of relative deprivation (Oshita, 2007:36-37) in a given society.

From the aforementioned, one can infer that socio-economic factors such as high poverty rate, unemployment and falling standard of living as reported in the Human Development Index Trend, which ranked Nigeria 153rd out of the 187 countries assessed in 2013 (HDI, 2013), are responsible for the high level of national insecurity issues in Nigeria. Similarly, research found that the level of threat to the state from its civil society is a consequence of the socio-economic deprivation and hopelessness felt by the people. Hopelessness in the sense that the political elite who are meant to protect the people's interests are the ones charged with resource mismanagement. Therefore, the people will persist in venting hostility towards the state and its agents who engendered the socio-economic deprivations that bred frustration and fostered violence (Ikelegbe, 2011).

On the other hand, the globalist literature perspective argued that the strategic position held by Nigeria in the international political economy exposed Nigeria to a unique set of security issues. By being an ethnically diverse post-colonial state as well as a developing regional power with huge oil resources, the state has attracted actors typically engaged in African political economy and internal conflict situations (Adegbuyi, 2007:163-173; Obi, 1997). The school therefore considers the process of globalisation and the pressure resulting from it responsible for some of Nigeria's violent conflicts especially the Niger Delta oil conflict (Obi, 2004:13-15). Emphasis is placed on the vast array of actors that have emerged as a result of globalisation, actors ranging from local insurgents to state operatives, TNOCs, non-governmental organisations and international bodies (Obi, 1999); each generating and protecting its own interests in a complex interaction between global and local politics (Kingston, 2011a; Okonta & Douglas, 2001).

Evidence suggest that many of the state security policies are geared towards protecting the transnational alliance and the control of oil, hence, state political elite will deploy any means necessary to defend and preserve its 'petrolised power' (Obi, 2004:14). Personal interests had subsequently brought about conflict of interests, which in turn has led to what Kaldor (2012:71-93) dubbed the 'new wars' where international capitalists, economic entrepreneurs, state elite, private military companies, foreign mercenaries and investors in terror, have created opportunities for themselves under an atmosphere of insecurity. Accordingly, these participating actors have employed various conflict strategies to achieve their ultimate objective(s); strategies ranging from securitisation to outright militarisation, armed insurgency, criminality, hostage-taking, use of mercenaries and terrorism (Obi & Rustad, 2011b). From the globalists' views, one can argue that the historicity of national crises in Nigeria especially the Niger Delta oil conflict can only be explained through the reconstruction of the different epochs that captures the structural dynamics leading up to the emergence of the violent conflicts, which is articulated within the internally driven approach.

The internally driven approach literature focused on the role of the Nigerian political elite in administering security, that is the nexus between the elite's security strategies in response to perceived or real internal threats and the escalation of those threats to open conflicts that often undermine national security and international security at large (Imobighe, 1990:223-235). Motivated by a combination of external and domestic factors, the internally driven perspective argued that the Nigerian political elite have adopted security strategies that has left the state vulnerable to more insecurity (Imobighe, 2003:6-11). Besides, the urge for private accumulation, economic scarcity, institutional weakness, problems of legitimacy and external vulnerability, has made political survival a matter of life and death for the Nigerian political elite (Danmadani, 1987:107-109). These structural deficiencies have placed extraordinary pressure on policy and decision-makers to enact diverse discursive performances that justifies their coercive security strategies in response to some of the real or perceived security threats (Mogalakwe, 2013); which are then built into the global hegemonic security discourses such as 'War on Terror' for it to be accepted by their

targeted audience (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008). To further analyse the elite–national (in)security nexus, some internally driven literature scholars employed the Johan Galtung's argument of structural violence (Omeje, 2007:27).

Galtung, a pioneer in modern peace studies argued that violence, that is harm done to another human being, can lead to human insecurity (Galtung, 1985). Galtung further explained that there are two dimensions to violence: first, violence can be directed at the structure; and second, violence can be inherent in the structure. The first will usually involve an actor who commits the act of violence, while the latter is inbuilt into the structure and can materialise as unequal power relations or life chances (Galtung, 1969), like when people are denied access to physical or social well-being; something Galtung also referred to as "social injustice". However, Galtung's second fold of violence is one that will likely lead to state insecurity, and such is the case with many Nigerian states especially in the Niger Delta region (Akokpari, 2007).

Similarly, assessment by Oshita (2007) on the insecurity and securitisation moves in Nigeria confirmed insecurity as a product of the political elite's exclusive politics and private accumulation of national resources at the detriment of the population. An assessment also shared by Omeje (2007:21-26) who established how the political elite had subjected the state to strict control in order to maintain access to national resources at the detriment of the population. In view of the assessments, it is concluded that a) the political elite state of insecurity is a consequence of their desire to secure unobtrusive access to scarce economic resources; and b) the political elite have endeavoured to consolidate their direct control of the state in order to protect their accumulation and material base. Thus, to achieve these, the political elite will engage in securitisation moves and framing practices, where potential security issues/perceived threats are presented in a specific way or their opponents labelled with a particular identity for example terrorists, criminals and so on; while the political elite portray themselves as 'security providers' or 'international allies' in maintaining global security.

Therefore, the perspective of the internally driven school is that in Nigeria, the attempt to frame and counter-frame, to manipulate and de-manipulate, has resulted to tension and open conflicts that has undermined the national security of the country (Emuedo, 2012).

2.6. GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Scholars have primarily approached the Nigerian Niger Delta conflict from the perspectives of grand theories in social science such as colonialism, dependency, Marxist political economy and legal ecologism. Their analyses resonate with certain explanatory constructs of the security theories reviewed in the preceding sections. The most pertinent is the securitisation framework of the Copenhagen and Paris Schools. These explanatory constructs have been variously applied in the analysis of the conflict. However, there is a need to synthesise the insights of Nigerian scholars with the Copenhagen and Paris Schools' approaches. It is also important to recognise that in Nigeria, the political context and policy environment in which security policy-making occur, can differ significantly from the West and be heavily influenced by indigenous practices. Practices that include centralisation of authority and power in those who govern, low levels of institutionalisation and minimal political community. As such, using analytical tools solely based on Western models may be of limited utility.

Nearly all the perspectives on the Niger Delta oil conflict raises a number of issues that require further investigation and a more critical interrogation. Issues like colonial antecedents and the state's use of coercive/military power to suppress legitimate protests of indigenous people against the TNOCs' gross violation of their human security that encompass human and environmental rights. With regards to the colonial legacy or historical conditions perspective of the conflict, at best this can be described as defensive or escapist. Good, bad or ugly, colonial legacies are historical facts common to majority of African countries; and how these African states would have looked like without these historical incidents is a matter of infinite and futile conjectures. As part of the objectives of this study, efforts will be geared towards proffering a security

framework that will enhance human security, and therefore social progress; rather than bemoan colonial legacies that have barely prevented countries such as Botswana and Mauritius from making political and economic progress.

With regards to state repression, the presumed unanimity of security perception within the Nigerian political elite and threat management strategies needs to be carefully deconstructed and interrogated. This is because little research has been conducted into the state political elite's perception of security and its impact on the oil conflict. This gap has restricted the knowledge to fully understand the potential ability of the political elite to prevent or manage the oil conflict - one which this research intends to fill. The study recognises that there are different perceptions of security not just within the different stakeholders in the Niger Delta oil region, but also within the different networks that make up the Nigerian political elite. Therefore, it does not assume unanimity on the conception of security within the political elite group in Nigeria, rather it allows for different individuals within the political elite group in Nigeria to have different attitudes and orientations to some of the key issues in the conflict namely environmental management, corporate social responsibility and resource control. When these are critically explored, the observed attitudinal and orientational nuances vis-à-vis the main issues of the conflict will lead to a greater understanding of elite's perceptions of security and their preferred mode of responsiveness to threats within their national territory.

2.7. CONCLUSION

Security in Nigeria has been well debated in the field of international relations, specifically because of the violent oil conflict that has engulfed the Niger Delta region of the country. The focal point of the debate has rather been on the cause and effect of the conflict rather than how security is determined. The determination of security in this study is connoted from how security and threats have been perceived and constructed by the state through its political elite hence, how the state elite have responded to real or imagined threat in its oil region. Generally, Nigerian political elite perception of security is fashioned in

the realist mode, which observe security from a state-centric perspective. As such, the political elite presume what constitute security is the state's ability to exploit and regulate all legitimate instruments of coercion. In spite of the paradigm shift that brought about the conception of human security (Smith, 2005:52; Solomon, 1998), the Nigerian political elite have upheld the state as the utmost referent object of security. Therefore, any challenge to the state survival or effectiveness, or to the regime in power is considered a threat to national security. Because state/national security is now perceived to be security of the political elite, rebellion in form of insurgency has been directed at the state alongside TNOCs because of their strong desire in controlling state natural resources. Subsequently, state security thrust have become a means for safeguarding the elite and their allies' interests at the detriment of the populace (Olukoshi, 1992).

Literature and analyses on the Nigerian oil conflict have highlighted different perspectives regarding the causal and elongating factors of the oil conflict, with the common view being that the political elite are responsible for (in)security in the oil enclave. However, while the scholars and commentators have established a nexus between political elite's actions, security strategies and national (in)security, little has be done to empirically explore the Nigerian political elite's understanding of security and what factors shaped this perception of security – a gap in terms of formation of perception prior to discourse. Most importantly, how the perception influence the construction of security strategies especially in the Niger Delta region of the country. This study intends to fill this gap. In doing so, it will sort answers to the following questions: Who are these political elite? How are elite perceptions formed? How does perceptions impact on security strategies? Is the oil conflict a reflection of state's perception of security? Can a security framework which reaches out in defence of the people as well as the state be developed? Answers to these questions could potentially pave way for a probable problem-solving approach that can be applied to the Nigerian oil conflict and probably other states with similar circumstance in the developing world.

The next chapter will outline the research methodology adopted in carrying out the investigation, highlighting the sources and methods used to gather and analyse the data, and the preliminary investigation outcome.

CHAPTER 3

ℵ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ℵ

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The last chapter argued how the move from a traditional realist conception of state/national security to that of human security, can be interpreted as security in an 'extended' form. A form which according to Rothschild (1995), moves a) downwards from nations to individuals; b) upwards from nations to the biosphere that is, from security of nations to security of supranational physical environment; c) horizontally, that implies from military security to food, health, personal, community, economic, environmental and political security; and d) the responsibility for security provision is extended in all directions from the state downwards to regional/local governments, upwards to international organisations, and sideways to non-governmental organisations, market forces and the press. This analysis through the different extensions describe what entity(ies) that need to be secured and how, since the nature and level of threat differs according to the referent object of security (Buzan, 1991). Consequently, the perception of security of the different actors will have a great bearing on the operationalisation of threats by those actors.

The previous chapter revealed a contested political understanding of security, particularly under conditions of environmental and human insecurity that has degraded the authority and legitimacy of state actors in Nigeria, resulting to significant shortfalls in national security. It showed that the expansive construction of security outlined by the human security framework, where both the state and its population enjoy equal access to safety and well-being, was rarely institutionalised in Nigeria. The lack of institutional framework for security provision and its resultant violent crises has given rise to a culture of militarism that has been internalised by both state and non-state actors. Despite the volatile security situation in Nigeria, it is the argument in this study that there is still a window of opportunity for significant improvements in the security landscape of the state. In particular, of its security crisis in the Niger Delta oil producing

region, which is the chosen case study for this research. The starting point will be a re-orientation of security behaviour and practices, where the state pays greater attention to the delivery of human security.

The ontological assumption in this study is that, how a state responds to its domestic security threat is determined by the perception of those who controls state power. Their response strategies are based on the perceived nature and consequences of the threat. Within this context, the Niger Delta oil conflict is problematised within a 'constructivist' approach of political science. This approach grounded in 'interpretivism' sees social and political reality as socially constructed (Flick, 2009:69-72). The constructivist approach focus on the role of ideas and identity in analysing social reality, while equally laying emphasis on the transformative impact of new constructs such as human security (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:63). The interpretivist nature of constructivism sees the researcher as a 'detective' in his quest for subjective knowledge. Hence, the research methods often utilised include ethnographic study, interviews and critical analysis of data to establish why and how things have happened (Corti & Thompson, 2007:297). This is in contrast to 'positivism' in political science that is underpinned by objectivist ontology that facts are facts, and can be measured through research methods such as questionnaires, surveys or random sampling (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:4).

However, the need to understand the perceptions and security practices of state actors in Nigeria led to the epistemological approach (research design) adopted in this study. Though the study have utilised both qualitative and quantitative research methods in its final analysis, the research is more interpretivist in nature because it allows for complexity and contextual factors such as interpretations, motivations and values (Flick, 2009:70-71). A closer look at the overall perceptions of the Niger Delta oil conflict has provided insight into the complex nature of the conflict where no single factor is ascribed to the causality of the violent conflict. Still, the secrecy and changes that has occurred in the life-cycle of the oil conflict has led to the absence of a clear pattern emerging on how the conflict has been managed since it began. This has resulted to the limited empirical evidence of the state management of the oil conflict. The

researcher bore this uncertainty in mind when choosing the research design, and ultimately achieved the research objectives through the chosen epistemological approach that uncovered the truth that was out there but too complex to understand.

This chapter explains the methodology of the research, and describes the research design to investigate and substantiate how the Nigerian political elite perceive security and the effect of this on the construction and implementation of security strategies. The chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in carrying out the study and expands on the "Investigating Elite Security Dilemma in Nigeria: Issues and Methodology" article published by the researcher in the *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* Review, and presented by the researcher in May 2014 at the Helen Bamber Centre for the Study of Rights, Conflict and Mass Violence. The article outlines the methodology adopted in undertaking the investigative work, issues encountered and justification for the chosen methods. The study itself required gathering of data and analysis of the data to test out the hypothesis that "there tends to be a specific interpretation of security within the Nigerian political elite, which could lead to an increased level of insecurity in the state". In testing out the hypothesis, answers to the following questions as listed in chapter 1 section 1.2 under research objectives were sought:

1 What is the perception of the Nigerian political elite of security?

2 How has this perception evolved over time through the transition from military to the civilian political era?

3 What factors have influenced this perception within the last decade and half, and have shaped the construction of security strategies in Nigeria?

4 How does the state address its security challenges and what are its security policies in the Niger Delta region?

5 To what extent is the Niger Delta oil conflict a reflection of the state's perception of security?

To deliver the study remit, the research adopted a case study methodology that incorporates a triangulation approach, mixing both qualitative and quantitative research methods at different level of the investigation (Maxwell, 2010; Woolley, 2009; Gerring, 2007:10; Bryman, 2006 & 1992; Yin, 2003:14). In addition, it used a multi-layered approach by utilising well known paradigms, frameworks of analysis, international relations theories and concepts, and statistical analysis. The case study approach was chosen because it is a fine-grained research methodology whose application can be used to investigate empirical phenomena in real-life contexts (Yin, 2003:13). Furthermore, it is a model that can be used to explain and describe the causal links in real life interventions (Gerring, 2007:45). Vargas-Hernandez et al. (2011) articulated that "case study can be used to analyse by building an explanation as a pattern-matching or for exploration to set an hypothesis-generating process". As such, each case study is unique because the researcher has no control over behavioural events and the questions raised. Thus, data collected in the course of the fieldwork and the unit of analysis cannot have the same form.

The identified triangulation in this study includes data source, investigator, theories and concepts, and methodological triangulation to ensure accuracy and validity of research processes (Yin, 2003:1-2). This also shaped the chapter structure, which is divided into three main sections, each looking at different phases of the research study: the type of data required for the study, the method used in gathering the data and the approach to how the data was analysed.

3.2. EPISTEMOLOGY

Since the study is to investigate a particular group of people's and institutional perceptions, behaviours and opinions on security issues, it was imperative that the researcher sought to engage with empirical evidence of how this group of people (the Nigerian political elite and security decision-makers) view, analyse and interpret national security in Nigeria. However, because the Niger Delta is a contested space with different groups understanding the conflict differently, it was deemed necessary to undertake a trip to Nigeria to carry out extensive

fieldwork. During the course of the fieldwork in Nigeria, the study identified three groups for its unit of analysis because to study the elite, there is need to understand how others view the elite and its framing of security issues. Given the unit of analysis could be an individual, a community, an organisation, a nation-state, an empire or a civilization (Yin, 2003:1), the chosen unit of analysis for the study are the two main actors - Niger Delta inhabitants and the political elite plus other Nigerians cum independent observers.

The Niger Delta group comprise the people from the oil producing region including militants and activists. The second group is made up of political elite and security decision-makers both at federal and state level in Nigeria - Appendix D outlines the current Nigerian government security decision-making structure as defined by the 1999 Nigerian federal constitution. The third group comprise of Nigerians from other ethnic groups outside the Niger Delta region and external independent observers. These groups were purposefully selected so that the information gathered could cut across a wide spectrum of the society, avoiding issues to do with generalisation and validity (Arksey & Knight, 1999:21-25). More so, different people from different background will hold different perspectives regarding the issues at the heart of the oil conflict and how best to address those issues. Even though the main objective of the study is to unravel how a specific interpretation of security by the Nigerian political elite has escalated its level of national insecurity, probing and comparing other people's perceptions of what national security should entail gave a good understanding of the clash of security perceptions at the heart of the oil conflict.

3.3. DATA GATHERING METHODS

It was necessary to source data from both primary and secondary sources due to the nature of the study that cut across the elite-security conundrum. Mediums used included newspapers, biographies, journal articles, government and non-governmental organisations reports, online materials and through using qualitative techniques such as face-to-face interviewing.

Interviews

During the course of the fieldwork, the researcher was able to interview 20 respondents including 4 government officials (2 of Niger Delta origin and 2 from other ethnic groups); 6 politicians at the federal level of governance; 5 middle ranking security personnel that have led military operations in the Niger Delta; 4 academics (2 of Niger Delta origin and 2 from other ethnic groups); and 1 independent journalist; see sources of primary data on page 237. The interviewees were people with inside knowledge of government security policies, their implementation and effects; and the amount of influence the political elite have on state security management. The interviews were recorded, not all participants were willing to be recorded on tape during the interviews; however, they were happy for the researcher to take notes.

Conventionally, research on national security in Nigeria has been state-centred due to the sensitive nature of security issues, as such any research into national security planning is considered a security issue (Hendrickson & Bastian, 2008). As a consequence, civilian researchers are rarely given access to security institutions to conduct research because they are deemed a potential security threat (Lee, 1993:4-10). These issues have been anticipated prior to undertaking the study, and mitigating steps were taken, which included:

- adopting a theoretical, conceptual and historical explanations through a desk-based enquiry, carrying out selective in-depth interviews, and conducting document analysis to uncover and assess the circumstances of national security planning in Nigeria;
- utilising the 'human security' concept to legitimise the research and create a new entry point in security analysis in Nigeria and part of the global south.

The utilisation of the human security concept made it possible for the researcher and the respondents to view security in an holistic way that accommodates both military and non-military dimensions of national security. This flexibility allowed

the sensitive 'hard' part of state security to be less obvious in the course of the research investigation, and less suspicion was roused during the fieldwork.

Paper-based Data Gathering

The libraries and archives of ThisDay Newspaper in Lagos, Nigeria, holding all the Nigerian dailies; the University of Lagos, Nigeria; the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, Nigeria; the Human Security Centre of the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria; the National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria; Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) London; King's College, London; School of Oriental and African Studies, London; London School of Economics and Political Science, were used as points of data gathering for the study. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the paper-based data gathered, their sources and volume. The newspaper/press cuttings were primarily sourced for information on national security issues in Nigeria most especially the Niger Delta oil conflict; these recordings dated back to year 1999 up unto year 2013 and provided a timeline on how perceptions have changed over time.

The newspapers/press cuttings were a good research tool because of its unique quality of reporting on state and elites' activities (Baumgarten & Gravel, 2009). It served as a great source for finding in-depth coverage of in-country events, elites and non-elites analysis of conflict situations and historic research in news archives (Matthews & Ross, 2010:95). In addition, it helped avoid issues that has to do with archival gate-keeping that is reminiscent of most security research. The 20 face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher and the newspaper interviews have both been used to complement each other where necessary. The face-to-face interviews have been used to fill in missing gaps and validate certain claims from some of the paper-based interviews because certain discrepancies were noticed in what was reported and some interviewees account.

Source	Data	Volume
Newspapers/Press Cuttings	Views, facts and accounts of national security issues.	239
NGO/Official Reports	Facts, accounts of government response to security issues.	40

Letters/Lectures/Speeches	Views, analysis and interpretation of Nigerian security issues.	95

Table 3. 1 - Summary of Paper-Based Data Sources

The reports included 10 commissioned security reports by past and present Nigerian governments on national security and the Niger Delta oil conflict, of which some are deemed highly confidential. A further 30 reports produced by International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) were sourced for data on state management of its internal conflicts. A unique attribute of the INGOs reports was that most contained on the spot assessment of the human security crisis and government response to the security challenges in the Niger Delta region; using visual images and recorded scripts of face-to-face interviews carried out on all the conflict actors. These reports were a good source for gauging people's perception of a crisis situation because of its in-depth description of events, context and realities; and the level of detailed analysis often involved (Pegg, 2002). Aside this, most conflict reports on Nigeria involve on the ground assessment or face- to- face interview with conflict actors in the course of investigation. Some of the reports contained the procedures used in data gathering and the challenges encountered in the course of the fieldwork. As such, the researcher was able to learn from such methods and decide whether the information to be obtained in the course of his own primary research is worth more than the potential difficulties.

The person of interest's writings, letters, field notes or conversations compiled from their biographies, were also sourced for data. The biographies were a good source of inferring the elite's perception of a situation because it presented facts about the person's life like what the subject believes, stands for and how he/she has acted (Lauterbach & Reynolds, 2007; Rosenthal, 2007:49-52). Though there has been issues with some authors interpreting same information about a person in different ways thereby undermining the quality of the biography, this has been mitigated by reading two or more biographies on the same subject.

Generally, data gathering using paper-based sources often face criticism for methodological issues pertaining to their reliability and validity despite their

numerous advantages (Long-Sutehall, Sque & Addington-Hall, 2010). However, since this research is more concerned with people's perception of security, the chosen sources for data gathering have provided detailed descriptions of the context and events of the Niger Delta oil conflict, and how the targeted people such as the Nigerian political elite, security decision-makers, academics, militant leaders and ordinary people of the Niger Delta perceive issues at the heart of the oil conflict.

Gathered data from the public speeches, interviews and writings of the Nigerian political elite, security decision-makers, academics, militant leaders, Niger Delta citizens and independent observers in the online documents, newspaper articles and reports published by government and non-governmental organisations, were scrutinised in a critical way, highlighting their main themes and inconsistencies, whichever the case might be. This also helped identify the recurrent ideas and the evolution of political elite thinking on security in Nigeria. Data gathering through this method allowed access to information that might have been difficult to obtain through other means, either by people not being willing to talk, or due to restricted access to political elite and key personnel relevant to the study, or people being difficult to track down.

Moreover, elites and political leaders have been known to consciously or unconsciously leave out vital information during interviews or in questionnaires (Mikecz, 2012; Berry, 2002; Moyser & Wagstaffe, 1987), but by including paper-based data gathering sources, the researcher was able to glean through a vast amount of data in an unobtrusive way that eliminates bias from corrupting the data. In addition, the types of data chosen for the study has allowed the researcher to track changes in the Nigerian oil conflict over time. This is referred to as longitudinal research (De-Vaus, 2001:113-115; Ruspini, 2000) meaning the ability to conduct research either prospectively (forward) or retrospectively (back over time).

The availability of a large body of documents over a long period of time provided insight into how the common people and government view the situations and the motivation behind their account. From the paper-based data

covering the period between 1999 to 2013, a total of 374 documents comprised of featured interviews, speeches, writings and/or communiqué of politicians, government representatives, activists, academics, militants, military officers and independent analysts that were of relevance to this study. Meaning 374 individuals' perceptions were collated and assessed based on their publicised pronouncements, speeches or writings. Out of the 374 documents showcasing 374 different individuals' perceptions, 132 were commentaries and/or interviews of the Niger Delta inhabitants; 48 were statements and/or interviews of the political elite; and 194 were those belonging to the independent observers.[3] These documented data alongside the 20 oral interviews carried out by the researcher have formed the basis for the research analysis.

3.4. APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS

The gathered data were analysed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The data analysis that proceeded in two stages had the data sets grouped into four categories: i) perceptions on the Niger Delta oil conflict, ii) perceptions on government response to the conflict, iii) perceptions on the militant youths, and iv) perceptions on best resolution to end the conflict (Julius, 2013). The first stage of the analysis was done by adopting qualitative analysis techniques. This was carried out using document and content analysis of the 374 gathered documentary data including the interview notes, which enabled the evaluation of government responses (actual security practice) to security issues as opposed to what their policies are in dealing with security issues.

This approach supports the Paris School of thought approach on securitisation, which articulate that to fully understand a state security strategy, one must look at their actual security practices rather than just the elite's security discourse (Waever, 2004) as the Copenhagen School (CS) of thought favours, and which has been identified as one of the main weaknesses of this school's theory (see chapter 2). However, this research has used a combination of discourse and

[3] See pages 242-266 of the thesis for list of source of primary data.

actual practice/field analysis through historical account to analyse state responses and gauge perceptions on security. The approach is best suited to capture all possible scenarios and fill in any missing gaps. Julius (2014a) similarly highlighted the benefits of using the combination of the Paris and Copenhagen approaches in analysing security issues in Nigeria, and demonstrated that both theories are not methodologically or conceptually incompatible when it comes to analysing security issues in Nigeria. The researcher's argument is that the discursive space of CS can account for the words and images of securitisation moves, but cannot account for the silence or absence of discourse that often dominates most securitising moves in the Niger Delta because of their very object of enquiry. The advice is to take a socio-historical accounting of how particular security practices are authorised, legitimated, or put into play by actors to gauge their perceptions of security.

Responses from the 20 oral interviews carried out as part of the fieldwork were transcribed from the tape recorder, and insightful comments were identified and used as samplers to strengthen some of the points already identified during the document and content analysis of the other data. Using these methods allowed for the assessment of people's and institutional perceptions of security through their responses and articulated views on conflict situations in Nigeria. This approach brought in the Copenhagen School's concept of analysing security issues. The second stage of the analysis adopted a quantitative approach using qualitative/thematic coding (Glaser & Laudel, 2013) and graphical representation of data. Initially, the data gathered from the 374 recordings of public speeches, interviews and writings of the Nigerian political elite, security decision-makers, academics, militant leaders, Niger Delta inhabitants and independent observers were deconstructed to extract the main themes to form the basis of the analysis. The reoccurring themes are as follows:

Development

Within the Niger Delta context, development is seen as a multi-dimensional process that goes beyond economic variables to include socio-political and environmental concerns. It is described as a complex process which involves

major changes in social structures, political attitudes, and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty (Lane & Ersson, 1997:19 cited in Omotola, 2010:21). Where these are missing, underdevelopment sets in. The **underdevelopment** debate in the Niger Delta oil region has been based on the contention that the abundant of human and natural resources in the region has had little impact on the level of poverty in the region, and why is this so? The over-riding perception is that a **development programme** that is pro-nature, pro-poor and pro-jobs is needed to address the human insecurity in the oil region (Omotola, 2010:32-33).

Resource Control

The term resource control was frequently used by the inhabitants of the Niger Delta to describe their desire to have a firm control over the natural resource (oil) found in their land. Rather than being compensated for its oil, the people will prefer to control the production and allocation, and pay taxes to the central government for common protection and administration of the federation (Odje – Mudiaga, 2006). Oluduro (2014:89) articulated that the concept is best understood in a federal structure where emphasis is placed on fiscal federalism - that is the existence of more than one level of government in a state, with each having its own expenditure, responsibilities and taxing powers.

However, the collective responses to what the target groups understood resource control to entail indicated two perspectives. One conception was in terms of management and control of oil resource for self-development hence, making statements such as "to control our oil", "to have greater participation on how oil revenue is shared" and "to manage our God given resource for the betterment of our people". The other was in terms of claims to ownership. Responses such as "they should give us what belongs to us" and "it is our God given property" alluded to this fact.

Environmental Degradation

This encompass gas flaring, oil spillages, air pollution and refinery effluents resulting from oil and gas production activities that have negatively impacted on the Niger Delta environment (Iwayemi, 2006:38). Environmental inequities resulting from oil spills and gas flaring continue to adversely affect the human security of the delta population (Dokpesi, 2013). See Appendix F for visual representation.

Federalism

Federalism is a system of government whereby sovereignty is constitutionally divided between a governing central authority and its constituent political units (Oluduro, 2014:89). Power is shared between the national and state governments or provinces in a true federal arrangement. According to Davis (2009:46), under **true federalism**, neither the central nor the regional units are subordinate to each other; on the contrary, the federating units are co-ordinate and independent. However in Nigeria, adhering to this fundamental principles of federalism has been problematic especially in the area of revenue sharing because of what Oluduro (2014:90) described as the tendency towards 'amalgamation and separation motives'.

The amalgamation contenders' argument is that the central/federal government is vested with the ownership of all the minerals that constitute the natural resources in the state through the constitution, as such, the entire federation should benefit from the oil wealth which is the mainstay of Nigerian economy. On the other hand, the separation contenders argue that the constitution should be amended with a view to reviewing the ownership and management of oil resources at the point of extraction, distribution and allocation of mineral wealth. This is the heart of the controversies surrounding resource control in the Niger Delta.

Governance

Governance reflect the processes and institutions both formal and informal, that guide and restrain a group's collective activities, with government as the subset

to act with authority and create formal obligations (Keohane & Nye, 2000:12 cited in CORE, 2011). With this understanding, the role of government is to conduct public affairs, manage public resources, and guarantee the realisation of citizens' rights since the space of governance is in between the state and its citizens. Where this is lacking, **bad governance** is pinpointed. In the Niger Delta region, the poor level of physical development and the coercive nature of state security strategy in the oil conflict have been attributed to bad governance. Likewise, Obi (2004:14-15) in his analysis of the violent dynamics of petro-politics and (mis)governance in the Niger Delta, referred to the lack of accountability where elected officials are not accountable to the electorate as part of the bad governance in the oil region and elsewhere in the state.

Faulty Constitution

Faulty constitution within the context of this study refers to the obnoxious legislations governing the ownership of land and oil in Nigeria. It is a common term used by the target groups to describe all acts, enactments, regulations and laws that has been promulgated by the Nigerian state post-independence governing natural or mineral resources, however detrimental to the interest and well-being of the population of the delta region. Examples are seen in the 'Petroleum Act of 1969', 'Offshore Revenue Act of 1971', 'Land Use Act of 1978' that 'vested sole ownership of all lands where oil is explored, stored and transported on the state', 'Petroleum Act of 2004' and so on (Oluduro, 2014:88). Those against the status quo calls for **new constitution** that will be pro-poor and strengthen institutions to improve outcomes in development, growth and security (Ahonsi, 2011).

Militarisation

Militarisation within the context of this study connotes the occupation of the Niger Delta region by state security apparatus through the military Joint Task Force (JTF). The current military engagement in the region is referred to as 'Operation Pulo Shield'. Those canvassing for the **de-militarisation** of the region see **non-militarisation** as a viable option to resolve the region's conflict (Dode, 2012; Emuedo, 2012; Amaraegbu, 2011).

Stick and Carrot Approach

The stick and carrot approach within the context of this study, signifies the coercive (militarised) and non-coercive (non-militarised e.g diplomatic, amnesty, infrastructure provision) methods employed by the Nigerian state to address the Niger Delta oil conflict (Owugah, 2010). The nature of the insurgency led to a debate within government whether to engage the militias in dialogue, or unleash the coercive force of the state on them, or better still, combine both strategies.

Political Amnesty

This was granted by the Nigerian state in August 2009 to the Niger Delta militant youth. Under the initiative, militias that surrendered their weapons received a cash reward, training, employment assistance and a government pardon. While the initiative led to a lull in the level of violence, it failed to address the main issues that has given rise to the conflict (Aaron, 2010:210). Some perceived it as an ill-conceived, medium-term strategy that only served to accommodate the forces of resistance (insurgents) at the expense of the entire Niger Delta citizens. Others argued that it was another avenue for the political elite to syphon oil revenue in the name of maintaining national security.

Criminalisation of Youth

Criminalisation of youths was used by the target groups to describe how the Nigerian state and Trans National Oil Corporations (TNOCs) have designated the Niger Delta youth as criminals, terrorists, cultists, opportunists, saboteurs, hoodlums and so on. The over-riding perception is that this framing strategy, which is always a precursor to military intervention, is to justify state coercive response strategy as postulated under the securitisation theory (Omotola, 2009; Iyayi, 2008).

Freedom Fighters

Commonly used specifically by the Niger Delta inhabitants target group to describe the militias who originally protested environmental and socio-economic

injustice in the Nigerian oil belt. Some of the militias in fighting their cause subscribed to oath of secrecy and allegiance, thereby been dubbed as '**cultists**' by the people (Davis, 2009:10-11). Consequently, the relationship between militias and cult groups in the region became blurred. University fraternities such as Mafia Lords, Vultures, Greenlanders, KKK and so on later merged with militant groups seeking power and control of oil facilities for self-sustenance; hence, were perceived as '**opportunists**' (Mitee, 2009).

The large insurgent groups like the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) became a loose federation of cult groups. Their mode of operation became violent and they sought increased access to small arms and light weapons to allow them control waterways and passages that will aid the illicit trade in oil, locally known as 'oil bunkering'. Because of this, they were labelled '**criminals**' who are economically motivated (Obi, 2004:21). Likewise, the factor of politics whereby some of the youth militias or cultists were engaged by politicians during election campaigns to terrorise their opponents, made the people also describe them as '**political thugs**' (Aaron, 2010:211-212; Mitee, 2009).

Terrorist

The term terrorist is ever contentious at the point of definition because, one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. While plane hijacking and suicide bombing amounts to terrorism, the same may not be said of a people legitimately resisting external occupation or internal oppression. Clapham (2003:15 cited in Akokpari, 2007) argued that "terrorists are compelled to operate within territory that is effectively controlled by their enemies". However, events of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States of America has made any violent or non-conventional way of grievance articulation to be branded as an act of terror. This trend is noticeable in Nigeria where governments have labelled militants as terrorists, because they use violence as a weapon in seeking socio-political, economic and environmental justice. In response, the state has also used violence in addressing the problem, an act analysts dubbed 'state terrorism' (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008). The implication of this on the study is that terrorism is difficult

to define in the Niger Delta context, as such, it will depend on which perspective is being looked at.

The described themes aided the researcher in establishing the perceptions of the target groups on the issues that have caused and has exacerbate the Niger Delta oil conflict. An important factor to note about the responses is that the respondents have frequently used more than one theme to express their views on the root-cause of the Niger Delta security crisis. For instance, a cited source questioned about his view on the cause of the Niger Delta oil conflict stated the issues of bad governance and environmental degradation. In such response, bad governance and environmental degradation were each cited as variables attributed to the cause or issue at the heart of the delta crisis. This approach was adopted to extract information from the body of data, and the end results produced 54 consistent variables in which the perceptions were assessed.

The data were subsequently coded for those variables. However, for ease of analysis, the 54 variables were further narrowed down to 24 themes. The method of narrowing down the 54 variables to the 24 including the justification are presented in Table 3.2 on the next page.

Variables for Analysis and Justifications for Merger

Themes	Variables	Justification for Merger
Environmental Degradation	• Environmental degradation • Air Pollution • Oil Spill • Gas Flaring • Ecological Damage	Terms used by the target groups to describe the environment related threats that has undermined human security and degraded the Niger Delta ecosystem.
Underdevelopment	• Underdevelopment • Lack of Human Development • Lack of Infrastructures	Terms used to portray the major grievances in the Niger Delta, as absence of development indicated mainly in poor social amenities, infrastructures and youth employment.
Federalism	• Absence of True Federalism • Powerful Centre - Weak Periphery • Majority Ethnic Domination	Terms used to describe the lopsided nature of the Nigerian federal structure.
Faulty Constitution	• Faulty Constitutions • Obnoxious Land Decrees and Petroleum Acts	Terms indicating the inadequacy of the various laws aimed at regulating the Nigerian oil industry and protecting the environment and people of the delta region.
Bad Governance	• Bad Governance • Repressive State • Human Rights Violations by the State • Corruption • Poverty • Poor Leadership	Terms used to describe the acts of the political elite in Nigeria who in order to privately accumulate state oil rents, monopolised power over oil by a mix of force (violence) and guile (co-optation or patronage). The result is endemic poverty and bad governance that profits the few;

Variables for Analysis and Justifications for Merger

Themes	Variables	Justification for Merger
		and corruption nurtured through shadowy transactions.
Resource Control .	• Absence of Resource Control • Economic Exploitation and Deprivation by the State and TNOCs • Inequitable Derivation and Allocation Formula • Alienation from Land	Terms used to depict resource control as ownership and control of all resources including land, oil, gas, water and forests. Also used to express the freedom to willingly dispose of these resources and negotiate its alienation or extraction without reference to an over-bearing state.
Militarisation	• Military Interventions • Special Security Operations • Securitisation	Terms used to describe the coercive response of the state to the insurgent threat in the Niger Delta.
Non-militarisation	• Police Cooperation and Intelligence Sharing • Diplomacy and Dialogue • Judicial Proceedings	Terms used to describe the non-coercive response of state in the oil region.
Criminalisation of Youth	• Criminalisation and Framing of Youth as Terrorists	Term used to describe the framing or labelling culture of youth by the elite.
Development Programmes	• Infrastructural Provision Schemes • Human Development Initiatives	Terms used to describe the interventionist programmes of the state in the oil region.

Variables for Analysis and Justifications for Merger

Themes	Variables	Justification for Merger
Political Amnesty	• Amnesty Programme • Federal Pardon	Terms used to describe the political amnesty granted by the Nigerian federal government in 2009 to the Niger Delta insurgents.
Stick and Carrot approach	• Combination of Hard and Soft Power	Term used to describe the combined coercive and non-coercive methods adopted by the state. to address the oil conflict.
Freedom Fighters	• Freedom Fighters • Vanguard of the Struggle	Terms used to describe the armed militants who make political demands including compensation for oil communities, greater share of oil revenues and release for imprisoned leaders.
Opportunists	• Opportunists • Self–interested and Greedy Youth	Terms used to describe the youth who simply kidnap people for money but have no political aim.
Criminals	• Violent Criminals • Vandals and Armed Bandits • Economic Saboteurs • Social Miscreants and Hoodlums	Terms used to describe the criminal elements that exist side by side with militants in the oil region.
Terrorists	• Terrorists	Term used to describe majority of the delta insurgents especially by the elite.
Political Thugs	• Political Thugs and Sponsored Militias	Term used to describe militias sponsored by political elite and traditional chiefs.

Variables for Analysis and Justifications for Merger

Themes	Variables	Justification for Merger
Cultists	• Cultists and Fraternity Members	Term used to describe gangs who provides security and economic opportunities for themselves and their communities, subscribing to an oath of allegiance and secrecy.
New constitution	• New Constitution and Abrogation of Obnoxious Laws	Term used to describe the importance of new set of rules that will be people-centred.
Resource control	• Fair Derivation and Allocation Formula.	Term used to describe the need for a just oil revenue sharing arrangement between federal, state, local governments and host communities.
True Federalism	• True Federalism • Adequate Political Representation and Inclusion	Terms used to advocate for a political system that reflects true federal character where none of the federating unit is marginalised.
Demilitarisation	• De-securitisation • Withdrawal of Security Forces from Oil Region	Terms used to espouse the draw-down of military operations in the oil region as a panacea for peace.
Development Programmes	• Infrastructural and Human Development Schemes	Term used to propose a resolution to the Niger Delta issue and encourage further developmental interventions.
Political Amnesty	• Amnesty Programme	Term used to describe the federal pardon.

Table 3. 2 - Themes - Variables for Analysis

The final 24 themes were grouped under the 4 categories: i) perceptions on the Niger Delta oil conflict, ii) perceptions on government response to the conflict, iii) perceptions on the militant youths, and iv) perceptions on best resolution to end the conflict; mentioned earlier under section 3.4, and shown in Figure 3. 1 in form of a perception tree diagram. The outcome of the qualitative/thematic coding produced the statistical data for the analysis and are outlined under chapter 6 in Table 6.1 to Table 6.4.

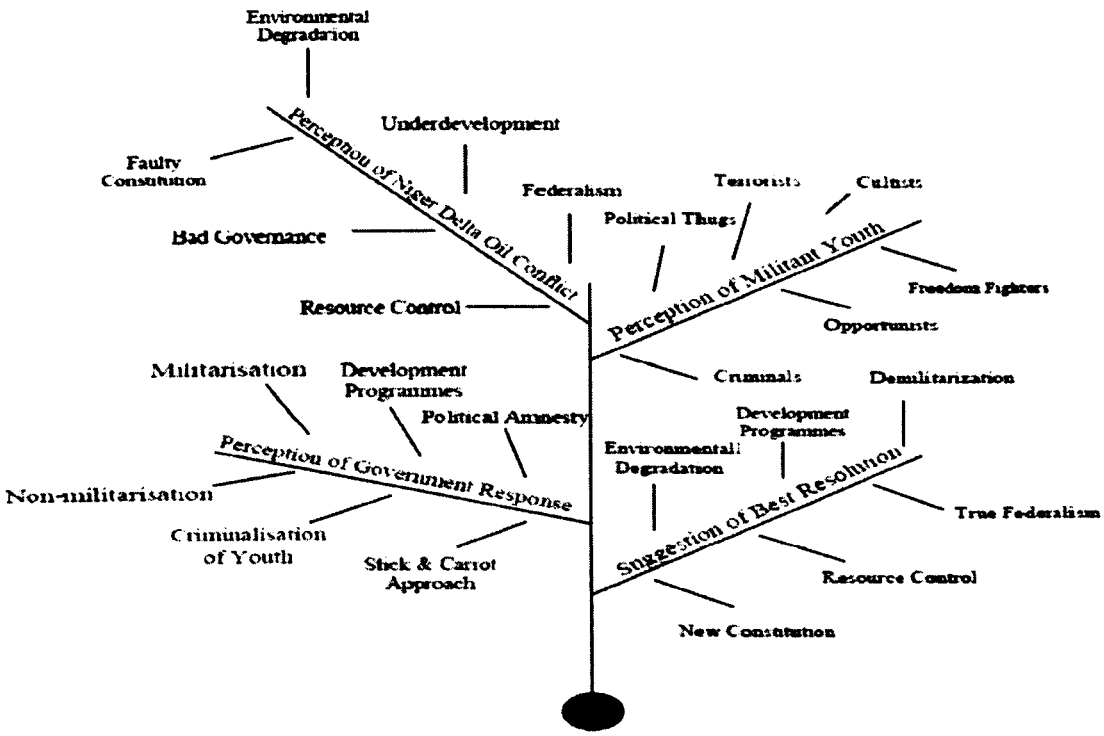

Figure 3. 1 – Perception Tree Diagram

3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS / CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

Research that use human subjects is often adjudged to be problematic, because the researcher has to address ethical, moral, language and socio-political issues in the course of his or her fieldwork (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:13; Dickson-Swift et al., 2008:7-10; Ryen, 2007:218-219). Consequently, the field research conducted for this study, which involved carrying out oral interviews and collecting primary and secondary data in the United Kingdom and Nigeria, encountered numerous problems particularly in Nigeria. The fieldwork was conducted in four locations in Nigeria namely Abuja - the Federal Capital Territory, Lagos, Ogun and Edo

states. While Lagos and Ogun states are non-oil producing states in the western part of the country, Edo state is part of the oil-producing states of the Niger Delta where the researcher originated from; see Appendices B and C for illustrative maps of Nigeria and the Niger Delta region. The fieldwork in Nigeria was conducted between the months of April and May in 2013. While this period is considered short for a research of this nature, certain factors necessitated the duration.

First, the volatile security situation in Nigeria due to the insurgency in the Niger Delta and the terrorist activities of the 'Boko Haram' group that has repeatedly bombed and terrorised most northern Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory - Abuja, called for caution on the part of the researcher and the research sponsoring institution, Kingston University (KU). Since the fieldwork entailed researching in an hostile environment, ethical clearance was provided by KU to the researcher. The clearance was approved based on the fact that the researcher will not be visiting the core conflict zones of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states, which are the core Niger Delta states.

Instead, the option of Edo state with Benin as its capital city was chosen. Partly because it is a peripheral Niger Delta state where the researcher originate from, also because it is relatively safer than the other core Niger Delta states. The local knowledge of the researcher who also engaged his brother domiciled in Nigeria as his fieldwork assistant helped mitigate the challenges and ensured personal safety of all involved. However, the security conditions in Abuja and elsewhere in Nigeria coupled with the sensitivity of the research topic, made the researcher shorten the length of the fieldwork activities, be it in the course of interviewing or in the process of collecting documentary data. This determined the overall duration required by the researcher to carry out the fieldwork in Nigeria.

Second, the researcher was awarded a studentship at the start of his doctoral study. Part of the conditions was that the researcher work as a graduate teaching assistant in the faculty by leading undergraduate tutorial classes. This affected the time and period the researcher could spend away from the university therefore,

the research had to be planned round teaching commitment. This factor also affected the initial research design. The researcher initially considered administering questionnaires to gather data for the statistical analysis; however, the fact that there was not going to be enough time to either administer or collate the questionnaire responses, led to the alternative approach of 'qualitative/thematic coding' of documentary data. Choosing this option eventually paid off in terms of the researcher's time and finances, because less time was required in Nigeria, and the researcher also managed to avoid repeated visitations to Nigeria, which would have had a cost implication.

Nonetheless, challenges were encountered during the course of the fieldwork in Nigeria despite the ethical standards adopted to promote fairness and prevent harming of participants. There were those within the Nigerian military who accepted to grant interview to the researcher during initial consultation while the researcher was still in the UK, however, the heightened insurgence of Boko Haram during this time made them to rescind their decision even though the researcher was already on ground in Nigeria. Experience suggest that the sensitivity of the topic and the fact that the research impinges on the vested interest of the Nigerian political elite made the candidates perceive that taking part in such exercise will expose them to substantial risk. With sufficient sensitisation information already provided through initial correspondence, which included the interview schedule, enshrining ethical principles such as confidentiality, anonymity and transparency (Ryen, 2007:220-224), some still turned down the researcher's request at the last minute. This impacted on the number of participants that were interviewed. It suffices to say the researcher had anticipated this, hence, the reason for subscribing to a higher number of participants of which 20 honoured their commitment.

Other instances were especially during the time spent in Abuja and Lagos, where considerable amount of time was spent with the gatekeepers of those participants who were considered powerful individuals in the society or who held high office positions. This was despite the fact that the researcher had sought appointment and had obtained formal consent for carrying out the research by processing an

application backed by an official letter from KU. Acquainting the gatekeepers of the appointment with their bosses became a challenge because of the sensitive nature of the visit. However, the potential pitfalls of this was well managed by the researcher because of his cultural awareness of the people. The fieldwork operations in Edo and Ogun states were much smoother because there was less officialdom and the researcher made high use of informal contacts.

On the side of data interpretation and analysis, concerted efforts were made by the researcher to maintain his role in this study primarily as that of an outsider despite his membership of an ethnic group in the Niger Delta region. Though it was challenging having witnessed the environmental and human insecurity in the region directly while growing up, he had to step back from the data that were collected through a process of 'de-familiarisation' and examined them from different perspectives (Dickson-Swift et al., 2008:87) This was necessary because of the political and subjective nature of the study that placed an ethical demand on the researcher not to impose pre-existing interpretations (Kelle, 2007:449).

The interpretation and analysis of data was completed through a process of triangulation and interpretivism. In triangulation, different research methods and theoretical perspectives are utilised in unravelling the phenomenon being studied. This was done to maximise the analytical strength of each method and theory, and overcome any limitation associated with the monolithic approach in social science highlighted by De-Vaus (2001:221). The approach is further justified by Flick (2009:405), who stated that when different theories and methods are coherently applied, the utility and explanatory power of research data is maximised through various points of views.

The analytical framework of the study was underpinned by interpretivism and constructivism. Interpretivism, because it lays emphasis on the narratives and perspectives of those being studied through its subscription. Constructivism, because it assume a meaningful reality is constructed in the interaction process which occurs between people (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:2013:13; Dickson-Swift et al., 2008:18). Though there are concerns that interpretivism is sometimes too descriptive, or goes beyond the conceptual schemes of the researched (Brannen,

2007:283-284); this necessitated the statistical aspect of the study to avoid criticism from the standpoint of positivistic social sciences that the study is empirically weak. As a result, the researcher incorporated statistical texts and a quantitative analysis of variance of people's perceptions of security threats.

Although there has been issues with researchers manipulating representations and findings because in qualitative methodology, the researcher is more privileged than the researched when it comes to construction of meaning (Flick, 2009:359). The potential limitation and drawback has been addressed through the utility of both qualitative and quantitative oriented frameworks in this study. Despite the concerns of many empiricists and critics of interpretivism and qualitative methodology, it should be noted that no analytical approach or methodology including positivism and quantitative methodology is faultless (Brannen, 2007:283-284).

3.6. CONCLUSION

To investigate and understand the Nigerian political elite's perception of security, it was imperative that the right data and method of gathering and analysing the data was chosen. As a starting point, the research identified three target groups as its unit of analysis, which were the Niger Delta inhabitants, the political elite and other Nigerians cum independent observers. The research took a combined perspective of the Paris and Copenhagen Schools of Securitisation to evaluate both state practices and "speech act" to assess and gauge state perceptions of security relating to the Niger Delta oil conflict. This guided the type of data required for the study. Data gathered were from both primary and secondary sources involving face-to-face interviewing, and paper-based data gathering involving the use of newspapers, security reports, recorded interviews, speeches, writings and communiqué of politicians, government representatives, activists, academics, militants, military officers and so on.

The gathered data were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods carried out in two parts. The first part involved the qualitative method and was

carried out using document and content analysis to enable the evaluation of government response (actual security practice) to security issues as opposed to what their policies were. The second part involved the quantitative method that involved thematic coding of the data, it generated 54 variables, which were further narrowed down to 24 themes to produce the statistics and graphical representation of the data.

Two main features of the qualitative or thematic coding adopted in this study is that the themes or variables were all extracted from the body of empirical materials gathered by the researcher during his fieldwork. As a result, the 24 themes that ultimately formed the statistical outputs grouped into 4 categories that enabled the researcher to assess state perception on i) the Niger Delta oil conflict, ii) government response to the conflict, iii) the militant youth, and iv) best resolution to end the conflict, were developed from the empirical materials rather than brought to it. Thus, the content analysis of textual documents complemented the thematic coding in this study. Secondly, the cited sources were allowed to give multiple answers to questions which ultimately had a bearing on the statistical outputs.

Since the question of what perception is tied to whose perception, the next chapter will explore the pre- and post-independence formation and evolution of the Nigerian political elite to provide insight into their formation and to what has shaped their perception of security overtime.

CHAPTER 4

ℵ THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL ELITE ℵ

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the study identifies the Nigerian political elite, tracing its evolution and composition; as well as exploring its particular characteristics. These considerations have shaped elite securitisation perceptions, practices and discourse. It will be found that regional/military/civilian dynamics, centralisation of authority and power in those who govern, and a security apparatus that is undermined by political pressures have a direct influence on elite securitisation. The political elite in Nigeria are key actors in the Niger Delta oil conflict. The elite is described as the ruling minority group that hold political power in recivilianised Nigeria. They are the influencing few of the society, given the political and socio-economic disparity found amongst the people (Banjo, 2008). They are also referred to as the small faction that hold prestige, wealth, political power and high socio-economic status in the society (Afuape, 2012). Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the polity has been marked by long successive periods of military dictatorship interspersed with short-lived intervals of civilian rule. These experiences of regime change has reflected a poorly regulated pendulum that often over-swings between dictatorial acts and democratic trials. This twisty shifts of the ruling regimes has been blamed for the puzzling changes observed in the nature and character of the political elite. Changes that have become obvious in the political elite's perception of security, and how they have responded to the Niger Delta security challenges.

The security analysis in chapter 2 established that the political elite's perception of security and threat is rooted in the realist state-centric mode of security. It is the argument of the study that such perception is shaped by the military background shared by the political elite. Though as a referent object of security, the Nigerian political elite consider themselves superior (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008; Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998:141-161) to what analysts consider should be the

referent objects of security, that is the state and its people (Williams, 2003; Waever, 1995). Thus, elitism have become associated with principles and practises that are autocratic and unreceptive to the idea of equality. However, with the global emphasis on human security, the spotlight is now on the political elite to make them more accountable for the security of the state and that of its populace. Okolie (2010) highlighted this fact when evaluating the significant role the political elites have to play in the socio-economic processes of change that is taking place in most developing states like Nigeria. Therefore, it has become imperative to reach out to these elites on issues affecting the development and security of the state. Issues that appear to have worsened, judging by the enlarged security threats from insurgencies like the Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), Ivorian Popular Movement for the Greater West (MPIGO), Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants and so on (Ahiave, 2011).

However, with so many actors involved in managing the affairs of a state, how can the true identity of the political elite in any given society be established? Is understanding the elite best by analysing them through Marxism and classical elite theories. Specifically, since the question of what perception of security is tied to whose perception within the context of this study; the question may be asked who are the Nigerian political elite and how did they come about? Answers to these questions will provide insight into why the political elite perceive security in a certain way hence, the adoption and implementation of certain security strategies. To address these questions, this chapter examine the current composition of political elite in Nigeria, exploring the evolution and transformation of the Nigerian political elite post-independence. The chapter expands on the researcher's published article '*Rethinking Elite Transformation in Contemporary Nigeria*', which examined the contemporary composition of the Nigerian political elite over the period 1999 to 2013. The chapter concludes with a selection of political elite members that will be subject to further research analysis, because of their relevance in the Nigerian political landscape and influence on state security policies.

4.2. RETHINKING ELITE-FORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

The evolution of the Nigerian political elite has been dictated by different circumstances of history. During the colonial era, analysts have referred to a fraction from the different groups of people that existed in the society as the Nigerian political elite (Omodia, 2011; Luckham, 1971). The Nigerian political elite have since evolved and been able to overlap, converge and blend into a near perfect whole when it came to managing and allocating state resources (Iroanya, 2008); a situation that has made them less discernible even when the 'plural elite group' perspective is applied. According to Plural Elitism, power in modern democratic states is shared between a multiplicity of competing elites (Dahl, 1967). A 'multiplicity of competing elites' that comprise of wealthy businessmen, senior administrators in both private and public sectors, seasoned politicians, professionals and traditional rulers, all who represent main sources of power within the African context (Sklar, 2004). Although in Nigeria, the process of elite formation and cohesion had been shaped by the British colonialists act of integrating the several ethnic groups and cultures into a single state (Mogalakwe, 2013). There are five ethno-regional elite groups that sprang up in the country towards the attainment of its independence. Nkwachukwu (2008) identified these groups as the North, Yoruba, Igbo, Niger Delta and Middle Belt.

Ethno-Regional Elite Groups In Nigeria

The **Northern elite** also referred to as the Northern Oligarchy, originated from the northern part of Nigeria (see Appendix B) and is dominated by the ruling elite of the Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, and Nupe ethnic groups. The strength of these elite groups are drawn from a single religion and language: Islam and Hausa respectively. While the group often come across as cohesive, the opposing blocs such as the 'Sokoto' and 'Borno' during colonialism and post-independence are pointers that elite rivalry and competition is embedded within the network. Paden (1997:246) highlighted on this rivalry in his analysis of the Sokoto and Borno elite blocs. He stated that the rivalry was an outcome of the attempt by Sokoto to conquer Borno in the 19th century, which resulted in a standoff that has since defined elite politics in northern Nigeria. Similarly, Ekwe-Ekwe (1985:619-620)

described the emergence of the 'Kaduna mafia' in the 1980s as another indication of intra-elite rivalry in northern Nigeria. Despite the creation of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in 2000, a platform to provide a united voice to the divided groups of northern elite (see Arewa Constitution),[4] little has been achieved in terms of forming the united front so desired. This is inspite the ACF and its members of Emirs (Kings), Ex-Heads of States and influential northerners, championing the cause of the northern elite against other ethno-regional elite groups on issues such as Sharia law and the Boko Haram insurgency.

The **Yoruba elite** originated from western Nigeria and comprise of sub-elite networks from the Yoruba towns of Ekiti, Ijebu, Lagos and Oyo. The Yoruba elite has the highest number of educated elite members in Nigeria owing to its early access to western education (Akintoye, 2010), which eventually helped in the nationalist struggle for independence. Falola (2006:29-37) described the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo and his efforts to forge a diverse ethnic and regional identities into one in western Nigeria. Efforts that included the creation of a cultural organisation in 1945 called the 'Egbe Omo Oduduwa', which means 'the society of the descendants of Oduduwa' (The Syndics, 1960:213-223).

Out of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa came the 'Action Group' (AG) political party created to forestall the control of western Nigeria and advance the cause for independence. It was the formation of the AG in March 1951 that made researchers describe the late Awolowo as the cornerstone of Yoruba elite politics (Adekunle, 2006:277-285). Even in death, the sceptre of 'Awo' as he was fondly called by opponents and supporters alike looms large over the Yoruba race. His political ideology referred to as 'Awoism' has been the recurrent theme of elite's discourse in western Nigeria. There has been several attempts to create a formidable and coherent voice for the Yoruba ethno-regional elite groups since the demise of Awolowo. Such efforts have included the formation of 'Egbe Afenifere' by late Adekunle Ajasin, one time governor of Ondo State; and the creation of Oodua People's Congress (OPC) a militant group formed by Frederick

[4] Arewa Constitution available at http://acf.com.ng/ACFconstitution.html

Fasehun to defend Yoruba interest in the Nigerian political landscape (Adebanwi, 2014).

The **Igbo elite** originated from the eastern part of Nigeria. Similar to the Yoruba elite, they had early access to western education that offered them administrative career opportunities. History recorded how late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, a pioneering elite of this region under colonialism used the existing kinship solidarity and networks among the Igbo to garner political support (Wolpe, 1969). As a result, Igbo-ness became aligned with the political aspiration of late Azikiwe until the advent of the Nigerian civil war (Biafra) between 1967-1970.

The massacre of Igbo indigenes in northern Nigeria in 1966 led to the Biafra civil war. The effect of the war left a collective suffering among the Igbos, creating an identity of a 'community of victims', which redefined Igbo-ness to being in support for Biafra (Uwechue, 1971:34-68). Researchers claimed that the exile of Biafra secessionist leader, late Odumegwu Ojukwu in the 1970s left a vacuum in the leadership structure of the Igbo elite (Nkwachukwu, 2008). Ever since, no known personality has been accepted as Igbo leader. According to Irukwu (2007), despite the establishment of 'Ohaneze Ndi Igbo' in 1976, which was later restructured in 2001 with Igbo marginalisation as its dominant theme, factional and intra-elite disputes had stalled the effectiveness of the organisation. Similarly, Oronsaye and Igbafe (2012) argued that the emergence of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), a radical group advocating for the secession of the eastern region from the rest of Nigeria, was as a result of the leadership vacuum within the Igbo elite group.

The **Middle Belt elite** originated from the ethno-lingua minority groups, in what is today's north-central part of Nigeria. The people of this region have historically resisted not just the political domination of the northern Muslim Hausa-Fulani, but also the religious domination of the northerners (Hatch, 1971:46-50). The British colonial conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate sowed the seed of how the colonialists used Caliphate soldiers to gain control of the Middle Belt, thereby introducing 'Fulani sub-imperialism'. Kastfelt (1994:12-14) recollected how caliphate foot soldiers were used to conquer Middle Belt communities by the

British colonial conquerors, and the subsequent transfer of political power to the Fulanis as proxies of the colonialists under the 'indirect rule system'. As a result, the Middle Belt region and its elite became subjected to the dominance and control of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani ethnic group through the British 'indirect rule system' (Nkwachukwu, 2008).

In years that followed, the region and its elite politics became divided along the Islamic and Christianity fault lines as a result of the simultaneous domination of British colonialists and Fulani sub-imperialists. Christianity became the alternative religion for the people desperate to counter Fulani hegemony in the Middle Belt. However, intra- and inter-elite rivalry made the political elite from the region to join different political parties, including parties dominated by the northern elite that had historically undermined the region. Sen (2002) alleged that the creation of the Middle Belt Forum (MBF) in 1991 was an attempt to revive the mixed fortune of the Middle Belt elite in the Nigerian political spectrum.

The **Niger Delta elite** despite originating from an ethnic and cultural heterogeneous region, share a similar history with the Middle Belt elite; one that has shaped its elite formation and political mobilisation (UNDP, 2006:48). This elite group has historically been resisting an array of groups such as the British colonialists, the northern, Yoruba and Igbo elite groups, and the post-colonial Nigerian state (Nkwachukwu, 2008). Under colonial administration, the Niger Delta was divided between the Western and Eastern regions for administrative ease. This delineation and colonial structure led to a 'master-servant' relationship between the inhabitants of the Niger Delta and the British colonialists, which later transformed to the Yoruba and Igbo dominance over the inhabitants of the Niger Delta in a post-colonial Nigeria (Okonta, 2008).

The above inter-group lopsided arrangement led to the agitation for Niger Delta states by the oil minorities. Obi (2004) saw the subsequent struggle in the Niger Delta as a result of the oil economy. Moreover, the present determination of the Niger Delta elite to seek further integration into the mainstream of Nigerian politics by using oil as a 'bargaining chip' might lend credence to this view. However, the paradox of the situation is in the level of mistrust not only seen

between the northern and Niger Delta elite groups, because of the northern opposition to greater resource control (Nkwachukwu, 2008); but also the amount of mistrust between the southern political elite, which include an all-inclusive Niger Delta elite, Yoruba elite and Igbo elite.

Unlike the pre-colonial traditional elite that were made up of Kings and chiefs, the different regional elite groups aforementioned in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria were made up of individuals and their families that lived in Government Reserved Areas (GRA) and other working class neighbourhoods. Individuals aided by education, urbanisation, Westernisation and popular media, who led the struggle for independence and as such became nationalist leaders at independence. The elite and their followers later occupied influential positions of authority post-independence both at regional and federal levels, and became leaders of the major Nigerian political parties. Unfortunately, the prevalent politico-economic ideology of the 1960s that was centred on state-directed development allowed these regional elites either as politicians, civil servants or entrepreneurs, to capitalise on their positions and privately accumulate state resources; setting the process for elite domination in Nigeria (Iroanya, 2008:109-110).

Elite Domination in Nigeria: Marxism versus Classical Elite Theories

It is apparent from the above narrative that the hitherto history of elite formation and evolution in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria has been the history of group contestation between different elite networks along ethno-regional fault lines. However, post-independence political scholars have observed political regimes in Nigeria from a democratic to authoritarian perspective; where regimes have either been civilian or military or at best a fusion of both. This has led to a simplistic and generic analysis of political elite's perception of threat and attitude towards national security. Scholars have tagged the military elite as the bane of the Nigerian society, in an attempt to provide insights into the constellation of the different forces within the Nigerian political spectrum.

Scholars like Adekanye (1999), Ibeanu and Momoh (2008), Banjo (2008), Adesola and Ako-Nai (2010), Kifordu (2011), and George, Amujo and Cornelius (2012),

have used the dominant political theories: Marxism and Classical Elite theories to analyse the various aspects of the civilian-military nexus in Nigeria. Their argument, which is premised along the democratic-authoritarian path, seemed justified considering that a better part of post-colonial Nigeria was spent under different military regimes; and the military elite who were perceived as the dominant elite group then, has been held responsible for majority of the contradictions of the Nigerian society (Ehwarieme, 2011). However, the dominance of the military elite, as true as this might be, has been exaggerated by these scholars that they tend to overlook the emergence of other elite groups such as the economic and professional in the Nigerian political scene. How powerful and influential these new groups have become in the area of policy-making in a recivilianised Nigeria has been understated.

Analysis based on Marxism provide an alternative perspective because of the view that the 'state' is "a committee for managing the common affairs of whole bourgeoisie...., and the form in which the individuals of a ruling class asserts their common interest" (Engels, 1919:27). What this implies is that the dominant class (elite) through instruments of state power such as the legislature, executive, judiciary or security instruments, dominate the other class (non-elite) expressed through policies and laws passed by the state; though representing bourgeoisie and capital (elite and TNOCs) interests. Marx's contention here is that the state is an arena where one class exploit another, as such, political power therefore serve as an organised power for one class to exploit the other. The theory assumes that the holders of power in any given society are a minority group that control the means of production or economic activities (Bottomore, 1993:15-21). Therefore, those who own or control the state productive resources are the ruling elite. These ruling elites are transformed into a political class over time as the society navigate through different tides of history (Pedersen, 1976:5-8). Thus, to the Marxists, the evolution and composition of the ruling minority is anchored on the ownership of means of economic production (Parking, 1979:1-10).

However, their assumption omits factors such as common social background and interests operating through formal and informal networks that has shaped elite

composition and character in contemporary Nigeria. Neo-Marxists tried to re-qualify the original Marxist hypotheses with arguments about the incorporation of the intellectual and military elites into the political power circles (Kifordu, 2011:29). The shortfall is their continued Marxian orientation that remained fixated on the idea of a direct relationship between the economic factors and political power (Poulantzas, 1973:327-335). If Marxist assumptions about the determinacy of economic power is to hold in Nigeria, where the source of power in the society resides in the economic infrastructure, then the military elite will not be the ruling elite group. As such, Marxist economic class foundation is insufficient to elucidate the Nigerian elite case.

The theoretical analytical flaw identified in the analysis of the Nigerian political elite through the lens of Marxism have made other scholars align with the Classical Elite Theories. While both Marxism and Classical Elitism agree on the rule of the minority over the majority, their point of disagreement is over the source of the elite's political power. Marxism disagrees with Classical Elite theory notion that the ruling minority who comes from different social backgrounds acquire prominent positions as a result of personal characteristics and political skill. Instead, they argued that the ruling elite are "the minority group qualified and called to rule by the given degree of economic development" (Marx cited in Schwarzmantel, 1987:111-112).

Classical Elite theorists, which includes Pareto's Circulation of Elites, Mosca's theory of Ruling Class and Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy, further argued that societies are always governed by a minority referred to as 'the elite' who are from various backgrounds and who continuously replace each other; as one ascends, another declines. The theory divides the elite into different subgroups claiming that there is no one elite stratum but different strata that make up the stratum. Within this context, Classical Elitism in their different perspectives identified a) the governing elite that consists of those who are in government either directly or indirectly; b) non-governing elite that comprises of others in the elite stratum; and c) political elite that exercises political power (Pareto, 1935:1419-1429; 1968:78; Mosca, 1939:50; Michels, 1966:365). They assert that

the elite will use whatever means including force, capital punishment, death, exile, exclusion from public office, financial ruin and so on, to protect itself from threats emanating from the non-elite; while recruiting individuals that will transmit same attitude, sentiment and inclinations from the lower strata to fill its gap when he eventually leaves (Pareto, 1935:1787-97; Mosca, 1939:50; Michels, 1966:182; Delican, 2012). A situation that has had a profound implication for national security in Nigeria as to be shown in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

* * *

Since the transition from military to civilian rule in 1999, structural changes have appeared as a response to the military legacy of inherited and undesired political and economic structures. The succeeding political elite have tried to diversify the power structure away from military inherited structures by creating new state institutions. However, given the Nigerian society where elite appear not only to persist in political power but demonstrate ineptitude in response to public security needs through state power, the diversification project of the emergent elite have not provided the expected answers. Olsen (1970:106) reckoned that regardless of the government structure in practise, a close examination of the true distribution of power will inevitably reveal the oligarchy of the few over the many. Since the population cannot govern themselves, the elite will continue to deploy whatever social and cultural means available at their possession to maintain power and their rule over the society. Agreeing with this analysis is a Nigerian international political journalist, Ms Nwikpo during the research interview asserted:

> "*Classical elitist characterisation of the Nigerian political elite provides key insights into the contemporary nature of the Nigerian political elite. Varied resources that include strongly nested military and non-military networks facilitate political elite composition in Nigeria. The convergence of interests and similar perception of security can be explained through political office-holding*

as the elite rely on state resources for magnifying their power and role".[5]

Ms Nwikpo's statement informed the argument of this chapter that political elite in Nigeria operates within exclusive networks that itself is predatory and disconnected from society. Similar background, recurrent appearances and vested interests are linked to elite practices such as repression, human rights abuse, patronage exchanges and corruption to enhance continuity in political offices. These cumulative practices and interests coalesce with inept state institutions to provide the dynamics for securing elite private interests and set back significant social change. Thus, continuity instead of renewal prevails in elite security practices with far-reaching negative effects on public security needs. The elite relies more on state power and institutions for survival than on the feedback from the Nigerian citizenry whose members clamour for elite responsiveness and protection.

Oliveira (2007:123) in his analysis of the Nigerian and African elite especially those of the petro-states, recognised the methodological and ideological constraint associated with the study of the intricate ruling elite who wield political power in societies that are often shaped with unaccountable decision-making, poor institutions and over-centralisation. However, he argued that without thorough investigation into who controls political power and state instruments such as the armed forces, the nexus between one of the central organising concepts of this study (political elite) and violent conflicts, will not be fully understood. He went further by suggesting that without investigating the elite, less will be achieved in understanding how a phenomenon (political elite) that seem recognisable to all can become elusive and changeable at the point of analysis. This observation informed the spotlight on political elite in this chapter. By virtue of their formal assumption that power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of elite, which is inevitable in any modern society (Olsen, 1970:106), both Marxism and Classical Elite theories will be accommodated in this study to mitigate their

[5] Interview conducted with Priscilla Nwikpo on the 5th of January 2013 in London, UK. She is a renowned Nigerian international political journalist based in London.

inherent analytical flaws in the Nigerian case. The other arguments to be advanced in this chapter are based on the following hypotheses:

a) Contemporary elite-formation in Nigeria was conditioned by the different processes of governance under the various military regimes in post-colonial Nigeria;

b) Elite-formation was inadvertently determined by the diarchic arrangement of governance (fusion of military and civilian personnel in governance) under the different military administrations in post-independence Nigeria;

c) The contemporary elite enhanced their position and influence in the Nigerian society by moving into the highest offices in government and administration, which invariably guarantees them economic power through the privatisation of state resources;

d) Policies such as the 'Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972 and 1977' or 'Indigenization Policy' presented as a form of economic nationalism actually helped in consolidating the emergent elite's position in the Nigerian society;

e) A major consequence of this military-civilian alliance is the blurred line between the military, economic and professional elites in contemporary Nigeria. All elite groups that are found in the political circle and whose actions or inactions has exacerbated the Niger Delta oil conflict;

f) The emergent dominant elite groups comprising a triangle of retired military officers, professionals and businessmen has moved to other spheres of the society rather than into top government positions alone to exact their influence and control in a recivilianised Nigeria since 1999;

g) The new political elite has preserved some of the security strategies of the previous military administrations such as militarisation of conflict zones, and transform them to strategy of securitisation through their discourse in order to safeguard specific interests;

h) The aim to safeguard these specific interests has been the unifying factor between the different elite networks despite intra- and inter–elite competition for scarce resources as in political office appointments, patronage and privileges.

Aside the traditional elite comprising the retired Generals and bureaucrats of the old guard that served under the various military regimes, are a growing spectacle of young entrepreneurs and businessmen of the economic elite network and foreign-trained technocrats and intellectuals of the professional elite network who have become powerful and influential in the Nigerian political arena. The military elite often seek their expertise and companionship, and make compromise with them where the need arise because of specific interests that need protecting (Afuape, 2012). This does not imply that the different elite groups that make up the political elite in Nigeria are coherent and united as assumed by the classical elitists. Evidence abound that the dominant modern elite in Nigeria comprising the retired military Generals, businessmen and professionals, while striving to achieve and maintain political power at the centre, have been unable to transcend local or regional politics or support base (Kifordu, 2010).

This contradiction has produced a lack of elite-solidarity that has made the act of unity a challenge within the elite networks in contemporary Nigeria. This does not mean that the elite do not agree on certain issues or policies, as doing otherwise will be tantamount to loosening control over key state issues that might be detrimental to elite's interests. The point being made is that the Nigerian political elite since 1999 have been divided. Evidence abound in elite competition and rivalry that has been the bane of politics in a recivilianised Nigeria. But how has the petro-state called Nigeria got to where it is today? A close examination into its turbulent political history post-independence will provide insight that can help answer this question.

4.3. ELITE EVOLUTION IN NIGERIA: FIRST TO FOURTH REPUBLIC

The political elite that took up the mantle of leadership in Nigeria following the demise of the colonialists came from different strata of the society. They comprised the traditional elite consisting of Kings, Chiefs and Priests, the socio-cultural made up of wealthy and influential people in the society, the economic elite comprising individuals that has cut their niche in the world of business, and the intellectual consisting academics and bureaucrats (Omodia, 2011; Simon & Monday, 2011). The elite boasted of advanced education, professional skills and wealth of proportional significance (Bassey, 2009). Besides, the elite by the virtue of the power conferred on them by the Nigerian constitution through the parliament, could declare war if the sovereignty of the country was under threat, or declare a state of emergency when security was breached, or reinforce security in a crisis situation (see Nigeria's 1960 independence constitution).[6] However, the elite's journey into the world of governance was cut short by the Nigerian military intervention in the country's political life. Scholars like Kifordu (2011), encapsulated this journey by time-phasing the formation and evolution of the Nigerian political elite into the first republic 1960-1966, first military era 1966-1979, second republic 1979-1983, second military era 1984-1999 and the fourth republic 1999-2014.

While Kifordu had analysed the process of elite recruitment and circulation during the different regimes and political administrations, he failed to examine the political behaviour and perceptions of those who have been at the helm of affairs in Nigeria since independence. Since this study is about the perception and attitude of Nigerian political elite to national security, it is more suitable to analyse the process of elite-creation as it has evolved under the different military administrations and its present structure in a recivilianised Nigeria since 1999. Following this approach will provide clear understanding to the evolution of the Nigerian political elite under the helm of the military at the end of the first republic in 1966, its subsequent transformations under military hegemony at

[6] Nigeria Independence Constitution of 1960 at http://www.worldstatesmen.org/nigeria_const1960.pd

different periods, and its emergence since 1999 as a relatively divergent group with national security and particularistic interests at its core.

Political elite formation, which was predominantly party-based as a result of existing social and political structures under colonial administration, has often been cited as the source of contemporary elite composition in Nigeria (Sklar, 2004). Contrary to this simplistic proclamation, this research argues that certain economic policies of the defunct military administrations laid the foundation of the emergent political elite in Nigeria as the chapter will later uncover. The Action Group (AG), the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) were some of the major political parties under the practiced parliamentary system in Nigeria's first republic. These parties comprised of political figures such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904-1996), Sir Ahmadu Bello (1910–1966), Alhaji Tafawa Balewa (1912–1966), Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1909-1987) and Chief Ladoke Akintola (1910-1966), who were highly educated, intelligent and had occupations that sustained them and their families (Bassey, 2009).

However, the military coup by a group of army majors of southern Nigeria descent, led by Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu that took place on 15 January 1966 ended the lives of some of these political actors in what has been described as Nigeria's golden age (Campbell, 2011:6; Luckham, 1971:20-24). Those assassinated included the Federal Prime Minister Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Premier of the Western Region Chief Ladoke Akintola, and Premier of the Northern Region Sir Ahmadu Bello. Four out of the five most senior military officers from the northern region were also murdered giving an ethnic colouration to the coup (Simon & Monday, 2011).

Several reasons has been adduced for the military intervention in politics such as the need to correct the elite-creation that was a process conditioned by colonial social and political cultures (Graf, 1981:1). Graf expressed that elite-formation determined by a policy of 'indirect rule' was exploitative as it often led to a desolate elite-mass distinction. Similarly, Afuape (2012) argued that the lack of effort on the part of post-independence Nigerian political elite to transform the

regionalised governmental structures handed down by the colonial masters, resulted to military usurpation of power. It is the argument of this school that politicians and their parties were more interested in consolidating their power base therefore, resorted to ethnic politics that led to patronage and clientelism in the area of appointments and privileges (Oliveira, 2007:125-129). Furthermore, they claimed that the need to satisfy demands coming from ethnic or regional constituents of the political elite was what led to the intra- and inter-elite competition that resulted to open conflicts, which could only be rectified by military intervention (Uwechue, 1971:28-29).

Subsequently, the military intervened in Nigerian politics as a 'corrective regime' to right the wrongs of the first republic political elite. General Aguiyi Ironsi who became the military head of state after foiling the 15 January 1966 coup, introduced draconian acts to forestall opposition to the military regime (Adamu, 2012). The authoritarian acts introduced included the abolition of political parties, parliament and interest groups. These were replaced with the Supreme Military Council (SMC), a political hierarchy established for state decision-making in addition to setting policy initiatives and agenda especially in the area of security (Agedah, 1993:2). The ruling SMC usurped both executive and legislative powers while the judiciary were left at the caprices of the military elite (Banjo, 2008). It is worth noting that military and civilian personnel were both appointed into the top echelon of government as advisers, even though few of these civilians were part of the inner circle of the ruling elite (Luckham: 1971:254).

The structural changes made by General Ironsi provided insight into the strategy that subsequent military regimes will adopt in Nigeria. A strategy of including an alliance of military and civilian personnel in governance, and the management of state resources. An alliance formed to wrest control of state power in order to further the particular interests of a selected few (George, Amujo & Cornelius, 2012). Politicians, civil servants and businessmen capitalised on the new arrangement and connived with the military in power to set the process for elite domination and perpetuation in power. Apart from the diarchal arrangement that combined both military and civilians at the helm of affairs, Ironsi also created a

unitary system of governance under the Unification Decree No 34 of 1966. Under the new unitary arrangement, the existing four regions: North, East, West and Mid-West, were to be made mere political units that will be called 'provinces' (Nwabueze, 2002:74). The timing of this power centralisation project, which included centralised resource control and weak autonomous units, was significant because right from the colonial days, whoever controlled state power also controlled the allocation of its resources (Banjo, 2008). The control of state resources before this period was regionally based because the regions were autonomous and relied on revenue from agricultural products for their development agenda. The revenue allocation principle was based on derivation whereby regions had 50 percent control over their resources (Iyayi, 2008).

The unfolding political context can be interpreted in two ways. First, the military elite from the north perceived an ethnic agenda at the federal power structure because Ironsi was of southern origin in the north-south dichotomy. The unification move was seen as an attempt by southern military elite to exclude the northern officers from holding federal offices (Ujomu, 2001). Secondly, the emerging political elite from the ethnic minority who clamoured for the creation of new regions cannot be said to be protecting their people's interest but their own personal aggrandisement (Iroanya, 2008:110). This is because the desire to accumulate wealth after this period led to increased elite competition for control of state resources and as a result, corruption became institutionalised among public office holders. General Ironsi was later toppled and killed in a counter coup however, his centralist aspiration became the hallmark of the federal system that was later adopted in place of the unitary system of governance (Luckham, 1971:264-265). Thus, Ironsi left an enduring paradox within the Nigerian political landscape.

On 29 July 1966, there was a counter coup by northern military officers who emerged as the new decision-makers within the military hierarchy. The counter coup led to the murder of many eastern military officers alongside Ironsi (Ujomu, 2001). Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon became the new Head-of-State. Gowon abolished the regional structure and in its place created twelve states. The

abolition of regionalism impacted on Nigeria's federalism and its process of elites' evolvement and entrenchment. The peripheralised federal system was transformed into a centralised federation where the central government became much stronger at the detriment of the federating units. This shifted the competition for political power and resource control from the sub-national level (regions or states) to the national level.

The killings of easterners and Christians in the north further led to a mass exodus of easterners back to their ancestral Igboland in the eastern part of Nigeria (Edike, 2012). Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, a military governor of the eastern region and an Igbo-man, declared secession of the independent state of Biafra from the Nigerian federation (Simon & Monday, 2011). A move supported by countries like France, Portugal, and South Africa, and opposed by countries like the United Kingdom, United States and the Soviet Union, who supported the Nigerian federal government instead (Campbell, 2011:6). Even though Gowon was able to conquer the Biafran secessionists through the military operation led by Olusegun Obasanjo, who later became both a military and civilian Head-of-State, Gowon's administration was best remembered for the high level of corruption resulting from the sales of crude oil and the enactment of Petroleum Decrees 51 and 9.

Decree 51 empowered the federal government to own, collect and allocate oil revenues, while issuing Oil Exploration Licences (OEL) and Oil Mining Licences (OML). Decree 9 extended the central government's rights of ownership to include oil revenues from offshore operations. Oil revenue rose steadily in the 1970s exceeding expectations, and corrupt military leaders both at federal and state level enriched themselves with state resources (Chikendu & Kalu, 1996:76). The safeguarding of the state under the Gowon administration became costly in terms of governance, as the Nigerian Army rose from 10,000 member force to 250,000 with the military becoming a key and strategic political player (Campbell, 2011:7).

Gowon re-established the Federal Executive Council (FEC) under a diarchic arrangement, whereby both military and civilian personnel were appointed to federal executive offices. The civilian personnel included permanent secretaries

in the civil service and political advisers mostly made up of professionals who were entrusted with bureaucratic decision-making roles. George et al. (2012) articulated that the military elite were simply using the intellectual and bureaucratic elite to gain legitimacy, while in return the intellectuals and bureaucrats used their positions to take care of their own interests. A situation that has made the military-professional elites nexus difficult to analyse when it comes to who makes what decision and when during this time in Nigerian political history. Nevertheless, analysts claimed that the appointments of the professionals was done to disguise the authoritarian nature of military regime to the outside world (Chikendu & Kalu, 1996:76).

However, the appointed civilians who were co-opted to cabinet positions to give their expertise and perform administrative tasks tried to extend their scope of authority and influence by seeking avenues to have further access to state resources. This was partly achieved through the enactment of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decrees of 1972, an 'indigenisation' strategy that allowed foreign business concerns to be sold to indigenous people such as civil servants, businessmen and professionals that could afford them (Graf, 1981:6). While the option of local ownership was provided through this new economic nationalism, it was only the elites that had access to state resources such as the largely state-owned lending institutions, and could afford to buy the equity in the foreign enterprises (George, Amujo & Cornelius, 2012).

The emergent 'share-owning elites' referred to as 'auxiliary bourgeoisie' by Collins (1977) were made up of upper level civil servants with better access to credit and information, leading Nigerian business executives with links to foreign companies, large scale businessmen and military officers who had acquired wealth in the 'quick-gain' sectors through contracting business (Graf, 1981:7). Thus, indigenisation policy rather than being a policy of economic redistribution and local ownership, only enhanced the position of the new political elite while entrenching the socio-economic status quo. Consequently, the lines between the military, economic, intellectual, bureaucratic and socio-cultural elites became blurred as they all became stupendously rich and influential because of their

access to state resources. Iroanya (2008:112) observed that all the policies contrived by the military further contributed to the process of elite formation and consolidation in Nigeria. Nevertheless, with a failing economy, unprecedented level of corruption and a federal government whose very own constituency (the military) had lost faith in its ability to move the nation forward both politically and economically, General Gowon was toppled on 29 July 1975 in a bloodless military coup (Ujomu, 2001). Again, by army officers of northern extraction. Brigadier Muritala Ramat Mohammed became the new Head-of-State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Muritala like Gowon came from northern Nigeria and some structural changes were put in place on his assumption of power (Onyike, 2012). He reverted back to the old structure of governance introduced by Ironsi and partially adopted by Gowon where the SMC and FEC remained the national decision- making bodies. Though, the high civil servants were barred from attending decision-making meetings except on invitation (Agedah, 1993:26-27). A new Council of States (COS) was also formed comprising state military governors whose SMC membership had been previously withdrawn. These corrective institutional changes had a lasting effect on security decision-making in Nigeria (both under the military and civilian administrations), because state governors' assessment and input to security issues in their respective states became subservient to that of the federal authority. In addition, the intellectuals and bureaucrats who became powerful under the Gowon's administration, were curtailed and removed from the decision-making process (Kifordu, 2011:80).

The state of affairs reveals that even under military rule, there was a process of elite-recruitment that was taking place, as those who occupied the seats of political command were not fixed or permanent. Adekanye (1999:160) ascribed it to a process of 'elite circulation' imitating Pareto's assertion, that overtime, there is constant circulation of individuals between the elite and non-elite in the society (Schwarzmantel, 1987:76). Although, the elite-recruitment process affected the form of governance during that era, it did not impact on the structure of military governance in Nigeria. The military elite at that point in Nigeria's national

history, still remained the dominant elite group that influenced both political and security decisions.

Despite the infringement on the influence of civilian personnel in state decision-making, the Muritala administration set Nigeria on the path to democratic rule by inaugurating a constitution drafting committee that were charged with the responsibility of preparing a legal framework for the return to civil rule (Nwabueze, 2002:76). Seven additional federated states were created within the seven months period that Muritala led Nigeria, increasing the number of states from twelve to nineteen to encourage grassroots politicking (Onyike, 2012). However, the mantle of leadership fell on Muritala's deputy, Colonel (later Major General) Olusegun Obasanjo when on 13 February 1976, Muritala was murdered in an attempted coup led by Lieutenant Colonel B.S. Dimka. By his death, Muritala became another landmark figure in elite succession in the chequered political history of Nigeria.

Obasanjo, a person of interest in this research for analysing the perception and construction of security strategies in Nigeria, is considered a key dominating political elite member in Nigeria (Campbell, 2011). He was an army officer of southern origin in the north-south dichotomy of Nigeria. He was the army commander under the Gowon regime that led the final and heroic onslaught against the Biafran secessionists. He also endorsed and implemented the Nigerian Enterprise Promotion Decree enacted by Gowon through a review of the 'indigenisation policy' in 1977 (George, Amujo & Cornelius, 2012). The 'Land Use Decree of 1978' that placed ownership of all land in the hands of state and federal governments at the detriment of the real owners was the most significant act performed by his administration. The Land Act is a causal factor of the Niger Delta oil conflict, this will be covered in more detail when the Niger Delta oil conflict is further explored in chapter 5. Obasanjo completed the transfer of power from military to civilian. Although, the new Nigeria national constitution was drafted by the military under his leadership, in place for the incoming civilian administration. By Obasanjo's side was a trusted and loyal deputy, Shehu Musa Yar'adua, an army officer from the north. Together they steered the affairs of

Nigeria into the new civilian era under a period regarded as the second republic in Nigeria's political phraseology.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari of northern descent emerged as the second republic new civilian president of Nigeria in 1979 through a military sponsored election. A presidential constitution and system of government was adopted instead of the Westminster parliamentary system practised in the first republic. The change was driven by a general concern amongst the different elite ranks on the suitability of practising a parliamentary system in Nigeria, because of its complex social structures; hence, the need for an American styled 'executive president' to lead the various groups and nationalities in Nigeria (Metz, 1991). Consequently, the offices of the Head-of-State, Head-of-Government and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces was merged into the presidency. This meant that the state including its armed forces fell under the authority of the civilian president.

The Shagari administration was characterised by violent politicking and endemic corruption. Political practices and decision making was based on convenience rather than on constitutional provisions. Offices were created to accommodate self-serving interests, and the entire machinery of government became bloated (Bello, 2011). Bribery, corruption and looting of public buildings to cover fraudulent acts became the hallmark of the Shagari administration (Momoh & Adejumobi, 1999:114). Despite all these, Shagari won a second mandate through a general election to lead the country for another four years term. A second leadership journey he embarked upon on 1st October 1983. However, on 31st December 1983, just three months into his second term, Shagari was overthrown by General Muhammadu Buhari in a bloodless military coup. Ending another landmark in the turbulent history of elite's succession in Nigerian political history.

Buhari, an army officer also from the northern part of Nigeria, had less tolerance for the corrupt political elite (Campbell, 2011:7). Together with his famous deputy, Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon, they initiated War Against Indiscipline (WAI), a corrective programme aimed at targeting the perceived negative social attitudes of Nigerians towards political authority (Agedah, 1993:82-85). However, with a similar pattern inherent in previous military regimes, the Buhari administration

suppressed the human rights of the civil populace by infringing on their freedom of speech (Momoh & Adejumobi, 1999:25-26). Through authoritarian rule, journalists were unfairly tried and jailed leading to friction in the civil-military relation (Chikendu & Kalu, 1996:84). On 26th August 1985, Buhari's regime was toppled by Major General Ibrahim Babangida.

Babangida, Buhari's Chief of Army Staff and another officer of northern descent, was skilful in political craftsmanship (Joseph, 1995:451; Momoh, 1995:312). He appointed individuals from different segment of the society into his political bureau. The individuals were appointed to facilitate the transition back to democratic rule. To further aid the transition, Babangida formed two political parties called the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Congress (NRC). The political parties' manifestoes were alleged to have been written by Babangida himself while at the same time instructing notable politicians on what party to join (Bello, 2011). His political reform alongside his economic reforms were implemented under a corrupt and repressive atmosphere (Adamu, 2012). On 12th June 1993, a presidential election was held and a Yoruba businessman from the economic elite, also a mutual friend of Babangida in person of M.K.O Abiola, was alleged to have won the undeclared election (Babasola, 2003). Babangida who was on course to leave office, annulled the widely acclaimed election and stepped aside for an interim national government, which he had set up (Momoh, 1995:336). Thus, halting 'the third republic' in Nigerian political history before it even began. Analysts have referred to it as a 'stillbirth' whose surgical operation was performed by the military elite (Babawale, 1999:233).

During his rule, Babangida did initiate and implement bureaucratic reforms where 'career permanent secretaries' were made 'Directors General' of their different ministries or federal agencies. Insignificant as this might be, in principle, it meant these civilian personnel could be appointed and dismissed by the military authority. A situation that left them open to political manipulation and vulnerability (Amuwo, 1995). The caretaker civilian administration that was constituted after the annulment of the June 12 presidential election was headed by Ernest Shonekan, another member of the economic elite and a close friend of Babangida (Joseph,

1995:390). However, Shonekan's government was overthrown just a few weeks into his administration by General Sanni Abacha, the most senior military officer second to Babangida. In November 1993, a High Court in Lagos state declared the interim government of Shonekan illegal. According to some analysts, this presented an opportunity for Abacha to satisfy his long time ambition of becoming the president and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces (Joseph, 1995:419). Meanwhile, Abiola the acclaimed winner of the June 12th presidential election had been arrested and kept in custody by the Abacha military junta.

While Abacha had set up a constitutional conference to review the country's constitution, he ruled in an authoritarian military manner (Banjo, 2008); quenching widespread anti-government protests by Abiola's supporters in southern Nigerian cities with brutal force (Babawale, 1999). His coercive way of managing opposition and conflicts was extended towards the human rights community in Nigeria. Activists were either imprisoned or executed while in custody or out of prison (Rupert, 1998:A01). Such were the killing of Alfred Rewane, who was alleged to have been funding a pro-democracy group, National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) that was sympathetic to the June 12th election cause (Momoh & Adejumobi, 1999:271); and the state murder of Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995, a Niger Delta activist and leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). The Niger Delta oil conflict in Nigeria still remains a major security issue nationally, regionally and internationally. It is a conflict emanating from the struggle over environmental degradation, revenue allocation and resource control (Amuta, 2006). It indicates the dysfunctional system in Nigeria where the political elite are more interested in the accumulation of state resources for their own interests rather than the national interest (Nnamdi, 2006).

Former military Head-of-State now retired, Olusegun Obasanjo and his deputy, Shehu Musa Yar'adua were also imprisoned on alleged coup plotting activities against the Abacha administration. Ibrahim (2008) described how Shehu Yar'adua later died in custody. On 8th June 1998, Abacha died naturally rather than through military coup, ending in Rupert's (1998:A01) view, one of the darkest episodes in Nigerian history and probably the most brutal of all the military

regimes Nigeria has ever had. On 9th June 1998, another military officer from northern Nigeria named General Abdulsalam Abubakar took over the mantle of power as the new Head-of-State of Nigeria and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Upon entering into office, Abubakar immediately set in motion the process for transition to democratic rule by granting amnesty to all political detainees including those that had fled the country; in doing so opening the political space for a broader political contest (Ujomu, 2001).

Even though Abubakar was committed to the democratic process, certain analysts argued that he had no choice given the fact that military government had been shunned and condemned after the annulment of the June 12th election, and the murder of Ken Saro Wiwa (Momoh & Adejumobi, 1999). There had also been international efforts to check the gross human rights violation perpetrated by the military elite in Nigeria. For instance, Nigeria was expelled from the Commonwealth of Nations while the High Commission of Canada in Lagos was closed and its ambassador recalled. The United States of America on its part downsized its U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Nigeria (Campbell, 2011:8-9).

By appointing a group of senior active duty and retired officers from the military establishment and businessmen from the economic elite group, Abubakar organised a transition government that ushered in the civilian 'Fourth Republic'. However, partly due to the fear that Nigerians might agitate for a new constitution, which they (the elite) might not be able to regulate or contribute to, Abubakar and his cohorts resuscitated the second and third republic Nigerian constitutions to protect officer-specific interests (Adamu, 2012). The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was created as a national, progressive party whose machinery will be used to end military rule on military terms (Ntiwunka, 2012). This brought about the selection of a former military Head-of-State, retired Major General Olusegun Obasanjo as its presidential candidate. Obasanjo, despite been imprisoned by Abacha, was part of the military elite in Nigeria. According to Ntiwunka (2012), Obasanjo been a Yoruba Christian from the south like Abiola, who was rubbed of his electoral

mandate on June 12th 1993 and died in custody on 7th July 1998, was a perfect replacement.

Obasanjo won the controversial presidential election in 1999, which the election observation team sent by the National Democratic Institute and led by the former American president, Jimmy Carter, refused to endorse due to the massive nature of electoral fraud that happened (Campbell, 2011:9). Notwithstanding, Obasanjo was sworn in on 29th May 1999, becoming the second executive president of a democratically elected government in Nigeria after Shagari. This period became known as the fourth republic in Nigeria's political parlance.

Obasanjo became the first president under the new 1999 constitution of Nigeria in the fourth republic. The constitution was similar to the 1979 version because it included provisions such as secular state, separation of powers, a bill of rights, federalism and multiparty system. Similarly, the presidential system of government was readopted in the 1999 constitution. The cabinet referred to as the Federal Executive Council (FEC) became headed by the executive president. The vice president and other appointed ministers were answerable to the president (see the Nigerian 1999 federal constitution). Specifically, Section 5, sub-section 1a and 1b of the constitution stipulate that the "executive powers of the federation shall be vested in the President and may, subject to any law made by the National Assembly, be exercised by him [sic] either directly or through the Vice-President and Ministers of the Government of the Federation or Officers in the Public Service of the Federation".

With its ascension to power, Isumonah (2012) described how the Nigerian political elite headed by Obasanjo threw all democratic principles into the air and started behaving the same way as previous military administrations. Banjo (2008) noted that the new political elite comprised men from the military establishment and civilians alike who had served under various military regimes. Likewise, Adesola and Ako-Nai (2010) noted that within this elite group were bureaucrats and technocrats herein referred to as professionals. The wielding of power by these political elite has been associated with corruption, diversion of state resources - oil rent and so on (Oliveira, 2007).

Over time, there has been state-society as well as intra-institutional crises between the executive and the legislature resulting from tussles over resource allocation (Amuta, 2006). Government stability was threatened because of oil pipelines vandalisation and kidnappings of foreign oil workers leading to disruption of oil production that affected revenue generation (Obi & Rustad, 2011b). Amid these security crises, Obasanjo tried to vie for a third term presidency, which was not provided for in the constitution, and failed (Simon & Monday, 2011). He eventually conducted elections having influenced the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the persons of president Umaru Musa Yar'adua and vice-president Goodluck Jonathan in 2007. Following which he relinquished power to his preferred candidates (Tenuche, 2011).

Umaru Musa Yar'adua was Shehu Musa Yar'adua's brother, who was Obasanjo's deputy during the military administration of 1976-1979. They are from a northern elite family of Fulani heritage in present day Katsina State. Umaru Yar'adua was Katsina State governor before being chosen to vie for the presidency by Obasanjo in 2007 (Adeniyi, 2011:21). Omotola (2011) asserted that the 2007 election that brought Yar'adua to power was described as one of the worst rigged election in Nigeria's history because of the massive irregularities that were reported. A position similarly adopted by Obadasha (2009). His political opponent was Muhammadu Buhari, a former military Head-of-State that overthrew the second republic civilian administration of Shagari through a military coup. Buhari disputed the election results and took his case to the law court but eventually lost. The point to highlight here is the calibre of individuals that keep re-emerging on the political scene both in government and in opposition. Individuals that have had some involvement with previous military administrations and therefore would share common background and probably similar interests which will influence their perception of security, or what constitute a security threat.

Umaru Yar'adua was not a man of sound health despite inheriting national insecurity from the previous administration. He passed away while on medical trip and his deputy, Jonathan Goodluck stepped in as acting-president in 2009 during the trip and later as president in 2010 when Umaru Yar'adua passed away.

In 2011, Goodluck Jonathan won the presidential election in Nigeria and became the third executive president after the 1999 military to civilian transformation. Awopeju (2012) saw his rise as meteoric because he was a deputy governor in the Niger Delta state of Bayelsa until the then governor - Diepreyie Alamieyesigha was controversially arrested in London due to money laundering allegations instigated by the Nigerian president - Obasanjo (Carroll, 2005). Jonathan became the stand-in governor and held the position till he became the new vice-president in 2007 and later as president of the country.

Most of the political actors in 2014 are still remnants of the same political class of 1999. Adesola and Ako-Nai (2010) in their analysis described the situation as the "recycling of the political gladiators". Omodia (2011) reckon that this was because successive Heads-of-State after Obasanjo were his choice of candidates, and are meant to protect his interests and that of his cronies. Bello (2011) observed a patron-client network pattern that emerged at federal and state level of governance, because retired Generals became the leading voices of their elite sub-groups (Omotola, 2011). While the other elite networks cling on to them for support prompting an alliance that has been insidious for most part, and antithetical to political stability.

4.4. COMPOSITION OF THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL ELITE 1999-2013

Political elite composition in the Nigerian fourth republic since 1999 has been made up of individuals of similar professional background and social network. Thus, the display of similar political attitude and perception towards security (Banjo, 2008). A situation that has also given rise to patronage exchanges, 'godfatherism' in politics, corruption and national insecurity (Simon & Monday, 2011). A senior administrator at the Ministry for Niger Delta affairs in Abuja, Mr C. J. attested to this during the research interview:

> *"The elite that form the political in post-1999 Nigeria are from different strata of the Nigerian society. ....while you have elites from the economic, military and socio-cultural realm like*

in any other society, the political arena has been the point of convergence of these elites in the Nigerian case because that is where the fate of the national revenue is determined most especially oil rent".[7]

While there is evidence that the Nigerian democratic process that started in 1999 brought about the dominance of retired military officers within the political space at the initial stage of the new civilian dispensation, it does not account for the influence and authority other characters outside the military elite network has come to play in the better part of the 21st century in Nigeria. Though, it is incontestable that the retired military officers, while not holding political offices, do impose political actors and influence policy-decisions through party politics (Ntiwunka, 2012); the reality is that other elite networks have emerged either by design or accident, and have become dominant and influential in the policy domain of state governance most especially since 2007 onward. Kifordu (2011) described the five core political executive elite groups that has emerged in Nigeria namely: the economic elite, socio-cultural elite, institutional elite, military elite and political elite, where the political elite comprises of members from other elite groups.

According to Kifordu, the military elite occupy the highest stratum of the elites' hierarchy. Their position at the topmost level of the political elite hierarchy empowers them to dictate the tune of politics in Nigeria. To hear and understand their views, one only needs to listen and observe the utterances and actions of their loyalists in government (Hanneman, 1986). In addition to the military elite's participation in politics, they are also guaranteed continuity in political offices and positions (Tenuche, 2010). History records the roles of certain retired Generals, military turned civilian political elite, who were leaders of their different military sub-elite groups at national level. Individuals such as Ibrahim Babangida, Mohammed Abubakar, Olusegun Obasanjo and Theophilus Danjuma that were instrumental in past military coups in Nigeria. Military coups that often involved the violent and forceful takeover of political power and state governance by one

[7] Interview conducted with C. J on the 10th of April in Abuja, Nigerian Federal Capital City.

military group from another (Adekanye, 1999). However, post-1999 appointments into the Obasanjo's administration saw these individuals among others become the inner caucus of the political elite decision-making machinery; especially in the area of security (Tenuche, 2011). To name a few, Atiku Abubakar of the Customs Service was elected vice-president, retired General Theophilus Danjuma former Chief of Army Staff became the new defence minister, retired General Mohammed Gusau became the new national security adviser, and retired General Abdullahi Mohammed, a former director of military intelligence was recruited as the new chief of staff.

The post-1999 Obasanjo civilian administration had less tolerance for the opposition and the other elite groups, who were marginalised in security decision-making. Despite the new cabinet members comprising of civilians, though mainly military retirees, their perception and attitude towards national security still remained militarily orientated (Tenuche, 2011). It is also important to note that these military/political elite have acquired wealth and business contacts through previous access to oil revenue during the military regimes and as such, have become members of the economic elite group.

The economic elite constitute the core in the economic establishment. Adesola and Ako-Nai (2010) described them as acclaimed businessmen and industrialists that seek to protect their privileged position in the society. They do this by initiating and supporting policies that will maintain their status quo and maximize their profit. The economic elite may be less conspicuous in official state political positions however, they have the ability to sponsor cronies to attain such strategic positions. Hence, in or outside government, the economic elite can influence government policy decisions through their social networks. Campbell (2011:27) identified the ring-leaders of the economic elite group in Nigeria: Aliko Dangote, founder of the Dangote Group ranked the richest black person in the world by Forbes in 2014; Femi Otedola, founder of Zenoil who also appeared in Forbes 2009 as one of the 793 dollar-denominated billionaires in the world; Jim Ovia, founder of Zenith Bank Group; Mike Adenuga, founder of Conoil Producing; Oba Otudeko, founder of Honeywell Group; Mohammed Nduni, founder of Oriental

Energy Resources; O.B. Lulu-Briggs, founder of Moni Pulo Limited; Sani Bello, a former military governor and co-founder of AMNI Petroleum; Hakeem Bello Osagie, founder of petroleum consultancy 'CTIC' and ex-chairman of United Bank of Africa; Folorunsho Alakija, founder of Famfa Oil.

It is important to highlight that most of the named individuals made their wealth through oil and gas business ventures, and featured in the Forbes 2012 List of 40 African richest business people.[8] The use of social network is an essential element in the recruitment process of the economic elite into the political circus. They are seen as the major players when it comes to political party financing and sponsorship. This has given them the advantage of permeating political structure of authority in furtherance of private interests (Nnamdi, 2006).

Intellectuals like university lecturers, technocrats and bureaucrats (top civil servants) who made up the socio-cultural elite, were also drawn into the politics of the fourth republic in Nigeria. Individuals like Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, a technical expert from the World Bank, served under the Obasanjo administration before she left in 2006 and re-emerged in the Jonathan administration as the Minister of Finance and the Chief Coordinating Minister of the Economy in 2011 (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012). Civilians who served under various military regimes were also being appointed into different administrations in the Nigerian fourth republic. Ojo Maduekwe who served under the Abacha military regime as a Special Advisor was appointed Minister of Transport, Foreign Affairs and also a PDP National Chairman. Professor Jerry Gana was appointed Minister of Information under the Obasanjo civilian administration but also served in a similar role under the Abacha military regime (Campbell, 2011:24).

According to analysts, the socio-cultural elite were appointed primarily to serve the interest of the military elite in power (Ntiwunka, 2012). Notwithstanding, these elite have been a major force in the new political calculation of the fourth republic in Nigeria. However, in spite of their importance, many believe the socio-cultural elite serve as willing tools of mass domination in the hands of

[8]See the Nigerian daily newspaper 'Thisday' of 25th November 2012 for more details.

their sponsors or godfathers (Tenuche, 2011). In the Nigerian context, the socio-cultural elite despite their level of education and enlightenment have somehow been found wanting when it comes to being socially responsive just like the other elite groups in the political spectrum (Banjo, 2008).

Other groups like the traditional institutional elite made up of traditional rulers also enjoy certain privileges and prestige because of their unrestricted access to the corridors of power. These traditional rulers are often allocated resources denied to their subjects by the ruling elite in order to win their support for issues bordering on legitimacy. As a payback gesture, the traditional rulers confer traditional chieftaincy titles on the political elite, which invariably enhance their influence in society. The traditional institution has been a dominant allotting network platform where candidates are picked and sponsored for political offices, giving credence to the dynamics of politics of godfatherism (Bello, 2011). It is important to note that ethnic politics through traditional identity is more pronounced at this level of elite network in Nigeria. Therefore, the executive political appointments that originate from these networks are set to protect parochial interest at the national executive level (Omodia, 2011). This goes against the liberal-pluralist notion of social inclusion which is driven by the idea of competition, because the elite's appointments are based on selectivity rather than competitiveness. A situation that affects policy decisions at national level (Tenuche, 2011).

A significant point of departure of this study from previous studies on elite evolution in Nigeria is the observed diminishing status of traditional rulers in present day Nigeria. While the economic elite made up of businessmen, industrialists and entrepreneurs; and the professional elite that include bureaucrats, technocrats and intellectuals have been on the upward rise and found their voice matching their military counterpart; the same cannot be said about the traditional institutional elite. This group has been on the downward slope and is less influential than it used to be under military hegemony. Further investigation into the reason behind this downward slope may be a good point of inquiry for another study. However, the violent attacks that has been directed towards

traditional rulers of recent in Nigeria especially by Boko Haram militants is a good reminder of how this once revered institution has become denigrated by the rulers and the ruled.

So far, the analysis on the composition of the elite in Nigeria has pointed to a single elite group as the superior entity - the Nigerian political elite. They initiate and supervise policies at the federal level of governance (Kifordu, 2011:47), and assimilate all the other elite networks into their fold in order to influence power structuring at different levels of governance (Tenuche, 2011). The military's incursion to the body politic of Nigeria that began with the January and July 1966 coups paved the way to these constituencies long term participation in the national elite group. While it succeeded in removing the first republic political elite from power however, it failed to prevent the transformation of the forces produced by these military coups into becoming a new and evolving political force.

Contrary to the military's self-proclaimed objective of correcting the mistakes of the past, it became an agency for exacerbating them; which did not come as a surprise given the "military's self-regulating mechanism that does not encourage feedback, and its monopoly of the means of violence" (Graf, 1981:2). It was the military elite that through its internal inter-ethnic rivalry, instigated the civil war (Biafra) and prosecuted it. The end of the civil war coincided with the substantial exploration of oil in the Niger Delta region of the country. The huge rent accruing from oil extraction referred to as 'oil bonanza' or 'national cake' in some quarters (Graf, 1981:3) led to the centralisation of the economy and the emergence of a new political elite sometimes referred to as 'petro-elite' (Oliveira, 2007:123-157).

This transformative period, characterised by active state involvement in the political economy of the country, threw up an alliance in which a coalition of military high ranking personnel, civil servants and representatives of local business concerns formed an alliance of military, civil service and big business to control state power (George, Amuwo & Cornelius, 2012; Adekanye, 1999:132-141), with the ultimate aim to influence and control access to the economic resources. This

strategy of securing the positions of certain elite or private entrepreneurs had a profound effect on elite-formation and governance in general, as it posits unequal distribution of rewards, private capital accumulation and socio-economic inequalities. Consequently, the social classes that emerged from these imbalances have been dubbed 'the elites and the masses' or 'the wealthy and the poor' - perceptions that has contributed to further grievances among the Nigerian populace (Afuape, 2012).

Since the political elite has been established as the main elite group in Nigeria, it is therefore chosen as the best unit of analysis to be explored in understanding the characteristics of state decision-makers. Though all the five elite groups play dominant roles in influencing state policy decisions, especially since Nigeria independence up until 1999. However, the game changer has been the emergence of strong individuals within the military, economic and professional elite networks on the political scene, formally or informally. Formally as in vying for political offices, and informally serving as godfathers thereby sponsoring their loyalists to occupy political positions. Loyalists that pursue their special interests, and in so doing share similar attitude, perception of security, patronage politics and corruption to that of their godfathers; which in many cases has undermined national security in Nigeria (Banjo, 2008). For the purpose of this PhD study, the military elite, economic elite and professional elite that make up the dominant political elite at national level in Nigeria will be analysed, because it is their decisions that matters as architects and managers of policies according to the Nigerian constitution (see chapter 2), which invariably impacts on national security.

4.5. ELITE SELECTION FOR RESEARCH ANALYSIS

There are various components of the Nigerian political elite group spanning across different arms of government, from the executive to the legislature and down to the judiciary, whose constitutional roles is to serve as agents of checks and balances; and whose roles are enshrined in the 1999 Nigerian federal constitution (see chapter 2). The 1999 Nigerian constitution empowers the executive arm of government to make policy decisions for the state; and these decisions are subject

to ratifications and interpretations by the other arms of government. Since the president as the chief security officer of the state in collaboration with the federal executive council and the federal legislators are responsible for the provision and maintenance of national security, the political elite both elected and unelected within the executive and legislative arm of government at the federal level of governance will be adopted as the unit of analysis for this research purpose. The federal political elite consist of the president, vice president, former Heads-of-State (both military and civilian), cabinet ministers, national security adviser, the service - military chiefs (army, navy and air force), the Inspector-General of police, head of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), head of the State Security Services (SSS) and members of the National Assembly (parliament).

The choice of these political elite for analysis in this research does not in any way underestimate the relevance of the political elite in the other arms or levels of government; or diminish the significant influence of elite outside the corridors of power on public policies. However, this research is primarily concerned with how security is perceived and constructed by those responsible for national security hence, the choice of using the Nigerian federal political elite as its unit for analysis. Moreover, the judicial and state level arm of government are known to be occasionally side-lined or made functionally weak by the federal executive, making them invisible when it comes to security decision-making (Ntiwunka, 2012, Tenuche, 2011). Therefore, investigating the chosen group will help unravel the perception and construction of security strategies by those holding political power in Nigeria, since it is the arm of government that has exclusive and absolute power to declare state of emergency in time of national insecurity (Nigerian 1999 federal constitution).

4.6. CONCLUSION

Given the purpose of this research is to understand the political elite's perception of security in Nigeria, and how such perception(s) have influenced security strategies, this chapter has established the preliminary background to elitism in Nigeria. To ascertain what factors may have or not have shaped elite's perception

of security, the chapter evaluated the formation of the elite which identified five main ethnic origins: Northern, Yorubas, Igbo, Middle Belt and the Niger Delta. It also established and analysed the five different types of elite groups in Nigeria: traditional, economic, intellectual, military and political elites, which revealed a degree of linkage and interdependency among the various elite groups. By exploring the evolution of the Nigerian political elite, which revealed a historic trait of elite entrenched in military ideals and who keep re-emerging from the first to fourth republic, the study has uncovered a multifaceted disposition in the formation, evolution and character of elite in Nigeria. This has exposed the flaws in applying some assumptions of Marxism and Classical Elite Theories to the Nigerian elite context.

The two rival viewpoints on elite-formation and recruitment namely Marxism and Classical Elite theory were carefully examined. Where Marxism economic determinism imply that having ownership of the means of production is a major determinant of who rules or holds political office, evidence suggests that in Nigeria, the dominant elite group which is the political elite comprising other elite networks did not necessarily emerged from an economic production background. The fixation on the economic origin of the dominant ruling class makes Marxism to be insufficient when applied to the Nigerian context. Moreover, the Nigerian economy is extractive-based rather than production based, as such, the Nigerian political elite as state actors in key political offices are more interested in rent-seeking for personal gratification (Okonta, 2008:4-5; Oliveira, 2007:123-130). Subsequently, with political power in Nigeria comes economic power as oil rent is the enticement of the elite. In other words, he who controls the state controls the oil money (Eberlein, 2006). In a nutshell, political power is an avenue for having economic power in Nigeria. Thus, the applicability of Marxism as a theory should be treated with caution when applied to the Nigerian case.

The Classical Elite theory perspective, which is based on the thoughts of classical elitists such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels, considers the elite as group of individuals with significant access to resources or capacities;

a feature reminiscent of the Nigerian political elite. However, their assumption that this small and influential elite group with common interests are cohesive and united, makes its applicability to the Nigerian case also to be insufficient. The history of elite politics in Nigeria is the history of intra- and inter-group rivalry and struggle. Even though classical elitists proposed that power is engrained in the hands of a few individuals drawn from the triad of political, economic and military institutions, which best illustrate the Nigerian case; there is lack of group solidarity within the Nigerian elite except when safeguarding specific interests. Hence, classical elitism should also be treated with caution when applied to the Nigerian context.

It is not the suggestion in this study that the aforementioned theoretical perspectives have no applicability at all to the Nigerian context, especially when considering other important factors that run through the core of the theoretical arguments such as, the state is dominated by a political elite group, the elite are in the minority and assert their influence through various mechanisms (Bachrach, 2010:1; Putnam, 1976:135; Albertoni, 1987:148). These can provide a starting point for analysis.

In conclusion, the chapter has taken both the Marxist and classical elitist views when selecting the political elite as its unit for analysing state perception of security and construction of security strategies in Nigeria, especially in the volatile oil producing delta region. This was crucial given one of the main arguments of this research is that the political behaviour of the minority who controls the institutions and oil money of the Nigerian state, is what has exacerbated the oil conflict in the region. The next chapter will examine the security situation in the Nigerian oil producing region of the Niger Delta. The chapter will demonstrate how a) the actions of the ruling elite of a given society can have a major impact on the level of (in)security in that society especially in environments with weak social and structural controls; b) how the political economy incentives created by the discovery of oil affected the security thinking of elite in Nigeria. The Niger Delta oil conflict in Nigeria, which is the focus of this study will provide a real-life example of how the (mis)management of a resource-based conflict on the

part of the Nigerian political elite has exacerbated the level of tension and undermined national security in Nigeria.

CHAPTER 5

ℵ NIGER DELTA OIL CONFLICT ℵ

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Preceding chapters of the thesis explored the issues of (in)security in and elite formation in Nigeria. Evaluation of scholarly work revealed a particular notion of security, which has made the state represented by the political elite, ascribe certain meaning and importance to threat against its national security. This chapter build on this by providing a detailed context of a real-life scenario, by using the Niger Delta oil conflict in Nigeria as an example of a security dilemma. One where the (mis)management of a resource-based conflict on the part of the Nigerian political elite, has exacerbated the level of tension and undermined national security in Nigeria. The chapter applies the Copenhagen School (CS) and Paris School (PS) approaches in a detailed examination of the securitisation discourse and practices of the Nigerian elite in dealing with this dilemma. It identifies certain key turning points in the elite's securitisation strategy.

By using the Niger Delta conflict as case study, the research aims to justify the hypothesis that "there tends to be a specific interpretation of security within the Nigerian political elite that has led to an increased level of insecurity in the state". To prove the hypothesis, the chapter will emphasise on the contrasting notions of security that has been central to the narrative provided by the insurgency in the Niger Delta. These contrasting notions of security between the political elite and the Niger Delta inhabitants has shaped security perceptions, which in turn has defined the competition, co-operation and conflict between the two camps. The chapter will also reveal that apart from the historical conditions and political economy incentives created by the discovery of oil that has affected the security thinking of the political elite, variables such as elite social background and state repression are other important factors that have contributed to the delta oil conflict.

The reality of the Niger Delta oil region being a major conflict zone in Nigeria is not overstated. It is a consequence of the state and its global capital allies - Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs) engagement in on-going confrontation with local forces of resistance on the issues of resource ownership, access, entitlements and rights. Besides, the Nigerian political elite's response to the perceived threat posed by the grassroot people clamouring for a fairer share of the oil rent has deepened the sense of resentment between the state and ethnic minorities in the region. A view similarly shared by Obi (1999:7), who articulated that "at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict is an interplay of social forces, both local and global, competing for oil space and access to resources".

While the worsening relation between the state, TNOCs and the local people has led to the disruption of oil production by the locals; there has been an increase in the level of state repression to quell all opposition to the free flow of oil to the international energy market. The situation has been further exacerbated by the Nigerian state's conflict management approach in the form of securitisation in the region (Uzodike & Isike, 2009). Attempts to see the essence of the conflict as a result of intolerance, because of the heterogeneity of the area, has been debunked by Okonta (2008:4); who argued that the Niger Delta ethnic diversity has nothing to do with the violent conflict in the region, given that the different ethnic groups in the area has been living side by side before the discovery of crude oil. It is the argument of this school that the explosion of the accumulated grievances of the oil minorities over the years against their perceived foreign invaders and domestic exploiters - the TNOCs and Nigerian political elite, is at the heart of the oil conflict.

However, if this account was to hold, how does one account for other variables that have played a key role in the conflict? Variables such as intra- and inter-community violence or inter-ethnic rivalry. To shed some light on this, the chapter will explore the historical and institutional dimension to the Niger Delta oil conflict. It will examine the political economy of the Nigerian state and how this has placed a premium on the oil resources from the Niger Delta region of the country. The enormous involvement of local and international actors, most

especially the Nigerian political elite and TNOCs in the oil conflict will be explored. The politics concerning oil revenue allocation and its use by the Nigerian political elite will be cross-examined given its impact on the human rights and environmental security of the ordinary people of the Niger Delta region.

Furthermore, the chapter will examine the local people's response to the environmental threat relating to oil extraction and distribution activities, as well as the state's response to the agitation of the oil bearing communities. Given the perception of security of the Nigerian political elite and what they perceive to be a threat to national security, the security management approach adopted by the state elite will be evaluated to see if this has further undermined national security of the state.

5.2. NIGER DELTA: ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The Niger Delta region comprises of nine states out of the thirty seven in Nigeria namely: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers (see Appendices B & C). It is an area measuring about 16,000 square miles and roughly the size of Scotland (ICG, 2006a). This massive wetland of the Niger Delta area renowned for its huge crude oil reserves covers an area of about 70,000 square kilometres spreading over coastal mangroves, freshwater swamp and lowland rain forests (Moffat & Linden, 1995). It is interspersed with a web of creeks and lagoons that runs through the River Niger into the Atlantic Ocean at the Bight of Biafra (Obi & Rustad, 2011a:3).

During the rainy season with a high degree of rainfall, humidity is above 80 per cent (Udosen et al., 2012), and road travel becomes almost impossible during this period. The river normally discharge during the rainy season due to the high level of rainfall, and according to Moffat and Linden (1995), this combined with the flat terrain of the soil causes enormous erosion and flooding. From Dokpesi's (2013) observation, the defining characteristics of the Niger Delta ecosystem is the seasonal flood, erosion and sediment deposition. Therefore it can be argued

that naturally, the Niger Delta region has a peculiar challenge posed by its harsh environment, which has made infrastructural development a herculean task by successive government administrations in Nigeria.

Nonetheless, within the delta challenging terrain known as the 'Oil River' in the nineteenth century, is an estimated thirty million people known as the Niger Deltans (Obi, 1999). The Niger Deltans referred to as the oil minorities or the Niger Delta inhabitants in this study are made up of over three thousand ethno-linguistic communities, with the Ijaws that cut across the four states of Bayelsa, Delta, Ondo and Rivers remaining the largest ethnic group in the region (Francis et al., 2011). The other ethnic groups numbering about forty comprises the Ibibio, Anang, Oron in Akwa Ibom State; Bekwarra, Efik, Ejagham in Cross River State; Isoko, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Igbo in Delta State; Edo, Etsakos, Igbira, Okpameri in Edo State; Yoruba, Ilaje in Ondo State; Igbo in Abia and Imo States; Andoni, Ibani, Ekpeye, Engenni, Epie-Atissa, Nembe, Ogoni, Okrika, Ogba in Bayelsa and Rivers States (Ibaba, 2011:72).

The daily survival of these minority groups of people is based on a mixture of subsistence farming, fishing and petty trading especially in palm oil (Jike, 2004). However, despite the Niger Delta region providing Nigeria's total proven reserves of oil standing close to 25 billion barrels, (an estimated 1.8 per cent of the proven global reserves); Ahonsi (2011:30) described the indigenous people as one of the most impoverished people in the world. Ako (2011:42-54) linked this to the politics of exclusion inherent in the formula for revenue allocation - that is the way oil rent is shared between the different layers of government. While the state and its political elite do not participate in the actual production of oil, they allocate the rents and profits from oil sales (Ibaba, 2011:71-78). As a result, who benefits depends on one's position or closeness to those at the top echelon of state power (Eberlein, 2006).

The deprivation of the local people has been further compounded by the oil production activities of TNOCs, with marine lives and species endangered in large numbers in the region's wetland (Jike, 2004). Toxic effluents from crude oil exploration and drilling mud are often dumped in rivers and farmlands across the

region; hence, undermining the environmental security of the indigenous people (Onuoha, 2007). Julius (2014a) explained how the ecological despoliation of the area has had a negative impact on the people's ability to survive by subsistence means. Similarly, Uzodike and Isike (2010) observed how oil spillage and the burning of excess natural gas extracted during oil pumping known as gas flaring, has created poor atmospheric conditions and contamination in the oil producing region. A position supported by Moffat and Linden (1995), who described the effect on health and agricultural activities as unimaginable.

Despite all these, the average Niger Delta inhabitant has little opportunity to seek legal redress (Obi, 2004:19), because it can be costly, lengthy and complicated. As a result, militancy becomes a means of agitating for environmental protection and greater resource control. In recent years, the militancy has evolved through different dynamics, with the one based on violence and the struggle for power the most potent. This has led to the struggle over oil space, with the state devising numerous conflict intervention and management approaches of which securitisation has been the most obvious.

5.3. DISCOURSES ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE OIL CONFLICT

Discourses on the political economy of the Niger Delta oil conflict tend to lay emphasis on the greed element of the main actors (Bagaji et al., 2011; Collier, 2008:30-31), followed by the linkage between natural resource abundance and civil conflict (Le Billon, 2001; Karl, 1997). As a result, the political economy approaches overlook the institutional context of the oil conflict and concentrate more on the economic aspect than on political processes. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) as well as Ross (2006) argued that conflict is motivated by economic opportunities rather than grievance, because elites and warlords are incentivised to loot due to the abundance of natural resources. This greed theory posits that natural resources motivates covetous individuals or groups to take up arms in order to gain control of resource revenue.

However, Keen (2012) described this as economic rationalism taken too far and argued that correlation should not be mistaken for causation when analysing conflicts; neither should the causes of conflicts be only subjected to the domestic environment while ignoring the external dimension. In the Niger Delta case, the oil conflict should not be solely viewed through the prism of economic privation as other variables such as political marginalisation, Nigerian identity politics and fiscal centralism are equally important (Sutcliffe, 2012).

From another perspective, resource abundance is seen as a curse because of the associated issues of conflicts, slow economic growth and corruption. Economic theorists articulate that any nation that relies on a single source of revenue is vulnerable and prone to conflict due to the accruing rents and exposure to shock - booms and busts (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). While Nigeria have experienced crude oil related shocks over the years, critics of resource-dependency theory such as Alao (2007:x) and Torvik (2009) have argued that dependency on a single natural resource does not lead to armed conflict; noting that scarcity and violence are a product of social relations rather than inherent in the relative abundance of a particular good, object or resources. Saudi Arabia, Norway, Iran, Botswana and Chile are countries that have considerably transformed their states progressively, thereby demystifying the resource-dependency theory (Thorp et al., 2012:172).

The institutional approach on the other hand, which this study supports, argues that special attention should be paid to the complex historical interaction between political institutions, natural resource endowment and economic development. Exploring this linkage can help explain why political elite make certain choices, why those choices are attractive to them and what are the alternative choices available to them.

Since oil was first discovered in the Niger Delta community of Oloibiri in present day Bayelsa State in 1956 by Shell, the Nigerian monocultural economy has been hinged on the production and export of crude oil from the Niger Delta area. The revenue accruing from oil herein referred to as oil rent has been central to Nigerian political economy, and the World Bank (cited in El-Rufai, 2011) estimated that in the 25 years preceding year 1999, Nigeria earned approximately

$300 billion from oil rents. It was suggested that the same amount of revenue was earned between 1999 to 2011 from oil and gas exports, income and taxes. According to Ahonsi (2011:28), oil production revenue have provided about 80% of budgetary revenues for the country for almost 40 years. As a result, Nigeria has been labelled a 'rentier state' because of its oil dependent political economy (Soremekun, 2011:99-110; Ikelegbe, 2001).

Similarly, Nigeria has been referred to as a 'petro state' because of the federal government's strong hold on the country's oil wealth. Watts (2005: 54) noted that within the Nigerian petro state is a degree of 'oil complex' due to the different actors and interests involved in the extraction and production of oil. This structure surrounding the political economy of Nigerian oil include the state, TNOCs, private and state security apparatuses, and external military interest in regional oil observable in the US AFRICOM security co-operation. Watts (2005:54) used the term 'petro-capitalism' to describe such economic alliance and form of global interaction.

A central feature of Nigeria's oil dependence since the oil boom of the early 1970s was the systematic neglect of the agricultural sector, which was the main export revenue generating sector during the colonial period and in the early 1960s. Today, agricultural production accounts for less than 8% of export revenues, because oil has taken the centre stage of the nation's economy (Jike, 2004). When compared to a country like Indonesia who in 1960 was at a similar stage of oil-dependence and development as Nigeria, oil accounts for no more than 10% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP); about 25% of government revenues and 15% of its exports (El-Rufai, 2011).

Critiquing the Nigerian political economy, El Rufai - a former Nigerian federal minister and a member of the Obasanjo Economic Team alongside prominent individuals like Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Oby Ezekwesili, highlighted how Nigeria exports its oil in crude form, unlike other countries like USA, China, Russia, Canada and Norway that produce more oil than Nigeria, but chose to add value to their oil by refining and processing it into gasoline and other petrochemicals for export and local consumption (El Rufai, 2011).

Nonetheless, it can be argued that Nigeria's political instability has affected its economic performance in different ways due to elite manipulation as discussed in chapter 2. An example is the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (NNOC), which was founded in 1971 and changed to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in 1977 under the military regime of retired General Olusegun Obasanjo who later became the civilian president in 1999.[9] The purpose of the NNPC was to have a Nigerian-owned and state-run oil industry similar to the Malaysian model, which established the Petroleam Nasional Berhad (Petronas) that holds exclusive ownership rights to all oil exploration and production activities in Malaysia. While Petronas grew to become one of the largest international oil companies registered in thirty one states including its acquisition of oil blocks in Nigeria, NNPC since its incorporation has been a passive partner in a host of joint ventures in Nigeria (El-Rufai, 2011).

The passive nature of the NNPC in the joint venture partnership is highlighted by the fact that Nigeria does not make financial contribution in the joint ventures except through its oil, which is "just there" according to the political elite. Consequently, NNPC is seen as a tool to "easy money" within the Nigerian political elite networks ((El Rufai, 2011; Campbell, 2011). Therefore, when compared to the agricultural and other sectors that require more participation from the Nigerian state and its political elite, oil is seen as a natural blessing from God. Even more so given that the TNOCs are those that provide the expertise and finance required to explore, extract, transport and sell the product with no labour input from the Nigeria state.

The state and its political elite share whatever the TNOCS appropriate to them as their share of the bargain at the end of every month (Oliveira, 2007:144-145). Since the NNPC is not involved in the exploratory and production activities, it has no way of knowing what the cost and/or profit margins are except to accept the TNOCs' account/record (Campbell, 2011:76). This easy way of earning money according to Akhaine (2011), has created a sort of 'national rentier mentality' within the elite circle in Nigeria. Likewise, Ukiwo (2011:17-27) observed that

[9] See chapter 4 on evolution of Nigerian political elite.

the elite want to get rich overnight without working hard to earn it, because the nation's got 'oil-rich' without any labour. Oil wealth is therefore seen as 'national cake' for the take (Jike, 2004).

In order to maintain the status quo, the political elite in Nigeria in conjunction with TNOCs have been reluctant to accept reforms in the Nigerian oil industry. An example is the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) proposed and sent to the National Assembly (Parliament) in 2009 under the late president Yar'Adua's government. The aim of the bill was to combine all the 16 Nigerian petroleum laws into one transparent and coherent document, and to bring oil exploration practices to global standards as Malaysia and Brazil have done (Oluduro, 2014:160-162; Adeniyi, 2011:43-59). However, following a series of TNOCs objections and over five years since the initial submission of the bill in the federal legislative house, despite being whittled down several times by the legislators resulting into several drafts; the bill remained to be passed at the end of the year 2014 under a different government administration (Campbell, 2011:77).

Analysts like Soremekun (2011:101) described how elite support were solicited in blocking the earlier versions of the bill from being passed into law by oil executives in an alliance that has become reminiscent of the Niger Delta struggle. From the preceding, one can deduce why competition for political power in Nigeria has become nasty and violent, because access to political power is an avenue to capture easy oil rent. The impact of this on the collective thinking of the elite as a group towards any threat to the free flow of oil in the Niger Delta can only be imagined. According to Obi (2004:21), the violent nature of the petro-politics in the Niger Delta where militarisation and repression has been the order of the day both under military and civilian regimes, is centred around the exploitation and distribution of oil wealth. A view corroborated by a senior administrator with the Ministry for Niger Delta affairs in Abuja. Mr C. J. during his interview with the researcher commented:

> *"...the hitherto history of national insecurity in Nigeria has been the history of struggle over oil as a natural and national resource. At the receiving end of the state (mis)management*

of its oil resources are the oil minorities of the Niger Delta. A people that has seen their supposed natural blessing turned to 'curse' by a repressive state. The oil that was supposed to be a tool for their national development have now turned out to be their nemesis. Shying away from this fact is like denying the open wound of a nation that is so obvious".[10]

Over the years, academics and researchers have used the 'resource-curse thesis' to analyse the Niger Delta oil conflict (Bagaji et al., 2011; Moffat & Linden, 1995), and Mr C. J.'s analogy justifies that. However, this study argues that while the rentier state theory and the resource-curse thesis in their basic assumptions are relevant to the analysis of the Nigerian oil conflict, other salient factors that are equally very important should not be overlooked. Doing so will be tantamount to undermining the historical and institutional dimensions of the remote and immediate triggers of the oil conflict. This is even more significant because the literature review and research findings highlight that of all the complex dynamics at play in the oil conflict, the critical factors impacting on lasting resolution of the conflict cut across historical and global drivers through to political and socio-economic trends.

5.4. SECURITISATION OF THE NIGER DELTA

The strategy of securitisation adopted by the Nigerian state has had a major impact on the Niger Delta oil conflict and level of insecurity in the region as a whole. Insecurity that has led to increased criminalities on the part of the youths who are only venting grievances against the state over perceived injustice on the use of their natural resource, economic status of the region and their human security. While the Nigerian state, its political elite and state security practitioners have failed to grasp the enormity of the Niger Delta issue, the oil minorities have resulted to militancy as a strategy of their own survival against the state and its TNOCs allies. The next section examines the evolution of insurgency in

[10] Interview conducted with C. J on the 10th of April in Abuja, Nigerian Federal Capital City.

the Niger Delta region resulting from the grievances of the local people, the state securitisation response to the insurgency, and how this has further exacerbated the conflict.

Evolution of Insurgency

The functions and mode of operation of militias in the delta region began to change in the mid-1990s, because of the new challenge of how to secure power and the right to have a greater say in the way the land and its natural oil resources were utilised (Ikelegbe, 2001). According to Ukiwo (2011:17-26) and Ukeje (2011:83-97), it was the economic and political marginalisation of the oil rich Niger Delta communities that led to the radicalisation of its youths and brought about the idea of insurgency as a way of overcoming the injustice perpetrated by the state political elite and their allies. Although, some scholars through the 'greed' rather than 'grievance' analysis have questioned this premise, arguing that it is the greed and self-enrichment motives of the militias that has served as a motivation for the oil conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, Ross, 2006).

While the greed argument carry some weight, given that former Niger Delta insurgent leaders in today's world are either corporate or government contractors or politicians (ICG, 2009; Mitee, 2009); the complicity of the African 'petro-elites' and TNOCs cannot be underestimated when analysing the political instability and insecurity in petro-states (Oliveira, 2007:123-157). As Watts (2007:648-651) argued, the context of the Nigerian form of petro-capitalism (or oil complex) created the economic motivation for militancy that later degenerated to full blown insurgency in the region. Therefore, this study argues that the inequalities of petro-capitalism that engages with the "grievance rather than greed" analysis is best suited to explain the rise of insurgency in the Niger Delta.

The following three distinct phases are observed in the evolution of insurgency in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria:

i. the development of militias until 1998. This period coincides with the struggles for environmental and human rights in the Niger Delta region with

the birth of the 'Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People' (MOSOP) as its focal point;

ii. the phase between 1999-2007, when militancy took the form of full blown insurgency. This period coincides with the transition from military to civilian regime in 1999 where apart from the oil related security issues in the Niger Delta, militias were used by political elite to suppress opposing political candidates and their supporters in a violent political game that involved the supply and use of sophisticated weapons;

iii. the phase from 2007-2013, a period successive Nigerian governments has dubbed the 'era of domestic terrorism' in Nigeria. This period marks the beginning of bomb detonation as a way of registering grievance against the state in Nigeria by 'Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta' (MEND). An umbrella organisation for several militia groups in the Niger Delta, which was formed in 2005 to actively challenge the Nigerian state and its security apparatus. The group disrupts oil operations and kidnaps oil workers most especially expatriates as a form of resistance (Boas, 2011:115-123). MEND also use public relations as a means of airing its demands.

Evolution of Militias in Niger Delta until 1998 and State Response

In 1966, exactly six years after Nigeria gained independence, an ethnic Ijaw policeman named Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro led the first rebellion for self-determination in the Niger Delta against the Nigerian state (Sampson, 2009). In what Nigerian scholars has hailed as a mini-revolution, Isaac Boro assembled a group of Ijaw men to fight for the independence of the Niger Delta region from the Nigerian state. Subsequently on February 23, 1966, Isaac Boro raised the flag of a 'Niger Delta People's Republic' and declared previous oil contracts and agreements between the Nigerian state and the TNOCs as null and void (Ukiwo, 2011:22). Sadly, within twelve days of this rebellion, Isaac Boro was subdued by the might of the Nigerian armed forces (Sampson, 2009). Though today, Isaac Boro is regarded as a national hero within the Ijaw nation of the Niger Delta

for his bold attempt to liberate his people from the whims and caprices of a repressive state (Obi & Rustad, 2011a:6).

With the economic decline of the 1980s came the upsurge of Niger Delta civil society groups whose aim was to publicise and seek redress for their economic and environmental grievances (Ikelegbe, 2001). Groups such as the Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organisation (ND-HERO), Ijaw National Congress (INC), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), MOSOP, Isoko National Youth Movement (INYM), the Concerned Youths of Oil Producing States and Niger Delta Peace Project Committee and so on, later developed armed wings in the late 1980s and 1990s as ethnic militias or informal security groups. These groups based on ethnic affiliations were exclusive of each other, however, tried to address common political, economic and environmental woes.

As the economic marginalisation in the Niger Delta region worsened, coupled with its high record level of youth unemployment, the youths in anger and frustration looked for outlets to vent their emotions. Strengthened by the ideology already adopted, one in which they saw themselves as a repressed people, the young militias started agitating against TNOCs. By the late 1980s, oil theft commonly referred to as 'oil bunkering' in Nigeria became well pronounced and rose steadily throughout the subsequent years (Ikelegbe, 2001; Onuoha, 2007). Oil pipelines were vandalised by angry youths and members of militia groups, and profits were made from the sale of stolen oil (Zalik, 2011:184-196).

Subsequently, TNOCs began to seek security protection of their facilities from the Nigerian state as a joint venture partner, one which the state political elite willingly agreed to despite the prevailing circumstances (Akhaine, 2011). Duquet (2011:136-148) recollected how in order for the state and federal governments to maintain security for TNOCs against the perceived threats from the local communities, the Supernumerary Police and security guards were deployed to various oil facilities across the region. This aggravated the tension between the state and its citizens, and led to further direct confrontations between the Nigerian state, its TNOCs and the environmental and human rights movements in the Niger Delta (Ibaba, 2011:71-80).

The most well-known and highly publicised of the activists movements was MOSOP, a socio-ethnic movement pursuing civil and environmental rights. It was led by a younger generation of Niger Delta elite who had previously served in the state bureaucracy. According to Obi (1999:17), the young elite were determined to re-negotiate the 'social contract' to reflect the current context of the political economy of the Niger Delta region. MOSOP fought for the minority rights of the Ogoni people in the Niger Delta. In the ' Ogoni Bill of Rights' presented to the Nigerian government in the year 1990, the Ogoni people demanded for a certain degree of political autonomy; a fair proportion of Ogoni oil wealth towards its societal development; adequate compensation for the degradation of its environment due to oil extractive operations of TNOCs, most especially Shell; and the setting up of a Sovereign National Conference by the Nigerian government, where all ethnic nationalities can renegotiate their continued membership of the Nigerian state on an equitable basis (Sampson, 2009).

Through widely publicised rallies and demonstrations, MOSOP empowered the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta to claim their oil-rich environment, declaring that the struggle for self-determination was not only morally just but also right (Soremekun, 2011:107). The movement identified the Nigerian state and Shell as the major actors to be targeted, highlighting that the reward of a successful pursuit of their struggle will eventually outweigh the costs. By deriving its legitimacy from the mass support received in Ogoni communities and the entire Niger Delta region, MOSOP became the umbrella organisation for different interest groups in Ogoni land. Groups that comprised the: Council of Ogoni Churches (COC), Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP), Council of Ogoni Traditional Rulers (COTRA), Federation of Ogoni Women (FOWA), National Union of Ogoni Students (NUOS), National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), Ogoni Teachers Union (OTU) and so on (Obi, 1999:18).

By 1992, MOSOP had successfully mobilised the local people in Ogoni land to wrest control of their oil-rich environment from the state-petro-business alliance (Akinola, 2011). NNPC alongside Shell and Chevron, which is another US oil company that operates in the Niger Delta, were given thirty days ultimatum to

meet a list of demands or have their oil operations interrupted. Among these demands were: Environmental Impact Assessment Study of TNOCs' oil exploration activities in Ogoniland in the last thirty five years; Social Impact Assessment of TNOCs' extractive operations in Ogoniland since 1958; provision of infrastructures such as general and specialist hospitals to examine the health of the local people who have been exposed to gas flaring in the past thirty five years; electricity and pipe-borne water to all Ogoni communities; review and payment of rents for all land seized by TNOCs from Ogoni land owners from 1958; and the resettlement of internally displaced people in Ogoniland to new accommodations (Obi, 1999:18-19).

It is important to highlight at this point that the adoption of militancy as a strategy to seek environmental justice by MOSOP, coincided with the new global agenda of 'human security'. One that favoured the promotion of human and environmental rights (discussed in chapter 2). MOSOP took advantage of this new security discourse to form an international platform for its advocacy, and in doing so, exposed what was unprecedentedly one of the greatest environmental injustice of all time (Soremekun, 2011:107). The new human security discourse gave the oil producing communities of Ogoniland the global lever to wage their struggle against the Nigerian state and its global oil capital allies.

MOSOP resistance gained an international audience through its linkage with the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) at the Hague, Netherlands in 1992, and its connections with other International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch Africa, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Rainforest Action Network and so on. (Okonta, 2008:265-275). Specifically, in an addendum to the Ogoni Bill of Rights published in 1991 with the title 'An Appeal to the International Community', MOSOP alleged that the Nigerian military government under Babangida have been unwilling to grant them audience despite been presented with legitimate demands in the Ogoni Bill of Rights.

By presenting its case to an international audience through a discourse that described the Ogonis and the entire Niger Delta population as a people faced

with possible genocide from the combined might of a repressive Nigerian state and its global oil capital allies, especially Shell; MOSOP was able to garner local and international support and force Shell out of Ogoniland in 1993 (Obi, 1999:20-21). Some argued that the act tendered the stage for a militarised mediation by the Nigerian political elite (Frynas, 2001), which saw the 'Rivers State Internal Security Task Force' (RSISTF) and other state regular armed security personnel drafted in to Ogoniland and its environs in what Obi (1999:21) described as a "militarised environmental governance".

Military operations were sanctioned by the state to suppress the activist movement and protect oil facilities as earlier demonstrated. The Nigerian state also resorted to the use of law to complement its militarised response to the conflict situation in the Niger Delta. In 1993, the 'Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree' was enacted by the Nigerian federal government under General Ibrahim Babangida, which made the agitation for self-determination by any minority group a treasonable act punishable by death (Emeseh, 2011:64). A year later, the Rivers State government enacted the 'Special Tribunal (Offences Relating to Civil Disturbances) Edict, under the Civil Disturbances (Special Tribunal) Decree of 1987'. This edict approved the death penalty for anyone or group involved in ethnic or communal conflict.

MOSOP leaders were subsequently arrested, detained and released several times in the new security strategy of the Nigerian state that involved intimidation and terror. Demonstrations and protests by local people at oil facilities were crushed by state security apparatus as it became evidently clear that the struggle for resource control by MOSOP was far from being over. In order to avoid further confrontation to its hegemonic and extractive power, the State-TNOCs business alliance resorted to a 'divide-and-rule' tactic by recruiting onto its side a faction of the Ogoni elite, who had personal grievances to settle with MOSOP leadership (Ikelegbe, 2011:131). By this time, Ken Saro-Wiwa (1941-1995) assumed the leadership of MOSOP as president, with Ledum Mitee as deputy president after the resignation of the previous leadership from their positions.

Sadly, on May 21, 1994, four Ogoni elite members were murdered by a youth mob in Gokana, an Ogoni community (Sampson, 2009). The mob described the traditional elite members as 'hawks' conniving with their oppressors (Nigerian state and TNOCs) against their own kind (Emeseh, 2011:67; Jike, 2004). Ken Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders were arrested and charged for the murder of the four Ogoni elite under the Civil Disturbances (Special Tribunal) Decree of 1987. In the days that followed the escalating tensions, several Ogoni communities were ransacked and militarised through a process of securitisation (Frynas, 2001). Independent accounts pinpointed indigenes most especially women and children as those that were mainly injured or/and displaced, with rough estimates putting the total loss of lives at a thousand (HRW, 1995; 1999).

Despite international campaign for the Nigerian military government to drop the charges against the MOSOP leaders and respect the human rights of the Ogoni people, nine MOSOP leaders including its president, Ken Saro-Wiwa were executed by hanging on November 10, 1995 by the Nigerian state under its ruling military council. The global condemnation that followed the execution of the 'Ogoni Nine' despite international appeal led to the adoption of a resolution condemning the killings by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, and subsequently leading to the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth. A fact-finding mission by the UN in Nigeria during March/April 1996 concluded that the trial of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight MOSOP leaders was flawed and illegal, because the Special Tribunal that held the case lacked the jurisdiction to try the accused (Soremekun, 2011:108).

Nevertheless, the suppression of the Ogoni activists and the securitisation of the region led to further development of militia movements such as the Chikoko Movement, Ijaw Youth Council and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) that later became a formidable insurgent group in the region. Like in Ogoniland, other state military operations in the Niger Delta area have defied all democratic and moral standards, offered a short-term national peace and security, as the resistance that followed state repression nurtured the circle of

violence that has endangered the lives of the people. Such are the cases of Umuechem in 1990 and the Kaiama crackdown in 1998/9.

Umuechem Military Assault (October 1990):

In the 1999 report titled 'The Price of Oil', Human Rights Watch (HRW) gave a vivid account of the police operation sanctioned by the Nigerian state against the oil-producing community of Umuechem whose indigenes were staging a protest at the Shell's facility based in the community. According to the report, the incidence of 30th and 31st of October 1990 that led to the extrajudicial killing of eighty unarmed protesters and the destruction of 495 houses, remains the most serious indictment of state-corporate alliance in the Niger Delta oil conflict history.

The event started on the 29th of October 1990 when Umuechem youths through peaceful protest demanded from Shell the infrastructural development of their community. This called for the provision of drinkable water, electricity and roads, to serve as a form of compensation for the environmental pollution caused by Shell's exploration activities in the area. However, rather than listen to the grievances of the oil-community, Shell's divisional manager in person of Udofia J.R. wrote a letter to the state Commissioner of Police in Rivers State requesting for a deployment of the renowned paramilitary Mobile Police (MOPOL) known locally as 'Kill and Go'. The security response that followed led to the loss of innocent lives that were supposed to be protected by the state.

The subsequent judicial commission of inquiry set up by the government exonerated the local people of posing any threat through the peaceful demonstration, while the police were accused of having "a reckless disregard for lives and property". However, the actual perpetrators of the heinous crime within the state security apparatus have never been brought to book nor have the victims or their relations ever been compensated.[11] This poses the question of whose security is paramount when it comes to national security calculation? Is it that of the citizens or that of the global capital as represented by TNOCs? One thing

[11] See Nsirimovu, Anyakwee (1994) ['The Massacre of an Oil Producing Community: The Umuechem Tragedy Revisited'. A publication of Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Port Harcourt, Nigeria] [belongs to Bib. Not here] for further analysis.

is however clear, that the security assault and state repression in Umuechem led to further grievances among the Niger Delta inhabitants, which nurtured the circle of violence that has endangered the Niger Delta and the Nigerian state ever since.

Kaiama Crackdown: Operation Salvage (Dec 1998 - Jan 1999):

Following the Umuechem and Ogoni crisis and the subsequent demise of Gen. Sanni Abacha, the military dictator that sanctioned the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight Ogoni activists; the Ijaw youths met in Kaiama, Bayelsa State on 11 December 1998 to form the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). The council adopted a declaration stating that the political crisis in Nigeria is an outcome of the "struggle for the control of oil mineral resources," and that the "degradation of the environment of Ijawland by the TNOCs and state arise mainly because Ijaw people have been robbed of their natural rights to ownership and control of their land and resources".

As a result, the IYC declared that it will no longer identify with any decree passed by the state without its participation or consent, and called for a stop to the militarisation of the region. Article 3 of Kaiama Declaration specifically states that:

> *"We demand the immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian state. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian state to 'protect' its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijaw people. Family members of military personnel stationed in Ijawland should appeal to their people to leave the Ijaw area alone".*[12]

The determination of the Ijaw ethnic group was further captured under Article 4 of the Declaration that stated:

[12] See Kaiama Declaration at http://www.unitedijaw.com/kaiama.htm

"...demand that all oil companies stop all exploration and exploitation activities in the Ijaw area. We are tired of gas flaring, oil spillages, blowouts and being labelled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We reject this labelling. Hence, we advise all oil companies staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th December 1998 pending resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta".

However, on the 30th December 1998 while the Ijaw youths were demonstrating across Ijaw communities in support of the IYC Declaration, the state responded in a similar way to how it responded in Umuechem and Ogoni; and unleashed its coercive power on the youths. HRW (1999) described the incident as a 'New Year Crackdown' that claimed dozens of lives of youths and three soldiers. In the days preceding the assault, truckloads of about 15,000 troops and two warships were reported to have been sighted by locals. There were also eyewitness accounts of the heavy-handed response of the state's special paramilitary anti-crime unit codenamed Operation Salvage created in August 1997 in Bayelsa State to protect oil facilities. Major Oputa who was the head of the paramilitary unit was reported to have commanded his troop to open fire on unarmed protesters in Yenagoa, the state capital. The violence and counter violence that followed the military intervention led to the declaration of a state-of-emergency by Lt. Col. Paul Obi, the state military administrator. Lt. Col. Paul Obi also banned all forms of meetings to avoid further violence.

Though the state-of-emergency was lifted on the 4th January 1999, the exact death toll of the military operation that lasted several days across Ijaw communities and the state capital has never been accounted for. Reports suggest over 200 citizens were murdered by the state security apparatus across Kaiama, Yenagoa and other communities in Ijaw heartland (HRW, 1999). One certain thing from the event is that the military operation in Kaiama like the ones in Umuechem and Ogoniland, offered short-term national peace and security as the resistance that followed the state repression continued to nurture the circle of violence that

has endangered the lives of the Niger Delta inhabitants and Nigeria's national security.

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Since the events, attempts by the Nigerian state political elite and Shell to refine its image through global public relations campaign proved unsuccessful (Idemudia, 2011:169; Ikelegbe, 2011:127), because of the state's conflict management approach which had fuelled the locals especially the jobless and powerless youths into further resistance. These politically and economically disenfranchised youths in the Niger Delta had increasingly grown frustrated with the global-state oil alliance within the Nigerian oil complex, because of evident neglect, inequities and atrocities in the oil producing region. By 1998, the ethnic militias in the Niger Delta area were well established to challenge the Nigerian state and its political elite in a period of transition from military to civilian regime. While the militias were willing to be used as private armies by the political elite contesting for political offices and at the same time fight for a share of the limited resources available to them, the Nigerian state could no longer curtail the revolutionary pressures originating from the Niger Delta area of its territory.

From Militias to Insurgents 1999-2007

The year 1999 marked a turning point in Nigeria's political history because it signified the handing over of political authority from the military to a civilian regime. During this time, the issue of environmental and national security had become a complex one with different ethnic groups and communal cleavages springing up in the Niger Delta. Also, militias were being recruited as political actors by local political elite to serve as ethnic paramilitary groups (HRW, 2003); but rather than being labelled as such, the militias were tagged 'political thugs' or/and 'opportunists' by the political elite and more recently by the local people of the Niger Delta; as research data will reveal in chapter 6. However, with unfettered access to sophisticated weapons made available to them by their political sponsors, the Niger Delta militias became more lethal and thus expanded their scope of operation (Mitee, 2009).

Consequently, the struggle for environmental and economic resources became usurped by ethnic in-fighting as a result of the political competition among the Nigerian political elite (Ukiwo, 2011:35). Evidence from the 1999 and 2003 national elections highlighted how hundreds of lives were lost and an estimated thousands displaced in the Niger Delta coastal communities of the Ilajes, Ijaws, Itsekhiris and Urhobos, because of ethnic militias fighting each other and state security apparatus over political matters. In certain cases, federal troops were sent as reinforcements to curtail the violence, some of whom were attacked or even murdered by the militias. Although the act of murder is totally abhorred in all modern societies through constitutional provisions, some analysts argued that the political elite that recruited and armed the militias in order to maintain political influence, ought to be held responsible for the atrocities committed by the militants (Ahonsi, 2011:35; Boas, 2011:118-120); arguing that the shift to criminal violence concurred with the ascendancy of militant youths as political proxies.

However, after the 2003 national elections in Nigeria, the militias were left in the cold because their services were no longer required by politicians who had either achieved or failed to achieve their political aim (Boas, 2011:118). Meanwhile, the already armed militias and still marginalised youths went back to their initial endeavour of fighting for whatever economic opportunities still available to them in the Niger Delta communities (Mitee, 2009). Their strategy included kidnapping of expatriate oil workers for ransom, interrupting oil flow through oil installations vandalisation and in some cases a total shut-down of oil production facilities (Onuoha, 2007).

Aside monetary ransom made from kidnappings, the militias resorted to oil bunkering locally to sustain their insurgent activities (HRW, 2005). The crude oil siphoned from oil pipelines were eventually sold to international buyers with huge profits made by the militias, while the Nigerian federal treasury bears the brunt of the economic loss.[13] Rough estimates put the figure of stolen oil at

[13] Ribadu Report (2012) at http://saharareporters.com/sites/default/files/ribadu...

70,000 to 300,000 barrels per day, with Nigeria's huge oil output reduced by an estimate of 15% in 2005 (Duquet, 2011:136-143).

Despite the Nigerian government militarised approach to curtail the rise of insurgency in the Niger Delta at the time, the forces of local resistance had intensified their struggle to challenge the authority and legitimacy of the Nigerian governing elite. In the fullness of time, crime became part of the resistance due to limited or non-economic opportunities for the jobless youths as some militias started operating for self-serving purposes (Campbell: 2011:63-78).

Insurgency To Domestic Terrorism 2007-2013

By 2005, the Niger Delta insurgent groups have learnt from experiences of the past, most especially that of MOSOP (Ukiwo, 2011:17-25). As a result, they devised new strategies of local resistance and global networking to support their cause. Attempts were made to upgrade the low intensity conflict in the delta region into a pan-Delta struggle for self-determination with the formation of MEND (Boas, 2011:121). In its new strategies, MEND under the leadership of Asari-Dokubo adopted public relations through media awareness as a tool for fighting its cause by using a spokesman to communicate the group's intentions prior to carrying out any threat (Ukiwo, 2011:18). With a vast amount of weaponry and firepower available to the group, MEND carried out debilitating attacks on oil installations and the Nigerian federal troops (Eberlein, 2006). These new violent methods have since been compared to that of Mary Kaldor's (2012) 'new war' by some analysts (Julius, 2011:20), because of the level of abuses and criminality involved.

On the 1st October 2010 at Nigeria's 50th independence anniversary celebration in the federal capital city of Abuja, MEND successfully carried out a bomb attack in the city. The entire world at this stage realised how existential a threat the Niger Delta issue has become to the Nigerian state; some analysts and social commentators even ascribed the event to 'the birth of domestic terrorism in Nigeria'. However, authors like Meehan and Speier (2011) and Oshita (2007), argued that the incident could have been avoided if an effective conflict

management approach was put in place by the state and its political elite. In years that followed, other insurgent groups such as Boko Haram adopted similar strategies of bombing strategic locations and government facilities as a way of making their grievances known (HRW, 2012; Onuoha, 2012). A security issue that started off in the swamps of the Niger Delta, has now impacted on the national security of the entire state. Could this really be as a result of the way the state political elite have responded to its perceived threat in the Niger Delta region? Or, could it just be as a result of the lack of accountability on the part of the state political elite?

5.5. STATE COUNTERINSURGENCY APPROACH

Since 1999, few changes have been made to the government's construction of security strategies in the Niger Delta region. This is partly because of the continued military garrisoning of the oil region by successive government to checkmate further agitations and clamour for resource control. According to Chiluwa (2011), the struggle for an expanded access to resource wealth has been temporarily curtailed under an overwhelming military strategy and a contrived political amnesty program by the state. While this study has also observed that the militarised approach of using the police and federal troops to keep peace and protect oil installations has been 'direct and swift' up until year 1998. There appears to be a continual shift towards securitisation as a way of suppressing the insurgency, other than just through military intervention.

For clarification, militarisation can be an aspect of securitisation, however, the distinguishing element is the rhetoric or discourse that often permeate the securitising act itself according to the Copenhagen School (see chapter 2). State political elite are sometimes constrained politically to act arbitrarily or incautiously, therefore have to elevate certain political issues to the security realm in order to justify the action or response taken. In the case of Nigeria post-1999, the need to reflect a democratic image of the new civilian dispensation made state political elite adopt a subtle change of approach of first labelling the oil protesters and militants as 'criminals and terrorists', before taking military actions (Zalik,

2011:184-185). Certain analysts contend that it was the post-9/11 Global War on Terror (GWOT) that made the subtle difference a desirable option for the Nigerian political elite, because of the fact that the international audience would readily buy into it (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008). Boas (2011:119) observed the significance in the merger between the Niger Delta security issues and the global security agenda.

Prior to the 1999 transition to democratic dispensation in Nigeria, the state have always been direct and swift in deploying military troops to areas where the free flow of oil was interrupted in the Niger Delta. Any minor conflict situation between host communities and TNOCs were met with swift government military responses. The periods between 1985-1998 under the military regimes of Babangida, Abacha and Abubakar saw massive military operations in the Niger Delta, whereby state security forces were used in combined operations with TNOCs private security to quell anti-oil protests resulting in heavy loss of lives. Ex-President Abubakar (cited in Ibeanu & Luckham, 2006:45) was even quoted saying that "the state military authority would not permit any form of anarchy to be perpetuated in the Niger Delta area by its youth associations". However, into the 1999 era of the new civilian regime of retired General Olusegun Obasanjo,[14] little changed in terms of the government security tactics, except for the way the security strategies were constructed and sold to the wider audience (ERA/FOE, 2002).

State Responses 1999-2013

In 1999, the Obasanjo civilian regime tried to open political dialogue with a selection of insurgent groups from the Niger Delta; however, this was seen as a ploy by the president to open up political space for his new administration (Ahonsi, 2011:13) while the use of state instrument of force that is military personnel, national police and so on to crackdown on insurgents in the course of protecting TNOCs' activities in the region, continued unabated (Omotola, 2009). A classic case is the Odi massacre in November 1999.

[14] See chapter 4 for evolution of Nigerian political elite.

Odi is a community endowed with crude oil in present day Niger Delta Bayelsa State. The community ordeal with the Nigerian state began when an alleged criminal gang operating out of Odi community headed by Ken Niweigha, ambushed and murdered seven policemen who were on investigating duty in the area (Obi, 2004:24-25). Their actions prompted the president, Olusegun Obasanjo to issue an ultimatum to the state governor Diepreye Alamieyesigha, to either fish out the criminals within fourteen days or face the wrath of the state. However, before the ultimatum expired, the Nigerian army at the president's order stormed Odi community in a military operation code named Operation Hakuri 11 led by Lt. Col. Agbabiaka, which followed a previous operation named Hakuri 1 in the same zone. The military operation led to the total annihilation of the town. According to Human Rights Watch:

> *"the troops occupied the town for around ten days, and demolished every single building, barring the bank, the Anglican church and health clinic, and left graffiti that included ethnic slurs and reflected views that the town and the whole Ijaw ethnic group must be punished for the crimes committed by their sons".* (HRW, 2002)

Some of the graffiti left by the rampaging soldiers according to eyewitness accounts included slogans such as: we will kill all Ijaws; Bayelsa will be silent forever; nobody can save you; we were sent by government to kill and burn your community, take heart; we go kill all Ijaw people with our gun; Federal Government say No to Odi; the wicked shall not go unpunished; Odi where is your pride; come take the oil now. Foolish people; we don finish Odi. We don finish the work; and it came to pass; the end; Hakuri! Hakuri!

The final outcome of the raid was the total demolition of Odi town and its inhabitants. When questioned about the operation, Femi Fani-Kayode the Presidential Spokesman said:

> *"When we need to be hard, we have been very hard. We were very tough when it came to a place called Odi town where our policemen and our people were killed by these ethnic militants.*

And the federal government went in and literally levelled the whole place. And the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It has never happened again since that time. So I think that policy works".[15]

He later went on to say that the operation was a:

"successful model of intervention that was aimed at criminal elements".[16]

President Olusegun Obasanjo also gave his view on the incident and described the operation as:

"a means of maintaining law and order and protecting human lives".[17]

However, with an estimated 2,483 people killed and the annihilation of an entire town, an Odi indigene interviewed by Human Rights Watch researcher stationed in Port Harcourt on the 4th December 1999, in a statement said:

"Why would any government use such excessive force and endanger the lives of so many innocent citizens of Nigeria for the sake of arresting between ten and thirty criminals? It makes no sense". (HRW, 2000).

With so many lives lost during the attack, it was no surprise that the National Assembly (federal parliament) delegate, under the leadership of late senate president Chuba Okadigbo, sent to inspect the scene described it as "killing an ant with a sledge hammer' (Aghalino, 2009).[18] Furthermore, analyst have ranked the incident as the third biggest military intervention in Nigeria after the Biafra civil war and the 1990s genocidal attack on the Ogonis by the then military

[15] See ERA/FOE Report (2002) pp.7. Also ICG (2006) ['The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest'. Africa Report No115 – 3 August 2006.] [in bib not here]
[16] See Ikelegbe (2001) for more on this.
[17] See ERA/FOE (2002) for presidential letter.
[18] See ERA/FOE (2002) A Blanket of Silence: Images of the Odi Genocide for a full analysis, visual representation and list of victims of the military assault.

administrations (Albert, 2003). Yet, defending the government, Doyin Okupe the Special Adviser to the president on media and publicity issued a statement saying:[19]

> *"I wish to make it categorically clear that government, by this act, has not violated any internationally acceptable human rights provisions as practiced elsewhere in the developed world. ...How can it be said that a carefully planned and cautiously executed exercise to rid the society of these criminals is a violation of human rights?"*

The Odi attack happened under a civilian dispensation. It is interesting to note the contradictions emanating from different statements of government officials and representatives when questioned about the military operation in Odi. For instance, the Nigerian Defence Minister retired General Theophilus Danjuma, while clarifying to an ECOWAS Ministerial Committee during a meeting held on 25th November 1999 stated that:

> *"This Operation Hakuri 11 was initiated with the mandate of protecting lives and property – particularly oil platforms, flow stations, operating rig terminals and pipelines, refineries and power installations in the Niger Delta".*[20]

General Danjuma's statement contradicts the earlier assertions of Femi Fani-Kayode the presidential spokesman, that the military operation was conceived to flush out criminal elements that waylaid and killed policemen who were investigating an alleged report of Ijaw youths invading Lagos. Therefore, Operation Hakuri 11 brings to light a number of questions that are yet to be answered by the state elite. Questions like: was the military operation an attempt by the state to demonstrate it will not condone any challenge to its authority and rentier interests in the Niger Delta? Or was it just a case of the state maintaining

[19] HRW (2000). See also text of speech given by DR. Doyin Okupe at a press conference in Abuja on 29 November 1999 reported in Punch Newspaper of 2 December 1999.
[20] See ERA/FOE (2002:7) for detailed analysis.

national security by maiming and killing the very citizens that it was meant to protect?

Similar to the Odi military assault, there were other cases in the Niger Delta where the political elite had unleashed state coercive forces on the oil producing communities, all in the name of fishing out criminals and terrorists. The military operations in Egbema (2004), Odioma (2005), Okerenkoko (2006), Gbaramatu Kingdom (2009) and Ayankoromo (2011) were specifically referred to as acts of state terrorism by some analysts (Julius, 2014a). These attacks were conducted under the military Joint Task Force (JTF) and were assigned different codenames like 'Operation Flush', 'Operation Fire-For-Fire', 'Operation Hakuri', 'Operation Strike Force', 'Operation Restore Hope', 'Operation Sweep', and 'Operation Pulo Shield', which was the most recent (Emuedo, 2012).

Obasanjo placed a blanket ban on all forms of militia activities the month following the Odi crackdown in December 1999, despite widespread condemnation of the security operation (Aghalino, 2009; ERA/FOE, 2002). This was similar to the decree imposed by Babangida against 'autonomous-seeking movements' in 1993, except that Obasanjo's was a specific target against individuals and youths involved in local resistance. The banning move by Obasanjo was seen as the beginning of a systematic criminalisation of the Niger Delta youths by the Nigerian political elite in order to justify future repressive acts in the region (Ikelegbe, 2001).

Furthermore, the outlawing of militias who once served as government approved vigilante groups to complement the police effort in the fight against criminality, was seen by some as a deft securitising move by the state political elite to reign in the militant youths. It is important to point out that it was not until the year 2002 that the state was able to ratify the ban, which eventually got ratified through the 'Prohibition of Certain Associations Act'. An act that bans associations or individuals or quasi-military groups formed for ethnic, cultural or social purposes or interests. This came on the heels of the new GWOT as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA.

The new strategy of criminalising and terrorising the Niger Delta youths seem to pay off for the Obasanjo administration, as the government was able to deploy even more troops to the Niger Delta conflict areas. In August 2003, a new military JTF codenamed 'Operation Restore Hope' was created with 4000 Army, Naval and Air Force personnel to patrol the entire region of the Niger Delta (Ukeje, 2011:91). With modern helicopters and gunboats sometimes provided by external actors and TNOCs, the mandate of the military unit was to curtail oil theft and protect oil facilities and personnel, even though evidence suggest they often went beyond this brief (Emuedo, 2012). The U.S. Navy also provided maritime security to curtail oil theft in the region, despite the act of oil bunkering had been in existence since the 1980s. According to Ikelegbe (2011:134), oil bunkering is a lucrative business that involved an array of elites that cut across the political, military, economic, professional and traditional divide. However, as it is within the Nigerian oil complex, it is only the criminalised communities of the Niger Delta region that have borne the brunt.

The security situation in the delta region of Nigeria has continued to be tense and fragile despite the securitisation strategy of successive civilian administrations, and the political amnesty program introduced in 2009. There has been a collapse of law and order in some oil producing communities, and the creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta have become ungoverned spaces due to the presence of militias. Fieldwork evidence suggests that despite the presence of military troops in the delta region, formal governance structures have been largely undermined by the militias and protection rackets that trade security for cash. The resistance of the insurgent groups to continued marginalisation has led to further suppression and patronage politics on the part of the political elite, who are determined to protect their oil rents at whatever cost. Sutcliffe (2012) termed this the 'politics of resistance and accommodation' because of the complex nature of youth militancy and petro-capitalism.

The bombing, illegal trade in oil and kidnapping activities that started in the Niger Delta have become almost a daily occurrence in most parts of Nigeria. This has greatly undermined national security, with governments both at federal

and state level compelled to allocate huge resources to security provision and maintenance. Though, by threatening oil facilities, which provide state revenues and profits to political elite and TNOCs, insurgents believe that the government would be forced to accede to the demands of the ethnic minority people in the delta region. However, by depicting the Niger Delta as a terrorist enclave, the state believes the youth militias can be eventually reined in. It is fair to say that such depiction suffers from improper threat analysis, as it overlooks the institutional context of the oil conflict.

Therefore, instead of perceiving all militant activities as criminal and greed inspired, the interplay of all the sociological forces within the oil complex (elite, militants, TNOCs and civil society movements) should be considered alongside why they struggle for the control of oil space. If this is seriously considered based upon the realities of petro-capitalism, then an alternative security framework that will accommodate all stakeholders interests in the Niger Delta region can be successfully conceived.

5.6. CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the Niger Delta oil conflict, it has been established that the Niger Delta is a key strategic region in Nigeria, given the Nigerian state's oil dependent political economy. Evidence suggest that the unresolved security issues in the region is attributed to long history of discontent and grievances now vented out in the form of insurgency by the Niger Delta youths, which had been further fuelled by the way the state political elite have managed the situation. The chapter revealed how state legislation and alliances guiding the Nigerian oil industry and the security crisis emanating from the alliance, has exposed the Nigerian political elite's inability to effectively manage a crisis resulting from its oil-rich environment. Thus, illustrating the social contradictions that can arise when a state-global oil cartel is formed in an alliance against indigenous people, in this case the oil minorities of the Niger Delta region who are only clamouring for equal access to its endowed natural resource.

More significantly, the chapter has unveiled what the political elite deemed as a threat to national security, which is anything that will disrupt the free flow of oil from the Niger Delta region. Given the persistent rebellion from the Niger Delta inhabitants, they are branded as insurgents and are considered as threat to national security. Going back to Galtung and the people centred security approach discussed in chapter 2, one may ask whose national security? if the very people the state is meant to protect are the same people whom the state is waging war against. This chapter has however unveiled an ulterior motive on the part of the political elite, one that situates them as a referent object of security, given that they are the major beneficiaries of the revenue from the oil rents. This has exposed a level of corruption amongst the political elite because of their mismanagement of state resources.

The chapter also revealed the political elite's adoption of securitisation as a security management approach. In that, by criminalising the youths of the Niger Delta - given the GWOT discourse, its deployment of force to curtail the militancy will be justified and accepted. However, evidence have shown that rather than the strategy of securitisation solving the oil conflict, it has further aggravated grievances and resorted to a no-win situation for all parties involved. This has meant that neither the local forces of resistance nor the state-global alliance could lay claim to a decisive victory. Even where victory seems attainable for the state-global coalition, the revolutionary pressures emanating from the aggrieved locals has only been curtailed for a minimum degree of time. Thus, to find a long lasting resolution, something has to give. The political elite owe it on themselves as state representatives responsible for maintaining security, both of the state and the people, to devise an alternative security strategy within the human security conception. A framework that will be more people centred. Thus, rather than seeing the state as a referent object of security, the security of the populace will become paramount.

The rest of this report will investigate and appraise the perceptions of security of the Nigerian political elite, the Niger Delta inhabitants, and other Nigerians/independent observers; because perceptions have real effects by

influencing the definition of problems/threats and the nature of proposed measures to address them. The aim is to explore the feasibility of establishing a framework that will form the basis for a process that will allow the views of those who prioritise state security over citizens security, and those who view security the other way round to communicate and find a common ground. The next chapter is the research findings section where the findings from the research is outlined in detail and critically analysed.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Using the Niger Delta oil conflict as a case study, the study has already in chapter 5 presented empirical evidence of state practices (Paris School) that demonstrate how the political elite through security policies have responded to conflict situations in Nigeria. The coercive security strategies implemented between 1999 to 2013 reflects the dynamic nature of the government in power, be it a military or civilian form of government. Besides, in spite of the different factors that cut across the cultural, economic, socio-political and security divide, attributed to the on-going crisis in the delta region; evidence from the study have shown that the Nigerian state security policies which involved the use of state-centric and politico-military security oriented strategies has further exacerbated the conflict. The prevalent anarchy and high level of violence still witnessed in the region as a result of the state conflict management approach has necessitated the need for a paradigm shift in the conflict management model, to one that is more citizen-centred and less coercive. By undertaking this study, the researcher aims to contribute to enabling this shift through understanding and challenging the state political elite's perception of security threat and how it respond to such threat.

The type of data collected during the data gathering phase of the study provided the research with enough test data to assess through the subjects' speech (Copenhagen School), the perceptions on the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict, perceptions of the state or government response to the conflict, perceptions of the militant youths and suggestions on how best to address the oil minorities grievances. The gathered data have focused on three target groups: the Niger Delta inhabitants, Nigerian political elite and other Nigerians cum independent observers. The target groups were used to establish the study unit of analysis as discussed in the Methodology Chapter, chapter 3.

While the Methodology Chapter outlined the methodological approach adopted for collecting and analysing data for the study, this chapter provides a detailed analysis on the collected data and findings of the research. The analysis and findings will provide the basis for designing a proposed alternative security framework that if implemented, can help better manage the Niger Delta security crisis and perhaps security issues in other parts of Nigeria.

6.2. DATA ANALYSIS

This section is structured into five subsections each analysing the results from the four areas surveyed and looking at the targeted group's view on the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict, the government's (represented by the political elite) response to the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict, the perception of the Niger Delta militant youths' cause, the perceived resolution to the oil conflict and the timeline of events.

Perceptions of the Niger Delta Conflict

The three target groups were assessed for their perception of the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict by seeking comments and responses to questions of perceptions on factors that have made the region insecure and unstable. This was to help determine the issue(s) that has given rise to and/or exacerbated the oil conflict. The indicators that frequently showed up were narrowed down to variables such as resource control, bad governance, faulty constitution, federalism, underdevelopment and environmental degradation. The results both in counts and percentages are presented in Table 6. 1. The first (blue) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the Niger Delta inhabitants including the militants of their perception of the issue at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict. Out of the cited views, 19% felt the issue was as a result of environmental degradation from the oil exploration activities of Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs).

Area 1 Analysis of Perceptions of Niger Delta oil Conflict						
	Perceptions of Niger Deltans including militants		Perceptions of the political elite		Perceptions of other Nigerians and independent observers	
Heading	**No of citings**		**No of citings**		**No of citings**	
Environmental Degradation	28	19%	3	8%	70	14%
Underdevelopment	32	21%	14	38%	82	16%
Federalism	4	3%	1	3%	27	5%
Faulty Constitution	6	4%	1	3%	20	4%
Bad Governance	36	24%	12	32%	183	36%
Resource Control	44	29%	6	16%	129	25%
Total	150	100%	37	100%	511	100%

Table 6. 1 – Area 1

The general belief is that the ecological impact of oil exploration in the Niger Delta has dispossessed the people of their land and means of livelihood with no alternative arrangement or adequate compensation either from the state or TNOCs. According to the group, the pollution from oil spill and gas flaring is so devastating that it is perceived as a form of ecological violence against the inhabitants of the Niger Delta. This view was shared by Niger Delta environmental activist, Mr Nnimmo Bassey of the Environmental Rights Action (ERA) and Friends of the Earth, Nigeria (FoEN), who articulated:

> *"A lot of people have lost hope, they've lost their land, they lost water, they cannot fish, they can't plant or cultivate their land... So when people are so disconnected from their land, disoriented from their culture, separated from what would have ordinarily brought them income, this is serious violence being done on the people's psyche. And so the response can be unpredictable. If a man sits down everyday and he sees so much money flowing, you know, you just see the pipes, and you hear the vibration and*

you see the gas flares but nothing is coming to you. It is a great violence that is being done to that person's psyche".[21]

However, 21% felt that the lack of development in the community and lack of opportunities have left the youth angry and the wider community discontented. The view was that with the ecological damage to the oil region came the grinding issues of underdevelopment and unemployment. This was highlighted during the research interview with Mr A. A., a human rights activist from the Niger Delta region, who stated:

> *"Whenever oil exploration by TNOCs begins, flow locations are established with state-of-art infrastructures that include electricity, water boreholes, and modern offices for oil company staff; leaving a graphic tale of two cities for all to see. While my people can't be jealous of the good life enjoyed by oil workers, the speed with which the TNOCs provide those amenities is always astounding. Considering the fact that over time, they failed to provide same to their host communities. The alliance of government and oil companies has brought underdevelopment both in human and structure to the oil region. And whenever my people protest against this, soldiers are sent in who are never on the side of the people, but to protect oil."* [22]

Hence, the claim that the indigenous people of the Nigerian oil belt have not benefitted from the largesse of the oil industry. Likewise, the perception that the petro-state and its TNOCs allies are oblivious to the needs and concerns of the people. This analogy confirm the structural violence analogy of Galtung discussed in chapter 2, where the act of violence is built into the structure. In the case of the Niger Delta, the act of violence has materialised in the form of the state and TNOCs denying the people access to basic social well-being, something Galtung referred to as social injustice.

[21] See Nnimmo Bassey's interview 'Why peace still eludes Niger Delta' in Sunday Vanguard Newspaper, 2 May 2004.

[22] Interview conducted with A. A. on the 7th of April 2013 in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

3% of Niger Delta inhabitants felt that the Niger Delta problem is attributed to federalism, highlighting that how the Nigerian political federating units is operated and structured runs contrary to the principle of true federalism. A further 4% felt the problem was rooted from faulty constitutions, most specifically referring to the Petroleum Act of 2004 and the Land Use Act of 1978 that abrogated ownership and control of land and the resource therein to the state at the detriment of the indigenous owners. This support analyses of other researchers like Emeseh (2011:55-70) who in his study exposed how the state has marginalised the Niger Delta inhabitants through use of legal means.

However, a larger percentage felt that bad governance and resource control were the main causes of the Niger Delta oil conflict. 24% attributed the problem to bad governance referring to the level of government corruption, state inability to implement effective policies to properly regulate the TNOCs, its arbitrary use of state security apparatus to facilitate uninterrupted oil production, and its role in facilitating ethnic domination. The other 29% of the cited views felt that resource control which encompass the derivation and allocation formula that is, how oil rent is shared between the federal, state, local governments and host communities; is a major factor and an issue at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict.

The second (brown) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the political elite's perception of the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict. Out of the cited views, 8% felt that environmental degradation and lack of proper efforts on the side of the TNOCs to do more to improve on their waste management, is the causal and contributing factor to the Niger Delta oil conflict. 38% felt that underdevelopment is a major contributing factor. Interestingly, the proportion of elite representatives who are of this view is quite higher than that of the Niger Delta inhabitants, where only 21% felt that lack of adequate development is a causal and driving factor at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict.

Only 3% apiece felt that federalism and faulty constitutions are major causes of the Niger Delta oil crisis. The two perceptions also featured in the bottom two amongst the Niger Delta inhabitants as causal or exacerbating factor of the

region's oil conflict. Some 32% of the cited views felt that bad governance is to blame both as a cause for the Niger Delta open contestation and a major contributing factor that keep exacerbating the oil conflict in the region. It is interesting to see that this also featured very high amongst the Niger Delta inhabitants, where 24% felt bad governance is the major contributing factor. It is more interesting that the political elite would accept that bad governance is a major contributing factor in the Niger Delta oil crisis.

The other 16% felt that resource control as in greater participation in sharing of the oil rent, is a major issue at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict. The proportion of elite representatives who are of this view are lower than that of the Niger Delta inhabitants; however, this factor featured in the second highest contributing factors in both the Niger Delta inhabitants' and the political elite's perception assessed.

The third (orange) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the independent observers' perception of the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict. This group comprised of scholars, journalists, activists, commentators, writers and fellow Nigerians, that is non-Niger Delta inhabitants. Out of the cited views, 14% felt that environmental degradation and other TNOCs oil exploratory activities are the cause of the Niger Delta oil conflict. This is of similar proportional representation as the results from the first two groups (the Niger Delta inhabitants and political elite). 16% felt that the lack of proper development strategies including unemployment, poor housing, degrading educational system, human insecurity and so on, are major contributing factors to the Niger Delta oil crisis.

Not many felt that federalism and faulty constitution had a bigger impact to the cause of or what has exacerbated the oil crisis, with each having a representational view of only 5% and 4% respectively. Similar to the first two groups, these variables featured in the bottom two on the assessed perceptions. However, 36% felt that bad governance is a major causal and contributing factor to the Niger Delta oil crisis, this represents majority view and follow suit with the other two groups (Niger Delta inhabitants 24% and political elite 32%); where bad

governance featured as the top contributing factor to the region's oil crisis. 25% felt that resource control is a major issue at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict. This also featured high in second place amongst this group, which follows a similar pattern to that of the Niger Delta inhabitants' group, where 29% felt strongly about the unbalanced nature of resource control.

Overall, the results from the assessed data show a similar pattern across all three categories under the group assessed for their perception of the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict. Bad governance and resource control featured in the hierarchical top two as major issues within the oil conflict, of which federalism and faulty constitution appeared to have had lesser impact and featured in the bottom two.

Perceptions of Government Response

The target groups were assessed for their perception of the state or government (represented by the political elite) response to the oil conflict by eliciting information from research data documenting how the state has managed the oil conflict. This was to help determine if the state strategy has been effective or not as a conflict management approach in response to its security problems. The variables elicited were militarisation, non-militarisation, criminalisation of youth, development programmes, political amnesty and stick and carrot approach. The results are presented in Table 6. 2. The first (blue) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the Niger Delta inhabitants including the militants, of their perception of state response to the Niger Delta oil conflict. Out of the cited views, a significant majority of 36% perceived the favoured strategy by the state in the Niger Delta is militarisation. They felt that the militarisation of the oil region and repression of protests by state security apparatus has not changed under civilian government from the military regime. They believe that militarisation, which encompass the hard power mode of traditional security, is an indication of political elite's perception of security.

Area 2 Analysis of Perceptions of Government Response to the Conflict						
	Perceptions of Niger Deltans including militants		Perceptions of the political elite		Perceptions of other Nigerians and independent observers	
Heading	No of citings		No of citings		No of citings	
Militarisation	26	36%	14	29%	129	41%
Non-militarisation	12	16%	14	29%	51	16%
Criminalisation of Youth	12	16%	6	13%	45	14%
Development Programmes	8	11%	8	17%	23	7%
Political Amnesty	5	7%	2	4%	33	11%
Stick & Carrot Approach	10	14%	4	8%	31	10%
Total	73	100%	48	100%	312	100%

Table 6. 2 – Area 2

Equally, 16% from this group felt that non-militarisation, which include the use of soft power approaches such as diplomatic means and dialogue; and the criminalisation of youths, which is the act of labelling militant youth as terrorists or criminals,[23] are top strategies in the state response to the oil belt crisis. The two approaches came joint second in the hierarchical order of the Niger Delta inhabitants perception surveyed. Some 14% felt that the state has used the combination of militarised and non-militarised strategies in managing the oil conflict. This method described as a stick and carrot approach include a mixed use of hard and soft power by the state.

A further 11% felt that the state has utilised the development programmes option to address the grievances of the oil minorities of the Niger Delta. The setting up of development interventionist agencies such as Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the creation of a government ministry solely for Niger Delta affairs, are perceived to be part of the state development approach. The political amnesty granted to militant youths in 2009 by the regime of late president Umaru Yar'Adua was perceived to be another state response strategy to the oil conflict by 7% of the Niger Delta inhabitants assessed. This group noted that the cash-for-weapon political amnesty that required militants to willingly surrender

[23] See chapter 5 section 5.5 for discussions of state responses to the Niger Delta insurgency

their arms in exchange for cash and apprenticeship, has had a great impact on the level of violence in the oil region.

The second (brown) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the political elite's perception of the state response to the oil conflict. Out of the cited views, 17% felt that the state has initiated and implemented various developmental and infrastructural programmes in the oil producing region to address the grievances of the locals. Merely 4% of political elite acknowledged the government amnesty programme as part of the state response to the oil conflict, compared to 7% of the Niger Delta inhabitants assessed. A further 8% of the political elite felt that the state has used both militarised and non-militarised conflict management strategies, which included judicial proceedings in certain cases. This stick and carrot approach was deem necessary according to the elite assessed, because the state has a duty to protect its citizens as well as assert its authority at the same time.

13% of the political elite assessed felt that the state has criminalised the youth in the course of presenting its case for military intervention in the region. According to the group, the security framing of militant youths as terrorists or criminals is a 'securitising move' on the part of the state. It is interesting that even the political elite acknowledge the securitisation of the Niger Delta conflict as a ploy on the part of state actors to justify their military operations in the oil region; this follows suit with the 16% of the Niger Delta inhabitants who shared this view.

As results from the documentary and content analysis indicate, 29% of the assessed political elite believe that the state has used the military option in containing the oil conflict, while a further 29% felt that the state has used non-military strategies to manage the conflict. Despite the proportion of elite representatives who believe that the state response to the oil conflict has been mainly militarised is lower than the Niger Delta inhabitants who held a similar view at 36%, the critical point being highlighted is that militarisation as a preferred state response to the oil conflict featured at the top in the hierarchy of

the two groups. Though in joint top with non-militarisation under the political elite subgroup.

The third (orange) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the independent observers' perception of state response to the oil conflict. Out of the cited views, 41% perceived the favoured government response to the Niger Delta oil conflict is militarisation. Similarly, this featured atop in the Niger Delta inhabitants and the political elite groups. Only 16% felt that the preferred state response has been non-militarised strategy. This is of similar proportional representation to the 16% of Niger Delta inhabitants who held a similar view; also coming at second in the hierarchical order in both groups.

14% perceived the criminalisation of youths, which involved framing dissenting youths as terrorists or criminals, has been a major strategy used by the state in prosecuting its so called oil war. A further 11% acknowledged the state political amnesty as a response on the part of the government, while another 10% felt that the stick and carrot approach, which involves both coercive and non-coercive methods has been used in the oil producing region. Only 7% of those assessed in this group acknowledged the developmental initiatives of the government to address some of the grievances of the oil minorities.

Overall, there are variances within the perceptions of the three units of analysis (Niger Delta inhabitants, political elite and independent observers) on the state response to the oil conflict. Political amnesty featured in the least of state response strategies according to the Niger Delta inhabitants and political elite group, while it featured as second to the least in the independent observers group. However, militarisation featured at the top of the hierarchy within the three groups, reinforcing the perception that militarisation and repression of protests has been the favoured instrument of state power in the Niger Delta region.

Perceptions of the Militant Youths

The groups were assessed for the way they perceive the youth militias of the Niger Delta. In other words, how they would describe the militant youths from

their activities in relation to the Niger Delta oil crisis. This was to help determine their cause and role in the Niger Delta struggle and the impact this has had on the general security situation in the region. The variables elicited from the research data are freedom fighters, opportunists, criminals, terrorists, political thugs and cultists. The results are presented in Table 6.3. The first (blue) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the Niger Delta inhabitants - excluding the militants, of their perception of the youth militias in the region.

Area 3 Analysis of Perceptions of Militant Youths						
	Perceptions of Niger Deltans excluding militants		Perceptions of the political elite		Perceptions of other Nigerians and independent observers	
Heading	No of citings		No of citings		No of citings	
Freedom Fighters	17	20%	0	0%	17	8%
Opportunists	14	16%	5	8%	53	26%
Criminals	31	36%	37	60%	57	28%
Terrorists	3	4%	9	15%	12	6%
Political Thugs	14	16%	8	13%	48	24%
Cultists	6	7%	3	5%	17	8%
Total	85	100%	62	100%	204	100%

Table 6. 3 – Area 3

Out of the cited views, 20% perceived them as freedom fighters. They were seen as vanguard of the struggle in the Nigerian oil belt. A 16% of Niger Delta inhabitants saw them as opportunists who have hijacked the legitimate struggle in the region for their own personal gains; and regarded them as self-interested and greedy youths. A further 16% saw them as political thugs who were being sponsored by politicians that are hell bent on acquiring or clinging onto political power. Another 7% perceived them to be cultists belonging to different confraternities, with 'Egbesu' deity the most mentioned. Only 4% from the group perceived the youths as terrorists; although with a majority of 36% describing them as criminals. This signifies a major shift in the dynamic of the petro-violence in the Niger Delta, which runs contrary to the assertion of most literature on the oil conflict.

The second (brown) column of the table shows the assessment of the Nigerian political elite of how they perceive the militant youths of the Niger Delta region. Of the cited views, none describe the youth militias as freedom fighters compared to 20% of Niger Delta inhabitants that described them as such. 8% of the political elite ascribed to them as opportunists, who were all out to benefit themselves and families as against the larger community. 13% of the political elite assessed perceive the youths to be political thugs who are pawns in the hands of their political godfathers.

A lowly 5% described the youths as cultists and another 15% labelled the militant youths as terrorists. This is quite high compared to the 4% of the Niger Delta inhabitants that labelled them as such. However, a significant majority of 60% of the assessed political elite representatives perceived the dissenting youths to be criminals describing them as bandits, hoodlums and miscreants in some cases. These perceptions align with the Niger Delta inhabitants group, except with the difference in proportional representation where only 36% of Niger Delta inhabitants perceived the youth to be criminals.

The third (orange) column of the table is the reflection of how other Nigerians outside the Niger Delta region and independent observers within and outside the country perceive the militant youths in the delta region. Out of the cited views, 8% perceived them to be freedom fighters who are championing the cause of their people; while an 8% described them as cultists who engage in rituals and oath-taking. Some 24% perceived them to be political thugs describing them as sponsored militias, while another 26% saw them as opportunists that were after their own private interests.

Only 6% of those assessed within this group described the militant youths as terrorists, which is similar to the 4% representation of Niger Delta inhabitants who held a similar view; although at a wider proportional variance to the political elite, which has a 15% representation of those who are of the same perception. Nevertheless, the militant youths being perceived as criminals also featured at the top of the hierarchy in this group, as seen in the other two; with 28% independent observers describing them as such.

On a general note, there are variances and similarities in the perceptions of the target groups in Area 3. The Niger Delta inhabitants and independent observers appear to see something positive in the role of the militant youths by perceiving them as freedom fighters, whereas the political elite have discarded this assumption. Though, all three groups described the youths to a certain extent as criminals, with a higher proportion found within the political elite rank. However, it is interesting that even within the Niger Delta communities, their youths are perceived as criminals because of their militant activities. This begs the question: is it a case of the social acceptability of the youths declining, or is it that part of the dynamics of the oil violence has not been captured by recent literature?

Perceptions of the Best Resolution

The groups were assessed for what they perceive to be the best solution in resolving the Niger Delta oil conflict. This becomes necessary because of the implication of the conflict on both regional and international security, most notably the world energy supply and prices. By seeking for opinions on a possible resolution mechanism, an alternative framework for security or conflict management can be developed, one that could lead to an enduring resolution of the conflict. In the course of the documentary research, the variables extracted as possible instruments for addressing the conflict were new constitution, resource control, true federalism, demilitarisation, development programmes and political amnesty. The results are presented in Table 6.4.

Area 4 Analysis of Suggestion of Best Resolution						
	Perceptions of Niger Deltans including militants		Perceptions of the political elite		Perceptions of other Nigerians and independent observers	
Heading	**No of citings**		**No of citings**		**No of citings**	
New Constitution	10	8%	0	0%	16	10%
Resource Control	60	50%	2	10%	66	39%
True Federalism	11	9%	2	10%	12	7%
Demilitarization	10	8%	2	10%	11	7%
Development Programmes	19	16%	10	50%	38	23%
Political Amnesty	9	8%	4	20%	25	15%
Total	119	100%	20	100%	168%	100%

Table 6. 4 – Area 4

The first (blue) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the Niger Delta inhabitants including militants, of what they perceived to be the best strategy to effectively address the grievances in the delta region. Out of the cited views, 8% suggested that a new constitution needs to be enacted with some of the old obnoxious legislations eradicated, particularly those bordering on land ownership. Another 8% suggested that an extension of the window period of the political amnesty might help in bringing respite to the troubled region. A further 8% of the Niger Delta inhabitants perceived demilitarisation of the region as the best solution in addressing the level of insecurity in the area. It is their belief that the less military presence in the region, the less the likelihood of state repression, eventually opening up avenue for dialogue.

Some 16% felt that the initiation of development programmes as an interventionist approach might help in dousing the tension in the region. With this, it is believed that the oil minorities will feel that the state is on their side and is concerned for their needs and that of their future. However, 9% of those assessed among the Niger Delta inhabitants felt that the restructuring of the Nigerian federation to reflect true federalism in its real sense, is the best panacea to resolving the conflict. A majority of cited views of 50% of the Niger Delta inhabitants indicated that resource control, which involves greater participation of the oil minorities, will fully address the Niger Delta question. An issue they described as a national shame because the goose that lays the golden egg has been systematically strangulated.

The second (brown) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of the political elite of what they perceive to be the best strategy to effectively address the Niger Delta oil conflict. Out of the cited views, 10% suggested true federalism and another 10% proposed demilitarisation. This is close to the 9% and 8% of the Niger Delta inhabitants who held the similar view. Another 10% suggested resource control which varies significantly to the 50% representation from the Niger Delta inhabitants who suggested a similar resolution. A further 20% of the assessed political elite suggested political amnesty as a probable

solution noting that the level of violence reduced in the region after the 2009 declaration of amnesty by the state.

However, a majority of 50% of the political elite felt that if more development programmes that include both physical infrastructures and human development projects were initiated, the conflict in the Nigerian oil belt will be a thing of the past. The interesting aspect of this part of the study is that none of the assessed political elite felt the need for a new constitution to address the oil conflict. Suggesting the constitution is adequate and clear enough to understand, other than the problem which lies with applicability on the part of the state, and acceptance on the part of the people.

The third (orange) column of the table shows the results from the assessment of independent observers of their suggestions on what they perceived to be the best way forward in resolving the Niger Delta imbroglio. Out of the cited views, 7% apiece suggested true federalism and demilitarisation as the best probable solutions to address the conflict. These are close to 9% and 8% of Niger Delta inhabitants who held similar view. Another 10% also suggested new constitution, which is similar to the 8% of Niger Delta inhabitants who proposed the same; although, which the political elite felt no need for. A further 15% suggested political amnesty, while a larger 23% felt the initiation and implementation of development programmes as the best way forward. Noting there is a wide mark between initiation and implementation in the Nigerian context. A significant majority of 39% however believed that resource control that is well defined through a just and proper derivation and allocation formula is the best mechanism to address the oil minorities grievances.

Overall, the results from the assessed data in this area shows a near similar pattern in the Niger Delta inhabitants and independent observers groups, but a marked variance with the political elite group. Resource control and development programmes topped first and second respectively in the hierarchical order of resolution mechanisms within the Niger Delta inhabitants and independent observers groups. Whereas, development programmes came first for the political elite and resource control at joint third or joint last depending on individual's

interpretation. Interestingly, new constitution did not feature in the perception of the political elite as a probable solution. Whereas it ranked joint fourth in the Niger Delta inhabitants group and featured at fourth position in the independent observers group.

Timeline Analysis

The data was further analysed to assess how the perception of how the government has responded to the Niger Delta oil conflict have changed over a period of time between years 2000 to 2012. The data was analysed to assess the perception of both the Niger Delta inhabitants and the political elite on the topic, and to determine the (non)coerciveness of the state conflict management strategy. The data was extracted from sourced data used in Area 2, which captures how the Niger Delta inhabitants - including militants, and the political elite perceived the state response to the oil conflict (excluding independent observers' perception).

Five out of the six variables (militarisation, non-militarisation, criminalisation of youth, development programmes and political amnesty, excluding stick & carrot approach) used to categorise the responses in Area 2 were further re-categorised into two categories, each representing the use of either soft power (non-militarisation, development programmes and political amnesty) or hard power (militarisation and criminalisation of youth) in the government's response to the Niger Delta oil conflict. The results are presented in Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2.

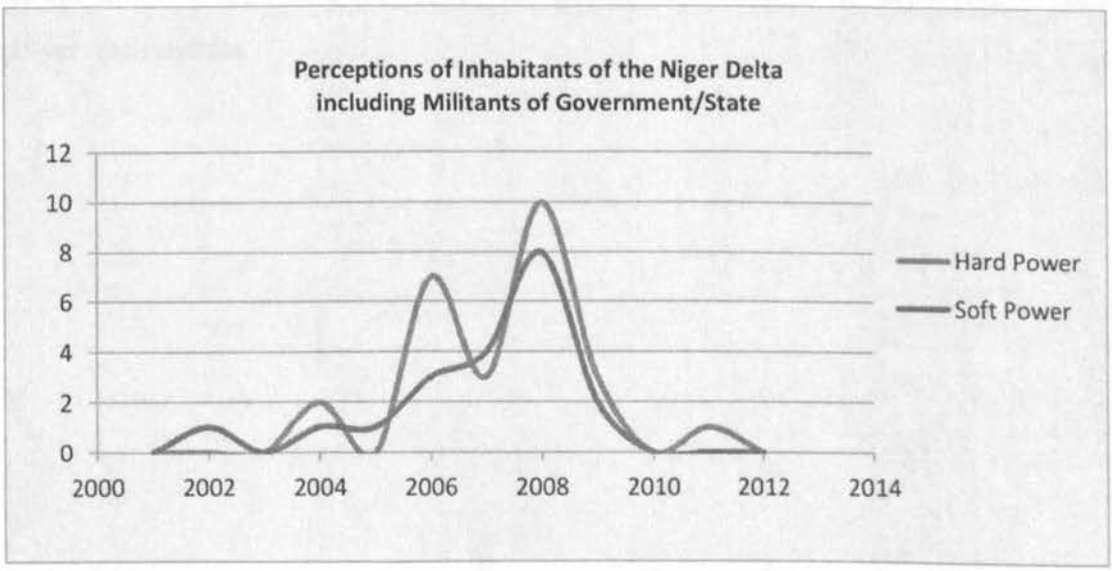


Figure 6. 1 – Inhabitants of the Niger Delta Timeline

Figure 6.1 reflects the perception of the Niger Delta inhabitants - including the militants, of the government's conflict management approach to the Niger Delta oil crisis between the period 2000 to 2012. The result shows that from year 2001, the government had adopted a soft power approach which continued into year 2002 but stopped in year 2003, which is when the people felt the government started to change direction and adopted a more hard power approach. Perception of the government's approach varied from year 2004, where a higher proportion felt the government used more hard power than soft power in dealing with the Niger Delta crisis.

An increasing proportion felt that since 2005, the government had used soft power even though more people felt the government had used hard power more than soft power in its responses. It is interesting that there was a steady increase in the perception of those that felt the government had used soft power, which peaked in year 2008 and began to decline from there onward. The perception on the use of hard power varied between 2004 and 2010, where it peaked both in year 2006 and year 2008. Overall, the perception shows the government had employed a more hard power approach than soft power approach. This might be due to the fact that militancy took the form of full blown insurgency during this period as already accounted for in chapter 5, section 5.4 of the thesis.

However, since late 2009 to 2010 in the Niger Delta inhabitants view, the use of coercive and non-coercive means of state power has been relatively close except under a spell in 2011 where the government reverted to deploying it hard power instruments.

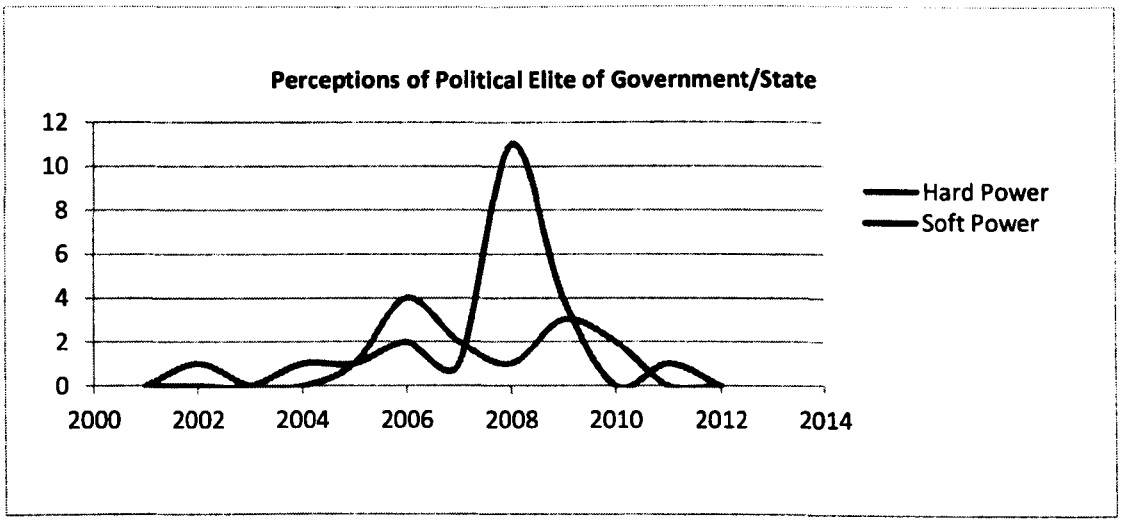


Figure 6. 2 – Political Elite Timeline

The illustration in Figure 6.2 reflects the political elite's perception of the government's conflict management approach to the Niger Delta oil crisis between 2000 and 2012. The results indicate that the political elite perceived the state to have used more hard power strategies to manage its oil conflict between the period 2001 and 2002. In 2004, the political elite felt the state adopted more non-coercive means to address the Niger Delta security situation compared to its use of hard power tactics. The political elite felt that a significant proportion of state instrument of hard power was unleashed in the oil delta in 2005 to 2007 and again in 2009. In this period, the Niger Delta inhabitants also felt that the government responses have been more of hard power than soft power.

However, from early 2007 up till 2009, more in fact a higher proportion of political elite felt that the government had adopted a more soft power approach in how it has responded to the crisis in the Niger Delta; which is also at a level never seen before under the period studied. Although, it is worth pointing out that the Niger Delta inhabitants perceived the state to have used both hard and soft power approaches simultaneously, however, relying more on the coercive strategy during this period. In the political elite's perception, the state reverted to the use of more coercive instruments in 2010 which later subsided from 2011 onward, a view that is in direct contrast with the Niger Delta inhabitants assessed.

The researcher found no unitary view to what the political elite and the Niger Delta inhabitants perceive as hard and/or soft power elements of the state response to the oil conflict. This contrasting perception of hard and soft power is evident in the above diagrams whereby within the period spanning 2001 to 2003, the political elite perceived government security practices to be coercive and high-handed, whereas the Niger Delta inhabitants perceived the state strategies during this period to be less coercive. Similarly in 2004, the Niger Delta inhabitants perceived state response to be more coercive and hard natured, however, the political elite adjudged the response to be less coercive and more soft natured during this period.

Furthermore, in 2008 the political elite felt more soft power means were adopted by the state in the delta in direct contrast to Niger Delta inhabitants, who held opposite view. Understanding this mixed picture is crucial to this study because what the Niger Delta inhabitants might term as state high-handedness through its security response, is sometimes referred to as mere and necessary security intervention on the part of the state by the political elite.

This concludes the data presentation. The next section will discuss in detail the findings from the research and how it bears on proving the research hypothesis.

6.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Perceptions of the Niger Delta conflict (Area 1)

It is noticeable from the data evidence presented above that the assessed target groups displayed different understanding of the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict, which were attributed to various causes cutting across the economic, socio-political and security spectrum. A very high proportion (24% of Niger Delta inhabitants cited perceptions, 36% of independent observers and 32% of political elite) perceived *bad governance* to be the main causal and exacerbating factor of the oil conflict. They considered issues such as youth unemployment, poverty, and social neglect as the effects of bad governance. Even though certain

analysts attribute the level of impoverishment in the delta region to environmental degradation resulting from TNOCs activities, and the political marginalisation suffered in the hands of the political elite (Eberlein, 2006). This contrast with what many Niger Delta inhabitants had to say. Mr S. M., a political scientist and government appointee who hails from the Niger Delta region stated during the research interview:

> " *...of what use is a government that fails to provide basic amenities to its own citizens, especially the very citizens that lays the golden egg for the nation. When militants takes over government duties by providing food and shelter for their immediate communities, there is bound to be some form of solidarity between the rural communities and the militants who are now the alternative government. When this situation is sustained, governance will be questioned and militancy will thrive".*[24]

The argument being that it is the responsibility of the Nigerian political elite to establish an effective government structure that ensures the human security of its citizens. A state that dithers in meeting these responsibilities cannot be adjudged to be a government for the goodness of its own people.

The human security concept outlined several aspects where a state must provide for its citizens, these include food, health, education, decent employment, social welfare and so on.[25] In the case where any of these is lacking, such could give rise to conflict situations as seen in the case of the Niger Delta. Any society that does not provide or cater for the basic human needs of its citizenry, will at the long run face a revolt from the population - with or without colonialism. In other words, the acts of dissent in the Nigerian oil region against the state and TNOCs by its civil society can be blamed on the Nigerian social and living conditions. This viewpoint has a resonant of the frustration-aggression theory,

[24] Interview conducted on the 3rd of April 2013 in Lagos, Nigeria. A follow up interview was later conducted with the same interviewee on the 5th of April 2013 in Benin City, Edo State to clarify certain issues regarding the first interview with him. He is a top government functionary that has served both at Federal and state level of governance.

[25] Discussed in chapter 2 section 2.3.

which perceive aggression as a consequence of frustration from a feeling of relative deprivation in a given society. That is why it is no surprise that socio-economic factors such as high poverty rate, unemployment and falling standard of living have been held responsible for the high level of national (in)security issues in Nigeria (HDI, 2013). A view shared by Ukeje (2005) who attributed the catalyst of citizens revolt in Nigeria to the inability of the political elite to deliver on public goods. Even the political elite admit there is a problem of bad governance in Nigeria. Former president Olusegun Obasanjo in an interview stated:

> " ... *the insecurity in Nigeria today is as a result of misappropriation and high percentage of national resources that was used for the procurement of military hardware and maintenance of large military forces in the hope of promoting physical security at the expense of quality of living for the citizens".*[26]

While Obasanjo's comments were purported to indict his own administration, it also reflect the Nigerian political elite's perception of security from that of a state-centric perspective hence, supporting the literature review of chapter 2, in particular claims from scholars like Ayoob (1995), that security in Nigeria is generally viewed from the traditional realist mode that sees the state as the primary referent object of security. Therefore, answering research question (i) outlined in chapters 1 and 3, sections 1.4 and 3.1 respectively. Obasanjo's comments further supports Waltz's (1979) argument, that military power is the ultimate means to achieving security against threats.

The other factor that featured high on the perception of issues at the heart of the Niger Delta crisis is *resource control* (29% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 25% of independent observers and 16% of political elite). Resource control is emblematic of factors such as: economic deprivation and exploitation resulting from the oil exploration of TNOCs; lack of a significant controlling stake in how

[26] See 'Insecurity, Result of Bad Governance'. Thisday Newspaper 22nd May 2012. Retired General Obasanjo speaking at a symposium on Security, Governance and Leadership in Dutse, Jigawa State.

oil revenue is shared; and the inability to claim land ownership and the resource therein for self-development. These are reflective of what the 'Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People' (MOSOP) fought for under the 'Ogoni Bill of Rights', and supports other scholars' analysis that puts the Land Use Act of 1978 at the centre of the Niger Delta crisis; the act that transferred land ownership and its mineral resources to the federal government at the detriment of the original land owners – see chapter 5.

Majority from the Niger Delta inhabitants and the independent observers target groups agreed that since the decree of the act, resource control has been a major driver of the on-going conflict in the region. The findings support scholars like Oluduro (2014) and Frynas (2001) on their approach to analysing the Niger Delta conflict from a legalistic point of view, arguing that the delta crisis portrays an environmental injustice against the people, which should be addressed in term of land and property rights, compensations and litigations. As opposed to the Marxist argument of scholars like Obi (1999) and Akhaine (2011), who claimed the dominant alliance between the Nigerian state and TNOCs are allegedly responsible for insecurity in the Niger Delta region.

The issue surrounding the Niger Delta inhabitants clamour for more controlling stake in the allocation of oil revenue is historic (see chapter 5). The federal government and the oil producing states have been the highest beneficiaries of the derivation principle up until the Nigerian Biafra civil war between 1967 to 1970; which changed the economic trajectory of the political elite in government at the time (Graf, 1981). Indication from existing literature showed how the derivation revenue from oil sale was slashed from 50% to 1.5%. As a result, states had huge reduction in revenue, which impacted on the ability to self-develop and fund regional projects that could have potentially created additional youth employment and eradicate the high level of poverty in the Niger Delta region.

> *"...derivation is the recognition of a prior beneficial right that was subsequently expropriated. Thus, the principle of derivation is a form of compensation and/or reparation for an expropriated*

interest ...resource control is the desire of the oil communities to control any natural resource found within its boundaries. ...while the proviso to section 162(2) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution directs that not less than 13% of the revenue accruing to the Federation Account directly from any natural resources located in the state should be paid to same..., it (oil region) is not been recompensed for anything even though it will be paying tax to the centre for its common protection and administration of the federation".[27]

The above speech by Mr. Odje-Mudiaga demonstrate the feelings of denial and unjust treatment felt by the Niger Delta inhabitants. Although, there appears to be a misconception between the political elite and the Niger Delta inhabitants on the issue of resource control, given it ranked 2nd highest on the Niger Delta inhabitants' list and 3rd on the political elite's. In view of Mr. Odje-Mudiaga statement, the Niger Delta inhabitants' agitation for an increase in the derivation percentage from 13% to 50% is a legal matter because the constitution allowed for it as opposed to the clamour for resource control, which was more of a political agitation. The political elite on the other hand, believe that the two are intertwined and that the oil minorities already have a greater stake in how their resource is allocated, managed and controlled; hence, the adopted conflict management approach. It is interesting the way the concepts of resource control and derivation have been used interchangeably without appreciating its distinction.

These differences in opinion explains why scholars like Omeje (2007:27) have used the internally driven literature to analyse the Niger Delta oil conflict. The internally driven approach focus on the role of the Nigerian political elite in administering security that is, the nexus between the elite's security strategies in response to perceived or real internal threats, and the escalation of those threats

[27] Abstracted from Odje-Mudiaga, Akpo (2006) "Building to last with peace in Nigeria: The Niger Delta as a case study". A speech delivered at the Law Students' Association of Delta State University Meritorious award ceremony, Oleh Campus on 5th May 2006. See Guardian Newspaper, 2nd June 2006 for publication.

to open conflicts that often undermine national security and international security at large.

Another issue crucial to the cause of the oil conflict is *underdevelopment,* which featured third highest across the target groups' perceptions (21% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 16% of independent observers and 38% of political elite). The statement by Mr. P. A. - a security analyst cum consultant captured during the research interview stated:

> *"...while there has never been paucity of developmental initiatives in the delta region by successive governments, an analytical perspective can be summarised through the daily existence of these rural communities. Most of them have no portable drinking water, hence, they have to rely on mosquito larva infested water to drink. Malaria and Cholera being water borne diseases becomes the bane of the people because the mosquitoes that causes the diseases bred right inside the water. So the wide gulf between elite promise of providing basic amenities and their actual practice of not providing it has compromised the citizen's health that is guaranteed under human security".*[28]

.... reflected the views of many across the target groups, where the issue of underdevelopment was seen in state failure to develop the region through the provision of social amenities, infrastructures, good road networks and youth development programmes. The issue relates back to the notion of human security and Galtung's 'structural violence' theory, where when the basic needs required to make people feel satisfied are lacking, could set off a revolt against the government as seen in the case of the Niger Delta crisis. It is interesting that a significantly higher proportion of the political elite found underdevelopment a key factor giving rise to the conflict in comparison to the Niger Delta inhabitants. One possible reason could be that the Niger Delta inhabitants believe that with

[28] Interview conducted with the security analyst/consultant on the 3rd of April 2013 in Lagos, Nigeria. He works as a security contractor for some the government and some churches in northern Nigeria.

greater control of their resources, land ownership and/or suitable allocation of derivation revenue from oil sale, they can self-develop and build their own communities.

The views on *environmental degradation* also featured prominently as a major issue in the oil conflict (19% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 14% of independent observers and 8% of political elite). This supports the view from many literature on the root cause of the delta violent conflict (ADB, 2009; RTTCND, 2008); where oil and gas exploration at the upstream and downstream sectors in Nigeria has been associated with environmental pollution. Oil spillage, gas flaring and pipeline leakages constitute major sources of environmental insecurity in the delta region through air, water and land pollution. This has made Nigeria rated as one of the worst gas flaring states in the world with its annual flaring standing at 25% of the global annual flaring (Iwayemi, 2006:38-39).

The effects has been destruction of vegetation and means of livelihoods for the Niger Delta inhabitants, thereby impacting on their human security. Given the impact on human security, it is interesting that environmental degradation featured quite low compared to the other issues discussed earlier; possibly because majority of the Niger Delta inhabitants' grievances has been directed at the government for not treating them fairly because of the way their natural resources is being managed. As well as the way the government has been less assertive when it came to holding TNOCs accountable for the impact of their oil exploration on the locals in the region. A typical example is the failure of the political elite to pass the Petroleum Industry Bill since 2009 up till now, six years later after the initial draft was tendered at the senate.

Similarly, environmental degradation featured low among the political elite target group; possibly because the elite's attitude towards the issue is that oil exploration and oil spillage go in parallel. Some of the elite respondents even used the 2010 Deepwater Horizon BP oil spillage in the Gulf of Mexico to justify this notion. It is interesting that the political elite will take such view, it says a lot about their perception of security and the importance placed on environmental security; which is a key component of the human security concept proposed and envisaged

by the Copenhagen School. Thus, given the state nonchalant attitude towards the destruction of the ecosystem which is affecting the livelihood of the very citizens the state is meant to protect, one can fairly conclude that national security in Nigeria does not equally include the security of the people. As the research findings have shown that the state is happy to sacrifice the people's security as long as oil rent keeps flowing to the purse of the state.

While environmental degradation had featured low on the level of perceptions, the issue concerning the structure of the Nigerian *federation* had featured even lower (5% or less across all the target groups). According to Davis (2009), true federalism is a governmental system that constitutionally divides sovereignty between a central governing authority and its constituents political units; where power is shared between the national, state and/or local governments. However, in the case of Nigeria, it has never behaved like a true federal state. This goes back to its history when the amalgamation of diverse ethnic groups, by the British colonialists, forced the unnatural grouping of 350 linguistic and cultural groups. This has since posed daunting political challenges to successive government administrations, both under military and civilian regimes.

In terms of political structure, the Nigerian federal system exploded from 12 states and 96 local governments in 1967 at the start of the Biafra civil war to the present 37 states and 774 local governments structure. Yet with a population above 150 million, the country has been unable to design the right federal structure due to gross inequalities between regions and classes. Subsequently, the clamour for more states with oil revenue dissipation started being seen as an attempt to placate other regional and ethnic groups outside the Niger Delta (Iwayemi, 2006). Thus, the creation of new states from oil wealth became a political tool by different government administrations to appease certain ethnic groups interests at the expense of fostering a national identity that encourages a cohesive political and economic development.

Although, when federalism works it can preserve the cultural and ethnic diversity of the people and at the same time maintain order as well as advance shared common values and interests. Nevertheless, in Nigeria, the creation of new states

as a political expediency has increased the vulnerability of the state to instability; because of the resentment of the oil producing region towards other ethnic groups that are not resource-rich.[29] Notable from the perspective of this discourse are two viewpoints. First, there is a bias towards the Niger Delta from other federating units, because of the flaws in the revenue allocation system. Given that the region will prefer to possess maximum control over its oil resource while contributing a fair share to the Federal Account for the maintenance of collective security and military support - leading back to the issue of resource control.

Second, the proliferation of states has encouraged an 'entitlement culture' whereby state actors rather than use imaginative governance to generate revenue through taxation or other means, have become totally dependent on oil revenue. As a result, the political federating units are seen as a means of wealth accumulation, making state creation an end to a means - leading back to the issue of bad governance.

Perceptions of Government Response (Area 2)

The appraised perceptions of the target groups to the state response in addressing the Niger Delta oil crisis revealed the number of strategies employed by the government, either as a conflict resolution or containment strategy, or both. The top perceived approach across all groups was *militarisation* (36% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 41% of independent observers and 29% of political elite), which involved the deployment of force to curtail any uprising. This stat substantiates evidence from literature review on state military approach in the Niger Delta, often seen through the use of the military Joint Task Force for special security operations, which analysts have described as repressive, coercive, high handed and brutish in nature.[30] However, given the top two key issues at the heart of the Niger Delta conflict that has ignited grievances and resulted to insecurity in the region is highlighted as resource control and bad governance, both impacting on the human security of the people; it is the argument of this study that the militarisation approach adopted by the state is far-fetched and does not correlate

[29] See El-Rufai, N.A. (2012c) "A Federation Without Federalism". Thisday Newspaper 6th April 2012.
[30] See discussion on the securitisation of the Niger Delta in chapter 5 section 5.4 and Appendix A.

with the nature of the problem that has given rise to the Niger Delta crisis in the first place.

The Nigerian government's militarisation strategy reflect the characteristic of a state-centric government perception of security threat, where any activity or sequence of events that poses to undermine the survival of the state is met with force (Marthur, 1996:305). Such is the case of Odi massacre in the Niger Delta in 1999 that allegedly claimed 2,483 innocent lives and annihilated an entire town. The subsequent government response to the incident delivered through Femi Fani-Kayode, the presidential spokesman, reveals the state-centric mindset of the government, which can be argued boils down to the military background of the political elite in power:

> *"...when we need to be hard, we have been very hard. We were very tough when it came to a place called Odi town where our policemen and our people were killed by these ethnic militants. And the federal government went in and literally levelled the whole place. And the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It has never happened again since that time. So I think that policy works".*[31]

Literature exploring the notion of security and threat often include defence against threats to the populace as well as the state. Those literature also recognise that defining what constitute a threat to national security can be subjective as well as objective.[32] In the case of the Nigerian political elite, the misperception of security threat has led to the adoption of security practices that are repressive, infringing on human rights, and have further deepened the grievances of the people. It is interesting that the special adviser to the president on media and publicity, Doyin Okupe will make the following comments following the Odi massacre in 1999, which highlights the state's perception on security:

[31] ICG (2006b), "The Swamps Of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest". Africa Report No115 – 3 August 2006. See also Environmental Rights Action (ERA) report (2002) pp.7

[32] See discussions on the perception of security in chapter 2 section 2.3.

"... I wish to make it categorically clear that government, by this act, has not violated any internationally acceptable human rights provisions as practiced elsewhere in the developed world. ...How can it be said that a carefully planned and cautiously executed exercise to rid the society of these criminals is a violation of human rights?"[33]

A view shared by the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole, who described the military invasion as a "peacekeeping operation".[34] This failure of the political elite to recognise that the security of a state should include that of the people as well as the state, demonstrate that the elite will to go to extensive length to legitimise coercive actions. The analysis supports preceding analysis of other scholars such as Ibeanu and Momoh (2008) who claimed that security in Nigeria is rooted in the traditional realist mode; whereby the political elite believe what constitute security is the ability of the state to exploit and regulate all legitimate instruments of coercion. It is this kind of perception coupled with the people's determination to fight for their rights that has continued to fuel the unrest in the delta region. Furthermore, the research findings back claims from scholars like Uzodike and Isike (2009); that in the cause of competing for oil space and access to resources, the crisis in the Niger Delta has been exacerbated by the Nigerian government's conflict management approach. Thus, answering research question (v) - see chapter 1 section 1.4 or chapter 3 section 3.1.

However, militarisation is not the only security approach adopted by the Nigerian state government. The second top perceived state response was *non-militarisation* (16% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 16% of independent observers and 29% of political elite), which included initiatives such as fairer allocation from oil revenue, state creation, setting up of Judicial Commissions of Inquiry and government committees to investigate security issues and report on the findings. It is interesting that a significant higher proportion of the political elite believe that the state non-militarisation approach balances out its militarisation strategy, in

[33] See text of speech given by Dr. Doyin Okupe at a press conference in Abuja on 29 November 1999 reported in Punch newspaper of 2nd December 1999.
[34] See Dimeji Bankole's interview in Thisday Newspaper, 21 May 2009.

contrast to the other target groups whose data shows they believed the state militarisation approach surpassed it non-militarisation actions. One conclusion to this disparity could be because of the fact that the Niger Delta inhabitants have been the ones at the receiving end of the government's instrument of violence. People that have witnessed many loss of lives and devastation to their livelihoods.

Another conclusion could be that the revenue allocation based on derivation, has been unduly allocated to the region. For example, the initial 50% allocation based on recommendations from the Niger Delta Development Board during the British colonial era, was slashed down to a mere 1.5% subsequent to the Biafra war in the late 1960s before it was raised again to 13% in 1999. Thus, where the political elite believe they have implemented a non-coercive approach to appease the aggrieved parties in the Niger Delta conflict, the issue is on the fairness and effectiveness of these measures in bringing a lasting resolution to the oil crisis. Data evidence from the Timeline Analysis (Figure 6.1 & Figure 6.2) revealed that between periods 2001 and 2012 of different civilian administrations, governments have utilised a combination of coercive and non-coercive approaches - described by some respondents as a "stick and carrot" approach; at various times during the history of the conflict. This gives the impression that the governments' perception of security has not changed over time hence, their adopted security strategies. Thus, answering research question (ii) - see chapter 1 section 1.4 or chapter 3 section 3.1.

A reasonable proportion across the target groups felt that *criminalising the youth* has been one of the preferred strategies adopted by the state to propagate its repression in the Niger Delta (16% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 14% of independent observers and 13% of political elite). This substantiates claims of a securitisation move on the part of the political elite, which involved the labelling of militant youths as criminals and terrorists by different Nigerian government administrations, because it fits into the new global security discourse. Evidence from literature review indicated that there has been a systematic shift from instant deployment of troops in the oil region to a situation whereby state actors through their speech act denounce the militant youths as terrorists and criminals in order to make a

case for military deployment. This securitisation move by the state has been prevalent since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, and even more since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the USA. Consequently, the political elite's narrative has become focused on the greed and criminal elements of the youth militancy while ignoring the grievance and crisis of governance that provided the fertile ground for the insurgency.

Other perceptions of government response to the oil conflict included *development programmes* (11% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 7% of independent observers and 17% of political elite) despite the perceived and obvious level of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta area. Research findings showed that development efforts were initiated by the state to address the oil minorities grievances; notable among these were the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) established in 2000 by ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo, the creation of the Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs by late president Umaru Yar'Adua in September 2008, among others. However, there were misgivings on the successes of these interventionist agencies from the content analysis of the research data. Mr. R. M., an ex-academic of the Niger Delta inhabitants target group in the research interview on the question about his perception of the success of these agencies articulated "they are conduit pipes to embezzle and launder more oil revenue".[35] Indicating that the agencies have become enmeshed in the political intrigue and corruption that has become a better part of governance in Nigeria; and possibly why underdevelopment continues to be a key issue (ranking 3rd) at the heart of the Niger Delta oil crisis.

Another controversial strategy is the *political amnesty* strategy (7% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 11% of independent observers and 4% of political elite). A non-coercive, soft power approach announced in June 2009 by late president Umaru Yar'Adua in what many of the target groups perceived to be an admission of the futility of violent response by the state. However, in view of statements like

[35] Interview conducted on the 7th of April 2013 at the Human Security Centre of Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

the one from Mr. J. O., a Nigerian serving senator that formerly chaired the Senate Committee on National Security and Intelligence:

> *"...any responsible government in power has to and will always take stand on critical issues bordering on national security. Doing otherwise will amount to a posture of weakness on the part of the state. Nigeria as a sovereign nation cannot be on its knees forever begging insurgents to lay down their weapons. There comes a time when a sovereign state with a legitimate government will decide to put a stop to all forms of internal aggression as we have seen in the Niger Delta and elsewhere in Nigeria. Any state that provides incentives to terrorists all in the name of social justice will only have itself to blame at the long run. That is why I am against amnesty for militants, it is like lobbying insurgents for pardon when it should be the other way round".*[36]

....shows that despite the relative peace that the oil producing region has witnessed in the post-amnesty period, questions are being asked about the entire purpose or the effectiveness of the amnesty programme. This became more pronounced considering the high level of kidnapping, oil theft and extant criminalities witnessed in the region today. This criticism backs up literature evidence that indicate the money-for-weapons approach under the amnesty programme favoured the militant commanders, who later became government and oil companies security contractors, at the expense of the insurgent foot- soldiers.[37]

Consequently, the amnesty programme despite bringing a lull in the activities of militant youths in the region, has been perceived by the Niger Delta inhabitants and the independent observers as lucrative business venture for the political elite and insurgent leaders. In that sense, it is fair to say that the amnesty programme was a successful conflict management approach, thus answering research question

[36] Interview conducted on the 10th of April 2013 in Abuja, Nigerian Federal Capital City.
[37] See discussions on Evolution of Insurgency in chapter 5 section 5.4.

(v); however, one that has created another problem of corruption and bad governance for the Nigerian state.

Perceptions of the Militant Youths (Area 3)

The insurgent activities of the Niger Delta militant youths have been the focal point of discourse on the insecurity faced in the region. Hence, understanding how they were perceived by the target groups helped clarify a couple of issues. First, whether the Niger Delta inhabitants felt that the actions of the militant youths is a representation of their grievances towards the state. Second, whether how the political elite perceive the militant youths is a representation of their perception of security threat; hence, their adopted strategic response. In the researcher's opinion, the militant youths are either fighting on the side of the people against the government and TNOCs, or fighting for other interests.

The research findings revealed that a large proportion of the target groups found the militant youths to be *freedom fighters* (20% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 24% of independent observers and 0% of political elite). This supports historic literature and reflect the perceptions during the earlier struggles of the Niger Delta inhabitants, where groups such as MOSOP sprung up to fight for justice for the people. However, it is interesting that none within the political elite described the dissenting youths as freedom fighters. Although, statement of a serving state governor in south-western Nigeria articulating:

> "...*when there is disharmony between social justice and universal law, chaos and disorder ensues... The environment of extreme poverty, ignorance and diseases where might is right, where the gap between the haves and have-nots is increasing at a geometric proportion, where law serve the interest of the few, where most people are hopeless, can only but encourage such sundry acts of terrorism capable of regressing man into the Hobbesian state of nature where*

there is war of all against all and the life of man is nasty, brutish and short".[38]

... shows a degree of sympathy to the cause of the youths. Two possible explanations can be adduced to this finding, even so, given that an higher proportion of the target groups perceived the militant youths as *criminals* (36% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 28% of independent observers and 60% of political elite). First, the criminal activities of these youths overtime has led political elite to regard them more as criminals than youths agitating for a just cause, or second, that political elite are scared of describing them as freedom fighters for fear of been reprimanded at the federal level of governance. An alarming trend is the proportion of political elite that ascribe to the militant youths as criminals. This substantiate claims by analysts who highlighted on the state securitisation move in the Niger Delta region.[39] It also exposes the security approach/conflict management choice of the political elite in the region, a security choice that the political elite has not always got right according to Mr. K. S., a security consultant during the research interview:

"*...what we are seeing in the Niger Delta today is a blow-back effect of the securitisation antics of the Nigerian state. Rather than the Nigerian government to go ahead and address the main issues at the heart of the oil conflict, it went ahead to demonise the youth militias in order to make case for continued military crackdown. The militias having nothing more to lose after been labelled as criminals and terrorists became more radicalised and has been living truthfully to their ascribed labels. So it is true that some of these youth has gone haywire. But it is the (in)action of successive government administrations in the country that led to the situation. A blow-back effect of elite security framing".*[40]

[38] Aregbesola Rauf, Osun State governor in south-western Nigeria cited in Omede A.J. (2011), ["Nigeria: Analysing the security challenges of the Goodluck Jonathan Administration". Canadian Social Science 7 (5)pp.90-102.] [in bib]

[39] See discussions on the on the Niger Delta Security Crisis in chapters 2 and 5.

[40] Interview conducted with the consultant on the 3rd of April at University of Lagos, Nigeria.

The statement shows that the state's construction of security strategy in the Niger Delta, which is a reflection of their perception of the threat, has escalated the crisis situation. Therefore, testing and confirming the research hypothesis that "there tends to be a specific interpretation of security within the Nigerian political elite, which could lead to an increased level of insecurity in the state."

A further key discovery in the research findings is the shift in the people's perception of the militant youths, where a higher proportion described them as criminals compared to the proportion that described them as freedom fighters. Unlike in the early 1990s when the Niger Delta inhabitants saw their militating youths as vanguards of the struggle, who were negotiating the people's freedom in a way that the authority will take notice. Nowadays, it appears that the activities of these angry, aggressive, violent and brutal youths as often described, has led to a change in perception of the host communities of its militating youths. Many even dubbed them as *opportunists* (16% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 24% of independent observers and 8% of political elite) as described by an historian from the Niger Delta, Mr. Omoruyi Agbonze during the research interview:

> *"... the pursuit of money has made militancy in the Niger Delta to become an attractive option. Because after graduating from school, you become unemployed which is a threat to security on its own. With lack of economic opportunities, the tendency is to indulge in any activity that might bring money to cater for yourself or family as the case might be. Thus, militancy becomes the surest way of making money because of the cash incentives that comes with ransom payment to free hostages or huge pay off from government functionaries to provide security that in most cases is short lived".*[41]

Mr. Agbonze's view is shared by many Niger Delta inhabitants and supports many discourse analysing the effect of militancy in the delta area.[42] Nonetheless, with the assessment of perceptions of the core issues behind the delta conflict,

[41] Omoruyi Agbonze, an academic, granted this interview on the 6th of April 2013 in Lagos, Nigeria.

[42] See discussion on Evolution of Insurgency in chapter 5 section 5.4.

the perceptions of the agitating youths, and how government has responded to the perceived security threat, had come suggestions on the best way to resolve the oil conflict going forward.

Perceptions of the Best Resolution Strategies (Area 4)

The research findings on the target groups' perception on the best strategy to adopt in resolving the Niger Delta oil conflict reflected their perceptions on the issues at the heart of the conflict giving rise to the violent crisis. The highest proportion proposed a resolution that involves giving more *resource control* (50% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 39% of independent observers and 10% of political elite), with the exception of the political elite who warmed more towards *development programmes* (16% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 23% of independent observers and 50% of political elite). It is not surprising the disproportion in the opinions, given the stats from the perceptions on the issues at the heart of the conflict. The Niger Delta inhabitants probably feel that with greater resource control or fair derivation allocation, they can self-develop and rely less on the federal government. Conversely, the political elite with tighter grip on the Niger Delta oil are not willing to relinquish such power and feel they can better compensate the region with added development programmes.

The suggestion of a *political amnesty* was more favoured by the political elite than the other target groups (8% of Niger Delta inhabitants, 15% of independent observers and 28% of political elite). Evidence from literature researched showed that during year 2009, the political amnesty programme initiated by the regime of late president Umaru Yar'Adua produced a period of calmness in the region; perhaps the reason why the strategy is considered a success and one to be maintained in the region by the political elite. However, the calmness was short-lived because of extant criminalities in the region. Moreover, the amnesty programme had not address the very issues that gave rise to the conflict. Hence, may explain the reason why a very small proportion from the Niger Delta inhabitants will support a re-implementation of the strategy.

Other suggestions on strategies proposed for resolving the conflict were *true federalism,* which will require the restructuring of the current federal arrangement. *Demilitarisation,* which might lead to an increase in police presence and a draw-down of military presence in the region despite the increased level of criminality. Enacting a *new constitution,* which will involve abolishing the obnoxious ones, though none from the assessed political elite group felt the need for redrafting the constitution. Probably because the 1999 Nigerian federal constitution is considered to be explicit enough on who gets what and how; perhaps it is the interpretation and applicability of the constitution that has been contentious. Nonetheless, a suitable resolution strategy must be one that will inculcate all aspects and address the concerns of all stakeholders including that of the Niger Delta inhabitants, government and the TNOCs.

6.4. CONCLUSION

The Niger Delta has been an epicentre of contestation over oil exploration and exploitation. The study found that major sources of grievance are resource control or what best could be described as adequate derivation based share or greater stakeholdership in its oil resources; bad governance as in poor leadership, pervasive corruption, rent-seeking behaviour, patrimonialism, state repressive acts or weak capacity of the state to protect its citizens; faulty constitution as in legislations or acts that militate against the minorities; federalism as in a reconfigured nation-state that will be more equitable and just to all ethnic groups and guarantee regional autonomy; underdevelopment stemming from limited presence of state, lack of infrastructures or social services or non-access to oil benefits; and environmental degradation as a result of oil spillage and gas flaring that has impacted on means of livelihood.

The study also found that these factors interacts with each other and has weaved a web of discontent and increased the level of insecurity in the Niger Delta oil belt of Nigeria. Some of these factors that can be described as structural has to do with the way the government and the political economy of oil has combined to make the Niger Delta vulnerable to a higher level of criminality and instability.

Despite the factors identified as issues at the heart of the oil conflict, the state response to the crisis has not always correlate with the nature of the problem. The use of coercive force as seen by the inhabitants of Niger Delta and independent observers has been described as too high-handed, suppressive and ineffective in finding a lasting solution to the oil conflict.

Though non-coercive measures have been adopted such as political amnesty, non-militarisation approach, development programmes; the emphasis has been on the militarisation/securitisation moves on the part of the political elite (see Appendix A). Evidence from the timeline analysis shows that the coercive nature of the state response to the conflict is as a result of contradictions in security perception between the state political elite and the oil minorities of the delta region. For a better part, the political elite in Nigeria subscribed to a state-centred and militaristic view of security which places premium on the free flow of oil. This traditional concept of security largely ignores the adverse effect of oil exploration on the environment and people of the Niger Delta. The oil minorities' notion of security on the other hand is hinged on the human security perspective, which recognises ecological damage as a threat to people's environment and means of livelihood. This clash of security perceptions made the state to securitise the Niger Delta and introduce violence as an instrument of state power in the oil zone; which has further escalated the oil conflict, thus proving the research hypothesis right.

Therefore, in order to find a lasting solution to the security problem of the delta region and possibly other parts of Nigeria faced with similar insecurity, one must look to challenge the political elite into rethinking their perception of security and threat. Possibly by seeking a process that allows the two views to communicate and find a common ground, or better still, adopt a different security framework that will represent all stakeholders interests involved in the delta security dilemma. With this, the elite could bring back enduring peace and stability to the region again. This security framework has to be comprehensive, straightforward to implement, and address all parties' concerns.

The next chapter will provide a synthesis of the research findings with theories by drawing together results in chapter 6 with theoretical issues raised in chapter 2 and further developed in chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 7

ℵ SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS WITH THEORIES ℵ

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The disengagement of the military in Nigeria from political office in 1999 has not resulted in demilitarisation of the society, nor did it reduce societal violence traceable to militarism in the Niger Delta. The alliance of what is hereby referred to as Nigeria's 'professional-economic-militariat' elite (political elite), imposed enormous costs on the people of the Niger Delta. The most enduring of the legacies bequeathed is the level of societal militarisation and violence that has become rife in the country's oil belt. In spite of the different approaches adopted by successive civilian administrations since 1999 to address the Niger Delta oil conflict namely militarisation, non-militarisation, criminalisation of youth, development programme, political amnesty and stick and carrot approach, the intensity of violence and criminality in the region underscore why effective conflict resolution strategy can only take place within the context of institutionalised security reorientation. For the elite to perceive the Niger Delta problem as primarily that of security as demonstrated in chapter 2 is to have a skewed understanding of the problem. That such a perception still persists in some quarters despite the transition from military to civilian rule, is in itself a tragedy of Nigeria's national life.

Findings from the research shows that governance was at the core of all the issues and concerns raised in the Nigerian oil conflict. Issues pertaining to resource control, underdevelopment, youth unemployment, lack of social amenities and state repression. Although there remains a risk of doing little, especially for a government often perceived as failing to provide the minimum requirement under human security; evidence from the study clearly indicated that government policies to redress environmental injustice and other socio-economic concerns, have been characterised with political gridlocks, institutional high-handedness and cosmetic projects with little or no impact on the oil minorities situation. From

research findings in chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and review of other literature, it is clear that the state has failed in upholding human security, and provide access to justice in the delta oil region.

While certain aspect of the state conflict resolution strategy, in particular the amnesty programme, have received commendation from critical constituencies, the heavy handed approach to internal security threat seem to have destroyed the little admiration garnered by the political elite. Hence, the need for state structures that are open, transparent, participatory and less coercive can hardly be overemphasised given that historically, government has been alien to the oil minorities. Having lived for so long under years of military repression, it is no surprise that youths in the Niger Delta have taken to heart the lessons of military rule – the use of force as a bargaining chip for forcing negotiations of a foreclosed agenda.

While not seeking to justify the youths' action, it is important to understand and take note of the context in which it occurred. To reclaim the militarised minds of the youths that has been fed by a deep-seated feeling of social exclusion under political militarism, is the challenge of first addressing the psychology of militarism that has become reified within elite circle in Nigeria. Given the prevailing national security perception, bred by decades of militarism and authoritarian rule, the current political elite in Nigeria can be described as a reconfiguration of the military, economic and professional elite groups; rather than a change in governance mode for de-emphasising the place of force in the resolution of conflicts in the petro-state. This reconfigured elite group with its state-centric mind-set makes the military option a viable one in the Niger Delta, even though one cannot deny the obvious criminal elements within the youths that needs to be addressed with the application of the law.

The study has utilised the theories of Securitisation, Marxism, Classical Elite, Structural Violence and Internally Driven perspective to analyse different perceptions and responsiveness to security threats in Nigeria. This has proven significant in analysing the Nigerian domestic security environment, especially as it relate to the Niger Delta conflict. With regards to using securitisation, the

combination of the Copenhagen School (CS) and the Paris School (PS) analyses to determine the extent of state security strategies in the Niger Delta oil region yielded a positive outcome. The combination of both discursive (speech act – CS) and non-discursive (field analysis – PS) through historical accounting and institutional analysis provided insight on security thoughts and practices in Nigeria. Often in Nigeria, state security actions occurs prior to any discourse. Once the state is captured, there is less need to account to society as a whole but to the alliance of the elite groups. This is in contrast to Western liberal democratic states where the relationship between state and the civil society is well managed, and state actors feel it necessary to manage public opinion. This has shown that the utility of a discursive approach, propounded by the CS is minimal to sufficiently understand state security policy in relation to the perception of security by the state. Though an established approach, the proposition is for Securitisation Theory to take into account the utility of discourse and practice in conflict analysis.

This chapter draws together research findings in chapter 6 with theoretical issues raised in chapter 2 that were further developed in chapters 4 and 5.

7.2. THEORETICAL EVALUATION OF FINDINGS

The objective of the study is to establish the perception of security of the Nigerian political elite and how this translates into their construction of security strategy. The study argued that to assess the perceptions, one must look at the security practices of the state as well as their security discourse hence, the adoption of the CS and PS variants of securitisation for gathering data on the state approach to managing its security issues already covered in chapter 2. The CS made the case for using the political elite discourse to understand the state security strategy. In contrast, the PS argued in favour of exploring actual state security practices to fully understand what the state security strategy is. By applying both versions of securitisation theory, the research produced data evidence that revealed the state security strategies between 1999 to 2013 which was either coercive or non-coercive (see timeline analysis captured in chapter 6) depending

on the period and in whose view. However, supported by literature on the conflict and through field analysis specifically propounded by the PS, discussed in chapters 2 and 5, the research produced evidence that revealed the state had employed extreme coercive strategies; pointing to the case of the military assault in Odi community and the continued securitisation of the militant youths within the studied period. One argument that has justified the theoretical combination is the fact that in Nigeria, discourse does not always precede the state political elite security actions. Therefore, by applying both variants of securitisation theory, the research produced comprehensive evidence that supports certain scholars' notion on the benefits of combining the two strands when analysing the securitisation of the Niger Delta. The evidence also established the link between the escalation of the conflict and the state security response. Over the period of the state coercive response, evidence in chapter 5 indicate the Niger Delta youths advanced from militancy to insurgency and from insurgency to domestic terrorism, therefore, raising the question of whether the state strategic response to the conflict is a misinterpretation of the issue; and whether there is the need to explore other theoretical approaches in analysing the security crisis?

The research findings validated the assumption that amongst the Nigerian political elite, there is a misperception of threat stemming from a narrow interpretation of security that has led to a conflict of security in the country. An interpretation based on the neo-realist notion of security, discussed in chapter 2. This proves the research hypothesis that 'there tends to be a specific interpretation of security within the Nigerian political elite that has escalated the level of insecurity in the state'. As the case study of the Niger Delta in chapter 5 has demonstrated, the research evidence points to a crisis of development and conflict of security in the Niger Delta area. That explains Galtung's structural violence theory covered in chapter 2. Galtung describes two folds of violence that can lead to insecurity of a state. The first where violence is directed at the structure and second where violence is embedded in the structure. Evidence from the research data reveals the nature of problems responsible for the Niger Delta conflict as issues embedded within the structure. These are bad governance, resource control, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, faulty constitution and federalism.

Therefore, the reality and perception of structural violence needs to be addressed theoretically as well as through policy recommendations. Although, all parties assessed for their perception on the issues giving rise to the conflict (see chapters 3 and 6) agreed on the nature of these root problems, the issue lies on their disagreement on the best way to resolve the conflict.

The political elite appears to dwell more on the anti-state activities of the delta youths, activities that include communal uprising against Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs), attacks and destruction of oil facilities and so on. A level of rebellion alluded to by Galtung when he articulated that people will result to violence if denied access to basic physical or social well-being, something he referred to as social injustice. It was mentioned earlier that the misinterpretation of security issues by the state elite has led to further crises, because of the state's approach to security management. An example is in the huge sum appropriated for security in the annual federal budget where in year 2008, 444 billion naira was allocated to the Niger Delta for security purpose compared to funding allocated for development programmes, such as 210 billion naira for education and 139 billion naira for energy sector (Iyayi, 2008). This demonstrates the state narrow interpretation of security, which gives less priority to issues bothering on the basic social and economic needs of the populace, as proposed under human security. It also presents a situation whereby a state's security approach has left the state even more vulnerable to insecurity, as the Niger Delta case study demonstrated that the security operation in the region through the state military Joint Task Force (JTF) has left the youths more defiant. Hence, escalating the conflict in the zone.

The above scenario paints what the internally driven perspective argued about by focusing on the role of the Nigerian political elite in administering security. The school claimed that how the political elite perceive and respond to security threat could potentially undermine the national security of the state. This is one of the main arguments of the research and the reason for the focus on the political elite in chapter 4, to explore the evolution and composition of the Nigerian political elite in order to establish and understand the reasoning behind how and why

security is perceived in a certain way; hence, the chosen response to address threat, see evaluation in chapter 4.

The study showed that the role, influence and power of the Nigerian political elite became a significant feature of governance in the latter part of the 20th century. The political elite through the use of coercive force exercised political dominance, which produced a state of insecurity for its civil populace. While the transition from military to civilian rule in 1999 generated a lot of enthusiasm over improvements in quality of governance, most especially on citizens security; little was achieved in the enhancement of human security. This is because whilst the return to democratic rule required a demilitarisation of political authority to discourage state violence, the strategy of recycling the military elite into civilian political offices, failed to produce the transition from insecurity to greater security for the populace. The very point on the recycling of the military elite into civilian political offices has made using theories like Marxism, discussed in chapter 4, to analyse the Nigerian political elite problematic. The research findings that confirmed the character and shared military background of the Nigerian political elite justifies Classical Elitism: Pareto's circulation of elites, Mosca's theory of ruling class and Michel's iron law of Oligarchy claim. For instance, the Nigerian National Assembly (Parliament) since 1999 up until the end of year 2014 has the highest number of legislators from the ruling political party (Peoples Democratic Party). David Mark, the senate leader who was on his third four years term, is a retired army general that served all civilian presidents in the fourth republic.

Other key security organs of the state have also been overshadowed by cabinet ministers and special advisers, who since 1999 were mostly retired generals and whose advice are crucial in the formulation of security policies and construction of security strategies. It is important to highlight that Olusegun Obasanjo who was civilian president between 1999-2007 was also a retired military general. This substantiates the Classical Elite theories which assumes that the political elite, either directly or indirectly in government, will maintain status quo by recruiting individuals of similar attitude, sentiment and inclinations. What this

has meant for Nigeria is that the perception of security has not changed in spite the changes in government regimes from military to civilian rule. Their military orientation has shaped the political elite's security perception and has influenced security decision-making, which has had an overall impact on the collective decision of government and the outcome of implementing such decisions.

In chapter 2, the security decision-making hierarchy of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution outlined the channels in which the political elite can transmit their perception of security and construct it into a security strategy. In particular, the office of the president that eclipse all other actors within the security decision-making process. Findings of the research revealed a significant level of hegemony of the president in comparison to other state actors when determining security policies/strategies. One important observation from the study was how the hegemony of the president in the security domain is not necessarily a product of its high level of institutionalisation, hence, giving it an edge over other governance structures. Rather, the presidency as an institution has been overshadowed by the person of the president (see chapter 4). The Odi community massacre in the Niger Delta in 1999 described in chapter 5 provides a good example of how the then president, Olusegun Obasanjo sanctioned a military operation that razed down the entire community without consulting with the National Assembly (federal parliament) before taking such crucial security decision. It was not clear what role the Chief of Army Staff (head of the army) played in shaping the security decision to carry out the operation. When questioned about the assault during an interview in 2002, General Victor Malu, the Chief of Army Staff articulated:

> *"The operation in Odi was done very professionally.... It was when the troops got to Odi, we witnessed sustained fire from the village. And this is what I say and people don't like. And whether they like it or not, I will say it as far as I have the knowledge of the army, as I know. If we go for internal security operation like the Odi case, you are supposed to perform when you are alive, not as a dead man. If somebody is firing at you, you try to take his head. That is the training I had and that is what I have done in these 33*

years. If you fire at me, I will fire back and might kill you or other people. The amount of fire that was coming from the village, the troops had to return fire. In any case, if you are inside a building firing, we first of all fire to bring down the building. In the process, we will also take you. That was exactly what happened. They didn't go on a massacre spree.... After the operation, at the end, I went to the president and briefed him on the operation we conducted.... If the president or minister didn't like it, that is when they would have removed me or order for my court-martial.... This was something that was approved by the president himself. Who am I to leave Abuja and go on operation in Port Harcourt or Bayelsa on my own. What status do I have?"[43]

From General Malu's comments, one can construe that the Nigerian president dominated the critical phases of security decision-making in the Niger Delta from agenda-setting to implementation. A view generally shared by many across the state including Mr. S. M., a political scientist and government appointee during the research interview:

"In an ideal situation, I would have said the constitution of the state which is the 1999 Nigerian constitution determines the key decisions/policies of this so called elite. But an average Nigerian knows its politicians are no respecter of the country's constitution and are hardly touched by the arm of the law even when they err. ....there is no institutional capacity to fully implement the rule book of the nation. This has resulted to a systemic failure that has engulfed and stigmatised the whole political process and system of governance in Nigeria. ....the level of insecurity in the nation is a good evidence of this lack of constitutional adherence. When the political elite ignores constitutional procedures just to further their own interests, there is bound to be a reaction on the part of the masses.

[43] Victor Malu's interview quoted in (HRW, 2002) 'The Niger Delta: No Democratic Dividend'. Available at http://www.hrw.org.

This reaction can be violent in nature and draws a response from the state. Response that has sometimes been excessive and create a friction between the rulers and the ruled. Cases in the Niger Delta are good examples. From Odi to Gbaramatu to Nembe, it has been instances of lack of constitutional adherence not lack of a constitution, because the 1999 constitution addresses most if not all of these issues".[44]

The above statement indicate state adoption of coercive means to resolve the Niger Delta conflict, and highlight the common perception in contemporary Nigeria that security strategy is at the will or vision of the president, rather than being a product of a systematic process. This substantiates the argument of the Classical Elite theory that the political elite will employ whatever means necessary including force, to protect its interest against threats emanating from the non-elite; the non-elite being the common Niger Delta inhabitants. Despite the country having a well-defined structure of authority for security decision-making as outlined in the 1999 federal constitution, the emerging reality is that the legislature has largely functioned as a rubber-stamp National Assembly when it comes to security matters. Not only are the lawmakers often denied a role in determining the policy on character and activities of state armed forces, they are often short-changed in approving executive security decisions. Therefore, while the constitutionalisation of security decision-making is a well thought out institutional agenda, the personalisation of political and security power, most especially the office of the president, has rendered the constitutional/institutional project unsuccessful. This could explain why the much anticipated demilitarisation of political authority have remained unrealistic, because threat assessment has been largely determined by a praetorian guard of erstwhile military era in an age of neo-militarism. Consequently, Nigeria's post-1999 security policies/strategies did not change drastically from pre-1999.

[44] Interview with S. M. conducted on the 3rd of April 2013 in Lagos, Nigeria. A follow up interview was later conducted with the same interviewee on the 5th of April 2013 in Benin City, Edo State to clarify certain issues regarding the first interview. He is an academic cum top government functionary that has served both at federal and state level of governance.

Further to his dominance in the security decision-making, evidence from the research showed that the president as an executive political elite can enhance his autonomy over security decision-making through wider influence and power by sponsoring candidates, usually loyalists from similar social background, to winning legislative seats (see chapter 4). From observation of the Nigerian security body, the military-oriented political elite have permeated the executive and legislative arm of government. Even the non-military ones like the past presidents late Umaru Yar'adua and Goodluck Jonathan, were alleged to have been handpicked and supported to political power by the military elite (Adeniyi, 2011; Tenuche, 2011). Consequently, security decision-makers even at the federal level, are obligated to seek security counsel from the military-oriented political elite and buy-in to their perception of security when it comes to formulating security policies and strategies. Where they refuse counsel or propose an alternative security strategy, passing the legislation through at the National Assembly could be impossible, given the assembly is populated by retired Generals and their cronies. Even more, the legislation could be overruled at the Council of State meeting, which is attended by both the former military and civilian heads-of-states. On the other hand, the political elite loyalists are restrained from impeding executive decisions on security matters, because doing so may portray an act of betrayal, which might lead to serious consequence.

In light of the above and evidence from the study, the research concludes that the political elite perception of security and security response is premised in their military ideology. It explains why the act of militarisation and securitising of the Niger Delta youths were presented as the favoured state approach to addressing the Niger Delta oil conflict. Despite the historical and institutional dimension to the oil conflict, a demand for greater resource control, agitations for compensation for ecological damage and new laws governing oil exploration on the part of the state; the research findings suggest that the Nigerian political elite is irked by the fact that its citizens has refused to accept its own interpretation of security, instead they engage in acts of resistance (Galtung's theory). The political elite perceive and believe that oil is a national resource belonging to the state rather than oil producing communities. As such, agitations for resource control is not

only misplaced but a national security threat orchestrated by criminals and terrorists.

The globalist perspective, discussed in chapter 2, attribute the strategic position held by Nigeria, because of its huge oil resources and the attraction from globalisation, TNOCs and other actors (see chapter 5); to the cause of its insecurity and internal conflict situations. The research partly agrees with this assumption given that the Niger Delta is a major oil producing region with major conflict still on-going. However, the research findings indicate that the rise of the conflict is as a result of grievance against the state and TNOCs for social injustice (Galtung's theory), worsened by the security approach adopted by the state (internally driven perspective); and how the state interpret what constitute a security threat which is subjective in this case (constructivism/interpretivism).

The study has shown that the issue of determining national security threats in Nigeria is made more complex, because, even though it is often articulated in relation to acts against national interest, it is actually the political elite and security decision-makers that have the final say on how threat should be defined. Marx (1965:37) must have envisaged this when he articulated that the "ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas". Implying that the description of the Niger Delta insurrection as a national security threat, is both a product of subjective and objective thinking within the elite spectrum of the Nigerian state. A view shared by Furniss and Snyder (1965:25), stating that national interest might be what the nationals believe it to be, except the political elite as decision-makers actually decide on it.

In relation to findings of this study, there is a realisation on the part of the researcher that the political elite in Nigeria are faced with a security dilemma. The confusion arises from the state–human security nexus, that is, whose security is paramount? Though certain national interests are incontestable such as the defence of sovereignty and territorial borders without which states will be vulnerable to external security threats, in addition, the state has to project and protect its national interests within the international environment due to geo-strategic attributes that may not be easily recognisable to its ordinary citizens.

Balancing the security act of protecting its civil populace and external interests with considerable investments in the country becomes a major dilemma for the political elite. It becomes even more problematic for a stratified state such as Nigeria, because of the ethnic and religious configuration that has made national cohesion unattainable. Consequently, this complexity of state-civil society relations has made political elite at times over-react to security challenges or at worst, misperceive threat.

The Niger Delta experience as the findings have shown reveals how the political elite in Nigeria have wrongly perceive national security threats. Despite mode of governance and environmental factors now in mainstream international security discourse, the Nigerian political elite appears to have an underestimation of the linkage between environment-governance-conflict. This context has fed into authoritarianism leading the state to adopt the use of coercive instrument of state power. From a neutral position, it is clear that the elite's view of national security threat is bereft of environmental considerations. The results, a conflict situation between those who feel the environment can be exploited for national development and specific interests, and those who feel the environment should not be sacrificed for reasons such as non-sustainability and the destruction of the eco-system. What comes out of the preceding is that, for a meaningful resolution to the Niger Delta conflict, environmental considerations must be locked into official perception of security and its subjugation and exploitation should not be seen as a necessary price for national development.

Nonetheless, considering that Nigeria is a rentier state with a huge proportion of its national wealth coming from oil rent, how does the state then confront the hegemonic local and global forces who profit from inequitable modes of oil extraction and production forced through by specific interests? The framework lies in a model that will protect all stakeholders interests. The logical question that follows is how can such a framework be operationalised? Evidence from the research findings confirmed that different conflict resolution strategies has already been attempted by the Nigerian state, which have mostly failed because the crisis still persist. Strategies that cut across both securitisation and

desecuritisation including militarisation, non-militarisation, criminalisation of youth, development intervention and political amnesty. The revelation from the study is while the securitisation strategy has been an over-reaction on the part of the political elite to state security challenges by deploying state instrument of coercive force; the state development interventions in the region has been cosmetic and as a result, inadequate.

Several studies including that of the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Human Rights Watch, Failed State Index and so on have published data highlighting the lack of or absence of indicators of well-being such as good roads, healthcare facilities, schools and electricity in Nigeria. This is even more disconcerting when the grim statistics are compared to the huge oil and gas deposits in the Niger Delta region. Against the background of oil and poverty occasioned by the harmful explorative and exploitative practices of TNOCs and institutionalised deprivation of an authoritarian Nigerian state, the citizens will surely revolt. From all indications in the study and elsewhere in other literature, the political elite in Nigeria have remained largely unpopular leading to crises of legitimacy and security.

An obvious assumption that can be gleaned from the study is that the major actors in the Niger Delta oil conflict are the State-TNOCs alliance on one hand and the oil minorities at the other. Although external economic interests are embedded in the state-human security crises in the Niger Delta, the struggle for resource control has not only been stimulated by the oil-rentier nexus, but also sustained by certain security practices at the local strategic environment. The use of armed troops to quell protests against oil multinationals has intensified the struggle and further radicalised the insurgents. The criminalisation of youths who have been framed as opportunists, terrorists, criminals, cultists by the political elite had further skewed public sympathy towards the militant youths until recently. Therefore, given the three levels in the oil conflict namely the local, national and international because of external interests, any resolution will call for a 'trilateral' security approach that will safeguard all stakeholders' interests. Besides, against popular media opinion and most studies on the delta oil conflict that sees the

state, through its political elite and TNOCs, as the only conflict parties that can bring about peace in the Nigerian oil delta; this study argues that the oil communities through their representatives and non-governmental organisations, will have a role to play in any peace process.

On another perspective based on the research findings, the contradictions of economic globalisation has come home to roost in Nigeria. TNOCs and their home governments in their quest to maximise profit for shareholders, will always take advantage of states with a weak environmental-legal-security framework where human security and environmental considerations are hardly part of national security policies. Globalisation have made such multinational conglomerates enjoy autonomy and greater influence in the governing affairs of the societies where they operate. As a result, they become central to the sustenance of the state and the mode of power relations prevalent in such societies. The state in the face of hegemonic external economic interventions that deepens scarcity and provokes conflict, has to act because of external dependence through the oil-rentier nexus. However, how should the state react in the face of protecting the interest of those who are interested in the optimal exploitation of the oil resource as well as the local forces that are against such? This will be captured in the alternative security management framework that will be outlined in the next chapter.

In light of the above, the argument of the thesis is justified in that one should look beyond colonialism and utilise a combination of other theories such as Securitisation, Internally Driven, Structural Violence and Classical Elite theories, when analysing the issues underlying the Niger Delta conflict as evidence from the research have shown that factors such as state security practices and elite framing culture are equally important. What has also emerged from the foregoing is the short-termish nature of state responses to public security needs and an approach to security decision-making that is characterised by quick-fix policy options. Thus, the study has been able to provide a deeper explanation to the Nigerian oil conflict vis-à-vis elite security strategies in the Niger Delta. The study, rather than see the Nigerian state as a unitary actor responding to or securitising threats in the Niger Delta, argues that conflict analysis should be

based on the way security issues are perceived by different societal groups operating within the state; and understand security strategies as an outcome of power struggles between these forces. This justified the methodological approach adopted in the study where different groups' perceptions of security were explored even though the political elite were the research focus.

Evidence from the research shows that the different societal groups evaluate security based on their own interests, ideology and strategies as certain groups/individuals perceive and discursively identify the Niger Delta insurgency to be 'threatening', while others perceive it as a positive and legitimate action. Since the perception of security varies, the likelihood of a unanimous agreement on what should constitute a national security policy/strategy is minimal. Hence, given that security policy has profound consequences for the way that state power is exercised, different socio-political groups/elite networks will push for security policies/strategies that furthers their own agendas; potentially clashing against one another. This conflict of interest or contradictions of security has shaped the official security policies and actual state practices in the Niger Delta. While social groups opposed to state security practices in the region tried to pervert such policy implementation; state actors on the other hand, securitised the dissenting action and the result has been the cycle of violence in the oil region.

Though the state through the proactive policy-driven work of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) alongside other development schemes under the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), has tried to move away from the predominantly reactive model of conflict response strategies to one that "brings together elements of architecture for inclusive conflict intervention within the context of a social environment that promotes proactive engagement with conflict as a human interest" (Oshita, 2007). Those that criticised the IPCR approach branded it a 'barrel of the gun approach' due to the fact that the same Obasanjo administration that set up the IPCR in February 2000 was responsible for some of the greatest atrocities committed in the Niger Delta such as the Odi massacre (Mustapha, 2010:124). This goes to show that regardless the legitimacy of an

intervention, the form in which it takes can impinge on the success or otherwise of the outcome of the conflict management strategy.

Notwithstanding, a 'right-based approach' of conflict management that respect and protect both majority and minority rights in the society, and improve the responsiveness of state institutions to public security needs is highly recommended. Until the 'occupation mentality' which is the use of security forces to quell violent protests and other social conflicts is stopped, the power approach that usually inform state response to conflict will continue to escalate conflicts regardless the efforts of agencies like the IPCR (El-Rufai, 2012b). The argument here is that state violent response strategies through either its reactive model or power approach has undermined the economic and socio-historical factors responsible for the Niger Delta conflict, not because of lack of understanding of the root causes and dynamics of the oil conflict; but because of political elite manipulation, complicity and dominance resulting from the need to control state resources and its narrow interpretation of security. Thus, to the Nigerian political elite who has been the main driver of the economic, political and security levers in the Nigerian state up until now, its narrow understanding of security and perception of national security threat is worth having a rethink over if national stability is to be maintained.

7.3. CONCLUSION

The chapter has provided a synthesis and evaluation of the research findings, which highlighted the key issues of bad governance, resource control, environmental degradation, underdevelopment and federalism as the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta conflict. A conflict that has been exacerbated by the state security strategy of securitisation, influenced by the political elite's perception of security and national security threat. Further evaluation highlighted the need to promote a different thinking and a change to the way the state manages its security affairs, because the study has highlighted the realisation that national security has many components and at the same time, many strategies with which it can be maintained. The strategies which cut across the economic, diplomatic

and military realm, has been linked together and was taken into consideration when formulating the 'Actors Role and Two Action Levels' security management framework acronymed 'ARTAL' that is proposed in the next chapter. Under the ARTAL security management framework, both the concept of security and its delivery has been rethought. This proposed approach recognises the fact that securitisation more often than not, has led to further grievances and the more a state divert its resources to the nation's coercive apparatus, the less opportunity for peace.

By introducing the ARTAL conflict framework, the researcher has created a security model that captures both the needs of the citizens as well as that of the state. Therefore, providing the capacity to enhance on human, state and national security. Although, while there is an historical element to the oil conflict, this should not undermine the contemporary realities of the oil region and other critical breaks from the past. As such, achieving human security will be dependent on the willingness and efforts of all stakeholders to achieve common security. The next chapter concludes the thesis and make recommendations for future research into other aspects of security management in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

CHAPTER 8

ℵ CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION ℵ

8.1. RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

This research aimed to understand the rationale behind preferred state security strategies and conflict management approaches by investigating the political elite's perception of security, and in the process test out the hypothesis that 'there tends to be a specific interpretation of security within the Nigerian politic al elite, which could lead to an increased level of insecurity in the state'. To make the empirical inquiry, the study adopted a case study of the Nigerian Niger Delta oil conflict, which has proven significant for both theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, the work stands as an original contribution to the literature on resource conflict, conflict resolution and Third World security; considering that recent scholarly works have paid little attention to the changing dynamics of the Niger Delta oil conflict and the Nigerian state management of the conflict. To a larger extent, the domestic security environment as they relate to the conflict actors has been largely ignored or underestimated in contemporary researches.

Subsequently, the high rate of criminality and level of militarisation in the oil region has been academically left in the cooler while majority of efforts have concentrated on post-amnesty analysis, that is the effectiveness of the political amnesty granted to the militants in 2009. Thus, overlooking the level of securitisation that is still ongoing in the region. The study utilised the theories of Securitisation, Marxism, Classical Elite and Structural Violence, which has proven significant in analysing the Nigerian domestic security environment. With regards to using Securitisation, the combination of the Copenhagen and Paris schools' analyses to determine the extent of state security strategies in the Niger Delta oil region yielded a positive outcome. The combination helped shed light on security thoughts and practices in Nigeria. Often in Nigeria, state security actions occurs prior to any discourse. This have shown that the utility of a

discursive approach, propounded by the Copenhagen School is minimal to sufficiently understand state security policy in relation to the perception of security by the state elite. Though an established approach, the proposition is for securitisation theorists to take into account the utility of discourse and practice in conflict analysis.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that other theories can be utilised to understand certain phenomena about Nigerian insecurity, even though certain assumptions need to be embedded, or at most combine two or more theories to legitimise its applicability. The study explored Marxism, Classical Elite and Structural Violence theories, evaluating the similarities and differences in their assumptions when applied in contemporary Nigerian society. The study recommends that researchers should exercise caution when applying the theories wholly to analyse social realities in Nigeria.

The research work is timely in view of Nigeria's role as an hegemon in the West African sub-region. Considering that aside being a major peacekeeper and centre of security co-operation in the region, other West African countries such as Benin, Togo, Niger and Ghana still depend on Nigeria's oil to power their economies. As a result, the persistent or escalation of the oil conflict could continue to have devastating consequences for national and sub-regional peace and stability. On an even wider scale, the oil conflict might further impact on international security, because of the ongoing need to seek for alternative oil reserves outside the Persian Gulf due to geopolitical considerations. This makes the study a well-timed and appropriate piece of research.

The originality of the work is twofold. First is the utility of the combined analytical power of the two variants of securitisation theory - Copenhagen and Paris Schools to unravel the evolving security dynamics in the Niger Delta. The integrated approach to security analysis has revealed a consistent way to explore elite perception and notion of security especially in the developing world. Most previous studies on the conflict are meta-narratives based on various grand theories such as Marxist political economy approach, dependency theory, structural ecologism and diverse legal paradigms. These works despite their merits have a

tendency to neglect issues about the security perspectives and practices of the Nigerian political elite. Even where they have been rarely appreciated, sweeping generalisations concerning the security perceptions of the elite are made.

Second is its application of a deconstructivist approach through qualitative data coding to analyse the Nigerian oil conflict. What this method has shown is the need to utilise different dimensions or approaches to explain the securitisation and persistence of the conflict. Such as formation of elite and its perceptions on one hand, and the formation of perceptions of civil society on the other. The miscommunication between these different perceptions becomes itself a factor which has to be studied and overcome if the conflict is to be ended.

The study explored the historical and institutional context of the oil conflict covering the last decade and half, seeking answers to the five research questions outlined in chapter 1 section 1.4; which were addressed from chapter 2 right through to chapter 7. The first question of 'what is the perception of the Nigerian political elite of security?', was addressed in length under chapter 2. The chapter, comprising an in-depth literature review on security in Nigeria with special focus on Niger Delta, examined the general perception of security by state actors in Nigeria. In addition, it examined what is considered a threat to national security, which varies depending on the referent object of security. The chapter revealed that in Nigeria, political elite have upheld the state as the utmost referent object of security; thus, adopting the realist school's perception of security (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998).

Therefore, any challenge to the state survival or the government in power is considered a threat to national security (Ayoob, 1995). Most significantly, in Nigeria, 'state security' is equated to 'security of the political elite' (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008); thus, rebellion in form of insurgency is more directed at the political elite because of their greed in controlling state natural resources (Obi, 1997). The chapter further explored the different theoretical perspectives on the concept of security in the field of international relations, and emphasised on the Copenhagen School's notion of security. In the process, introducing the concept of securitisation as an analytical tool for analysing security issues in the Niger

Delta region, and demonstrating that to truly understand state perception of security; one should appraise state approach to conflict management through state security practises (Paris school) and discourse. Hence, the exploration of state discourse and practises in analysing elite's perception of security in the Niger Delta oil conflict.

The second question of 'how has this perception evolved over time through the transition from military to the civilian political era?' was addressed in length under chapter 4. The chapter through Marxism and Classical Elite theories analysed the Nigerian political elite as the minority few who controls power in the Nigerian society (Pareto, 1935; Mosca, 1939:329). The chapter uncovered five main ethnic origins: Northern, Yorubas, Igbo, Middle Belt and the Niger Delta; of the five different types of elite groups in Nigeria: traditional, economic, intellectual, military and political elites. Of which the political elite is the dominant elite group, because it comprises a mix of the other elite groups; thus revealing a certain degree of linkage and interdependency among the various elite groups. The chapter further uncovered that to wield and maintain power in the society, the political elite have to establish themselves by acquiring economic power through rent-seeking from its oil resource; therefore creating a mind-set of 'he who controls the state, controls the oil money' (Eberlein, 2006).

Consequently, the political elite try to hold on to political power/control of the state by any means necessary. Also, by exploring the evolution and composition of the Nigerian political elite, the chapter revealed a historic trait of political elite entrenched in military ideals, that keep re-emerging from the first to fourth republic (1960 to year 2014). Individuals like former president Olusegun Obasanjo, a formal military General who served as president under military rule and later twice as a civilian president. Obasanjo among others remain a key actor in the Nigerian political landscape till date. Making factors such as the engraved military mind-set, urge for power, competition for scarce resources, oil control and more to continue to drive the political elite's perception of security and threat; and thus, the security management strategy they adopt and implement in conflict zones like the Niger Delta oil region. As such, addressing the third research question

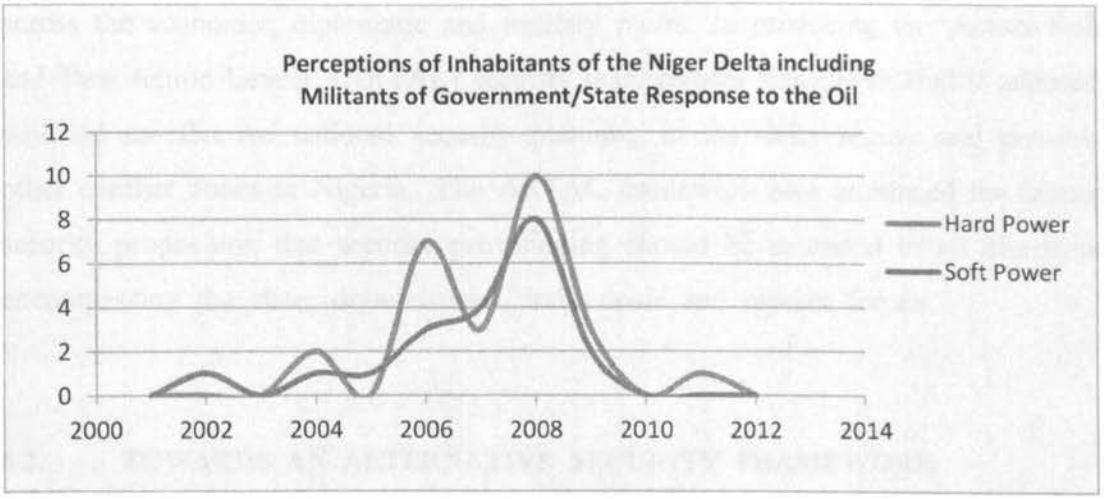
of 'what factors have influenced this perception within the last decade and half, and have shaped the construction of security strategies in Nigeria?'.

The fourth research question of 'to what extent is the Niger Delta oil conflict a reflection of the state's perception of security?', was addressed in length under chapter 5. The chapter by establishing the historical and institutional dimension to the Niger Delta oil conflict, examined the security challenges posed on the region and to the Nigerian political elite, and how these challenges have been addressed. The chapter established the cause of the crisis and increased level of insurgency in the region as a result of a long history of discontent and grievances among the oil communities. This is attributed to the high level of poverty and underdevelopment in the region emanating from the lack of resource control, political elite's greed and environmental degradation from explorative activities of Transnational Oil Corporations (TNOCs); which has been further fuelled by the way the region and the political elite have both managed the situation. The chapter established the economy of the Nigerian state as an oil dependent economy with the Niger Delta as a key strategic region. As such, the political elite consider anything that will disrupt the free flow of oil from the Niger Delta region as a threat to national security, and a challenge to the survival of the state. This gave rise to the labelling of the rebellious youths of the Niger Delta as militants or as terrorists. Youths whose actions involves oil bunkering (oil theft), oil pipeline vandalisation, hostage-taking and so on; resulting to their been identified as threat to the national security of Nigeria.

Although from earlier analysis that equates state security to the security of the political elite, and given the political elite's desire to maintain grip on the resource base and thus cling on to power; tagging the militant youths as threat to national security has raised questions on the ulterior motives of the Nigerian political elite and in their management of the region's crisis. The chapter also explored the political elite's adoption of militarisation and non-militarisation conflict management approaches in the region, some of which have been contentious especially with its 2009 amnesty programme. However, it is the political elite's securitisation strategy, which involves the criminalisation of the Niger Delta youths

(given the 'global war on terror' discourse) prior to the deployment of force to curtail the militancy; that has further aggravated grievances and exacerbated the crisis. This is done in order to justify state militarisation approach. To this extent, the chapter also answered research question five of 'how effective are the current measures adopted by the state to solve security challenges in the Niger Delta region?'.

Following on from the above, the gathered and analysed data from the researcher's fieldworks documented in chapters 3, 6 and 7 looked at four key areas in attempt to test out the research hypothesis; and seek an alternative route to a long lasting resolution of the conflict/security crises of the oil region and possibly other regions in Africa with similar conflict situations. The areas assessing the perceptions of i) the issues at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict, ii) government response to the conflict, iii) the militant youths, and iv) best resolution to end the conflict; gauged the perceptions of three targeted groups that is the Niger Delta inhabitants, the political elite and other Nigerians cum independent observers. Top on the issues list were resource control, bad governance, faulty constitution, federalism, underdevelopment and environmental degradation; which all pointed to the issues discussed in chapter 5 on the factors that gave rise to the insurgency in the Niger Delta region. The documented government response in managing the oil conflict highlighted militarisation, non-militarisation, criminalisation of youth (securitisation), development programmes, political amnesty and stick and carrot approach; which reflects the conflict management approaches described by other scholars assessed in chapters 2 and 5. Although the data revealed that over time, the perception of government response to the conflict has changed (see Figure 8.1), there remains a vast difference between the political elite's and the Niger Delta inhabitant's perception on the nature of the government security strategy adopted in the region.



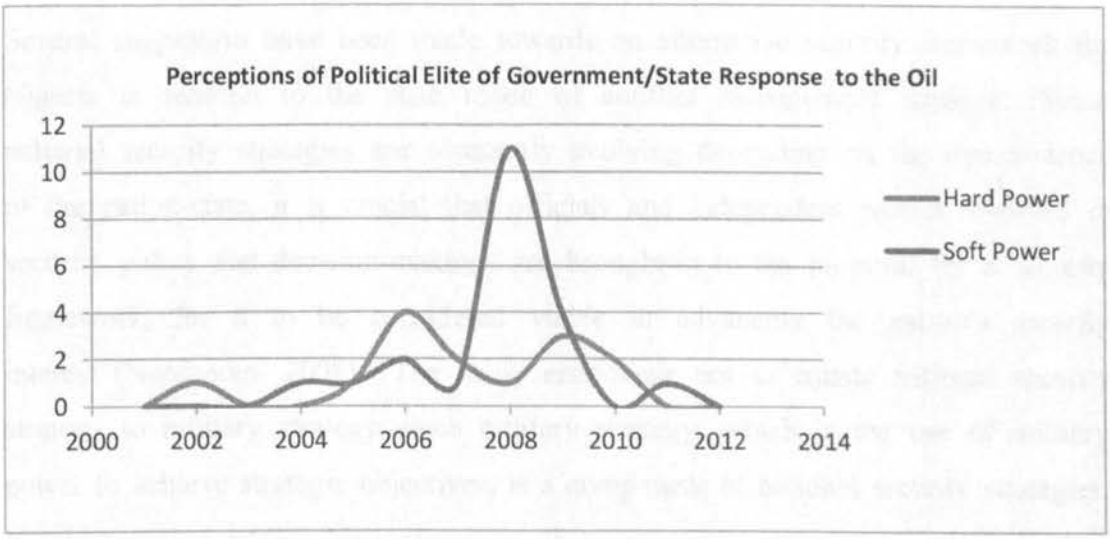


Figure 8. 1 – Perceptions on Government Response

The youth militias were frequently perceived as freedom fighters, opportunists, criminals, terrorists, political thugs and cultists; demonstrating a mixed feeling towards the cause of the Niger Delta militant youths. However, the top favourite suggestions to resolving the Niger Delta oil conflict recommended a new constitution, increased resource control, true federalism, demilitarisation, development programmes and political amnesty; which to an extent reflected on the issues perceived to be at the heart of the Niger Delta oil conflict. The data evidence largely supported other scholarly work on state perception of security and the construction of security strategies, and the overall implication on national security of the state. As a result, the proposed alternative security management framework in the next section accounted for all sides of the argument; which cut

across the economic, diplomatic and military realm, in producing an 'Actors Role and Two Action Levels' (ARTAL) security management framework that if adopted, will aid an effective national security planning in the delta region and possibly other conflict zones in Nigeria. The ARTAL framework also embraced the human security proposition that security provisioning should be extended in all directions encompassing the state, organisations, individuals and market forces.

8.2. TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE SECURITY FRAMEWORK

Several suggestion have been made towards an alternative security framework for Nigeria in relation to the state mode of conflict management strategy. Since national security strategies are constantly evolving depending on the circumstance of the nation-state, it is crucial that officials and independent parties involved in security policy and decision-makings are brought-in to the proposal for a security framework, for it to be considered viable in advancing the nation's security interest (Noteboom, 2008). The study endeavour not to equate national security strategy to military strategy since military strategy, which is the use of military power to achieve strategic objectives, is a component of national security strategies. Noteboom also noted other strategies that cut across economic and diplomatic realm are as equally important in achieving strategic objectives. Moreover, given the Nigerian political elite are inclined towards the traditional national security strategy, an approach that has failed to maintain national stability as the research has shown so far; the study effort is geared towards other options that will serve the country well in the face of internal opposition.

Since national security strategy is a mirror of a state national security policy and policies are developed in projection of national interests, discussion on Nigeria's national interests will be based on the principle of the 'nation-state', because it is the primary organising principle that underlies global affairs (Noteboom, 2008). As such, exponents of a wider and broader version of security might find fault in the study's summation; nevertheless, the fact remains that by and large in the African context, the state remains the epicentre of activities economically, socially and politically (Akokpari, 2007, Ayoob, 1995). The above assertion might ignite

another debate when considering an alternative security framework for a country like Nigeria, deliberating whether a proposed alternative security framework should be anchored solely on citizen's security or contrived to cater for both state and the populace security. In other words, should a monolistic or dualistic security framework be recommended? Addressing this question becomes important for Nigeria because the state has been challenged by a part of its civil component with divergent interests and as such, the strategic environment should be treated with the conception of two conflicting parties.

Findings from the research shows that the state have employed several strategies ranging from securitisation to de-securitisation, direct militarisation to non-militarisation, criminalisation of youth to development intervention, and political amnesty to stick and carrot approach. However, the rest of this section for analysis purpose has broadly categorised these strategies into militarisation and non-militarisation. Of the two, the militarisation strategy of the state has been the most contentious and ineffective. Not only has the state lost its monopoly of the instrument of violence to militias, its legitimacy has been called into question and the level of criminality in the region and elsewhere in Nigeria has further undermined national security. Although the state might argue that its use of the military force is to maintain the corporate existence of Nigeria, which is non-negotiable as many political elite attested to during the research interviews. A re-evaluation of its response strategies will provide a viable basis for conflict management re-orientation.

To fully understand how the state has economically short-changed herself and misprioritised its national interests, El-Rufai (2012a) gave a detailed analysis of the year 2012 security budget of Nigeria where he alleged that the country was spending 130 million naira per hour or 3.1 billion naira per day on national (in)security. Money that could have been channelled into developmental programmes in the area of education, health, employment and food production; and signify a demand-led bottom-up security approach that accommodated the needs and demand of the civil populace rather than a supply-led top-down

approach that only protected regime security while eliminating the middle and lower class from participation (El-Rufai, 2012b; Oshita, 2007:47-48).

Nevertheless, an alternative and viable security framework will need to incorporate both a top-down and a bottom-up approach due to the changing nature of threats. As a result, the security strategy must both be proactive and reactive since threats and opportunities are constantly evolving (Noteboom, 2008). In addition, the security strategy must adapt to the context of the strategic environment. More importantly, any proposed strategy should accommodate the participation of the civil society as stakeholders in the peace process (Davidheiser & Nyiayaana, 2011). This is of particular importance because in Nigeria, the civil society has been systematically excluded from supporting social inclusion for sustainable development and national security by the political elite (Essien, 2014). This analytical security discourse will form the basis of the proposed alternative security framework.

The framework is designed to bring all stakeholders in the Nigerian and Niger Delta security project together. In doing so, both the state and public security needs would be taken into account to a certain degree, given the study's argument that human, state and national security are complementary rather than contradictory. When one is protected, the other is assured. Therefore, a tripartite security framework that will involve the Nigerian political elite, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community leaders as actors from the larger civil society is hereby outlined through an 'Actors Role and Two Action Levels' (ARTAL) security framework. The ARTAL framework has been originally designed and developed by the researcher. It has been initiated from the wealth of knowledge gained during the research period and strengthened by the research findings. The aim is for it to be a subject of future research.

ARTAL

Actors: maintaining national security can be complicated because of the array of actors involved. It can be even more complicated if the actors have divergent interests that could impinge on the successful outcome of the security agenda.

While these interests might be concealed or clearly manifested, a security framework clearly designed to accommodate different stakeholders interests will result in optimum security. The state political elite, NGOs and community leaders need to work together in building a culture of peace in the Niger Delta and probably elsewhere in Nigeria. Spence (2004:62) explained that peace can only be sustained by an array of people who perform various functions at different times. Through their sustained actions as security actors, the political elite, community leaders and NGO officials can transform the civil-military relation in the Niger Delta from a confrontational one to a partnership one. The elite group should encompass all elite networks discussed in chapter 4 that make up the political elite in Nigeria. The tripartite elite group of the military both serving and retired, the economic elite that comprises entrepreneurs, industrialists and businessmen, and the professional elite whose skills and knowledge serves as the engine house of governance can create a common security by facilitating friendly relations with other security stakeholders in the Niger Delta through peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts.

Role: there already exists an array of NGOs in and outside Nigeria championing the cause of the oil minorities of the Niger Delta through advocacy, campaigning and public enlightment (Frances et al., 2011). In particular the Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organization (ND-HERO) that promotes environmental conservation and development in the Niger Delta; the Entrepreneur Development Initiative (ENDIP) that provides skills training for unemployed youths in the oil region; Save the Earth Nigeria (SEN) that addresses environmental neglect associated with oil extraction through education, research, advocacy and networking; and the Environmental Rights Action (ERA) that advocates for environmental security and provides services needed for environmental education and research. These NGOs' efforts have been directed towards achieving environmental and social justice for the inhabitants of the oil delta from 'big business' (TNOCs) and the state political elite (Obi, 1999). The activism has paid off in the past and the NGOs can still play a crucial role in national peacebuilding by assisting in establishing new forms of governance at local, state and federal

levels; and in helping the demobilisation of insurgents and implementation of longer term security measures.

Furthermore, community leaders as in local tribal chiefs, religious and ethnic associations leaders, women and cooperative groups leaders and youth organisations officers, can volunteer to provide activities that will sustain the peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts from the bottom-up rather than just from the top-down. While media attention have always been on governing political elite to create an enabling security environment in the delta through a top-down governing process, evidence abound of a rich vein of locally-based peacebuilding actions through local movements that has had national and transnational effects (Spence, 2004:66). Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011) referred to the significant role played by community groups in the Arms for Development (AfD) approach adopted in Sierra Leone in 2002 under the auspices of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Sierra Leonean government. The program that encouraged giving up arms in exchange for communal projects is a direct contrast to the amnesty programme implemented in the Niger Delta, which paid cash for arms buybacks from militants. While the AfD benefitted the entire community, the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta is alleged to have only benefitted the insurgent leaders and some of their militias. However, the civil society can be engaged to sensitise the militants on the need to voluntarily surrender arms in exchange for immediate and visible public facilities.

Action Level 1: Level one actions under the ARTAL security framework place so much responsibility on the political elite. It requires them to set up a process of peacemaking by initiating mediation and negotiation channels with other stakeholders such as the local leaders and NGOs. This by no means imply that the state will jettison its peacekeeping responsibility, which entails deployment of security apparatus especially since military troops are already in the zone. However, there will come a time at a later stage of the security framework, when trust is fully built between the civil society and the governing regime; therefore, military presence will have to be whittled down to the minimum level. In addition at level one, NGOs could contribute to the peacemaking process through a national

peacebuilding effort by encouraging what Spence (2004:67) termed 'people exchange', which would involve building relationships between individuals, government officials, ethnic, religious and educational organisations that can act as a positive force for good.

Community leaders will also have a responsibility to contribute to local peacebuilding efforts by providing volunteering assistance in the area of information dissemination, as the people might initially be suspicious seeing uniformed men around. The peace effort at this level of the ARTAL framework is in accord with Galtung's (1996:136) point that "the best providers of development assistance are probably voluntary people's organisations engaging in people-people rather than expert-expert dialogues, providing assistance closer to basic needs, and being ready to accept reciprocity".

Action Level 2: Level two actions of the ARTAL security framework entails a multifaceted approach especially on the side of the Nigerian political elite. Aside promoting dialogue between the different stakeholders through high level diplomacy stipulated in level one, the political elite should work towards transformation of governance at local, state and federal levels. The mode of governance, perceived to be bad in the findings of the study, has been the major driving factor of the Niger Delta oil conflict leading to tensions and instability as discussed in earlier chapters. The perception emerging from the structural factor due to the way government and the political economy operate in the oil region has further created provocating factors that has sparked violent agitations and armed conflict. Addressing the drivers of unrest is vital at this stage of the security framework in order to curb the deterioration of the provocation factors such as securitisation. Doing otherwise might jeopardise the dialogue already initiated and throw the region back into a destructive cycle of instability witnessed prior to implementation of the amnesty programme (Francis et. al., 2011).

To address the issue of bad governance, the governing political elite can accelerate the passing of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) discussed in chapter 5, which is still pending in the legislature. This proposed political and legal framework for the Nigerian oil industry is meant to readjust the political economy of oil

exploration and management, but has stalled in the parliament of the country for the past six years due to opposition from TNOCs and their allies in the Legislative and Executive arms of government. General opinion suggest that oil companies policies and practices need revamping to be up to date with modern practices and international standard.

In addition, at this level of the ARTAL framework, the political elite should address some deeper structural issues such as revisiting the issue of environmental governance in the Niger Delta, tackling corruption at all levels of government, adopting poverty alleviation measures through job creation, execute physical infrastructure projects and complete all abandoned projects in the region. Although the research findings indicate that a majority of the oil communities favoured having greater control of their resources either through the derivation allocation, to enable them to self-develop; however, by embarking on an accelerated program of massive infrastructure development, the oil communities will feel the closeness of government to them as host communities and be receptive to other state policies in maintaining security. It should be noted that there are government agencies already in place to carry out some of these functions such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) for fighting corruption, and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for administering infrastructural development. However, the issue has been on whether the political elite have the will to carry out the reforms?

Another angle to the security-development nexus is the issue of peacekeeping/enforcement on the part of the state. The historical antecedents of the military JTF in the Niger Delta made the inhabitants to perceive them as 'occupation forces' meant to protect big business, as such were unreceptive towards them. But the level of criminality in the region today has changed the feeling to that of ambivalence towards the JTF, because the local residents' perception of the militias has also changed; as findings of the research has shown in chapter 6. Some inhabitants of the oil delta rather than perceive the militias as freedom fighters as the case was in the early days of the struggle, now see them as criminals and opportunists alongside the political elite. This experience

might open a window of opportunity for both peacebuilding and peace enforcement efforts on the part of the state. The state can streamline the amount of military personnel who are already in the region while assuring the locals that the remaining troops are meant to safeguard their human security. As the level of insecurity improves, further routine withdrawal of forces should be made until it gets to the minimum level that will be determined by circumstances. With the ongoing re-orientation in the Nigerian military on the need for interpersonal and community liaison skills that will capture the 'hearts and minds' of the people (Francis et al., 2011), the security apparatus can endear themselves to the locals and improve the civil-military relation in the region. This will also impact on the state-civil society relation.

To achieve this positive civil-military relation, Harris (2004:36) recommended 'civilianising military functions' whereby the military will assist in development tasks such as undertaking construction work and helping out in civil defence during natural disasters. In the researcher's opinion, to canvass for total military withdrawal in the region at this stage of the conflict will be tantamount to calling for a political suicide of the state and its 'investing partners' in the oil region. Evidence on ground suggest the region is an hot-bed of violence and criminality, and no one seems to argue that the idea behind human security is security for all to attain optimum security. Ibaba (2008) alluded to this while maintaining that security has to be provided by the state for real development to take place in the oil delta.

The actions for NGOs at level two of the ARTAL security framework, with its peacekeeping role traditionally viewed from a military function perspective, may involve conflict resolution, information dissemination, governance monitoring, retraining of ex-combatants under the amnesty programme and setting up a process of societal healing that will involve local leaders at communal level. Analysts have previously queried the wisdom in using solely combat troops for peacekeeping operations because of their battlefield training orientation. According to Wood et al. (2001 cited in Harris, 2004:37), rather than saddle combat troops with peacemaking duties that may include social functions, civilian groups or the

police force could be utilised to perform such functions effectively. NGOs outside and in the oil region can support state reform efforts by engaging with local communities regularly and informing them of employment opportunities and open bid contracts available. Until recently, this have been communicated to and enjoyed by local elites and insurgent leaders. However, by strengthening the communities through broad stakeholder involvement in the developmental process, the people will have trust in the new inclusive approach and transmit this in a reciprocal manner to the state.

The re-integration of the ex-combatants under the amnesty program can also be sustained by support from NGOs. Skills training, apprenticeship and job placement should not just be the prerogative of government, other stakeholders should get involved as well through public-private partnership schemes. These attractive alternatives can serve as strong disincentives to crime and encourage a culture of peace in the region and elsewhere in the country. What the foregoing suggest is that NGOs can serve as a peace army. Equally important at this level two is for the NGOs to encourage citizen monitoring and reporting on governance and security practices. In the context of the Niger Delta, the local communities have been voicing their experience and opinion on issues such as lack of social amenities, environmental quality, human rights abuses and electoral malpractices. They can be further encouraged by the NGOs to uphold this attitude so as to promote transparency and social accountability in governance which will ultimately result to good governance that has been craved for by all.

Furthermore at level two of the ARTAL security framework is the actions for the local leaders, they should be proactive in their role by helping to boost trust in the new governance and security mode. Spence (2004:65) recounted how religious leaders and organisations have been at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts in divided and conflicting societies for decades. Such individuals and groups have advocated for non-violent social change and called for space to explore alternatives. The local leaders can provide strong moral ground for their communities to look beyond the past and reach out to the future in order to lay a groundwork for sustainable and enduring peace in the delta. Their task at this

level should involve transforming people's perceptions that human security and enduring peace is possible, but requires the contribution and commitment of all stakeholders in the peace process. By doing so, all the stakeholders at level two of the ARTAL security framework would have prepared future generations for peace and stability in Nigeria by transforming the present.

None could deny the daunting nature of the security challenges in the Niger Delta and elsewhere in Nigeria. There will be no quick fix, neither would there be eventual winners or losers. To create a strategic environment for peace, the ARTAL analytical alternative security framework proposed above has demonstrated that several actors will need to be on board and full hands on the deck. With the sincerity of purpose of all stakeholders and the will to accept the broader conceptualisation of security as advocated by proponents of human security, a dualistic interpretation of security is achievable and can be operationalised in Nigeria. Improving upon and reforming some social, political, economic and security practices will de-escalate tensions in the country without the coercive instrument of state power been deployed.

The proposed security framework has shown that there are alternatives to military-driven strategies, one that is based on 'security-development' nexus. Its focus should be on accelerated development interventions, environmental protection and political rights as against the deployment of the coercive and authoritarian instrument of state power. Given that underdevelopment and bad governance, resulting to environmental degradation because of political elite's laxity in managing the TNOCs, were top key issues at the heart of the Niger Delta crisis giving rise to the violent conflict. However, understanding that with such a proposal comes its critics, at this point it is important to address a criticism of the ARTAL security framework frequently raised during the presentations of the proposal to audiences within the UK and overseas.

Public response to the proposed framework has been largely laudable, because of its inclusive nature. The concern has mainly been around the willingness of the African elites especially the Nigerian political elite to abrogate, cede or share their security power with other entities most especially the NGOs within their

national territory, bearing in mind the oil-rentier nexus in the conflict. The point to be noted is that while the political elites in Africa had sometimes in the past been so protective of their national security power that is always shrouded in the 'culture of secrecy'; the loss of the monopoly of the instrument of violence as witnessed in the Niger Delta has facilitated a greater understanding of the need to open up possibilities for security collaboration like proposed under the ARTAL security framework. Hence, what is being advocated under the framework is not impracticable. Essien (2014) and Frances et al. (2011) argued that there are no paucity of NGOs in Nigeria that can contribute to national peacebuilding especially in the Niger Delta. It is a matter of engaging them in a collaborative arrangement with sincerity of purpose on the part of the state.

Similarly, given the findings from the research and other literature, which indicate the Nigerian state no longer has a monopoly of violence in the Niger Delta and elsewhere in the country, due to the proliferation of armed groups of which Boko Haram is the most recent; the state is now ever willing to compromise and enter peace pacts with some of the NGOs and insurgent elements out of the public sphere. The modality for achieving this is something that will not only be at the terms of the state, but also at the terms of all the stakeholders involved with a bit of extra mediation effort from independent parties. It is an open secret that militants are part of the security providers in the Niger Delta today and are on corporate and politicians payroll as security consultants (Mitee, 2009). So the Nigerian state as it is today is not only sharing it security power with non-state actors even though it lacks the political will to admit it; it has also continued to seek for assistance through different security cooperation with external hegemonic powers.

Therefore, the only viable option is for the state to adopt a human security principle as against the realist militarist traditional approach; and engage its civil society in a public-private partnership security provision rather than relying on external forces that are often parties to the conflict due to their interests. Thus, in conclusion, the ARTAL security framework is operable, although requires a

security re-orientation and the political will on the part of some of the stakeholders to be deliverable.

8.3. CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The study has demonstrated that the Niger Delta oil conflict is proof that the Nigerian political elite's perception of national security threat and construction of security strategies, is an outcome of both objective and subjective processes. This is more so, because particular representations of issues, events, individuals and groups in the delta's oil conflict are based on underlying perceptions. In other words, how issues and identities are presented is based on the particular construction of social realities by some of others. Thus, representations comprise of both objective and subjective, real or imagined versions of social realities. In the data corpus gathered during the study, it was observed that people's preferred choice of words or particular use of language was significant, because of the power to shape perceptions; likewise the variables employed to analyse these perceptions. The researcher also observed that the people - known as the target groups in the study choice of words may have been explicitly or implicitly left to achieve certain goals. Because this goes beyond the scope of the study, it was never explored further. However, efforts were made throughout the study as reflected in the different chapters, to demonstrate how the variables and/or themes elicited for the study are interconnected within the context of the Niger Delta oil conflict. Though some variables may have been elevated, while others relegated through discourse to legitimise certain security practices.

In summary, the research indicates that the issues of bad governance, resource control and underdevelopment gave rise to serious security challenges in the Nigerian oil delta. Followed by environmental degradation that is air pollution, destruction of the ecosystem and so on, resulting from oil exploration activities of TNOCs; which led to the agitation for self-determination and calls for the oil communities' right to participate in decision-making pertaining to the exploration, production and exportation of their oil resources. Arguing that this will allow the oil producing communities to be able to understand how much oil rent is

accruing to the state, and appraise how it is being spent on developmental projects based on the needs of the citizenry. However, rather than address the concerns of the oil minorities, the Nigerian political elite went through a process of creating more states over the years; thereby amplifying the powers of the federal government at the expense of regional governments. This led to the centralisation of political power and impacted on how federalism is practiced in Nigeria; because of the further marginalisation of the ethnic minorities from decision-making at the advantage of the major ethnic groups. Subsequently, giving rise to the debate on what constitutes true federalism.

To maintain the status quo, the political elite introduced the Petroleum Act of 1969 and Land Use Act of 1978, transferring all oil revenue and land with natural resources to the federal government. This led to a sense of perceived injustice on the part of the oil producing region and its people. It is at this critical juncture that the issue of faulty constitution arose in the Niger Delta violent contestation. The security challenges worsened with the proliferation of youth militia groups that became confrontational with TNOCs and later the state. The youths were later criminalised as terrorists through a process of security framing by state political elite in order to justify certain security practices. The Nigerian government responded by sending military force known as military Joint Task Force (JTF) to the oil region to guard oil installations and quell the uprising like the case of Odi massacre. This form of militarisation resulted to indiscriminate killings of both militants and innocent civilians, and destruction of properties due to its coercive nature. The consequence has since been action and reaction that has not always been equal, neither can it be said to be opposite; because both state and non-state actors have adopted violence in most parts of the campaign to articulate their point and assert their demand for their mode of security.

It is apparent from the study, that the Nigerian security decision-making body failed in its ability to prioritise the more pressing security threat between environmental insecurity and civil agitation. This misperception of security and threat have resulted in missed opportunities for national cohesion, subsequently, the direction for meaningful security strategies were also lost along the way. As

a consequence, the domestic security environment became violent for both state and businesses, and state security strategies has ever since been reactive. From a simplistic point of view, one might argue that the Niger Delta imbroglio can only be resolved if the inherent contradictions are fully addressed through economic and socio-political actions, not through military strategy. However, translated in concrete terms that recognises the internal nature of security threats, this study has emphasised the need for a mixture of military and non-military strategies with a clear focus on citizen-centred security to resolve the conflict. It would require auxiliary national resources to be allocated to the region for government to face less crisis of legitimacy, as failure to do so and thus resolve the conflict on time and permanently, will continue to impact on national security and stability in the region. Since a greater part of the study has highlighted that the political elite's preferred security strategy has been less than satisfactory, then there is need for a re-direction of national security policy. The starting point is to embrace the civil society as stakeholders in security provision. It will require sacrifices and compromises to be made by all sides for peace and security to return to the delta region and be maintained. This is what the 'ARTAL' security management framework have proposed.

While the researcher's proposed ARTAL framework did not anticipate for an increase in resource control given this was one of the key demands from the oil communities, it however proposed measures that addresses the issues of underdevelopment, security cooperation, youth unemployment and environmental degradation. The other fact that the proposed ARTAL framework did not rule out all forms of military intervention might make certain people to question the emancipatory and humanistic purpose of the suggested solution. This research cannot be accused of maintaining the status quo because of the numerous changes proposed in security provision, and its articulated inadequacy of traditional national security perspective. A keen observer would admit that the current domestic security environment of the Niger Delta is one that is volatile, violent, nasty and brutish; even to the ordinary inhabitant of the oil region as data evidence has demonstrated. The proliferation of different youth groups involving those based on the ideology of marginalisation, while others are simply opportunistic, will

surely demand a mix of both 'stick and carrot' approach till the situation improves. The idea that state actors in Nigeria will completely demilitarise the zone right from the onset of peacemaking initiatives can best be described as naive or wishful thinking at worst. The solution however, lies in an integrated conflict management approach as described in the researcher's proposed ARTAL security management framework.

What is true of Nigeria in the past decade and half specifically in the Niger Delta region need not be true in the coming years. While the security challenges may be dire, they are not insurmountable. Since national security threats under the period studied has proven to be elite determined, then with careful planning and wise leadership, the situation can be resolved. National security should be taken to mean not just the preservation of the small governing elite, but should encompass the protection and preservation of all the component parts of the civil society that includes the citizenry. Individuals and groups have to be protected by the state from all forms of human insecurity that include economic and environmental concerns. Likewise, the state should avoid the use of arbitrary and coercive power to demand for its own security. A well-conceived national security strategy that provides coherent part towards the identification, advancement and protection of citizens' interests should be given priority.

Since the study has shown that there is a linkage between environmental degradation and poverty, which in turn has impinged on human security of the oil minorities, government should as a matter of urgency pass and implement the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB). This will bring oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta to international regulatory standard, that will lead to less oil spill and flaring of non-essential gas. Equally, securitisation that is seen as one of the driving factors of the oil conflict should be discouraged and phased out gradually. As shown throughout the study, elite perception shaped the government securitisation approach and tensions that emerged from the underlying structural factors that has made the delta region unstable. Therefore, the particular way in which government and the political economy works has to be reformed for peace to return and be maintained in the delta region. Overall, by straddling both the

realist and constructivist notions of national security threat, this research has been able to elicit the transformative potential of the human security agenda over the traditional approach to security.

8.4. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As a prelude to this scholarship, the researcher conducted a study on the security co-operation between the United States of America and some Gulf of Guinea countries, using AFRICOM in Nigeria as case study. This initial study provoked a number of intriguing frontiers that culminated in this research. The study uncovered how state actors in Africa have been using international security discourse to frame their own domestic security agenda even where there is no evident connection between the two. As such, it will be worthwhile for future researchers on Nigerian security to investigate to what extent has the US military influenced Nigerian elite? Looking at its operational connection in the process.

With the Nigerian state political elite's perception of security now investigated in this study, following a similar study conducted by Omeje (2004) to ascertain the TNOCs perceptions of security and responsiveness to threat; it is only proper that a more comprehensive inquiry is carried out among the Niger Delta elite to ascertain if their security orientation has changed over a set period of time. This becomes necessary given that a native of the Niger Delta region was elected Nigerian president by the year 2011. Except for the politics of accommodation that is being played to pacify insurgent leaders, instability in the region persists. In light of the foregoing observation, whereby a Niger Delta indigene as president was unable to hold the peace in the oil region, then it will be worthwhile for future researchers to conduct a more rigorous study comparing the security perspectives of the Niger Delta elite and the ordinary local people within the context of the oil conflict.

Another question mark in the Niger Delta oil conflict has been the issue of policing and democratic control. What has been the role of the Nigerian police in time of conflict? Is it an organisation that is tied to the apron of the political

elite thereby implementing the wishes of the elite in a democratic setting just like other security outfits; or it has been afflicted by the ills in the Nigerian society such as corruption leading to its incompetence. This issue is outside the scope of this study but can be explored in future studies.

Thirdly, the fact that there are smaller oil producing states within the Gulf of Guinea with similar resource conflicts as demonstrated by Massey and May (2009:213-239) calls for additional case studies. A study conducted along similar path such as this can be used to compare and contrast the trends observable in these developing countries. By so doing, solutions might be found to the various oil-related conflicts plaguing these Third World countries.

Lastly, despite the significant role played by civil societies in Africa, little is known about the role the elites play in the civil society space. This under-researched area can be further explored to establish whether the emergence of civil societies in the continent is a new way of thinking or is just another platform for elites to renew their voices. This become necessary especially if one is to consider Thomson (2010:111) and Baker (2002:91) allegations that the African elites has infiltrated their civil societies and made it weak.

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APPENDIX A

Timeline of Conflict

Period	Incident
December 1998	Over 5,000 Ijaw youths assembled in Kaiama Town and proclaimed the "Kaiama Declaration". Resource control and self-determination were the main issues in the Declaration as a result of years of environmental degradation. As a way of curtailing the peaceful protests by the Ijaw youths, the state deployed its military force to towns such as Bomadi, Mbiama, Port Harcourt and Yenagoa in Bayelsa and Rivers States respectively where many local citizens were murdered.
January 1999	The oil producing communities of Opia and Ikeyan in Delta State were razed down by state security apparatus that were alleged to have been transported to the villages in Chevron helicopters. Chevron being an American oil company operating in the area.
May 1999	Nigeria transited to civil rule after years of military authoritarianism. Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired military 'General' becoming the new civilian president. This elicited hope of the Niger Delta oil conflict being resolved through democratic means.
November 1999	Odi, an oil producing community in Bayelsa State demolished by military troops in an operation sanctioned by the new civilian president. An estimated 2,483 citizens were killed in the operation (Hakuri II) condemned both locally and internationally as a 'total massacre'. The reason for the military raid has been accounted for in chapter 4.
July 2002	Ethnic Ijaw women from Gbaramatu and Egbema communities in Delta State were brutalized by state security operatives when they protested at the Abiteye oil flow station belonging to Chevron. The women were protesting their neglect in terms of employment and other socio-welfare schemes such as microcredit scheme before the military were invited by Chevron to curb the peaceful protests of the women.
August 2002	Women of Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo ethnic backgrounds who were protesting at Shell and Chevron offices in Warri, Delta State were brutalized by state security apparatus. The military were invited by Shell and Chevron to curtail the peaceful protests embarked upon by the women who were demanding for better community resources from the TNOCs in return for their oil resource that is being exploited.
March 2003	There was open confrontation between the military and the youths of Okerenkoko community when the military deployed about 10 gunboats in an operation to fish out locals who were involved in oil theft (bunkering). However, the youths claimed the military were the one masterminding the illegal oil dealings. About 20 civilian and 3 soldiers' lives were lost in the ensuing armed confrontation according to available evidence.
August 2003	A military Joint Task Force (JTF) codenamed "Operation Restore Hope" was established by the federal government of Nigeria specifically for the Niger Delta. The mandate of this military unit comprising the army, air force, navy, police, mobile-police and the State Security Service (SSS) was to protect oil installations by neutralising any threat to it and to curb agitations by the locals in the region.
September 2003 – August 2004	The IYC President and leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) in person of Asari Dokubo alleged that the Rivers State governor, Dr. Peter Odili who happens to be his friend rigged the 2003 elections that returned him as state governor; hence, the results are

	unacceptable. Another militant group Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) under the leadership of Ateke Tom, who were on the side of the governor confronted the NDPVF militias, and this boiled to an open conflict in the area between the militia groups and the state security agencies who were alleged to be playing the script of the political elites.
September 2004	The military JTF "Operation Restore Hope" directed by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to wipe out the militant group NDPVF and its leader Asari-Dokubo. Consequently, Asari-Dokubo declared a state of war with TNOCs and the Nigerian state. He threatened to disrupt oil production in the Niger Delta by blowing up oil pipelines and flowstations.
October 2004	President Obasanjo embraced the path of dialogue by inviting two militant groups leaders Asari-Dokubo of NDPVF and Ateke-Tom of NDV to a peace meeting at the presidential palace. Thereafter "amnesty" was granted to the militant groups and cash paid to them after surrendering their weapons in a buyback deal with the state.
February 2005	Operatives of the military JTF "Operation Restore Hope" invaded Odioma community and demolished the town as already accounted for in chapter 4. The military intervention was sanctioned by the state governor after it was alleged that a cult group called "Teme" (Shadow) resident in the town, ambushed and murdered twelve members of a government delegation including four Nembe Local Government Area councillors who were on a crisis mediation trip.
September 2005	NDPVF militant leader Asari-Dokubo arrested on the order of Nigerian president Obasanjo and charged for treasonable felony in disregard of the amnesty agreements. Military troops reinforced in the Niger Delta to quell retaliatory attacks.
January 2006	Rebels of the "Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta" (MEND) which has now become the umbrella organisation for all militant groups in the Niger Delta attacked a shell offshore oil field; kidnapped four expatriate workers and demanded the unconditional release of Asari-Dokubo in exchange for the hostages taken.
February 15th, 17th and 18th 2006	Military hardwares including jet fighters and helicopter gunships deployed over Okerenkoko, Seigbene, Perezuuoweikorigbene, Ukpogbene and Seitorugbene, all communities in the Gbaramatu Kingdom of the Niger Delta to arrest illegal oil dealers. Up to 20 people, mainly civilian fishermen lost their lives in the military operations. Aircrafts used in the operations alleged to have been deployed from Shell airstrip in Osubi, Warri, Delta State.
February 19th 2006	MEND rebels in response to the military operations in Gbaramatu Kingdom attacked Shell's Forcados loading terminal, setting fire on oil facilities and the loading platform. Nine hostages were held from Wilbros (a Shell contractor) by the militants and used as human shields against military aerial attacks. The federal government called for cessation of hostilities on both sides after losing about 400,000 barrels of crude oil per day in the affected zones, embracing dialogue and stopping military operations in Gbaramatu kingdom.
April 2006	MEND in a show of might and to send a "strategic but symbolic" message to TNOCs in the area that the state security apparatus will not be able to protect them in the face of threat set off two explosives at Bori Camp Military Barracks, Port Harcourt, Rivers State and the other within the confines of a petrol tanker garage in Warri, Delta State. President Olusegun Obasanjo reacted by declaring a clampdown on the militants through the state security apparatus. A declaration that contravened his earlier promise that the state will henceforth tow the path of dialogue as a means of resolving the oil conflict. The declaration and

	counter-declaration of hostility led to further instability in the region resulting to unaccounted loss of lives of both civilians and military alike.
May 2006	The Ijaw ethnic group boycotted a meeting of the Niger Delta called by the Nigerian president. President Obasanjo acknowledged the appalling conditions in the Niger Delta region and set up the Council of Social Economic and Development of the Coastal States (COSEEDECS). The council charged with the development of the coastal oil producing states in the Niger Delta dissolved not long after formation due to the paucity of fund from the government. The East-West road which is the only road linking the Niger Delta to other parts of the country was earmarked for dualisation at the meeting by the president. But eight years on in 2014 and under three different civilian administrations, the road was still to be completed when the researcher passed through it while on fieldtrip.
August 2006	A coalition of militant groups under the banner "Joint Revolutionary Council" (JRC) was formed, comprising of MEND, NDPVF, Coalition of Militant Action and the Martyrs Brigade. This was in response to the presidential declaration earlier on that the military JTF should suppress all agitations in the Niger Delta so that TNOCs can resume full oil exploration activities in the region. Consequently, fifteen Ijaw youths were killed by the men of the military JTF on 20th August 2006, while returning from an hostage rescue mission on behalf of Shell whose staff (Nelson Ujeya) was earlier kidnapped. The hostage including the rescuers were all murdered by the security operatives in what has ever been described as an 'unprovoked attack'.
December 2006	A group of sixty-five Nobel Laureates including the Commission of Nobel Laureates on Peace, Equity and Development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, an effort of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity (EWF) released its report based on its findings and on-the spot assessment of the situation in the Niger Delta. Issues such as corruption, governance, environment, elections, violence, poverty, TNOCs, development and security were captured in the report.
March 2007	A Marshall Plan for the development of the Niger Delta region comprising a 15-year road map released by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).
May 2007	A new president (Umaru Musa Yar'Adua) from northern Nigeria sworn in as the new Head-of-State in Nigeria after a general election conducted in April, with an Ijaw man from the Niger Delta (Goodluck Jonathan) becoming the vice-president for the first time in Nigerian political history.
June 2007	The militant leader Asari-Dokubo arrested and detained since 20th September 2005 by the erstwhile president granted bail on the order of a high court sitting in the federal capital city of Abuja. His arrest and detention has been the main driver of the incessant hostage-taking, kidnappings and violence perpetrated by the insurgents in the Niger Delta. The new vice-president Goodluck Jonathan visited various militant camps in the Niger Delta creeks proposing a new conflict resolution approach in the region. A new body, the Ijaw Youth Leadership Forum (IYLF) was set up by the insurgent groups to dialogue with the new federal government as a gesture of goodwill.
July 2007	Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan inaugurates the Presidential Committee on Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Niger Delta. David Brigidi and Kingsley Kuku became the Chairman and Secretary of the committee saddled with the task of appealing to militant youths to give up their arms towards amicable resolution of the oil conflict.

August 2007	A "committee for consultation on the roadmap to peace implementation" set up by the Ijaw Youth Leadership Forum (IYLF) submitted its preconditions for negotiations with the federal government. Among the conditions submitted to the Secretary to the federal government was, the withdrawal of all military troops from Ijaw land, amnesty to Ijaw "freedom fighters" both in and out of prison and the rehabilitation of Odi and Odioma communities destroyed by state security operatives.
November 2007	Gbaraun community in southern Ijaw land renowned for its peaceful and non-militant activities was attacked by soldiers of the JTF. The military operation was carried out while peaceful negotiation was still ongoing between the government and insurgent groups. At the same time, a top secret military document written by the commander of the JTF, Brig. Gen. L.P Ngubane titled "Brief for Chief of Defence Staff on Strategies to Stem Out Militant Activities within the Joint Task Force Operation Restore Hope Area of Responsibility" was leaked to the public (see Ngubane, 2007 in reference). The report advocates the need to use maximum military power against those he termed "militants" and "fellow Nigerians" on the same page of the report. Some oil producing communities such as Kurutie, Okerenkoko, Oporoza etc. in Delta State were marked for military assault even though the report acknowledged many innocent lives will be lost in the eventuality of such operation.
December 2007	Ateke Tom, a militant leader of the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) who has been at the forefront of the peace process was attacked by the military JTF through aerial bombardment and the use of armoured tanks. This was largely seen as a deliberate act to scuttle the peace process on the part of the state. Of note in the same month is the budgetary allocation of 69 billion naira ($500 million USD then) to the development of the Niger Delta region while 444.6 billion naira ($4 billion USD) was earmarked for maintaining its security by the federal government. A move that prompted the withdrawal of insurgent groups from the negotiating table, accusing the state elites of insincerity.
May 2008	Operatives of the military JTF invaded Opuama town in Delta State and killed four local citizens on the pretext that they were looking for militants. Several houses were also destroyed.
June 2008	The military JTF unleashed its full force across several states in the Niger Delta leaving a trail of blood on its path. For example, on June 3rd, the town of Twon Brass was invaded in Bayelsa State where lives were wasted and many displaced by state security operatives. June 6th was the turn of Epebu community in the same Bayelsa State where slained bodies were alleged to have been thrown into the river by men of the state security operatives. Properties were set on fire by security operatives according to eye-witness accounts. It was the turn of Sararogbo Zion, Egbema 1 and Egbema 2 communities in present day Edo State on June 8th. The soldiers of the JTF annihilated these communities and displaced the indigenes in what is now regarded as their trademark. As a result of these military attacks, the IYLF suspended its peace dialogue with the federal government citing non-commitment on the part of the state.
August 2008	The military JTF "Operation Restore Hope" invaded the coastal town of Agge in Bayelsa State on August 4th and razed down the entire community in similarity to Odi and Odioma in 1999 and 2005 respectively under the

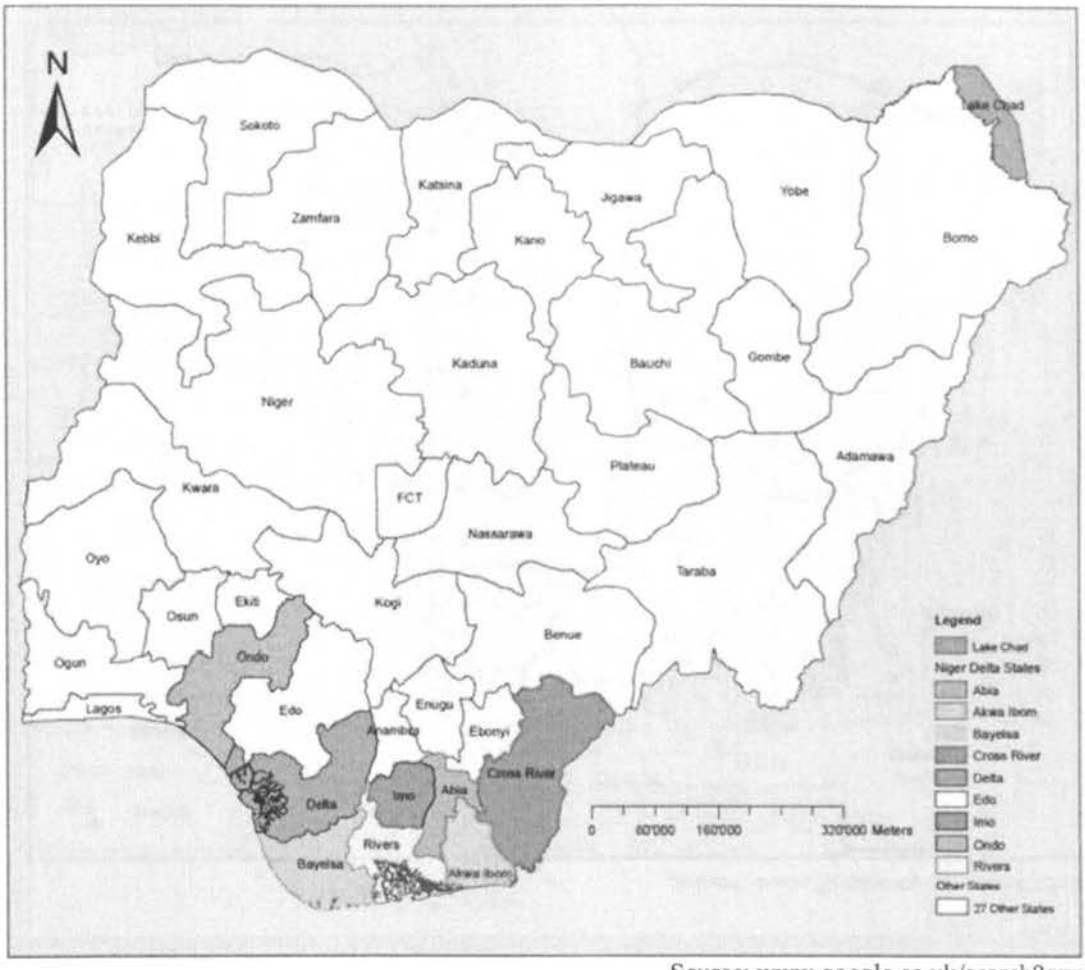
	presidency of Obasanjo. The reason given for the invasion was that militants harboured in the town attacked security operatives a day earlier in neighbouring towns of Bomadi and Tuomo. Several citizens became homeless as a result of the military operation.
September 2008	The Nigerian President announced the creation of "Ministry for Niger Delta" to coordinate all efforts towards the infrastructural development, environmental protection and youth empowerment of the region. The JTF invaded some militants hideouts in Rivers State using air, land and sea artillery in an operation that lasted for days. The militants responded by blowing up oil pipelines in an operation codenamed "Hurricane Barbarossa".
November 2008	The military JTF 'Operation Restore Hope' claimed to have arrested some "big guns in illegal oil business". Their identity it promised to reveal shortly, but six years after, the promise is still to be kept.
December 2008 - April 2009	The attacks and counter-attacks between the JTF and insurgents went unabated in communities across the whole of the Niger Delta. Notably in Bonny, kalabari and Okrika in Rivers State and elsewhere in Nembe and Ekeremor in Bayelsa State. The JTF was restructured in March 2009 with its operational headquarters moved from Warri in Delta State to Yenagoa in Bayelsa State.
May 13th and 14th 2009	The JTF invaded 'Camp 5' of one of the insurgent groups and the militants fought back for several days resulting into the death of eighteen soldiers and several militants. The violence spread into some neighbouring communities in Gbaramatu kingdom claiming about 500 to 2,000 innocent lives according to eye-witness accounts.
May 15th - 25th 2009	On the 15th of May, 4 jet fighters, 24 gunboats and 3 battalions of the Nigerian armed forces were sent as reinforcement to Camp 5 and Oporoza town in Gbaramatu kingdom to conclude the military operation. The palace of the traditional king and other buildings were touched by the security operatives with several lives wasted in the ensuing violence. An oil pipeline belonging to Chevron was blown up by MEND on the 16th of May in response to the military attacks and the JTF continued its attacks on Kunukununa and Kurutie communities on the 18th. By 19th, it was the turn of Okerenkoko again that has been a targeted community by the JTF since 2003, except this time; it was totally annihilated by the security operatives. The local health centre and primary school were razed down by the military men in what the state governor Emmanuel Uduaghan described as a "merciless and indiscriminate attack on the people of Gbaramatu kingdom. On the 20th - 22nd, Kunukununa, Kurutie and Oporoza were revisited by the JTF, who conducted house-to-house search to apprehend those who escaped the earlier assault. By May 25th, MEND claimed to have blown up major oil pipelines feeding flowstations in Alero Creek, Abiteye, Dibi, Makaraba and Otunana. All in response to the state military repression that has claimed thousands of innocent lives.
May 27th 2009	The militant kingpin that was alleged to have masterminded the killing of police officers in Odi that led to the destruction of the town by the state security apparatus was arrested and later died under police custody in contentious circumstances. The police claimed he was killed in a shoot-out with the force but MEND claimed he was summarily executed at the state police headquarters in Bayelsa without the opportunity to defend himself in a judicial process.

May 29th 2009	MEND rejected the offer of "amnesty" from the Nigerian government favouring instead, the redefinition of Nigerian federalism that is part of the causal factor of the oil conflict. It also called for the "involvement of international mediators".
June 5th 2009	MEND demanded that all TNOCs in the Niger Delta should vacate the region within 72 hours or face looming attack.
June 9th 2009	MEND declared 'Hurricane Piper Alpha' which is to smoke out the state security operatives who are being harboured in oil facilities across the Niger Delta. The operatives were labelled as "war criminals" by the group.
June 11th 2009	Seven displaced indigenes of Gbaramatu including children and the elderly who were on their way to the refugee camp in Warri, Delta State were shot and killed by soldiers of the military JTF.
June 25th 2009	The Nigerian federal government under the presidency of Umaru Musa Yar'adua announced the option of amnesty to militants willing to give up their arms, with the amnesty cut-off date set at 4th October 2009. Not long after the presidential announcement, the town of Agbeti in Delta state was attacked by soldiers of the JTF. While MEND also claimed to have blown up the well head (jacket B) of the Afremo off-shore oil-fields in Delta State belonging to Shell.
June 29th 2009	MEND claimed to have sunk a military gunboat ferrying about 20-30 JTF operatives in the Niger Delta creek.
July 5th 2009	The codename "Hurricane Piper Alpha" upgraded to "Hurricane Moses" by MEND. At the same time, coordinated attacks carried out by militants on Shell Well Head 20, at Cawthorn Channel 1 and Chevron strategic Okan manifold to disrupt the free flow of oil to loading platforms.
July 6th 2009	Six crew members were taken as hostages by MEND insurgents from the chemical tanker 'Sichem Peace'. They were 3 Russian nationals, 2 filipinos and an indian.
July 12th 2009	MEND extend its attack on oil facilities outside the Niger Delta by attacking the Atlas Cove oil facility in Lagos, western Nigeria. Five navy men and four civilians lost their lives in the operation.
July 15th 2009	A 60-day ceasefire in the Niger Delta declared by MEND to facilitate peace negotiations between the federal government and insurgent groups.
July 21st 2009	The six crew hostages from Sichem Peace held by MEND since 6th of July released as a measure of goodwill on the part of MEND. The group asked the federal government to reciprocate by demilitarising the Niger Delta.
July 23rd 2009	State governors from the Niger Delta region threatened to withdraw from the amnesty arrangement due to what they termed insincerity on the part of the federal government towards the oil producing region.
August 7th 2009	32 militant leaders met President Yar'Adua at the presidential palace in Abuja and accepted the amnesty offer from the government while renouncing violence at the same time. The spokeman of the group who happens to be a major militant leader himself, Ebikabowei Victor Ben a.k.a. General Boyloaf commented, "our people are hungry and dying. Our infrastructure is in a deplorable state. Our communities have no water and light, oil spill and gas flaring is the order of the day. In fact, you need to visit the region to see things for yourselves. Our youths are unemployed and this is the same region that produce over 90% of our national income". The question then arise, will these youths fold their arms in the face of tyranny and oppression?

December 1st - 3rd 2010	Ayankoromo community in Delta State attacked with helicopter gun-ships and naval gun-boats by JTF operatives who claimed to want to neutralise John Togo, a militant leader in the area. More than 150 people lost their lives and about 3000 indigenes displaced according to available estimate.
May 12th 2011	Ayankoromo invaded again by JTF under the guise of looking for John Togo who refused the offer of amnesty. Innocent lives were lost again with several people displaced, while houses were also burnt by the rampaging soldiers.

Compiled and Adapted from: NigerDeltaRising Website, HRW, ICG, Saharareporters, Amnesty International, BBC, Reuters, Newswatch magazine, Thisday, Punch, Guardian, Tribune, Vanguard newspapers.

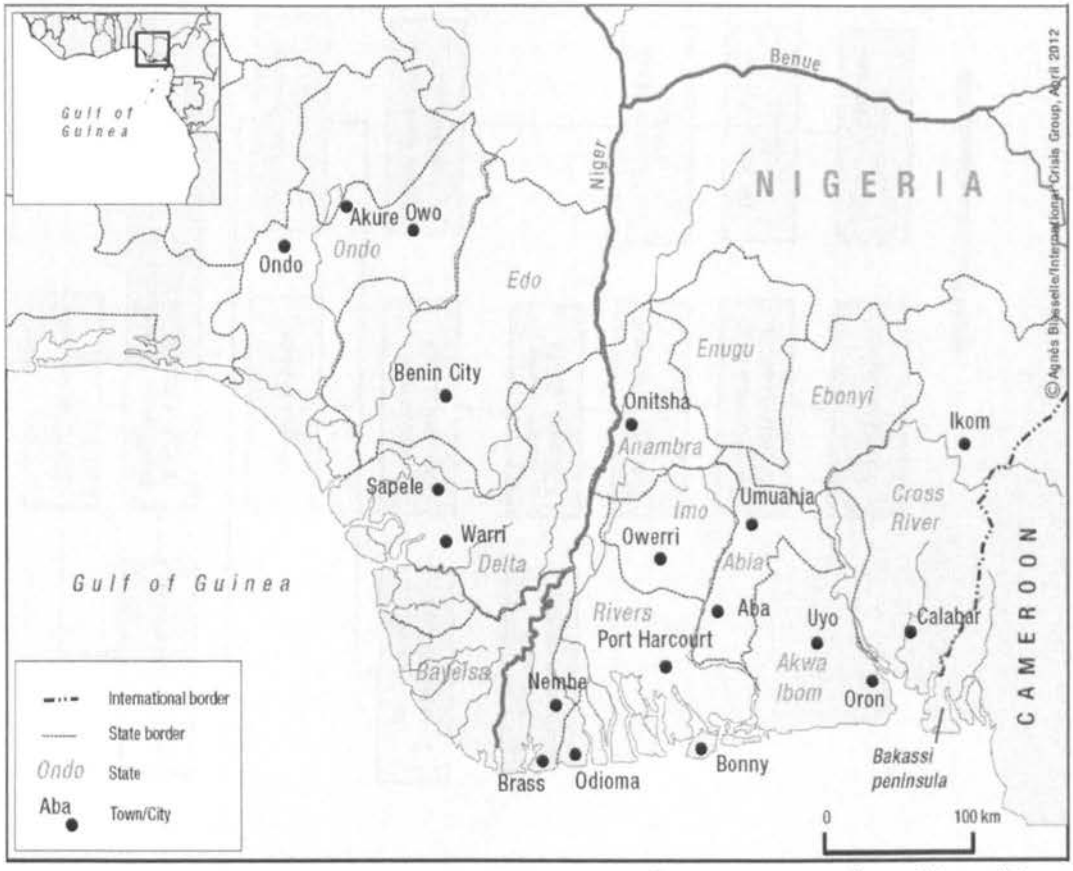
APPENDIX B



Source: www.google.co.uk/search?q=map

Map of Nigeria

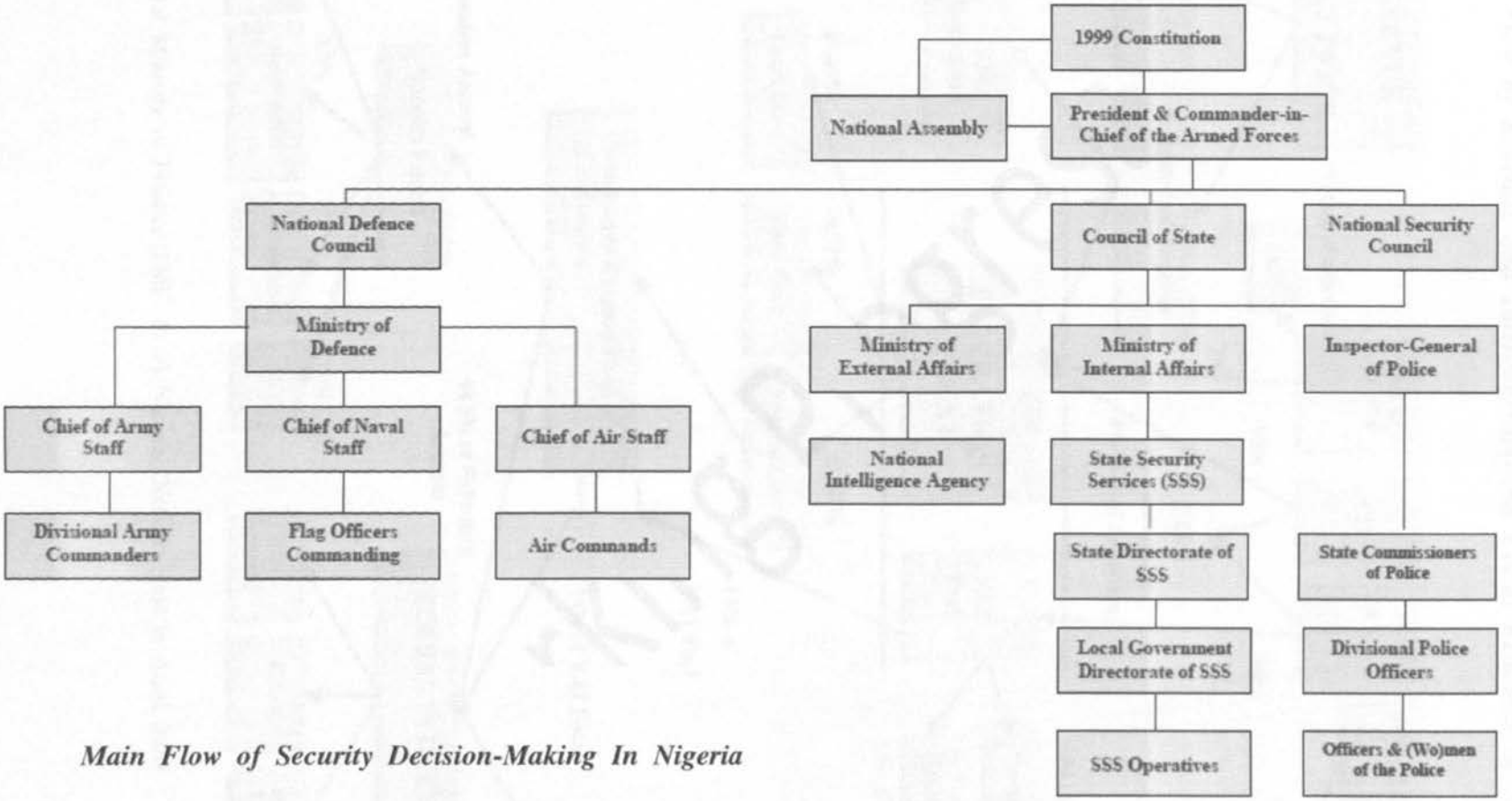
APPENDIX C



Source: www.google.co.uk/search?q=map

Map of Niger Delta Region

APPENDIX D

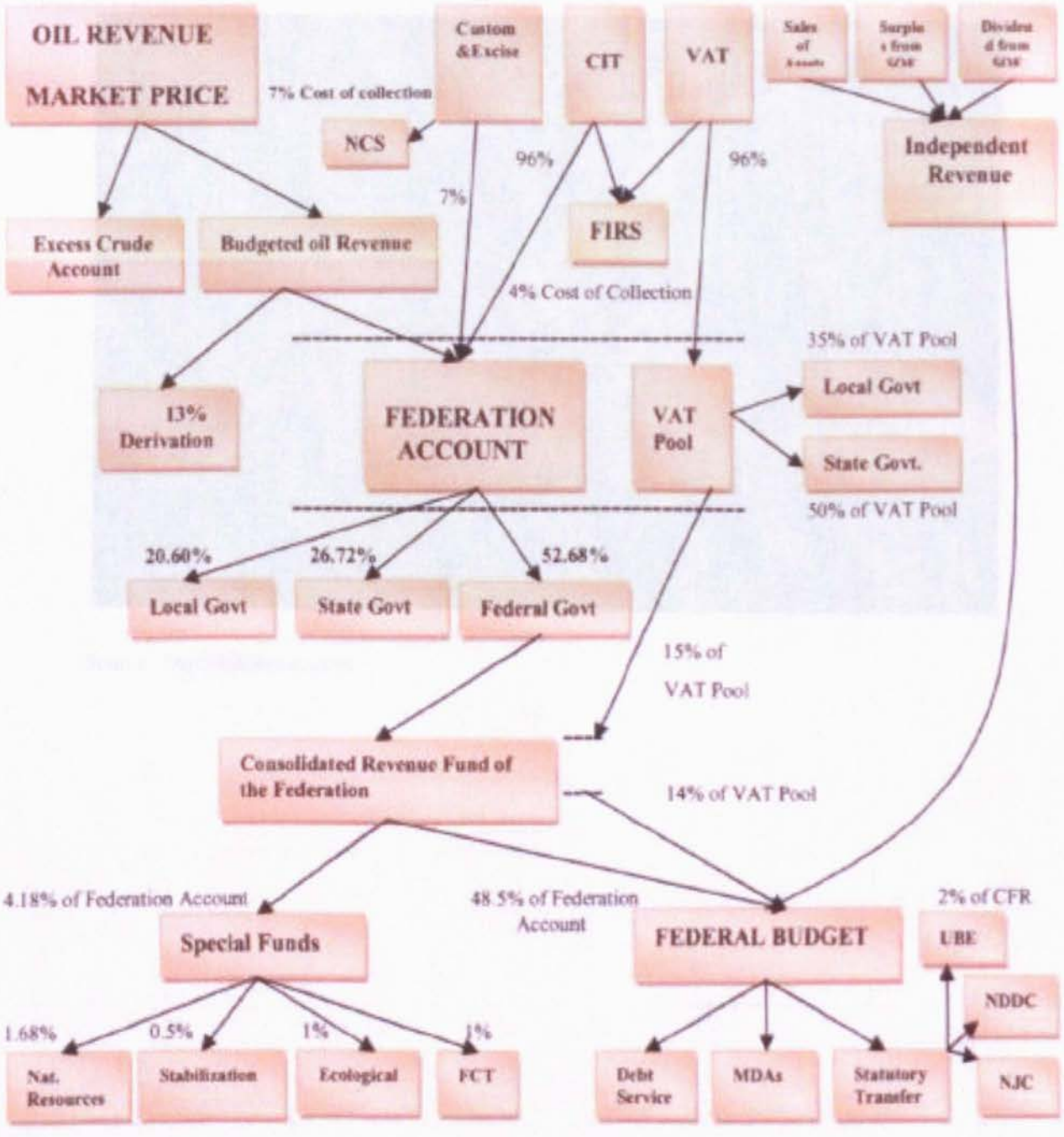


Main Flow of Security Decision-Making In Nigeria

Adapted from: (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008)

APPENDIX E

The Flow of Revenue and Intergovernmental Fiscal Relations in Nigeria



Source: Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF, BOF) Nigeria, 2006:10 cited in Alabi 2010.

APPENDIX F

Image of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta

Source: http://inhabitant.com