Original Research

The Military Dimension of Niger Delta Crisis and Its Implications on Nigeria National Security

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Abstract
This article uses qualitative research method to obtain information from high-profiled respondents through verbal interaction in semi-structured interviews in addition to some secondary data to examine the military dimension of Niger Delta crisis and its implications on security sectors in Nigeria. The Nigerian militarized political system attests to the influence of long-term military rule in the country thereby the perpetual deployment of Nigerian armed forces to complement the duty of police in ensuring internal security has been found unassailable within Nigerian democratic governments. Consequently, there have been numerous cases of civilian casualties characterizing the historical record of these military interventions in which the case of Niger delta crisis has been no exception. This article finds it worthwhile to examine the outcomes of these military operations in Niger delta crisis over security sectors in Nigeria and finds them to be terrifically counterproductive. The result unveils the impracticality of military armed forces becoming instrumental in addressing economic and environmental insecurities of a state as well as the need to expand the agenda of security beyond the military armed forces. Theoretically, this article uses the Copenhagen School of Security Studies’ (CS) conceptualization of security sectors as conceptual and structural framework of the study.

Keywords
militarization, militarism, multidimensionality, traditionalist, wideners, Niger Delta

Introduction
Militarism in African context is defined according to Luckham (1994) as the pervasiveness of prioritizing military symbolic values and validating of military power in the society for the sake of making preparation for war. The author expanded the concept of militarism to be a multidimensional process whereby different elements ranging from military coups and regimes, authoritarian government, war and armed conflict, the prevalence of patriarchal system, importation of ammunitions, external military interventions, war and armed conflicts, powerful military, and repressive state apparatuses are inter-connected with each other for the projects of national and international hegemony. He argues that several years of military involvements in the contemporary style of African politics have militarized its civil rule. Nigeria returned to a democratic government in 1999 but the impact of military dominance from 1966 to 1979 and 1984 to 1999 in Nigerian politics has remained apparent in civilian rule (Mohammad, 2014).

The military features of Nigerian democratic government are defining traits of militarizing the Nigerian political system. This is explained according to Professor Dent (1978) that the amount of soldiers and their enormous influence on Nigerian civil rule are more than the quantity of teachers and their influence over all aspects of the polity. George et al. (2012) argue on the prevalence of militarism in Nigerian civil rule by stating that the first civilian president who was democratically elected in 1999, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has been a retired military head of state and Army general, the then senate president David Mark was a retired army officer, the Sultan of Sokoto who became the head of the Supreme Muslim Council was a retired army officer, the well-known Olubadan of Ibadan was also a retired military officer, and boards of directors in many blue-chip companies were retired military officers. In addition, the current president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, has previously ruled the country under military regime between the year 1983 and

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1985 and he was also a retired Army general. The occupation of important offices by retired military personnel under civil rule is one of the defining features of a militarized political system in Nigeria.

According to Best (1999), militarized governance in Nigeria has to do with an important increase in military expenditure, the domination of military officers in political system, and most significantly the dynamic participation of high-ranking military officers in Nigerian politics. Adeakin (2013) buttresses on militarism in Nigerian politics from four phases: the experience of colonial rule in Nigeria, the different reasons behind military intervention in Nigerian politics, the connection between challenges facing the democratic government in Nigeria and the influence of a long-term military rule, and finally the need for security reforms that encompass all security sectors as suggested solution to multidimensional security challenges inherent in the country. Obi (2007) explains that Nigerian militarized political system is beyond the experience of military rule in the country; it has developed to include the political legacy characterized with cultural impunity, the consideration of active-combative posture and suppression over dialogue and negotiation, and the participation of high-ranked retired military officers in civil rule.

According to Frank and Ukpere (2012), the Nigerian democratic practices have raised considerable issues over the display of militarized political culture. Militarism is defined as the displacement of civil authority by military elements in governance and the conduction of civil affairs in military fashion. The influence of the military fashion of conducting civil affairs over civil populace whereby they imbibe in principles and practices of militarized political system is defined as militarization. According to Omilusi (2015), there is a complete overhaul of politics rooted in military symbols, values, and ethos replicating in the large sections of the present Nigerian civil society. The author argues that Nigeria is yet to build stable civil–military relations, which is a critical task of consolidating the fragility of democracy in the country and an attempt to rebuild stable civil–military relations is to reclaim the militarized mindset that has diffused with Nigerian politics under military rule. According to Fayemi (2012), the prevailing political culture in Nigeria is reflecting the three decades of militarism and authoritarian control of the country. The on-going process of democratization is reflecting a reconfiguration of the political, economic, and military elite rather than opening of the political system to broaden political participation.

One of the most popular on-going protracted conflicts in Nigeria presently is Niger Delta crisis, which has, in a long-term, threatened Nigeria national security. The conflict erupted as a result of the insensitivity and negligence of Nigerian government and transnational oil companies as well as their intransigence toward the grievances of the local people of the region about the unwillingness to address the continuing environmental degradation resulting to their hardship social and economic conditions. Considering the dynamism of militarism in Nigerian political system, the use of soldiers has remained the preferable approach of securing the national security. Afeno (2014) argues that the deployment of Nigerian armed forces to support the Nigerian police in carrying out their internal security operations has always been favorably considered by the government with the belief that such military intervention is more effective in ensuring the internal security. This explains the constant decision of government to deploy Nigerian soldiers into Niger Delta crisis and Utin (2018) argues that the aim of such military operations is to suppress the rise of militants in the region and quell their various activities that are threatening to Nigeria national security.

The creation and continued deployment of a Joint Task Force (JTF) composed of Nigerian armed forces by the government and their various military operations in the Niger Delta crisis are main arguments behind the military dimension of the crisis. According to Adeakin (2013), militarization of Niger Delta crisis has resulted to the rise of many ethnic militias such as Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF). Dode (2012) concludes that if militarization is an ideal security approach to Niger Delta crisis, the massive military operations in Gbaramatu Kingdom, which recorded the use of full military ammunitions such as 3,000 troops, two warships, 14 boats, and at least four helicopter gunships executed on air, land, and sea, should be more than to end the rise of militants in the region and quell their operations.

The region has recorded many military operations in physical combats with militants that are disrupting the activities of oil but the questions to ask include the following: What are the outcomes of these operations? Has militants’ attacks reduced in the Niger Delta due to the presence of Nigerian soldiers? What are the implications of the military dimension of this crisis over the Nigeria national security? This article aims to provide answers to these questions with the use of both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The researcher carried out a semi-structured interview with respectable individuals who have made contributions to provide solutions to lingering problems of the Niger Delta. Theoretically, this article uses the Copenhagen School of Security Studies’ (CS) conceptualization of security sectors as conceptual and structural framework of the study. This research briefly examines the military professionalism in East Asia, particularly in Indonesia to divulge the conventional military involvement in democratic governments of developing countries in the world.

**Theoretical Framework: Security Debates**

The debates of national security revolve around two classified security approaches, which are Traditionalists vs. Wideners.
These approaches explained the conception of security during the cold war and its aftermath. Realism/Neorealism gained prominence during the cold and realist construct of security that constitutes the traditional security approach. Booth (2005) defines the realist conception of national security as the military security of states against the military capability of another state. Stephen Walt (1991) defines national security from realist perspective as “the studies of the threat, use, and control of military force.” Realist/traditionalist security theory is defined to be state-centric approach that considers states as both securitizing actor and referent object of security. It is basically a militarized security approach whereby military relations among nation-states and military capability of states against external military threats occupy the agenda of national security of states. A state is secured in the absence of military objective threats for the sake of its survival within anarchical nature of international system. Military power of a state is considered as the main instrument of ensuring its national security and sovereignty. Slaughter (2011) argues that states would possibly do anything to avoid depending on other states, which is the idea of self-help and survival.

Saleh (2010) explains the significance of military power in the traditional security approach: a tool used by states to demonstrate their strengths, to maintain territorial integrity, to ensure domestic or internal security, to acquire international recognition, to fight against every threat, to carry out diplomatic negotiations, to gain economic advantages, to secure geopolitical boundaries and for political propaganda. Noteworthy, the prevailing militarism in Nigerian political system and the military dimension of Niger Delta crisis can be classified under the traditional or realist construct of security. The traditional or realist construct of security faced with many criticisms basically at the aftermath of the cold war leading to the birth of new security debate known as wideners’ security approach. The need to expand the scope of security beyond state-centric and military approach of traditional security debate became the arguments of wideners’ scholars of security. According to Richard (1983), threat can be attributed to anything or issue that is capable to threaten people or state. Human security scholars argue on the need to focus on those issues threatening the well-being of individuals that cannot be singlehanded addressed by states. They argue for the recognition and inclusion of nonmilitary issues and non-state actors in the scope of security. Lin (2011) argues on the rise of nonmilitary threats along with nonstate actors, socio-economic, cultural, and nonterritorial threats at the aftermath of the cold war and the need for them to be properly addressed under the scope of security. Issues such as poor health care, deprivation of minority rights and violation of human rights, poor education, political oppression, and high rate of poverty are outside the understanding of traditional security approach (Saleh, 2010).

In the consideration of widener approach to security studies, the Copenhagen School (CS) presents a detailed alternative approach to the traditional conception of security during the 1970s and 1980s. This approach is premised on three principal elements: (a) the development of sectoral approach to security in which security threats are analyzed from five sectors, (b) the use of a social constructivist theoretical understanding of security through the development of securitization studies, and (c) the introduction of regional focus on security whereby the possible interlinks security dynamics of regions are discussed (Charrett, 2009). Proponents of this approach (CS) are Barry Buzan, the leading scholar, along with Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde. Barry Buzan in his popular book titled “People, States, and Fear” argues against the traditional conception of security and defines it to be too narrow and inadequate to address the multidimensional threats that emerged after the cold war. He stated other non-traditional issues that could threaten the stability of states and well-being of the people emanating from economic, political, environment, and societal insecurities. Contrary to the argument of traditional security approach, Buzan argues for security at different levels of analysis such as individual, state or unit, and global level and the involvement of non-state actors in the business of security. The popular conception of security according to Barry Buzan is his classification of security into five sectors: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental. He defines these sectors in the following ways. The military sector is defined as the level of interplay between the armed offensive capacity and defensive capabilities of states and the perception of each other’s intentions. Political sector is defined as the organizational stability of states, their system of governance, and ideologies that legitimize their authority and legitimacy. Economic sector is defined as the level of access that states have to their resources, finance, and market, which are needed in ensuring the sustainability of their welfare and power. Societal sector has to do with the sustainability of traditional pattern of language, religion, culture, and national identity of a state. Environmental sector is concerned with the ability of states to maintain the local and the planetary biospheres that are considered as bedrocks for the survival of human enterprises (Saleh, 2010).

Another important argument of Barry Buzan could be his ideas on the interconnectedness of security sectors. He argues that his classification of security into different sectors cannot establish separation among these sectors but to simplify the complexity in facilitating the analysis of security studies (Buzan et al., 1998). Threats emanating from one sector could affect the functionality of other sectors and securitization of one sector could require the need to ensure stability at other sectors. Noteworthy, the sectoral security approach of Barry Buzan will be the structural and conceptual framework of this research. Niger Delta crisis emerged as a result environmental insecurities in the region that directly affected the economic activities of the local people, which is an illustration of interconnectedness of security sectors as put forward by Barry Buzan. The use of Nigerian armed forces (JTF) to address instabilities in the region illustrates the use of one
sector (military) to maintain stability at other sectors, which Barry Buzan considers to be intractable. The discussion of wideners’ security approach according to Copenhagen School is to further ascertain the outcomes of military interventions on security sectors in Nigeria and to possibly suggest alternative security approach to Nigerian policy makers after divulging the facts that the implications of military interventions in the region correlate with Buzan’s argument on the impracticability of traditional security (military security) to adequately address threats that are defined nontraditional (economic, societal, and environmental).

Research Methodology

This research uses qualitative methods whereby data collected consist of both primary sources through verbal interaction in semi-structured interviews and secondary sources through different materials and documentations relevant to the research. Open-ended questionnaire was designed and questions were asked concerning the implications of military operations in Niger Delta on each security sectors, economic, political, environmental, societal, and military, in Nigeria. This research uses the key informant sampling method whereby key knowledgeable individuals on Niger Delta issues were targeted as informants or respondents such as the following: (a) Professor Ambily Etekpe, a senior lecturer and the Head of Political Science Department, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. He served under General Yakubu Gowon, Nigerian Former Head of State, during the period of Ogoni issues and started the awareness of various injustices done to the environment under the leadership of Ken Saro-Wiwa. (b) Dr. Tari Dadiowei, a senior lecturer in Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education, Bayelsa State. (c) Celestine Akpobari (NGO), Ogoni-born right activist base in Niger Delta, is the National Coordinator of Ogoni Solidarity Forum established in 2007 to compliment the effort of MOSOP. (d) Fineface Dummanene (NGO), Ogoni-born activist, works with different NGOs, written and submitted many reports concerning environmental issues in the Niger Delta to the Office of Nigerian President. He is one of the leading voices in the campaign for the development of Niger Delta. (e) Morris Alagoa (NGO) served as a civil servant for Nigerian Federal Government for 18 years and retired in 2006; he is now a project officer for Environmental Right Action. (f) Kenteebe Ebiaridor (NGO), a project officer at Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth, Nigeria. (g) Kpoe Kpiam (NGO), the Vice Chancellor of Obia Study Group, a founding member of Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). (h) Feefeelo Peter, a Media Entrepreneur from Niger Delta region who had 10 years of experience working with African Independent Television (AIT) in Nigeria.

The tools used in this research are interview, observation, and documentations. The face-to-face, semi-structured interview was conducted through verbal interaction with these high-profiled respondents and audio-recording was done and transcribed by the researcher. The data validity test is based on the degree of confidence and credibility of data obtained from respondents; their high profile, incontestable contributions, as well as observable involvements in the issues of Niger Delta justifiably determine the correctness and credibility of information obtained from them. The validity of data will also be proven by establishing correlation between the firsthand information obtained from respondents (primary sources) and various secondary sources (official documentations) used in the research. The ethical considerations is that respondents’ consents were seek and obtained during the interview in getting permission to make audio record and possibly cite their names in relations to exact information obtained from them. They are well-known individuals in the region and information obtained from them during the interview has already been made known to Nigerian government through various means.

Military Professionalism in Indonesia

Samuel Huntington defined the concept of military professionalism in 1957 and many scholars have excoriated his explanatory proposition of the concept. He stated three characteristic features of a profession to be expertise, responsibility, and corporateness. He argues that professional knowledge comprises two parts: a broad education offered by the available institutions of learning in the society, and specialized skills and knowledge that the institution itself is capable to produce. The acquisition of professional expertise is basically through experience and education. According to Huntington, there is a universal application of professional knowledge and skills, centering on the fact that all the available military officers in the world are united by possessing the same professional skill. The concept of social responsibility as the second feature of a profession is explained as the duty to perform a service that is mainly ensuring the functioning of the society. In this respect, society becomes the only client of the professional and less consideration is given to material recompensation, which is defined as a distinguishing feature of a professional man from other experts. The main and primary duty of every military officer is to protect the state and society and the motivation behind his or her commitment to this assignment has nothing to do with financial compensation but a code of ethics grounded in custom and tradition of the profession (Alagappa, 2001).

The concept of corporateness as the third feature of a profession is explained by Huntington as unity and consciousness of all military officers reinforcing that they belong to a distinct body characterized with formal standards of professional competence, a body that is not just formal armed bureaucratic units alone but also inherent with complex of associations, schools, tradition, custom, and journals. Stepan, on the contrary, argues that it is indisputable for internal conflict to include political, economic, social, and military dimensions and military officers cannot be defined
as suitable agency with the capability to address these dimensions, thereby the multidimensional aspects of internal conflict call for different agencies of government to become instrumental in these areas where military cannot develop full expertise (Alagappa, 2001).

The East Asia has witnessed many transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy over the past 25 years whereby democratic transitions took place in countries such as South Korea in 1987, Philippines in 1986, Thailand and Taiwan in 1992, Mongolia in 1990, Cambodia in 1993, Indonesia in 1999, and East Timor in 2002. Many scholars have come to an agreement that democratic transitions in the region have led to the decline of authoritarian political power together with the possibility of military coups and frequency of military regimes. Notably, there are capacious signs establishing the fact that military still constitutes a crucial political force in many of these countries such as the following: the experience of 10 attempted-but-failed military coups in the Philippines since 1986 and the September 2006 coup in Thailand as well as the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) still plays a significant role in the politics, economy, and internal security of Indonesia since over 15 years of democratic reforms in the country. South Korea and Taiwan have been regarded to be successful by many scholars in regard to democratic reforms but they have also struggled with demilitarizing government apparatuses and political system that constituted the backbone of the civil–military relations during authoritarian regimes, battling with the creation of functioning civilian institutions and institutionalization of civilian infrastructure (Croissant, 2011).

The history of civil–military relations in Indonesia can be briefly summarized from different notable events that took place in the country: (a) the dereliction of the Commander of Indonesian Armed Forces, General Sudirman, to comply with the decision made by the President to surrender to the Dutch in Yogyakarta (the capital city of Indonesia) during the attack of 1948, and consequently, the Commander decided to lead a guerilla war against the Dutch. In addition, the military also declined the developed ideology of the President known as NASAKOM incorporating three components: nationalism, religious groups, and communism. (b) The active role of military in support of Soeharto’s New Order whereby a doctrine of Dwi Fungsi ABRI (dual function of Indonesian Armed Forces as defense force and political force) was assigned to the military by civil authorities in 1982 illustrating the legal involvement of military in politics. (c) the formulation of academic manuscript regarding the military positions in democratic order by Seskoad (Sekolah Staff dan Komando Angkatan Darat, Army Staff, and Command College) during the New Order. (d) On May 21, 1998, the country witnessed a successful transition of power from President Soeharto to his successor Vice President B. J. Habibie, whereby the Indonesian Armed Forces Commander, General Wiranto, was in a good position to hijack the political power of the country during this period but displayed an act of military professionalism by supporting the new President. (e) The implementation of a drastic military reform during the reformation of President Abdurrahman Wahid which included the plan to restructure the military and change leadership. (f) The continuation of military reform by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to place civilian control over military (Ahmad, 2012). (g) The bias role played by the military during 2014 general election in the country. The historical pattern of civil–military relations and military involvement in politics of Indonesia is quite different from that of Nigeria’s experiences of incessant change of government through different military coups.

According to Tarmansyah (2011) cited by Djuyandi (2015), the main challenge militating against the building of democracy in Indonesia during the New Order is lack of military professionalism whereby TNI as a state instrument has neglected its professional duty to become Government/Power instrument touching many fields that exist in the society and making incredible influence in politics. The influence of the military is found active both in executive and legislative branches of government, whereby the concept of dual function of the Indonesian armed forces prevailing in the New Order, which allowed the Army to enter any government area as well as ensuring that every new formulated policy must align with the interest of the military, has been described as deleterious to the building of democracy in the country as military authorities have become a de facto ruler. This concept has enabled the military forces to control many aspects of social, political, and economic unfairly as well as abusing its authority for selfish interests. The act of professionalizing the Indonesia Army started with the reform of 1998 with the aim of sending soldiers back to barracks and have more training and not interfering in political activity of the country but reverse has been the case. The various roles of military in the politics of Indonesia during the New Order as well as its iniquitous involvement in the 2014 general election have been described as unprofessionalism of the military as well as weakening of TNI (Djuyandi, 2015).

The fact that many developing countries around the world with historical experience of military regimes have remained under the influence of military footprints or involvement during democratic governments attests to the military fashion of Nigerian democratic government and military interventions in Niger Delta crisis, as well as questioning the professionalism of military in these countries as described by Samuel Huntington. According to Djuyandi (2015), the different events taking place in Third World countries, including Indonesia, whereby the democratic governments are held and controlled by the military, constitute an hindrance to the thriving of democracies in these countries, and as a matter of fact, democracy has become a decorative tool of military fashion of government thereby democracy is simply a mere formality and Huntington (1965) argues that when democracy becomes ailing, it is impossible for people to influence the government
to align with their interests. This illustration establishes the fact that the development of democracy requires the development of military professionalism.

**Military in Nigerian Politics**

The military came to power in Nigeria through a bloody military coup that was led by Major Nzeogwu, Ifeajuna, Okafor, Anuforo, and Adeboyejo in January 1966, which was about 5 years after the country gained independence (October 1, 1960; Osoba, 1996). The coup was justified as a mean of ending civilian maladministration, corruption, tribalism, indiscipline, and ineptness inherent in the first 5 years of civil rule and military regime was described as a “corrective” form of governance aimed at ensuring the restoration of democracy and justice (Osoba, 1996, p. 26). The coup was not a total success as it was frustrated by senior military hierarchy and Brig.-Gen. Aguiyi-Ironsi was installed as the Head of State in January 1966. On July 29, 1966, another violent coup took place, which led to the overthrow of Gen. Aguiyi-Ironsi and Lt-Col. Yakubu Gowon was installed as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Gen. Murtala Mohammed overthrew his government on July 29, 1975 (George et al., 2012).

The country witnessed the assassination of Gen. Mohammed on February 13, 1976, in an aborted coup, which led to the installation of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo that successfully handed power to the democratic government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari on October 1, 1979. The country witnessed another coup on January 31, 1984, which led to the coming of power of Gen. Mohammed Buhari and a palace coup took place on August 27, 1985, leading to the end of Gen. Buhari’s regime and the advent of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida’s regime. He succeeded to annul the described fairest elections in the history of the country popularly known as June 12, 1993, elections that denied the coming to power of multimillionaire business tycoon, M. K. O. Abiola. This resulted to mass national protests against the annulment of the 1993 elections and Gen. Babangida surrendered the office reluctantly to Chief Shonekan. Gen. Abacha then overthrew Shonekan on November 17, 1993, who died on June 8, 1998. Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar came to power on June 9, 1998, and handed over to the democratic government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29, 1999, which officially marked the advent of democratic transition in Nigeria (George et al., 2012).

The country witnessed democratic transition in 1999, but the spirtually military influence over the nook and cranny of its politics has remained incontestable. Nigeria is characterized with protracted inter-ethnic and inter-communal conflicts as a result of the numerous numbers of ethnic groups available in the country. These clashes have resulted to the death of many people such as the death of more than 100 people in Kaduna in May 2000, more than 27 people died in Ebonyi as a result of inter-communal conflict on July 25, 2001, the death of more than 100 people and 23,000 displaced people during the clashes between Mambilla and Fulani communities in Taraba state in January 2002, more than 20 people were killed in clashes between Hausa-Fulani and Berom communities in the village of Turu, Plateau State, in January 2002 and in May 2002; the clashes between Yege and Lakpor communities of the Ogoni ethnic group in Bori, Niger Delta, recorded the death of around 15 people and displacement of 100 people. Noteworthy, the main approach of Nigerian government to respond to these inter-ethnic clashes has been the deployment of Nigerian armed forces to complement the work of police (Amnesty International 2002).

The study of Afeno (2014) shows that between June 2006 and May 2014, there was a 59% fatality caused by security forces in conflicts where they had intervened and between June 2013 and May 2014; it peaked at 80% with the illustration that the more military interventions recorded in a conflict, the more innocent people would likely be killed. Starting from the advent of democratic government in 1999, Nigerian armed forces engaged in large-scale killing of civilians in the village of Odi, Bayelsa State, as retaliation to the murder of 12 police officers. Many reports of international and Nigerian human rights organizations accounted that Nigerian forces killed more than 250 civilians and almost turned the entire village to desolation. More than 1,000 homes were set ablaze and many human right groups and journalists were forcefully disallowed to have access to this area.

In addition, during the military intervention in Tiv-Jukun conflict, around 150 soldiers from the 24th Armored Brigade were deployed to Takum Barracks, in Taraba State in September 2001. They launched attack on many Tiv villages in Benue State between October 22 and 24, 2001, as a retaliation for the killings of 19 soldiers on October 10, whereby many reports explained how soldiers rounded up unarmed civilians and opened fire at them in towns and market squares resulting to the death of more than 200 unarmed civilians (Amnesty International, 2002). Based on the conclusion of Amnesty report in 2002, the Nigerian armed forces have engaged in extrajudicial executions of unarmed citizens and exert excessive use of lethal force such as torture and degrading treatments on alleged criminals. According to Afeno (2014), the Nigerian armed forces have killed 529 unarmed civilians out of 880 violent incidents they intervened between 2006 and 2014. Amnesty International (2018) also recorded the military response to the protest of Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), a Shia political movement, whose leader, Ibraheem Yaqub El-Zakzaky, was injured and arrested together with his wife, in the 2015 Zaria massacre, and three of his remaining sons together with hundreds of his followers were killed by the Nigerian Army on October 27, 2018. Consequently, there have been clashes between the Nigerian armed forces and IMN protesters demanding the release of their leader, whose detention was described by a federal court in December 2016 as unlawful and unconstitutional.
According to Amnesty International’s research, there are more than 350 IMN members who were killed by military forces between December 12 and 14, 2015. The Nigerian armed forces violently attacked IMN protesters during their protest on October 27, 2018, whereby Amnesty International has evidence that the military used automatic firearms that killed at least 39 protesters and 122 injured in a single day. The numerous cases of military interventions in internal security and various civilian casualties characterizing the historical record of these interventions archetypically illustrate the outcomes of military operations in Niger Delta crisis. It attests to the fact that time after time, the Nigerian military has been effective in crushing innocent people; that the military has, in fact, embedded its own regime of truth (which legitimizes brutality and theft) within Nigerian society.

The Military Dimension of Niger Delta Crisis

The name Niger Delta was derived from River Niger. It is made up of nine states: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta State, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers State. The region is located at South-South region of Nigeria covering the area of 70,000 km² equivalent to 7.5% of Nigeria’s land mass and it is defined as one of the largest wetlands in the world as well as the largest Delta in Africa (Adebanjoko & Asu, 2013). Niger Delta is considered to be the engine room of Nigerian economy due to the high concentration crude oil in the region that is covering around 80% of total Government Revenue, over 80% of National Wealth, and 95% of Foreign Exchange. Multinational corporations are dominant oil industries in the region such as Chevron, ELF, Texaco, Agip, SPDC, Exxon-Mobil, Total, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The region contains more than 600 Oil Fields, 5,284 onshore and offshore Oil Wells, 10 Export Terminals, 275 Flow Stations, four Refineries, and a Liquefied National Gas Project (Paki & Ebienfa, 2011). Since the discovery of crude oil in 1956, it has become the most significant part of Nigeria playing a pivotal role in the politics, economy, and security of the country (Onuoha, 2016).

The various activities of crude oil are detrimental to the environment if care is not adequately taken. The exploration and exploitation of crude oil by oil companies under the approval of Nigerian government in this region have taken a cruel way, which directly put the political, ecological, and socioeconomic conditions of the region in a substandard state. According to Inokoba and Imbua (2008), people of Niger Delta have been deprived to enjoy peace, progress, justice, and their natural resources that are supposed to facilitate good life for them. Prior to the discovery of oil in the region, the traditional occupation of people involved agricultural business, fishing, and farming, but after oil was discovered, exploration and exploitation of oil degraded the environment as occasioned by oil spillages that destroyed the likelihood of survival for the local people. Okonta and Oronto (2001) explain that the destruction of farmlands, fishponds, and rivers as a result of environmental degradation from oil exploitation put the local people in hardship lifestyles. Onuoha (2016) argues that despite the vast wealth created by Niger Delta oil, the region is characterized with widespread of poverty, high rate of unemployment of youth, political underrepresentation, and environmental degradation. Nwankpa and Onyekosor (2015) explain that agitation for resource control resulted to the rise of militants and armed conflicts in the region couple with several consequences such as oil bunkering, bombing of oil installations, kidnapping, car bombs, and state of insecurity in the region. According to Ikelegbe (2005), decades of oil exploitation, environmental degradation, and nonchalant attitudes of Nigerian government have frustrated the youth and left them with no alternatives to violence, rebel against the government and oil companies.

Responding to this upheaval historically, there were different methods adopted by the government. At first, there was formulation of industrial policies aimed at engaging oil companies in corporate social responsibilities such as adequate control of pollution, rendering financial support to Education Trust Fund (ETF), allowing negotiations between oil companies and host communities as well as putting into practice the quota system of staffing. Second, government engaged in developmental commission whereby some bodies were formed to engross in developing the region. This includes Niger Delta Development Authority (NDDA), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Niger Delta development Board (NDDB), and Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC). The third method adopted has to do with militarization of the region whereby Joint Military Task Force (JMTF) was formed by the government and constantly deployed to maintain orderliness, quell the activities of militants such as vandalization of oil facilities, taking of oil workers as hostages, and illegal oil business. The last method adopted was amnesty program whereby militant groups were granted amnesty and persuaded to surrender their weapons in 2009 coupled with the establishment of rehabilitation and empowerment programs to provide jobs for surrendered militants (Idowu, 2012).

There was minimal level of success recorded on the part of each adopted method as well as several challenges that quenched their operations. The presence of Nigerian soldiers in the region and their several military operations have gained the attention of this research article. This is as a result of the perpetual deployment of soldiers to assist Nigerian police in policing internal domestic affairs and the belief of Nigerian government in military forces to provide stability in the country. The formation and deployment JTF to Niger Delta is also the same method adopted in combating Boko Haram terrorists at the northern part of the country as well as military interventions in many violent internal conflicts. The
military perception of security by the Nigerian government is worthwhile of examination. The JTF (Chiluwa, 2011) was formed in 2003 composed of the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air Force, Nigeria Police, and State Security Service assigned with the task of ensuring a long-term peace settlement in the Niger Delta. The basic tasks of the force were to arrest militant groups, to provide a secure environment for social and economic activities of oil industries, and to restore law and order in the region.

The demand for fairness on the side of Niger Delta people was first raised by oil right group known as the MOSOP under the leadership of a social activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa. In 1993, the first military operation was launched through the deployment of Internal Security Task Force (ISTF) to Ogoni land as a response to the struggles of MOSOP. This operation aimed at suppressing the activities of MOSOP and remonstrations against the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC; Odomovo, 2014). There were records of human rights violations and extrajudicial executions recorded during the operation and the most popular one was the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the MOSOP in 1995 (Forest, 2012). Following the 1993 military operation, the region witnessed “Operation Salvation” and “Operation Hakuri I, II and III” in 1997 that took place in Bayelsa and Rivers states (Francis et al., 2011, p. 32). Operation Hakuri II was initiated under Lt. Col. Agbabiaka as a result of the death of 12 police officers at Odi, Bayelsa State. The operation was described by the then Minister of Defense, General Theophilus Danjuma, as a military assignment to ensure the protection of pipelines, refineries, and power installations in the Niger Delta. The Navy was assigned with a broader operational task to protect offshore oil platforms from militants’ attacks, to engage in maritime surveillance and prevent the importation of weapons to the region, and to protect flow stations and operating terminals (Bassey, 2012). On November 20, 1999, there were 2 days of unstopped bombardment of Odi, a predominantly Ijaw community in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Many observers described this military invasion to be a pogrom and recorded massive destruction of lives and properties. Following Operation Hakuri II, the region witnessed another military operation in 2004 known as “Operation Pulo Shield.” The deployment of armed forces covering all the nine states in the region assigned with the task of combating with militants, stoppage of illegal oil bunkering, piracy, kidnapping and taking of hostages. Operation Andoni and Operation Restore Hope were also deployed to some parts of the region after “Operation Pulo Shield” (Itiri, 2015, p. 53).

According to Chiluwa (2011), the JMTF under “Operation Restore Hope” was deployed to Niger Delta in 2009. This military force was assigned with the task of ensuring the protection of oil installations and waterways in the Delta region as a result of report of militants’ attacks on oil facilities in the area. Consequently, this military operation engaged in indiscriminate killing of insurgents and civilians with the record of destroying lives and properties worth millions of Naira. Another division of this JMTF was regarded to as “Operation Flush Out.” According to Bassey (2012), the JTF unleashed a well-coordinated, offensive attack in the Niger Delta with the inclusion of land, sea, and air contingents of the Nigerian armed forces in 2009. This operation aimed at destroying network of militant camps and to incapacitate the ability of armed youths to engage in any subsequent operation against oil facilities. It was described as heinous and fratricidal operation planned to brutally subjugate and exterminate target group. The operation was also explained to record many civilian casualties as thousands of innocent citizens died, displacement of hundreds of thousands, and aggravation of living standards. The operation was planned to end every possibility of militants’ operation in the Niger Delta.

Courson (2006) describes JTF military operations under “Operation HAKURI II” to be a brutal experience for civilians as the indiscriminate use of aircraft, grenade launchers, mortar bombs, and other military weapons resulted to the death of around 2,483 civilian population that were mainly women and children (p. 3). “Operation Restore Hope” is also explained to be JTF military attacks in seven suspected communities allegedly accused of harboring insurgents and the operation recorded many civilian casualties and environmental degradation. Consequently, Chiluwa (2011) argues that militarization of Niger Delta has only increased the level of violence, devastating attacks and counterattacks leading to more human rights casualties. Bassey (2012) argues that the massive military operations in the region have succeeded in aggravating the situation as militants responded with more deadly attacks on the depot, pipelines, and flow stations such as Escravos (Warri petroleum products marketing company pipeline), Abiteye pipeline (Shell pipeline carrying crude oil from Billekrama to Bonny Export Terminal), Okomaniifold of Chevron, Forcados offshore platform of Shell, and Atlas Cove terminal in Lagos. If these military operations were orchestrated to end the resistance of MEND and its affiliates in the region, then they have failed. Militarization of the crisis has made insurgents grow stronger and become well coordinated in their counterattacks.

Results and Discussion: Implications of Military Interventions in Niger Delta Crisis on Security Sectors

Implications on Societal Security Sector

The concept of societal security has been defined according to Barry Buzan whereby the identity of people, ethnic group, religious group, and clan should not be under any threat to ensure the societal security of a state. It also includes addressing emanating issues that are leading to the rise of inter-ethnic or inter-communal conflicts within the society. According to Itiri (2015), the deployment of JTF into many communities in
the region illustrates how some identities or communities have been defined threatening to national security by hindering oil activities. It started with the execution of Ogoni people and their leaders, the military operations in Odi and Zaki communities, and the military invasion of villages of Vasae, Anyiin Iorja, Ugba, Sankera, and Zaki-Biam, and so on. These operations recorded many human rights casualties as youth of these communities became targets of military attacks by the virtue of their identities and not for committing crime against the national security. These military operations are also allegedly accused to have resulted to the rise of ethnic militias in the region, which is an attempt on the side of youths to retaliate the various injustices done to their communities. According to Utin (2018), the creation of JTF composed of Nigerian armed forces to militarize Niger Delta has committed many human rights abuses during their military operations. They have carried out several extrajudicial executions of suspected individuals and their invasion of Odi community; the raids on Odioma in 2005; Egbema, Olugbobiri, and Ikebiri in 2004; Okerenkoko in 2006 and Agge in 2008; Gbaramus in 2009; and Ayakoro in 2010 recorded massive human rights violations in the region.

Interview questions relating to societal security: Have military operations in this region encouraged more ethnic militia groups? Has any ethnic group become a victim of these military operations? Dr. Tari Dadiowei (PhD) explained that due to various casualties experienced in the region from operations of armed forces, many communities have formed their militias to fight against injustices done to them. There were not many ethnic militia groups like this in the history of the region but now avengers have come and many more are demanding for their rights. According to Fineface Dumnamene (NGO), the youth of the region understand that deployed armed forces have been attacking every mean of peaceful protests and the only language that government now understands is physical confrontations. They have developed a mentality that without committing atrocities and get really violent, they cannot get the attention of government. Morris Alagba (NGO: Environmental Right Action) explained that militarization of the region by the government is a symbol of violence to the people and it has led to the rise of many ethnic militia groups in Niger Delta. Kentebe Ebiaridor (NGO) stated that there many communities that have been attacked by Nigerian armed forces such as Ijaw, Umuchem, Odi massacre, and Ogoni during Ken Saro-Wiwa crisis whereby people became military targets by the virtue of their identities.

Implications on Environmental Security Sector

The concept of environmental security has been defined according to Barry Buzan et al. (1998) whereby threats to environment could emanate from three perspectives:

(1) threat to human civilization from natural environment that are not caused by human; (2) threats from human activity to the natural environment when the changes made pose existential threats to civilization such as the effect of green house gas emissions and other industrial emissions at global level and the effect of environmental exploitation such as extraction, accidental destruction and dumping at state or local level; (3) threats from human activity to the natural environment when the changes made do not pose any threats to civilization such as the use of military weapons and bombing.

The Niger Delta crisis and various military operations in the region can be classified under the second category of threat stated by Barry Buzan.

Every military operation is directly described to have devastating effects on the natural environment. One of the main causes of Niger Delta crisis is the effect of oil activities on the environment. Based on the report of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), on a daily basis, there is about eight million cubic feet of natural gas burned off in flares resulting to smoke and light in the skies across the region (Odoemene, 2011). According to Aworawo (2013), Nigerian government has only engaged in exploiting crude oil without taking care of the environment. There are no economic benefits provided for inhabitants to enjoy, and as a result of oil exploration, their traditional economic activities of farming and fishing are destroyed through pollution and environment degradation. Local people are left with no other options to survive. Their inability to fish or farm resulted to intense poverty and this frustration led to aggressive attacks against the government with the use militancy. Some potable sources of drinkable water have been polluted as a result of oil and gas activities; some activities such as bush burning and the indiscriminate dumping of domestic and industrial waste products also contribute to the environmental pollution. In addition, many military operations carried out in the region involved Land, Sea, and Air contingents of the Nigerian armed forces as already explained. Water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution, and all other types of pollution are inevitable at host communities.

Interview question relating to environmental security: Do you think Nigerian military operations in Niger Delta have any impact on the environment of the region? Professor Ambily Etekpe (Senior lecturer and the Head of Political Science Department, Niger Delta University) responded that when Nigerian armed forces are demonstrating their capacity to bring peace, they will go to camps where illegal refineries take place and set them on fire then those fires sometimes burn beyond the camps and thereby destroy nearby environments. Fineface Dumnamene (NGO) responded that most of the on-going illegal oil activities contributing to further demolition of the environment in the region are carried out under the approval of soldiers after receiving bribes or sometimes they initiated the whole process for economic benefits. Celestine Akpobari (NGO) responded that many military operations in the region have further worsened the environment such as the use of military weapons and bombing.
every actor involved in oil activities. They are also used to working to protect pipelines, oil workers, companies, and that mainly depends on the oil to survive. Soldiers are flow of oil because of its significance to Nigerian economy region. They have been working to provide security for the (NGO) responded that the presence of security operatives oil exploitation over the region. Fineface Dumnamene cannot be used to force the unacceptable consequences of lost their lives as well because they cannot understand the military forces; the violent reactions of people are as a tion. The problems of Niger Delta have nothing to do with ing peace over the people, which have worsened the situ-

**Implications on Military Security Sector**

Military security has been explained by both traditional and wideners’ approaches (Barry Buzan) to security studies, whereby the use of armed forces as instrument of maintaining both political and internal security of state constitutes the agenda of traditional approach. The military interventions in various internal conflicts in Nigeria exemplify the outrageous use of this security sector in Nigeria. Nigerian armed forces have played important role in the crisis of the Niger Delta. The outcome of military operations in the crisis has questioned the ability of Nigerian armed forces to ensure stability in the region. Owugah (2009) blames the Nigerian government for increased intensity of militancy in the Niger Delta to be as a result of violent response of the government. Some authors shared the same opinion with Owugah: Ibeanu and Luckham (2006) argue that the federal government itself has aggravated conflicts in the region as a result of violent responses in a number of towns as well as different cases of mass killing by the JMTF (cited by Nwankpa & Onyekosor, 2015). Nwagbosu (2012) argues that despite military measures adopted by the government to address the challenges of insecurity in the Niger Delta, the military attacks had increased the rate of militants kidnapping of foreign oil workers, government workers, and indigenes.

Interview question relating to military security: *Do you think Nigerian military operations (militarization of Niger Delta) can facilitate stability and peace in the region?* Dr. Tari Dadiowei (PhD) responded that there are identified conditions; empathy and personalities needed to ensure stability in the region and any security approach that does not take into considerations these factors will only bring more violence to the region. Celestine Akpobari (NGO) explained that the presence of military in Niger Delta is a way of forcing peace over the people, which have worsened the situation. The problems of Niger Delta have nothing to do with military forces; the violent reactions of people are as a result of getting tired with the system. Many soldiers have lost their lives as well because they cannot understand the terrain of Niger Delta more than its citizens. The military cannot be used to force the unacceptable consequences of oil exploitation over the region. Fineface Dumnamene (NGO) responded that the presence of security operatives in the Niger Delta region is not for security or peace of the region. They have been working to provide security for the flow of oil because of its significance to Nigerian economy that mainly depends on the oil to survive. Soldiers are working to protect pipelines, oil workers, companies, and every actor involves in oil activities. They are also used to suppress and attack any protest from the people. Kpoi Kopiam (NGO) responded that militarization of the region will bring no stability until adequate development is put in place by the government. Kentebe Ebiaridor (NGO) explained that Niger Delta crisis is not a military issue and it has nothing to do with Nigerian armed forces. Issues are there to be addressed and military forces cannot remove those issues, and until these issues are adequately addressed, there is no chance for peace and stability in the Delta. The presence of military cannot change the fact that the environment is polluted and it does not change the fact that the region is underdeveloped.

**Implications on Political Security Sector**

Political security sector has been defined according to Barry Buzan whereby threats against the organizational stability of state and the denying or demise of ideologies that legitimize its authority and legitimacy are associated with political insecurity. According to Bagaji et al. (2011), Nigeria is characterized with weak political institutions that are unable to facilitate internal stability in the country and this could be traced back to the period colonial rule as well as the influence of a long-term military rule. The historical source of Niger Delta crisis is traceable to the violent state repression launched against peaceful protests of people during the military regimes. Many authors have concluded that weak political institutions are one of the main reasons behind the protracted nature of Niger Delta crisis. According to Newson (2011), Nigerian system of governance is considered to be the cause of Niger Delta crisis as well as the place of solution. The level of corruption in the political sector leading to the embezzlement of oil revenues constitutes the reason behind the neglect of Niger Delta poor economic and environmental conditions and the use of Nigerian armed forces to contain the crisis.

Interview questions relating to political security: *Do you think the deployment of armed forces to this region reflect the failure of Nigerian political ideology? Is Niger Delta crisis a threat to political stability of Nigeria?* Professor Ambily Etekpe responded that the question that should be asked is if there is any political ideology in Nigeria? The deployment of armed forces to the region has demonstrated the country as a failed state. Nigeria has features of a failed state: a situation whereby the federal government can no longer control many groups in the country, a state that cannot guarantee the security of its people. People have been marginalized and government has responded with armed forces to suppress people’s voices; the presence of military forces in the region is a sign of a failed state. Dr. Tari Dadiowei (PhD) responded that the protracted nature of this crisis is as a result of Nigerian political failure; Nigerian political leaders have been the main causes of the crisis and corruption at political level worsens the situation. The region has become the source of wealth to them and the flow of oil enriches their pockets, which has
also been the only concern without taking care of disasters that oil activities have caused to the region. Kentebe Ebieriod (NGO) responded that the use of armed forces as the only security approach toward Niger Delta crisis illustrates the political failure of Nigeria.

Implications on Economic Security Sector

Barry Buzan defines economic security as the level of access that a state has to its resources, finance and market, and the use of these resources to ensure the sustainability of its welfare and power. Nigerian governments have official access to lands containing crude oil through the land use act of March 29, 1978, but the challenges lie in the use of these resources to provide security in the country. One of the outcomes of military operations in the region has been retaliations of militants by vandalizing oil facilities as already explained. According to Paki and Ebienfa (2011), the retaliations of militants in the region assumed a dangerous dimension over Nigerian economy. For example, the MEND had almost succeeded in crippling the Nigerian oil industry. It should be noted that any attack on oil activities is a direct attack on Nigerian mono-cultural economy; the nation is sustained basically from incomes obtained through exportation of oil and gas produced in the Niger Delta. In June 2008, the militants (MEND) had a chance to attack the deep-sea operation area of Nigeria’s largest offshore oil platform known as Bonga Oil Platform. At this period, Bonga oil platform was producing 225,000 barrels of crude oil per day. Another attack was launched in 2009 against the Atlas Clove oil facility in Lagos leading to depreciation in Nigerian economy. Operation Climate Change and Hurricane Barbarossa were launched in 2008 by militants with heavily armed fighters in hundreds of war boats aimed toward the destruction and deadly attacks on the oil industries. These attacks have disrupted oil production through vandalization of pipelines, pumping stations and created platforms that hindered the free flow of oil constituting havoc to Nigerian Economy. According to statistics of International Center for Reconciliation (ICR), the cost of militancy over Nigerian economy as a result of stolen crude oil (bunkering) and disrupted oil production between 2003 and 2008 alone was around 14 trillion naira equivalent to 100 billion dollars.

In January 2016, there were unrecognized militants attacking oil facilities in the Niger Delta region. Even with the decision of President Buhari to curtail insecurity in the country, it has not prevented the emergence of a new militant separatist group known as Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) that started its operation on February 3, 2016. This group has launched many attacks against oil industries in the region. On February 10, the militant group bombed the Bonny Soku Gas Line carrying natural gas to the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas plant, and an independent power plant at Gbaran. “Operation Red Economy” was launched to give government a 14-day ultimatum in a demand for response from the government. The day after, a devastating attack was launched on the Trans Forcados Pipeline (TFP) that carries oil, water, and associated gas from fields in the western Delta to the 400,000-bpd Forcados oil terminal. On February 23, NDA gave another warning to the government with the aim of proceeding in destroying oil facilities if there is no effort to address their grievances. On May 4, 2016, the militants bombed Chevron Valve Platform located in Warri and launched another attack on the following day against the Chevron Well D25 in Abiteye along with gas lines feeding the Warri and Kaduna refineries (Onuoha, 2016). In addition, the constant deployment of soldiers to Niger Delta (militarization) requires huge amount of finance to purchase ammunitions, to maintain their welfare and payment of their salaries. This leads to the allocation of huge amount of budget from the state’s pocket that could be used to augment the economy to finance military operations.

Conclusion

This research finds out that the adopted military tactics of Nigerian government toward the Niger Delta crisis are ter-rifically counterproductive and impotent to facilitate stability in the region. Considering the various human rights casualties recorded during the military operations, the devastating implications of military dimension of the crisis on Nigeria security sectors as well as the violent response of militants in retaliating military operations, it is suggestible to Nigerian policy makers to adopt wideners’ security approach as illustrated by Barry Buzan. This article finds out that militancy, illegal oil activities, taking of hostages, kidnapping, and other violent tactics of people are not the main challenges militating against Nigeria national security. There are economic, environmental, societal, and political issues that urgently require high-yielding approach from the government instead of adopting a security approach that is reactionary and military oriented to curtail the violent excesses of frustrated people against the corrupt and underfunctional political system. Niger Delta crisis as a case study has accommodated many military operations with considerable capacity to facilitate stability in the region if militarization is an ideal security approach to the crisis but rather new militants (NDA) emerged with more devastating attacks and tensions remain alarming in the region. Barry Buzan buttresses more on the disparity of emanating threats to each security sector with the need to involve different actors (experts) in addressing them, illustrating that the agenda of security expands beyond states and their military armed forces. The agenda of security in Nigeria should expand beyond the scope of Nigerian governments and their military armed forces, illustrating that the need to ensure stability at other security sectors should be prioritized by the government (multidimensional security approach).
Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

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