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Niger Delta Militancy: Onset, Resurgence and Implications for Nigeria's Economic Development

Garba, Dimas

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State, Nigeria

Abstract:

This paper examined the onset and resurgence of Nigeria's Niger Delta Militancy, and its implications on Nigeria's economic development. It drew from two prominent theories of conflict onset i.e. Frustration-Aggression Theory and Greed vs Grievance Theory, which respectively argue that armed rebellion is triggered by frustrations and greed. Beyond conflict onset, the paper argued that frustration and greed can equally interact to provide strong motivations for conflict resurgence. How? Where natural resources and the opportunity to loot exist, rebels can use popular frustration to justify their resurgence. The paper used secondary sources of data and content analysis methods. It showed that while the onset of Niger Delta Militancy was informed by popular grievances, its resurgence in 2005 and 2016 were driven by the interaction of frustration and greed, especially when the militants discovered extorting of oil resources and political patronage as sources of income to sustain their struggle and enrich themselves. Key negative implications of the militancy for Nigeria's economic development include discouragement of foreign direct investment, reduction of oil production and revenue generation for the Federal Government of Nigeria, which makes it incapable of promoting adequate economic development. The paper concluded that a more severe militancy resurgence will occur, if the Niger Delta region's core grievances remain unsettled, especially as the ongoing amnesty terminates in December 2017. Its recommendations include: the government should settle the region's core grievances politically, diversify the economy, penalise patronage of militants by political elites and use advanced technologies to prevent oil resource extortion.

Keywords: Militancy, onset, resurgence, Niger delta, frustration, grievance, greed and economic development

1. Introduction

Niger Delta is the oil rich region in Nigeria, comprising of nine oil producing states. Oil was first discovered in 1956 in Olaibiri, in current Bayelsa State; and production in commercial quantity begun in 1958 (Tell 2008). After the oil boom of the 1970s, the oil sector overtook agriculture to become the major source of revenue for Nigeria, constituting about 85% of Nigeria's GDP, 80% of national wealth and 95% of National budget (Ebegbulem, Ekpe and Adejumo 2013:279; UNDP 2006) However, the region has been characterised by severe militancy against the Nigerian government and multinational oil companies. Agitations begun in 1966 with non-violent secessionist movement but turned into deadly militancy as from the 1990s. Since then, the militancy became resurgent, causing massive loss of lives, environmental damages, closure of businesses and loss of revenue which all bear negative implications on Nigeria's prospects for economic development.

Most existing studies agree that Niger Delta militancy was caused by popular frustrations and grievances due to marginalization, environmental degradation, poor infrastructural development, poverty and unemployment despite its huge contribution to revenue generation the socio-economic development of Nigeria (UNDP 2006; Asuni 2009a; Asuni 2009b; Courson 2009; Akinola and Adesopo 2011; Ibaba 2011; Benedict 2011; Abegunde 2013; Saheed 2016). Some few studies linked the militancy with greed, implying that the militancy was driven by motivation and the opportunity to loot availability oil resources (Nwodo 2009; Tonwe, Ojo and Aghedo 2011). However, beyond grievances as a mere casual factor for the militancy onset, the interaction of greed and frustration as motivations for militancy resurgence has not been fully determined. The objective of their paper is to examine the causes of Niger Delta Militancy resurgence and its implications on Nigeria's economic development. The major questions it seeks to answer are: Why do we observe militancy resurgence in the Niger Delta? What are the likely implications of the militancy to Nigeria's economic development?

This paper draws from two prominent theories of conflict onset, i.e. Frustration-Aggression Theory by Dollard et. al. (1939), Gurr (1970); Berkowitz (1989); Zillmann (1979) and Greed vs Grievance Theory by Collier and Hoeffler (2002; 2004), which respectively argue that people initiate civil conflicts because of frustrations and greed. It argues beyond conflict onset, that the interaction of frustration and greed may equally provide strong motivations for conflict resurgence. The logic is that, popular frustration and grievances can be used as good justifications for conflict resurgence, especially where motivation and opportunity for looting exist, and where existing grievances remain unaddressed. The paper shows that though popular grievances informed the onset of Niger Delta

Militancy, when the militants discovered greed proxied by oil extortion and political patronage as sources of income to sustain their struggle and enrichment themselves, they used the existing grievances to justify their resurgence. The paper concluded by highlighting some key negative implications of the militancy for Nigeria's economic development.

The study contributes significantly to existing literature on Niger Delta militancy and policy makers on why we observe militancy resurgence in the Nigeria's Niger Delta and its implications on the Nigerian economy. Its recommendations will guide policy makers on how to avoid future militancy resurgence in the Niger Delta, especially as the existing amnesty terminates in December 2017.

2. Methods of the Study

This paper examined and explained the Nigerian Niger Delta Militancy, its onset, resurgence and implications for Nigerian economic development. The study utilized secondary sources of data like journals, government publications/reports, text books, newspapers, online publications etc. to obtain relevant information on the topic. Frustration-Aggression; and Greed vs Greed theories of armed conflict were extended to analyse the militancy resurgence and its implications for Nigeria's economic development. The method used for analysis was Content Analysis. The study period is 1966-2016, which covers the onset of Niger Delta agitations to the latest major militancy resurgence.

3. Theoretical framework – Frustration-Aggression Theory and Greed vs Grievance Theory

Frustration-Aggression theory' and 'Greed vs Grievances Theory' are two prominent armed conflict theories that can be used to explain the Niger Delta militancy. Frustration-Aggression was published by the Yale University group, including Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Roberts (1939). The theory assumes that aggression is caused by frustration. Its main hypothesis states that 'the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression'' (Berkowitz 1989:60). Frustration occurs when individuals or groups feel deprived from achieving their desired goals, whether directly or indirectly; and that aggression is usually directed against those they think as responsible for their frustration. Miller (1941), Berkowitz (1989) and Gurr (1990) among others later refined the theory, claiming that frustration does not actually always lead to aggression. To Miller (1941), frustration produces different responses, and aggression is just one of them. Zillmann (1979) added that frustration may not be a sufficient condition for aggression but a necessary one. Gurr (1990) considered relative deprivation rather than absolute one that causes violent aggression. He defined relative deprivation as the 'discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what they actually think they can get' (Gurr 1990: 24). This implies that aggression occurs based on the degree of disparity between people's expectations and what they get. Gurr (1990) also argues that, just as frustration leads to aggression, so does it drive collective violence/aggression.

The greed vs grievance theory opposes a popular explanation that armed conflicts are caused by grievances resulting from ethnic and religious fractionalization, political repression and inequality (Collier and Hoeffler (2002). It offers an alternative explanation that combatants join armed conflicts for personal economic benefits i.e. desire for self-enrichment, rather than grievances. Collier and Hoeffler (2002; 2004) argue that the viability of rebellion depends on availability of finance, which they need to buy weapons, maintain their armies and enrich themselves. Prominent likely sources of rebel financing they identified are primary commodity products, funding from Diaspora and hostile governments. In their study of 79 civil war cases from 1960 to 1999, Collier and Hoeffler (2002; 2004) demonstrated that countries with abundant natural resources like Cocoa in Colombia, drugs Colombia, Poppy in Afghanistan, timber in Cambodia and diamond in Angola had higher likelihood of civil war occurrence than those without. Typical examples of diaspora funding they used include the funding of Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka by Tamil citizens in North America, and the funding of Taliban by Pakistan government (Collier and Hoeffler 2002; 2004).

Meanwhile, the theory argues further that decision to embark on rebellion depends on opportunity determined by cost-benefit analysis. Opportunity of rebellion exists where the benefit of rebellion outweighs the cost and vice versa. Strong states determined by high levels of economic growth can impose higher cost on rebellion than weak ones. Thus, weaker states are more likely to experience onset of civil conflicts than strong ones. The theory pointed at the Taliban insurgent group which took advantage of the weak transition government led by Hamid Karzai and sustain while extorting Opium, imposing 10% tax on heroin to sustain itself (Collier and Hoeffler 2002; 2004). The main solution to rebellion is to achieve rapid economic growth to be able to impose cost on rebellion.

The basic limitations of the two theories are twofold. Firstly, they dwell more on explaining motivations for conflict onset rather than resurgence. Secondly, they portray grievance and greed as competing variables for explaining conflict occurrence. Despite these, this paper believes that the two theories can offer useful insights into how we can explain conflict resurgence, which was not previously fully or clearly explicated. How? The logic is that grievance and greed may interact to provide stronger motivations for conflict resurgence, especially where agitations prolong due to persistence of frustration and unsettled grievances. Prolonged conflicts may necessitate rebels to look for means to sustain themselves, and as Collier and Hoeffler (2002; 2004) have noted, availability of primary commodity and weak state capacity provide the necessary opportunities. As noted by Keen (2000), grievance and greed reinforced each other to legitimise conflict. Thus, the existence of unsettled grievances may become strong justifications for conflict resurgence, even where commitment to peaceful resolution exist. These assumptions can effectively explain Niger Delta militancy resurgence.

4. Literature Review

4.1. Conceptual Clarifications

Militancy is defined by Inokoka and Imbua (2010) as an aggressive and active behaviour geared towards the defence and support of a cause (mainly political), often the point of extremism. They hold that militants can be social, professional and violent. Similarly,

Ikelegbe (2006:92) defined militancy as ‘a combative and aggressive activism, or engagement in struggles for identified cause’. He notes that intense militancy can lead to armed struggle and establishment of militia. He defined militia as ‘an armed informal civilian group who are engaged in some paramilitary, security, crime and crime-control function in the projection or defence of communal, ethnic, religious and political cause...’ (Ikelegbe 2006:92). Militancy is sometimes taken as synonymous with insurgency or terrorism because they are all rebel organizations that seek to achieve certain political goals against states; and share strategies like violence, guerrilla tactics, sabotage, psychological warfare and terrorist strategies (Kydd and Walter 2006). The Oxford Dictionaries defines resurgence as ‘an increase or revival after a period of little activity, popularity, or occurrence’. Hence, this paper defines militancy resurgence as the increase or revival of militancy activities after a period of inactivity due peaceful settlement. In addition, Resurgence may involve at least the same parties or issues as the original conflict. The Niger Delta militancy and subsequent resurgences involved the same agitations and to some extent, the same parties i.e. Nigerian Government and the Niger Delta region, though the militant groups change over time).

4.2. *The Niger Delta Region*

The Niger Delta region consists of nine oil producing states mainly from the South-South, South-East and South-West geopolitical regions of Nigeria namely Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers, Abia, Imo and Ondo states (Ebegbulem, Ekpe and Adejumo 2013). Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states were the core Niger Delta states, but President Obasanjo included the rest in the year 2000 because they belong to the oil producing states (Asuni 2009a; Abegunde 2013). The region covers about 7.5% of the Nigerian land mass and 75,000 km² (Abegunde 2013:8). It is blessed with natural and mineral resources such as forests, freshwater swamps, mangrove swamps, agricultural products, oil, gas etc. (UNDP 2006). It has over 31million of the over 140million total Nigerian population based on the 2006 national census (National Population Commission, NPC, 2006); with about 140 ethnic groups (Asuni 2009b), including the Ijaw, Ogoni, Kalabari, Efik, Esan, Ibibio, Igbo, Oron, Bini, Edo, Urhoro, Ikwere, Ukwuani, Isoko, Annang, Yoruba, Itsekiri and Urhobo etc. (Afinotan and Ojajorotu 2009; Asuni 2009a).

Oil was first discovered in the Niger Delta region at Oloibiri town, now in Bayelsa State by Shell-BP in 1956, while production in commercial quantity commenced in 1958 with 5,100 barrels per day (Tell 2008). Oil boom was experienced in the 1970s, and crude oil gradually overtook agriculture as the major export commodity. The oil sector contributed only 6.0% of GDP in 1970, but grew to 39.3% in 1990, 48.2% in 2004; While agriculture’s contribution of about 60-70% to Nigeria’s GDP in the 1960s from leading exporter commodities like cotton, groundnuts, rubber, palm oil, Kernel declined to 41.3% in 1970, 29.7% in 1990, 16.6% in 2004 (Daramola, Ehui, Ukeje, & McIntire 2007:2-3). Since crude oil became the leading export commodity for Nigeria, the Niger Delta region became very strategic as a major source of revenue the Federal Government of Nigeria (Ebegbulem, et al. 2013). Nigeria joined the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1971, established the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in 1977; it has four refineries and several oil companies operating in the Niger Delta, including Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Elf, Agip, Texaco etc. (NNPC 2017).

4.3. *Niger Delta Militancy*

Niger Delta militancy refers to violent agitations by different ethnic youth groups, cult/gang and criminal groups against the Federal Government of Nigeria and Multinational Oil Companies over resources control and poor socio-economic conditions in the Niger Delta region (UNDP 2006; Asuni 2009). The Niger Delta militant groups are too numerous to number but some of them include: Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (NDPVF), led by Mujahid Dakubo-Asari; Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), led by Tom Ateke; Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND); which leaders include Henry Okah and Tom Polo and Boyloaf; Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF), led by Farah Dagogo; KKK, Icelanders, Greenlanders (Asuni 2009a; Gilbert 2010; Taft and Haken 2015) etc. The most recent is the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), an umbrella for several minor militant groups (PIND 2016).

4.4. *The Onset and Development of the Niger Delta Militancy (1966-2004)*

Niger Delta Militancy emerged in the 1990s but agitations in the region begun with a 12day secessionist movement by Oloibiri youth group, namely Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), led by Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro, an Ijaw activist, also a former teacher, Police-Officer, and student unionist. Beginning on 23rd February 1966, Boro, declared the ‘Republic of Niger Delta’, but was arrested, convicted with treason and jailed along with other members of the group (Courson 2009:12; Abegunde 2013). In 1967, Gen. Yakubu Gawan, then Head of State granted amnesty to Boro and enlisted him into the Nigeria Army to help fight against Biafra during the 1967-1970 Civil War but was reported killed in 1968 under suspicious circumstance (Courson 2009). The post-Civil War witnessed oil boom and no major conflicts recurred until the 1990s, except for some minor agitations and petitions like those presented against Shell by some Elders and Chiefs of Ogoniland and Iko people (Saro-Wiwa 1992; Rowell and Kretzman 1996).

In 1990, some Ogoni ethnic groups in the Niger Delta met and formed the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). Led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, MOSOP drafted the ‘Ogoni Bill of Rights’ in which they expressed frustration with the marginalization and poor socio-economic conditions of the Ogoni land despite their contributions to Nigeria’s development. They asserted their rights and determination to pursue political autonomy, economic justice and control of the region’s resources for the development of Ogoni land (Ogoni Bill of Right 1991). MOSOP adopted a non-violent approach to its agitation and presented the Bill to the military government but the Head of State, General Babangida ignored it (Courson 2009). Consequently, MOSOP staged a protest from 30-31 October 1990 at Shell facility in Umuechem, of Etehe in Port Harcourt. The Mobile Police Force deployed by the government to protect Shell repressed the protesters, killed over 80 demonstrators and destroyed over 495 houses (Rowell 1996; Manby 1999). Following this, several violent clashes occurred between the Ogoni people and the security forces. The agitation went international for the first time in

July 1992 when Ken Saro-Wiwa addressed the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous peoples in Geneva and appealed for support from the international community (Rowell 1996).

In December 1992, MOSOP demanded the Nigerian government and oil companies, namely Chevron, Shell and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to stop the environmental degradation, negotiate drilling conditions and pay the sum of \$10 billion as damages and accrued royalties from the extraction of oil resources since 1958 (Rwonire 2001). MOSOP further warned that it would disrupt oil activities, if its demands were not met (Ugoh and Ukpere 2010). In reaction, the Nigerian government banned public gatherings in the region, deployed military and warned that any action targeted at obstructing oil production was treasonable felony. In 1993, Saro-Wiwa led a non-violent mass protest that forced Shell to shutdown activities throughout the Ogoni land but the Military, under General. Sani Abacha regime crackdown and dispersed the protesters (Courson 2009:13). In 1994, Saro-Wiwa and nine human rights activists were accused of killing four pro-government Ogoni Elders in May, sentenced to death by hanging by a special tribunal constituted by Gen. Abacha; and executed on 10 November 1995 (Hanson 2007; Courson 2009). Their execution attracted both domestic and international condemnation by human rights organizations, United States, United Kingdom. The Commonwealth and the European Union imposed sanctions on Nigeria until Abacha's death in 1998 (Human Rights Watch 1999).

Similarly, by 11 December 1998, Ijaw youth groups held a conference in Bayelsa State on how to find solutions to their marginalization and the socio-economic conditions of their region. They formed the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and issued '*Kaiama Declaration*', proclaiming their rights for resource control, self-determination and justice (Kaiama Declaration 1998). IYC adopted a peaceful approach to the struggle and it organised for celebration, prayer and direct action tagged '*Operation for Climate Change*', scheduled for 28 December 1998 (Ugorji 2012:114). IYC wrote to the oil companies demanding for the suspension of oil production activities and withdrawal from the Ijaw land. The Federal government reacted by deploying about 1,500 military troops and two Warships to Delta and Bayelsa States to prevent the scheduled campaign and deter disruption of oil activities (Ugorji 2012:114). On 30 December 1998, about 2,000 IYC youth embarked on procession, singing and dancing in black clothes in Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State. The Nigerian military attacked the protesters, killed three of them, arrested and detained about 25 others (Ugorji 2012:114). A protest for the release of the detainees was also dispersed with military force, resulting to the killing of three other individuals. Eventually, the government declared a State of Emergency and imposed dusk-to-dawn curfew to prevent further uprising. This period was marked by serious human right abuses such as rape, beatings, invasions of homes etc. perpetrated by the military (Ugorji 2012:114). Repression against Ijaw communities continued as military personnel attached to Chevron launched attacks on Opia and Ikiyan in Delta State, destroyed houses, villages, killed over one thousand people and displaced many others on 4 January 1999. Operation Climate Change was not deterred as it proceeded with attacking oil facilities and workers (Ugorji 2012).

When Nigeria returned to democracy in May 1999, after long repressive military regimes, expectations were that the grievances of the Niger Delta would be addressed democratically (Courson 2009:15). However, in November 1999, just 6 months after President Obasanjo assumed office, he deployed military troops to Odi Community in Bayelsa state to hunt some gangs suspected of ambushing and killing nine policemen. The troops massacre about 2,483 persons and destroyed the entire Odi community (Manby 1999; Courson 2009:15). Since the Odi massacre, militant attacks against oil companies and clashes with the government progressed intensely in the region (Odomovo 2014).

In 2000, President Olusegun Obasanjo created the Niger Delta Development Commission (NNDC), replacing OMPADEC to address the development concerns of the region but it had no significant impact (Benedict 2011). In 2003, Warri and Port Harcourt in Delta and Rivers States respectively became polarised with diverse inter-ethnic competitions and conflicts over control of the region's resource, especially between the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo; and several youth militant groups like the Klux Klu Klan (KKK), Vulture, Greenlander, Icelanders (Taft and Haken 2015). In 2004, most of the smaller Niger Delta militants aligned either with the camp of Asari's NDPVF or Ateke's NDV (Asuni 2009). Intense rivalry and clashes ensued between the two camps, in which many people were killed and properties destroyed. The NDPVF enjoyed the sponsorship and protection of the former Rivers State Governor, Peter Odili for political gains but the two fell apart after Asari openly criticised Odili's re-election in 2003 as fraudulent (Asuni 2009; Courson 2009). Odili allegedly shifted his support to Asari's rival, Ateke of the NDV, using him to fight Asari. Collaboration between Rivers State government and the Federal government to wipe out the NDPVF forced Asari and his NDPVF to relocate to the creek. Then, Asari declared 'all-out-war' against the Nigerian government and oil companies and embarked on massive attacks on oil installations and civilians; and oil bunkering (Hanson 2007:6; Asuni 2009). NDPVF worsened the security situation of the region and caused negative impacts on oil production and the economy at large, former President Obasanjo invited and reconciled Asari and Ateke in Abuja. They consented to ceasefire and were granted amnesty on 1st October 2004 (Asuni 2009; Courson 2009). The region experienced relative peace but was short lived by militancy resurgence in 2005 (Asuni 2009).

4.5. Reasons for the Niger Delta Militancy Onset

Most studies attribute the onset of Niger Delta Militancy to grievances and frustration over marginalization, environmental degradation, poor infrastructural development, high poverty rate, unemployment and military repression.

Marginalization of the Niger Delta manifested with gradual loss of control of land and oil mineral resources; and access to revenues generated from crude oil in the region. According to UNDP (2006), Nigeria communities enjoyed 100% of revenue from what they produced within their localities from the 1950s to the 1960s. Then, the Northern region, Southern region and Eastern region enjoyed the 100% derivation as major producers of groundnut, Cocoa and Palm oil respectively. However, Akinola and Adesopo (2011) show that after oil production commenced in commercial quantity in the Niger Delta, the Federal Government cut down the existing derivation from 100% to 50% in 1960. UNDP (2006) and Abegunde (2013) further exposed that marginalization of the region deepened with the enactment of a Petroleum Act of 1969 and the Land Use Act of 1978 which abrogated the derivation formula and

vested full control on all lands and petroleum resources within country's territory in the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Acts were incorporated into the 1979 Constitution and consequently, the Federal Government took over control over the lands and mineral resources from the Niger Delta communities. Some of the lands were allocated to multinational oil companies with promises of compensation to the affected communities, but only the value the cost of crops, but not of the lands (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Ita Enang revealed in 2013 that 83 % of oils well were owned northern Nigerians (Premium Times 6 March 2013). UNDP (2006:36-37) also shows how Federal revenue allocations to the Niger Delta from oil revenues declined from 50% in 1960 to 45% (1969-1971), to 45% (without offshore) (1971-1975), 20% (without offshore) (1975-1979), 0% 1979-1981, 1.5% 1982-1992, increased to 3% 1982-1999, and 13% since 1999 to date. These caused serious resentment among the Niger Delta communities because they felt deliberately deprived of the benefits of oil resources, which they regard as their natural endowment (UNDP 2006).

Studies also show that Niger Delta suffered from severe environmental degradation caused by oil spills, gas flare and waste dumping by oil companies, resulting to serious damages to agriculture, fishing, wildlife, the ecosystem, forest, safe drinking water and health challenges (World Bank 1995; Abegunde 2013). Eyinla and Ukpo (2006) show that as from 1976 to 1996 alone, the region had witnessed over 60,000 oil spills and about 2,369,741 barrels leaked into the environment. Also, that between 1997 and 1998, Shell alone admitted spilling over 106,000 barrels from Jones Creek. Ibaba (2001) also revealed that the gas flared by oil companies was over 80% of production. Taiwo (1991); Manby (1999); UNDP (2006); Asuni (2009b); Kadafa (2012) and Paki & Ebienfa 2013) show that most Niger Delta farmlands had become infertile, crops destroyed and ground and surface waters contaminated, causing death of fish and scarcity of safe drinking water, including public health problems to the region because of their proximities to oil pipelines. Ibaba (2001) shows further that 100% of crops cultivated 200 meters near Ijombe gas station were lost, 45% of those 600 meters away, and 20% of those 1km away from the station.

Concerning infrastructural development, Asuni (2009) and Courson (2009) argue that Niger Delta remained poorly developed despite the enormous oil revenues generated from the region and various development programmes implemented by different regimes in Nigeria such as the National Development Plans of 1962-1968, 1970-1974, 1975-1980, 1981-1985, 1990-1992; including and specific initiatives taken to improve development of the Niger Delta, including the pre-independence Willink Commission of 1958; the Niger Delta Development Board (1960); Presidential Task Force (1980), Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (1976), Special Funds for Oil Producing Areas (1981), Presidential Task Force for the Development of Oil Producing Areas (1989), Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) of 1992 (UNDP 2006; Abegunde 2013; Benedict 2011). According to Benedict (2011), these plans and initiatives had little impacts because, the plans were mostly revenue-centred than development oriented, while the special institutions were managed by corrupt political appointees. Ibaba (2011) pointed that companies have also intervened in improving the infrastructural conditions of the region such as building of schools, provision of health facilities, roads, clean water as well as scholarships for several young individuals to acquire education and vocational skills. However, Benedict (2011) argues that the majority rural areas remained poorly developed because they had not benefited much.

Studies show that the reduction in revenue allocations to the Niger Delta, coupled with environmental challenges and poor infrastructural development pushed majority of the region's population into abject poverty, despite contributing about 95% of National budget (Ebegbulem, Ekpe and Adejumo 2013:279). According to UNDP (2006), 74% of the inhabitants survived on the natural environment before oil production commenced. However, environmental degradation forced them to abandon farming and their means of livelihood (Taiwo 1991; Manby 1999; UNDP 2006). UNDP (2006:36) put the poverty rate of the South-south region, where the core Niger delta is situated at 74.8%. The National Bureau of Statistics (2005) revealed that poverty rates grew significant among the Niger Delta states from 1980 to 1990s when violent militancy begun in the region. It raised from 19.8% in 1980 to 56.1 in 1996 for Edo/Delta State, 10.2% to 66.9% for Cross River, 14.4% to 56.2% for Imo/Abia, 24.9% to 71.6% for Ondo; and 7.2% to 44.3% for Rivers/Bayelsa for the same period. Data for Akwa-Ibom is however missing from the source of the table.

Niger Delta Region States	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004
Edo/Delta	19.8	52.4	33.9	56.1	Delta: 45.35 Edo: 33.09
Cross River	10.2	41.9	45.5	66.9	41.61
Imo/Abia	14.4	33.1	49.9	56.2	Imo: 27.39 Abia: 22.27
Ondo	24.9	47.3	46.6	71.6	42.15
Rivers/Bayelsa	7.2	44.4	43.4	44.3	River: 29.09 Bayelsa: 19.98
Nigeria	28.1	46.3	42.7	65.6	54.4

Table 1: Incidence of Poverty in the Niger Delta, 1880 to 2004.

Sources: National Bureau of Statistics, 2005.

UNDP (2006), pointed that disparities in levels of income and life styles between the rich oil workers and the poor majority made poverty look even more visible, causing more resentment among the poverty ridden majority. Meanwhile, the oil companies which were supposed to create massive employment opportunities did not help much because they required highly skilled workers which were mostly not available within the Niger Delta (Courson 2009:7-8).

5. Niger Delta Militancy Resurgence - 2005 to 2016

The first major militancy resurgence was in 2005 after President Obasanjo granted amnesty to NDPVF and NDV in 2004. The resurgence was marked by the coming together of several militant groups to form the Movement to the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) with a resolve to adopt more violent approach to the agitation. The groups included the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Federation of the Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC), including cult/gang groups like Greenlanders and Klansmen Konfraternity (KK) (Asuni 2009:17; Kimiebi 2010). MEND served as an umbrella for several militants, cult/gang and criminal groups to join forces and compensate for their relatively weak military strength compared to the federal government (Hanson 2007). MEND issued warning to oil companies to evacuate the region and declared that “Our aim is to totally destroy the capacity of the Nigerian government to export” (Howden 2006). The strategies MEND employed include pipeline vandalism, guerrilla warfare, sabotage, oil theft/bunkering, kidnapping, abduction etc. (Hanson 2007). Since 2005, the security in the region progressively deteriorated, causing average daily oil production to reduce from 2.6million barrels in 2006 to 700,000 in 2009 (Gilbert 2010). Production by Shell alone declined from 1million average daily production to 250,000 in same period (Alaide 2010, cited in Nwogwugwu et al 2012:31).

To avert further impacts of the Militancy on the Nigerian economy and forestall peace and security in Niger Delta, President Umaru Musa Yar’adua constituted a Presidential Amnesty Committee and mandated it to proffer solutions. Based on its report, Yar’adua declared a 60-day unconditional amnesty on the 25th June 2009 to Demobilize, Disarm and Rehabilitate (DDR) militants, effective from 6th August to 4th October 2009. The amnesty made provision for N65,000 (\$450) stipends those who accepted the DDR, five-year rehabilitation programme (2009-2014) that included vocational and academic training of ex-militants within Nigeria and abroad; and contract allocations (Sayne, A. 2013). Henry Okah was released from prison and charges against him were dropped in July 2009 (Courson 2009). Eventually, 30,000 militants accepted the amnesty, renounced violence and surrendered their arms (Akinola and Adesopo 2011:254). \$1.3billion was awarded for infrastructural development (IRIN 2010); thousands of ex-militants were granted scholarship to study within and outside Nigeria, while top x-militant leaders like Asari, Tompolo, Ben, Boyloaf, Ateke were granted contracts worth millions of dollars for oil pipelines surveillance (Hinshaw 2012; Onuoha 2016).

The post-2009 amnesty brought significant peace to the region, which reflected in rise in oil production from 700,000 barrels per day to between 2.2 and 2.4 in 2011 (Crisis Group 2015:2). However, sporadic attacks against oil facilities and looting continued. President Buhari extended the amnesty by 2 years to enable the government perfect exit plan for December 2017 (Odunsi 2016). Yet, another major militancy resurgence took place in 2016, marked by attacks and explosion of gas pipeline and oil installations in Warri on 14 January 2016, followed by Bonny-Soku Gas Export Line on 10 February, among others (The Economist 2016). In March 2016, the ‘Niger Delta Avengers’ (NDA) took responsibility of the attacks. NDA declared that it was more equipped than previous militants and vowed to bring cripple down the Nigerian economy through coordinated attacks, namely ‘Operation Red economy (Christopher, 2016). Most of the year 2016 saw unprecedented attacks from the NDA, causing serious havoc to the economy (Patience 2016). In August 2016, NDA declared Ceasefire after negotiation with the government. However, attacks continued by smaller militant groups despite the ceasefire (Udom 2016).

6. Understanding Niger Delta Militancy Resurgence from the Interaction of Grievance and Greed Perspective

Based on the assumptions derived from ‘Frustration-Aggression Theory’ and the ‘Greed and Grievance Theory’, I argue that unlike the onset of Niger Delta militancy which was mainly triggered by popular frustration, the militancy resurgence in 2005 and 2016 were precipitated and driven by the interaction of grievance and greed motivations.

The Grievances connected to the 2005 militancy resurgence are twofold. Firstly, immediate grievance due to the arrests of some prominent Niger Delta personalities, which generated fresh tensions in the region because the people felt that their leaders were unjustly hunted by the government to further marginalize the region (Asuni 2009; Courson 2009). The personalities included, Ebitimi Bamigo, an Ijaw Businessman whom EFCC arrested and closed down his bank ‘All States Trust Banks’; Bayelsa State Governor, D.S.P. Alamiyeseigha who was arrested and convicted for money laundering in London and was rearrested in Nigeria on corruption charges after jumping bail; Asari who was re-arrested and charged with treason for campaigning for Nigeria’s brake-up and resources control after the amnesty granted him and Ateke in 2004. Also arrested was Olo, the leader of KKK. The Niger Delta groups perceived the arrests as government’s plot to silence their agitation and further marginalise them. Secondly, grievances due to failure of the government to address the region’s existing grievances such as environment degradation, deprivations and poor socio-economic condition of the region reinforced frustration and aggression in the Niger Delta (Ibaba 2011:243-244). For example, the government failed to increase the revenue allocation to Niger Delta from the 13% since 1999 despite long agitations. Even in 2005, when some Niger Delta delegates presented demands at the 2005 National Constitutional Conference, including increment of the revenue allocation to 25% and 50% in the future, the demand was rejected, prompting the delegates to walk out of the Conference angrily (Akinola and Adesopo 2011:254).

Besides the grievances, some involvements of the militants before and after the 2005 Niger Delta Militancy resurgence suggest that the campaign was not only about grievances but also driven by greed. According to Nwodo (2009), these activities included oil bunkering, kidnapping of oil workers for ransom and political patronage. For example, with the resurgence in 2005, MEND kidnapped 118 foreign oil workers, including the 4 at AE oil field in 2006 (Paki and Ebienu 2011:141). Philip (2009) put the number over 200. Obi (2009:105-106) also reported that about 100 personnel of Agip, Chevron and Shell were kidnapped by militants for ransom between 2006 and 2007 alone. The number grew to 390 in 2008, and from January 2008 to January 2009 alone 1,128 kidnapped (Saheed O. B. 2016:68).

Another aspect of the militants’ greed reflected in political patronage, in which some Niger Delta political elites hired militant groups to help them win elections and seek for greater share of oil revenue for the Federal Government and in turn get paid (Howden 2006).

Political patronage was discovered as a lucrative business during 2003 elections and had since contributed to the motivation for continued militancy. For example, Courson (2009) and Asuni (2009) revealed that during the 2003 elections, Rivers State Governor, Peter Odili sponsored Asari, NDPVF's leader to help win the 2003 elections but when the duo fell apart, Asari condemned Odili's elections as fraudulent. Odili shifted his support to Ateke, NDV's leader to fight Asari, his rival. Asuni (2009:13) further revealed that some cult/militant groups reportedly received between N5million to N10million (\$38,000-\$77,000) from Rivers State Government in connection to rigging 2007 election but these militants were not disarmed after the election, making it possible to use them in the future. Unfortunately, these greedy politicians also contributed to the frustration of the region by looting the public funds and denying the majority of the anticipated developments. For example, Governors former Bayelsa State Governor, Diepreye Alamiyeseigha was jailed for 2 years for corruption and money laundering of hundreds of millions of dollars in 2007, after jumping bail and escaping from London to Nigeria in 2005 (Sahara Reporters 2007; BBC 2005). Former Rivers State Governor, Peter Odili was petitioned on corruption by EFCC in 2007 but discharged and acquitted by a Nigerian court. In 2012, A British Court sentenced him to 13 years imprisonment, after pleading guilty to corruption charges involving millions of dollars (BBC 2012).

Despite President Yar'adua's peace effort and fulfilment of MEND's demand for the release of Asari and Alamiyeseigha from detention in 2007, the militants still launched Operation Hurricane Barbarosa in Sept 2008 and declared Hurricane Obama in January 2009 (Courson 2009:23). They used the re-arrest and trial of Okah for treason in 2007 as justification for their action. He was previously arrested and extradited from Angola for illicit arms deals (Courson 2009; Obi 2009). During this period, the militants embarked on massive violence and oil extortion, leading to the closure of oil companies and decline in oil production from 2.6million barrels per day in 2006 to 700,000 in 2009 (Gilbert 2010). Consequently, about 50% of average monthly revenue was lost from N330billion (\$2.2billion) in 2008 to N150billion (\$1billion) in January 2009 (Akinola and Adesopo 2011: 254). This informed Yar'adua's decision to declare the 2009 amnesty.

The 2016 militancy resurgence, which was despite the ongoing amnesty and its achievements shows that greed was also at play. The NDA and other smaller militant groups used some popular grievance to justify the resurgence of agitation, including the inability of the amnesty programme to adequately address the region's original challenges (Abu, Egbejule and Akpa 2016; Ebiri 2016; Otodo 2016). The NDA stated that their objective was to cripple the Nigerian economy, compel the government to implement the report of 2014 Sovereign National Conference, secure greater 60% control of oil blocks for Niger Deltans, reopening of Maritime University and sustenance of the amnesty funding and political autonomy for Niger Delta (PIND 2016:3). Other grievances attributed to the resurgence included the defeat of President Jonathan, who hailed from Niger Delta in the 2015 elections (Crisis Group 2015); government's withdrawal of pipeline surveillance contracts granted to top ex-militant leaders, slashing of about 70% of the amnesty stipends and EFCC's plan to arrest Tompolo, ex-MEND leader on corruption charges by the new government led by President Buhari (PIND 2016; Patience 2016). However, with the involvement of the militant's in oil bunkering, piracy and kidnapping for ransom despite the achievements of the amnesty programme (Okere 2013; Mernyi 2014, Adishi, & Hunga 2017), one cannot disprove that greed was also a primary motivation for the militancy resurgence. Although the NDA declared amnesty in August 2016, oil loot by ex-militants persist. For example, 80 illegal refineries operated by militants were discovered and destroyed by the military in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States in March 2017 (Aliu, Akinboye and Osahon 2017).

7. Implications of Niger Delta Militancy on Nigeria's Economic Development

Niger Delta militancy resurgence have three potential implications for Nigeria's economic development. Firstly, it will further discourage FDIs and cause reduction in the volume of oil production. Secondly, it will significantly cut down government revenue. Thirdly, giving that oil is the main source of revenue to Nigeria, reduction in oil revenue will render the government more incapable of addressing the grievances and providing development. This can be seen clearly from past effects of the Niger Delta insurgences.

As crude oil is the primary commodity of Nigeria, which is highly demanded globally, the sector is supposed to attract diverse opportunities for greater national economic development through FDIs and economic diversification which will translate to higher productivity, infrastructural development, employment creation and poverty reduction, but as studies suggest, without secure environment, meaningful development cannot be achieved and vice versa (White 2009). However, as demonstrated earlier, militancy activities like pipeline vandalization, oil bunkering, piracy, kidnaping and violence against civilians/oil workers etc. posed serious threats to those potentials. Nigeria, which was placed as 40th best global destination for FDIs for 2007-2009 (UNCTAD 2007), saw its FDIs reduced from \$20bn in 2007 to \$8.28 in 2009, and further down to \$6.1bn in 2010 due to militancy based on the investment report of United Nation Conference on Trade and Development (Clement 2011). This caused Nigeria to fall behind Egypt, Morocco and South Africa in FDI ranking (Nwogwugwu, Emmanuel, and Clara 2012:31). Several oil and non-oil businesses shutdown operations due to militancy attacks and kidnaping. For example, Shell evacuate about 235 non-essential oil staff, causing its oil production to reduce by 30,000 barrels per day in 2003 when NDPVF relocated to the creeks and begun attacks on oil installation (Courson 2009).

Similarly, the militancy resurgence has cause drastic reduction in crude oil production and revenue generation for Nigeria. For example, Table 2 shows that militancy costed Nigeria loss in annual volume of stolen oil from 140,000 barrels in 2000 to 150,000 barrels in 2008; daily volume of shut-in production from 250,000 barrels to 650,000 barrels, except in 2001, 2003 and 2004; and consistently yearly total loss to both stolen oil and shut in production from \$4.1 in 2000 to \$33.8 in 2008, (except for 2004) for the same period. While the total value of loss from 2000 to 2008 was US\$111.4billion.

Year	Average price of Bonny Light per barrel (in USD)	Volume of oil stolen per day (in barrels)	Value of oil stolen per annum (in USD) (billion)	Volume of oil shut-in per day (in barrels)	Value of oil shut-in per annum (in USD) (billion)	Total value of oil stolen or shut-in per annum (in USD) (billion)
2000	28.49	140,000	1.5	250,000	2.6	4.1
2001	24.50	724,171	6.5	200,000	1.8	8.3
2002	25.15	699,763	3.2	370,000	3.4	6.9
2003	28.76	200,000	3.2	350,000	3.4	6.9
2004	38.27	300,000	4.2	230,000	3.2	6.4
2005	55.67	25,000	5.1	180,000	3.7	8.8
2006	66.84	100,000	2.4	600,000	14.6	17.0
2007	75.14	100,000	2.7	600,000	16.5	19.2
2008	115.81	150,000	6.3	650,000	27.5	33.8

Table 2: Estimated Value of Nigeria's Stolen and Shut-in Oil Production, January 2000- September 2008

Source: Coventry Cathedral (2009)

The International Centre for Reconciliation (ICR) estimated the cost at N14trillion between 2003 and 2008 (Asuni 2009b:5). Obi (2010:220), (cited in Ibaba 2011:256) put the shutdown between 25% to 40% between 2005 and 2009. After the amnesty programme, oil production drastically increased from 700,000 barrels in 2009 to between 2.2million and 2.4million barrels by 2011(Crisis Group 2015:2). However, due to greed, cases of kidnapping increased from 66 cases in 2010 to 36 in 2013 and 3,931 in 2014 (Saheed 2016:69). Fear of kidnapping forced Julius Berger to abandon contracts for the construction of roads like Kaiama-Port Harcourt, Ogbia-Nembe-Brass, Yenagoa-Oporoma roads etc. (Paki and Ebienfa 2011:143).Despite the ongoing amnesty and the relative peace, oil theft persisted before the emergence of the avengers. In 2013 alone, N1.72trillion was lost by Nigeria due to oil theft (Izuora 2013). In the same vein, the NNPC recorded a cumulative loss of N418.97billion between January 2015 and September 2016, which represent 27.7% decline in crude oil production from 2.16million barrels daily in 1st quarter of 2015 to 1.60million in the 3rd quarter of 2016. The monthly loss from 69.49million barrels, the highest monthly recorded in October 2015, to 46.56million barrels, the lowest recorded in August 2016' (Udo 2016). Also, the NNPC Group Managing Director, declared at the 'NNPC Security Awareness Week', that its subsidiary alone, 'Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC) lost over N1.5 trillion to attacks and over 59 shutdowns attributed to the Avengers in 2016. Consequently, this contributed to reducing global oil price to \$50 per barrel (The Economist 2016), and Nigeria fell behind Angola as Africa's leading oil exporter in 2016 (Helodny 2016).

Finally, the Niger Delta militancy negatively affects Nigerian's capacity to finance its National Budget and provide an expected economic development. For example, the 14trillion revenue loss to militancy between 2003 and 2008 (Asuni 2009b:5), covers more than 2 years annual budget of Nigeria and the N1.5 trillion revenue loss to the Avengers by NPDC alone in 2016 is equivalent to 24.8% of the N6.06 trillion 2016 budget (Udo 2016; Eboh 2016). These demonstrate that the Nigerian economy, indeed loses greatly from the Niger Delta militancy and its resurgence, which is not good for an oil dependent economy like Nigeria,

8. Conclusion

This paper concludes that Niger Delta militancy was caused by grievances, but the resurgences were motivated by both grievances and greed. The militancy had negative impacts on Nigeria's economic development and if proper measures are not taken, future militancy resurgence will be highly likely, especially when the ongoing amnesty ends in December 2017 or before the 2019 general elections. To avert future resurgence, the paper recommends that the government should addresses the core grievances that informed the militancy onset, which the militants use to justify their continued struggles and looting of oil resources. The region's current 13% allocation should be reviewed to 25% or 50%. The economy should be diversified to reduce over dependence on oil revenue. Political solutions should be applied to the agitations rather than military repression. Cutting age technologies should be utilized to monitor and report looting of oil resources. Also, political elites should be penalised and prosecuted for funding and using militants for personal political gains. Future research may consider examining prospects for restructuring Nigeria's federalism, role of corrupt political elites and multinational oil companies in militancy resurgence in the Niger Delta.

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