

A PERCEPTION STUDY OF THE NIGER-DELTA COMMUNITY ON AN ECOWAS ROLE IN THE NIGER DELTA SECURITY CRISIS

Onwuchekwe, I. Stanley

Department of Criminology & Security Studies
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam
Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email: excellentiyke@yahoo.com

Professor Okafor, Frank-Collins

Department of Political Science,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email: fcollins67@yahoo.com

Madu, E. Tochukwu

Department of Criminology & Security Studies,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam
Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email: emmanuel.madu@mail.com

Abstract

Every constituted body is made with a general and a specific function in mind, and the relevance of any institution is always measured by its ability to fulfil its expected role. The creation of ECOWAS in 1975, the founding members gave it a central role of regional economic development through its members. However, seen that regional development became unattainable under flawed security architecture, ECOWAS inevitably adopted security as one of its key functions in West Africa. This study seeks to ascertain the opinions of the communities in the Niger-Delta region on, the contributory role ECOWAS must play in addressing the security crisis in the Niger-Delta. The significance of this study is that if public perception agrees that ECOWAS has a role to play in addressing the conflict in the Niger-Delta, an ECOWAS intervention in the security crisis will be positively received. However, is public opinion disagrees with an ECOWAS role, then the grounds of an ECOWAS intervention are, thus automatically nullified. The non-experimental survey research design relying on quantitative data was instrumental in conducting this study. A total number of 482 respondents were used, questionnaires were instrumental for data collection and data analysis was done using parametric statistics (Analysis of Variance-ANOVA). The result of the study concluded that public opinion in the Niger-Delta agrees with the statement that ECOWAS has a definite non-military role to play in addressing the Niger-Delta security crisis. The study also indicated that ECOWAS remains a viable and most appropriate institution for intervention in matters of security affecting the region of West Africa.

Keywords: Security Crisis, Niger-Delta, ECOWAS, Role, Intervention, Federal Government.

Introduction

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is perceived as an economic block designed to mimic the successes of other economic blocks around the world, particularly the European Union, whose successes have reverberated across the world and have brought unimagined successes for the millions of Europeans in Europe. However, the two institutions are incomparable in terms of challenges and successes despite its similarities objectives. Particularly facing the sub-continent of West Africa are challenges associated with development underpinned by ineffectiveness of local security structures put in place to usher an enabling ground for the envisioned development the founding fathers of ECOWAS had in mind. The economic objectives in this region are truncated by breakdown in security apparatus, as evident in actions of armed robberies, pipeline vandalism, maritime insecurity and gang-violence and ethnic clashes, all weighing directly or indirectly on the economic activities of the mother country or the region in question. With this backdrop, it will be incomplete to discuss the economic and security outlook of any given West African state without first looking at historical and particularly global dynamics of events (particularly the outcome of the Cold War) and its influence on economic and political survivability of the region and member states making up the region.

ECOWAS is essentially an entity emerging out of the ideological warfare between the communist East and the capitalist West. It resulted in an economic instrument designed with an African agenda in mind, but ended up serving the interests of the Western powers in West Africa. Popular views indicate that the economic interest of Western powers in recently, overshadows that of West African states and is manifested at the level of national policy formation of states in West Africa. To the delight of the West, a few publications and reports tends to inaccurately convey a negative perception of dwindling ECOWAS influence over its region on economic and security matters, thereby refusing to recognise that the organization continues to grow in influence and effectiveness even if predominantly through foreign financial aid, technical and logistical support, but also from Nigeria as its economically most significant and biggest member contributor in financial aid and human resources, for its peacekeeping operations and support missions across West Africa. Since its inception in 1970's, the body has registered significant successes in inter-state cooperation and as a result, has emerged as the most principal institution in West Africa for inter-state multilateral cooperation in all matters affecting public life in the region. The institution boasts of a vast array of natural resources and precious minerals of various kinds, serving as a strong magnet for foreign revenue and likewise foreign actors.

Akwa-Ibom state is located in the region of the Niger-Delta in Nigeria, and serving as one of Nigeria's top crude-oil producing states, with vast reserves of natural gas and a significant percentage of the country's maritime ecosystems. Likewise, the presence of natural resources has brought divergent interests and untold conflict and misery for many of the community inhabitants in the state. The conflict is worsened by domestic militia groups whose aim is in direct conflict with that of the Federal Government of Nigeria. This conflict of interest has been manifest in acts of terrorism (Nwankwo, 2018) vandalism and violent clashes between the two major conflicting parties. The outcome of these threats to the crude-oil production industry has essentially driven out more potential investors it has attracted if examined over several decades, with severe

opportunity costs that go beyond disrupting the economic sector of the country. In essence, the driving away of the potential investors ready to invest for the social-economic development of the region and the country, rather fell short of investing due to a diminished international image of the Niger-Delta and country at large. To manage this crisis, many government funded initiatives have been initiated over several decades of fruitless efforts that has at best produced a waning performance. The Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is a significant government initiative since 2001, but this body has not been able to tackle this crisis well enough to prevent the reverberation of the conflicts and crisis in the volatile region. Not minding the thousands of infrastructural projects that have occurred under this organ of government, the implication has always been the lingering on conflicts without necessarily ending the grievances associated with it.

The Presidential Amnesty Programme of 2009, under the late President Alhaji Umar Yar'Adua, likewise had important achievements in the desperate attempt to end the militancy crisis in the Niger-Delta (Ubhenin, 2013). However, the resuscitation of conflict only indicates that whatever result it achieved only lasted for a short period in time. It indicates that the interests of the entire militant community as a whole do not have been considered, and that the project only cater to the interests of a minority section of the community. The Federal Government of Nigeria also launched a disarmament initiative with the hope of disarming the militant community and set it on a course to a peaceful settlement of the dispute. The initiative involved the militant members of the community surrendering weapons for a sum of US\$ 2000 for every weapon surrendered to a federal authority (Ubhenin, 2013). A significant milestone was achieved as the militants surrendered thousands of active weapons. However, this surrendering did not usher the peace agreement so elusive from this conflict. Despite the marginal success in disarmament, the Federal Government failed in its overall objective, with lasting peace illusive and conflict perennial. The overall achievement in this case is as such a 'disarmament' that did not produce peace between the arrays of belligerent parties. In enticing the militants with cash incentives to surrender their weapons did little to achieve the overall objective of a demilitarised region with peace. Instead, the cash enticement gave way to militants surrendering faulty, outdated and largely ineffective rifles in exchange for cash to potentially purchase better ones. There were no measures to indicate that the cash incentives will not be misused, especially in the procurement of upgraded rifles, which essentially defeats the demilitarisation agenda. In essence, cash insensitive have helped in decreasing the total number of outdated rifles in the hands of the militant communities, on the other hand, have facilitated the procurement of more sophisticated weapons out of the cash incentives given to them.

History indicates that ECOWAS has had significant presence on Nigerian soil, actively taking part in missions, particularly in playing oversight roles in matters about election processes in Nigeria. This role has been growing in significance and in presence indicating the keenness of ECOWAS member states in the well-being of the Nigerian state and people. However, this zeal and commitment seem less evident in matters affecting the security of Nigerians in Nigeria, despite strong indications that the insecurity situation as that found in the Niger-Delta region has gone transnational in nature and in scope.

The reputation of the Federal government in the region of the Niger-Delta can be said to be abysmal to say the least, with a terrible history of bloody massacre, suppression and what the international community be easily term as a poor record of human rights protection in the region. This poor impression inevitably leaves the Federal government forces with a poor negotiation image in the region, making it unsuitable for achieving a negotiated settlement with the 'oppressed' militants and their communities.

Statement of Research Problem

The crisis in the Niger-Delta region is a protracted conflict. This conflict occurring in one of Africa's economically most pivotal regions, the Niger-Delta, holds the growth and economic prosperity of many ECOWAS member states in the sub-region. The Federal government of Nigeria has proven ineffective in eliminating the most serious challenge to the growth and prosperity of the region, which the ineffectiveness hinders the effective exploration and exploitation of the region's vast gas and petrochemical resources. In doing so, they risk creating a waiting time bomb, ready to turn into a humanitarian disaster with overbearing security implications for the rest of West Africa, largely dependent on the Niger-Delta for at least 60% of its annual GDP needs. The Niger-Delta crisis has become a chronic disruptor of the economic activities in the sub-region, through acts of sabotage, sea piracy and perennial pipe-line vandalism that interfere with crude-oil production and transmission throughout Nigeria and West Africa at large. The adverse consequence of this reality emanates from the actual volatility that is potentially causing paralysis to the functional integrity of ECOWAS's most significant member state, Nigeria. As a crude-oil dependent state, and as an ECOWAS key member, a disruption of the functional integrity of Nigeria, can directly translate into the disruption of the functional integrity of ECOWAS as an economic and security organisation. A continued interruption will result in the paralysis of the state and will lead to an eventual state collapse. As such, it is safe to denote that the survivability of ECOWAS as a functional intergovernmental organisation is to a significant extent dependent on survivability and the functional integrity of Nigeria as its key member and an economic powerhouse, whose economic output is gravely resting on the conflict management approach applied to the management of the crisis in Niger-Delta.

The extremely poor human rights record of the Federal government armed forces in the Niger-Delta region has inevitably disqualified it as a credible and acceptable instrument to achieve the desired negotiated settlement out of the Niger-Delta conflict, and on the other hand, strongly indicates the necessity for a supranational conflict management approach to the crisis at hand.

Hypothesis

The hypothetical statement guiding this article is:

Public perception agrees that the international community (particularly ECOWAS) has an interventional role to play in managing the security crisis as found in the Niger-Delta.

Review of Related Literature

The challenges in the Niger-Delta can be perceived as a challenge that manifests itself as a crisis in security. Likewise, the evolution of “security” as advocated by Barry Bussan points towards a global change in mindset as to the way-related concepts such as security and insecurity, threat and vulnerability is perceived. As such, none of these concepts are immune to global changes in political dynamics as driven by states and non-state actors alike. Many authors such as William (2007) write extensively on the nature and changes to the notion ‘security’ stressing on its evolutionary nature, particularly from its Cold War understanding of been a security of the state and its regime (state-centric approach), to a security of people centred on the security of the individual and all that helps it in its quest for survival. The author’s contributions centred on the evolution of the concept and the understanding of security in the Post-Cold War era, and how threats to security in West Africa have become more internal than external in character. The author underscores the growing prevalence of intra-state conflict over external threats to national security. Despite these contributions, the author gives no insight into the role of established supra-national institutions such as ECOWAS in the management of such new forms of insecurity in West African and in Nigeria in precise.

Omilusi (2015) and Idahosa (2016) go as far as identifying Nigeria as a hot spot for chronic instability, in the presence of numerous non-state dissident actors constantly plaguing efforts towards peace and security in the country. Marc et al. (2015) place more emphasis on the influence of a nation’s defence budget on its neighbours and how this behaviour tends to stimulate the grounds for arms race, stressing that Nigeria as a state, has championed this race, thus, emerging as the apex military power in West Africa. Other authors like Onoja (2014) extrapolates on the security concerns facing Nigeria, and how the nation has been a huge benefactor of financial aid, foreign military programs, technical and advisory aid and military hardware from the United States of America, in recognition of the magnitude of the security challenges that has seemingly and increasingly is beyond the effective control of the state, thus necessitating the need for foreign assistance.

Amongst the unique contributors to understanding security in West Africa is Boukhars (2015) whose focus is on the conflict patterns in West Africa. The author divulges on the motivational factors driving individuals to partaking in unlawful militant activities, in which he identified ‘state repression, weak governance and social exclusions’ as the most significant driving forces behind the development and the growth of militia groups in West African states. Bryden and Olonisakin (2010) shed light on the influence regional intergovernmental bodies can hold on the structuring of a state’s security sector to enable it meet up with the demands of Post-Cold War security challenges as found in West Africa. However, their contributions though recognised the adverse influence of colonialism in the formation of the security architecture of most African states, limited ECOWAS’s role to the transformation of the security sector of these states. The author failed to identify contributory roles that is useful, after the process of security transformations and the advocated changes in the way security should be viewed, can occur.

Ikpe (2010) recognised the political will and determination shown by ECOWAS in the effort to pursue peace and security within West Africa, yet places much attention in recognising the structural factors inhibiting the effectiveness of this organisation, factors, which the author finds to be prevalent in other inter-governmental organisations in other parts of the world. Founier and Fini (2013) also underscore the need for an intervention in many of West Africa's security challenges, by a government higher than the state government. The focus of the authors is however on the obstacles to realising this intervention, blaming it more on the low levels of interoperability found amongst ECOWAS member states. The low political will for the first choice cooperation amongst member states impedes the effort to resolve regional security matters within the region. The author identifies "coordination" between member states as been a challenge blamed for the underlying issues of border disputes still generate low-level grievances amongst ECOWAS member states.

Coming closest to conducting a perception study on the Niger-Delta communities on the ongoing conflict was Afinotan and Ojatorotu (2009), who sought to capture the perceptions of the Nigerian government, the Niger-Delta indigenes and the numerous oil companies in the Niger-Delta region, on their perception of the conflict in the Niger-Delta. Despite the amiable discoveries made from the research, and the recommendations that came as a result, the authors however, overlooked the need for a study that would reveal the public's perception on the need for an intergovernmental organisation to intervene in aspects of this conflict, transnational in character. As such, they kept their recommendations limited to the roles of the Nigerian government and the oil companies in creating a more conducive social and economic environment for communal development. Tewase et al. (2015) recognised the problem found in the recognition of legitimacy over the rightful use of force within African states. The authors write that states lacking in monopoly to use force within its territorial borders, abuse the little legitimacy they have, to the detriment of the rights of its citizens. Thus the author recognised the need for the intervention of a higher authority above the state, where a state can be held accountable for the misuse of power. Likewise, Adigbuo (2014) in recognition of the need for an ECOWAS role in internal security crisis resolution, points, to the limitations in human, financial and material resources, bureaucratic sluggishness and language barrier as impediments to realising the benefits of a supranational intervention in the Niger-Delta security crisis.

Ibrahim et al. (2014) conducted an efficacy study of ECOWAS, trying to understand its approach and usefulness in addressing challenges affecting member states. The study pointed towards a declining effectiveness of this institution, despite having a strong deterrent outlook against aggression and the unlawful seizures of power. On a similar note, Essuman-Johnson (2009) expresses some doubt over ECOWAS's usefulness in conflict prevention and management on regional matters, by evaluating the institution against a historical backdrop of past performances in regional security challenges. The poor performance was partly blamed on global security dynamics, which for many years kept key security matters predominantly out of the hands of this regional body, and more in the hands of global superpowers. Uzodike and Site (2013) indicate the diminished appetite of the Nigerian government to engage ECOWAS in its security challenges, despite been a major donor and a host to the organisation, and would rather resort to seek assistance from Western powers, particularly the United

States and the United Kingdom. This in essence indicates a diminished confidence, as argued by Carmen and Rowlands (1998), in the use of this body by its own members, particularly by its biggest and most significant member, Nigeria. From the perspective of the United Nations, Ebo (2010) exemplifies the influence the United Nations have on regional arrangements in handling regional issues. The influence is most felt in efforts made to reform the security sector, to improve its effectiveness in addressing regional security matters.

Methodology

Study Design and Location

A non-experimental survey research design was applied to this study, as it is considered to be the most suitable for conducting research of this nature in the social sciences, which involve the search for public opinion. The large population size necessitates the use of this method of research design. The research was conducted in Niger-Delta states, particularly Rivers State, Akwa-Ibom State and Delta state. These states were carefully selected because of their strategic importance to crude-oil production in Nigeria and its bearing on the activities of militancy and insecurity in the Niger-Delta region as a whole.

Participants and Procedure

The participants of this study or the target population comprise of 546 Niger-Delta inhabitants (representing 2.5%), sampled out of 21, 805 of the total accessible population that would have been relevant for this study. The Cluster Random Sampling technique was instrumental in this process. Three Niger-Delta states with an Amnesty total population of 17, 319 were involved to representing approximately 85% of the total Amnesty participants (Ugwuanyi, 2014: 78). As such, to obtain a 2.5% of the target population a total number of 433 participants were sampled from three key Niger-Delta states (Rivers, Akwa-Ibom & Delta states). In an attempt to reduce the margin of error in the study, the researcher conveniently expanded the population sample to 482 respondents, thus raising the percentage to 2.7% of the target population. A total number of four hundred and eighty-two (482) Niger-Delta inhabitants were randomly selected for this study, across the three (3) key states (Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Delta) (as mentioned) that were specifically selected for this study. Amongst the participants selected, 259 (53.7%) persons were men while 223 (46.3%) persons were females. A total number of 205 (42.5%) persons were from Akwa-Ibom state, 113 (23.4%) are origins of Rivers state, 54 (11.2%) persons are origins of Delta state, while 110 (22.82%) persons have their state of origin from other Niger-Delta states outside the three key states selected for this study.

Their marital status is as follows; A total number 434 (90.0%) persons were unmarried, 46 (9.5%) were married and 2 (0.4%) identified their marital status as 'divorced'. All participants identified their age range to have fallen between the ages of 16-59 years of age. The occupation of the participants were as follows: A total number of 419 (86.9%) were identified themselves as 'students', 35 (7.3%) identified their occupation as 'Civil Servant', 16 (3.3%) persons were 'Unemployed', while 12 (2.5%) identified their occupation as 'Business'.

In selecting the participants from the various states of origin, the Cluster Random Sampling technique was instrumental, which means that only in the three key states selected for this study does everyone has an equal probability of been selected as a participant of the study. All participants were origins and permanent residence of either of the three key states under study to partake in the survey study.

Data Collection and Procedure

The data collection instrument used for this study is the questionnaire. Questions asked and the population size necessitated the use of this method of data collection procedure. The questionnaire was structured in a format similar to the Likert Scale form of questions, where the participants had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the statement made. To administer the questionnaires effectively, the researcher sourced the help of four research assistants to administer and collect the questionnaires as soon as the participants were done recording their responses. Social sciences research ethics were upheld as the unanimity of the participants was guaranteed and a consent form was given to each participant to complete before partaking in the study. A total of 498 questionnaires were collected but only 482 were suitably completed to be included for the study.

Analytical Construct (Theory) Applied

The theory of functionalism is applied here, as the analytical construct for this study. An alternative to the stated analytical construct, which can also be relevant to this study is the 'Greed-versus-Grievance theory', which suggests that the force that sustains a civil war emanates from the desire for personal gains and enrichment inherent within the combatants. Here, what is examined is the economic and political benefit to be derived out of the process of conflict. These derivations are seen to ought-weigh the costs of the conflict. The derivations or gains are centred on economic and political gains as defined by the belligerents. In other words, this theory seeks to explain the relationship between an ongoing conflict and how it is driven by the potential gains that are to emerge from the prolonging of the conflict. The gains manifests in the perception of natural resource control and management, the control of the movement of goods, services, market, commodities, economic and political influence over a populace of a given territory.

Nevertheless and despite its merits, the theory of functionalism is better suited in explaining the conflicting reality in the Niger-Delta region. It seeks to offer a decisive edge over the Greed-versus-Grievance theory by, providing an avenue for legitimate external intervention in a conflict where the ballots have made it transnational in character. In doing so, it gives an opportunity for a panacea to emanate from a non-partisan external party that does not have any stakes in the ongoing conflict. As such, this leaves room for a peaceful settlement of dispute (acceptable to all parties) through a legitimate external and credible body. This is a clear advantage present in the theory of functionalism but deficient in the Greed-versus-Grievance' theory, and as such, making the latter limited in its explanation of the cause and the effective solution to the conflict in the Niger-Delta. The deliberate overlooking of the possibility of an external source of mediation for the conflict, in the form of a supranational actor implies that any other actor used for mediation is to have interests in the conflict, thus diminishing the chances of a settlement of dispute acceptable to all parties.

In functionalism as a theory in international relations, the theory is founded on the tenets of having a collective ideal, challenges, goals and interests among actors. Functionalism would allow ECOWAS an array of interventional roles in the ongoing Niger-Delta conflict. Intervention can be initiated in all sectors particularly in the economic and security sectors. This can be achieved through close cooperation between ECOWAS member states, through the deliberate, gradual and partial relinquishing of their national sovereignty, for effectively addressing the common security threats to their existence. The beauty of functionalism comes from the use of 'the collective' in tackling a common challenge. It allows regions that are economically impoverished, and as such incapable of effectively addressing internal security challenges due to a lack of capability, to effectively tackle those transnational challenges, collectively.

This is most effective in resource-poor states and countries with faulty security apparatus in dire need of transformation to, meet the demands of irregular warfare as found in a post-Cold War reality. As such, 'functional cooperation' and 'burden-sharing' as inherent values of functionalism will best position member states to meet the demands of modern forms of guerrilla warfare as found in the Niger-Delta region. Functionalism recognises the impoverished condition of social-political institutions of a given country and various deficiencies in capabilities and personnel characterised of developing nation states. This theory seeks less of a military intervention and more of an effective pro-action through cooperation on various societal challenges anchoring on human rights, refugee assistance, and international information sharing and economic intra-regional development. The structures within an institution through which functional cooperation can be initiated are hierarchical and specialised in nature, best suited for addressing challenges transnational in character.

Data Analysis

Proper scrutiny was applied to the quantitative data collected in the process of collate, organising and analysing the data collected from the questionnaires. The result of the data was interpreted using the parametrical statistical tool (Analysis of Variance-ANOVA) SPSS version 20. Where appropriate, Content Analysis was also used in expatiating on some tables provided in the result and discussion section.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis underpinning this study is hinged on the perception that:

ECOWAS is not playing an effective role in addressing the security challenges that is associated with militancy in the Niger-Delta.

Result and Discussion

Below are five (5) tables constructed in the form of a questionnaire, where respondents had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the statements.

Table 1:

Niger-Delta community responses on whether they would welcome an ECOWAS intervention in the Niger-Delta with the aim of resolving the militancy security challenge in the region.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
STRONGLY DISAGREE	32	6.6	6.6	6.6
DISAGREE	36	7.5	7.5	14.1
UNDICIDED	91	18.9	18.9	33.0
AGREE	167	34.6	34.6	67.6
STRONGLY AGREE	156	32.4	32.4	100.0
TOTAL	482	100.0	100.0	

(Source: SPSS Output in the field survey in the Niger-Delta: 2020)

Table 1 above indicates a 67.01% level of agreement, with 323 respondents agreeing with the statement, and 91 (18.87%) persons undecided respondents and 68 (14.107%) respondents disagreeing with the statement. The significance of the result is that a high majority of the inhabitants in the Niger-Delta have a positive image and perception of ECOWAS to play a positive and an effective role in addressing the protracted challenges of militancy in the region, if given the opportunity to intervene.

Table 2:

Niger-Delta community responses on the international community (particularly ECOWAS) not do enough to uplift the living conditions of the inhabitants of the Niger-Delta.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
STRONGLY DISAGREE	44	9.1	9.1	9.1
DISAGREE	51	10.6	10.6	19.7
UNDICIDED	64	13.3	13.3	33.0
AGREE	177	36.7	36.7	69.7
STRONGLY AGREE	146	30.3	30.3	100.0
TOTAL	482	100.0	100.0	

(Source: SPSS Output in the field survey in the Niger-Delta: 2020)

Table 2 above also indicates 67.01 % level of agreement, with 323 respondents agreeing with the statement, with 64 (13.27%) undecided and 95 (19.07%) respondents disagreed with the statement. The significance of this result in table 2 suggests that as the key supplier of crude-oil and energy to the international community, the Niger-Delta community is of high expectation that the international community should be in return, give back more to the community from which natural resources are taken. It indicates that more positive commitment is expected of the international community, starting with ECOWAS organisation.

Table 3:

Niger-Delta community responses on whether ECOWAS can protect the rights of the Niger-Delta inhabitants abused by the Nigerian security forces.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
STRONGLY DISAGREE	51	10.6	10.6	10.6
DISAGREE	67	13.9	13.9	24.5
UNDICIDED	45	9.3	9.3	33.8
AGREE	207	42.9	42.9	76.8
STRONGLY AGREE	112	23.2	23.2	100.0
TOTAL	482	100.0	100.0	

(Source: SPSS Output in the field survey in the Niger-Delta: 2020)

Table 3 above indicates a 66.18% level of agreement, with 319 respondents agreeing with the statement, and 45 (9.3%) persons undecided, while 118 (24.48%) respondents disagreeing with the statement. The significance of this table is that the Niger-Delta community expects significant levels of ECOWAS intervention especially in the protection of the rights of individuals abused by government forces in the Niger-Delta region.

Table 4:

Niger-Delta community responses on whether they have lost confidence in the Nigerian security forces to end militancy in the Niger-Delta.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
STRONGLY DISAGREE	45	9.3	9.3	9.3
DISAGREE	63	13.1	13.1	22.4
UNDICIDED	84	17.4	17.4	39.8
AGREE	137	28.4	28.4	68.3
STRONGLY AGREE	153	31.7	31.7	100.0
TOTAL	482	100.0	100.0	

(Source: SPSS Output in the field survey in the Niger-Delta: 2020)

Table 4 above indicates a 60.16% level of agreement, with 290 respondents agreeing with the statement, and 84 (17.427%) respondents undecided, while 108 (22.4%) respondents disagreeing with the statement. The significance of this table is that most inhabitants of the Niger-Delta region have essentially lost confidence in the ability of the Nigerian security forces to effectively end the menace of insecurity as caused by militancy in the region. This perhaps explains the protracted nature of the insecurity situation in the Niger-Delta.

Table 5:

Niger-Delta community responses on whether ECOWAS can contribute meaningfully to securing the Niger-Delta through non-military methods such as Peacekeeping, Confidence-Building and Preventive Diplomacy techniques.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
STRONGLY DISAGREE	36	7.5	7.5	7.5
DISAGREE	23	4.8	4.8	12.2
UNDICIDED	41	8.5	8.5	20.7
AGREE	227	47.1	47.1	67.8
STRONGLY AGREE	155	32.2	32.2	100.0
TOTAL	482	100	100.0	

(Source: SPSS Output in the field survey in the Niger-Delta: 2020)

Table 5 above indicates a 79.25% level of agreement, with 382 respondents agreeing with the statement, and 41 (8.506%) are undecided and 59 (12.2%) respondents disagreeing with the statement. The significance of the result of the table above strongly suggests that the inhabitants of the Niger-Delta are of the strong belief that ECOWAS has a meaningful role to play in ending the security crisis in the Niger-Delta as caused by militancy, especially by adopting roles such as peacekeeping operations, confidence-building measures and various levels and forms of preventive diplomacy. The result above suggests that these roles are well received by the inhabitants of the region if adopted and implemented by ECOWAS in the Niger-Delta region.

In conclusion, tables one to five all yielded positive responses from the inhabitants of the Niger-Delta region, suggesting that most inhabitants have a strong belief that ECOWAS has a role to play in easing the challenges of insecurity as caused by militancy in the Niger-Delta region. The significance of the responses also strongly indicated that despite the government of Nigeria playing its role, that role in the views of the inhabitants is rather insufficient in ending insecurity in the Niger-Delta. The tables above also indicates that many local inhabitants are losing confidence in the ability of the government to end the challenges of insecurity as caused by militancy in the region. As such the people of the Niger-Delta are looking beyond Nigeria for a solution to the security menace in the region. Finally, the results from the tables above indicate that ECOWAS have a more favourable image for resolving this crisis in security in the region, than the government of Nigeria whose poor public image is dented by the various human right atrocities committed against the people of the Niger-Delta over several decades and government administrations.

Conclusion

The study began by investigating the contributory roles ECOWAS can plan in resolving the security crisis in the Niger-Delta and whether these roles is welcomed or rejected by the Niger-Delta communities. The result of the study as such indicates that the Niger-Delta communities have a favourable outlook on the possibility of a supra-national intervention to the protracted conflict in the Niger-Delta communities. These communities are particularly favourable for an ECOWAS non-military intervention as having the needed technical, legitimacy and political leverage to induce processes for a peaceful settlement of the dispute between contesting parties. Public opinion tilts towards the belief that ECOWAS as a prime regional conflict resolution and management institutions, can contribute meaningfully towards conflict resolution in the Niger-Delta geo-political zone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, many recommendations are deemed appropriate in resolving the security crisis in the Niger-Delta. In view of the favourable outlook by the Niger-Delta communities on the possibility of an ECOWAS intervention in the security-related crisis in the region, it is thus recommended that at the least, active participation should be played by ECOWAS in the aspects of facilitation and enabling roles. Facilitating roles includes but not limited to the act of bringing the parties together to attain a negotiated agreement between them. A negotiated agreement is a panacea to any meaningful settlement of dispute over a long period.

Likewise the ECOWAS can take up an enabling role by showing support for Security Sector Reforms, to assist Nigeria's security sector to become better suited for handling guerilla/irregular types of modern warfare and, to modernise its mentality up to post-Cold war standards. Other enabling roles include enabling national initiative through advocacy, affecting training and capacity building, conducting joint exercises and the initiation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes as an agitation-lowering strategy in the Niger-Delta communities.

References

- Adigbuo, E.R. (2014). The New ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy And Arms Trade Treaty. *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, 25: 1-20.
- Afinotan, L.A & Ojajorotu V. (2009). The Niger Delta Crisis: Issues, Challenges And Prospects. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 3 (5), 191-19
- Boukhars, A. (2015). *Corridors of Militancy: the Sahel-Sahara Borer Regions*. Fride Policy. Internet: Accessed: 05/2017.
- Bryden, A. & Olonisakin, F. (2010). *Security Sector Transformation in Africa. Geneva Centre For The Democratic Control Of Armed Forces (DCAF)*. Internet: www.dcaf.ch/publications. Accessed: 06/2017.
- Ebo, A. (2015). *Towards a Common ECOWAS Agenda On Security Sector Reform*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Policy Paper-No. 23. Internet: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/PP23_Ebo.pdf
- Essuman-Johnson, A. (2009). Regional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: A Comparative Analysis Of Two African Security Complexes. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 3 (10): 409-422.
- Fournier, P., & Fini, M. (2013). *The Geopolitics Of Islamic Militancy In Africa: Risks To Mining And Energy Investors Remain High*. National Bank Financial. Geopolitical Hotline. Internet: http://www.unice.fr/crookall-cours/iup_geopoli/docs/pdf3ae9a79d8e36c88f0846bc05d8d6cebf.pdf.
- Ibrahim, S.I., Othman, Z., & Idris, N.Z. (2014). The Decay And Withering Away Of ECOWAS's Role In West African Regional Security. *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 10 (3): 188-200.
- Idahosa, S.O. (2016). Contemporary Arc Of Instability In West Africa: A Case Study Of Nigeria. *Global Journal Of Advanced Research*, 3 (9): 884-894.
- Marc, A., Verjee, N., & Mogaka, S. (2015). *The Challenge Of Stability and Security In West Africa*. Africa Development Forum. World Bank Group. Internet: https://www.subsahara-afrika-ihk.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/worldbank_safety_westafrica.pdf.
- Nwankwo, OD. 2018. *Military Psychology And Psychology of Terrorism. A Comprehensive And Hybrid Approach*. SCOA Heritage Publishers.
- Omilusi, M.O. (2015). Transnational Threats And Security Governance In West Africa: Revisiting The Boko Haram Terrorism And Patterns Of Refugee Movements. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences, Art and Humanities*, 3 (3): 56-70.
- Onoja, A.F. (2014a). In Search Of The Causes Of Insecurity In Nigeria: A Note On Administrational And Their Agendas. *Journal of Conflictology*. Vol. 5, (1): 1-16.
- Terwase, I.T., Abdul-Talib, A.N., & Zengeni, K.T. (2015). The Role Of ECOWAS On Economic Governance, Peace And Security Perspectives In West Africa. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6 (3): 1-17.
- Ubhenin, O. E., (2013). The Federal Government's Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta: An Appraisal. *Journal of Administrative Science*, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University-Turkey. Vol11 (21). Pp 179-203.
- Ugwuanyi, B.I., Obaje, I., Ohaeri, C.S., Ugwu, C.E., & Ohagwu, C.A. (2014). Militancy In The Niger Delta Region Of Nigeria: A Reflective Discourse On The Cause, Amnesty And Imperatives. *Review of Public Administration And Management*, 3, (6): 1-22.
- Uzodike, U.O., & Isike, C. (2013). Whose Security? Understanding the Niger delta Crisis As A Clash Of Two Security Conceptions. *African Security Review* 18.3 Institute for Security Studies. Internet: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/250889030_Whose_security_Understanding_the_Niger_Delta_crisis_as_a_clash_of_two_security_conceptions. Accessed: 07/2017.
- Williams, P.D. (2007). Thinking About Security In Africa. *International Affairs* 83 (6): 1021-1038.