



Corruption and Conflict in the International System: Niger Delta Region in Focus

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Abstract: The paper examined corruption and conflict in the international system, using Niger Delta as a case study. The objectives of this paper centered on the causes of conflicts in the Niger Delta; examining how corruption affects conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region; and determining if the conflict resolution strategies in the Niger Delta have been able to bring about economic development in the Niger Delta region. The research used the Conflict Theory because this research area is focused on conflict. The theory explained that inter-group hostility arises as a result of conflicting goals and competition over limited resources, which largely fits into the situation of conflicts in the Niger Delta region. This study used the descriptive research method that focuses on the administration of questionnaires to illicit information from the respondents. This research involved both primary and secondary sources of data. For the primary sources, the researcher used questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions to gather data for analysis. For the secondary sources of data, textbooks, students' projects, journals, newspapers, magazines, etc were used to gather data for the study. The findings of this paper show that there has been a prevalence of conflicts in the Niger Delta region; and this has been affecting the development of this region. Besides, the conflicts have been largely caused by the poor attitude of the Nigerian State and operating MNCs in the Niger Delta that do not like to develop this region. This study therefore concluded by suggesting that the situation of conflicts in the Niger Delta could be corrected through all stakeholders concertedly stopping corruption and conflicts for the overall development of the Niger Delta region. The recommendations of this study therefore are: control of corruption; punishment of corrupt political leaders in the Niger Delta to serve as a deterrence; creation of employment and awarding contracts to Niger Delta youths; provision of social amenities for development by government and MNCs; and there should be the diversification of the economy of Nigeria for less emphasis to be placed on oil that has largely served as a divisive factor in Nigerian politics and governance.

Keywords: Corruption, Conflict, International System, Conflict Resolution Strategies, Nigerian State, and Multinational Corporations.

I. INTRODUCTION

The irony of the Niger Delta region is that the abundance of natural resources that contribute to development in other parts of the world, pronouncedly lead to conflicts here. As the most crucial natural resource in a global economy that has evolved to rely on fossil fuels as its primary source of energy, oil has become the leading cause of resource-induced conflict. This is true of both the Persian Gulf and the oil-exporting nations of Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, Angola, and Sudan. The conflict between the central government and oil-producing areas in these States stems from the management of oil income and exclusion from governance

The distribution of oil income and the environmental consequences of oil exploration have played a crucial role in the conflict in the Niger Delta. Due to the scale of the issue, practically all oil-producing villages in the Niger Delta have experienced at least one kind of violence. And the bad news is that in such crisis scenarios, Niger Delta communities are invariably portrayed as pitiful victims. Numerous

lives and assets are lost as a result of the usage of security agents in conflicts resolution. Cases including the Ogonis, the Umuechem village, Kula, Ogoda in Ahoada West, and several communities in Delta State and Bayelsa State demonstrate that the Niger Delta area is rife with disputes.

In Niger Delta, the emergence and proliferation of armed youth organisations are attributed to inter- and intra-ethnic competitions for oil revenues (Joab-Peterside, 2005, pp. 30-51). The emphasis here is on the fact that armed organisations existed prior to the violent period of community disputes in Niger Delta. When the necessity for a violent reaction to state repression came, these organisations simply capitalised on oil-related tensions and evolved into militias.

According to Akpakpan (1989, p.30), "socio-political and developmental frictions are born of intricacy in the affairs of states and people." In light of the fact that crude oil accounts for more than three-quarters of Nigeria's national revenue, Obaabo (2010, p. 5) argues that it is more important than ever to put into scholarly perspective why oil wealth should not make and at the same time ruin our state, with well-researched solutions being enacted to address the oil politics causing community conflicts in Niger Delta.

Given the foregoing considerations, this study will explore ways of ensuring that oil wealth do not at one and some time make and mar Niger Delta through well researched solutions.

Statement of the Problem

Different scholars have done works in the past on corruption and conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region. Acemoglu and Robinson (2008, p. 57-59) believe that corruption plays a significant role in the conflicts in this area since the ruling political class is so corrupt that they only consider their pockets and supporters and not the growth of the region. However, its shortcoming is that it did not recommend how to alter the mindset of the Niger Delta's governing class in order to advance the region's advancement.

Naanen (2005, p. 39) notes that corruption in conflict settlement persists due to the State's failure to implement adequate measures to combat corruption in Niger Delta. Referring to the high incidence of corruption in the NDDC, which is intended to be a palliative measure for the conflicts in the Niger Delta, this study revealed that the State and the elite sometimes collude to perpetuate the corruption observed in conflict resolution in the Niger Delta. When words are very accurate, they need no additional explanation.

Olukoshi (2000, p. 57-61) suggested that corruption in the settlement of disputes is thriving because the people of the Niger Delta supported it by voting those who are corrupt into public offices. This stance is deficient in that it ignores the reality that the political elite does not even allow the impoverished masses an opportunity to have their ballots count, since politicians in this area are often picked rather than elected.

Though these scholars have contributed immensely towards a proper understanding of corruption and conflict resolution in the Niger Delta, they all suffer the pitfall of not using a holistic approach that will entail all variables being discussed in one lump in relation to the problems of this area of study. With the holistic approach being a good method in the social sciences that helps for a better understanding of social phenomena, we deem it necessary to take a look at the phenomenon of corruption and conflict resolution in the Niger Delta holistically, which is an approach that considers the historical, economic, social, cultural, and political variables in analyzing any phenomenon.

Research Questions

This study shall be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the causes of the conflicts in the Niger Delta?
2. To what extent have the problems of corruption undermined conflict resolutions in Niger Delta?
3. Has the conflict resolution strategies of the state been able to solve the conflicts in the Niger Delta?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study shall be as follows:

1. To examine the causes of conflicts in the Niger Delta.
2. To carefully examine how corruption affects conflict resolution in Niger Delta region.
3. To determine if the conflict resolution strategies in the Niger Delta have been able to bring about economic development in the Niger Delta region.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Corruption

Different scholars have put definitions to the concept of corruption. However, it is proper to point out that this concept is a relative term. According to Rogow and Lasswell (1963, p. 132-133), corruption is a breach of the public interest. This definition is insufficient since corruption affects not just the public interest, but also the personal interests of certain members of society. This concept is likewise fraught with ambiguity due to the difficulty in determining public interest and public opinion. Critics said, "although acknowledging that the public interest may play an essential role in any society's self-understanding, it is not the most precise tool for identifying corrupt acts."

In a larger context, Egbue (2006, p. 241) defines corruption as "including a wide range of unlawful, illegitimate, irregular, and/or immoral behaviours and conduct." In this light, corruption is a significant moral, political, and legal concern. This viewpoint is appropriate since corruption involves several aspects.

As corruption is complex and multifaceted, so are the methods for combating it. Some ancient writers, according to Klitgaard (1991, p. 90), ascribed governmental corruption to avarice. Others have attributed corruption to certain cultures or peoples (whether authoritarian, individualistic, or gift-giving). Others have noted that corruption is most widespread when societal standards are in flux or disintegrate, as well as during economic booms and busts. Corruption has been attributed to both too much and too little capitalism and competition; colonialism and the retreat of colonial powers; traditional regimes and the decline of traditions. Except for none, each of these might explain corruption in Nigeria. Another characteristic that may assist to explain Nigeria's pervasive corruption is its godfather politics. Godfatherism is, in a broad sense, an ideology based on the notion that select people possess the resources to unilaterally choose who receives a party nomination and who wins an electoral fight (Gambo 2006, p. 88). It is customary to seek for a political father to support one's political ambitions.

According to Egbue (2007, p. 87), corruption is a significant problem in Nigeria's public administration. It is essential to the governance and legitimacy problem, the construction of a stable democratic order, the rule of law, development, and the welfare of people. Political corruption has been the most significant impediment to national growth in Nigeria. Indeed, corruption is the primary cause for Nigeria's apparently insoluble poverty, sickness, hunger, and overall acute development disaster. In addition, it has "severely hindered the expansion and efficient usage of resources in Africa."

Médard (1986, pp. 115-131) asserts that corruption occurs at the boundary between the public and private sectors, a fact emphasised by scholars who cite the Weberian divide between public and private as the basis of noncorrupt politics and administration. It is important to note that the primary concern should not be propriety, but rather understanding the phenomena of corruption and finding strategies to prevent it from damaging our economy, particularly in developing nations where corruption is prevalent.

Nye (1967, p. 416) defines corruption as "behaviour that deviates from the official obligations of a public position (elective or appointive) in order to obtain private riches or prestige" Mushtaq Khan's modified definition of corruption has the same elements: "behaviour that deviates from the official

standards of conduct controlling the acts of someone in a position of public authority for private reasons such as money, power, or prestige" (Khan, 1996, p. 12). The irony of corruption in the majority of nations today, including Nigeria, is that people who set the laws are often the first to breach them when it comes to corruption concerns.

By examining the various types of resources transmitted, a difference has been formed between economic corruption and social corruption. Economic corruption occurs in a market-like setting and necessitates the exchange of money or tangible products, which is fundamental to corruption. This is a rigorous definition of corruption, as shown by the restrictions that limit the sums that may be "provided" before they are declared bribes. However, transfers are not limited to cash or other tangibles, and the exchange takes place in a social context with many cultural and moral connotations. Corruption in these larger dimensions has been referred to as "social exchange" and "social corruption." Customarily, social corruption is seen as an integral component of clientelism. Clientelism often entails the exchange of money rewards, but it cannot be limited to this since it has broader cultural and societal implications. In social terms, clientelism, nepotism, and ethnic and other favouritism are all types of corruption (Médard 1998, p. 308). This is true in the context of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the issue is that, given our degree of development, we should have transcended these conditions and followed our developmental objectives in Nigeria.

Corruption and rent-seeking are sometimes used interchangeably, because there is a substantial overlap between the two. However, while corruption is the abuse of public authority for private gain, rent-seeking stems from the economic idea of "rents," i.e. earnings in excess of all relevant expenses, and corresponds to what the majority of people consider monopolistic profits. Rent-seeking, the endeavour to gain rents, is not necessarily prohibited by law or considered immoral by society, nor is it necessarily uneconomical in terms of growth if reinvested effectively, but it is generally "directly unproductive," wasteful, and very often economically inefficient (Coolidge and Rose-Ackerman, 2000, p. 73).

According to Olugbenga (2007), Odofin (2007), and Omojuwa (2007), corruption is difficult to describe. Similarly, Alemika (2012), Falore (2010), and Igbuzor (2008) assert that defining corruption is not simple. Indeed, identifying corruption is a dauntingly difficult endeavour. However, according to Andrig and Fjelstad (2001:4), corruption is a "complex and multidimensional phenomena with different origins and consequences, as it manifests itself in a variety of forms and circumstances." According to them, one of the most challenging aspects of conceptualising corruption is that, while it is tough to eradicate, it may take on new forms (Andrig and Fjelstad, 2001, p. 82). In a similar vein, Tanzi (1998, p. 53) asserts that although it is difficult to describe corruption, it is not difficult to perceive the related issue.

Given the above, it is reasonable to infer that corruption is a negative phenomena that hinders the growth of many countries, particularly emerging ones. This serves as a trumpet call to all undeveloped countries to curb their corruption levels if they are sincere about pursuing progress.

Conflict

Several scholars have written on the topic of conflict resolution. Cohen, Davis, and Aboelata (2011), Sethi (2006), Forsyth (2009), Adam and Ash (2009), etc., are examples of such researchers. However, a comprehensive grasp of the idea of conflict requires a clear comprehension of the term 'conflict' first. According to Cohen, Davis, and Aboelata (2011, p. 1), conflict is a scenario involving two or more persons whose viewpoints are conflicting. Some confrontations are useful because they produce change, despite the negative connotation associated with conflict. This study argues that conflict is desired in some way, which is problematic. Conflict, regardless of how it is handled, imposes significant costs on society, particularly on emerging countries. Therefore, it must be completely discouraged.

According to Sethi (2006, pp. 67-71) death is merely one consequence of wars. Other consequences include the breakdown of food systems, the dissolution of public services, the loss of revenue,

displacement, insecurity, and an increase in crime. It is essential to remember that the immediate expenses imposed by conflicts, although being large, constitute just a tiny percentage of the total cost borne by the afflicted community. Specifically, the institutional costs of conflict may hinder the long-term development of a civilization. The physical infrastructure such as roads and buildings damaged or destroyed during conflicts can be repaired or rebuilt, albeit at a high cost, but the breakdown of institutions, the loss of mutual trust and understanding, and the trauma inflicted on the most vulnerable population make it highly likely that bad blood will persist and that conflicts and violence will recur. They trap whole communities in endless cycles of violence, which is why preventing or resolving disputes at an early stage becomes a formidable undertaking.

A dispute is not an one occurrence, but rather a dynamic process with several phases. Throughout the many stages of a conflict's life cycle, the aims of the parties involved, their strategies, the intensity levels, and the anticipated damage vary. Therefore, the optimal technique for conflict management varies from stage to stage. In order to implement conflict prevention and management measures, it is vital to have a comprehensive grasp of the dynamics of conflict throughout its life cycle. This study should have highlighted certain conflict management tactics, highlighting their advantages and disadvantages. The inability to do this is its flaw.

There will always be the potential for conflict in a society whose people have varied values, interests, socioeconomic situations, and requirements. Thus, in every community, perceptions of group or communal interests being hurt or disproportionately deprived may be formed for a number of causes. If cultivated, this may lead to dissatisfaction towards the State or other social groups/communities. If such dissatisfaction is not addressed in the early stages or is dealt with in a way that exacerbates the group's or community's already prevalent sense of unfairness, a serious conflict scenario may develop.

According to Forsyth (2009, p. 139), "conflict resolution, often known as reconciliation, refers to the strategies and procedures that facilitate the peaceful conclusion of conflict and retribution." Committed group members often strive to settle group disputes by actively expressing information about their opposing motivations or ideologies to the rest of the group (e.g., intentions; reasons for having specific ideas) and by participating in collective bargaining. In the end, there exists a variety of strategies and processes for resolving conflict, including but not limited to negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, and creative peace building. There is a need for this work to emphasise that occasionally conflict resolution procedures fail to provide the anticipated outcomes, which may be much worse than the dispute itself. Therefore, conflict resolution solutions should always be thoroughly considered before to implementation.

According to Adam and Ash (2009, p. 69), "conflict resolution and dispute resolution may be used interchangeably in situations when arbitration and litigation procedures are crucial." In addition, the idea of conflict resolution may be seen as include the employment of nonviolent resistance tactics by parties in conflict in an effort to encourage successful resolution. The issue is that it is necessary to maintain that there are distinct distinctions between the two ideas. This is especially true given the proverb that "no two English words have identical meanings." There are some theories and models of conflict resolution. Some of them are carefully discussed below thus:

Dual concern model of conflict resolution: The dual concern model of conflict resolution is a conceptual perspective that assumes individuals' preferred method of dealing with conflict is based on two underlying themes or dimensions, namely:

1. A concern for self (i.e. assertiveness), and
2. A concern for others (i.e. empathy) (Sternberg, and Dobson, 1987, pp. 79-81).

The paradigm suggests that group members balance their concern for meeting their own wants and interests with their concern for serving the needs and interests of others in various ways. The junction of these two characteristics eventually leads to people having distinct conflict resolution methods (Goldfien and Robbennolt, 2007, pp. 277-320). The dual model identifies five conflict resolution

styles/strategies that individuals may use depending on their dispositions toward pro-self or pro-social goals. They are as follows:

1. Avoidance Conflict Style: The avoidance conflict style, which is characterised by inaction and passivity, is typically employed by individuals who care less about their own outcomes and the outcomes of others. During conflict, these individuals adopt a "wait and see" stance, frequently allowing it to resolve itself without their participation. Unfortunately, by avoiding high-conflict situations, avoiders run the risk of allowing problems to fester and spiral out of control.

2. Yielding Conflict Style: In contrast, accommodating or surrendering conflict styles are characterised by a high regard for others and a low regard for oneself. This passive pro-social attitude develops when people receive personal joy from satisfying the needs of others and have a general interest for preserving stable, pleasant social ties (Forsyth, 2009, p. 61). Individuals with a yielding conflict style prefer to concede to others' requests during conflict out of respect for the social connection.

3. Competitive Conflict Style: Competitive or "fighting" conflict style increases individual assertiveness (i.e., self-concern) and lowers empathy (i.e., concern for others). Groups comprised of competitive individuals frequently want dominance over others and see conflict as a "win or lose" scenario (Forsyth, 2009, pp. 61-62). By utilising competitive, power-based strategies (e.g., debate; insult; accuse; assault) that instil emotions of fear, fighters often coerce others to embrace their particular viewpoints (Veenema et al, 1994, pp. 29-38).

4. Cooperation Conflict Style: Cooperation conflict style is characterised by an active concern for both pro-social and pro-self conduct. It is generally used by individuals with heightened interests in both their own and others' results. Cooperators work with others to find a peaceful resolution to a disagreement that satisfies all parties concerned. Individuals with this conflict style are often both extremely forceful and highly empathic (Goldfien and Robbennolt, 2007, pp. 277-320). By seeing disagreement as a chance for innovation, partners devote time and resources freely to discover a "win-win" solution (Forsyth, 2009:62). The literature on conflict resolution recommends a cooperative conflict resolution method over all others (Sternberg and Dobson, 1987; Jarboe and Witteman, 1996).

5. Conciliation Conflict Style: The conciliation or "compromise" conflict style is characteristic of those with a moderate degree of personal and interpersonal care. Compromisers appreciate fairness and expect reciprocal give-and-take relationships as a result (Goldfien and Robbennolt, 2007, pp. 277-320). By accepting part of the demands of others, compromisers want to convince others to meet them halfway, so fostering conflict resolution (van de Vliert and Euwema, 1994, pp. 74-87). This conflict style is an outgrowth of both "yielding" and "cooperative" approaches (Forsyth, 2009, p. 62).

Both as a professional activity and an academic topic, conflict resolution is culturally sensitive. Successful conflict resolution in Western cultural settings, such as Canada and the United States, often entails facilitating conversation between disputants, problem-solving, and writing agreements that suit their underlying needs. In these circumstances, conflict resolution professionals often refer to achieving a win-win solution or mutually agreeable scenario for all parties (Fisher and Ury, 1981).

In reality, it is a good thing that these varieties have been specified clearly for instructional reasons. On the level of practise, however, several of these ideas do not hold water, particularly in emerging countries that scientists neglected to consider when formulating their theories.

In a number of non-Western cultural situations, such as Afghanistan, Vietnam, and China, it is similarly vital to create "win-win" solutions; however, the means of achieving this objective might vary significantly. In these situations, direct dialogue between disputants that openly tackles the issues at question might be viewed as very impolite, aggravating the disagreement and delaying its resolution. Rather, it may be prudent to include religious, tribal, or community leaders, to convey tough realities indirectly via a third party, and to provide ideas through tales (Augsburger, 1992, p. 113). Intercultural disputes are sometimes the most difficult to settle since disputants' expectations might be vastly different and there are many opportunities for misunderstanding.

III. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework to be used in this work is the Conflict Theory because this research area is focused on conflict. Some scholars have already conducted research in this field. Conflict Theory is a social-psychological concept of inter-group strife (Sedanius and Pratto, 1999, pp. 17-18). According to the theory, intergroup animosity is a consequence of competing aims and rivalry over limited resources. (Jackson, 1993: 395-415) Real or actual scarcity of resources such as money, political power, military protection, or social standing may cause rivalry between groups. Groups feel anger because they see rivalry over resources as a zero-sum game, in which only one group wins and the other loses (Baumeister and Vohs, 2007, pp. 725-726). The perceived worth and scarcity of a resource impact the duration and intensity of the dispute.

Positive relations can be rebuilt, according to the Conflict Theory, only if there exist superordinate objectives, or goals that can only be realised via the united efforts of both parties (Jackson, 1993, pp. 395-415). In addition to unfavourable sentiments toward the out-group, Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 19) note that danger from an out-group increases intra-group cooperation, leading to increased in-group identification. The hypothesis was formally termed by Donald Campbell, although others have stated it since the mid-20th century (Tajfel and Turner, 1979, p. 19).

Existing assumptions regarding inter-group conflict based on intra-group or intra-individual traits somewhat inspired the development of this theory. Conflict Theory provides an explanation for prejudice and discrimination against other groups as a result of people's tendency to resent out-group individuals seen as competing with their own group for scarce resources (Whitley and Kite 2010, pp. 18-21).

Using this approach to relate to the subject at hand enables us to demonstrate that the intra-community conflicts occurring in the Niger Delta are primarily the result of a struggle for certain benefits or pursuit of certain interests, which have led to so many intra-community conflicts. It also affords us the chance to evaluate in detail the origins, nature, scope, and impacts of conflicts on the economy of this region and, by extension, the nation as a whole, given this region's substantial contribution to our national economy as a result of its oil reserves. These considerations explain why this theory is preferred and used in this study.

IV. Research Methodology

The research design to be used in this study is the descriptive research. This method is to be used to empirically ascertain the relationship between corruption and conflict resolution in Niger Delta. In doing this, the paper used both primary and secondary sources of data. The use of primary data which includes the use of questionnaires, oral interviews, focus group discussions, and observation are the key approaches obtain relevant primary data to be used in this research work.

The researcher purposively distributed one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires, which was administered to three (Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta) States of Niger Delta States. Regarding how to administer the questionnaires, the simple random sampling technique was used to select States that could be included in the administration of the questionnaires. For data analysis, the paper utilized the simple percentages for the purpose of ease of computation and comprehension by all and sundry that may be interested in this study.

V. RESEARCH SETTING

History and Geography of Niger Delta Region

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a densely populated region sometimes called the Oil Rivers because it was once a major producer of palm oil. The region was the British Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 until 1893, when it was enlarged and renamed the Niger Coast Protectorate (Akoroda, 2000, p. 29). The Niger Delta, as defined by the Nigerian government, covers about 70,000 km² and comprises 7.5% of Nigeria's geographical area (Akoroda, 2000, pp. 29-30). Historiographically and geographically, it included the present-day states of Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers. In 2000, however,

Obasanjo's leadership expanded the area to encompass Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River State, Edo, Imo, and Ondo States. The Niger Delta is home to around 31 million people from over 40 ethnic groups, including the Efik, Ibibio, Annang, Oron, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Igbo, Isoko, Urhobo, Yoruba, and Kalabari, who speak over 250 dialects (Akoroda, 2000, p. 29).

The Niger Delta and the "South-South Zone," which encompasses the states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers, are two distinct entities. South-South Zone is a geopolitical zone, while the Niger Delta is the oil-producing area.

Identifying the geographical extent and component ethnic groups of the Niger delta area, a name more fitting than the traditional Niger Delta, is difficult. Takena Tamuno, an authority on Nigerian history and an outstanding scholar from the region, offers a geographical definition of the Delta. He states that "linguistically, ethnographically, culturally, the Niger Delta of the pre-crude oil and gas era, comprised a bewildering mix of ethnic groups" among which "the communities of Ijo (in eastern, western, and central Niger Delta), the Ogoni, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Is (Tamuno, 1999, p. 63).

In addition, the Niger Delta spanned around 70,000 square kilometres. In contrast, the 1995 World Bank Technical Report states that the entire geographical area of the Niger Delta "found in south eastern Nigeria" is 20,000 square kilometres (World Bank, 1995). Unfortunately, the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES), a non-governmental group supported by the Oil Producers Trade Sector (OPTS) of the Lagos Chambers of Commerce, has promoted an even more limited view of the Niger Delta. The NDES set the northern boundary of the Niger Delta at Aboh, the eastern boundary at the Imo River estuary, the western boundary at the Benin River, and the southern boundary at Akassa and the Nun River Estuary.

Franki and Cordry suggested the phrase "Niger Delta Oil Province" at the 7th World Petroleum Congress in 1967 for the area south of Onitsha, Benin, and Umuahia where oil and gas exist in economic amounts. This is the definition of the Niger Delta in terms of petroleum. (Nkomadu, 2003, p. 33) However, it must be stressed that the coastal and riverine portions of the Niger Delta are challenging for development reasons.

The Niger Delta is comparable to the fabled elephant depicted by the seven blind men of Hindustan. Each blind guy touched a different portion of the elephant and provided a unique description of it. Even the farmers and fisherman of the Niger Delta understand their delta differently than do the historian, geographer, petroleum geologist, politician, and politician (Nkomadu, 2003, pp. 33-34). However, a bird's-eye vision of the whole Niger Delta area is required. The current Niger Delta Development Bill links the Niger Delta with the South-South geopolitical zone, which consists of the states of Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River, to which must be added the oil-producing regions of Ondo, Abia, and Imo.

To be beneficial to the inhabitants of the Niger Delta, who are exposed to oil pollution and environmental degradation and have suffered from neglect and inadequate infrastructure development, the region must be properly and adequately described. It may be equally useful to analyse the Niger Delta from the viewpoints of both human and natural history in order to trace the origins of the current unrest in the area. The Delta is an oil-rich area that has been in the centre of worldwide debate over pollution and ecocide, kleptocracy (particularly by the Abacha dictatorship), and Royal Dutch Shell's involvement in human rights crimes (Ogoloma, 2005, p. 9).

Western Niger Delta comprises of the western portion of South-South Nigeria's coastline, which encompasses Delta and the most southern portions of Edo and Ondo States. The western (or northern) Niger Delta is a civilization comprised of several ethnic groups, including the Urhobo, Igbo, Isoko, Itsekiri, Ijaw (or Ezon), and Ukwuani in Delta State, and the Yoruba in Ondo State. Their primary sources of income are fishing and farming. According to historical accounts, the Itsekiri, Isoko, Ukwuani, Ijaw, and Urhobo ruled the Western Niger, and the British administration had to sign separate "Treaties of Protection" with them in order to construct the "Protectorates" that subsequently constituted southern Nigeria (Ogoloma, 2005, pp. 9-11).

Central Niger Delta consists of the central section of the coastal South-South Nigeria which includes Bayelsa and Rivers States. The Central Niger Delta region has the Ijaw (including the Nembe-Brass, Ogbia, Kalabari, Ibanis (Opobo, Bonny, etc.), Okrika, and Andoni clans, the Ogoni and other groups which consist of the Ekpeye, Ndoni, Etche, Ikwerre and Ndoki in Rivers State (Ogoloma, 2005, pp. 9-11).

Eastern Niger Delta Section consists of the Eastern (or Atlantic) section of the coastal South-South Nigeria which includes Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. The Eastern Niger Delta region has the Efik, Ibibio, Annang, Oron, Ogoja (including Ekoi and Bekwara) people, who are all related with a common language and ancestor.

VI. Data Presentation and Analysis

This heading examines the presentation and analysis of data. Here, the paper focused on the presentation of data and analysis in relation to corruption and conflict in the Niger Delta region. This paper also used available field data to make analysis using tables. However, it is appropriate to reiterate at this stage that the researcher administered one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires to some randomly selected States in Niger Delta (Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta States). However, only one hundred and twenty (120) of them were successfully retrieved and used for analysis in this study.

Table 4.1: Age of Respondents

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
18 – 23 years	18	15%
24 – 29 years	24	20%
30 – 35 years	54	45%
36–above years	24	20%
Total	120	100%

Source: *Field Work, 2021*

Table 4.1 shows the age range of the respondents to be 18 – 23 years 18 (15%); 24 – 29 years 24 (20%); 30 – 35 years 54 (45%) and 36 – above years 24 (20%).

Table 4.2: Sex of Respondents

Sex	No. of respondents	Percentage
Males	72	65%
Females	48	35%
Total	120	100%

Source: *Field Work, 2021*

Table 4.2 shows that the sex distribution of the respondents is 72 (65%) males and 48 (35%) females.

Table 4.3: Occupations of Respondents

Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Civil servant	78	65%
Student	24	20%
Private business	12	10%
Others	6	5%
Total	120	100%

Source: *Field Work, 2021*

For the occupation of the respondents, table 4.3 reveals that 78 (65%) are civil servants; 24 (20%) are students; 12 (10%) are into private business; and 6 (5%) belong to other careers not listed on the table.

Table 4.4: Educational qualifications of Respondents

Qualification	No. of respondents	Percentage
FSLC	48	40%
O/Level	30	25%
First Degree	18	15%
Masters and above	24	20%
Total	120	100%

Source: *Field Work, 2021*

Table 4.4 above shows that 48 (40%) are First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) holders; 30 (25%) are O/Level certificate holders; 18 (15%) have First Degree certificates; and 24 (20%) have Masters Degrees and above.

Table 4.5: Work experiences of Respondents

Work Experience	No. of respondents	Percentage
No experience	66	55%
1 – 5 years	12	10%
6 – 10 years	18	15%
11 – 15 years	15	12.5%
16 – above years	9	7.5%
Total	120	100%

Source: *Field Work, 2021*

Table 4.5 shows that 66 (55%) have no form of work experience; 12 (10%) claimed to have worked for 1-5 years; 18 (15%) have worked for 6-10 years; 15 (12.5%) answered that they had worked for 11-15 years; and 9 (10%) claimed to have worked for 16 years and above.

Question 1: Do you really think that corruption factors in conflict resolution in Niger Delta region?

Table 4.6: Corruption and conflict resolution in Niger Delta region

S/N	Responses	Number of Respondents	% of Total
1.	Yes	102	85%
2.	No	18	15%
3.	Don't know	-	-
	Total	120	100%

Source: *Field Work, 2021*

From table 4.6, it is obvious that a majority of the respondents feel that corruption factors in conflict resolution in Niger Delta region. This is represented by 102 (85%) ticking 'Yes'; 18 (15%) answered 'No'; and no respondents ticked 'Don't know'.

Question 2: What are the causes of causes of the conflicts in the Niger Delta?

Table 4.7: Causes of the conflicts in the Niger Delta

S/N	Responses	Number of Respondents	% of Total
1.	Corruption	78	65%
2.	Class interest	6	5%
3.	Greed	30	15%
4.	Environmental issues	6	10%
	Total	120	100%

Source: *Field work, 2021*

From table 4.7 above, one can say that an impressive percentage of the respondents think that corruption is the main cause of the conflicts in the Niger Delta. This is represented by 78 (65%) ticking ‘Corruption’; 6 (5%) answered ‘Class interest’; 30 (15%) ticked ‘Greed’; and 6 (5%) ticked ‘Environmental issues’.

Question 3: Would you agree that the problems of corruption undermined conflict resolutions in Niger Delta?

Table 4.8: Corruption and conflict resolution in Niger Delta

S/N	Responses	Number of Respondents	% of Total
1.	Yes	111	92.5%
2.	No	9	7.5%
3.	Don’t know	-	-
	Total	120	100%

Source: Field work, 2021

From the table above, we have 111 (92.5%) of the respondents answering ‘Yes’ and 9 (7.5%) answering ‘No’; and no respondents indicated ‘Don’t know’. These figures indicate that the problems of corruption undermined conflict resolutions in Niger Delta.

Question 4: Has the conflict resolution strategies of the state been able to solve the conflicts in the Niger Delta?

Table 4.9: Conflict resolution strategies and conflicts in the Niger Delta

S/N	Responses	Number of Respondents	% of Total
1.	Yes	15	12.5%
2.	No	96	80%
3.	Don’t know	9	7.5
	Total	120	100%

Source: Field work, 2021

The table above reveals that 15 (12.5%) of the respondents answered ‘Yes’; 96 (80%) answered ‘No’; and 9 (7.5%) indicated ‘Don’t know’. These figures reflect the fact that the conflict resolution strategies of the state have not been able to solve the conflicts in the Niger Delta.

Question 5: Is it correct to say that there is a relationship between corruption and failure of conflict resolution in the Niger Delta?

Table 4.10: Corruption and failure of conflict resolution in the Niger Delta

S/N	RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
1.	Yes	120	100%
2.	No	-	-
3.	Don’t know	-	-
	Total	120	100%

Source: Field work, 2021

Table 4.10 above shows that all the respondents 120 (100%) are of the position that there is a relationship between corruption and failure of conflict resolution in the Niger Delta. On the other hand, no respondents ticked ‘No’ or ‘Don’t know’.

Question 6: Would you agree that there is a relationship between conflict resolution and relative peace and security in the Niger Delta?

Table 4.11: Conflict resolution and relative peace and security in the Niger Delta

S/N	RESPONSES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	% OF TOTAL
1.	Yes	72	60%
2.	No	42	35%
3.	Don't know	6	5%
	Total	120	100%

Source: Field work, 2021

Table 4.11 above shows that 72 (60%) are of the position that there is a relationship between conflict resolution and relative peace and security in the Niger Delta. On the other hand, 42 (35%) answered 'No'; and 6 (5%) answered 'Don't know'. The size of the 'Yes' respondents indicate that there is a relationship between conflict resolution and relative peace and security in the Niger Delta.

Analysis of Baseline Data

There actually has been the phenomenon of conflicts in the Niger Delta. Some of the conflicts have to be carefully put in tabular form above.

Table 2: Baseline data on some conflicts in the Niger Delta

Conflicts	Year	Effect/Consequences	Conflict management strategy
Conflict Owaza youths and SPDC	2005	Destruction of lives and property	Dialogue with the chiefs and the youths
Conflict between Egi youth and Elf Nig Ltd	1996	Massive destruction and looting of Elf property at Obagi and the shut down of site for weeks	Elf agreed to provide basic social amenities free of charge
Agip Nig Ltd versus Ogoda youths	2001	Many youths of Ogoda and neighboring Ubeta community got killed by the security operatives and the site was shut down	Compensations were paid to the family of the deceased
Omoku and Obirikom youths versus Agip Nig Ltd	2005	There was a destruction of lives and property of Agip and there was a shut down of power in the area for sometime	The use of dialogue with the chiefs and the youths of the area
Youth militancy activities	2000 to date	High level of social insecurity in the Niger Delta as there was the high level of kidnapping, hostage taking, armed robbery cases and political assassinations etc	The use of the Amnesty programme initiated by late President Musa Yar'Adua in 2007
Ogoni youth (MOSOP) versus SPDC	Close to two decades now	Several instances of shut down of SPDC activities and destruction of lives and properties	Government intervention that has been poorly executed
Umuechem youths versus SPDC	1994	Destruction of property	Government biased intervention
Kula youths versus SPDC	2004	Death of some youths and shut down of SPDC site	Dialogue with chiefs and some youths
Delta State youths versus Esravus	2002	Destruction of lives and properties as well as shutting down of sites for a very long period of time	Witnessed the intervention of the Federal Government
Egbeu Boys versus government in Odi community	2001	Many hundreds of lives were killed and their community destroyed by government security operatives	Setting up of Okadigbo committee to look into the issue

Camp	Quantity of arms surrendered	State
Ateke's Camp	3, 756	Rivers
Farah's Camp	2,958	Rivers
Boy Loaf's Camp	3, 131	Bayelsa
Tomplo's Camp	5, 867	Delta
Young Shall Grow	3, 572	Bayelsa
Africa's Camp	4, 633	Bayela
Joshua Makava's Camp	2,843	Bayelsa
Total	26, 760 ammunitions of different types	

Table 4.12: Camps and arms surrendered by Niger Delta Militants

Source: Deduction from newspapers

The situation of conflicts was so bad that many youths decided to engage in militancy activities. Luckily today, there has been the Amnesty programme that made some youth gangs to declare their arms as shown on the table below.

It is obvious, given the figures of arms on the table above, that the conflict situation was terribly bad. The types of arms declared by the ex-militants looked more like there was a mini-war in the Niger Delta. These conditions call for appropriate recommendations.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

Considering the fact that oil wealth has been causing a lot of community conflicts in Niger Delta, it primarily lies within the purview of the Nigerian State to create systematic and institutionalized methods that will detect early warning signs for preemptive actions and design effective conflict resolution and peace building strategies through operational structures and personnel for monitoring conflicts and transform the existing community conflict(s). Nevertheless, it is appropriate to say that corruption factors a lot in the conflicts that take place in the Niger Delta.

It is the researcher's opinion that in the search for lasting peace to conflicts in Niger Delta, academics, religious leaders, traditional rulers, women groups, local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), social critics and activists, trade associations, civil societies, various youth leaders, students bodies, and multinationals companies of particular interests in corporate social responsibility, etc and not our corrupt political elite should be involved in conflict resolution and peace building process. This will ensure enduring and sustainable peace.

Finally, all Niger Delta people owe the State the allegiance of discharging their duties and responsibilities, while the state should reciprocate with the guarantee of all rights and privileges. Recognizing the differences in identities and exploiting the dynamic rich multi-cultural nature of the various ethno-religious groups, will no doubt enhance coexistence and encourage unity in diversity in this region. It is not enough for the State to make pronouncements, but mechanisms mentioned earlier should be in place for facilitation and proper dialogue through peaceful means to end conflicts in Niger Delta.

The recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. Corruption by the political elite in the Niger Delta should be properly monitored to control its detracting factors.
2. Corrupt political elite in the Niger Delta should be recalled and squarely dealt with to serve as deterrence.
3. The federal system of government in Nigeria should be jettisoned because it is dysfunctional and unsuitable for a society like Nigeria which is driven much by 'ethnic national' inclinations. Incorporating equal development for the diverse parts of the country seems infeasible in the present

system of government and has created deep feelings of sidelining and marginalization. It is recommended here, that Nigeria adopt a confederacy to facilitate the development of the diverse ethnic nationalities.

4. It is better for the government to award contracts directly and hold the contractors responsible for non-execution than giving funds to the commissions only to be embezzled. Massive infrastructural development of Niger Delta is the sure answer to the desired peace.
5. There is the need to have a social reengineering of the Niger Delta area. So many abuses have been committed by the Nigerian security forces, loss of lives, properties, detentions, torture, rape and all the social ills.
6. There should be the provision of employment for the youths of Niger Delta to reduce the spate of conflicts in this region.
7. Improvement and diversification of the economy; The Niger Delta region, with its stock of natural and human resources, offer immense opportunities for developing a diversified and growing economy. Over-dependence on oil is causing so much conflict.

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