

Niger Delta Environmental Degradation: Reciprocal Process between Micro-Regional Environmental Governance and Macro-Regional Security Governance

Nijer Deltası'nda Çevresel Bozulma:
Mikro Bölgesel Çevre Yönetimi ile Makro Bölgesel Güvenlik Yönetimi
Arasındaki Karşılıklı Süreç

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Abstract

Niger Delta environmental degradation is known for oil spills and their environmental outcomes. However, the issue is not isolated from the region's other dynamics as part of governance. The complex context of the Niger Delta should be analysed in two spheres. At the micro-regional level, there are environmental degradation and oil crimes in the Niger Delta. At the macro-regional level, there are transnational crimes and relatively stable relations among the states in West Africa. The picture requires governance investigation, which would classify actors, institutions, regulations, and interactions. This paper argues that poor environmental governance in the Niger Delta is highly connected with transnational crimes in West Africa. The main reason is that there is a centralised state function but not a centralised power in two different regional levels (i.e., Niger Delta and West Africa). This work aims to clear out the contexts of two separate levels via a conceptual framework based on the connection between environmental governance and transnational crimes.

Keywords: Niger Delta, Regional environmental governance, Security governance, Oil Spillages, Transnational Organised Crimes.

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Nijer Deltası çevresel bozulma, petrol sızıntıları ve çevresel sonuçları ile bilinir. Ancak bu, yönetimin bir parçası olarak bölgenin diğer dinamiklerinden izole değildir. Nijer Deltası'nın karmaşık bağlamı iki alanda analiz edilmelidir. Mikro-bölgesel düzeyde, Nijer Deltası'nda çevresel bozulma ve petrol suçları vardır. Makro-bölgesel düzeyde, Batı Afrika'da ulusötesi suçlar ve devletlerin nispeten istikrarlı ilişkileri vardır. Resim, aktörleri, kurumları, düzenlemeleri ve etkileşimi sınıflandıracak yönetim araştırmasını gerektiriyor. Bu makale, Nijer Deltası'ndaki zayıf çevresel yönetimin Batı Afrika'daki ulusötesi suçlarla yüksek oranda bağlantılı olduğunu savunuyor. Bunun temel nedeni, iki farklı bölge düzeyinde (yani Nijer Deltası ve Batı Afrika) merkezi bir devlet işlevinin bulunması, ancak merkezi bir gücün olmamasıdır. Bu çalışma, çevresel yönetim ve ulusötesi suçlar arasındaki bağlantıya dayanan kavramsal çerçeve aracılığıyla iki ayrı düzeyin bağlamlarını netleştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nijer Deltası, Çevresel Bölge Yönetimi, Güvenlik Yönetimi, Petrol Sızıntıları, Transnasyonal Organize Suçlar.

Introduction

Multinational Oil Corporations (MOCs) have been operating in the Niger Delta since 1956. Oil from the Niger Delta region accounts for more than 90% of Nigeria's exports and about 80% of the government's revenue.¹ However, oil spillages of exploitation and exploration have created one of the most significant environmental degradations globally. Oil spillages occur because of pipeline vandalism, leakages, drilling, oil smuggling, the process of refining, and the lack of control of MOCs.² These occurrences result in agricultural land contamination, river pollution, public health problems, and pollution of fishponds. There are economic and environmental outcomes of the matter. However, when economic dynamics participate in the process, the picture grows more complex, because weak governance, which means not being able to prevent environmental degradation, leads civil society to become a core of the matter.

Environmental governance of the micro-regional area (i.e., the Niger Delta) would question the central decision mechanism of Nigeria.

¹ Maurice Ogbonnaya, *From Nationalist Movements to Organised Crime Groups The Trajectory of the Niger Delta Struggles*, Enact, 2020.

² Uno Ijim Agbor, "Local Governance and Regional Crisis in Nigeria: Rethinking Governance Dimensions to the Crises in the Niger Delta Region", *Developing Country Studies*, 3:10, 2013, pp. 78-85.

However, Nigeria is a special case in West Africa in terms of having regional hegemonic ambition. Both domestic and international levels determine governments' behaviours. Although governance studies could isolate political aspects, they cannot provide a healthy explanation for governance in Nigeria. The security matter of post-colonial states and regions still constitutes a particular case. The government of those countries tries to be robust with centralising power despite ethnic and local competition in the society. There is a problematic picture for state-society complexity. In terms of West Africa, however, the hegemonic ambition of Nigeria has seemed a stability provider between the 16 states of the region. It is challenging to argue that peace has entirely been built, but intraregional conflicts are highly suppressed in West Africa. However, the security government of Nigeria and West Africa is relatively successful. It can even be named a "proto-regional" security complex.³ But, what about governance?

West Africa and specifically Nigeria, is one of the centres of transnational organised crime. There are drug trafficking, internet fraud, human trafficking, diamond smuggling, forgery, cigarette smuggling, money laundering, arms manufacture, arms trafficking, piracy, and oil bunkering.⁴ Niger Delta has a unique case in terms of being a part of transnational crimes. The investigation of this study has started the realisation of the environmental degradation and oil crime connection. What is the connection between oil crime and transnational organised crime in West Africa? What is the connection between micro-regional (i.e., the Niger Delta) environmental governance and macro-regional (i.e., West Africa) security governance? To find answers to these questions, the integration between those two spheres should be found. The question here is "How?". Thus, the study is oriented to theoretical work rather than

³ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers, the Structure of International Security*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 239.

⁴ Akinyetun Tope Shola and Bakare Kola, Transnational Organized Crime and Insecurity Debacle in Nigeria: Abstract The Budding Illegal Enterprise. *History, Education, Society and Unionism*, 2:1, 2021, pp. 207-218. Stephen Ellis, "Nigerian Organized Crime", F. Allum and S. Gilmour, (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transnational Organized Crime*, London, Routledge, 2021, pp. 128-144.

providing new empirical evidence. Primary (i.e., online documents) and secondary sources are benefitted, but the existent literature provides enough data to match the conceptual map. Placing the government, governance, politics, policy, and security terms are prioritised.

This paper argues that poor environmental governance in the Niger Delta is highly connected with transnational crimes in West Africa because weak governance of the Nigerian state is compensated with centralisation of power, which would bring militarisation of central power and even of society. These issues are both the results of flawed governance interpretation. A strong government can make Nigeria an important actor in West Africa and Africa,⁵ but governance requires social inclusion. The local leaders rather than the civil society itself can have a cultural heritage from the pre-colonial era; however, the new paradigm of governance considers the entire population. Each new generation of Niger Delta citizens is normalising both the central government's security policies and the lack of governance.⁶ It triggers more problems. Environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is a result of oil-related operational mistakes and the lack of control and inspection mechanism. These factors are connected with transnational crime, supporting the lack of micro-regional environmental governance in a non-linear feedback loop. There is economic growth, but not development. There is a centralised state function but not a centralised power in regions (i.e., the Niger Delta and West Africa). However, authorities should have power and governance functions should be decentralised within this power. There is a lack of communication between macro, meso, and micro levels that leads to insecurity problems: on the one hand, how the micro-regional environmental degradation process is handled is a reflection of the nation-state's governance structure; on the other hand, excluded civil society's surviving attempts leads a macro-regional security governance issue.

⁵ Olusola Ogunnubi and Christopher Isike, "Regional Hegemonic Contention and the Asymmetry of Soft Power: A Comparative Analysis of South Africa and Nigeria", *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 37:1, 2015, pp. 152-177.

⁶ Robin Cartwright and Nicholas Atampugre, *Organised Oil Crime in Nigeria The Delta Paradox: Organised Criminals or Community Saviours?*, Enact, 2020.

The rest of the study is composed of four parts. First, the study evaluates regional environmental understanding. The evolution of environmental perception, its regional security and governance dimensions are discussed according to the literature. The transition to governance from a security perspective has created the central questions of the work: *who will perceive the threat, who reacts and who/what the pushing power is*. Second, the study operationalises the conceptional discussions on the West Africa case. Regional security of West Africa is argued via Nigeria's role and the government aspect of the region. Third, the study analyses the Niger Delta case as an axis between micro-regional environmental governance and macro-regional security governance. According to governance understanding, the mentioned three questions are answered and integrated with Niger Delta's regional security. A theoretical contribution to the literature lies in this section. The discussion would help the future works for separating actors, institutions, processes and outcomes. The last part presents a conclusion to the research.

1. Regional Environmental Understanding

1.1. *The evolution of environmental perception: what is the contemporary narrative?*

Environmental consideration started in the 1960s. *Silent Spring* of Carson⁷ has been one of the earliest attempts to make people realise the importance of the issue. The questions started being asked about better environmental policy solutions. How much is it political, or what is the role of people (i.e. society and scientists)?⁸ It is worth remembering that there was a time that economic structure and investments moved it into a critical era and the societal aspect of human development became the centre of the debate.⁹ Then, the evolution of environmental security started.

⁷ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin, New York, (2002 [1962]).

⁸ Mathieu Quet, "Science to the People! (and experimental politics): Searching for the Roots of Participatory Discourse in Science and Technology in the 1970s in France", *Public Understanding of Science*, 23:6, 2014, pp. 628-645.

⁹ Gulnara Baikushikova, Kabatov Tursynbek and Binur Balaubayeva, "Conceptual Bases of Environmental Security", *Bulletin of the Karagand A University*, 2020, pp. 128-

Regional energy perception began in the 1980s when the inter-state started to define the environmental focal points.¹⁰ World environmental governance was also considered a superset of a regional environmental one. Since inter-state conflicts and cooperation became the centre of attention, the environment as a security issue took its position within the wave.¹¹ While the state was accepted as a unitary actor, how can it participate in environmental solutions via regional understanding? Thus, the theme of the paradigm was based on the relationship between the environment and conflicts. It would give its place to seek cooperation via the actors at global, regional, and national levels. Regional aspects of environmental security have become the most important ones.¹² Since the early millennium, there has been close attention towards sub-state actors, as well as global ones. It has been the overall evolution of environmental perception. Now, what region means for it can be focused on.

1.2. Regional environmental security

As for the liberal theorists, Nye¹³ interpreted regionalism as “the formation of interstate groupings based on regions”. For neorealists, however, the global structure is essential for security understanding. Moreover, the environment was a matter of low-politics.¹⁴ Buzan discusses “the regional security complex” and “security sectors” within the framework of his work on security studies, which is composed of the five security sectors, namely, political, military, economic, societal, and environmental sectors.¹⁵ The environment has been seen as necessary

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¹⁰ Bernard Debarbieux, “How Regional Is Regional Environmental Governance?”, *Global Environmental Politics*, 2012, 12:3, 119-126.

¹¹ Geun Lee, “Environmental Security in East Asia: The Regional Environmental Security Complex Approach”, *Asian Perspective*, 26:2, 2012, pp. 77-99.

¹² Marc A. Levy, “Time for a Third Wave of Environment and Security Scholarship?” *Environmental Change and Security Project Report*, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, 1995, pp. 44-46.

¹³ John Nye, *International Regionalism: Readings*. Boston, MA, Little, Brown, 1968, p. 7.

¹⁴ Barry Buzan, “Regional Security Complex Theory in the Post-Cold War World”, F. Söderbaum and T. Shaw, (eds.), *Theories of New Regionalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2003, pp. 140-159.

¹⁵ Barry Buzan, “New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century”, *International Affairs*, 3, pp. 431-451.

since it connects the local with the planetary biosphere. The regional security complex considers global and local dynamics but does not ignore intra-regional.¹⁶ The investigation of the region's specific dynamics pushes the Copenhagen School to focus on neighbouring relations. They carry constructivist patterns and connections, while there is also a materialist aspect derived from neorealists.¹⁷ Territoriality and distribution of power cannot be ignored within the relations of the region.

On the material side, states in a region are determined by the power (a)symmetries. On the ideational side, the social structure perceives "other" whether they are enemies, rivals or friends.¹⁸ Norms and practices simultaneously constitute the meaning. The state is accepted as a social construction. Thus, its analysis includes two dynamics simultaneously: the state's relationship and the social influence behind it. It creates three levels of structural spheres, the arrangement of the units and the differentiation amongst them, the pattern of hostility, and the distribution of power.¹⁹ Analysis of a region requires an investigation of those levels. It is believed that regionalising logic can only be achieved with a geographically coherent group of actors or an environmental impact encompassing the entire region.²⁰ Although the environment carries a security matter, it is perceived either by governments or by public opinion. Thus, not the existence of a problem, but accepting the problem as a threat is the key.²¹ Perception of the threat leads to new security questions, which should form our analysis: *who will perceive it as a threat, who governs, and who/what leads the governance?* This would take the matter out of the scope of security only and turns it into a governance element at the same time.

¹⁶ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers, the Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

¹⁷ Ole Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization", R. D. Lipschutz, (ed.), *On Security*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, pp. 46-86.

¹⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

¹⁹ Buzan, *Regional Security Complex Theory in the Post-Cold War World*.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 155.

²¹ Daniel Deudney, "The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 19:3, 1990, pp. 461-476.

It can be argued that the regional security complex reflects and is partly directed by the evolution of environmental perception. While the trend in security studies has been oriented to non-state and sub-state dynamics, the solutions for regional environmental problems have been looked at in multi-level and multilateral relations. Lee²² replies the regional environmental security complex to the East Asia case and asserts four forms: “latent regional environmental security complex” where threats are perceived at the level of the regional ecosystem, “balance of interests system” where the state’s position towards environmental problems is determined by each country’s environmental security threats, “regional regime” in which states resort to regional institutional measures to tackle the problems, and “regional inter-subjective community” where the problems are inter-subjectively regarded. As operationalisation of the regional environmental security complex, the Arctic case is studied by Exner-Pirot.²³ It is argued that interdependence has been the central motivation of transnational cooperation between scientists, environmentalists, indigenous people, and states. Russell,²⁴ however, investigates the Persian Gulf’s environmental security via the challenges facing the ruling elites. Environmental security in the Latin America case emphasises conflicts and civil war terms.²⁵ Every region has its dynamics.

1.3. A necessity for governance? Who/What governs?

A common missing point in the literature is a separation of security and governance. Security is about a perception of threat, including the questions of whose security, on which subject, and under which circumstances.²⁶ Governance, however, is an action or reaction after

²² Geun, Lee, “Environmental Security in East Asia: The Regional Environmental Security Complex Approach.” *Asian Perspective*, 26:2, 2002, pp. 77-99.

²³ Heather Exner-Pirot, “What is the Arctic a Case of? The Arctic as a Regional Environmental Security Complex and the Implications for Policy”, *The Polar Journal*, 3:1, 2013, pp. 120-135.

²⁴ James A. Russell, “Environmental Security and Regional Stability in the Persian Gulf”, *Middle East Policy*, XVI:4, 2009, pp. 90-101.

²⁵ Hannah Johns, *Environmental Security in Latin America: Case Study for Colombia*. Montana State University, Bozeman MT, The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) 2020.

²⁶ David A. Baldwin, “The Concept of Security”, *Review of International Studies*, 23:1, 1997, pp. 5-26.

perceiving the threat. As a continuation of security matters, the following questions should be asked here: *who will perceive the threat, who reacts, and who/what is the pushing power?* Thus, the transition from security to peace-making/peace-building governance in an environmental sense should be followed.

Since security understanding moves from a state-centric approach to the environmental issues for individuals, societal groups, and the planet, governance becomes a matter of multi-level spheres. Global, inter-regional, regional, national, and sub-national levels should be considered. A threat perception of security understanding should be integrated with cooperation among different actors. These actors can be scientists, decision-makers, experts, and the public.²⁷ From another perspective, actors should be found under scientific, financial, and political dimensions.²⁸ There is also a specific mention of the importance of epistemic community.²⁹ Not only the actors but also international regimes are included by some researchers.³⁰ Here, it is seen that governance is interpreted via actors and processes, institutions, and organisations. Intergovernmental or non-governmental institutions can determine organisations. Environmental degradation as a threat can merge various groups. There is a “pluralist logic of coexistence”.³¹ How those are structured should be cleared out.

According to Komori,³² there are three features of the concept of governance: *a variety of state and non-state actors embedded in complex networks, the dynamic processes of coordination rather than static institutional arrangements, and the aim of efficiency.* Thus, there are actors, processes, and

²⁷ Catharina Landström, *Environmental Participation: Practices Engaging the Public with Science and Governance*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, p. 2.

²⁸ G. Baikushikova, K. Tursynbek and B. Balaubayeva, “Conceptual Bases of Environmental Security.”

²⁹ Peter M. Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination”, *International Organization*, 46, 2020, pp. 1-35.

³⁰ Jörg Balsiger and Stacy Vandever, “Introduction: Navigating Regional Environmental Governance”, *Global Environmental Politics*, 12:3, 2012, pp. 1-17.

³¹ Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 150.

³² Yasumasa Komori, “Evaluating Regional Environmental Governance in Northeast Asia”, *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 37:1, 2010, pp. 1-25.

outcomes. Balsiger and Debarbieux³³ analyse the complex institutional architecture of global, regional, national, and local regimes, norms, and regulatory mechanisms. Institutions as regulatory mechanisms carry a unique role because they can shape both social and material realities. Debarbieux³⁴ separates the taken-for-granted ontologies (regional organisations, conventional entities, imagined regional communities) and how these regional entities are built. The passive role of institutions is distinguished from how institutions attempt to interact. Balsiger and VanDeveer³⁵ suggest three axes for regional environmental governance: agency that includes coordinating and rule-making, the scope of issues, and territoriality. The territoriality of regional environmental governance should not only be defined according to the nation-state's borders. There is also causality between global and local realms.

Before the neoliberal wave, the traditional public administration regarded the government as the only authoritative actor through its bureaucratic and hierarchical structures. However, the development paradigm now requires the decentralisation of government functions.³⁶ Not only the private actors but also civil society should be included in the governance process. There is a necessity for non-governmental organisations, private firms, and governmental units nexus for better governance in the current paradigm.³⁷ Discussed conceptual framework will now be operationalised in West Africa, and then specifically in the Niger Delta case.

³³ Jörg Balsiger and Bernard Debarbieux, "Major Challenges in Regional Environmental Governance Research and Practice", *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 14, 2011, pp. 3-4.

³⁴ Bernard Debarbieux, "How Regional Is Regional Environmental Governance?", *Global Environmental Politics*, 12:3, 2012, p. 122.

³⁵ Balsiger and Vandever, *Introduction: Navigating Regional Environmental Governance*, p. 8.

³⁶ Okey Marcellus Ikeanyibe, Ogonnaya Eze Ori and Arinze Emmanuel Okoye, "Governance Paradigm in Public Administration and the Dilemma of National Question in Nigeria", *Cogent Social Sciences*, 3:1, 2017, pp. 1-16.

³⁷ Jo Ann Ewalt, *Theories of Governance and New Public Management: Links to Understanding Welfare Policy Implementation*. NJ: Paper Prepared for Presentation at the Annual Conference of the American Society for Public Administration Newark. 2001.

This work has benefitted from both primary (i.e., online documents) and secondary sources. As components of primary documents, both Nigerian and international research documents have been followed. This research aims to clear out the contexts of two separate regional levels (i.e., micro- and macro-regions) via a conceptual framework based on the connection between environmental governance and transnational crimes.

2. Regional Security of West Africa

Because the Niger Delta is the part of West Africa where Nigeria is accepted as one of the regional security complexes in Africa during and after the Cold War,³⁸ West Africa's security dynamics will be investigated in this section. West Africa, as the sub-region of Africa, will be named as the region thereafter.

West African sub-region comprises the 16 states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte D'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo (see Figure 1). The post-colonial story of the region started in the late 1950s. The political context of the region has been composed of a variety of identities (e.g., religious, ecological, and linguistic)³⁹ in addition to the remains of colonialism. For example, the countries in the sub-region are still classified as Francophone (e.g., Côte D'Ivoire), Anglophone (e.g., Nigeria) and Lusophone (e.g., Cape Verde) ones. The intra-regional geopolitics is not directly based on the competition between those three sets, but the existence of Francophone countries' majority keeps France's interference alive. Shortly, there are sociocultural and geopolitical divisions.

³⁸ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers, the Structure of International Security*.

³⁹ D. J. Francis, "Peacekeeping in a Bad Neighbourhood: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Peace and Security in West Africa", *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 9:3, 2009, pp. 87-116.

Figure 1: The Map of West Africa⁴⁰



As part of the African continent, West Africa experienced civil wars, specifically during the Cold War. As a continuation of this fact, the security structure has been based on state-centred military rule, which is paradoxical, including the lack of state authority: such condition comprises Westphalian-style security and post-colonial territorial disputes.⁴¹ However, the interferences between other's civil wars have left its place for international peace with domestic wars⁴² because there is a regional hegemony attempt in the region.

2.1. The Role of Nigeria

Nigeria has been an interfering peacebuilder as the more powerful country that overcame its civil war of 1967-1970. Distribution of power and capabilities and historical amity and enmity factors exclude extra-

⁴⁰ World Regional Geography, *West Africa*. 2012, Retrieved July 7, 2022, accessed <https://open.lib.umn.edu/worldgeography/>

⁴¹ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers, the Structure of International Security*.

⁴² Arie Marcelo Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World: South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective*. State University of New York Press, New York, 1998.

regional interferences within its security sphere. However, such a situation does not mean that Nigeria does not have relations with the United States and the United Kingdom.⁴³ The region's structure has become a reflection of the culture of Nigeria's foreign and security policies because of its hegemonic leadership with institutional and practical attempts.⁴⁴

Both neorealism and constructivism are based on the acceptance of the international anarchy situation. In the case of West Africa, however, there is the regional hegemony ambition of Nigeria. Nigeria has been trying to be a player as a peacebuilder with its population power and natural resources.⁴⁵ Nigeria carries this role, serving both its national interests and regional peace. When a regional actor has such aims, outside actors' (e.g., France's) interferences to the region are challenged.⁴⁶ Although France maintained a robust military presence in the former colonies, unlike other colonial powers, the direct influence of France could not stay in the region as the sole determiner. *Accord de Non-Agression et d'Assistance en matière de Défense* had to be incorporated with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which happened in 2001.

Nigeria led the formation of ECOWAS in 1975. Such a unipolar activity has included all 16 countries of the region but has been limited to economic dynamics. Through time, it included the Nonaggression Protocol of 1978, a Protocol of Mutual Assistance and Defence of 1981, and a Standing Mediation Committee of 1990. The Liberian civil war of 1990 faced interference by the Nigeria-led Economic Community Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Declaration of Political Principles of

⁴³ Morten Bøås, "Nigeria and West Africa: from a Regional Security Complex to a Regional Security Community?", E. Braathen, M. Bøås and G. Sæther, (eds.), *Ethnicity Kills? The Politics of War, Peace and Ethnicity in SubSaharan Africa*, London, Macmillan Press, 2000, pp. 141-162.

⁴⁴ Francis, *Peacekeeping in a Bad Neighbourhood: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Peace and Security in West Africa*.

⁴⁵ Adeoye O. Akinola, "Niger Delta Crisis: The Nexus between Militants' Insurgency and Security in West Africa", *African Security*, 4:1, 2011, pp. 65-80.

⁴⁶ Alhaji M. S. Bah, "West Africa from a Security Complex to a Security Community", *African Security Studies*, 14:2, 2005, pp. 77-83.

1991, the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001, and the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework of 2008 followed the mentioned efforts. The use of military force has been no longer the policy of members' interactions with each other.⁴⁷ Those attempts have worked for solving the security complexity of the region in the cases of the Liberian crisis from 1990 to 1997, Sierra Leone from 1997 to 2000, Guinea Bissau in 1999, Côte'd Ivoire in 2002, Niger in 2010, and the military coup d'état in Mali and Guinea-Bissau in 2012.

Nigeria attempts to provide regional stability with its vast revenue from oil, gas, solid materials, and agriculture because exports of these products provide a military capability for a hegemonic local actor.⁴⁸ However, the main issue is that "big brother" creates the governance structure of the region via its mechanism and foreign policy aims. In other words, Nigeria is at the centre of the region, as a similar structure exists within the Nigerian domestic structure. The concentric circle objective of Nigeria exists in foreign policy (i.e. West Africa) and the domestic sphere.⁴⁹ At the domestic level, political elites, leaders, and international corporations define the policy mechanism of post-colonial Nigeria with roughly 250 ethnic groups and 400 language groups.⁵⁰ Since security is defined according to the military perspective in Nigeria,⁵¹ stability could be achieved at the domestic and regional levels; however, governance requires more, as discussed above (see section 2.3.). Nigerian policy-makers are not successful in having good governance because security is still defined according to the Cold War paradigm, which considers territorial integrity and sovereign independence rather than freedom from

⁴⁷ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security Communities* (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

⁴⁸ R. Akindele, Ecowas, "Good Governance and Sub-Regional Security in West Africa", R. Akindele, (ed.), *Civil Society, Good Governance and the Challenges of Regional Security in West Africa*, Vantage Publishers, Ibadan, 2003, pp. 271-333.

⁴⁹ Bola A. Akinterinwa, *Nigeria's New Foreign Policy Thrust: Essays in Honour of Ambassador Ohuyemi Adenji*, Vantage Publishers, Ibadan, 2004.

⁵⁰ Felicia H. Ayatse and Isaac Iorhen Akuva. "The Origin and Development of Ethnic Politics and Its Impacts on Post-Colonial Governance in Nigeria", *European Scientific Journal*, 9:17, 2013, pp. 178-189.

⁵¹ Thomas Imobighe, "Perspectives on Regional Security in Africa", A. C. Eze Osita, (ed.), *Nigeria*. NIIA, Lagos, 2010.

all danger and threats.⁵² The central decision mechanism of unitary state understating perceives and reacts to the threats. Moreover, pushing factors are heavily determined by the interests and desires of political elites, corporations, and stronger local actors. There is a paradigm of indirect solutions rather than direct ones.

There is a necessity for the collaboration of all actors from all levels. Despite intense and diverse ethnic interests and the multiplicity of local governments, which were autonomous during the pre-colonial era,⁵³ Nigeria could have achieved a stable structure through a centralised military regime. The country's military rule has provided relative stability among those various groups, but this does not mean good governance. At the regional level, the situation was the same. Nigeria's leadership policies have defined West Africa's governance picture through a lack of policy reversals and long-term plans.⁵⁴ Although there have been efforts to solve transnational crimes in the region, such as drug smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism, Nigeria has become one of the centres of transnational crimes.⁵⁵

The regional security complex of West Africa has become a regional security community.⁵⁶ When a community picture is provided regardless, there must be a governance structure aside from the regional hegemon. How does the governance structure work in West Africa?

2.2. Regional Security “Government” of West Africa

Governance aims for cooperative action among conflicting and diverse interests. The existing “good governance” definition is based on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's view on the

⁵² W.O. Alli, *The Role of Nigeria in Regional Security Policy*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Abuja, 2012.

⁵³ Ikeanyibe, Ori and Okoye, *Governance Paradigm in Public Administration and the Dilemma of National Question in Nigeria*.

⁵⁴ D. Seteolu, “The Challenge of Leadership and Governance in Nigeria”, *The Constitution*, 4:2, 2004, pp. 1-12.

⁵⁵ W.O. Alli, *The Role of Nigeria in Regional Security Policy*.

⁵⁶ Morten Bøås, *Nigeria and West Africa: from a Regional Security Complex to a Regional Security Community?*; Bah, *WEST AFRICA From a security complex to a security community*.

necessity of neo-liberal ideology.⁵⁷ As part of it, democracy, with its characteristics of popular participation and accountability, gets the attention of good governance. Nigeria has spent a great deal of effort promoting democracy in West Africa since its transition in 1999.⁵⁸ However, democracy and the rule of law are not still well established. Territorial integrity and state survival priorities sustain state-centric understanding, which keeps insecurity at the domestic level but not at the intra-regional. Failure to respect the rule of law keeps nepotism and poverty alive because it leads to a political culture that is not based on accountability but is based on society's cultural and historic character. In the West African case, it is neopatrimonialism.⁵⁹ Personalised authority structures, which both reflect and bring clientelism and protection of the ruling elites, undermine the rational state bureaucracy. Such governance would only bring unpredictability, while only the elites can experience sustainability. Thus, governance of West Africa at both regional and state levels means security for the region, governments, elites, and local leaders but does not bring forth the prioritisation of “democracy” and “human security”.⁶⁰ For example, Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world because of its weak institutional context.⁶¹

Because of the “proto-regional” security complex of West Africa,⁶² weak transnational and intra-state securities undermine the region's potential of having good governance.⁶³ There are still insurgencies at the domestic level and transnational crimes of people and arms. For example, West Africa has become a significant transit hub for cocaine and heroin,⁶⁴

⁵⁷ James Vreeland, *The International Monetary Fund: Politics of conditional lending*, Routledge, London, 2007.

⁵⁸ Samuel M. Makinda and F. Wafula Okumu, *The African Union Challenges of Globalization, Security, and Governance*, Routledge, London, 2007.

⁵⁹ Ian Taylor and Paul Williams, “Political Culture, State Elites and Regional Security in West Africa”, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 26:2, 2008, pp. 137-149.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 147.

⁶¹ Emmanuel Adegbite, “Good Corporate Governance in Nigeria: Antecedents, Propositions and Peculiarities” *International Business Review*, 24, 2015, pp. 319-330.

⁶² Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers, the Structure of International Security*. p. 239.

⁶³ Johan Tejpar and Adriana Lins de Albuquerque, *Challenges to Peace and Security in West Africa: The Role of ECOWAS*. Studies in African Security, 2015.

⁶⁴ Kwesi Aning and John Pokoo, “Understanding the Nature and Threats of Drug

despite local efforts of the Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, the National Agency for the prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, as well as some intra-regional attempts such as the Political declaration on Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organised Crimes in West Africa of 2008, West African Police Chiefs Committee, and the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership. The problem has been the result of the lack of “the needed capabilities to support civil authority leadership.”⁶⁵

At this point, the argument of this study should be given: *A strong government does not mean good governance*. Successful politics does not mean good policy. The institutions and administration of state authorities cannot provide collective good without including identity and interest varieties. For example, the policy decision process and institutions of energy governance in Nigeria still follow a centralised system, which helps to have energy supply security, but the centralised decision mechanism finances corruption in the energy sector.⁶⁶ Environmental governance is one of the areas that governments cannot deal with individually and they require international necessity. The Niger Delta case can be studied to investigate the environmental governance issue in West Africa because it is a matter of both micro-regional environmental governance and macro-regional security governance. Both spheres, caused by similar problems, are interconnected.

3. Niger Delta: An Axis between Micro-Regional Environmental Governance and Macro-Regional Security Governance

Environmental security is composed of economics, geopolitics, and conflicts.⁶⁷ Environmental degradation is caused by economic activity, so

Trafficking to National and Regional Security in West Africa”, *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 3:1, 2014, pp.-13.

⁶⁵ Alli, *The Role of Nigeria in Regional Security Policy*. p. 36.

⁶⁶ Norbert Edomah, Chris Foulds and Aled Jones, “The Role of Policy Makers and Institutions in the Energy Sector: The Case of Energy Infrastructure Governance in Nigeria”, *Sustainability*, 8:829, 2016, pp. 1-15.

⁶⁷ Cyril I. Obi, “Environmental Perspective to Nigeria’s Security: Conceptual and Analytical Issues”, Y. Akinyeye, (ed.), *Nigeria and the Wider World in the 20th Century: Essays in Honour of Professor Akinjide Osuntokun*, Davidson Press, Ibadan, 2003, p. 167.

there is a covert connection between economics and the environment. In the Niger Delta case, such an economic activity (i.e. oil exploitation and exploration) with seismic surveys, canalisation, poor waste disposal, and gas flaring are the reasons for the environmental pollution.⁶⁸ Oil production provides 95% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 80% of its budgetary revenues, while the bulk of wells exist in the Niger Delta.⁶⁹ In the area covering 150 oil fields and 1481 oil wells, there have been 4,000 oil spill incidents.⁷⁰ These incidents are caused by both technical and human factors (see Figure 2). Human factors include errors and intentional activities. As a result, multi-layered environmental impacts have been seen in lands, rivers, and air quality. All these factors damage the health and socio-economic conditions of the local people.⁷¹

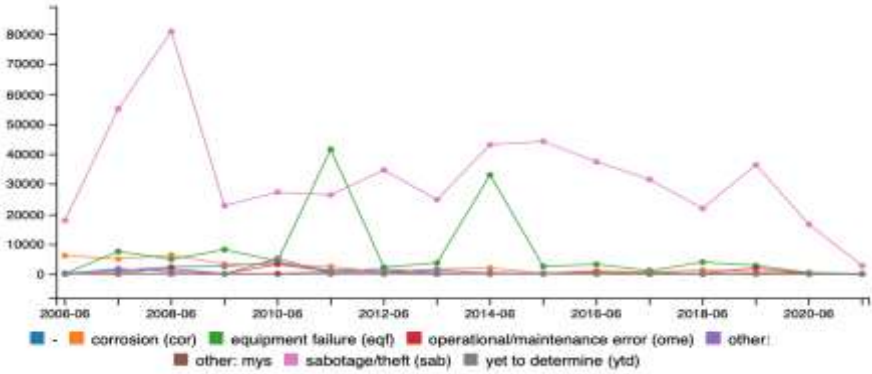
⁶⁸ M. D. Imobighe, "Paradox of Oil Wealth in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria: How Sustainable is it for National Development?" *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 4(6), 2011, 160-168.

⁶⁹ Ogonnaya, *From nationalist movements to organised crime groups The trajectory of the Niger Delta struggles*.

⁷⁰ Mohammed Nuruddeen Isah, *The Role of Environmental Impact Assessment in Nigeria's Oil and Gas Industry*. A PhD Thesis submitted to Cardiff University, 2012.

⁷¹ Bayelsa Commission, *The Bayelsa State Oil and Environmental Commission*. 2019, Retrieved from <https://www.bayelsacommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/BSOEC-Public-Interim-Report-ONLINE-VERSION-29.10.19.pdf>; Anna Bruederle and Roland Hodler, Effect of oil spills on infant mortality in Nigeria. *PNAS*, 116(12), 2019, 5467-5471.

Figure 2. Oil Spill Monitor Between 2006 and 2021⁷²



If so, there must be a conflict-based explanation too. Niger Delta, which is composed of nine states and covers over 20% of the entire population, experiences extreme poverty because of corruption, insecurity, and environmental degradation that prevents the people from farming and fishing.⁷³ For example, there is arms proliferation affiliated with Boko Haram and bandits. Specifically, the role of small arms and light weapons cannot be ignored, since these arms are easy and cheap to produce and buy.⁷⁴ Guns can even be preferred by MOCs to protect themselves.⁷⁵ There is also fuel criminality that merges economics, geopolitics, and conflicts under the environmental politics debate. Militants do not only attempt to

⁷² NOSDRA, *NOSDRA Oil Spill Monitor*. 2021, Retrieved May 14, 2021, accessed <https://nosdra.oilspillmonitor.ng/oilspillmonitor.html>

⁷³ Thaddeus Chidi, Nzeadibe Chukwudumebi, L Egbule, Nnaemeka Chukwuone and Victoria Chinwe Agu, *Farmers' Perception of Climate Change Governance and Adaptation Constraints in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria*. Nairobi, Kenya, African Technology Policy Studies Network RESEARCH PAPER, No. 7. 2011.; Uno Ijim Agbor, "Leadership Behaviour and The Crises of State Failure in Nigeria: Towards A Transformational Leadership Attitude for Addressing Nigeria's Failing State", *Public Policy and Administration Research*, 2:4, 2012, pp. 24-37.

⁷⁴ Abu Frank Ogbemudia and Cyrille Ngamen Kouassi, "Niger-Delta Avengers, Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Its Potential Threat to Nigerian Security: Which Way Forward?", *Indiana Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2:8, 2021, pp. 47-55.

⁷⁵ Shola and Kola, *Transnational Organized Crime and Insecurity Debacle in Nigeria: Abstract The Budding Illegal Enterprise*.

control oil production (i.e., upstream sector) in the Niger Delta but they also affect refining (i.e., midstream sector).⁷⁶ There is obvious environmental insecurity, but how does it happen?

3.1. Who Perceives the Threat? What/Who Pushes?

Post-colonial states, as their progenitors, have “a law-and-order state based upon the use of force”,⁷⁷ and they integrate global capitalism with an over-centralised structure. Relatively stable Nigeria and West Africa are formed via two dynamics: *high-level oil income* resulting from hosting MOCs in the region since 1956 and *military rules*. Although Nigeria has transitioned to a more democratic structure, the remains of military rules as over-centralisation at the federal level of security understanding linger. In a historical process, there is a more complex picture. Since the federal decision mechanism needs military equipment to provide stability among various ethnicities, economic income gained from oil wells is also needed. However, the integration of MOCs into the poor corporate responsibility structure of Nigeria has not only provided stability but also triggered inadequate environmental regulations, ineffectively managing hydrocarbon-derived revenue because of increased corruption/theft, and deterioration of the cultural heritage items over the past 55 years.⁷⁸ A threat for policy-makers means national security at the federal level, but corrupted policy-makers would perceive the prevented economic income for themselves individually as another threat. An estimated \$380 billion of the country’s oil wealth was stolen by its post-independence leaders: this is about two-thirds of all economic aid given to Africa during this period.⁷⁹ Corporations as business actors would perceive

⁷⁶ Moses Omozue, “The Destruction of Illegal Refineries on the Niger Delta Environment: An Appraisal”, *Law and Social Justice Review*, 2:2, 2021, 113-119.

⁷⁷ Shola Omotola, *The Next Gulf? Oil Politics, Environmental Apocalypse and Rising Tension in the Niger Delta*. ACCORD Occasional Paper Series 1:3, 2006, p. 6.

⁷⁸ Aniefiok E. Ite, Thomas Akpan Harry, Clement O Obadimu, Ekpedeme Asuaiko and Iniemem J. Inim, “Petroleum Hydrocarbons Contamination of Surface Water and Groundwater in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria”, *Journal of Environment Pollution and Human Health*, 6:2, 2018, 51-61.

⁷⁹ A. Adebajo, Hegemony on a shoestring: “Nigeria’s Post-Cold War Foreign Policy”, A. Adebajo and A. R. Mustapha, (eds.), *Gulliver’s Troubles: Nigeria’s Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. Pietermaritzburg, 2008, p. 2.

any incident preventing their economic profits as a threat. Those threats can be interpreted as macro-level.

Threat perceptions vary because there is no unitary state structure. At the local level, traditional rulers and community leaders often fight over cheap royalties paid by oil companies.⁸⁰ The entry of international oil companies into a country's domestic market in this way prevents the country from having healthy governance. As a continuation of this problem, the method of state administration with the use of force, which is one of the basic characteristics of the post-colonial state formation process, becomes an even more striking reality. Certain persons at the state level benefit from the income individually rather than sharing it with local people. Corruption exists at the local level, too.⁸¹ Micro-regional leadership can operate within a common leadership culture of criminal opportunism. The collaboration between corporations and local leaders in the Niger Delta has led to conflicts and brutality among the leaders.⁸² Nigeria has one of the least transparent hydrocarbon structures in the world.⁸³ At this point, the role of MOCs becomes a matter. Both onshore and offshore operations of the MOCs have led to economic income only for themselves. The residents of the local communities were excluded from profiting economically.⁸⁴ Ogoniland case is only one of them.⁸⁵ A threat means economic income and security for the local leaders individually. Meso-level is more complex than the macro one, but threat

⁸⁰ Agbor, *Local Governance and Regional Crisis in Nigeria: Rethinking Governance Dimensions to the Crises in the Niger Delta Region*.

⁸¹ Dennis O. Balogu, "Delineation of the Niger Delta Problems and Proffered Solutions", www.nigeriavillagesquare.com, 2009, accessed May 14, 2021,

⁸² Ogonnaya, *From nationalist Movements to Organised Crime Groups The Trajectory of the Niger Delta Struggles*.

⁸³ Chatham House, *Nigeria's Criminal Crude: International Options to Combat the Export of Stolen Oil*. CG. 2013.

⁸⁴ Oluwatoyin Oluwaremilekun Oluwaniyi, "The Role of Multinational Oil Corporations (Mnocs) In Nigeria: More Exploitation Equals Less Development of Oil-Rich Niger Delta Region", *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, 3:6, 2018, pp. 143-162.

⁸⁵ UNEP, "Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland Report". 2022, [https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/disasters-conflicts/where-we-work/nigeria /environmental-assessment-ogoniland-report](https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/disasters-conflicts/where-we-work/nigeria/environmental-assessment-ogoniland-report), accessed 7.7.2022.

perception is almost the same except that macro-level officials also consider Nigeria's position in West Africa.

Micro-level threat perception is more environment-oriented than the others. Governance is a process composed of what is done and undone in state-society complexity. Corrupted leaders first think of themselves, not ordinary citizens. This means the development aspect of the current paradigm is not prioritised in the corrupted states.⁸⁶ The Niger Delta, which has stuck in economic income injustice, environmental degradation, the military-security complex, and the benefits of elites can only experience mass-based mobilisation of civil society.⁸⁷ Local environmental politics heavily prevent environmental governance. This local level includes the interconnection between poverty, environmental degradation, and oil production. In other words, economic and political objectives result in the neglecting of the human aspect. Although civil protests for the spillages have increased over time, they have not been successful directly. The question of "*Who reacts?*" can be discussed at this point initially.

3.2. *Who Reacts? How Reacts?*

There has been an emergence of environmental rights activism by civil society groups such as the Pan-Niger Delta Resistance Movement (*The Chikoko*), which is a representative mass organisation for the defence of the rights of the ethnic minority nationalities in the rich Niger Delta Area, the Environmental Rights Action, the Ijaw Youth Council, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, Movement for Reparation to Ogbia, and the Movement for the Survival of the Izon in the Niger Delta.⁸⁸ However, the Abacha regime of Nigeria (1993-1998) did not welcome such movements. The reaction of the government against social

⁸⁶ Agbor, *Local Governance and Regional Crisis in Nigeria: Rethinking Governance Dimensions to the Crises In the Niger Delta Region*.

⁸⁷ Luqman Saka, Moh'd Azizuddin Moh'd Sani and Adedoyin J. Omede, "The Niger Delta, Oil Politics and the Nigerian State", R. Ajayi and Y. Fashagba, (eds.), *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development*, Springer, Cham, Switzerland, 2021, pp. 321-339.

⁸⁸ Victor Ojajorotu, "The Internationalization of Oil Violence in the Niger Delta of Nigeria", *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 7:1, 2008, pp. 92-118.

reaction has aimed to take control. On the other hand, irrelevant to military or democratic rules, governments have always embraced regulatory and institutional decisions. There are examples of local-level policies, such as the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) of 1959, the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) of 1961, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) of 1992, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) of 2000, and the foundation of Ministry of Niger Delta in 2008.

There are also regulations and institutions at the national level such as the Petroleum Act of 1969, the Oil in Navigable Waters Act of 1968, the Associated Gas Re-Injection Act of 1979, the Oil Pipelines Act of 1990, the Environmental Impact Assessment Act of 1992, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of 1999, the Environmental Guidelines and Standards for the Petroleum Industry of 2002, the National Policy on the Environment of 1999, the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency of 2006, and the National Environmental Standards and Regulatory Enforcement Agency of 2007. The responsibility to prevent oil spills has been given to multiple decentralised institutions.⁸⁹ There have been institutional and regulative attempts to achieve an environmentally safe Niger Delta, but governance does not solely mean institutions. As mentioned above, governance means a process composed of actors, institutions, and outcomes. The environmental governance process of the Niger Delta does not stay at the local level.

3.3. From Local to Transnational

As happened in the environmental governance sphere, institutional attempts to solve the transnational crimes of the Niger Delta have also not worked. Moreover, this issue is integrated with the unregulated oil market of the Niger Delta. For example, stolen oil in the region is being moved to local refiners. Then the product is marketed illegally. In this market, oil is traded for cash and/or arms and drugs.⁹⁰ It would be wrong to assume that

⁸⁹ Harry Barnes-Dabban, *Greening African Ports: Environmental Governance Transformations in a Network Society*. PhD Thesis submitted at Wageningen University, 2018.

⁹⁰ Etannibi E.O. Alemika, Alphaeus Koroma, Alioune Badara Gueye, Boubacar Daouda Diallo and Moses Udo Ikoh, *The Impact of Organised Crime on Governance in*

oil bunkering is the sole reason for organised crime in West Africa, but it is one of the biggest. Organised crimes are interconnected with each other, as corruption includes the interaction between governments, politicians, bureaucratic officials, military personnel, and criminal groups. Oil and gas operation currently goes on in more than 50% of the 3,000 communities in the Niger Delta region.⁹¹ Nowadays, maritime piracy, armed robbery at sea, kidnapping for ransom, oil theft, oil smuggling, oil refining, and destroying oil installations have turned the entire Niger Delta into a dangerous and lawless zone. According to Ogbonnaya,⁹² it is a result of the evolution of environmental governance. Pan-ethnic resistance to environmental pollution and armed ethnic militia's reaction against environmental degradation have increased since the 1980s. The insurgency-environmental degradation-poverty nexus has presented a picture of unity that cannot be solved by unitary state understanding.

There are some attempts to solve transnational crimes in West Africa, such as the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the ECOWAS Protocol on Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa, the West African Police Chiefs Committee, West African Coastal Initiative, West Africa Commission on Drugs, The West African Bureau of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), The ECOWAS Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, and The ECOWAS Convention on Extradition. However, they do not prevent transnational crimes in connection with oil.

Despite the high number of regulatory attempts, oil and environmental governance in the Niger Delta is still lacking. Economic income has not been spent on the development of the region. Sustainable policies require economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion rather than the integration of crimes, governments, and national

West Africa. Abuja, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. 2013.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 44.

⁹² Ogbonnaya, *From Nationalist Movements to Organised Crime Groups The Trajectory of the Niger Delta Struggles*.

leaders.⁹³ There is no inter-state conflict occurring in West Africa, but there is a transnational one. Poor environmental governance in the Niger Delta is highly connected with transnational crimes in the region. The cause of these problems is poor governance understanding. A strong government can make Nigeria an important actor in West Africa and Africa,⁹⁴ but governance requires social inclusion. The inclusion of the local leaders rather than civil society itself can have a cultural heritage from the pre-colonial era; however, the new paradigm of governance considers the entire population. Each new generation of Niger Delta citizens is normalising both the central government's security policies and the lack of governance.⁹⁵

3.4. Regional Environmental Security Aspect of Niger Delta

Regional logic can have various causations: global causes-local effects, global causes-global effects, local causes-local effects, and local causes-wider effects.⁹⁶ In the Niger Delta, local environmental degradation causes local environmental effects. However, in terms of a more comprehensive security perspective, local causes have broader macro-regional effects. Environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is not only caused by oil-related operational mistakes but also by the lack of governance. Their results relate to transnational crime, supporting back the lack of micro-regional environmental governance in a non-linear feedback loop. There is economic growth but not development. There is a centralised state function but no power in regions (i.e., the Niger Delta and West Africa) because of weak governance, although authorities should have power and governance functions should be decentralised. There is a lack of communication between macro, meso, and micro levels, which is getting more prominent because of the "sustaining" economic income of

⁹³ Chigozie Okonkwo and Ezinwanne Ekekwe, "Environmental Management and Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta", *South East Political Science Review*, 1:1, 2017, 254-267.

⁹⁴ Ogunnubi and Isike, *Regional Hegemonic Contention and the Asymmetry of Soft Power: A Comparative Analysis of South Africa and Nigeria*.

⁹⁵ Cartwright and Atampugre, *Organised Oil Crime in Nigeria The Delta Paradox: Organised Criminals or Community Saviours?*

⁹⁶ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers The Structure of International Security*.

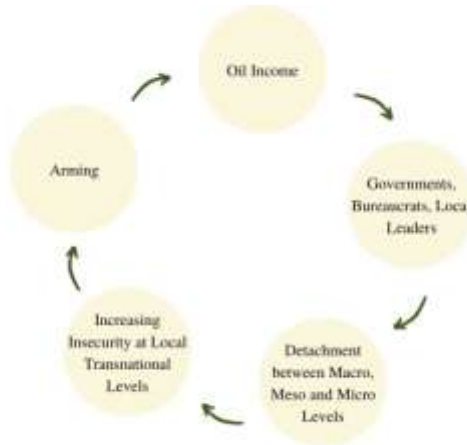
rental income of leaders, governments, and policy-makers. It leads to insecurity problems at local and transnational levels, which require arming, which in turn requires oil income (see Figure 3). The micro-regional environmental governance process causes such micro- and macro-regional security governance processes.

Figure 3. Feedback Loop of Oil Production and Insecurity Observed at Local Level. *Source: Author's Own Elaboration*



Unregulated oil production leads to environmental degradation. Because of environmental damage, locals get weaker because of harmed farming and fishing. Increased poverty leads to illiteracy and health problems. There is a detachment between the state and society. At this point, local leaders get stronger. They can create an illegal oil market, which increases oil production. High crimes become challenging ones for central governments to solve. They have to produce more oil to match the increased necessity for military expenditure (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Feedback Loop of Oil Production and Transnational Crimes Transit from Local to Transnational Level and then from Transnational to Local One. *Source: Author's Own Elaboration*



In addition to the direct influencing factors mentioned above, indirect dynamics should also be mentioned. The remains of colonialism still have a lasting effect on the region. As mentioned above, the former colonial powers still have military and political ties within the region. While Nigeria first tries to break free from this bond, it also faces a second legacy of colonialism, which has a state structure based upon the use of force and integrating global capitalism with an over-centralised structure.

Conclusions

This study has investigated environmental degradation in the Niger Delta and its connection with transnational organised crime in West Africa. However, the connection has not been researched via the participation of organised crime groups but by structural analysis. As a security provider in West Africa, Nigeria has provided a relatively stable region that has not experienced inter-state conflicts. The tools used for creating a relatively stable situation for the unitary states have worked for this aim but have not prevented transnational organised crime. Oil production is at the centre of the debates due to several reasons. First, it provides income for the Nigerian central government, which eases the

arming of other countries in West Africa. Second, oil income supports institutional attempts too for preventing crimes. Third, however, oil production has an illegal market in Nigeria. It pushes and supports crimes in Niger Delta. Fourth, oil production with a lack of regulations and control causes environmental degradation. Because of degradation's impact on civil society and the lack of governance understanding, local-level environmental issues have joined transnational crimes. Then, they both start triggering each other.

A successful government does not mean good governance. Nigerian governments have taken the character of leaders, and they could reflect them on their political decisions at domestic and macro-regional levels. However, governance requires civil society inclusion. If it lacks this aspect, institutional attempts could only stay at the government level. Moreover, actors' interests and desires overweight on institutional and regulative attempts. People of governments, policy-makers, bureaucrats, army officers, and local leaders can easily ignore governing attempts. Thus, environmental degradation becomes an issue for civil society than others. Decision-makers and the rest authority carriers behave as if they worry about the degradation, but the corrupted structure stays. The environmental problem becomes connected with corruption, poverty, and irrepressible crime in the Niger Delta. On the one hand, it is a part of transnational crime in West Africa. On the other hand, it supports back the crime in West Africa.

The reason is that successful politics does not mean good policy. Political level dynamics are becoming more successful in West Africa, while policy ones stay behind. Including society in the policy-making process would ease solving problems, but institutional attempts and the personal interests of "some" are contradictory. While there are regulatory attempts, authorities involved in the process create a "conflict of interest". In the current paradigm, collective good cannot be achieved without a variety of identities and interests. When new generations (youth people) see the structure, poverty, environmental problems, and inertia of governments, they choose easy ways. In some cases, those ways are the only options. Solving environmental degradation in the Niger Delta would not help solve organised crimes in West Africa; however, the healthy governance process for the degradation would help see the

distinction between government and governance, and policy and politics. This research's main contribution to the literature is recognising a centralised state function, but not a centralised power in governance matters in the Niger Delta and West Africa spheres. Policy recommendations for states that are shaped by weak governance are oriented where "centralisation" is experienced.

Geniş Özet

Küresel en önemli çevresel bozulmalara bir sebep petrol sızıntılarıdır. Bunlar, boru hattı vandalizmi, sızıntılar, sondaj, petrol kaçakçılığı, rafine etme süreci ve transnasyonel petrol şirketlerinin kontrolünün eksikliği nedeniyle meydana gelmektedir. Sonuç olarak tarım arazilerinin kirlenmesi, nehir kirliliği, halk sağlığı sorunları ve balık havuzlarının kirlenmesi gibi sonuçlar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dolayısıyla meselenin hem ekonomik hem de çevresel sonuçları vardır. Ancak ekonomik dinamikler sürece dahil olduğunda, resim karmaşılaşmaya başlar, çünkü çevresel bozulmayı önleyememek anlamına gelen zayıf yönetim, sivil toplumu konunun merkezine taşır. Sivil toplumunun çekirdek halinde algılanmaya başlaması ise safi bir güvenlik tartışmasından çıkıp yönetim (*governance*) zeminine geçer.

Mikro-bölgesel alanın (yani Nijer Deltası) çevresel yönetimi, Nijerya'nın merkezi karar mekanizmasıyla ilgilidir. Ancak Nijerya, aynı zamanda daha büyük bölgede hegemonik bir hırsa sahip olması açısından Batı Afrika'da özel bir vakadır. Burada gözlemlenen hem yerel hem de uluslararası düzeylerin hükümetlerin davranışlarını belirlemesidir. Yönetim çalışmaları, siyasi yönleri izole edebilse de, Nijerya'daki yönetim için sağlıklı bir açıklama sağlayamaz. Sömürge sonrası devletlerin ve bölgelerin güvenlik meselesi hala özel bir durumdur. Bu ülkelerin hükümetleri, toplum içindeki etnik ve yerel rekabete rağmen merkezileştirici güçle sağlam olmaya çalışmaktadır. Devlet-toplum kompleksitesi yönünden sorunlu bir tabloyla ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ancak Batı Afrika açısından, Nijerya'nın hegemonik hırsı bir istikrar sağlayıcı olduğu da bilinmektedir. Barışın tamamen sağlandığını iddia etmek zor, ancak Batı Afrika'da bölge içi çatışmalar büyük ölçüde bastırılmış durumdadır.

Batı Afrika, özellikle Nijerya, ulusötesi organize suç merkezlerinden biridir. Uyuşturucu kaçakçılığı, internet dolandırıcılığı, insan kaçakçılığı,

elmas kaçakçılığı, sahtecilik, sigara kaçakçılığı, kara para aklama, silah imalatı, silah kaçakçılığı, korsanlık ve petrol ikmalleri gibi çeşitli suçlar gözlemlenmektedir. Nijer Deltası, ulusötesi suçların bir parçası olması açısından daha benzersiz bir duruma sahiptir. Bu çalışmanın araştırılması, çevresel bozulma ve petrol ile alakalı suç bağlantısını aramayı başlattı. Buradan ortaya çıkan sorular: Batı Afrika'daki petrol suçu ile ulusötesi organize suç arasındaki bağlantı nedir? Mikro-bölgesel (yani Nijer Deltası) çevre yönetimi ile makro-bölgesel (yani Batı Afrika) güvenlik yönetimi arasındaki bağlantı nedir? çalışma yeni ampirik kanıtlar sağlamaktan ziyade teorik çalışmaya yöneliktir. Bu analizler yapılırken birincil (yani çevrimiçi belgeler) ve ikincil kaynaklardan yararlanılmıştır, ancak mevcut literatür, kavramsal haritayı eşleştirmek için yeterli veri sağlamaktadır. Hükümet, yönetim, siyaset, politika ve güvenlik terimlerinin yerleştirilmesine öncelik verilmiştir.

Bu makale, Nijer Deltası'ndaki zayıf çevresel yönetimin Batı Afrika'daki ulusötesi suçlarla yüksek oranda bağlantılı olduğunu savunuyor, çünkü Nijerya devletinin zayıf yönetimi, merkezi gücün ve hatta toplumun militarizasyonunu getirecek olan gücün merkezileşmesiyle telafi edilmektedir. Her ikisi de hatalı yönetim yorumundan kaynaklanır. Güçlü bir hükümet Nijerya'yı Batı Afrika ve Afrika'da önemli bir aktör haline getirebilir, ancak yönetim sosyal aktörleri içermeyi de gerektirir. Sivil toplumun kendisinden ziyade yerel liderler, sömürge öncesi dönemden kalma bir kültürel mirasa da sahip olabilir; ancak yeni yönetim paradigması tüm nüfusu dikkate alır. Nijer Deltası vatandaşlarının her yeni nesli hem merkezi hükümetin güvenlik politikalarını hem de yönetim eksikliğini normalleştiriyor. Daha fazla sorunu tetiklenmiş oluyor. Nijer Deltası'ndaki çevresel bozulma, petrolle ilgili operasyonel hatalardan ve kontrol ve denetim mekanizmasının eksikliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Sonuçları, doğrusal olmayan bir geri bildirim döngüsünde mikro-bölgesel çevresel yönetim eksikliğini destekleyen, ulusötesi suçla bağlantılıdır. Ekonomik büyüme var ama gelişme yok. Bölgelerde (yani Nijer Deltası ve Batı Afrika) merkezi bir devlet işlevi vardır ancak merkezi bir güç yoktur. Bununla birlikte, yetkililerin güce sahip olması ve yönetim işlevi onun altında ademi merkezizetçi olmalıdır. Güvensizlik sorunlarına yol açan makro, orta ve mikro düzeyler arasında bir iletişim eksikliği vardır: bir yandan mikro bölgesel çevresel bozulma sürecinin nasıl ele alındığı, ulus devletinin yönetim

yapısının bir yansımasıdır, diğer yandan dışlanmıştır. Sivil toplumun ayakta kalan girişimleri, makro-bölgesel bir güvenlik yönetişimi sorununa yol açmaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın literatüre ana katkısı, Nijer Deltası ve Batı Afrika bölgelerinde yönetim konusunda merkezi bir gücü değil, merkezi bir devlet işlevini tanımlamaktır. Zayıf yönetim tarafından şekillendirilen devletlere yönelik politika önerileri, “merkezileşme”nin yaşandığı yerlere dikkat çekmek üzerinedir.

Conflict of Interest Statement:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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