

The background of the cover is a photograph of a tall, modern skyscraper with a grid-like facade. In the foreground, there is a large, blue, curved archway. Several large, yellow, 3D-style stars are scattered around the archway and in front of the building. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

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Full Length Research Paper

International responses to human trafficking: The Ghanaian experience

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Human trafficking in this era has been conceptualized as a global event that is likened to slavery because of the inhumane treatment that the victims go through. The scope and the criminal aspect of it demands police initiative to curb the menace. The current researcher used semi-structured qualitative interview, direct observation, and review of documents to gather data from Ghana Police Service and some anti-human trafficking institutions in Ghana to identify the nature, scope and responses to reduce or eradicate this menace that has detrimental effect on the people of Ghana, as a case study. Contemporarily, in terms of origin, destination and transit of people to engage in this criminal act, the menace put Ghana into Tier Two Watch-List classification in 2015 on the international level. Human trafficking in Ghana was characterized as violence, debt bondage, exploitation, deprivation of the freedom of the victims, and confiscation of travelling and other documents. The study revealed that the government of Ghana had put in only a minimal effort to curb the menace, and that the trafficking of people had created a security concern that the police must be apt to control. There is a recommendation that the Government of Ghana puts in maximal effort to educate the people and equip the Police service in Ghana to enable the service take tough action to ensure the maximum implementation of the regulations against human trafficking.

Key words: Human trafficking, Ghana, policing, inhumane treatment, criminalization, border crime.

INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is a global problem and it is an issue of human exploitation that creates instability and corrupts the chain of manpower supply in many countries. A study by the US Department of State (2013) estimated that globally the number of people trafficked on annual basis ranges between 600 and 800 million. Human trafficking, regarded as one of transnational organized crimes in recent times by the United Nations, is rated as the second heinous crime in the world (Kempadoo et al.,

2015; Shelley and Lee, 2007). It requires the effort of governments, non-governmental agencies, and the world as a whole to come together with a common front in dealing with the menace of human trafficking (Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005; Laczko and Gramegna, 2003). US Department of State (2013) considers it as a form of modern slavery and attempts to define it as, "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, or provision of a person for labor or services, through the use of force,

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fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery”.

In many countries, especially in the Americas and Europe, the police have intensified their border-policing through focusing on people smuggling. In some countries such as Australia, the police consider people smuggling as a threat to national security (Pickering, 2004). In Netherlands, the operational practice of the police uses human-centered approach to gather unstructured information that reveals many unknown human trafficking practices (Poelmana et al., 2012). In Malaysia, the major human trafficking problem confronting the police concerns trans-border security that prompted the police to strengthen their maritime governance to control the influx of illegals to curtail public corruption fueled by human trafficking (Stanslas, 2010).

Slovenia, for example, shaped its anti-trafficking paradigm to include the tightening of the borders and saving human trafficking victims alongside the use of strict policing based on the frames of criminalization (Pajnik, 2010). On April 1, 2009, the enforcement of the laws against the menace in Europe by the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT) took place in UK with the view of protecting the victim of human trafficking (Simon, 2010). United States raised the awareness of the criminal aspect of trafficking of persons and the need to prepare the police agencies to deal with the menace through the enactment of laws that treat human trafficking offences as crimes (Farrell et al., 2010). A study revealed that in Britain, thousands of the children were sexually exploited as victims to internal human trafficking despite the mandates provided to curb human exploitation to bodies. This prompted the establishment of some centers, including the UK Human Trafficking Center, Child exploitation Online Protection Center, and National Referral Mechanism, to see to issues of curbing human trafficking in the UK (Westcott, 2013).

In shifting the paradigm of New York Police arresting and prosecuting the trafficked to the protection of the trafficked who were the victims, New York State enacted some laws that empowered the anti-human trafficking volunteers to form an Interagency Task Force with the obligation of eliminating the use of force, coercion, or fraud by the human traffickers (Nack, 2010). In Asia, to curtail the problem of human trafficking victims suffering violations and denial of human rights by their traffickers and some government agencies, the international organizations and the states initiated some actions to tackle the inhumane aspects against the victims (Willman, 2009).

In Africa, Nigeria for example enacted some laws to treat cases involving human trafficking to Europe, Middle East, and some other parts of the world including North America with the view of reducing sexual exploitation of Nigerians. Other human exploitations and sale of humans

or human parts in Nigeria under the umbrella of human trafficking was treated as heinous crimes but the laws suffered serious enforcement challenges (Elechi et al., 2007). Considering the scope and nature of human trafficking contemporary, the international community of researchers is urged by the ILO to make empirical assessment of the menace and come out with an amicable solution to curb it (Gozdziak and Collette, 2005; Belser, 2005).

This study of human trafficking in Ghana was guided by the social constructivist framework that is built on the epistemology that truth is based on objective knowledge and emanates from social influence through exchanges and inquiry (De Simone et al., 2015). The theory posits that objective knowledge is obtained through active engaging minds of people in a society (Bodem, 2010). Constructivism framework is useful for the study because of the nature of the study that is based on the engagement of minds with anti-human trafficking activists who had had direct interactions and exchanges with the victims and the traffickers and the researcher's social interaction with some of the victims in servitude at the Volta Lake in Ghana where thousands of the victims were found working for their so called “Masters” and their traffickers.

The study was also guided by the interpretivist conceptual framework that stipulates that to understand the reality of a phenomenon the researcher must live it (Cresswell, 2007). The interpretivist conceptual framework guided the researcher to understand the reality of human trafficking as understood from the perspective of the lived world of the victims and the traffickers as experienced by the experts who might have gained experience from their interactions with the victims and the traffickers. The researcher used interviews to gather data from some Police Officers and individuals working with some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) empowered to look into issues of human trafficking in Ghana and Ghanaians in the diaspora. The data gathered from the participants contributed immensely towards unveiling most of the challenges of human trafficking. The interpretation of the phenomenon by the experts involved in the study portrayed the reality of the phenomenon in Ghana and elsewhere.

Brief profile of Ghana

Ghana, a former British colony in West Africa, shares borders with Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, and at the South is the Gulf of Guinea. A census conducted in 2010 revealed the population of Ghana was 25 million. Ghana achieved republican status on July 1, 1960. The country gained independence as a sovereign nation on March 6, 1957 and it is the first African country, south of the Sahara, to gain independence from the Western colonial regime. The country's first president after

attaining independence in 1957 was overthrown in a military coup in 1966. Ghana, as a nation was destabilized and suffered economic decline from 1966 to 1992 resulting from interventions of periodic military coups. Since 1992, the political regime has been stabilized with democratic leadership of government. Ghana had its own system of policing long before its colonization by the Europeans in the form that include, enforcement of laws, patrolling, and territorial protection (Gyamfi, 2012). Many Ghanaians have the perception that, "Ghana lacks the requisite institutional capacity and framework for responding to organized crimes" (Aning et al., 2013).

Purpose and problem statement

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify the nature, extent, problems and the responses to globally reduce or eradicate the menace of human trafficking using the Ghanaian situation. Human trafficking is considered as an issue that is multidimensional, global, and associated with human rights, migrant exploitation, cheap labor, and corruption (Stanslas, 2010). The criminal nature of it has been a global issue to the police. In many different parts of the world human trafficking victims are exploited and forced to engage in heinous crimes such as prostitution. The traffickers use them for sexual acts, as slaves, and for other criminal acts that benefit the traffickers and their accomplices mostly (Murray, 2006; Cockbain et al., 2011).

Limitation and delimitation of the study

The study objective was to identify the scope at which human beings are exploited and recommend means for the eradication of the menace of human trafficking. The researcher focused mainly on the criminal nature and the effort to combat the menace. The scope of the study was not on all transnational organized crimes but limited only to crimes resulting from human trafficking.

Research question

Human trafficking gains momentum on daily basis and millions of trafficking victims worldwide are enslaved resulting from human trafficking. Efforts of many nations to enact laws and use police enforcement units to do away with exploitation of people through human trafficking continue to prove futile and classified (US Department of State, 2013). In 2015, the profile of human trafficking in Ghana in terms of origin, destination and transit of people to engage in criminal acts put Ghana into Tier 2 Watch-List classification on the international level. The research question for this study is, "What is the extent, nature, scope, protection, and prevention of human trafficking in Ghana?"

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used qualitative method and the case of Ghana to explore the nature, extent, problems and responses to human trafficking menace across the globe. Eight participants who were working in anti-human trafficking organizations were selected and interviewed using purposive sampling technique because of the nature of the phenomenon under consideration. Case study design and purposive sampling technique were employed because of the intention of the researcher to have in-depth description of the phenomenon from the experts who had been well associated with the work on the fight against human trafficking in Ghana. Other suitable qualitative design appropriate for the study could have been ethnography but ethnographic design was avoided because of cost, time, and other constraints (Mathews, 2010). Direct observation and documents reviewed were used to triangulate the study.

Research setting

Eight participants made up of four top police officers from the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of Ghana Police Service (GPS) and four other Ghanaians working with some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in curbing the menace from Ghana were interviewed. The researcher obtained permission from GPS to interview the Police Officers of anti-human trafficking unit of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of GPS. The researcher interviewed the participants from GPS at a location in Ghana Police Headquarters, Accra. The participants from anti-human trafficking NGOs were interviewed at a different location in Ghana.

The study participants were interviewed after explaining the purpose of the study and agreeing with them for the interview. With permission from the participants, the interview was recorded and the interviewees confirmed the transcription of the interview and gave approval for the usage of the data for the study. The participants were assured of their confidentiality. The researcher gave every participant a three digit code, prefixed by "SP" (Study Participant) signifying their identity. The codes represented the first letter of the surnames of the participants. For example, if the surname of a participant is Gerald, the code would be SP 007 (The seventh letter of the alphabets). In a situation where two participants' surnames began with the same alphabetical number such as Gerald and George, George was given the code SP 070 and Gerald's code became SP 071. The third digit distinguished the two participants based on the alphabetical order. With the codes, no real name of any participant appeared in the data collected.

Field notes were taken from the body language and other observations during the interview. The interview was captured using handwritten notes and voice recorders. The interview was supported with facts noted and electronically captured from the field using information-computer technology by the interviewees who, as part of their duties, usually received reports and made follow-ups to the scene where the victims of human trafficking were being exploited. The researcher was given access to the relevant archival documents held at the CID office relating to human trafficking in Ghana. The CID office also provided statistical data spanning 2005 to 2015 on human trafficking in Ghana. The researcher spent about one hour on every interview session. After the one-on-one interview, the researcher made a follow-up field study to verify most of the issues raised for triangulation.

Instrumentation

The researcher designed the instrument for the interview because there was no suitable instrument available for adaption or adoption in Ghana. The instrument was reviewed by four-member panel of

professionals who had expertise in criminology in the area of human trafficking and other criminal issues in Ghana. In all, four initiating questions with follow-up questions were used as interview guides. The initiating items were, "Can you tell me more about human trafficking in Ghana?" "Kindly describe how human trafficking is treated in Ghana." "Kindly share your views on human trafficking and the challenges confronting the security services in combating the menace." "On human trafficking and the approach used by Ghana and the international community, share your views with me." The follow-up questions included: "Can you share your views on human trafficking and security of Ghana?" "Can you share your opinions on the legal framework guiding human trafficking victims, the traffickers, and their accomplices in Ghana and the international community?" "If you have the right to change the laws on human trafficking in Ghana, what will you come out with?" "Describe the dangers involved in human trafficking in Ghana and the effort by the government of Ghana in curbing the menace."

Trustworthiness and triangulation of the study

To ensure trustworthiness of the study, after the interview, the researcher made a follow-up to the Volta Lake in Ghana where most of the trafficked children were observed engaged in fishing and doing other menial jobs for their slave masters. The field notes from the direct observation were used as triangulation to enrich the trustworthiness of the study. Another form of triangulation was the use of member-checking where the participants were asked to confirm the transcribed interview for their approval. The researcher also reviewed the archival records of the statistical unit of Ghana Police Service for data on human trafficking recorded by the unit.

Research protocol and analysis

After discussing the purpose of the study with the interview participants, the researcher explained the right that they had to opt out as participants before, during, and after the interview. After agreeing to become co-researchers of the study, every participant was given two consent forms to complete and sign the relevant portion of the form to indicate their consent to become participants. Time was scheduled for the one-on-one interview. The researcher asked the participants to express their feelings and opinions during the interview. The data gathered from the interview, direct observation, and documents reviewed were analyzed using wholistic (sententious) approach where sentence clusters were analyzed to reveal the meaning of every sentence to the phenomenon under study (van Manen, 1990).

During the analysis of the data gathered, every text resulting from the field notes, archival files from the CID office, and the transcripts from the interview were read several times with codes (labels) attached to the text with the aim of developing categories that could enhance thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo 10 qualitative software (Leaviss, 2000). After placing the data gathered into understandable codes, inductive reasoning was used to develop abstractions that gave meaning to the study when the data were placed into the NVivo 10 program for further analysis (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). The software sorted out and highlighted the texts and phrases into commonalities (Nodes) that led to the categorization and generation of themes. The following findings emanated from the study after thorough analysis of the data gathered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following themes emerged after using reiterative

approach, with the aid of NVivo 10 software, to categorize the data context during the analysis:

1. Nature and scope of human trafficking in Ghana
2. Ghanaians trafficked abroad
3. Curbing the menace of human trafficking

Nature and scope of human trafficking in Ghana

Statistical data from CID on major crimes in Ghana indicated human trafficking was among the top level of crimes in the country from 2011 to 2014. The other forms of crimes on top of the list included murder, child stealing, rape, robbery, drug abuse, smuggling, counterfeiting, cybercrimes, and illegal possession of firearms. The documents reviewed from the office revealed that in 2013 Ghana was branded as a country of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking belonging to Tier 2 classification by the international body seeking to combat the menace of human trafficking globally. In 2015, Ghana was branded to belong to Tier 2 Watch-List group of human trafficking that was associated with violence, debt bondage, exploitation and deprivation of the freedom of the victims, confiscation of travelling and other documents. A participant, SP004, indicated, "The government of Ghana had put in only a minimal effort to curb the menace and the trafficking of people has created a security concern that the police must be apt to control." Statistical records at the CID head office on crimes from 2011 to 2014 as reported showed human trafficking offences had been increasing from 2011 to 2013 but declined in 2014 as indicated in Table 1.

Among the selected offences, abduction emerged as the most commonly committed offence which registered 3,286 cases followed by child stealing, 451; human trafficking, 396; kidnapping, 269; and smuggling, 88. It was revealed that some of the victims were trafficked from some of the borders of Ghana. A participant who was a senior Police Officer indicated that some of the victims were trafficked from places such as Nigeria, China, and Canada were made to subject themselves, after arriving in Ghana, to sexual exploitation on commercial basis by their traffickers and the dealers involved. Most of the men trafficked to Ghana from other countries were made to engage in forced labor and some of the young ladies also engaged in domestic services. It was revealed that majority of the teenagers who were girls trafficked to Ghana from other countries were forcefully made to indulge in child prostitution. Information revealed from the participants SP001, SP130, and SP170 showed that the traffickers of other nationals to Ghana sometimes sold the trafficked to their exploiters. SP170, for instance revealed that there was evidence to prove that some traffickers used false information to commit the victims to pay between \$6,000 and \$10,000 per person before sending them to Ghana. A criminal case brought before a circuit court in Ghana held on 23 June, 2009

Table 1. Selected criminal offence.

Offence	Year					Total
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Human trafficking	18	10	47	190	131	396
Child stealing	71	45	79	69	187	451
Smuggling	10	11	15	20	32	88
Abduction	600	639	767	657	623	3,286
Kidnapping	2	48	57	80	82	269

Data Source: CID of GPS

revealed that three Chinese nationals; James, San and Chou were jailed for trafficking some ladies from China on a false pretense that they were to work in a restaurant in Ghana. Before embarking on the trip to Ghana the victims were convinced to pay huge sums of money to facilitate their travelling expenses to Ghana. On arrival the traffickers seized their travelling documents to compel the victims to work to defray any expenses incurred on them during their migration to Ghana. The holding of the case proved that the girls were actually trafficked to work as prostitutes in a brothel belonging to the traffickers and the proceeds earned from the prostitution were received by the traffickers who used some to purchase contraceptives, douches, and some other materials that facilitated their sex trade.

In Ghana, it was revealed that internally many people, including some parents sold their relatives to human traffickers at very cheap prices who trafficked the victims to other parts of the country and the trafficked were forced to engage in menial jobs such as fishing, commercial sex, sex tourism, begging, and farming. A participant, SP170, for example, disclosed that, "at Volta Lake in Ghana over 40,000 trafficked children were observed, some of the children were even below 4 years old, and could be observed engaging in fishing and other jobs related to fishing." Another participant, SP190, indicated that "A woman gave her child, for an amount less than \$1.00." Direct observation at the Volta lake by the researcher revealed that some of the children had bruises on their faces resulting from how their masters used cane to lash them and beat them mercilessly. Most of the victims seemed malnourished and some of them engaged in serious fishing on the Volta Lake and some of the victims were also observed selling fish at some of the villages near the Volta Lake.

A participant, SP190, further stated that Gambian National Intelligence Agency had disclosed to them that some Ghanaian fishermen smuggled some Ghanaian girls to Gambia who later on subjected them to work as their sex slaves after convincing the parents of the girls that they were sending them to work at decent places for money. The trafficked ladies later confessed to the Gambian authorities that they were forbidden not to have any contact with their parents in Ghana. Sometimes the

girls were made to smoke fish and do other menial jobs for their masters. Another participant, SP170, also stated that, information reaching her and confirmed by the trafficked indicates that, "a thirteen-year-old girl indulged in prostitution at a place in Accra could sleep with many men during one night."

The findings on the nature and scope of the menace revealed that the Ghanaian situation was similar to the reported cases of human trafficking from many different parts of the world as reported by Shelley and Lee (2007), Kempadoo et al. (2015), and US Department of State (2003). In many different parts of the world including New York (Nack, 2010), Netherlands (Poelmana et al., 2012), and Malaysia (Stanslas, 2010), the police service was engaged in multi-dimensional approaches to limit the scope of human trafficking but the findings from this study indicated that the government of Ghana and GPS had not put in much effort to limit the scope of human trafficking in Ghana as reported by Aning et al. (2013).

Ghanaians trafficked within and abroad

The findings also disclosed that in Ghana there were some agencies engaged by the human traffickers who fraudulently used false pretense to recruit young men and women from Ghana and trafficked them to the Middle East and other countries including Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Israel, United States, and United Kingdom. Some of the people were also trafficked to some other countries in the sub-region including Cote D'ivoire, Burkina Faso, South Africa, and Gambia. Some of the participants, SP170, SP190 and SP191 reported that, on reaching their destination, the travelling documents and other particulars of the trafficked were seized by their traffickers and the trafficked were sent to places where the traffickers bargained with the exploiters in the form similar to the slave trade. The exploiters forced most of the women into prostitution, domestic services and some of the young men were also forced to do menial jobs by their new masters. A participant, SP001 gave account of how the trafficked were treated in a painful mood as follows, "At the destination they are put in a small room and people come to choose them...they sell them for a number of years and treat them as a commodity...they

take away all their travelling documents.”

In certain parts of Ghana, there is a religious and traditional custom known in a native language as *Trokosi*, meaning “slave of the gods.” Two participants, SP190 and SP004 gave account of how a lady was enslaved as a young child trafficked into lifelong servitude for the atonement of purported crimes committed by her relatives. This lady was made to serve in a shrine as a sex slave subjected to forced labor sometimes naked for the pleasure of the priests in the shrines. The lady was released after an NGO had paid some monies to liberate her. The accounts indicated that in 1997 over 5000 young girls were believed to be serving in 345 shrines located in the Southern part of Ghana near Togo. It was disclosed by SP004, in a high tone during the interview that over 30,000 children had been trafficked from the Northern part of Ghana to Accra on the false pretense by their traffickers that they were to be sent to school by their relatives in Accra. On arrival the victims were subjected to work as head porters (known in a local language as “Kayaye”) and other menial jobs in order to earn a living and also pay their traffickers (SP004).

The participants reported that many Ghanaians trafficked abroad were sexually exploited similar to the findings from the study by Westcott (2013), used to work as slaves as the report of US Department of States (2013) reveals, and were exploited and had their human rights trampled upon similar to the findings of Farrell et al. (2010). What might be unique about the trafficking of people in Ghana, as revealed from the study, was the cultural aspect where the trafficked served in servitude and made to serve fetish priests in their shrines nude.

Curbing the menace of human trafficking in Ghana

The outcome of the study revealed that GPS had Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) that was mandated to address all the criminal aspects of human trafficking in Ghana and involving Ghanaians in other parts of the world. The AHTU worked in collaboration with other institutions, including, Ghana Immigration Service, Economic and Organized Crime Unit, the Interior Ministry, Gender and Children’s Affair Ministry, some faith-based organizations, the Ministry of Labor, and some non-governmental organizations to curb the menace of human trafficking menace in Ghana. The findings revealed that the government of Ghana was not putting in maximal effort in the fight to eliminate or reduce human trafficking in Ghana. Research conducted by the US Department of State (2013) disclosed that the government of Ghana’s effort to provide training to anti-human trafficking law enforcement officials and units was very low.

At the CID department of GPS, a participant (SP004) revealed that, the human trafficking victims rescued by the AHTU and some NGOs could not get shelters to lodge temporary, and did not receive much immediate

care due to lack of funds, before being reintegrated with their families. The AHTU was only existing in name because it was not well resourced to enable the unit take the necessary steps to combat the menace even though the officials were highly committed to their work on humanitarian grounds. Most of the activities engaged in by the bodies involved in fighting the human trafficking menace in Ghana were financially resourced by the individuals involved. SP 007 made it known that there was the perception in Ghana that the judicial system was not contributing to the fight against human trafficking because most of the criminals involved were set free due to technical issues raised by their lawyers and prolonged adjournments of the cases. The institutional structures put in place were not strengthened and not much education to draw awareness of the harmful effect of the human trafficking menace was carried out due to lack of funds.

The study outcome revealed that GPS had AHTU that worked in collaboration with some other public institutions and some NGOs to curb the menace of human trafficking. This effort is similar to the efforts of many police forces from different parts of the world (Kempadoo et al., 2015) including the findings from Australia (Pickering, 2004) and North America (Gozdziak and Collette, 2005). The participants revealed that though many individuals in Ghana were committed to work against human trafficking voluntarily, the effort of the Government of Ghana to provide logistical support was very minimal and not encouraging.

Conclusion

The study revealed that Ghana was a country classified as a country belonging to Tier 2 Watch-List by the international community working against human trafficking in 2015 due to the nature, scope or level of human trafficking offences with only a little effort put in by the government and people of Ghana to eradicate the menace. Ghana was a country regarded by the international community as a country of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking. In Ghana most of the human trafficking victims were made to indulge in prostitution, child exploitation, and menial jobs including fishing and farming due to the conditions that the victims were subjected to by their traffickers.

Ghanaians trafficked abroad were forced to engage in prostitution and other commercial sex, cheap labor, and domestic work where their traffickers and their accomplices enjoyed greater part of what was earned by the trafficked. The police and some NGOs seriously engaged to eradicate or reduce the human trafficking menace in Ghana were not able to redeem most of the victims due to poor financial resources from the government. The police officers and the other volunteers were not able to curb the menace because of lack of facilities to support their effort. The findings revealed that

the Ghanaian experience of human trafficking is similar to other experiences from different parts of the world. However, the Ghanaian experience goes further to engage the victims to serve as slaves to fetish priest in a crude method such as serving the priests nude and other services in servitude to atone for the wrongdoings of relatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings indicate that the effort of the government of Ghana to put measures in place to enable the anti-human traffic organizations to commit themselves very well to fight the menace was minimal and that ranked Ghana as a Tier Two Watch List country before the international community calls for the government intervention in dealing with the canker. It is therefore recommended that the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department of Ghana Police Service should be financially and materially resourced to motivate the officers to diligently act to curb the menace of human trafficking in Ghana. The NGOs and other organizations involved in the fight against human trafficking in Ghana should be provided with the necessary incentives to push them to take bold steps to reduce or eradicate the menace from Ghana. The laws against human trafficking offences should be strengthened and the judicial system should be made to speedily deal with human trafficking offences. Education of the masses on the problems associated with human trafficking should be intensified for the people of Ghana to acquire more knowledge on the need to contribute to eradicate or reduce to the barest minimum, the menace of human trafficking. Human trafficking is now regarded as a transnational organized crime, and therefore the fight against the menace should involve the highest commitment of the people and the government and their collaborators internationally. Philanthropists are encouraged to sponsor researchers and volunteers who offer themselves to work against human trafficking worldwide. United Nations is expected to take it as a serious project to curb the menace.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

Implications of ethnic nationalism: The Niger delta region of Nigeria as a case study

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This paper examines the implications of ethnic nationalism within the context of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. It employs the methods of analysis and evaluation in investigating the concepts of national question and nationalism, implications of the two concepts as well as advantages and disadvantages of nationalism. Its aim is to identify the factors responsible for disunity and consequently suggest means of promoting unity in diversity. Nationalism relates to the wish of a large group of human beings belonging to the same origin and language, to mention a few links, to establish an independent nation. This is also what is meant by ethnic nationalism. The paper also considers the merits and demerits as well as solutions to ethnic nationalism. The paper found out that the main cause of ethnic nationalism is injustice. This injustice is mainly expressed in exploitation or discrimination in the distribution of resources, rights and power. It was discovered that ethnic nationalism has been an attempt to redress the injustice favourably. The paper recommends that in order to attain unity in diversity and good governance, justice should be promoted (183 words).

Key words: Implications, nationalism, Niger, Nigeria, region, self-determination.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of the national question is synonymous with the concept of ethnic nationalism. The two notions will be used interchangeably. The concept of the national question relates to the grouping of people who share a race, ethnic origin, and language, among other connections. Such group clamours for independence. With a view to ameliorating, different forms of injustice which it allegedly suffered, or is still suffering, from those who exercise political power and/or, authority. The concept of ethnic nationalism implies the following terms, for instance: "self-determination", "national question", "national autonomy", and "independence". Some of the

vehicles of ethnic nationalism are ideological movements, separatist movements, liberation movements, freedom fighters, civil society groups, and human rights groups. The issues involved in the subject matter of this paper will be considered with reference to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This paper is divided into six parts: Introduction represents the first part; the second part deals with the definitions and implications of the national question and nationalism; the third part discusses the positions of Marx and Engels on the national question; the fourth part considers the catalysts and consequences of ethnic nationalism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; the fifth

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part focuses on the solutions to ethnic nationalism; the sixth part covers the conclusion.

The national question and nationalism: Definitions and implications

“Nationalism” can be used to refer to the desire by a large group of people (with the same race, origin, language, etc.) to form an independent State or country” (Longman Dictionary, 1980: 725). The idea of nationalism is synonymous with the notion of the national question and both are often used interchangeably. The national question is a “concentrated” socio-economic-political question concerning the association or co-existence of ethnic groups or nations in a country (Fashina, 1998: 93 and 87). The national question arises when, among other things, ethnic nationalities feel “disadvantaged, exploited or discriminated against in the distribution of resources, rights and power merely by virtue of their ancestry and their numerical disadvantage” (Fashina, 1998: 106). The question persists if nothing is done to redress the situation or if efforts made to solve the problems are considered to be below expectation.

Usually, the ethnic groups concerned form ideological movements through which they try to realize their goals. These goals include elimination of exploitation and injustice and consequently, acknowledgement and promotion of equitable distribution of resources, equal rights, and equal or equitable access to power, self-determination, national autonomy and/or independence. Nationalism is a step further from the national question. It represents a movement from mere expression of feelings against or opposition to perceived forms of exploitation and injustice to the formulation and adoption of strategies for the attainment of the above-mentioned and related ends. One of these strategies is the establishment of an ideological movement. According to Fashina (1998: 88), by ethno-nationalism is meant an ideological movement that claims, on behalf of a group that:

(a) Its members, all of them share a culture, by virtue of their common ancestry, such that this culture is regarded as distinct from that of every other group. (It is also claimed that the most important fact about the life of any individual belonging to that group is his or her membership in that group.

(b) Their common ancestry and culture, qualify the group for equal political and economic well-being as other groups (polycentric nationalism) or for superior political economic position among ethnic groups (ethnocentric nationalism)”. Examples of such movement in Nigeria are Movement for the survival of Ogoni people (M. O. S. O. P.), Ijaw National Congress (I. N. C.), Ijaw Youth Council (I. Y. C.) Movement for the actualization of the State of Biafra (M. A. S. S. O. B.), Odua People’s Congress (O. P. C.), and Arewa Consultative Forum (A. C. F.). These movements

emerged in an attempt to address the national question. As a prelude to dealing with nationalism in a particular region in Nigeria, let us discuss the views of Marx and Engels on the national question.

Marx and Engels on the national question

Marx and Engels consider the national question to be important in one respect and not crucial in another regard. To them, national question is important in the sense in which it will facilitate the creation of a superstructure that will hasten capitalist economic development and therefore conditions for proletariat revolution. On the other hand, they regard the national question as not crucial if economic development is eroding the national identity of workers. In the opinion of Marx and Engels, a nation so involved should be taken to be ‘non-historic’. They hold further that the nation would eventually be economically and culturally assimilated by the ‘great’ nations (Townshend, 1996:36). However, Marx and Engels “supported the national independence movements of Ireland or Poland ...on the grounds that such movements would foster international proletarian unity and/or help to dislodge the ruling class of the oppressor nation (England or Russia) (Townshend, 1996:36 to 37).

The attachment of insignificance to the national question by Marx and Engels is based on the “highly economic and optimistic view that nationalism would disappear” as workers place class loyalties before national loyalties (Townshend, 1996:34). Marx and Engels suppose that (1) capitalism will ‘denationalise’ workers; (2) workers of different nations will be able to unite as they have a common interest in the overthrow of international capital; (3) antagonisms between ‘peoples’ are being reduced by modern capitalist development. By the late nineteenth century, these suppositions did not hold especially within the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. Then, “there were struggles between ‘peoples’ and workers who often put national loyalties before those of class in their desire for an independent state” (Townshend, 1996:34). Furthermore, Marx and Engels regard the national question a non-problem because they ignore the psychological causes of nationalism. They ought to have realized that “in relation to the ethnic underpinnings of nationalism, group or community feelings have often transcended those of class” (Townshend, 1996: 34 to 35).

Three conflicting factors influence the judgement of Marx and Engels about whether to support national movements. The first is whether a nation has the capacity for statehood whether it will facilitate capitalist development and consequently produce a working class required for its overthrow. On this ground, Marx and Engels did not back the following nationalities (or ethnic groups), among others, during the 1848 revolutions: Romanians, Slovaks, Slovenes, Czechs,

Croats, Ukrainians (that is, the 'Southern Slavs' generally). Marx and Engels thought these nationalities were non-historic and would consequently be assimilated by more 'historic' peoples such as Russians and Germans (Townshend, 1996: 35). It is important to state that today (that is, in the twenty-first century), not all these nationalities have been so absorbed. In fact, this puts a question mark on the judgement of Marx and Engels on the capacity of the liberated nationalities for statehood (Romanians, for example).

The second factor is the usefulness of nationalism in terms of undermining the chauvinism of workers in oppressing nations and therefore fostering the international working class unity. For instance, Marx and Engels support the nationalism of oppressed nations such as Ireland. They consider "Irish independence as a precondition for proletarian revolution in England" (Townshend, 1996: 35). This precondition is yet to materialize. In addition, the judgement of Marx and Engels is questionable. The third factor is the effectiveness of national struggles in preventing certain powers from implementing reactionary foreign policies that oppose historically progressive national-democratic movements. For example, Marx and Engels "backed Polish self-determination because it would weaken Russia whose foreign policy retarded movements in Central Europe for modern democratic statehood and therefore the development of capitalism in Europe" (Townshend, 1996: 36). The backing was successful as Poland indeed gained its independence.

Catalysts and consequences of ethnic nationalism in the Niger delta region of Nigeria

In this section, we will discuss the catalysts and consequences of ethnic nationalism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In doing so, we will show the relevance or irrelevance of the above-stated views of Marx and Engels on the national question. The optimism of Marx and Engels, that nationalism would disappear and consequently the attachment of insignificance to the national question did not anticipate the events in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; especially in Ogoni land. By implication, the optimistic view of Marx and Engels is irrelevant here. Let us now state the events one after the other. The first event is the issue of oil spillage which has assumed monumental proportion to the extent that it has attracted the attention of the United Nations' Environmental Protection Agency (U. N. E. P.). The Agency wrote a report on the need for the clean-up of the area. Though the Federal Government of Nigeria adopted the report some years ago, it took practical step to start the oil spill clean-up on Thursday, 2nd June, 2016 (Olaniyi, 2016:6). The second event is the seeming neglect of the area by succeeding governments in Nigeria. The third is the disenchantment

of the Niger Delta people culminating in some of them forming armed groups such as the Niger Delta militants, Niger Delta Avengers, among others. These and other groups have been calling for self-determination, a call that has been registered at the United Nations' Organization (U. N. O.). Some of the above-mentioned groups have been violently attacking oil pipelines, kidnapping oil workers (especially, expatriates), disrupting the operations of oil companies in the area and thereby causing reduction in crude oil production. As against the optimism of Marx and Engels, the national question in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria will remain significant as long as the Federal Government of Nigeria fails to address the issue meaningfully. Some of the ways of addressing the issue are:

- (1) Restructuring Nigeria as a country to reflect true federalism.
- (2) Giving more powers to federating units.
- (3) Redistributing the national wealth; especially, by reviewing the revenue formula such that more revenue will go to the states and local governments.
- (4) Re-establishing regionalism and adopting derivation formula.
- (5) Acknowledging and respecting the principle of self-determination.

If it is difficult or impracticable to adopt the third and fourth measures together, the Federal Government may choose either of the two, whichever is convenient and practicable in the short run. With respect to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, as Townshend observed, and we agree with him in opposition to Marx and Engels ethnic underpinnings of nationalism, group or community feelings have indeed overridden those of class. What the above mentioned militant groups are fighting for transcends the issue of class or capitalism. It is mainly about self-determination. It is pertinent to state that the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a nation which has capacity for statehood. It has capacity to facilitate capitalist development and can produce a working class that is required for its overthrow. The clamour for self-determination suggests the capacity of the region for statehood. Our observation here agrees with that of Marx and Engels on requirements for statehood. The earlier stated events which influence the emergence of the different groups in the Niger Delta region warrant the need to support the groups unless meaningful measures are implemented to diffuse the tension. The nationalism in the Niger Delta is useful in terms of facilitating the development of the region for the benefit of workers in particular and the people in general. By doing so, it can foster international working class unity. The struggle of the militant groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria appears to be effective in some senses. One, operations of the oil companies in the area have drastically reduced. Two, there has been a reduction in oil output in Nigeria as a whole. Three,

Nigeria's income from the sale of crude oil has depreciated. Four, the threat by the Niger Delta Avengers that it has twelve missiles which it aims to launch against Abuja (the nation's capital) among other targets, has implication for national security. Five, the Federal Government is now trying to address some of the grievances of the militant groups. The foregoing observations imply that ethnic nationalism has advantages and disadvantages. We will now deal with the merits and demerits of ethnic nationalism.

Merits and demerits of ethnic nationalism

Generally, the merit of ethnic nationalism partly consists in its promotion of resistance to oppression and injustice separately in special groups. In respect of ethnic nationalism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, its merits can be seen from the ways it has drawn attention both locally and internationally to the plight of the region and its people as well as the need to salvage them from oil spillage, oppression, exploitation and injustice, among others. The merits of ethnic nationalism in the Niger Delta also consist in the various forms of attention the region and its people have received and are still receiving from the Federal Government of Nigeria. The first is the creation of Niger Delta Development Commission (N.D.D.C.) by late President Yar Adua's administration. The second is the establishment of the Amnesty Programme by the same administration. The third is the creation of Niger Delta Ministry, also by late President Yar Adua's administration. The N.D.D.C., the Amnesty Programme and the Ministry still exist. The fourth merit is the cleaning-up of oil spill in the region which the current administration of President Mohammed Buhari started on Thursday, 2nd June, 2016. Fifthly, as reported in the Nation Newspaper on Tuesday, 7th June, 2016 (p.16), President "Mohammed Buhari has appointed National Security Adviser, General Babagana Mongunu to head the team that will dialogue with the warring Niger Delta militants" (Ofikhenua, 2016:6).

Concerning the demerits of ethnic nationalism, we will state them generally first and then mention them within the context of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. One, it ignores the socio-political significance of common human suffering. Two, its promotion of special fraternal relationship between people of the same ethnic group (that is, co-ethnics) under-plays the possibility of exploitative relationship between them. Three, ethnic nationalism promotes the indifference of a member or members of one ethnic group to the issues of exploitation and oppression in another ethnic group. Four, it encourages the separation of a group's humanity from others. Five, it covers prevailing exploitative processes in all ethnic groups. Six, ethnic nationalism tries to deny the class question or the role of actors in the social production process. Seven, it promotes the use of the oppressed in each ethnic group

by their oppressors against the oppressed in other ethnic groups (Fashina, 1998: 92 to 93 and 103). Let us now discuss the demerits of ethnic nationalism within the context of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Nationalism in the Niger Delta region ignores the fact that the suffering being experienced by the people in the region is not peculiar to them; that majority of Nigerians are also affected. The fraternal relationship between the people of the Niger Delta tends to underplay the possibility of exploitative relationship between them. The militants in the region appear to be less concerned with the issues of oppression and exploitation in other ethnic groups. Consequently, they tend to encourage the alienation of their humanity from others. Nationalism in the Niger Delta region is oblivious of the fact that exploitative processes prevail in other ethnic groups. It tries to deny the role of actors in the social production process. Furthermore, it tries to promote the use of the oppressed in that region by their oppressors against the oppressed in other ethnic groups. For example, the agitations of the militants affect not only the oppressed in the Niger Delta but also the oppressed in other ethnic groups or regions in Nigeria.

Solutions to ethnic nationalism especially in the Niger delta region of Nigeria

Generally, resolution of the national question requires a strong productive base, a strong commitment to social welfare, equitable allocation of produced resources and rights, a redress of past injustices to some communities, doing compensatory justice to aggrieved communities, the acknowledgement and promotion of individual and collective rights (Fashina, 1998: 103, 107 and 118). The following solutions suggested by Ogundowole (1994: 63) are also noteworthy: (Equality of nationalities (or ethnic groups) should be recognized). There should be no privileges for any one nationality, for any one language. The question of political self-determination of nationalities, that is, their right to secession, in an absolutely free and democratic way (should be settled). The authorities concerned should pass a law covering the whole country and proclaiming unlawful, null and void every measure adopted by any segment (state and local governments). Such law will prohibit any privileges granted to any one nationality and/or negate anything that violates the equality of nationalities or the rights of individuals

The adoption and utilization of the suggestions inherent in the above stated quotation imply the commitment of those in authority, especially political authority, to the principles of fairness, and justice. These two important principles represent some of the essentials of good governance. This observation agrees with the position of Ogundowole (2006:211) that "developing the moral sense of justice is a sine qua non of good governance". Specifically, the first immediate

solution is dialogue. All parties concerned except the Niger Delta Avengers appear to recognize this. The Federal Government of Nigeria has taken the first step by setting up a team mentioned earlier, led by Babagana Mongunu to enter into dialogue with the militants. Some of the interested parties; especially, pressure groups in the area have been expressing concerns on the development in the region and have been calling for dialogue, among other things. For instance, the Ijaw National Congress World Wide (I. N.C.) through its President, Barrister Boma Obuoforibo, published an Advertorial in The Nation Newspaper on 7th June, 2016 (P.31). It is titled "The State of the Niger Delta: "The Stand of the Ijaw Nation". The Advertorial reads: The Ijaw National Congress (I. N .C.) in conjunction with the Traditional Rulers, Elders, and Opinion Leaders of the Ijaw ethnic group, has after a thorough and careful deliberation on some issues currently of concern in the region resolved as follows:

1. The Ijaw Ethnic Nationality pledges its support to the Federal Government of Nigeria led by President Mohammed Buhari. This support has been made in various fora. We are non- partisan and apolitical and we will support any popularly elected government.
2. We condemn the present resurgence of bombing of pipelines and oil installations in the Niger Delta as this ultimately, is counter-productive to the Niger Delta and the Nigerian Nation.
3. We appeal to the Federal Government to show restraint in its pronouncements and actions to crush the Niger Delta militants. We believe that this will not bring any lasting solution to this complex problem. The options of dialoguing and negotiating are worthwhile and, therefore, should be pursued.
4. While we urge the perpetrators to immediately stop these unwholesome actions, we appeal to the Federal Government to restructure the amnesty programme for better impact on the people and the community to assuage the plight of the people of the region and remove, from focus some of the issues that have been responsible for these behaviors.
5. We appeal to the Federal Government to urgently enter into dialogue with stakeholders in the region in a bid to safeguard the interest of the Nation.

The issuance of/or, the publication of the above-mentioned Advertorial by the Ijaw National Congress, is timely and welcome. Certain matters arise from it and these should be addressed. Firstly, the pledge of support by the I. N. C. is good. But what is required to solve the problem is more than a pledge. The organization has to use its powerful influence to call all the militants to order soonest as what they are doing is not in their best interest either in the short or long run. As a result, the organization will demonstrate its sincerity in pledging its support and condemning the negative activities of the militants. The I. N. C. has to be more explicit by clearly stating the issues involved in the

agitations of the militants and offer suggestions on modalities for restructuring the Amnesty Programme. The Federal Government of Nigeria led by Muhammed Buhari appears to be demonstrating its resolve to address the problem by, among others, commencing the clean-up of the Ogoni Land and establishing a team to enter into dialogue with the militants. We believe that the Federal Government can do more than this. This belief is demonstrated in the earlier-stated measures canvassed as lasting solutions to the problem measures which will likely address the grievances of the Niger Delta people and promote the unity of Nigeria as a country.

A group of militants in the Akwa-Cross region of Nigeria, the Bakassi Strike Force, has also called for dialogue. In its report titled "Tension as Bakassi militants sends Strong Message to Avengers" and accessed on Friday, 10th June, 2016, Naij.com (an on-line medium) states that: The Bakassi Strike Force has condemned the activities of the Niger Delta Avengers. The Bakassi militant group said the incessant bombings of oil pipelines in the oil rich regions have a retrogressive effect on Nigeria's economy. The group called on the government to embrace dialogue as war alone cannot solve their problems in tackling the issue. The Bakassi Strike Force is not alone in its call for dialogue. Ex-militant leaders in the Niger Delta region have also made similar call. Ex-militant leaders have come together under the group called Leadership, Peace and cultural Development Initiative L.P.C.D.I.), to tell the Avengers to desist from their nefarious and negative activities. The L. P.C. D.I. consists of former commanders of the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) (Odiegwu, 2016:41). The international community is also interested in the amicable resolution of the problem. The support of the international community concerning the efforts of the Federal Government in resolving the Niger Delta problem is noted and commendable. For instance, the United States of America (U.S.A.) has expressed concern over the Niger Delta violence and has called for promotion of dialogue and provision of economic opportunity and needed services for residents of the Niger Delta (Ogundele, 2016a). Like the U.S.A., the United Kingdom has also expressed its view about what is happening in Nigeria. At a meeting between David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, former Presidents Obasanjo, Goodluck Jonathan and current President of Nigeria, Mohammed Buhari on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016 in London, Mr. Cameron appealed to Nigeria to allow Niger Delta to secede after he confirmed that the Niger Delta Avengers are determined to launch twelve (12) missiles at certain targets in the country in order to achieve their goals (afrivibes.net, 2016). While the dispute rages on, efforts are being made locally to solve it.

Part of such efforts is the meeting between the Acting President of Nigeria, the Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, Service Chiefs and States from the Niger Delta region. At the meeting, it was resolved that

the Federal Government and Delta States have joined “forces to stop the bombings of oil and power installations in the region” (Ehikioya, 2016:6). While various interested parties, both locally and internationally, are interested in dialogue and pursuing it, the Niger Delta Avengers, think otherwise. In fact, they have given the Federal Government conditions to satisfy before they can cease fire and enter into dialogue. As stated by Awala (www.informationnigeria.com, 2016), the Avengers are demanding:

1. Immediate release of Sambo Dasuki, former National Security Adviser (N.S.A.).
2. Reversal of the order to freeze the bank accounts of Government Ekpemupolo better known as Tompolo.
3. Establishment of maritime University in Okerenko, Delta State.
4. Negotiation with government on the basis of developing the Niger Delta region rather than giving out monetary compensation.
5. The implementation of the report of the 2014 national conference.
6. Removal of Paul Boroh, the Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, with immediate effect.
7. Replacement of Boroh with Dr. Felix Tuodolo.
8. Cleaning up oil polluted lands in the Niger Delta and paying compensations to all producing communities.
9. Release of Nnamdi Kanu, the I.P.O.B. (Indigenous People of Biafra) frontier.

It is yet to be seen whether and how the Federal Government will respond to these demands. Several matters appear deducible from the foregoing observations. These issues can be put in the form of questions. The questions will likely reveal the dimensions of the struggle of the Niger Delta Avengers and other militants as well as possible consequences. The questions are, but not limited to, the following:

1. How did the Avengers get money to acquire twelve (12) missiles?
2. Who or which country sold the missiles to them?
3. Are the Niger Delta Avengers not mistaken?
4. Are they not succumbing to the diabolical intention(s) of some members of the international community who are only interested in the crude oil produced in that region?
5. Have the Niger Delta Avengers forgotten what prompted the concerned members of the international community to attack Iraq and Libya on the pretext of destroying weapons of destruction and maintaining world peace which turned out to be false?
6. Are the Niger Delta Avengers mindful of what Iraq and Libya have now turned into and the emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (I.S.I.S.)?
7. Seven, are they mindful of the fact that the disintegration of Iraq and Libya implies the

destabilization of the areas and the failure of the concerned foreign countries; especially, U.S.A. and Britain to contain the associated problems including the refugee problem?

8. Like it has happened in Iraq and Syria, are the Niger Delta Avengers aware that since there are divisions in the ranks of the militants, the Niger Delta region may become unstable after secession? 9. Are they aware that there may be a humanitarian crisis (that is, refugee problem) and failure to attain their dream(s)?

10. As a consequence, will it not be too late for them to realize that they have played into the hands of the enemies of Nigeria (including the Niger Delta region) who predicted that Nigeria would disintegrate in 2015?

It is hoped that the Niger Delta Avengers and other militants in the region will allow reason to prevail and accept the dialogue option. The dialogue option is just one of the options that are open to the Federal Government of Nigeria to pursue. One of the other options being pursued by the government is the legal option. This option is already yielding some results. One of these is the arrest by the Navy of some suspects linked to multiple attacks on oil and gas facilities in the Niger Delta (Ogundele, 2016b:1, 6 and 12). It is important to observe, that whatever option adopted and implemented, must proceed from the principles of fairness and justice, among others.

CONCLUSION

The ideas of the national question and nationalism essentially derive from the notion of self-preservation. The concept of self-preservation is multi-dimensional. At the level of human beings, it operates as an instinct to drive them to look for work, food, housing and clothing, among other necessities. Similar endeavors also take place in the animal kingdom, for instance. At societal level, it influences the maintenance of law and order internally, and the prevention of external aggression. A society or country that cherishes peace, stability and progress must give adequate attention to the idea of self-preservation in all its ramifications. Failure to do this is largely responsible for many conflicts. The right of others to self-preservation, including the people of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, should be recognized and respected. The principles of fairness, justice and federalism, among others, demand that the agitations of the people of the region should be favorably considered. Other measures canvassed in this paper, among other meaningful ones, should be implemented in order to promote unity in diversity.

Conflict of Interests

The authors has not declared any conflict of interests.

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