

**SECURITY RISKS, MYTHS IN A TRANSITIONING SUB-NATIONAL
REGIONAL ECONOMY (CROSS RIVER STATE)
AND IMAGINATIVE GEOGRAPHIES OF NIGERIA**

J. K. UKWAYI¹, R. INGWE², I. ANGIATING³

ABSTRACT.- The emergence of an “international community” through accumulation of perceived risks that contrasts with those risks (of considerably lower levels of seriousness compared to those perceived) constitutes one of the interesting (or intriguing) subjects of risks and disaster studies surrounding the 9/11 era. The constructions of “imaginative geographies”, have frequently been biased in the practices that underlie the mapping of the foreign places tend to put-down the affected regions in their “paintings” for the global community. The latter are subsequently “demonized” in their ratings of competence for participating in world trade, tourism, travel, among other social/cultural, and economic and political activities. The objective of this article is to highlight how the exaggeration of risks (contrasted to actually existing/lived risks), practices that are frequently associated with such adverse “imaginative geographies” poses sub-national regional development dilemma in Nigeria’s Niger Delta. We trace the roots of adverse “imaginative geographies” of Nigeria to the Abacha dictatorship (1993-1997). Then we highlight the mixed characteristics of the Niger Delta conditions during the “return of positive image recapture” by Nigeria’s federal government (re-democratisation of the Fourth Republic, 1999-present, re-branding campaigns; as well as adverse conditions present. Most significantly, we show that despite these adversities, a combination of favorable geographical size, differentiation, sub-national regional security programme formulation and management taking aims at diversification have created “large oases” of peace and security in Cross River State, a part of the Niger Delta that has been completely unscathed by insurgencies of the nearby sub-national region and further away national origin. Apart from identifying sub-national regions qualifying for delisting from “adverse imaginative geographies” due to their unscathed security credentials/records, we argue for their subtraction from such “brown books”. Realisation of the latter requires vigorous campaigns that the “international community might be unwilling to undertake. However, we point towards sub-national regional tourism events that effectively re-map the evidences of security in the Cross River State.

¹ Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria

² Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), University of Calabar, Nigeria; Centre for Research and Action on Developing Locales, Regions and Environment (CRADLE), Calabar, Nigeria, ingwe.richard@gmail.com

³ Department of Business Administration Faculty of Management Sciences Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) Nigeria

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1. INTRODUCTION

The type of federal system of government practiced and supported by prevailing laws in Nigeria has been described two and a half sovereignties. Under that arrangement comprising three tiers of government namely: federal government of Nigeria, states (currently 36), 774 local government areas (LGAs); the first and second entities operate as full sovereigns while the third possesses half sovereignty (Nigeria, 1999). This arrangement is important for the way it facilitates the creation and management of regional development plans, programmes and projects. We underline the importance of that framework because, as the laws of Nigeria (including the supreme one i.e. the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 –as amended in 2011 stipulate, despite the experience that the same laws could have been violated, or ignored, by some of the tiers of government, each of the tiers are allocated powers for generating revenue and spending same, and to do as a means of improving the welfare of its people i.e., increasing the opportunities available to the population of the region to achieve their fullest and highest potentialities in their lifetimes.

Recognised as an economy that exhibits petro-capitalistic characteristics, some of the most interesting of Nigeria’s laws are those specifying the formula of sharing revenue derived, since the advent of that petro-capitalistic economy, from export of crude oil to the three tiers of government, and of course the federal capital territory, which is usually underplayed. However, all governments (federal, 36 federal states, 774 local government areas, LGAs (councils) and the federal capital territory (Abuja), have tended to rely solely on the statutorily allocated revenue derived from export of crude oil. Specific features of petro-capitalism, refer to the abnormal habits such as over-reliance on oil-derived revenue, weak systems of generating other sources i.e. non-oil (forms) of revenue generation such as from tourism, among others within the sovereigns different from the federal tier². Petro-capitalism also includes gross corruption, theft, graft, mediocrity, and other specific aspects of failure to harness natural and human resources following the various forms of innovations that have been developed to achieve economic growth, promote social justice, reduce inequality, reduce absolute poverty, and reduce unemployment, as became accepted in the 1960s (Seers, 1972 [1969]; Todaro and Smith, 2005).

Implied in the laws of Nigeria is the agreement that as the 36 states and the 774 LGAs do not have to depend or await the federal tier to fend for them after

receiving their shares of the statutory allocations intermittently disbursed from the FAAC. Instead, the states and local governments, like their counterparts do in other effective federal systems, are expected to undertake to plan and manage sub-national regional development programmes/projects. The latter includes local level decisions to concentrate on programmes and projects that could be most easily be supported by available resources i.e. those that are accessible and can be cost-effectively obtained. Therefore, planning and management of such selected or preferred development programmes (and projects within them) would subsequently be followed by implementation, monitoring, controlling, adjusting or re-planning phases. The foregoing does not occur in a vacuum: rather the inter-relationships among the national and international system is significant aspect of any sub-national regional development programme. This is especially true of tourism development programme at sub-national regional levels.

1.1. (In)security information/knowledge/understanding gaps/variations and development challenges posed across regional scales: from national to sub-national focusing on Cross River State

Limitations on travel imposed on citizens of some global North countries have frequently been placed by individual national governments following socio-economic disorders of various kinds since Nigeria's dictatorships of the 1980s to the insurgencies of the 1990s to the present. Apart from variations in the calibration and scope of security (or insecurity³) by individual global North nations, their information gathering concerning issues constituting security and insecurity exhibit disparity. Major contradictions trail the origination (i.e. conception of security and insecurity) and the reversal of these scenarios or conditions. Put differently, it is evident that one (or more?) global North country(ies) that pioneered declarations of inadequate safety on Nigeria (or parts of the country) (e.g. the United States of America, USA) have turned out to be the last to be the last to reverse their perception or judgment on the current scenario. We observe that while a bandwagoning effect has been occurring in the declaration of Nigeria as either secure or insecure and applying entry restriction policies, the reversal of such judgment and consequent actions poses a time lag. This problem also poses information and decision challenges to global North nations that are not leading in the generation, processing, management and application of security data/information. That is, the security-insecurity perception and conceptualization is permeated with myths, errors, inaccuracies that require new mechanisms for addressing the challenges involved. Specifically, the conceptualization of security or insecurity over national scales and/or wider regional ambits (larger than one of Nigeria's 36 federal states) do not always represent the accurate scenarios of sub-national regions possessing resources of interest to nations involved.

1.2. Scope

This article examines challenges faced by the Cross River State, one of the nine states located in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, in achieving its fullest potentialities due to the adverse consequences of bad publicity.

1.3. Objectives and organisation

The general objective of this article is to highlight how the exaggeration of risks (contrasted to actually existing/lived risks), practices that are frequently associated with such adverse "imaginative geographies" poses sub-national regional development dilemma in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The rest of this paper is organized in sections wherein materials relevant for achieving the specific objectives of the study are packaged. We define "imaginative geographies", then trace the roots of "imaginative geographies" (including the adverse forms of them pertaining to Nigeria within the past two to three decades). We identify two major phases of Nigeria's "poor images". First, the era of dictatorship especially the Abacha dictatorship's hanging of the environmentalist and human rights campaigner, Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995, policy shifts from West to East between 1993 and 1997 that rapidly followed the dictator IB Babangida's annulment of the 1993 elections believed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola as some events that put Nigeria on the "brown-list" of the "international community". Second, we represent the insurgency in the Niger Delta based on the agitation for resource control and protests against injustices associated with federal government exploitation of the Niger Delta's oil and natural gas, among other resources, while subjecting the region that "lays the golden eggs" to human and environmental degradation since the advent of the petro-capitalistic economy in the late 1950s.

Then we highlight the mixed characteristics of the Niger Delta conditions during the "return of positive image recapture" by Nigeria's federal government (re-democratisation of the Fourth Republic, 1999-present, re-branding campaigns; as well as adverse conditions present. Most significantly, we show that despite these adversities, a combination of favourable geographical size, differentiation, sub-national regional security programme formulation and management taking aims at diversification have created "large oases" of peace and security in parts of the Niger Delta completely unscathed by insurgencies of local (i.e. sub-national regional and national origin. Apart from identifying sub-national regions qualifying for delisting from "adverse imaginative geographies" due to their unscathed security credentials/records, we argue for their subtraction from such "brown books". Realisation of the latter requires vigorous campaigns that the "international community might be unwilling to undertake. However, we point towards sub-national regional tourism events that effectively re-map the evidences of security in the Cross River State.

1.4. “Imaginative geographies”

Although “imaginative geographies” has been discussed generally, we draw attention here to those concentrating on risks and, of course, disasters. In what follows immediately, we draw from insight provided on this topic by Human geographer, Derek Gregory (Gregory et al, 2009: 369-371). “Imaginative geographies” refers to the articulation of writers’ interests (fears, desires, and fantasies), as well as the exercise of their powerful grips and influences that are usually wielded through various complex networks on certain places that are frequently viewed and treated as “others”. The identification of “imaginary geographies”, the concern of a special field or practice, described as “critical readings” implicates a wide gamut of the writing of both the formal (including spatial scientific lattices) and informal (fictional works) categories as containing ideas or materials that promote “otherness”. Originally created by the cultural specialist and public intellectual, Edward Said (1935-2003) whose seminal critique on Orientalism (2003 [1978]) jolted those who were pre-occupied with mental mapping among other studies of environmental perception under the sub-field of behavioural geography with Said’s emphases on power generally and colonial power, in particular. Viewed as ideas that anticipated “situated knowledge”, Said addressed his critique to the rather large doses of privileges enforced by writers of Euro(pean)-American descent and domicile in their portrayal of other peoples and their cultures. By so doing European and American writers obtained a sort of “license” to weave a network of power and construct and manage a “surveillance” mechanism, over their “others”, especially, the East. Neo-Said (or Post-Said) workers –including increasing numbers of human geographers (Gregory, 1995a) concerned with critiquing Orientalism have extended Said’s emphases on textual meanings to its visually metaphorical counterparts.

Critiques of Orientalism are distinguished from comparable behavioural geography constructs by the belief and demonstration that rather than being the product of purely cognitive exercises, “imaginative geographies” are culturally derived. Therefore, the latter’s constructs are stimulated and laden with fantasies, desires, and unconsciousness. Said’s use of “poetics of space” to refer to acts of endowing places with “figurative value” is viewed as a kind of comparative valorization of images of places. It is associated with the politicization of places, their natures. This has led to programmes taking aims at recovering “imaginative geographies” of other natures, cultures, and perhaps places. Counter-imaginative geographies represent attempts to by workers to reverse the dominant power systems installed and strengthened through imaginative geographies by campaigns of subversion, contestation, and displacement.

Several applications of “imaginative geographies” have been undertaken that are too many to be summaries here except to mention but a few that would clarify this study. Among the foregoing is the frequent separation of spaces of “the

international community” from that of the people “facing security crises” (Orford, 2003). This involves among other things legitimizing the actions of the global North, representing humanitarian actions as selflessly as can be, always carrying out interventions after the mostly disastrous events have occurred, and adopting strategies of simultaneous distancing and localizing the separated spaces (for the international community and those facing crises. Others include the way the global North pretends that it is ignorant of the operations of its international agents who are instrumental to the provocation of the crises they give false impressions of mitigating while actually feigning innocence, solution-seeking dispositions, but actually tolerating or promoting the same (and other similar) crises. Of longer accounts of this phenomenal campaign has been documented

2. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

2.1. Methodology

The hypothetico-deductive scientific methodology provides the overall framework for the implementation and design of this study. However, we adapt the methodology by selecting specific method(s) as we consider appropriate for the study, as follows.

2.2. Methods

We use description for implementing this study. As documented by previous workers, research on titles such as the above, that take on relatively unpopular hues (the impact or influence of “imaginative geographies” on the representation of risks and disasters in Cross River State has not been studied/documentated) have been best approached through descriptive methods, frequently case studies. With its emphases on introducing new issues deserving the attention of the academic community and minimal demands for sophisticated quantification, except for some rudimentary statistical (averaging tools), description has served creditably for purposes of the kind undertaken presently. Moreover, our concern with the achievement of relatively higher levels of security in Cross River State has been acclaimed as the result of the deliberate and purposeful programmes planned and implemented by the sub-national regional government of that region and differs from that of its nine neighbours in the Niger Delta region, six states of South-South zone and 36 states forming Nigeria. Therefore, our adoption of the case study approach is justified (Ogunniyi 1992).

2.3. Data

We gathered data from a combination of primary and secondary sources. As a national civil society coalition leader and social activist, one of the authors (Richard Ingwe), is experienced in collaborations with international civil society

campaigners and diplomats of global North, among other nations. From his experience in such mobilization of workers, he drew data and decision factors on restrictions on global North nationals' travel to the Niger Delta including Cross River State. Apart from drawing on our experience of conducting social research – for over 10 years by each of the authors, we are participants in ongoing research concentrating on the sub-national regional tourism development programming, industrial development, among others socio-economic development of the Cross River State (Ingwe, et al, 2013; Ingwe, 2013; Ingwe, Richard. 2012a; Ingwe, 2012b; Ingwe, 2012c; Ingwe, Richard. 2012d; Ingwe, 2012e; Ingwe, Mboto, Ojong & Angiating, 2012; Ingwe, Okoro & Ukwayi, 2010; Ingwe, 2012f; & Ingwe, 2004/5.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Nigeria and the Cross River State

Through what it described as “re-basing” revalue the economy as worth US\$50 billion, Nigeria’s government recently represented it as Africa’s largest thereby displacing South

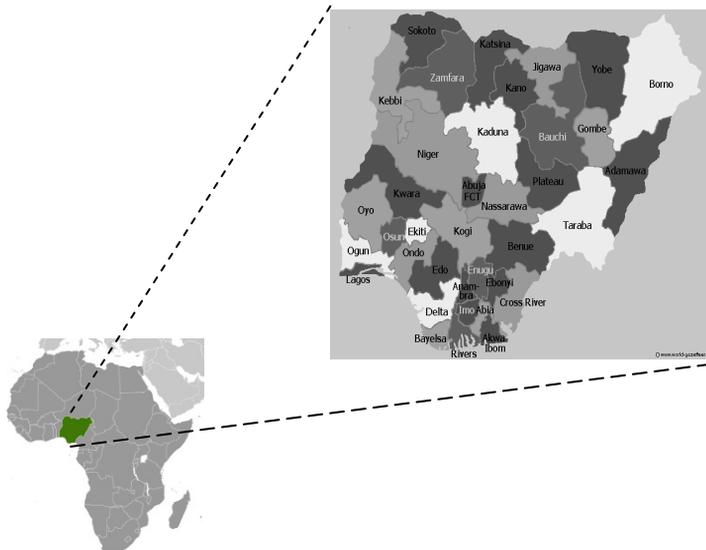


Figure 1: Nigeria’s 36 states and Federal Capital Territory projected from Africa Sources:
 (1) <http://www.worldofcultures.org/1024/africa/AfricaMaps/nigeria.gif>;
<http://www.worldofcultures.org/1024/africa/AfricaMaps/nigeria.gif>;
 (2) <http://www.world-gazetteer.com>.

Africa to the second position. Located in the Gulf of Guinea, West Africa, its population projected at about 161 million (BusinessDay, 2011) has been represented as Africa's largest thereby offering a market for most of the world's suppliers of goods and services. It is for the latter reason that the Sino-Nigeria economic diplomacy has experienced sudden and rapid increase from its modest level in the 1970s to a high level within the past decade (Okoro, Ingwe, Ojong, 2012). Of Nigeria's 36 states, one of the most successful in driving the country's entrepreneurial schemes within the past decade and a little longer (i.e. 1999 to the present, 2014) has been Cross River State.

3.2. Cross River State

Located at Nigeria's south-eastern edge, this sub-national region has an area of 21,787 km² (National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, 2006) and a population of 2.9 million in 2006 (Nigeria 2007). After experiencing a series of socio-economic misfortunes (World Court ruling ceding the Bakassi Peninsula to the Republic of Cameroon, Nigeria's Supreme Court ruling ceding about 76 oil fields to Akwa Ibom state, among other forms of marginalization by federal ministries, departments and agencies, demonstrated that such adversities could be overcome through effective endogenous planning and industry. Therefore, from 2009 when the region's oil wells were compromised to the present, the sub-national regional government undertook an ambitious investment attraction programme. Details on the state's socio-economic profile as well as its successful campaign in ongoing economic diversification is being documented (Ingwe, Ada, Angiating, 2014a; Ingwe, Ada, Angiating, 2014b). Previously, the state had charted an economic diversification path away from the prevalent petro-capitalistic culture by undertaking a sub-national tourism development program that has made it Nigeria's and to some extent, Africa's tourism destination (Ingwe, 2012?).



Figure 2: Nigeria showing Cross River State (shaded), one of Nigeria's 36 states (Source: Ingwe et al, 2009).

3.3 Real risks and “imaginative geographies” of Nigeria *Dictatorships of the 1980s and 1990s*

It is now known that a yet to be ascertained –but definitely over US\$?? of Nigeria’s public funds stolen by the country’s dictators between 1967 and 1999 has been stashed away in banks of the global North (Ingwe, 2014) thereby exposing Nigeria’s majority –over 90% of the total population projected at 165 million to socio-economic risks poverty earning/living on less than US\$2 per day (WRI, UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, 2005). Curiously, while the treasury-looting lasted, the poor majority bore the brunt of the international community’s penalties. As the Commonwealth was meeting in Auckland that November 1995, dictator Abacha gave two orders: first, to the Foreign Minister, Tom Ikimi, to take the Presidential jet to join the Commonwealth Council of Foreign Ministers, who were preparing to meet in Auckland; second, to the hang-men to tie the noose around Ken Saro-Wiwa’s artful neck. Angered and disgusted by news of Saro-Wiwa’s hanging while Ikimi was airborne, the Commonwealth Summiteers could let the Nigerian “messenger of death” into the August Meeting. Ikimi was turned back and he probably did not given the luxury of diplomatic honour to know that Nigeria was banned until he was briefed by his aides in Abuja. Those who suffered that disaster (beyond risks) were qualified Nigerian who desired scholarships, among others benefits offered by the Commonwealth for as long as the ban lasted. During that ban, the dictators’ agents were visiting luxury shops and banks in the global North to consolidate on their ostentation.

During that dark era, the US Government imposed an air ban on Nigeria, whose airspace was declared unsafe. Citizens of the global North nations, especially those in the Allied Forces against the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussien, who had bragged to wage the “Mother of all wars” against the USA in the early 1990s, imposed travel bans on their citizens wishing to visit Nigeria. Those who insisted on traveling still were warned that they were doing so at their own risks. The actually existing security situation at the time surrounding the agitation for the actualization of the “June 12” elections believed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola was that the socio-economic trauma that rocked south-western part of Nigeria, Chief Abiola’s native place was restricted to that region. Abuja, the federal capital territory was unruffled by the agitation. When later millions of men marched on Abuja, it was known to all that it resulted from the cheer-leading programmes orchestrated the same members of the same Abacha kitchen cabinet that caused the General Abacha to be “popularly” adopted as sole presidential candidates by almost all political parties existing during his dictatorship.

Global North banks abet dictators treasury loot, ban citizens’ visit to Nigeria. Until his sudden death, it could not be said that the general was assisted by the same cabinet to loot as much as US\$5 billion to US\$5 billion, as former EFCC Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, disclosed (Ribadu, 2009). It turns out that even

Ribadu was ignorant of how far the general's "errand boys" went to stash away the loot and how much they stashed away. The loot is about US\$210 billion! (Euroda; Ingwe, 2014). Considering the foregoing evidences, the real risks of Nigeria have been the deprivation and pauperization of Nigeria's majority by the dictators. Ruefully, the international community's response has been to facilitate the stashing away of funds looted from Nigeria's treasury while banning their citizens from visiting the looted area.

Niger Delta insurgency, associated risks and safety of Cross River State

Angered by decade-long neglect, human and ecological degradation, the restive youth of Nigeria's Niger Delta had learnt from their counterparts of south-western Nigeria that insurgency rewards group rights enforcement. Abacha continued from Babangida's annulment of the June 12th elections won by a Yoruba by further decimating the south-western Nigerian cultural group, Yoruba. Abacha punished Yoruba elite: incarcerated (Generals Obasanjo, Diya, Fadipe, Professor Odekunle, bank chiefs, among others), sentenced some to life imprisonment. The response included Yoruba civil society transitioning from dialogue to violence. Thus the existing ?? was complemented by factions of the Odua Peoples' Congress, OPC, which undertook to "maintain law and order" in the interest of the Yoruba in the context of the perception that the federally funded Police and security agencies had turned towards the service of dictators from Babangida to Abacha.

Northern Nigeria's insurgency and safety of Cross River State

As indicators emerged that the sick-leave taken by Katsina-state born President Umaru Musa Yar' Adua, a northern Nigerian, in Saudi Arabia (earlier in Germany) had become prolonged, tempers rose in northern Nigeria. The president's kinsmen (the region bears considerable population of the Hausa-Fulani cultural group) became suspicious that former president Obasanjo had tricked them into presenting a terminally ill candidate for the top job of the country. Therefore, since the first bomb was exploded by the "aggrieved" politicians, religious extremists, armed robbers among other criminals in 2009 (about two years into the Yar'Adua presidency), they have not seized till this day of writing. What is clear and incontrovertible because evidence exist is that there has been a balance of terror: former insurgents of the Niger Delta, who heeded and accepted President Yar'Adua's amnesty by suspending their violent attacks on oil installations have been warning their counterparts (actually of the "new terrorism" variety) that there shall be instantaneous retaliation should bombings of the northern Nigeria cross that region and reach the southern part. The major point that has been made here is that Cross River State has been free of the insurgency of northern Nigeria. That is Cross River State has been an insurgency-free sub-national region all through insurgencies that happened in Nigeria from those of the south-western, Niger Delta and northern Nigeria.

3.4. Risk reduction outcomes/increasing global north internationals' participation in Cross River State programmes

The central pre-occupation, experiences, and messages noticeable and observable in Cross River State's tourism sector development programme has been the promotion and maintenance of peace, avoidance of risks and disasters. Most of the sub-national region's programmes and projects have been attracting increasing numbers of individual and corporate persons to the region. Providing evidences of the foregoing assertion requires representing records of them by major categories: recent manufacturing, industrial development and multidimensional tourism.

Cross River State's relatively higher security or freedom from insurgencies. It was not affected by these socially disruptive processes that ravaged other parts of Nigeria due to a range of reasons. The region's distant location away from the south-western part of Nigeria (Yoruba land) explains why it was unscathed by the agitation for the realization of the June 12 (1993) elections believed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola. The Niger Delta militancy or restiveness was concentrated in particular areas rather the entire region. What constituted "battleground" were mostly the creeks of the Niger Delta. Although some creeks are to be found in the Delta, for a combination of reasons, perhaps strategy on the part of the militants and/or history of the agitation, the State did not prove to be a host of the insurgency. However, its relative peacefulness contributed to its selection as the location for rehabilitation of militants during the ongoing federal government-funded post-Amnesty programme.

Manufacturing and industrial development. Recently, Cross River State Government-inspired and managed programme aiming to mid-wife a transition of the sub-national regional economy from one that was derided as "backwards" in the 1980s, based as it was on agrarian features to tourism in the late 1990s - 2010s and more recently industry including manufacturing has been the pre-occupation of the post-dictatorship administrations. Governors of Cross River State: Donald Duke (1999-2007) and Liyel Imoke (2007-2015) have pursued these goals and objectives vigorously. Evidences of industrial manufacturing concentration in the region have been summarized by documenting the increasing list of investors led by firms from the USA –the giant, General Electric, GE (US\$ 1 billion), China, India, among an expanding interest from a widening geographical spread of countries competing for a piece of the exploding market. Details of the corporate size of investments flowing into the state and the attendant increases in employment of internationals and local population are being documented (Ingwe, Ada, Angiating, 2014).

The tourism region and budding industry. Tourism events (open air festivals, parties, sports fiestas, among others) hosted in the region. Before doing so one point proves convincing. The media messages in form of jingles over the radio, television houses/programmes, newspapers and newsmagazines, websites/pages as

well as personal speeches of the people of Cross River State exude the quest for peace. Outcomes of the state's tourism development in terms of their attraction of global North citizens include: increasing numbers of tourists to various annual events (film festivals, film shoots, globally known "Africa's largest street party" and the 31-day Christmas festival, both organized at December ending of every year. Others are: the world's largest Mountain Race competition (organized every year-end around the Obudu Plateau), sports tourism festivals of various kinds, among others. Moreover, the state has become one of Nigeria's (and West Africa's) most sought-after venues for conferences, summits of civil society organizations, government arms (retreats grounds for legislators, judiciary, and executives at federal, state and local council levels).

Restricting foreigners' entry to cross river state: myths and realities of risks. The decision by US giant (General Electric, GE) to establish a turbine manufacturing industrial plant in southern part of the state has been hailed as an endorsement of the security and profitability of the business environment (Nigeria, 2012/3). As if in support of the judgment of the US firm, firms from other parts of the world (China, India, among others) have followed by investing in the region (Ingwe, Ada, Angiating, 2014a,b).

CONCLUSION

We have demonstrated, in this study, that security in Cross River State was never being compromised throughout the dark eras of dictatorship, insurgencies in various parts of Nigeria (south-west in the late 1990s, Niger Delta in the early 2000s, and the north in the late 2000s through early 2010s), respectively. Ruefully, this sub-national regional oasis of security has not been well known to some governments of the global North, like many others due to limited information, and knowledge. Some global North (among other) governments have been rather slow in comprehending scenarios and processes that get distilled from civil society interactions, the leads taken by the latter have mostly proved most instrumental for resolving challenges in the nexus of sub-national regional security in the context of developing countries involved in insurgency occurring in parts of the national territory.

Civil society as leaders of problem resolution. Drawing from numerous case studies, the world is replete with examples showing how civil society organizations have led the development of solutions for various problems. From the clearance of land mines through the admirable leadership of the late Princess Diana of Wales, among others, the record of civil society in problem resolution is charming (WRI, UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, 2001?). However, civil society has achieved the feats ascribed to them not by getting daunted on confrontation with challenges. Civil society achieved most feats after long-drawn struggles, unrelenting attitude towards

problems that governments frequently, by their orientation and methods, consider intractable. It is due to the same reluctance of governments, their unwillingness to proceed flexibly but instead observe all protocols irrespective of how expensive those turn out to be that we deliberately conclude and recommend more cautiously here.

Under the circumstance, we can only urge civil society (organizations) familiar with the peculiar challenges faced by specific governments they interact with in terms of gaps in information, knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding insecurity in the Niger Delta and its environs is that they should strive towards creatively developing and sharing more reliable ideas, knowledge and resources, based on mutually beneficial partnerships. It deserves recalling that the appropriate concept of partnership was recommended by British Prime Minister during the enunciation of the Millennium Development Goals under the auspices of the United Nations (United Nations, 2000).

What then could civil society familiar with the scenario and environments resembling those discussed above, do? We can think of some familiar cases immediately. We propose that the Centre for Research and Action on Developing Locales, Regions and the Environment (CRADLE), a sustainable development think-tank that has been collaborating with its counterpart, Support for Women and Children in Nigeria (SWACIN), could work with other appropriate civil society coalitions to develop solutions to challenges similar to those discussed in this study.

Notes:

Nigeria's local government areas (LGAs) are, more or less, equivalent –in terms of political, legal powers, among others- to provinces in many countries of the world.

Since the federal tier is responsible for security, immigration, maintenance of law and order such as through policing operations (this is undertaken by states and councils in some federal systems), the states and councils are expected to device ingenious systems and approaches of generating revenue internally i.e. by using the guidelines stipulated for such functions. Ruefully, this has not been the case in most of sub-national regions in Nigeria.

Insecurity is a condition characterized by instability and disorder in terms of multiple dimensions of social, political, economic and environmental forms that are easily transmitted to the psychological make-up of individuals constituting a delimited region. Usually, social scientists use the concept of region to denote areas of various scales. Region can refer to areas of various sizes (group of countries separated by ocean(s), sub-national region, among others. Here, it mostly refers to sub-national region: state or group of states. To avoid confusion in the paper, specific terms have been appropriately applied.

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