

**Amnesty as a Mechanism for Conflict Resolution: A Study of the Niger Delta
Conflict in Nigeria**

Abdul-Wasi Babatunde Moshood

Supervisor: Dr. Suzanne Francis

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies, University of
KwaZulu-Natal, 2016

Declaration

I, Abdul-Wasi Babatunde Moshood, declare that this dissertation is my own original work, has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that the sources that I have used have been fully acknowledged. The dissertation is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016

Signature -----

Dated -----

Abstract

This study, through extensive field work interrogates the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta, and demonstrates how amnesty has impacted on peace. The Niger Delta region has suffered neglect from successive governments. The unbridled exploration for oil by multinationals, and neglect by the government has led to the conflict becoming intractable. In previous years, efforts at resolving the conflict in the Niger Delta included both the use of force and pacification, an approach that was a mixture of both force and dialogue. Little success seems to have been recorded using these initial mechanisms. The introduction of amnesty, however, seems to provide a palpable solution to the intransigent conflict, but has received criticism. Scholars have diverse views on the introduction and implementation of the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta conflict. Some of them opine that the programme should not be considered as a “silver-bullet”, but rather a temporary palliative to ensure peace in the region. Others argue that amnesty is just a process employed to *buy* peace, to ensure unhindered access to crude oil production in the region, and not a process informed by the need to achieve sustainable peace in the region.

The need to engender sustainable peace in the Niger Delta is central to any future socio-economic development. This need is key to the introduction of the amnesty programme. Since the introduction of amnesty, the region has enjoyed stability, there has been an increase in the production of oil, and many Niger Delta people (including ex-militants) have been provided with the opportunity of capacity building and training in a peaceful coexistence. The study claims that amnesty as a home-grown conflict transformation mechanism could be used to achieve a sustainable peace in the oil rich region.

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been completed without the profound blessings and mercies of Allah, who Has granted me the wisdom, good health, and Has seen me through the entire period of the programme-to you belong all praises.

I equally acknowledge the dedicated support, insights and guidance of my supervisor Dr. Suzanne Francis, currently academic cluster leader in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am grateful for the constant encouragement. Dr Suzanne has been a great mentor and teacher, her words of encouragement are particularly inspiring, I am greatly indebted to you.

I thank all my interviewees; of special mention is Dr Odion Akhaine who gave me a link to Port Harcourt. Also very important to mention is Chief Eze Christian Akani who received me in Port Harcourt and gave me a valuable link to Bayelsa state. I acknowledge the warmth reception of Alhaji Dokubo Asari in Abuja, one of my interviewees. I am honoured for the audience given to me by the director Environmental Action Group, Dr Uyi Ojo, and all other human right activists and environmental activists who afforded me their time. Also worth mentioning are the former foot soldiers-the ex-militant the Nature and all the members of his group. Other important personalities such as Mr Ledum Mittee, General Cecil, the technical head for amnesty Mr Lawrence Pepple and others too numerous to mention are profoundly appreciated for enriching my study.

This acknowledgement will not be complete without special mention of Dr Onapajo Hakeem, I benefitted immensely from his scholarly sagacity and humane gesture. Dr Aderemi, Oshodi Abdul Gafar have also been great motivators and altruistic scholars, God will continue to be with you. I thank my former head of department and the current one Dr Abdur Rahman Olayiwola and Dr Mudasiru Surajudeen respectively, and all my colleagues in the department of Political Science Lagos state University for their support and understanding, God bless you all.

I want to specially acknowledge the financial support of Alhaji Muhammad Lawal, he stood by me financially and morally during the trying times, you will never lack by the grace of God. I also express my heartfelt appreciation to all my Muslim brothers in Scottville; it has been a pleasant experience being in your midst. This will not go without mentioning Mr kamal Omopupa for your kind support, Dr Sarumi, and Dr Mrs. Rofia Sarumi for their hospitality in Scottville. My good friend and colleague in the department of Political Science Abiodun Abdul-Fatai-indeed, you have always given me a reason to be unrelenting and ever alert, the healthy rivalry between us contributed partly to this success.

Most importantly, I thank my family whose support in all ramifications contributed to successful completion of my PhD programme. My sincere appreciation goes to my wife Mutiat Abeke, My children, Abdul Rahman, Lateefah, Rufaydah, and Rodiyah for your sacrifice, prayer, and your belief in me, may God continue to preserve you for me. I equally thank my parents and siblings for their support God will bless you all.

Finally I thank my friends and members of the National Council of Muslim Youth organization Lagos state and Mushin Chapter for their prayer. I am grateful for the link provided by Alhaji Mustafa Balogun, I also wish to express my profound gratitude to my brother and friend Dr Raji Abdul Fatah for his concern, and my friend and Ustadz Maruf Thani, Alhaji Kewukanwo Quazeem, and Dr Afisi Oseni Taiwo for your concern and prayer. God will bless you all.

Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Acronyms and abbreviations	v

Introduction	1
Chapter One: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	17
Chapter Two: Reflection on Research Methodology	98
Chapter Three: The Changing Dynamics of the Niger Delta Conflict	116
Chapter Four: State Interventions in the Niger Delta Conflict and Their Failures	149
Chapter Five: The Amnesty Programme in Nigeria	177
Chapter Six: Amnesty as a mechanism for Conflict Resolution: the Niger Delta Experience	190
Chapter Seven: Conclusion to the Dissertation	261

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Community Assistance
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DESPOADEC	Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission
GWVSL	Global West Vessel Specialist Limited
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
NDBDA	Niger Delta Basin Development Authority
NDDB	Niger Delta Development Board
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDES	Niger Delta Environmental Survey
NDPCRC	Niger Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee
OGIF	Oil and Gas Industry Foundation
OMPADEC	Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission
OMPADEC	Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission
PAP	Post Amnesty Peace-Building
PAO	Presidential Amnesty Office
PBSO	The Peace-building Support Office
PTF	Presidential Task Force

QIPs	Quick Impact Projects
RBDAs	River Basin Development Authorities
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SAPND	Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta
SD	Sustainable Development
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TC	Technical committee
TCND	Technical Committee on the Niger Delta
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Peace is often believed to be the absence of war, and a situation where people go about their normal businesses without any form of hindrance. Recent discussions on peace negate this view; a state of calmness does not necessarily presuppose a state of peace, as we may be experiencing a 'peace of the grave yard'¹. On this, Goodhand and Hulme (1999) argue that peace is commonly conceptualised as the antithesis of war, 'the beating of swords into ploughshares' (p.14), and a situation in which physical violence does not occur'. According to them, recent definitions of peace have extended the meaning beyond this view point which conceptualises "negative peace". Galtung (1990) discusses structural violence, which manifests itself through structural inequality and the unequal distribution of power, which must be resolved by action that fosters "positive peace". From this perspective peace is conceived not purely as an absence of physical violence but is intimately connected to the analysis and practice of social and economic development which is fostered by building peace (Goodhand and Hulme 1999, p.15).

Peace-building on the other hand is conceptualized by the United Nations as 'the promotion of institutional and socio-economic measures, at the local or national level, to address the underlying causes of conflict' (cited in Goodhand 1999, p.15). Goodhand et al (1999) state that peace-building has become increasingly common and is often used broadly to mean any activity undertaken with the purpose of preventing, alleviating or resolving violent, or potentially violent, conflict. 'It is the strategy which most directly tries to reverse the destructive processes that accompany violence' (p.15). This involves a shift away from the warriors, with whom peace-

¹Peace of the grave yard here is defined as an uneasy peace, a state of cold war, where there is no war, no peace.

keepers are mainly concerned, to the attitudes and socio-economic circumstances of ordinary people. Therefore, it tends to concentrate on the context of the conflict rather than on the issues which divide the parties (Goodhand et al 1999, p.15). In this way amnesty, this according to Reiter (2011) is the process which has great potential for negotiating peace and is directly linked to the process of peace-building. Reiter avers that:

The most promising amnesties, theoretically, are those attached to a peace process. Advocates of amnesty insist that amnesties are often necessary to get adversaries to the negotiating table and ultimately reintegrate rebels into society. Rebels are not likely to lay down arms, their main source of power, if they fear that prison sentences will immediately follow (Reiter 2011, p.3).

Amnesty is a process initiated to grant pardon to the warring parties for peace to take place and it is more often than not initiated by external parties and most often the United Nations (UN). In this study, the amnesty programme is conceived as a home-grown peace-building initiative undertaken by the Nigerian government in order to achieve immediate cessation to conflict in order to enable a post-conflict peace-building effort to take place in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

The Niger Delta region is the main source of Nigeria's abundant oil and gas resources. The revenue generated from the region accounts for over eighty percent of its foreign earnings and its daily oil production amounts to 2.46 million barrels (Obi 2014; UNEP 2011; Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011). Ironically, the peoples of the Niger Delta region have not experienced meaningful development. This is more so in consideration of the enormous oil wealth derived from the region. The people in the Niger Delta live in one of the poorest and the least developed areas in the country. Unemployment is at over 70 percent of the population which is almost

double the national average of 40 percent (see Davidheiser and Nyiayaana; 2011; Idemudia 2009). The political economy of oil and the failure of previous regimes have exposed the region to exploitation by oil multinationals. This exploitation includes land degradation and pollution through the poor regulation of the activities of the oil multinationals in the region (see Akinola 2015). The implication of this is that the people, whose means of survival is mainly agriculture and fishing, have been systematically uprooted and deprived of their basic source of livelihood. The environmental pollution and degradation also impacts on the life expectancy in the region. The region which hitherto produced its own food and water now depends on food imports and people travel several miles to the city in order to access their basic needs (see Ahonsi 2011, p.28-41).

Consequently, the paradox of rising unemployment, environmental degradation, poverty and underdevelopment in the midst of abundant oil wealth has increased the grievances of the Niger Delta people. For this reason, there have been several forms of local peaceful protests since the 1960s which later became transformed into a violent struggle following the lack of an adequate response from the government. The early peaceful struggles notably include the Isaac Adaka Boro-Twelve Day Revolution in 1967², which was brutally crushed by the state and the Ken Saro Wiwa led demonstrations in the 1980s³, which placed particular focus on environmental degradation. Indeed, Saro-Wiwa's struggle introduced a new phase of protest which attracted

²Isaac AdakaBoro in 1966 led a group of youth in the region on an aborted Twelve Day Revolution. The insurrection was crushed by the Nigerian Military after the twelfth day. The revolutionaries intended to secede from the entire country and take over the control of oil resources. They were later arrested and subsequently released when Major General Yakubu Gowon took over as the military Head of State.

³Ken SaroWiwa was an Ogoni human rights and environmental activist. He led a peaceful demonstration against the deplorable state of Ogoni land and the activities of the oil companies. The military leadership under Abacha later accused him and eight other Ogoni activists of instigating the youth in the region which led to the death of some people in the region. They were subsequently charged for murder and killed by hanging.

significant international support⁴. Unfortunately, all these efforts were discountenanced by Nigeria's federal government. Saro-Wiwa was subsequently implicated and executed⁵ with eight other Ogoni activists. They were accused of allegedly inciting the youth which resulted in the killing of four Chiefs in the region. As a result, the inability of the federal government and the oil multinationals to appropriately address the situation radically changed the character of the protest from a peaceful to a violent conflict (see Ojakorotu 2008; Ukiwo 2007).

The violent dimension of the conflict became more pronounced with democratic rule in 1999. All political leaders in the region who desired political office through elections recruited unemployed youth and armed them with weapons (see Ahonsi 2011; Ukiwo 2007). After the election, some of these groups were not demobilised. The access to weapons provided the opportunity for them to join the rank of existing militants in the region, and this further added a criminal impetus to the previous struggle (Ahonsi 2011; Ukiwo 2007). Consequently, there were a series of hostage takings, killings, oil bunkering, and the sabotage of oil vessels. Nigerian oil production dropped drastically, and the security situation in the country became volatile. It became a discourse of both the national and international community, especially as it affected the energy security of the United States and other foreign interests. This directly affected the

⁴Ken Sarowiwa used the media, books, articles, and campaigns both at home and abroad to internationalise the struggle in the region. This publicised the activities of the government, and the oil companies in their home state. It also shows the level of degradation in the region. This persuaded the international press in the UK, US, and other European countries to put pressure on their home governments to condemn the government of Nigeria and the oil companies. It was reported that consequently, the oil companies began to address the issue of oil spills and were considering paying compensation. They also embarked on "image laundry" by improving their corporate social responsibility, and even sponsor massive media campaign abroad. In the aftermath of SaroWiwa's death and eight others, Nigeria was heavily sanctioned by these countries (see Ukiwo 2011; Ibaba 2011; Ikelegbe 2011; Idemudia 2011).

⁵SaroWiwa and eight other activists were allegedly responsible for the killing of four Ogoni chiefs. They were arrested and tried by a Special Military Tribunal. They pleaded not guilty but were in the prison for over a year and were later found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging by the tribunal. They were subsequently executed on 10th of November, 1995. Premium Times reports that the Royal Dutch Shell and Brian Anderson, Head of the Nigeria operation, connived with the military on Ken SaroWiwa's trial and execution (Premium Times 12th Dec. 2012).

political economy of the country, as the image of the country became battered and it affected direct foreign investment. Similarly, the revenue from oil reduced significantly, as the oil production declined from 1 million barrels per day in 2007/2008 to 300,000 barrels per day in 2009 with further deterioration (Asuni 2009; p.10).

There have been a series of government interventions in the previous years spanning from 1960 to 2000 to address the Niger Delta conflict. In the 1960s, the government created a special focus upon development through the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB)⁶ to manage the developmental challenges of the region, but little progress was achieved. Between 1979 and 1983, due to the developmental challenges of the region, the Nigerian government also established a Presidential Task Force⁷ to manage the allocation of 1.5 percent of the federation account to tackle the special developmental needs of the region. The resultant project⁸ had little or no significance to the community (Ahonsi 2011, p.25). In 1992, during the Babaginda administration (1985-93), the government set up the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)⁹. In spite of the 3 percent of federal revenue allocated to it, it also failed due to institutional incapacity in its administration. Subsequently since 2000, the government has also introduced various intervention efforts, which manifested in the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)¹⁰ and the establishment of the Ministry of

⁶The NDDP was formed by an act of parliament in 1960. Its main function was to initiate a development programme and project in the region (see chapter four for details on the functions). It was placed under the purview of the federal government, and reported to the national government for works and policy guidance.

⁷The Presidential Task Force was a committee set up by the President to manage the 1.5 percent allocation to the region. It was to report to the president.

⁸Projects include the construction of bore holes where water leaks mired the projects the very day it was commissioned.

⁹OMPADEC was established in 1992. Their main function was to coordinate infrastructural development in the region. It was an agency of the federal government (see chapter four for more on its functions).

¹⁰The NDDC was established in 2000. It was to coordinate developmental activities in the region, and was given a broad mandate, including revenue sources (see chapter four for details).

the Niger Delta¹¹. None of these have had a significant impact on the development in the region and have failed to address the root causes of the problem. Due to government incapacity and insincerity they have all failed (Ahonsi 2011, p.26).

The conflict in the region has become further aggravated in recent years. In 2008, President Yar'Adua set up a technical committee¹² to collate the reports of previous committees that had been set up to resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta region. Part of the report (in chapter four I provide details of the report on amnesty) contained the provision to grant amnesty to those involved in the conflict. Consequently, in a bid to finding a lasting solution to the violence in the Niger Delta, president Yar'Adua granted amnesty in 2009 to the militants¹³ and to all those who were overtly or covertly involved in the conflict in the Niger Delta region (Technical Committee report 2008, p.67). Amnesty is a home-grown conflict resolution programme which is aimed at disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the Niger Delta militants into society. It is preceded by amnesty, to set a condition for confidence building among the people and the government, thereby preparing the ground for post-conflict peace-building. Amnesty according to Oluwatoyin, is defined as a legislative act by which a state restores those who have been guilty of offences against it to a position of innocence (2011, p.21). Expectedly, with the cessation of hostility 2009, oil production regained a steady increase as peace gradually returned to the region. There is a steady increase in Nigeria's foreign reserves as oil production and exports have

¹¹The Ministry of the Niger Delta was established in 2009. It operates as a separate ministry under the federal government. It is to oversee various agencies of the government in the Niger Delta, and to initiate development driven policies.

¹²The Technical Committee on the Niger Delta was setup to collate all previous reports on the region, and recommend ways of resolving the conflict and development issues in the region (Technical Committee Report 2008 - see details in chapter four).

¹³ The militants, in the context of the Niger Delta, are the armed groups in the region. They emerged in protest to the marginalisation of the region. They are currently being referred to as the ex-combatants.

long resumed unhindered. The state has witnessed a reduction in oil pipeline vandalism and crimes, while foreign direct investment is on the rise again (Onwuke 2013).

It has been claimed by some scholars and people in the region that successes have been recorded with the implementation of the amnesty programme. Four years into the programme (2009 to 2013), the number of beneficiaries of amnesty is estimated at about 30,000 people (Personal Interview, November 2014). Amnesty has three mandates which include: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) (Onwuke, 2013). Explaining what the programme means, Kingsley Kuku¹⁴ (the Special Adviser to the President on Amnesty in the Niger Delta), stated that it entails equipping the ex-militants with skills that will enable them to secure gainful employment for reintegration into society. Since its inception in 2009, 14,029 of the ex-militants have been demobilised and enrolled at different formal education or vocational centres within Nigeria and outside the country (Onwukwe, 2013). By 2015, over 16,000 ex-militants and youth from the impacted communities have successfully completed and graduated from various educational, and vocational training, amounting to 65 percent from all those who registered for the programme (Personal Interview, Novovember 2015).

In spite of the successes recorded, there are still many unemployed youth from the region whom are yet to be incorporated into the scheme. This prompted a reaction by Special Adviser Kinsley Kuku who further stated that: the key objective of the presidential amnesty in the Niger Delta remains to stabilize, consolidate and sustain security conditions in the region as a pre-requisite for promoting economic development in the region (Onwukwe 2013). This raises questions

¹⁴Kinsley Kuku was the former Special Adviser to the President, and the Head of the Amnesty Implementation Programme. He oversees the activities of the Amnesty Committee, and ensures proper reintegration of the former militants. He reported directly to the president.

around how long those that are unincorporated in the amnesty programme will patiently remain waiting, before resorting to violence. In addition, there are serious concerns regarding the way in which the Nigerian government is implementing the amnesty provisions, as many promises have not been fulfilled. These include complaints that women, and non-combatants in the region (such as those in the Ogoni community) were left out of the amnesty programme, and some incorporated militants even complained of nonpayment of the monthly emolument they were promised by the government (see Oluwatoyin, 2011, Ruhfus, 2010). Furthermore, the root causes of the conflict that includes marginalisation, resource control, and issues around development have received little attention.

The possibility of a return to violence was demonstrated in 2013. Barely a year after the amnesty programme, there were two car bomb explosions near the regional governor's office in the oil city of Warri in Nigeria (*The Punch News Paper* 10th April, 2013). Then, on April 8, 2013, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)¹⁵ claimed responsibility for the killing of twelve soldiers in Azuzama, Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa State (see Odiegwu, 2013). These events serve as a reminder of the militia's existence. It shows that, despite the acceptance of the amnesty programme in 2009 and the conclusion of a disarmament process, factions who felt that the amnesty programme does not fully integrate them and does not address the root causes of the conflict have the potential to reignite the violence. Some ex-combatants were not included in the

¹⁵ The Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) originated as a reaction to initially peaceful protests in the region which were met with force by the government. It was formed from a series of meetings held in November 2005, which took place among The Federation of Niger Delta Ijaw communities (FNDIC), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF). Also included are fighter cult groups such as klans men konfratenity (KK), and the Greenlanders. The coming together of these groups led to the formation of a larger group called MEND. It is important to note that other militant groups in the region are also affiliated to this group. MEND's stated goal is to localize control of Nigeria's oil and to secure reparation from the federal government for pollution caused by the oil industries. Because MEND claims to be championing the cause of the Niger Delta people, its supporters are mixed as they are found across groupings, including the traditional and political classes within the region (Courson 2009; Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011).

training that followed demobilization and disarmament due to internal contradictions in the scheme which included factors such as the exclusion of some real militants from the training programme due to corruption, delays in the payment of monthly stipends among others. The contradictions also extended to the point that some unemployed youth in the area who did not belong to any militant group also came forward for demobilization because of the financial benefit they stood to gain (Oluwatoyin 2011). All this seems to suggest that there are still several issues that the programme needs to address in order to promote the sustainability of peace in the region. It is against this backdrop that my PhD study intends to examine the processes leading to the amnesty programme, its challenges and how the implementation of the amnesty programme can guarantee sustainable peace in the oil producing area of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria.

In multi-ethnic societies, demands for resource control and self actualization (when the people actively seek to take over the control of the resources in their area to actualize their dreams) have sometimes formed the basis of conflict.¹⁶Where conscious efforts are made to placate communities, this has sometimes included the repression of demands which in most instances has led to bloody violence in such societies where this occurs. In previous years from 1958 to 2000, efforts at resolving the conflict in the Niger Delta included both the use of force and pacification, an approach that was a mixture of both force and dialogue. Little success seems to

¹⁶ In multi-ethnic societies, resource rivalries and the struggle to control state policy produce competing communal interests. For example, in Nigeria, each ethno-regional group looks to the state to favour it when it comes to the distribution of public resources, producing, what Claude Ake (1981) refers to as, an 'over politicization' of social life which gravely weakens the state itself. In Yugoslavia, Slovenians and Croatians resented the system of federal redistribution to the poorer regions of the country; their publics backed their leaders' expressions of indignation, ultimately fuelling the demand for greater political autonomy. The exclusion from political power and long years of state deprivation informed the kind of conflict which erupted between the South and the North of Sudan, and which later led to the eventual breakup in 2012. When groups conclude that they can improve their welfare only at the expense of others, they become locked into competition for scarce resources and state power (Lake and Rothchild 1996; Stewart 2009).

have been recorded using these initial mechanisms. The adoption of the amnesty programme for the ex-militants however is proving helpful to mitigate the tension and conflict in the Niger Delta region. I therefore seek to investigate the conditions which facilitate the success of amnesty as an instrument of conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region, and to explore the extent to which the amnesty programme is sustainable in transforming the long intransigent conflict in the region. As such, I interrogate the likely challenges that may inhibit the success of the amnesty programme.

In this dissertation, I explore the following research questions.

1. What does the amnesty programme comprise within the context of the Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria?
2. In what ways has the amnesty programme been able to resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges faced in the process of implementation of the amnesty programme?
4. What does this case study tell us about amnesty as a useful tool in the transformation of conflict more broadly?

In this dissertation I have the following objectives.

1. To explain what the amnesty programme entails – in terms of process and content - within the context of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria.
2. To examine how far the amnesty programme has been able to resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

3. To interrogate the challenges faced in the implementation of the amnesty programme in Nigeria.
4. To explain how amnesty as a tool might be useful or not in the transformation of conflict more broadly.

While previous studies on amnesty in Nigeria deal with the process of disarmament, demobilisation and training, there are scant studies that explore the reintegration aspect of the programme because most of the ex-militants are still undergoing training. In this study, I therefore attempt to examine the reintegration process under the amnesty deal, and further assess the development efforts of the state in addressing the root causes of the conflict. This is with a view to critically examining the effectiveness of amnesty in sustaining the current peace in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, and to determine if amnesty in Nigeria is capable of achieving the same successes recorded in countries where it has been initially adopted.

The justification for this study is based on the economic value of the oil in the region, and how this impacts on the running of the country. The Niger Delta region is the economic nerve centre of Nigeria and a high priority for the Nigerian federal government. Hence, any disruption to peace and orderliness in the region will automatically affect the production of oil; thereby affecting the main source of revenue generation for the country. Moreover, continuous conflict in the region will lead to the quantum loss of lives and, consequently, blot the national image of the country. This, in turn, would automatically affect foreign investment. In this way, sustaining peace in the Niger Delta region is of immense importance for Nigerian socio-economic development. In this dissertation I further explore the importance of amnesty as a mechanism for

conflict resolution and, in so doing, contribute to the scant literature on the subject matter. The study mainly focuses on amnesty as a mechanism for conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. I appraise this by reviewing the reintegration efforts of the programme, and the developmental drive of government in the region. This, I consider essential to sustaining peace in the region. Moreover, considering existing works on amnesty are primarily of secondary analysis, I adopt an empirical analysis for this study.

The themes of this dissertation comprise seven chapters in addition to this introduction.

In chapter one –*the literature review and theoretical framework*–I set out the theoretical framework of the study and define the key concepts that I draw upon, through a review of the relevant literature. I begin by reviewing the peer-reviewed literature on theories of conflict, the DDR process, on amnesties, and on various perspectives of the conflict in the Niger Delta. My discussion of the theoretical grounding of the work provides an exposition of various conflict resolution mechanisms. I claim that conflict is a natural phenomenon among human beings. The sense of deprivation in the Niger delta region acted as a catalyst in the short term to unite the Niger Delta people to face a perceived enemy. I argue that conflict is not naturally bad, but can often become destructive when it is not processed effectively. I claim that the resource curse thesis does not adequately explain the causatives of the conflict. Using diverse perspectives to interrogate the dynamic of the conflict, I contest that the conflict is located in the socio-economic conditions and deprivation in the region, occasioned by the neglect of grievances that have multiplied overtime in the region. Thus, the conflict requires a transformational strategy to engender peace, stability and development in the region.

In chapter two – *reflection upon research methodology* - I provide a detailed description of, and rationale for, the methodology of the study. I explain the nature of the research; data collection; sampling/case selection; data analysis; ethical issues; and provide a discussion of the limitations and special research challenges and their impact upon the validity of the findings of the study. I adopted an interpretive meta-theory of the social sciences and a qualitative methodology. The methodology comprises of the entire process of research-including its social organisational context, philosophical assumptions, ethical principles, and the political impact of new knowledge from the research enterprise. This research is qualitative in its orientation; therefore, the questions asked are tailored around a qualitative methodological approach. I explain the nature of this research, the processes involved in case selection, data collection procedures, sampling procedures, data analysis, ethical principles, and the challenges encountered in the process of conducting the research and how they were addressed.

In chapter three - *The changing dynamics of the Niger Delta conflict* -I provide a historical analysis of the conflict in the Niger Delta. I explore the various phases of this conflict and the way in which they changed over time. Looking at the dynamics of the conflict through the pre-colonial, colonial, and the post colonial periods, I show that although in the pre-colonial period there was conflict, these conflicts were partly managed with the existence of internal conflict mechanisms in the region. I observed that the change in trade from that of slaves to palm oil and the incursion of colonialism changed the dynamics of the conflict. The discovery of fossil fuel in 1956 in Oloibiri, and the subsequent exchange of it in commercial quantities in 1958 complicates the entire conflict context. This coupled with the incapacity of the government led to escalation

of the conflict. These various phases are particularly important in underscoring the dynamics of the present conflict.

In chapter four – *The failure of various government interventions in the Niger Delta* - I explore the various intervention efforts by the government in the region and the reasons for the failure of these. This establishes the political and historical context of the current amnesty programme. I claim that from the establishment of the Willink Commission of Inquiry in 1958 that the government has tried to provide answers to the developmental questions and marginalization of the region through the establishment of various government agencies. I contend that most of these responses were merely palliative because they failed to address the structural development questions in the region. The management practices which were fraught with corruption, politicization and a lack of proper accountability contributed to the failure of previous interventions. I conclude by noting that a lack of government resolve to address the fundamental issues in the region equally contributed to the failure of previous government interventions. It was these failures that increased the present skepticism about the amnesty programme.

In chapter five -*The amnesty programme in Nigeria* - I examine and analyse the process that led to the implementation of the amnesty programme, the objectives of the amnesty programme and the progress and challenges of it. I note that when the military diplomacy failed to resolve the militancy challenge in the Niger Delta, the Yar'Adua administration saw the need to resolve the issue using a “win-win approach”. This came out of the recommendation of the Technical Committee constituted by the President mandated with the task of collating previous reports on the Niger Delta issue and to proffer a lasting solution to the problem in the Delta. The objectives

of the amnesty committee were to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate the former militants. I observed that at the initial stage of the implementation of the amnesty programme the militants were skeptical about the sincerity of the government and not all of them came out for demobilization in the first instance. Subsequently, as the programme gained more prominence and recognition, and because of the attached benefits to participation (such as quality training, a monthly allowance, and capacity building) the expectations from the programme increased. This I noted contributed to some of the initial teething problems in the area of management and implementation which warranted criticisms expressed by scholars. Some of these challenges I noted were being addressed by the officials of the programme.

In chapter six –*Amnesty as a mechanism for conflict resolution in the Niger Delta* - I interrogate amnesty as a mechanism for conflict resolution within the context of the Niger Delta conflict. I provide my major findings and analyse in detail how amnesty has been used in rehabilitating the youth; how amnesty has been able to improve the development in the region; to increase peace in the region; and the possible implications for amnesty in resolving conflict in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria. I discuss, in this chapter, the successes of the amnesty programme by reviewing the reintegration phase of it. I observe that the amnesty programme, apart from impacting positively on peaceful coexistence in the region, has also helped in training and improving the capacity of people. The training, both in vocational and formal education, is of a sufficient standard to qualify the former militants and the youth from the impacted communities to enter employment after training. The impact on peace has helped to increase oil production, a significant factor for the Nigerian economy. Equally the atmosphere of peace has encouraged gradual infrastructural development in the region and imparted behavioural change

by the militants. However, despite these positive developments, the programme is faced with serious challenges which include corruption, unemployment of the former militants and the problem of exclusion, which has the potential to reverse the gains of the programme.

In chapter seven - *the conclusion to the dissertation* - I summarise my major findings in the dissertation, make recommendations, illustrate how the dissertation makes a substantial contribution to knowledge and provide suggestions for future research. I conclude that amnesty is a useful mechanism for conflict resolution. In particular, I note that contrary to previous amnesty programmes in other parts of the world which were managed by the UN and other transnational organizations, the amnesty programme in Nigeria is home-grown, it is locally managed, financed and implemented. This is particularly significant, because it prevents financial fatigue (often experienced in externally conceptualized, financed and implemented amnesties). Financial fatigue can detrimentally impact on the quality of training and the overall programme due to a paucity of funds, and sometimes management. If the amnesty programme is properly managed and financed, it remains a useful mechanism in negotiating, resolving and building peace.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework that guides this study which is generated from exploring the relevant literature on conflict theories and conflict resolution mechanisms. Indeed, this will help to provide a deep understanding as to what constitutes a theoretical grounding for conflict resolution activities historically. I therefore provide, in this chapter, the basis for the reason why conflict transformation theory is most appropriate to addressing conflict in the Niger Delta region and equally effective for resolving contemporary conflict elsewhere. I begin this chapter by providing a conceptualization of conflict and its various types. This follows with a discussion of the concept of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) that became a necessary precondition for the homegrown peace building process in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Thereafter, I review extant studies on amnesty and multiple perspectives on conflict in the Niger Delta. The concluding part of the chapter focuses on the theoretical framework of the study. As will soon be noticed in the subsequent discussion, the long standing intransigence and sense of deprivation among the people in the Niger Delta helped to galvanize a common cause. I claim that it would be erroneous to simply subsume the conflict under the resource curse thesis as this conflict is more properly related to the previous disposition of the government in Nigeria which helped to exacerbate feelings of distrust among the people.

1.1 UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT AND ITS FORMS

The fundamental philosophical problems in discussing conflict are the problem of situating conflict, of describing and analyzing its structure, of articulating its modes and themes and of showing how various kinds of conflict may be related. Apart from the above, there is no consensus on the definition and description of conflict and often this has resulted in the misuse of related terms. For example, the words crisis, conflict and violence are related, though distinct terms. Scholars tend to regard them as synonymous, but this is not so (Soremekun 2009, p.10).

Violence is often the manifestation of an extreme, consistent and intense level of conflict. To this end, Soremekun (2009) says violence is always conflictual, while conflict may not necessarily be violent in an elementary fashion. Violence is harm, perpetrated on persons or property. In the case of persons, it ranges from restraining their freedom of movement to torture and death, and in the case of property, from simple damage to complete expropriation or total destruction (Girvets 1974, p.185). On the same level of analysis, conflict is said to occur where there is interaction between at least two individuals or groups whose ultimate objectives differ (Nicholson 1971 cited in Soremekun 2009).

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that conflict may not necessarily be destructive, but violence, in most cases, is. Furthermore, in most cases, crisis is taken to be synonymous with conflict. Some scholars have often identified crisis with conflict just as some others confuse the term conflict with violence. For example, on a pre-critical level of analysis, Mike Oquaye (1995, p.20 cited in Soremekun 2009) associates, almost rigidly, crisis with conflict. When he says:

‘Conflict is a sequence of interactions between groups in society, between groups and governments and between individuals. The causes of such interactions, the methods employed and their consequences may lead to conflict...connoting crisis, conflict evokes feelings of tension –fear and insecurity within the state. Its inherent corollaries include

disputations, disagreements, struggle, bad relations, and identification of others as “enemies” or potential enemies’.

Crises are structurally differentiated from conflicts. It may be said that both conflict and crisis are vents, but a little application of the rigorous tool of logic expresses clearly the differences between them. Structurally, crisis goes beyond the occurrence or the manifestation or existence of conflict or even violence, but the fact remains that a state of crisis is what comes after a persistent manifestation of incidents of conflict. In other words, crises are states of events after a consistent level of conflict and violence have occurred. They denote a turning point, either for good or bad, after conflict or violence. At such a level of consistent incidences of violence and conflict, what describes the state of events is called a crisis. One could safely conclude that a crisis occurs where a conflict is not safely or promptly managed, it leads to violence while a crisis is the final manifestation of violent conflict.

Deutsh (1973) views conflict as an action, which prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures or renders ineffective another action with which it is incompatible. For Syth (1990) conflict occurs when the actions or beliefs of one or more members of a group are unacceptable to and, hence, are resisted by one or more groups or members. Conflict is a struggle, between individuals or collectivities, over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are to assert their values or claims over those of others. Although this term is often used simplistically and negatively, conflating all conflict with physical violence (Outhwaite and Bottomore cited in Goodhand and Hume 1999,p.14), conflict can also be seen as having a positive dimension as ‘normal forms of social interaction which may contribute to the maintenance, development, change and overall stability of social entities’(Cosser cited in

Goodhand et al 1999,p.14). From this perspective, conflict 'is only a problem when society cannot stand for, manage or resolve its different interests in a productive manner, thus initiating a degenerative or destructive cycle of physical violence'¹⁷ (Kapila cited in Goodhand et al 1999, p.14). This is the meaning adopted in this study. For actors seeking to reduce human suffering or improve the human condition it means that their task is not to prevent conflict (this would be utterly unattainable and often undesirable) but to reduce the likelihood of specific conflicts becoming, or continuing to be, physically violent and transforming the conditions that are likely to bring a relapse into violent conflict. In actual fact, conflict connotes disagreement, dispute or controversy in ideas or viewpoints held by two or more individuals or groups. In general terms, and by way of comparison, disputes involve negotiable interests while conflicts are concerned with issues that are not negotiable, issues that relate to ontological human needs that cannot be compromised, such as resource control, marginalization, and environmental degradation as it is the case in the Niger Delta conflict.

1.2 CONFLICT TYPES AND VARIATION

On the types and variation of conflicts, Soremekun (2009) identified the following sub types: such as elite conflicts, factional conflicts, communal conflicts, mass conflicts and popular conflicts. Elite conflicts are said to occur within the political centre, when elites of different backgrounds, favouring diverging policy positions, and often pursuing a multiplicity of interests,

¹⁷An important insight into the process of conflict resolution is the view of democratic theorists who opine that democracy has inbuilt mechanism for resolving conflict through a process of democratic socialisation and negotiation, unlike the non-democratic states which use autocracy and coercion to resolve conflict. According to them, losing a political battle does not result in the loss of political rights or exclusion from future political competition. Moreover, coercion and violence are not considered legitimate means for resolving conflicts. They surmise that democratic institutions and representative government presuppose that all the citizens cannot rule directly. Hence, in spite of conflicting values and ideals, conflict resolution, or the airing of grievances is confined to democratic institutions. (Przeworski 2006; Dixon 1993; Russett 1993; Huth and Allee 2002; Rousseau and Kinsella 2006).

contend with each other to promote their separate concerns and to protest against measures perceived as detrimental to their well-being¹⁸.

Factional conflicts connote factional strife. It is often times organized by elites, but nevertheless extends to a variety of social groups and down to the local level. This mobilization takes place to further access to the institutional centre of power, to increase participation and even control of government, and to influence political decisions as well as specific policies. Communal conflict, on the other hand, is strife posed by a section or some small group of people within a state. Communal conflict challenges the state's territorial integrity and mass confrontations protest the existing distribution of power.

Mass conflict according to Soremekun (2009) is a political movement with the purpose of inducing a rapid, complete, and permanent alteration of the power structure. By definition, revolutionary conflicts of this sort pose a basic threat to the validity of state power as currently constituted and offer an alternative political vision guided by a clearly defined set of organizing principles. He concluded by averring that popular conflicts as popular political protest chip away at the foundations of state power from below, thereby undermining its viability without altering its form. It constitutes a quiet rebellion against state authority, a way of responding to exclusion and lack of access by limiting the reach of existing central institutions. Popular conflict of this kind emerges most emphatically in conditions where state structures are especially weak and

¹⁸The understanding of elite here includes the political and non-political elite. The political elites are found in political positions and comprise those who initiate and take important political decisions, like the president, governors, and those in the legislative assemblies. The non-political elite are those that are not directly involved in taking vital political decisions, but are those people whose influence within society impacts greatly or influences political decisions. In this case we have such groups as ethnic or regional leaders, heads of a militia groups, among others (see Francis 2008 for more on elite discussion).

leaders capricious, other patronage network have broken down, where alternative avenues for power accumulation exist and where economic conditions have wrought widespread misery. The next paragraph provides an insight into factors and conditions that make conflict probable, an understanding of which assists in underscoring various drivers and causes of conflict.

In the preceding section I discussed the ways in which conflict is conceptualized, and the various types of conflict. I noted that conflict may not necessarily be destructive, but violence is. The purpose of conflict in some instances may be to show a strain in a relationship, a misunderstanding of another's point of view, and an expression of discontent about the present situation within the context of the Niger Delta conflict, the conflict in the region started as a communal conflict but has evolved into a form of mass mobilization. The metamorphosis of the conflict into a mass conflict constitutes a greater challenge to the state, as the conflicting parties have now gathered enough power to challenge the hegemony and the claim of the state that it has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

1.3 PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT THEORIES AND DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

Conflict theory has two main roots. The first group of theorists believes that social scientists have a moral obligation to critique society. They refuse to admit that one can really separate analysis from judgment or fact from value. Theorists in this group also often (but not always) believe that in principle a society may not necessarily be predisposed to conflict. The second group, by contrast, considers conflict to be an inevitable and permanent aspect of social life (Ruth and Alison 1999, p.69).

1.4 CONFLICT AS A CONSTRUCT IN HUMAN SOCIETY

Theorists in the first group, such as Wright and Pierre Bourdieu, are most influenced by the work of Karl Marx. In the second group, essentially, are scholars like Ralf Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser and Randall Collins. Although their writings have some tints of Marx's influence, they are mostly a continuity of Max Weber (Ruth and Alison 1999, p.70). The basic elements of conflict theory are apparent in Marx's work. He believed, first of all, that people have an essential nature and clearly defined interest or set of interests. Indeed, Marx generally argued that if people do not behave in accordance with these interests it can only mean that they have been deceived about what their "true interests" are by a political system (including both social and economic systems) that works in others' favour. Second, Marx analyzed both historical and contemporary society in terms of conflicts between different social groups with different interests. Finally, he emphasized the link between the nature of ideas or ideologies and the interest of those who develop them, and he insisted that the ideas of an age reflect the interests of the "ruling class" (Marx and Engels 1967; Ruth and Alison 1999, p.71).

Marxist theory argues that different classes inevitably have incompatible interests because under a system of property ownership if one class makes economic gains, it must be at the expense of another. A class is understood as a sizeable group of people that are unique from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of socio-economic production. Accordingly, Lenin avers that some classes appropriate the labour of another due to their higher place in a definite structure of a socio-economy. To Marx, a class is a group with profound socio-economic interests. The unique interest of each class is the basis of a fundamental

antagonism between such groups (Edward 1983, p.578). For example, it is in the interest of laborers to maximize wages and benefits, as it is in the capitalist's best interest to maximize profit. It is this sort of interest that often leads to a contradiction within the capitalist system (Edward 1983, p.578). Within Marxian class theory, the structure of the means of production and the production process forms the basis of class construction. Marx asserts that an individual's position within a class hierarchy is determined by his or her role in the production process, and argues that political and ideological consciousness is determined by class position. According to Marx, each of the major economic systems that existed in the past strengthened one particular class, which could then exploit others. He wrote that 'Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and the serf, guide-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and the oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight' (Marx and Engels, 1967, p.79). According to Marx, in bourgeois society, capitalists are the oppressors and the proletariat the oppressed. Marx argued that at any one time, class struggle defines the essential character of a society. It is the product of, first, irreconcilable differences in interests between classes and, second, the fact that one class's common interests will encourage its members to group together for common action as it is noticeable in the common action taken by the Niger Delta people¹⁹. However, at any given time, the degree to which members of a class recognize their interests will depend on their level of class consciousness (Manifesto of the Communist Party 1872, pp.174-175). Gaining consciousness among the exploited class is expected to instigate the need to bring about change in the status quo, herein referred to by Marx as revolution (Ruthand Alison 1999, p.85). The impression here is that conflict does not necessarily have to occur if there is no exploitation of the class that is the privileged class over

¹⁹ There have been intense tensions and rivalry among various ethnic groups in the Niger Delta. This rivalry was however subsumed to fight for a common cause. Ukiwo (2007) provides a detailed exposition of such rivalry between Itsekiri and Ijaw people in the Niger Delta.

the less privileged class. In actual fact the need to revolt against the existing status quo only became necessary by the time the other class gained consciousness (see Manifesto of the Communist Party 1872, pp.174-175).

One can further argue that the need to bring about change in the existing status quo often happens when there is a rift within the existing dominant class. Hence, the dissatisfied group mobilizes the masses to propagate their own interests. The consciousness that is later gained by the exploited class is considered to be false consciousness. This may not be true of all conflict situations because there are instances of genuine resistance. For example, Ken Saro Wiwa's struggle for the plight of the Ogoni people²⁰ in the Niger Delta falls into the present example. This in part, explains the genuine struggle of the Niger Delta people at the initial stage before it was later infiltrated by the political elite to pursue their own personal selfish interests. This is discussed extensively in chapter four, where I support Idemudia's (2009) position that the conflict has traversed various phases, beginning from genuine agitation to a complex state where personal economic interests and survival becloud the initial agitation. This is discussed further under the perspectives of conflict in the Niger Delta.

²⁰Ken SaroWiwa was an Ogoni human rights and environmental activist. He led a peaceful demonstration against the deplorable state of land in Ogoni and the activities of the multinational oil companies. The military leadership under Abacha later accused him and eight other Ogoni activists of instigating the youth in the region which led to the death of four chiefs who were seen to be pro-government in the region. They were subsequently charged with murder and killed by hanging. The trial was done by a Special Military Tribunal. They pleaded not guilty, were in the prison for over a year and were later found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging by the tribunal. They were subsequently executed on 10th of November, 1995. Premium Times reports that the Royal Dutch Shell and Brian Anderson, Head of the Nigeria operation, connived with the military on Ken SaroWiwa's trial and execution. Although Anderson later denied non involvement in the trial process, Shell the company which he headed later paid \$15.5 million as compensation for out-of-court settlement. This, Anderson said, was a gesture of peace and not acceptance of guilt (*Premium times* 12th& 30th Dec. 2012).

1.5 CONFLICT AS A NATURAL PHENOMENON IN HUMAN SOCIETY

The second theoretical orientation in this group of theory sees conflict and its root as being permanent in the society, and equally emphasizes that conflict of interest is inevitable. While not discountenancing the fact that society is stratified between two groups - the haves and the have nots as noted by Marx- they believe that many others have far more complex power and status distributions and interlocking patterns of stratification that do not line up neatly. According to Alison et al (1999), society has many different sources of power and position, and one particular set of institutions, such as that based on property, is not always necessarily paramount in the society. Scholars of this Weberian orientation include Ralf Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser and Randall Collins.

Talking about conflict, Dahrendorf (1959, p.157) claims that, ‘there is an inherent tendency to conflict in society. Those groups with power will pursue their interests, and those without power will pursue theirs. The interests of the two are necessarily different. Sooner or later, he argues, the balance between power and opposition shifts, and society changes. Thus conflict is the great creative force of human history’. Furthermore, like many other conflict theorists, such as Lewis Coser in his discussion of the origin of conflict, pays more attention than do most conflict theorists to the role played by people’s emotion (Coser, 1964). He agrees with Simmel that there are aggressive impulses in people, and he emphasizes that in close and intimate relationships both love and hatred are present. Close proximity, he points out, brings ample opportunities for resentment to develop. Hence, conflict and disagreement are integral parts of people’s relationships, not necessarily signs of instability and breakup.

Coser argues that conflict often leads to change (Coser 1964). For example, it can stimulate innovation or, especially in war, increase centralization (Coser 1964, p.89-95). For the most part however, Coser concentrates on the role of conflict in maintaining group cohesion. This is, of course, the subject that most concerns functionalists. However, Coser is a functionalist only in the sense of sharing this interest. He does not imply that it is desirable for a group to survive and remain cohesive or that conflict occurs because it may be functional for the group. He sees cohesion as only one of conflict's possible results (Ruth et al 1999, p.130).

In this context Coser distinguishes between conflicts that are external and conflicts that are internal to a group. Both types, he argues, can define a group, establish its identity, and maintain its stability and increase its cohesion. In his most unqualified statement about the relationship between conflict and cohesion, Coser argues that external conflict is essential in establishing a group's identity (Coser 1964, p.36). In this he is following not only Simmel but also Marx, who felt that only conflict makes a class self-aware. Coser just like Simmel states that conflict sets boundaries between groups within a social system by strengthening group consciousness and awareness of separateness, thus establishing the identity of groups within the system (Coser 1964, p.37).

Commenting still on the causes of conflict, Anifowose (2005) expatiates on the relative deprivation, rising expectations and frustration aggression hypothesis. Here, it is generally stressed that psychological theories of motivation and behaviour, frustration and aggression have provided an essential impetus towards understanding why a conflict erupts. Feierabend et al (1966) stress the 'revolutionary gap', what they call the 'want get ratio', that is, the distance

between expectation and achievement. Ted Gurr (1973) emphasizes the relative deprivation gap between expectation and capabilities. What all these explain is the notion of a gap, which creates frustrations. Frustration leads to anger, leading in turn to aggression and violence (Peter 1971, p.90).

The frustration-anger-aggression principle from the individual to the social level, according to Gurr (1973), states that all the empirical theories essentially elaborate on the same basic premise by specifying what kinds of social conditions and processes of change increase social discontent to the threshold of violent conflict. Revolution is most likely to take place when a prolonged period of rising expectations and rising gratification is followed by a short period of sharp reversal, during which the gap between expectations and gratification quickly widens and becomes intolerable. The frustration that develops seeks outlets in violent action. When the frustration becomes focused on the government, the violence becomes coherent and directional. If the frustration is sufficiently widespread, intense, and focused on government, the violence will become a revolution (Gurr 1973, p.360).

Gurr posits two additional patterns of change that create the potential for violent conflict, though not necessarily revolutionary conflict. One is the so-called "revolution of rising expectations," whereby men become angered because they acquire new or intensified expectations which cannot be satisfied by means at their disposal. The perceived gap between expectations and capability is "relative deprivation," which generates discontent (Gurr 1973, p.361). The second might be called a "capability decay" pattern. The source of people's discontent is their declining capacity to satisfy stable expectations. The Feierabends and Betty Nesvold (cited in Gurr 1973)

distinguish rapid and minimal change patterns, and a fluctuation change pattern. This implies that human wants are continuously widening, and the means to satisfy those wants are limited.

All theorists recognize that human beings seek many different types of values. The three generic types according to Gurr are welfare, power, and interpersonal (a sense of belonging, respect, status) values. Davies (cited in Gurr 1973) proposed a fourfold classification comprising of physical needs, social affectional needs, equal esteem or dignity needs, and self-actualization. Moreover, Gurr, Feierabend and Nesvold agree that these have a universal hierarchy of importance. Thus, once physical needs are satisfied, social-affectional needs become dominant. When they are satisfied the need for dignity predominates, and so forth. This hypothesis has a psychological basis and there may be the need to draw a connection in practical terms on how systematically the satisfaction and lack of satisfaction of one need leads to another, and how eventually it ignites or leads to conflict.

Gurr himself claimed that at present, the hypothesis is supported only by a few plausible, but far from definitive, case studies. Why expectations and achievement change over time is a thorny question, one whose answers involve a regression up an ever widening "funnel of causality." The Feierabends' and Nesvold's answer (Cited in Gurr 1973) is specific to the contemporary world. They take the socioeconomic modernization process as a given, and suggest that it is simultaneously the source of increasing expectations among "modernizing" groups and a threat to the achievements of "traditional" groups²¹. Moreover, the attainment of modern goals is likely

²¹Traditional refers to societies or elements of societies that are small-scale, and are derived from indigenous and often ancient cultural practices. Modern refers to such practices that relate to the industrial mode of production or the development of large scale, or often colonial societies. Marx delineates between the feudal and capitalist societies. Max Weber equally contrasted between traditional authority and modern rational-legal authority. The

to be thwarted by the traditional, and vice versa. Gurr further surmises that the greater the violence used against people who believe they are in the right, the greater the likelihood of their resistance, to the extent of their capacities. This proposition according to him applies to all situations in which violence is used for social purposes. The rationale is straightforward; the use or threat of violence against people is an attack, generates a resistance and, unless it is of an absolutely overwhelming, life-endangering nature, it stimulates anger and a desire to retaliate (Gurr 1973, p.362). Even when fear predominates, which it may do at first attack, the long run effect is that anger increases as fear subsides. The success of defensive violence²² used in efforts to maintain order, or otherwise to defend a status quo in the allocation of values, is likely to have the intended effects to the extent that three conditions hold: (1) the purposes for which violence is used are generally accepted; (2) violence is generally accepted as a legitimate means; and (3) those against whom violence is used are too few and powerless to increase their resistance. This tripartite hypothesis should apply to any collective use of violence by or against a social movement (Gurr 1973, p.359-392). As will be later shown in chapter three, the experience of the people over the years may have contributed to the further militarization of what was initially a peaceful struggle, helped to foster unity among the people and helped them to gain power, support and momentum over time. The militants, and their supporters, now constitute a formidable threat to the state. Reacting to the above proposition, Gurney and Tierney (1982) note that this theory cannot be empirically proven to be responsible for collective action in social movements. The aggression and disaffection of people, according to them, can be expressed in forms other than that of violence or rebellious action. They do, however, concur with the fact

deferring features between the two are that while the former is communally based, the later is complex, large, and industrially based (see Weber 2009).

²²Defensive violence is the violence used, or embarked upon, to retain the status quo, or fight against any change (see Gurr 1973).

that the theory still remains relevant in the literature for discussing social infraction. In their words, they say that the theory can be viewed as an adjustment at both the level of theory and ideology. On the one hand, the theory repudiates earlier views on conflict which were becoming increasingly hard to justify by emphasizing the reality of grievances. On the other hand, it advances an alternative which is in line with commonly accepted theoretical orientations in the field and at least one step removed from the critique of the structure of society.

For the purpose of this study, the theory still remains relevant to explaining the frustration of people in the Niger Delta region, which in turn led them to taking up arms against the country. The long neglect and environmental degradation (right from the time of Isaac Adaka Boro's²³ agitation, to the time of the Ken Saro Wiwa's demand) combined to increase the frustration of the people and the reason why some youth in the region resorted to militancy against the state.

1.6 COOPERATION AND COMPETITION AS DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

Still on conflict theorizing, Morton Deutsch (2006) focuses on what he calls cooperation and competition theory. He notes that the field of conflict theory was initially influenced by the writings of three intellectual giants – Darwin (1859); Marx (1872); and Freud (1905). Their writings according to Deutsch impacted significantly on the early social psychologists on conflict as well as theorists in many other areas. The writing of Darwin (1859), for instance, on evolution and the theory of natural selection, promoted the concept of survival of the fittest- which in his earliest day provided the reason why the strong believed it was their responsibility to rule, and

²³Isaac AdakaBoro a retired Major in the Nigeria military, in 1966 led a group of youth in the region on an aborted Twelve Day revolution. The insurrection was crushed by the Nigeria Military after the twelfth day. The revolutionaries intended to secede from the entire country and take over the control of oil resources. They were later arrested and subsequently released when Major General Yakubu Gowon took over as the military Head of State (Vanguard News 24 July, 2011).

the reason for the weak to obey. The concept also helped to fan the embers of racism, sexism, notions of class superiority and war. In the instance of Freud (1905), his view on psychological development was that of constant struggle between the biologically rooted infantile id and the socially determined internalized parental surrogate, the superego. According to him: 'the metamorphosis from life in the womb to life in the world are replete with images of war, coercion, reluctant compromise, unwelcome necessity, imposed sacrifices, uneasy truce, enforced detours and round about ways to return to the original peaceful state of absence of consciousness and stimulation' (Deutsch 2006, p.13). These subconscious activities naturally provide the instinctual readiness for man to engage in the conflict-like activities during their developmental stages in life. In the context of Marx he emphasized class struggle, and as this struggle proceeds the whole society breaks up into the classes of the haves and the have-nots. One class is in constant struggle to subjugate the other. Thus, the intellectual atmosphere prevalent during the period when social psychology began to emerge contributed to viewing conflict from the perspective of competitive struggle (Deutsch 2006, p.13).

By the mid 1920s, the concept of social Darwinism began to retreat in the field of conflict theorizing. In its place, two other theories have become dominant - the psychological-economic view. This early empirical orientation, according to Deutsch (2006), focused on the socialization of the individual, in part as a reaction to the instinctivist doctrine. This also prompted other studies, including a number investigating the cooperation and competition theory. The cooperation and competition theory in Deutsch's view is the precursor to the empirical social psychological study of conflict.

In his voyage to developing the cooperation and competition theory, Deutsch was influenced by Lewin's field theory, with his dynamic concepts of tension system, driving and restraining forces, valences, power fields, interdependence, overlapping situations and so on (Deutsch 2006, p.15). In addition, this theory also gained substantially theoretically and methodologically from game theory. The emphasis is on the parties to a conflict having interdependent interests, their fates woven together. It shows that conflicts were typically mixtures of cooperative and competitive processes and that the cause of conflict would be determined by the nature of the mixture. Thus it will either be destructive or constructive²⁴ (Deutsch 2006, p.16).

The theory of cooperation and competition as earlier noted was developed by Morton Deutsch from 1949 through 1985. It was elaborated further by David W. Johnson (Johnson and Johnson 1989). Cooperation/competition theory signifies the presupposition that any given conflict situation has both constructive and destructive elements that could be harnessed for resolving the conflict. Accordingly, Johnson and Johnson (1989) aver that:

A cooperative process as compared to a competitive one leads to greater group productivity, more favourable interpersonal relations, better psychological health, and a higher self esteem. Research has shown that more constructive resolution of conflicts results from cooperative as opposed to competitive process (Johnson and Johnson 1989, p.41).

The major difference between the constructive controversy and competitive debates is that in the former, people discuss their differences with the main intent of clarifying them to find a solution; this often results from various thoughts that emerge during the discussion. There is no loser if, during the controversy, each party comes to a deeper insight and attains enriched views of the matter that is initially in contention (Johnson and Johnson 1989; Deutsch 2006).

²⁴Destructive conflict is when a winner wins or acquires everything in conflict, while in constructive conflict both the winner and the loser have shared benefits. The former is a win-lose situation while the latter is a win-win situation. (see Deutch 2006 for more on this).

By contrast, in competitive contests there is usually a winner and a loser. The party judged to have the best presentation, approach, knowledge and skills and the like often times wins, while the other, who is considered to be less good or persuasive in approach, typically loses. In Deutsch's words: 'competition evaluates and ranks people based on their capacity for a particular task, rather than integrating various contributions' (Deutsch 2006, p.30). This particular theory is instructive and useful for understanding the causation of conflict and its dynamics and useful for this study, appreciating the fact that a conflict has the element of being constructively resolved or otherwise, provides an impetus for the theoretical grounding of this study. The conflict transformation theory adopted for the study is aimed at changing the entire setting of conflict, so that the possibility of the initial tension or conflict resurfacing will be a rarity (i.e. uncommon). Constructive conflict resolution techniques are the backbone for achieving the essential transformation that is needed in a conflict.

Moreover, Obi (2009) opines that an understanding of the drivers of conflict in the Niger Delta region should encompass a combination of factors which include the political economy thesis, neo-patrimonialism, the resource curse perspectives, and environmental scarcity perspectives. Thus, understanding the various causes of conflict through different theoretical lenses will enrich our understanding of conflict dynamics in the Niger Delta region. Historically, the causes of conflict in the region arose through a combination of factors. This started with neglect (meaning that the region was effectively socio-economically abandoned, and no meaningful development was initiated in the region), the degradation of the environment and persecution of the people which engendered frustration. Also, the activities of the government and oil multinationals in the

area of unbridled oil exploration equally necessitated the call for resource control and self rule. This in turn triggered the militant activities which were made more complex by the activities and behaviours of politicians, who expropriated the process to advance certain interests and thus introduced the political economy of war and a resource curse dimension to the conflict. In spite of the destructive dimension the conflict initially took, the government was still able to navigate through it and develop a constructive approach towards a resolution of the conflict. Thus, discussing various theories helps to provide a useful framework for the understanding of various perspectives on conflict, which in the long run provides requisite understanding for its transformation.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process came about with the declaration of amnesty for the militants, and it is assumed that it comprises a prerequisite toward a homegrown peace building effort in Nigeria. From the foregoing, it is assumed that various factors determine the cause and the course a conflict takes. In the context of Niger Delta conflict, the frustration and long years of neglect is believed to have promoted the escalation of the conflict. I therefore surmise in this study that the militancy in the region originated as a defensive technique and coping strategy. This, helped to enhance the cooperation among various ethnic groups in the region who now see the government as a common threat. Because the conflict has lingered for so long, I claim that a single causal analysis will not be helpful in the bid for total transformation of the conflict.

1.7 DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR): A PREREQUISITE FOR A HOMEGROWN PEACE BUILDING MECHANISM IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

Boutros Boutros-Ghali²⁵ first conceived of post-conflict peace-building as a framework for ensuring that violent conflict would not reoccur in post-conflict settings. The DDR process originated as a response to the Brahimi Report²⁶, which explicitly linked the peacekeeping, peace-building, and socioeconomic development functions of the United Nations (UN) system. This was later elaborated by Kofi Annan (Knight 2008, p. 25). The UN adopted “peace-building” as part of its official discourse in 1992, when former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali used the term in his Agenda for Peace. In Boutros-Ghali’s view, peace-building was an activity to be undertaken immediately after the cessation of violence. In his words, it was ‘an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict’ (Boutros Boutros-Ghali cited in Knight, 2008:24). Knight (2008) concludes that from this conceptualization of peace-building, one can easily discern the early outlines of what later became known as the DDR process. In his words:

²⁵Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali became the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations on 1 January 1992, when he began a five-year term. At the time of his appointment by the General Assembly on 3 December 1991, Mr. Boutros-Ghali had been Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt since May 1991 and had served as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs from October 1977 until 1991. Mr. Boutros-Ghali has had a long association with international affairs as a diplomat, jurist, scholar and widely published author (UN Press Release, 15 Nov. 1996).

²⁶The 1992 Brahimi’s report (otherwise known as UN Agenda for Peace) was adopted by the UN as the new template for conflict resolution and peacemaking. The report introduced a new lexicon to the understanding of peace, when it considered preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peace-keeping as the activities or functions that speak directly to the creation of UN. The report recognises conflict prevention as important through a prompt address of the early warning signals. It also detailed peace enforcement as key strategy where preventive diplomacy failed. It introduced possible deterrence measures through the world court system. It also recognises human development and economic stability of states as pre-requisites for enhancing peace and talks about the role expected of the UN and some of its Agencies in this regard. The report and subsequent Agenda for Peace is a new drive to the making of, and keeping of, peace in contemporary times (Report of the Secretary General, 17th June, 1992).

The former UN Secretary General envisioned, for instance, that some of the elements involved in peace-building would be linked directly to preventing the recurrence of violent conflict. These elements include disarming warring factions, restoring law and order, decommissioning and destroying weapons, repatriating refugees, reintegrating internally displaced persons into their communities, providing advisory and training support for security personnel, improving police and judicial systems, monitoring elections, de-mining and other forms of demilitarization, providing technical assistance to fledging states coming out of conflict, advancing efforts to protect human rights, repatriating refugees, reforming and strengthening institutions of governance, promoting formal and informal participation in the political process, and facilitating social and economic development (Knight 2008, p. 26).

From this time onwards, the UN has adopted the DDR process as an indispensable element of post-conflict peace-building; this has been utilized in various peacekeeping missions of the UN²⁷. The sole aim is to enhance internal security and build human capacity, and thereby to ensure that sustainable peace is entrenched and becomes a permanent feature of countries and regions coming out of conflict (Knight 2008, p.26). Making further exposition on this, NeclâTschirgi (2004 cited in Andy Knight 2008, p.28) explains that post-conflict peace-building has become an international growth industry. This also came as a response to a UN Blue Ribbon Panel Report²⁸, at the turn of this century that called on the world body to expand its global peace support role. When the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (known as the Brahimi Report) was released in August 2000, the link between peacekeeping, peace-building and socioeconomic development was fully acknowledged. The panel recommended a number of peace-building tools and strategies that could become part of any peace support operation. These included the adoption of quick impact projects (QIPs), the establishment of a

²⁷DDR has been used in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi, Liberia, Côte D'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and the Sudan.

²⁸The Ribbon Reports written in 2006 intends to completely revamp the operation of the UN. This included, unifying the UN at the country level to respond to national needs, to introduce a new funding system to drive performance and accountability, to consolidate three bodies into a new organization for women, the UN Sustainable Development Board and the UN Development Coordinator to better marry UN operational and normative activities at global, regional and national levels. It also aimed at strengthening leadership on humanitarian and environmental activities (UN, 9th November 2006).

fund for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), the adoption of a doctrinal shift away from civilian policing to rule of law teams, the creation of a pilot Peace-building Unit,²⁹ and regularized funding of the Electoral Affairs Division³⁰ at the UN Headquarters in New York (Report of UN Panel on Peace Operations cited in Andy Knight, 2008). Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote in his report to the Sixtieth Session of the UN General Assembly³¹ that since February 11, 2000, six UN peacekeeping operations have included disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration as part of their mandate. The DDR tasks involved in those operations included, inter alia, the broad provision of security; collecting, securing, and destroying light and heavy weapons; de-mining; demobilizing ex-combatants; dismantling militia groups; enhancing regional security to stem the spillover of conflicts across borders; identifying and resettling foreign ex-combatants, including children and women; supporting national disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs; promoting sensitization programs within communities; and meeting specific needs of women, children, and disabled ex-combatants (Knight 2008, p.29). DDR programs do not have a single definition. Isaczai (2006) argues:

²⁹The Peace-building Support Office (PBSO) is responsible for the pilot peace-building programme. It works closely with the United Nations system and others to ensure policy coherence across the UN with regards to peace-building. In its efforts to increasingly focusing its work to enhance its support to the Peace-building Commission, the PBSO makes efforts to find new ways to bring together key actors from across the public and private sectors and civil society. In this spirit, the PBSO has established partnerships with a number of organizations from within and outside the United Nations system to further strengthen peace-building processes and to achieve the best results in the countries on its agenda.

³⁰UN Peacekeeping assists election processes in many ways including through the provision of security, technical advice and logistical support. It was formed in 1992 and its role includes ensuring credible elections. Once the parties to a conflict agree to cease fighting, the holding of elections is often written into the peace agreement, and represents a major step in establishing a legitimate State. UN Peacekeeping operations are often mandated to play a direct role in this process. It works directly with the Department of Political Affairs. In recent years, UN Peacekeeping has provided crucial technical and logistical assistance in milestone elections in many countries, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Afghanistan, Liberia and the Sudan.

³¹The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, the admission of new members and budgetary matters require a two-thirds majority. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority. Each country has one vote, and each country has a financial responsibility to the council.

That integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (IDDR) principles assert that the reintegration of former combatants should be the essential focus and objective of DDR programming and should involve national ownership, capacity development, and be situated within the larger recovery strategy, from the support of individuals, to the community at large (2006 cited in Obi 2014, p.251).

From the perspective of the UN Secretary-General (1992), discussing the background to conflict in Africa, in most of the insurrections in Africa, irregular militia groups and large numbers of soldiers are recruited (which includes both children and women). This conflict has also included the proliferation of lethal weapons, mostly small arms and light weapons (SALW). It is therefore argued that this group of people requires special attention since they portend a threat to the peace process and could also undermine progress towards the development of security (see UN Agenda for Peace 1992).

Having a large number of ex-combatants who are still in possession of weapons can pose a threat to the security of a state and its civilian population. The situation also threatens countries bordering on the state in question. Thus, DDR programs are generally put in place to dissipate threats to the security of a post-conflict society, and a particular region, by helping ex-combatants disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate into communities of their choice. These programs should ultimately provide ex-combatants with the kind of skills necessary for them to become productive members in a peaceful society. DDR programs, combined with security sector reform (SSR), are designed, ideally, to forestall any return to violence. To this end, they consist of three principal components, or a three-stage process, that involves the surrender of weapons, the discharge of active combatants, and the reintegration of ex-combatants into society (Knight 2008, p. 31). Curtis (2012 cited in Obi 2014, p.252) conceptualises DDR within the praxis of peace-building defined as ‘a set of ideas and practices, mediated by the interactions

between local communities, and international, national, and regional actors'. The aim as Obi (2014) puts it is in 'preventing the resumption or escalation of violent conflict and establishing durable and self-sustaining peace' (Obi 2014, p.252; See also Newman, Paris, and Richmond 2009, p.3). The objective of the DDR process, according to the UN's DDR Resource Centre, is:

To contribute to security and stability in post conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin. This entire process, linked to broader national recovery, is a complex one, with political, military, security, humanitarian and socioeconomic dimensions (Knight 2008, p.30).

One of the other major aims of DDR is to address the post-conflict security problems that arise when ex-combatants are left without livelihoods or support networks (other than their former comrades) during the transition from conflict to peace. By relieving combatants of weapons and by taking these individuals out of their military structures and routines, the DDR process can then facilitate integration of the ex-combatants into society and help them become active participants in the peace process (UN report on DDR cited in Knight 2008, p.31). Disarmament refers to the collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and the light and heavy weapons of combatants and, often, of groups within the civilian population in a conflict zone. It involves establishing and initiating arms management programs (e.g. programs for the safe storage and/or destruction of weapons) as well as of de-mining. When conflict ends through a negotiated settlement, ex-combatants are generally induced to give up their weapons voluntarily. When conflict ends via a clear military victory, the victor will more often than not coerce the vanquished to surrender their weapons. Where UN peacekeepers are involved in the disarmament phase of DDR, they are generally charged with the collection, safe storage, and sometimes the destruction of weapons. Ideally, by taking weapons out of circulation, a more secure environment is created in which the peace process can

mature (Knight 2008, p.32). It is also said to occur within assembly areas that are predetermined during the peace negotiations, where fighters are gathered together in camp-like settings. Weapons are confiscated, safely stored and eventually destroyed (Naraghi and Conaway undated, p.2). Demobilization is a process by which conflicting armed groups are induced to disband their military organization and structure and shift from combatant to civilian status. It involves, inter alia, the registration and processing of individual ex-combatants in temporary centres; the massing of troops/rebel forces in cantonment sites, encampments, barracks, or other assembly areas; inducements for ex-combatants to give up their weapons (e.g. the exchange of weapons for money); the provision of transitional support/assistance packages to help them and their families meet their immediate basic needs, such as food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term remedial education, training, employment, and tools (this is usually called reinsertion); discharge; and transportation to get to their home community. In most cases, the dividing line between reinsertion and reintegration is not all that clear. But, given the political and security objectives of DDR, it is perhaps useful to view the reinsertion phase as a bridge between demobilization and reintegration (Ball and DeGoor cited in Knight 2008, p. 32). It is also known as the formal disbanding of military formations and, at the individual level, is the process of releasing combatants from a mobilised state. The discharge of ex-combatants often occurs over a period of time, during which they are usually transported to their homes or new districts and granted small initial reinsertion packages (Naraghi and Conaway undated, p.2). Reintegration is a longer-term social and economic process with an open time frame designed to facilitate the assimilation of ex-combatants in a way that allows them, and their families, to adapt to civilian life in communities that may not necessarily be ready to accept them. In most cases, this process involves the provision of cash or some form of compensation

package in exchange for the commitment of ex-combatants to refrain from returning to conflict, providing ex-combatants with longer-term job or career training, initiating sustainable income-generation projects, repatriating refugees and displaced persons, and establishing a forum and process for truth and reconciliation (Knight 2008, p.32). This stage of the DDR process is usually accompanied by efforts at the rehabilitation of war-affected individuals (which in the Niger Delta context is referred to as people from the impacted community) and the reconstruction of national infrastructure that was damaged as a result of the violence. In some cases, surplus militia and other ex-combatants may be encouraged to merge with a new national military force as part of a process of security sector reform during the reintegration phase of DDR. This is a critical factor in successful post-conflict peace-building since no peace can be assured unless order is maintained and, often, the best method of ensuring order may be to have a unified national army (Knight2008, p.32). Corroborating this (Naraghi and Conaway undated, p.3) aver that it has two phases - initial reinsertion and long-term reintegration. Reinsertion refers to the short-term arrival period of an ex-combatant into his/her former home or a new community. Reintegration is a much longer-term process with the goal of ensuring permanent disarmament and sustainable peace. It includes assisting the community and the ex-combatants during the difficult transition to civilian life. In this phase, former fighters may enter job placement services, participate in skills training, credit schemes, scholarships or rehabilitation programmes.

It is important to note that reintegration is sustained when indigenous capacity³²is enhanced, when ex-combatants and other war-affected individuals become productive members of their communities, and when post-conflict societies begin to learn how to address conflicts in

³²Building indigenous capacity here refers to building local capacity which is the state capacity. It is believed that when the state in crisis is strengthened or empowered to be able to take responsibility for the management, and funding of a DDR programme, it helps to guarantee the success of the programme.

nonviolent ways (Obi, 2014; Knight, 2008). Knight (2008) however notes that it is necessary for reintegration to be a long term programme. He argues that the need for this was recognized when the UN distinguished “reinsertion” to mean a short-term process of reintegration.

The DDR process is multidimensional and exceedingly complex, with political, military, security, humanitarian, and socioeconomic dimensions. Its primary goal is to address the post-conflict security challenge that stems from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks once wars come to an end and during the critical transition period from conflict to peace. DDR programs seek to support ex-combatants’ economic and social reintegration, so that they can become stakeholders in peace and as productive members of their communities. This transformational strategy helps to foster post amnesty peace-building, and thereby to ensure that the peace is homegrown and thus durable.

1.8 POST-AMNESTY PEACEBUILDING AS A HOMEGROWN PEACE BUILDING MECHANISM

In their discussion of post amnesty peace-building (PAP) as a homegrown peace building effort (otherwise referred to here as DDR) in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, Obi and Rustad (2011, p.200) note that the PAP, unlike most other DDR programmes in post-conflict countries of the world, did not involve an open negotiated ceasefire, a decisive military victory or a formal peace-making process culminating in a peace agreement, involving the parties to the conflict, local actors and international actors/multilateral agencies. The programme also excluded the UN and regional peace-building actors, even while later seeking their endorsement. It was

conceptualised in the context of the co-optation practices involving the Niger Delta elites and the federal government's engagement with militia groups, represented by President Yar'Adua's³³ effort to draw up a comprehensive plan to end the conflict and bring about a transition to peace in the region.

The PAP, from the perspectives of Obi and Rustad, was an attempt to bring about peace at all costs, in order to afford the federal government unhindered access to oil (Obi & Rustad 2011, p.200). In this context, the government did not follow all the necessary prerequisites that are required in DDR as an international peace-building programme. In their words Obi et al (2011, p.201) state that:

PAP provides a case with which to demonstrate that, far from being a neutral process, certain actors, in this case the Nigerian state and elites can use the notion and practice of peace-building to pursue dominant political and economic interests. Using peace intervention in a local conflict, state elites have been able to respond to international pressures from oil companies (their partners) and energy-dependent global powers that are desirous to protect their energy interest, while also seeking to neutralise, co-opt and buy off oppositional local forces or disruptive elements. However, by the same logic the PAP has warded off direct international intervention, but without compromising the strong connections between national elites and transnational hegemonic, geo-strategic and economic interests (Obi et al 2011, p. 201).

Commenting still on the success of amnesty and the consequent DDR programme, the special adviser to the president and the chairman of the PAP, Kingsley Kuku (Kuku 2011, quoted in Udo 2011 cited in Obi 2014), who once claimed with pride that:

'The Amnesty programme is the only DDR programme in the world that did not rely on the expert advice from the United Nations. It has been acknowledged as a unique

³³President Muhammadu Musa Yar'Adua came to office as the Nigerian President on the 29th of May 2007. His priorities included to make sure that peace returns to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. To achieve this he set up the Niger Delta Technical Committee to collate previous reports on Niger Delta peace and developmental initiatives. It was part of the recommendations of the committee that amnesty should be granted to the militants who were willing to disarm.

Nigerian-made peace model. This is solely funded and managed by Nigerians to this level of success so far without any tragic incidents (cited in Obi 2011, p, 202).’

It is from this perspective that amnesty is argued to be a homegrown peace-building programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Moreover, the success of DDR depends on the building of local capacity and to ensure that the programme is adequately supervised by the national government to achieve sustainable peace in a conflict region (see Obi 2014, Knight 2008). The amnesty programme as a peace-building effort was initiated by the Nigerian government as a homegrown peace-building mechanism. The immediate objective was to ensure prompt disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the ex-militants. That is the reason that DDR comes as a natural requirement or a follow up to the amnesty programme.

Moreover, there are serious concerns among a number of observers that some ex-combatants received disproportionate benefits during the post-conflict phase, and that amnesty itself is an attempt to prevent justice and allow human rights violators to go unpunished (see Obi, 2014; Agbibo 2014; Akani personal communication Nov. 2014). However, one can argue that such disproportionate benefits may be a small price to pay for the establishment of security and peace in war-torn societies, particularly if obstacles to broader recovery efforts can be eliminated and a return to violence forestalled. In the subsequent part of my discussion I review the existing literature on amnesty. From the foregoing discussion, I claim in this study that amnesty has become a necessary prerequisite for the post conflict peace-building drive. The former combatants’ chances of putting down their weapons are limited when they are not given assurance that they will not be punished afterwards. This, the study claims may likely prolong the conflict and worsen an already devastating situation. When battles are not won through

outright military victory, amnesty remains an option to negotiate, resolve, and thereby commence a post conflict peace-building effort.

1.9 STUDIES ON AMNESTY

Amnesty is defined as a legislative act by which a state restores those who have been guilty, of offences against it, to a position of innocence (Oluwatoyin 2011, p.3). Olsen, Payne and Reiter (2010, p.806) define amnesty as a process where a state officially declares that those accused or convicted of human rights violations, whether individual or groups, are excused from prosecution, pardoned for their previous crimes, and subsequently released from prison.

Amnesty as a concept is derived from the Greek word *amnestia*, meaning to cast into oblivion or forgetfulness. This is shared with the medical term amnesia which means a loss of memory (Chigara 2002). Amnesty is defined as a strategic state policy which takes a form of executive or legislative clemency and in which offenders, or those involved in illegal actions, are formally pardoned. It is presumed that the moment a person or group is granted amnesty all records of the person's accusation, trial, conviction and imprisonment are summarily closed. In other words, upon amnesty, the antisocial acts of a person are totally wiped from the official record and he/she is considered not only innocent but also as having no legal connection with the crime in the first instance (Schey 1977).

An amnesty process is one of give-and-take. It requires the recipients to perform certain tasks, such as the willingness to be “amnestised”, to provide information, to admit to the truth about their actions, and to show remorse and surrender weapons, as in the case of the militants in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The conditional amnesty could be individualized, so that the recipients

can only benefit from an amnesty programme upon successful compliance with its conditions (Ogege, 2011).

Amnesty is of different types and kinds. It is categorized into individual amnesty, amnesty movements and mass amnesty. Individual amnesty has to do with a pardon that is extended to an offender. The amnesty movement refers to a programme in which illegal materials or contraband can be turned over to authorities with no repercussions for those who possessed the illegal materials or contraband. Mass amnesty is provided as a peace offering to a group or collectivity whose actions threaten the cherished values of peaceful existence in the society. These actions could take the form of violent protests, normlessness or revolution (Henrard 1999).

In spite of the controversy and differences associated with amnesty, the rationale behind the granting of amnesty remains relevant. The philosophy behind the design of amnesty is to achieve the following: to alleviate internal pressure, protect state agents from prosecution, promote peace and reconciliation, respond to international pressure, provide reparations, encourage exiles to return and to adhere to religious or cultural traditions and norms (Andreas 2002). The Niger Delta amnesty was designed to build peace and reconciliation so as to facilitate the beginning of a wide ranging package of reforms to address the problem of underdevelopment in the region.

Amnesty has been adopted to resolve several conflicts in various countries and its usefulness is numerous. As a mechanism for conflict resolution, it has been applied differently across countries to resolve conflicts (Reiter 2011, p.2). It is also gaining reputation as a preferred conflict resolution mechanism for many different forms of conflict, including for civil wars (Adejumobi 2009, p.73). Amnesty has also been used as a tool for nation-building when a country is in a process of democratic transition from a military authoritarian regime to

democratic rule. In conflict, amnesty has been effectively used to achieve the cessation of hostility (Schabas, 2004) between the different parties engaged in the conflict. Amnesty is often extended by the state as a concession to induce insurgent or armed groups to the negotiating table.

Whichever form amnesty takes, it generates controversy. There are always divided opinions on the issue of amnesty. Some scholars see amnesty as the opposite of justice³⁴ and it encourages individuals to act out criminal or antisocial behaviour knowing that they will not be negatively sanctioned if they simply stop the behaviour (Naqvi 2003, Tieman, 2002). However, those who oppose amnesty maintain that there is no doubt that if those involved in a revolution are granted amnesty, the war will cease and thus no additional casualties will be recorded. But justice had eluded those who were already hurt or killed while the revolution lasted. On the other hand, those in favour of amnesty argue that not only is it easier and cheaper, but it also helps to provide

³⁴Justice can be used to mean a number of things, such as the importance of having rights, fairness, and equality. People often think it is unjust to have their rights violated (for example imprisoning someone without being found guilty in a court of law); or being unfairly harmed by someone and yet adequate compensation is not paid for the harm done; or being unfairly treated with regards to employment, where someone is qualified for the job yet is denied the opportunity due to discrimination. Theories of justice are not necessarily "moral" theories because "justice" is more specific and could even be separate from morality entirely (Gray 2006, p.160). Gray discusses justice from the perspectives of the utilitarians who see no major divide between justice and morality, Nozick's (2001) libertarian theory which favours negative justice and the right to property in particular, and Rawls's theory of justice which equates justice with fairness. For this purpose, Rawls's principles of theory speak directly to the conception of theory in this study. Rawls's (2001) theory of justice revolves around the adaptation of two fundamental principles of justice which would, in turn, guarantee a just and morally acceptable society. The first principle guarantees the right of each to have the most extensive basic liberty compatible with the liberty of others. The second principle states that social and economic positions are to be (a) to everyone and (b) open to all. A key setback for Rawls is to show how such principles would be universally adopted, and here the work borders on general ethical issues. He introduces a theoretical "veil of ignorance" in which all the "players" in the social game would be placed in a situation which is called the "original position." Having only a general knowledge about the facts of "life and society," each player is to make a "rationally prudential choice" concerning the kind of social institution they would enter into a contract with. By denying the players any specific information about themselves it forces them to adopt a generalized point of view that bears a strong resemblance to the moral point of view. 'Moral conclusions can be reached without abandoning the prudential standpoint and positing a moral outlook merely by pursuing one's own prudential reasoning under certain procedural bargaining and knowledge constraints (Rawls 2001 p. 104).'

a non-killing alternative, rather than wanting to push a strategy that prolongs killing and devastation in the state (Burke-White 1987;Hadden 2004).

For those who support amnesty, they place emphasis on the need to adopt amnesty especially if it will help to bring an end to intransigent conflict. Those who are not in support advocate for a minimal amnesty if it becomes inevitable, especially when it relates to issues of human rights violations. Their argument is that the failure to bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice will serve as a bad precedent for future violations, and will also help to promote a sense of injustice across society (see Arriaza and Gibso, 1998; Naqvi, 2003;Tieman 2002). The essence of justice is to be fair to all, where in most instances fairness to all may not be applicable. In this regards, social and economic inequalities are expected to benefit the worst off group, particularly when this right does not infringe on the general right of the majority in society. Thus, giving amnesty to some groups of people may prevent them from being prosecuted, which invariably denied those who have been wronged the right to justice. However, if this is put into perspective, the state as a unified entity is considered to be wronged in this instance, and if such state later decided to grant amnesty in order to prevent further infractions in the state, this is assumed necessary in order to guarantee good for the population in general, which can only be achieve through concession. The worst off group here are the people in the community, the state in term of economic loss, and the warring parties (or the militants).So in the long run, the decision which is taken to grant amnesty will later be assumed to be in the interests of all. (See Rawls 2001; Gray 2006).

Arriaza and Gibso (1998) provide a critical analysis on the use of amnesty in eight different countries. Their aim was to look for the jurisprudential evidence for the use of amnesty in conflict management. They conclude that in a country where international laws and treaties are given consideration, amnesty hardly finds a place because, in these instances, amnesty will only become useable when the purpose is to prevent further breakdown in international conflict. That is, amnesty is only applicable for resolving international conflict. On the other hand, amnesty becomes relevant in countries where national law and sovereignty are given consideration. The useful commentary from the above dialogue is that amnesty may only be employed if it is aimed at achieving the cessation of hostility. The debate around amnesty also serves as a caution to the institutionalization of a blanket amnesty in a number of cases. For instance, in South Africa, for anyone to be qualified for amnesty, such a person (i.e. the perpetrator of a crime) had to present him/herself before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Failure to do this while the sitting of the commission was in place meant that the person would not be due for amnesty at the expiration of the sitting (TRC Report 1998, p.103-135).

Chile, on the other hand, adopted both national and international laws in respect of its amnesty. This made it possible to try the military head and his supporters even after they had abdicated from power with the amnesty law still in place (Walling and Sikkink 2007; Collins 2013). In contrast, in Argentina, amnesty did not cover military officers above the rank of colonel, because they were regarded as the superior officers who initiated and commanded the offences and violations that were committed (Walling and Sikkink 2007; Collins 2013). On the rationale for amnesty, Arriaza et al comment that amnesty is eminently a political act, the faculty for granting grace or clemency is a manifestation of the sovereignty of a country. They thereby define

amnesty as ‘derogation with a retroactive effect of a penal norm’ (Arriaza and Gibso 1998, p. 830). Amnesty in their words appears as a ‘measure of character in order to appease rancours and resentment inseparable from social and political struggle’ (Arriaza and Gibso, 1998, p.830). They conclude by advocating for a greater voice for the judge and courts in determining when amnesty is appropriate. To achieve this, the judges will have to be more professional and independent in the applicability of international statutes, hence the need for a greater international review mechanism. This according to them will prevent judges from the mechanical application of statutes, as expertise resulting from constant practice would have resulted in exercising review over the actions of subordinate branches. While the scholars advocate for limited amnesty (that is amnesty with caution) and seek a voice for judges and courts in its implementation, they contend that there is a need for amnesty, especially as it relates to managing international conflict. The point of departure here is that contemporary conflicts are more frequently of national rather than an international nature, where (in some cases) they have international influence. Thus, claims that amnesty is only relevant in international disputes are not tenable, because a nation has to be at peace before such nations could manifest the same at the international level.

1.10 AMNESTY IN A WIDER CONTEXT

In discussing when and how amnesty could be implemented, Naqvi (2003) provides an exposition on the position of amnesty as it relates to war crimes under the international criminal justice system. He distinguishes amnesty from pardon. According to him, while amnesty covers total forgiveness before conviction, pardon only comes after conviction. If one traces the etiology of amnesty, it comes from the Greek word “amnestia”, which means oblivion or not remembering. It means to erase criminal prosecution for past offences. This pre-conviction

measure may be distinguished from pardon, which officially recognizes the guilt of the offender but forgoes the sentence (Naqvi 2003, p.586).

Under the international criminal justice system, amnesty does not cover crimes against humanity such as genocide. Having this in mind, both the national and international courts can try such cases, even after amnesty might have been offered. Amnesty is also recognized by the state that offers it. It only become applicable if there is international conflict among countries and amnesty is given to enable the cessation of the conflict. In such situations, it becomes binding among the countries where such a peace treaty is agreed to.

Amnesty, according to Naqvi (2003), may also be granted and recognized by the international justice system where the UN Security Council consider it necessary to forestall continuous crime, conflict and international instability. Again, amnesty is recognized wherein the granting of such amnesty helps to extract important facts (or information) from an offender. In this case, what the perpetrator of the crime needed is amnesty which will assure the person that he/she will not be prosecuted after his/her confession. In summation, Naqvi notes that domestic courts and international courts are not normally bound by provisions on amnesty for war crimes. The only exception to this is where such courts are required to honour the amnesty granted in the extreme cases, where the prosecution of an accused (who has been granted amnesty as part of a peace agreement brokered by the United Nations), in the instance when prosecution of such an accused is perceived as a threat to international peace and security. However, even in these circumstances the amnesty must be consistent with the fundamental principles of international law in order to render it valid and internationally acceptable (Naqvi 2003, p.594). Thus, amnesty must be seen to

adhere to international best practices and must not serve as a bad precedent for future crimes. In all the discussions, amnesty is still deemed useful from the perspective of the international criminal justice system to forestall further chaos.

1.11 THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AMNESTY

Writing on the historical importance of amnesty, Tieman (2002) takes a cursory look at the Amnesty 403 in Athens³⁵- and discusses the views of authors like William Mifford who opines that the programme was a failure due to the passion and uncontrollable self interest of the demos³⁶. Grote was of the view that the programme was a success due to the moderation and the gentle bearing of the demos. Tieman, drawing on the experience of amnesty in Chile where General Augusto Pinochet³⁷ was later brought to account thirteen years after the self imposed amnesties, argues that amnesty is never a matter of forgetting.

³⁵Thrasybulus led the democratic resistance to the new oligarchic government, known as the Thirty Tyrants which the victorious Spartans imposed on Athens. He commanded a small force of exiles that invaded Attica and, in successive battles, defeated first a Spartan garrison and then the forces of the oligarchic government (which includes the Spartan general, Lysander). As a result, the leader of the Thirty Tyrants, Critias was killed in the battle. The Battle of Piraeus is fought between Athenian exiles, who defeated the government of the Thirty Tyrants and occupied Piraeus, and a Spartan force sent to combat them. In the battle, the Spartans narrowly defeated the exiles, with both sides suffering large numbers of casualties (Cited in Tieman 2002). After the battle, the Agiad King of Sparta, Pausania arranged a settlement between the two parties which allowed the reunification of Athens and Piraeus, and the re-establishment of democratic government in Athens. The remaining oligarchic Thirty Tyrants were allowed to flee to Eleusis. Thrasybulus restored democratic institutions to Athens and granted amnesty to all except the oligarchic extremists. He was helped by Lysias the Athenian orator, in arguing the case against the oligarchy. Andocide, Athenian orator and politician, who was been implicated in the mutilation of the Herms on the eve of the departure of the Athenian expedition against Sicily in 415 BC returned from exile under the general amnesty. The amnesty that came up from this settlement is what is called Amnesty 403 (Tieman 2002).

³⁶The leaders i.e. the democrats

³⁷Pinochet assumed power in Chile following a United States-backed coup d'etat on 11 September 1973 that overthrew the elected socialist Unidad Popular government of President Salvador Allende which brought to an end the civilian rule. Before the coup, Pinochet had been promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the Army by Allende on 23 August 1973, having been its General Chief of Staff since early 1972 (BBC News, 18 August 2011). In December 1974, the ruling military junta appointed Pinochet President of Chile by joint decree, although without the support of one of the coup's instigators, Air Force General Gustavo Leigh. Right from the outset, the new military government implemented harsh measures against its perceived opponents. Various reports and investigations claim that between 1,200 and 3,200 people were killed, up to 80,000 people were interned and as many as 30,000 were tortured during the time Pinochet was in government. In 2011, the official number of deaths and forced disappearances stood at 3,065 (BBC News, 18 August 2011). Pinochet's seventeen-year rule was given a legal framework through a controversial 1980 plebiscite, which approved a new Constitution drafted by a government-

Tieman draws on the character and attitudes of the Athenian demos which he emphasizes as contributed to its success. He claims that Athenian amnesty was a success and helped to lay a good foundation for Athenian democracy. Thus, the character and genuine ability of the parties in amnesty may go a long way in determining the effectiveness of amnesty in any country.

Moreover, the relevance of amnesty to peace building is present as part of a series of mechanisms employed under a transitional justice system. It has therefore been utilized by countries such as South Africa, Sierra Leone, Chile, Argentina and El-Salvador in their processes of democratic transition³⁸ from apartheid, civil wars and military authoritarian regimes to democratic political systems.

appointed commission. In a 1988 plebiscite, 56% voted against Pinochet continuing as president, which led to democratic elections for the Presidency and Congress. Pinochet stepped down in 1990 and still continued to serve as Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army until 10 March 1998, when he retired and became a senator-for-life in accordance with his 1980 constitution. On the 10th of October 1998, Pinochet was arrested under an international arrest warrant on a visit to London in connection with numerous human rights violations (Angell 1991). After an intense legal battle, he was released on grounds of ill-health, and returned to Chile in March 2000. In 2004, Chilean Judge Juan Guzman Tapia ruled that Pinochet was medically fit to stand trial and placed him under house arrest. By the time of his death on 10 December 2006, about 300 criminal charges were still pending against him in Chile for numerous human rights violations during his seventeen-year rule, he was also accused of tax evasion and embezzlement during and after his rule (Angell 1991; Tieman 2002).

³⁸Democratization otherwise known as democratic transition is the transition to a democratic political system. It may be the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy or transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. The outcome may be consolidated and entrenched (as it is currently being experienced in Nigeria) or democratization may face frequent reversals (as it has experienced for example in Argentina). Different patterns of democratic transitions are often used to explain other political phenomena, such as whether a country goes to a war or whether its economy grows. Democratization itself is influenced by various factors, including economic development, history, and civil society. The ideal result from democratization is to ensure that the people have the right to vote and are involved in democratic decision making either directly, or through their elected representatives in their political system (Guo 1999; Przeworski et al 2000; Therborn 1977; Traversa 2014; Acemoglu 2006). A more appropriate position here is that of Robert Dahl. Dahl (1971) argues that for democracy to be considered to have consolidated, the citizens must have civil and political rights plus fair, competitive, and inclusive elections. Dahl calls countries that meet these criteria "polyarchies," or plurality but they are more commonly referred to as "liberal democracies" (Dahl 1971).

In the South African case, for example, amnesty was employed as a tool for nation-building; that is, a nation transitioning from a system of governance which excluded, degraded and dehumanised its citizens during the apartheid system, to an all inclusive system which encourages national unity for the development of the country (see Gibson, 2002). Wepener (2012) used the concept of liminality³⁹ to explain what he refers to as social dramas which symbolizes the cleansing processes during the TRC period in South Africa. This, according to him shows ‘the dynamics of a ritual process of a society experiencing conflict, the so-called social dramas with their phases of breach, crisis, redressive action and reintegration/schism’ (Wepener 2012, p.300). What the whole processes signify is that the new state has been wiped clean of its old crimes and is thereby deemed to be new and one in which trust is warranted. Commenting still on this, De Lange (2000), reports that during the transition, the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) made a Faustian bargain in order to secure majority rule in democratic South Africa. Corroborating this, Gibson (2002) claims that the ANC traded amnesty for peace; the leaders of the apartheid government accepted freedom from persecution for human rights abuses in exchange for power sharing. This concession (i.e. the power sharing arrangement) was proposed by Joe Slovo of the South Africa Communist Party (SACP), whose “sunset clause” (cited in Slovo 1994, p.3) involved power sharing with the NP for a fixed period

³⁹In anthropology, the concept of liminality (from the Latin word *līmen*, meaning "a threshold") is the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of rituals, when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the ritual is complete. This comes in stages, the first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a ‘state’), or from both. During the intervening ‘liminal’ period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the ‘passenger’) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (re-aggregation or re-incorporation) the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual, or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined and ‘structural’ type. He is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of this social position in a system of such positions. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transition (Turner 1996 cited in Wepener 2012, p.295).

of time; amnesty for security officers, and the honouring of the contracts of civil servants. His clause was accepted and endorsed on 18 November 1992, and thus broke the final deadlock for a negotiated settlement, at multi-party talks in the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum, in April 1993 (see Slovo 1994, p.3).

The negotiation provided an opportunity for the election which came afterward, and thus offered a reason for the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which was part of a larger South African project of nation-building set out in the Reconstruction and Development Plan and included land restitution, redistribution and tenure rights.

Accordingly, Gibson (2002) stated that in order to achieve the real intent of the commission, four types of justice were employed, which included: distributive justice, procedural justice, reparative justice, and retributive justice. **Distributive justice** here means that amnesty places a great deal of effort on the compensation of victims of apartheid for their losses. In terms of **restorative justice**, the essence of the justice system was to restore the perpetrators of crimes against humanity into the society, rather than to punish them. **Procedural justice** involves a process in which victims are given a voice to state their ordeal and where the perpetrators of crimes also confess their sins. **Retributive justice** concerns the desire of individuals who are dissociated with the victim or the act and its consequences for punishment of the offender and it is thought by some to be older, more primitive, more universal, and socially more significant than any other justice (Hogan and Emler 1981; cited in Gibson, 2002). Looking at the South African case critically, the aim of the commission that was set up was not to punish offenders, but to acknowledge the victims and to facilitate the restoration of the perpetrators back into the

society, while at the same time ensuring that the new state was distinguished from the old through the process of liminality (as the victims told their stories, perpetrators recounted their role, and the new state was indemnified). To establish a fair procedure for achieving this, and to assume that once a confession about impunity had been made, it was considered that this would suffice for the victims and the society. This still supports Rawls's (2001) argument about greatest good for the larger society. Under the transitional justice system, South Africa made use of multiple mechanisms to achieve its nation-building project. These included the reparation and amnesty provisions of the TRC.

The case of Sierra Leone is another useful example for this study. Amnesty, within this context, was used to resolve the intransigent civil war. According to Schabas (2004) amnesty was used in Sierra Leone as a post-conflict strategy which aimed at reconstruction and peace-building after the civil war from 1991 to 1999. Like the Sierra Leone case, the Nigerian government first employed amnesty after the 1967-1970 civil war through its declaration of *no victor no vanquished*⁴⁰. The priority of the Nigerian government was to foster national reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconciliation and post-conflict nation-building (see Osaghae 1998, p.69). In order to achieve a post war reconstructive drive, the government of Sierra Leone also made use of multiple mechanisms under a transitional justice system. Amnesty was used alongside the truth commission and through reparations for the victims.

⁴⁰General Yakubu Gowon introduced the concept of "no victor no vanquished" after the civil war in 1970. This was as Said (2008) claims to show magnanimity in victory. Again the declaration was very important to instil confidence in the minds of the Biafrans (the Easterners) and to pave the way for post conflict nation building of the government which include rehabilitation, reconstruction, and reintegration (RRR) of the warring community (see Osaghae 1998, Adejumobi 2005).

In the cases of Chile, Brazil⁴¹, Argentina, and El-Salvador⁴², amnesty was employed as a self-imposed system by authoritarian military regimes with the aim of promoting freedom in their

⁴¹It was formed in May 2012. The objective of the Commission, according to the President Dilma Rousseff, was to bring about national reconciliation. She assured the antagonists (that is the military) that the political pact will be honoured (i.e. the Amnesty Law of 1979) . The Amnesty law granted total and unrestricted amnesty to all individuals involved in politically motivated crimes, including murder and torture, during the dictatorship. This is against the backdrop that in April 2010, the Brazilian Supreme Court already upheld the constitutionality of the 1979 Amnesty Law. In December 2010, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that the Amnesty Law is illegal. Filho (2012) has equally argued that the amnesty law should be revoked and individualised amnesty granted to worthy cases. That is, for all perpetrators who came forward to the truth commission. As a result, Brazil is able to investigate the military-era deaths, tortures, and disappearances without having to prosecute the perpetrators that cooperated with the work of the truth commission. However, it was the President's belief that telling the people the truth about the circumstances behind the torture, disappearance, and murder of their loved ones would help to heal the old wounds. The final report was presented to President Dilma Rousseff on 10 December 2014 and it consisted of three volumes. The first volume provides a history, description and the goals of the National Truth Commission (CNV). The second provides information regarding human rights violations from differing perspectives in various social sectors including militants, urban workers, indigenous peoples, the LGBT community, professors and university students. The third, and most extensive volume, details the histories of the 434 people who were killed and whom disappeared. These volumes do not represent the beginning nor the end of these investigations. There were several arguments from the activists and the people of Brazil after the presentation of the report. The state is said to have two options: either to view the report as a historical registry or to serve as another step toward transitional justice. The later was adopted by the committee. Those who are involved in torturing and murdering political prisoners are recommended to be punished (see Filho 2012; Castañeda 2014; Collins 2013).

⁴²The conflict in El Salvador took place during a time of social upheaval and dissent within the military. The 1970s brought about growing public support for leftist movements as well as increased government repression including, ultimately, the creation of government organized 'death squads' to combat opposition movements. Both trends were influenced by unrest in other Latin American countries. This continued into 1980 after several military interregnums failed to quell the violence. By 1981, leftist guerrillas and political groups joined forces, forming the FMLN. Then, throughout the 1980s civil war was waged between the FMLN and the US-backed Salvadoran military forces. Increased international attention in the fighting led to an investigation by the US Congress into the conflict and, eventually, the UN intervened to help mediate a resolution to the conflict. Subsequently, a Truth Commission was established January 16, 1992 and was mandated by the UN to broker a peace agreement that ended the war (Cited in USIP Truth Commission Report 1993, p.1-5). The mandate was to investigate serious acts of violence occurring since 1980 and the nature and effects of the violence and to recommend methods of promoting national reconciliation. The Commission presented its report, titled *From Madness to Hope: The 12-Year War in El Salvador* on March 15, 1993. The Commission concluded that among over 22,000 complaints documented, 60% involved extrajudicial killings, 25% involved disappearances, 20% involved torture, and some alleging more than one form of violence. That based on collected testimony the commission attributed 85% of the acts of violence to State agents, which took place predominantly in rural areas. Approximately 5% of the acts of violence were attributed to the FMLN. Also, the report named individual actors allegedly responsible for human rights violations (Cited in USIP Truth Commission Report 1993, p.1-5). In line with this, the Commission noted that its recommendations were legally binding according to its mandate. It recommended the dismissal of culpable army officers and civil servants from government employment and the disqualification of any other person implicated in wrongdoings, including those investigated by the commission, from public office. It called for extensive judicial and legal reform (especially to prevent the use of coerced confessions in trials) and security and institutional reforms. It did not call for prosecution of incriminated perpetrators, since it saw the Salvadoran legal system as incapable of executing such prosecutions effectively. It recommended reparations for victims including memorials and monetary compensation. The commission recommended that a forum, comprising a representative sector of society, should be established to monitor the implementation of the recommendations. However, five days after the report was presented, there was a threat of a military take over which necessitated the legislature to pass a general amnesty law covering all crimes related to the civil war. In 1999, the Inter-American Commission ruled that El Salvador's

new democracies (Collins, 2006; Hamber, 2009). In these countries, the manner in which amnesty was deployed in resolving conflict varies. Cases from the self imposed amnesty in military authoritarian regimes in Chile, Argentina, El-Salvador and Brazil reveal that there are variations in the manner by which amnesty was used to ensure a lasting peace. In Chile, Collings (2006) wrote that the head of state Augusto Pinochet was tried in Spain, while his colleagues who were equally involved in crimes against humanity were tried in Chile, even after the actualization of peace. This implies that the amnesty granted by the military dictator was not enough for him and his friends to escape prosecution after their departure from government. Similarly, former Liberian President Charles Taylor⁴³ was also tried by the International Court of

amnesty law violated international law by foreclosing further investigation in the 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests and two women. The amnesty law prevented not only prosecutions but also serious criminal investigations to determine legal responsibility for the cases cited in the Truth Commission report and for the thousands of other cases of human rights abuses that occurred in the course of the war. At the time, the argument was made that post-war political stability required a broad blanket amnesty that would not assign blame and would allow the various political forces in the country to look forward. This however has been a subject of controversy at home and abroad till today (USIP Truth Commission Report 1993, p.1-5; Thale and Beltran 2013).

⁴³President Charles Taylor was born in Arhinton, Montserrando Country, in Liberia; he earned a degree at Bentley College in the United States before returning to Liberia to work in the government of Samuel Doe. After being accused and removed for corruption and embezzlement, he eventually arrived in Libya, where he was trained as a guerrilla fighter. He returned to Liberia in 1989 as the head of a Libyan-backed rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, where he eventually overthrew the government of Samuel Doe. This resulted in the first Liberian Civil War (1989–96). Following Doe's execution, Taylor gained control of a large portion of the country and became one of the most prominent warlords in Africa. After a peace deal that ended the war, Taylor manipulated his way through force and coercion, threatening to resume war if he was not elected. He was subsequently elected as the president in the 1997 general election and was sworn in as president of Liberia on August 2, 1997, after leading an eight-year insurgency against the Liberian government. Taylor's presidency, which lasted until 2003, was characterized by widespread human rights abuses in Liberia (Cited in Human Right Watch 2012). Taylor's forces also participated in armed conflicts and cross-border raids in neighbouring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, where they committed numerous abuses. Growing opposition to his regime grew, culminating in the outbreak of the second Liberian Civil War (1999–2003). By 2003, he had lost control of much of the countryside and was formally indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in 2003 for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law during Sierra Leone's armed conflict. Taylor's repression in Liberia fuelled a rebellion to unseat him. Following rebel incursions into Monrovia, the Liberian capital, and the unsealing of Taylor's indictment by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, Taylor stepped down as president, in August 2003. He was offered a safe haven in Nigeria, where he stayed until his surrender to the Special Court. He was later transferred to the custody of the Special Court on March 29, 2006. Because of concerns over regional stability in West Africa, the trial was moved from Freetown, the Sierra Leonean capital, to the Netherlands. On April 26, 2012, Taylor became the first former head of state since the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders after World War II to face a verdict before an international or hybrid international-national court on charges of serious crimes committed in violation of international law. He was found guilty on all 11 counts of the indictment on the premise that he aided and abetted the commission of the crimes and was therefore individually criminally responsible for them. He was also found guilty of planning attacks on the diamond-rich Kono district in eastern Sierra Leone and the town of

Justice after the initial amnesty was granted to him on the 9th of July 2003 when the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo offered him political asylum in Nigeria. Taylor resigned as the President of Liberia on the 11th of August 2003; he flew to Nigeria on the 14th of October 2003 where he stayed before he was later arrested. Contrary to this development, an attempt to try the military authoritarian regime could not be achieved in Argentina, where both houses of congress voted in 2003 to annul the *de facto* amnesty provisions introduced earlier in the transition period. The annulment was later upheld by the country's Supreme Court (see Collings 2006). In the case of El-Salvador, Collings (2006) claimed that the military regime still continues to exert enormous power after the transition, thereby making it impossible for activists or opponents to challenge the veracity of the amnesty scheme. The cases in Chile and Liberia have future implications for the amnesty offer. They may bring skepticism and suspicion for a future amnesty programme or the warring parties may be wary of a relapse or reversal of the agreement by subsequent regimes and thereby refuse to acknowledge and accept the amnesty proposal to end a conflict. Examples of this could also be seen in the recalcitrance of Gaddafi⁴⁴ in Libya, to

Makeni, the economic centre of northern Sierra Leone, in late 1998, and an attack on Freetown in early 1999, during which war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed. On May 18, the court released its full written judgment, totalling over 2,500 pages. On May 30, he was sentenced to 50 years in prison for having found guilty of the crime (Human Right Watch 2012; BBC News 26 April, 2012; The Economist, 31st May 2007).

⁴⁴On 1 September 1969 Muammar Gaddafi became the *de facto* leader of Libya after leading a group of young Libyan military officers against king Idris in a bloodless coup d'état. After the king had fled the country, the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) headed by Gaddafi abolished the monarchy and the old constitution and proclaimed the new Libyan Arab Republic, with the motto "freedom, socialism, and unity" (Libyan Constitution 11 Dec, 1969). On coming to power, the RCC government initiated a process of directing funds toward providing education, health care and housing for all. Although the reforms suffered some challenges, public education in the country became free and primary education compulsory for both sexes. Medical care became available to the public at no cost but providing housing for all was a task the RCC government was not able to complete. Under Gaddafi, per capita income in the country rose to more than US \$11,000, and became the fifth highest in Africa. The increase in prosperity was accompanied by a controversial foreign policy, with increased political repression at home. During the 1980s and 1990s, Gaddafi openly supported what is termed rebel movements, the movement that he (Gaddafi) deemed as liberation movement like that of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the Irish Republic Army and the Polisario Front (Western Sahara), which led to a deterioration of Libya's foreign relations with several countries. After the 9/11 attacks, however, the relations were mostly normalised considering the fact that Gaddafi also believed Al Qaeda was a terrorist group. In the first quarter of 2011, a civil war broke out in the context of the wider "Arab Spring" spurring an anti-Gaddafi movement in Libya. The anti-Gaddafi movement formed the National Transition Council, on 27 February 2011 which was meant to act

change course in Libya, and prefer to die in power even after the African Union tried to intervene in spite of the initial sidelining of the organisation by the US military. By and large, however, considering the cases cited above and regardless of their variation, amnesty was still effectively deployed in many states to support a peaceful transition, and to contribute to post-conflict peace building.

The South African and Sierra Leone cases are very useful for my study. Amnesties in these contexts are similar to that of Nigeria. Nigeria equally adopted multiple mechanisms under the transitional justice system. Amnesty and reparation were employed. Reparation in practice is the capacity building and monetary benefit which the government introduced into the scheme. Giving an exposition on this, Oluwatoyin (2011) stated that the processes are in phases. First, the militants must disarm and be demobilised. Second, the militants are to be arranged into clusters and are to embark on training to enhance their capacity (this is simultaneous with the provision of monthly stipends to them). This phase is completed after two weeks of training after which the ex-militants are set for proper capacity building which includes vocational training such as welding and fabrication, pilot training and also further education. The phase would then be completed by the reintegration of the ex-militants into society whereby money, employment and other necessary tools are expected to be provided for the final reintegration process.

as an interim authority in the rebel-controlled areas. In the bid to curtail the group, a number of atrocities were committed by the government. In order to prevent further bloodshed, a multinational coalition led by NATO forces intervened on 21 March 2011 with the aim to protect civilians against attacks by the government's forces. At the same time, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Gaddafi and his associates on 27 June 2011. Gaddafi was ousted from power in the wake of the fall of Tripoli to the rebel forces on 20 August 2011, although pockets of resistance held by forces loyal to Gaddafi's government held out for another two months, especially in Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte. The fall of the last remaining cities under pro-Gaddafi control and Sirte's capture on 20 October 2011, followed by the subsequent killing of Gaddafi, marked the end of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya a political party he headed. Since the death of Gaddafi, there has been a wide political vacuum in Libya which may probably take decades to restore (Global Edge2011; CNN, March 2011; Al Jazeera, March 2011).

In sum, I have examined various cases of amnesty from a wider country by country and historical analysis to assess how the amnesty programme has impacted on peace in different countries. I established that, although there were variations in the way amnesty was employed in the cases cited, it has proven to be a useful and valuable mechanism to negotiate and initiate a path to a post-conflict nation building situation. This is particularly useful for my study as it further strengthens the resolve that the amnesty programme in Nigeria has great potential to galvanize the resolution of the conflict in the Niger Delta, and provide an avenue for the subsequent transformation of the former militants.

I now proceed by exploring the relevant literature on the perspectives of conflict in the Niger Delta, as it has a bearing on my study.

1.12 STUDIES ON THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT

Several scholars, with diverse points of view, have attempted to explain the causes of conflict in the Niger Delta. These studies will be interrogated under the following thematic headings: historical accounts of the Niger Delta conflict, which includes the government's response and management of the conflict thus far; the international dimension to the conflict; the environmental aspects of the cause of the conflict; and, the effect of "blood oil" in the escalation of the conflict. I shall also focus on the militarization of the struggle and the activities of militant groups which were spearheaded by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Thereafter I shall review extant studies on amnesty in the Niger Delta. The purpose of the review is to provide an insightful framework into the diverse nature of the conflict. Through

this, it is shown how the conflict in the region progressed to the present stage, and the likely challenges that await the implementation of the amnesty programme.

1.13A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CONFLICT

The causes of the conflict in the Niger Delta region are seen from diverse perspectives, ranging from unemployment, marginalization of the region, environmental degradation due to neglect, harmful activities of the oil multinationals and the effect of climate change, and a clamour for the control of resources (see Ajiboye et al 2009; Courson 2009; Ojatorotu 2008; Idemudia 2009; Asuni 2009; Watts 2008; Uyigwe and Agho 2007; Obi 2009). In their exposition on the causes of conflict in the Niger Delta, Ajiboye et al (2009) argue that the inequality in the distribution of wealth by the state and the deliberate neglect of the region of the Niger Delta has increased the poverty level of the population. This, according to them, has created feelings of frustration, which gradually resulted in the youth adopting violence as a means of making their grievances around their poverty heard.

Similarly, Ojatorotu (2008) argues that the intractable dimension of the conflict became further heightened when it assumed an international dimension. He suggests that this became possible because of the strategic position of the Delta region. The Niger Delta, located in the West Africa's oil-rich Gulf of Guinea, is said to be strategic to the energy calculations of the world's established and emerging powers. This unequivocally ensures that there is international attention on the conflict in the region and ensures pressure on the government to find an immediate solution to it (also see Ojatorotu 2008; Ukeje 2012).

Asuni (2009) takes special interest in analyzing the impact of blood oil⁴⁵ in the Niger Delta. The central argument is the illicit involvement of stake holders⁴⁶ in oil bunkering, which complicates all attempts to stem the tide of oil theft and sabotage. The proceeds from oil theft, the author argues, have helped to sustain the level of violence in the region. According to her, the proceeds are used to buy weapons and ammunition, and to further help to sustain the armed groups that are fighting the federal government (Asuni 2009, p.2). As an extension, the armed groups also invested in criminal enterprises such as drug trafficking, thereby escalating crime.

She further stated that unemployment, the presence of armed ethnic militias who understand the terrain and the network of the rivers which connect oil pipelines, the ineffective and corrupt law enforcement officials and low conviction rates for those suspected of oil bunkering, the protection and patronage offered by senior government officials and politicians who often use oil theft as a funding source for political campaigns, the relative ease of corrupt oil industry staff to assist in bunkering, and the presence of an established international market for stolen oil, further help to sustain the crime and conflict in the region. All these equally help to sustain the unequal distribution of resources in the country (Akinola 2014; Asuni 2009, p.4).

1.14 THE BLOOD OIL THESIS

In furtherance of the “blood oil” thesis, Watts (2008) states unequivocally that the petro insurgency in the Niger Delta has a direct connection to politics. The selfish interest of the political class, and recklessness of the political leaders in the unbridled manner by which they

⁴⁵The term “Blood oil” owes its origins to the “blood diamond” campaign, which raised awareness of the problem of diamond smuggling from African war zones and its role in funding conflict. The sale of stolen oil from the Niger Delta has had the same pernicious influence on that region’s conflict as diamonds did in the wars in Angola and Sierra Leone (see Asuni, 2009).

⁴⁶Some Niger Delta elites, village heads, politicians and the militants.

expend and siphon public funds to foster a culture of impunity in the country. Beginning with the case of Rivers state, Watts maintains for instance that the criminal activities of the state, armed banditry, and kidnapping among other factors are rampant because the perpetrators knew they will not be reprimanded. This is against the backdrop that the criminals know full well that they cannot be arrested because what operates at the state level also encourages the act of criminality. Moreover, the criminals have at one time or the other been used by the political elite⁴⁷ for election related crimes, in the desperate attempts by the politicians to control the political machinery. Thus, these thugs were used to cause violence in order to manipulate election results. In turn, the perpetrators are attempting to reassert their power after being marginalized, and in some case hounded, by the security forces as they fell out of favour during the last year of the Odili administration (Watts 2008, p.22).

In his further analysis, he argues that what makes the politics of oil complicated is that within the Nigerian petro-states is a mix of forces that give shape to the oil complex. These include, inter alia, the military, local and global civil societies conscripted either through transnational advocacy groups concerned with human rights and the transparency of the oil sector, or through local movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) championing the right of the exploited masses. The transnational oil business - the independents and the entire service industry - are actively involved in the process of local development, corporate social responsibility and stake holder inclusion. Also, there is an inevitable struggle over oil wealth.

⁴⁷A political elite is not simply a group of people that rule politically, but belong to an economic class. Their basis of power is not related to the means of production and they are not necessarily primarily driven as an economic class. They are popular and exert great influence within the political institutions and in the affairs in the state. Using the political elite in KwaZulu-Natal as a reference point Francis (2008) defines the political elite as the elected members of the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal, because their legitimate relationship to the institutions of power enables them, within constitutional and institutional constraints, to take the most important political decisions in the post-1994 period in South Africa (Francis 2008, p.8).

This is about who controls and owns it, who has rights over it, and how the wealth is to be distributed and utilized. Such struggles bring in a panoply of local political forces such as ethnic militias, para-militaries, separatist movements and so on. He concludes by saying that there is a relationship between oil and the shady world of drugs, illicit wealth through oil theft, mercenaries and the black economy (Watts 2008, p.12). It is in his opinion that all these have to be factored in to really have a full grasp of what constitute the complex oil politics in Nigeria, and which in turn fuels the crisis in the Niger Delta region.

1.15 THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF THE CONFLICT

Uyigüe and Agho (2007) focus on the environmental consequences of the operations of the multinational oil companies in the region. They argue that the Niger Delta is highly susceptible to adverse environmental changes occasioned by climate change because it is located in the coastal region of the world. According to them, coastal regions of the world are already experiencing flooding due to a rise in the sea level. In addition, the region is also faced with a myriad of environmental problems resulting from oil exploration and exploitation activities. Reports on the environmental state of the Niger Delta are conclusive that the area has become an ecological wasteland (Uyigüe and Agho 2007, p.8). They explain that gas flaring which increases greenhouse emissions, and other explorative activities, conjoin to heighten the effect of climate change in the region. The corresponding effect of this is the occurrence of coastal erosion due to the rise in sea levels which has rendered many people homeless and taken over many farms. They further note that the acid rain which resulted from greenhouse emissions also increases salinity of both surface and underground water, thereby limiting the farm produce and destroying fishes and the natural habitat of the people. This deprives the people of their means of livelihood.

One important narrative here is that the adverse effect of the climate change, which has not been mitigated by successive governments, has contributed in part to increasing the level of disaffection and conflict in the region (Uyigue et al 2007, p.8).

1.16 THE STRUCTURAL ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT

Idemudia (2009) captures different variables in the causes of the conflict. He traces the structural origin of the Niger Delta conflict from the colonial period to the present, and surmises that the conflict is best understood as a process viewed in phases, and with a combination of causes. Accordingly, the solution to the conflict must also incorporate all the root causes which ranges from structural imbalances, resource control, marginalisation, poverty and the undevelopment of people and the region.

In his own submission, Obi (2009) provides deep insight into the causes of the intransigent conflict in the Niger Delta, stating from the outset that the present conflict is characterized by multiple interests in the control of oil resources. This is further heightened with the perceived marginalization of the ethnic minorities, who feel that the majority ethnic groups (i.e. the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) derive pleasure in depriving the Niger Deltans of their rights. He notes that the background of the conflict lies deeper in the nature of the Nigerian state and the depredations of the ruling political elite. Also, central in the discourse is the long-festering grievances and marginalization of the ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta region which has informed the demands for self-determination and resource control (Obi 2009,p.108).

Taking a wider view on the causation of conflict in Africa generally, Obi (2009) adumbrates some perspectives on the drivers of conflict in Africa. Starting with the economy of war perspective which provides a link between the greed versus grievance debate, according to him, the economic considerations shape the calculations and behaviour of parties in conflict, giving rise to a particular war economy. He further discusses the neo-patrimonial perspective which attempts to demonstrate the rationality of corruption, conflict and poor governance within the African cultural, social and historical milieu as the drivers of conflict. Idemudia (2009) also argues that it is the failure of the state to adequately address the fundamental issue of deprivation in the region coupled with selfish political interest that helps to give room for the greed issue (see also Ukiwo 2009). This is further discussed in chapter three.

The resource curse perspective (is also referred to in the literature as the Dutch Disease) is where developing countries with abundant resources have a poor record of sustainable development, which is especially bad in the case of oil-resources. The abundant oil resources leads to an economic reliance on oil wealth, which constrains economic growth and poverty alleviation. This promotes rent-seeking practices, heightens commodity price volatility; and responsible for lack of diversification pulls resources into one sector. In this case, the Nigerian state diverts its money and resources into the extraction of petroleum resource thereby causing decline in all other sections of economy. Thus there is an over emphasis on getting the oil out of the ground rather than a diversification of economic activities and development of other economic sectors. This seeks explanation by demonstrating how huge natural resource endowments, rather than brighten the prospect for development, paradoxically motivate people to struggle over resources, or act as an incentive and propeller for armed groups to engage in conflict in order to exploit the

opportunity to loot. Similarly, Watts (2004) argues that oil rather than being a source of happiness is more of a curse to the region. This, according to him is because there is a particular sort of “oil complex” in which nefarious activities link all critical stake holders in the country to the complex politics of oil (beginning with the political leaders, military leaders, up to the militant leaders). The politics of oil and the unbridled nature of the state make oil a curse rather than a blessing for the county in general, and the region in particular. This speaks directly to the position of Collier (2000) where he argues that African countries with the abundant presence of resources are more prone to conflict, and in most cases the mineral endowments in these countries have always been the driver of conflict in them(see Collier 2000).

On the environmental scarcities perspective, Obi (2009) notes that population growth beyond a particular threshold places pressure on renewable natural resources and the environment in general. These are also noticeable where resources are being rapidly depleted as a result of degradation occasioned by climate change, or unsustainable forms of exploitation and production. All these have the capability of fuelling conflict. The UN Intra Agency For Preventive Action (2012) equally notes that the management of land and natural resources is one of the most critical challenges facing developing countries in contemporary time. The exploitation of high-value natural resources, including oil, gas, minerals and timber has often been cited as a key factor in triggering, escalating or sustaining violent conflicts around the globe. In addition, increasing competition over diminishing renewable resources, such as land and water, are on the rise. This is being further complicated by environmental degradation, population growth and climate change. The mismanagement of land and natural resources is contributing to new conflicts and obstructing the peaceful resolution of existing ones (UN Intra

Agency 2012, p.8).Howard and Dixon (1999) discussed three types of scarcity using Mexico as a reference point. These include: *demand-induced scarcity* which is caused by population growth or increased per capita resource consumption; *supply-induced scarcity* is caused by degradation and depletion of environmental resources; and *structural scarcity*, which is caused by an unbalanced distribution of resources that severely affects less powerful groups in the society (Howard and Dixon 1996, p.5). In his submission, Bromwich(2008) in his discussion of Darfur asserts that environmental degradation, increases in population numbers and continuous decreases in the traditional land control system are among the drivers of conflict. According to him,the debate over the environment in Darfur illustrates the complexity of a conflict that has numerous levels. The lowest level of conflict, between neighbouring tribes and villages, displays the environmental aspect of the conflict most acutely, as different livelihood groups seek to adapt their ways of life to increasing resource scarcity. This is happening in a context where traditional rules of environmental management have been weakened, and in places have been rejected altogether (Bromwich 2008, p.2).

In terms ofthe horizontal inequality-conflict perspective, Obi (2009) focuses on the role of political, cultural and economic factors in influencing and constructing group identities and mobilizing them to compete for power. This view holds that where a sense of inequality in access to power and resources pervades, the disadvantaged groups are likely to be mobilized to challenge an unsatisfactory state of affairs. Willems (2012) further contends that the fact that inequality exists between the rich and the poor does not necessarily mean that there will be conflict and, in most instances, does not always result inconflict. He contends that conflict actually arises in a group when there is a sense of depravity and marginalization. Using four

types of inequalities, which include: inequalities between countries⁴⁸, inequalities within a country⁴⁹, group inequalities⁵⁰ and social cohesion⁵¹, he argues that they have the potential of escalating conflict. In similar vein, Stewart (2010) argues that horizontal inequalities among groups of people that share a common identity have different manifestations. Such inequalities have economic, social, political and cultural status dimensions, each of which contains a number of elements – some which may matter to people in some societies, but not in others. Differentiating between four types of horizontal inequalities he writes that economic horizontal inequalities include inequalities in access to and ownership of assets - financial, human, natural resource-based and social, and also inequalities in income levels and employment opportunities, which depend on such assets and the general conditions of the economy. Social horizontal inequalities include inequalities in access to a range of services, such as education, health care and housing, as well as to the benefits of educational and health care outcomes. Political horizontal inequalities include inequalities in the distribution of political opportunities and power among groups, including control over the army, the cabinet, local and regional governments, parliamentary assemblies, the police and the presidency. They also encompass inequalities in people's capabilities to participate politically and to express their needs. Cultural status horizontal inequalities include disparities in the recognition and standing of different languages, religion, customs, norms and practices. According to him, any type of horizontal inequality can provide an incentive for political mobilisation, but political inequalities (that is, political

⁴⁸ Perspectives on inequality between countries look essentially at poverty. Countries that are wealthy are less prone to civil war, while poor countries are more easily prone to civil war because the people in such countries can more easily be recruited for conflict.

⁴⁹The inequality within country perspective emphasises Gurr's theory of relative deprivation, where the inequality that is created and sustained by denying some group their rights may easily serve as a driver of conflict.

⁵⁰ Horizontal inequality between groups can include religious, ethnic or regional inequalities. When cultural differences coincide with economic and political differences between groups, this can cause deep resentment that may lead to violent struggles.

⁵¹Social cohesion is a means that enables some group to live in a country where they enjoy a sense of belonging and trust. This also implies that the absence of social cohesion may cause instability.

exclusion of particular groups) are most likely to motivate group leaders to instigate a rebellion (Stewart 2010, p.3).

From the foregoing discussion, it may be argued that the fundamental causes of conflict in Africa could be located in the historical context. The social and distributive inequalities exacerbate grievances. Also, the contradiction being spawned within the continent by global-led extraction and accumulation, Obi (2009) argues, goes to the heart of conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The intersection of global, national and local forces and processes also influence or define the various actors, high stakes and lines of partnership in the conflict. This also underscores some of the contradictory alliances and strategic calculations that underlie a transnational process of extraction and dispossession, and the attempts by some local forces to exploit the process for selfish ends, resist the predatory global-state alliances, or navigate between the two positions based on calculations of expediency (Obi 2009, p.114). The complex dynamics of oil politics is what Watts (2008) refers to as the 'oil complex'. A failure to gauge the politics of oil and the conflict in the region from these diverse points of view will only trivialize the conflict and the experiences of those within it.

In sum, I have explored the conflict in the Niger Delta region from the diverse points of view of scholars. These diverse perspectives provide the backdrop to understanding the drivers of conflict, which the amnesty programme aimed to resolve. The conflict is shrouded in the complex oil politics, the activities of which involved a substantial range of critical stake holders in the region. The complicity in the oil business is directly linked to the flourishing nature of

militancy because the militants and the critical stake holders make use of the instability in the region in attempts to advance their own economic wellbeing.

1.17 THE MILITARIZATION OF THE STRUGGLE

In his contribution, Courson (2009) states that the marginalisation and repression of opposition in the Niger Delta led people to adopt new forms of protest. This subsequently led to the evolution of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). This movement arose as a reaction to the force that the government displayed towards initially peaceful protests in the region. It was formed from a series of meetings held in November 2005, which took place among The Federation of Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC)⁵², the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF)⁵³, fighter cult groups such as the Klansmen Konfraternity (KK)⁵⁴, and the Greenlanders⁵⁵. The coming together of these groups led to the formation of a larger group called MEND, the evolution of which, according to Courson (2009), transformed an initially peaceful protest movement to assume an intractable violent dimension.

⁵²The Federation of Niger Delta Ijaw Communities is a unified group of all the Ijaw people, both the youth and the elders. It was founded in the nineties to serve as the mouth piece of the Ijaw people, and protect the rights of the people and the region. The youth wing, the Ijaw Youth Council developed in 1998 as a civil rights organization in Nigeria which supports the interests of the Ijaw ethnic group of the Niger Delta.

⁵³The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force is one of the largest armed groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and is composed primarily of members of the region's largest ethnic group, the Ijaw. The group was founded in 2004 in an attempt to gain more control over the region's vast petroleum resources. The NDPVF has frequently demanded a greater share of the oil wealth from both the state and federal government and has occasionally supported independence for the Delta region. Until 2005 the group was headed by its leader, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari.

⁵⁴Klansmen Konfraternity (KK) began as a cult group, that is, a local university fraternity in 2003; it was constituted by disaffected young men in Port Harcourt. Its aim was to defend the rights of the Niger Delta people. It has always been supported and backed by Asari Dokubo and Ateke Tom, some of the militant leaders.

⁵⁵Greenlanders also started as a cult group from a local university fraternity in 2003. It was constituted by disaffected young men in Port Harcourt. Its aim was to defend the rights of the Niger Delta people and it receives support and directive from militant leaders Asari Dokubo and Ateke Tom.

In furtherance of the intractability thesis of the conflict and the subsequent evolution of MEND, Courson (2009) did a systematic analysis of the evolution and metamorphosis of the group. He begins with an analysis of the aims of the movement which included winning the rights of local oil producing communities to participate in the Nigerian oil industry through royalties, employment, infrastructure and compensation for the degraded environment caused by the oil activities and the insensitivity of the federal government (Courson 2009, p.9). He noted, particularly, that MEND's adoption of violent means to achieve its objectives was informed by the previous failure of peaceful protest which had resulted in brutal repression by the state, and the securitization and militarization of the region. The group gained more prominence with the advent of democratic rule in 1999. He noted that the 2003 and 2007 elections brought a new dimension to the violent struggle, as the militants were further emboldened and empowered by the political interest of the political elite. The use of violence during elections also contributed to the acquisition, and use, of sophisticated weapons and firearms in various parts of the Niger Delta and even beyond, setting the pace for post-election armed resistance in the Niger Delta. This, according to Courson, is where greed rather than grievance crept into the conflict dynamics in the region (Courson 2009, p.17).

Furthermore, Courson claims that the movement, as a strategy, deliberately adopted a loose coalition of shadowy groups and a variety of leaders scattered across the states of the Niger Delta. This was to make the movement elusive, but effective in guerrilla warfare. The tactics employed by attacking oil installations, kidnapping oil workers and expatriates and the use of information technology (IT) helped to internationalize the crisis. These strategies have been very effective. For instance, Courson (2009) noted that one such attack in 2009, when MEND

declared “Hurricane Moses”⁵⁶ following a military show-down in Gbaramatu Kingdom⁵⁷, led to a reduction in oil output from 2.6 million bpd to 1.8 million bpd within a month(Courson 2009). This, coupled with pressure from the international community prompted the process which eventually led to the declaration of amnesty by the federal government.

Commenting still on the exigency for the evolution of MEND, ShadiBuhra cited in Courson (2009) observes that the organization was a child of necessity because all methods of peacefully resisting the environmental, social, and economic degradation of the region at the hands of the oil companies proved futile. As such, the only recourse was a violent and mutually unbeneficial war on oil companies. While noting that the activities of MEND may have had devastating effects on the state and the people, their ultimate aim is to free the Niger Delta and its people from the undue exploitation of the Multinational Oil Companies MNOCs and the oil corrupt and irresponsible government (Bushra, cited in Courson 2009, p.25). Bushra, while acknowledging the fact that the methodology of MEND has adverse effects on the state and its people, believes that it is the only alternative means left for the people. The experience of previous repression also informed the tactics that were adopted to fight the state. This has had repercussions on the psyche of the citizens, as it may have contributed to a broader culture of violence. This is reflected in the work of Bushra, Courson and Davidheiser et al who believe that violence has become indispensable in the struggle in the Niger Delta.

⁵⁶Hurricane Moses was declared by MEND in 2009. MEND implied it was “the mother of all plagues” that would be used if the “Nigerian Pharaohs” (i.e. the government and the oil companies) show stubbornness over reasoning. This is used proverbially in relation to the role Moses played in the liberation of the Israelites from the Pharaohs in Egypt.

⁵⁷Gbaramatu Kingdom is located in the Warri South West local government of Delta State. The Gbaramatu kingship is rotational and not hereditary. Each monarch occupies the palace for a period of four years and then abdicates. The kingdom is made up of nine original communities which include: Azama, Benikurukuru, Inikorogha, Kurutie, Kunukunuma, Okerenkoko, Oproza (Oporoza), Ogoba and Opuede.

In response to the political economy thesis of the conflict and the activities of the militants in the Niger Delta region, Ukiwo (2007) argues that it was the neglect, marginalisation and exploitative experience the Ijaw people⁵⁸ had among its own clan that taught them the act of violence. In his study of the social origins of militant groups, he examines the Ijaw generally and the Ijaw people of Warri in particular, from among whom MEND emerged. He discusses a greed-based theory of the conflict. According to him, if greed were the major cause of violent conflict then all the oil-bearing community would have taken up arms against the state and the oil businesses. In his statement, the fact that it was only the Ijaw who embarked on violent mobilization suggests that this is a product of an unpalatable experience the people hitherto had of state power and inter-group relations, rather than a simple opportunity to loot resources (also see Hanson 2007).

⁵⁸Ijaw (also known by the subgroups "Ijo" or "Izon") are a collection of indigenous peoples to the forest regions of the Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States within the Niger Delta in Nigeria. Some are resident in Akwa-Ibom, Edo, and Ondo states also in Nigeria. Many are found as migrant fishermen in camps as far west as Sierra Leone and as far east as Gabon along the West African coastline (Alagoa 1972). The Ijo population is estimated to be over 10 million people. They have long lived in locations near many sea trade routes, and they were well connected to other areas by trade as early as the 15th century. One important observation that can be made of the Ijo in general is that they are of considerable antiquity in the Niger-Delta. Much of the evidence for this is drawn from Alagoa's use of the linguistic parameter which establishes a separation of the Ijo language from that of its immediate neighbours by about 7,000 years (see Alagoa 1972; Robin 1997). Moreover, Alagoa's findings, based on the oral traditions of the people, suggest a pattern of movement from the central Delta (approximating present day Bayelsa State) to the west (Delta state) and east (Rivers State). In this sense therefore, the central theory of Alagoa's postulation is that the Ijo's are of central Delta origin (Okorobia, 2009) and with time spread out or migrated westward and eastwards to settlements in present day Delta and Rivers states. Robin (1997) has given some fresh thoughts on the place of the central Delta as the cradle of the Ijo people. He claims that the eastern Delta, rather than the central is in fact the home of the Ijo. Employing a combination of linguistic and archaeological sources, Horton avers that the Obolo (Andoni) region in the eastern Delta (Rivers state) is the probable home of the Ijo (Robin 1997). Basically, the fish industry was the main stay of the economy in pre-colonial times. Accordingly the aquatic ecosystem in Ijo Land and throughout the Niger Delta supports a rich diversity of fish and shell fish resources. The Ijo operated mainly in small scale fishery which is labour intensive, and the people used mainly simple fishing implements and dugout canoes built by them. On the whole, the industry was dominated by men who controlled the aspect of fishing while women controlled the processing and marketing of the fish. The main technique for preserving the fish is smoke drying. The Ijo also developed flourishing commerce with the Europeans from the 16th century. In later years, the Ijos were to participate fully in the triangular slave trade because of their control of the water ways (Alagoa 1972; Robin 1997; Okoroba 2009; Ariye 2013).

Needless to say, the activities of the militants through MEND, and other affiliate groups, make the security of lives and properties vulnerable and further threaten the revenue generation of the government. In addition, it was alleged that the youth militants were offering their services as mercenaries in foreign countries and this greatly embarrassed Nigeria. For example, it was alleged that the Niger Delta youth offered their services to violently overthrow the government of President Theodore Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea in March, 2005 (Ushigiale 2009 cited in Sharkdam 2012, p.163). Though this was aborted, it has been noted that a successful overthrow of a legitimate government in Equatorial Guinea by non state actors, like the militants from Nigeria, would have created a crisis in the foreign policy of Nigeria and also created insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. The Crisis Group⁵⁹ also reported that the militant youth groups launched not less than eight offensive attacks on Cameroon, between 2007 and 2009 (ICG 2009, p.6 cited in Sharkdam 2012, p.163). An attempt to reverse this situation and to bring normalcy into the region culminated in the granting of amnesty to militants and their supporters.

In sum, I have established that MEND originated as a direct response to the socio-economic neglect and exploitation of the region. This becomes instructive considering the circumstances surrounding the Ijaw people which historically have always been in constant struggle with

⁵⁹The Crisis Group was founded in 1995 as an international non-governmental organisation on the initiative of a group of well-known transatlantic figures who despaired at the international community's failure to anticipate and respond effectively to the tragedies in the early 1990s of Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia. They were led by Morton Abramowitz (former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and Thailand, then President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), Mark Malloch-Brown (former head of the UN Development Programme, then UN Deputy Secretary-General and UK Minister), and its first Chairman, Senator George Mitchell. The idea was to create a new organisation – unlike any other – with a highly professional staff acting as the world's eyes and ears for impending conflicts, and with a highly influential board that could mobilise effective action from the world's policymakers. The International Crisis Group is today generally regarded as the world's leading source of information, analysis and policy advice on preventing and resolving deadly conflict around the world (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/about.aspx>).

their neighbours. The development of violent struggle transcends the greed rhetoric, and includes the need to survive. This is particularly useful for the study, given the fact that MEND was the coordinating body for the militant activities in the region. Moreover, the amnesty programme both in its initial stages and until the present is coordinated in concert with MEND. Hence, understanding the dynamics and evolution of the group provides ample opportunity for the management, resolution, and subsequent transformation of the conflict.

1.18 PERSPECTIVES ON AMNESTY IN THE NIGER DELTA

In this section, I review some of the extant studies on the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. So far, there are two opposing views on amnesty for the Niger Delta militants. One of the views doubts the possibility of amnesty as a method to finally end the conflict in the Niger Delta (Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011; Obi 2014; Ogege 2011; Agbiboa 2014). The other view is quite optimistic, stating that if the good will of the government is fully deployed, this could help to transform the conflict in the region to a peaceful state of affairs (Osumah 2013; Ako 2012; Olubayo and Olubisi 2012; Sharkdam 2012; Oluwatoyin 2011). Davidheiser et al (2011, p.558) argue that the granting of amnesty lacks the capacity to completely transform the conflict in the region to a state of peace. This view is held because proper negotiations were not carried out, especially with groups such as MEND, which the government described as an amorphous group. This is coupled with a lack of political will that is consistently shown on the part of the government, which has the capacity to truncate the on-going peace efforts, and probably makes remobilization more feasible than demobilization. However, recent efforts since 2012 on the part of the state to recognize the MEND leadership and to further extend some economic benefits (such as contracts for the securing of oil installations) sets aside Davidheiser et al's arguments.

One might equally argue that any member of MEND who refuses to accept the amnesty offer is someone who benefits from a conflict situation. Their involvement in illegal oil theft or bunkering, and activities such as hostage taking among others, may perhaps be an indicator that they believe that their interests will not be secured in a post-conflict arrangement.

Although agreeing with the above view, Obi (2014) is also skeptical on the possibility of amnesty as a mechanism which can bring an enduring peace in the region. He argues that the present arrangement only guarantees a fragile peace in the short term. In his analysis, he observes that the programme was aimed at buying peace to guarantee unhindered access to oil by the state and the oil companies, thereby maintaining the previous process of expropriation without regard for the development of the region. This is aptly captured in his notes that: the Nigerian political elites use the notion and practice of peace building to pursue dominant political and economic interests. Using peace intervention in local conflict, political elites have been able to respond to international pressure from oil companies and energy dependent global powers, while also seeking to neutralize, and buy off opposition or local forces that they consider to be disruptive elements (Obi 2014, p.253). Buttressing this point of view, he noted some contradictions that may hinder the success of the programme. According to him, the post amnesty programme (PAP) is used as a platform to pursue political ambitions. He cites the case of MrTimiAlaibe, the then Presidential Adviser on Amnesty, and Governor Timipre Sylva of Bayelsa State who attempted to use the disarmament of the militants to score political points because of the rivalry between the two in their contest against each other for the governorship of the state. He also noted that amnesty is used to provide financial opportunity for political associates and, in such instances, proper accountability becomes difficult. Again, he expressed

doubt about the quality of training offered; instead, the emphasis is mainly on the oil industries where the opportunities for job placement are limited. Also, non-combatants were not accommodated in the scheme which may prompt another round of militancy as youth may think that the only guarantee for their recognition by the state is through acts of violence. He however, warned that the present peace being enjoyed may be as a result of the fact that the president is from the region.

In the same vein, Ogege (2011) doubts the possibility of the present arrangement to engender sustainable development in the region. Reviewing amnesty through the theoretical lenses of economic penetration and integration he argues that amnesty, just like previous peace initiatives adopted by the government, is an attempt to create a conducive environment for the oil multinationals to operate, thereby creating stability for the economic interests of the state and the oil companies. In his analysis, he posits that the need for the oil multinationals to move to the peripheral state (that is the Niger Delta) was to afford them the opportunity to maximize profits, as they cannot realize such in the oligopolistic economy⁶⁰ provided in the North. In order to realize their dreams, the oil multinationals have to influence the state compradors - the corrupt government⁶¹ and their aides who serve as an interlocutor between the agents of exploitation and

⁶⁰An economy is said to be oligopolistic when there is a market structure in which a few firms dominate. When a market is shared between a few firms, it is said to be highly concentrated. Although only a few firms dominate, it is possible that many small firms may also operate in the market. For example, major airlines like British Airways and Air France operate their routes with only a few close competitors, but there are also many small airlines catering or offering specialist services.

⁶¹Corruption is a disease that has infiltrated the fabric of Nigeria. It has become a way of life. Corruption exists, not simply at the human level, but at an institutional level as well. The political climate and socio-cultural narrative is fundamentally shaped by corruption. Corruption manifests itself in different ways, both on a micro and a macro level. Policemen collecting bribes is just one of these said manifestations of corruption in Nigeria. Bad roads, intermittent to a nonexistent power supply, ill-maintained infrastructures, black markets with stolen resources such as oil, the embezzlement of funds by public officials, electoral crimes such as ballot stuffing, politically sponsored ethnic violence, politically motivated erosion of the human rights and dignity of persons, are amongst these manifestations of corruption. Nigeria ranks 136 out of 176 countries with a score of just 27 out of 100 on the 2014

the people (Ogege 2011, p.250). Hence, the major intention of the government for the provision of amnesty was to provide an unencumbered environment for the economic interests of the government and the oil multinationals. While attesting to the fact that amnesty no doubt helped to ease tensions and to enhance speedy economic recovery, Ogege noted that the gains of amnesty are lopsided, and are skewed to disfavor millions of people who inhabit the Niger Delta. The amnesty initiative is nothing but a militant-centred programme that undermines the plight of the entire Niger Delta people (Ogege 2011, p.251).

In his own contribution to the narrative of amnesty and sustainability of peace in the Niger Delta, Agbibo (2014) provides an insight into the Niger Delta conflict which he contends is multilayered. According to him, amnesty was, at best, used as a form of tainted pacification and thus failed to address the “peacelessness” in the region. While not condemning the programme in its entirety, he applauded the non-killing alternatives that amnesty afforded to peace building. He observes however that the planning and implementation of amnesty was flawed and as such is incapable of reducing the long-term potential for violence in the region. He argued that the cash payout was paid to lure the warlords while the foot soldiers were not adequately covered and catered for in the programme. This, according to him, has led to the foot soldiers continuing in the illegal oil theft for sustenance. Agbibo also noted that the programme does not seriously address

Corruption Index. 85 per cent of Nigerians surveyed believe corruption has increased from 2011 to 2013 (Transparency International May 2013, p.1). Global Financial Integrity estimates more than US \$157 billion in the past decade has left the country illicitly (Transparency International (May 2015, p.2). Corruption is everywhere: even the health and medical service, considered the least corrupt government institution, is considered very corrupt by 41 percent of Nigerians (Transparency International May 2015, p.3). Nigeria’s military establishment scored a very poor ‘E’ grade on a scale from ‘A’ to ‘F’ in the last Transparency International UK’s Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index, which measures corruption risk in defence establishments around the world (Transparency International May 2015, p.3). The former central bank governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi alleged that US\$20 billion in oil funds was not remitted to the national coffers; some estimates close to US \$400 billion was stolen between 1960 and 1999, the pervasiveness of corruption has led to the weakness and ill functioning of state institutions in Nigeria (Transparency International May 2015; UNODC 2015).

the underlying issues of government corruption, the political sponsorship of violence and the environmental degradation that continues to fuel violence in the region (Agbiboia 2014, p.16). In his final submission he says that the Niger Delta problem is temporarily halted, hence the government should use this grace period to adequately provide a lasting solution to the problem. Thus, 'the Niger Delta problem is on pause, the challenge now is to move it from pause to stop' (Agbiboia 2014, p.16).

Osumah (2013), while probing the veracity of amnesty to sustain peace in its present state, reviewed the state of uneasiness and deprivation that led to militant activities in the region and the various attempts by the federal government to resolve the crisis. He affirms that amnesty has proved to be a useful mechanism, as it helps to provide somewhat of a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Amnesty, according to him, helped to bring back normalcy to the region which, in turn, enables a steady increase in petroleum production and as well as helping to curb criminality and the proliferation of arms in the country. He however observed that the present situation in the Niger Delta is what he termed 'a no war no peace situation' (Osumah 2013, p.258) as there are still challenges. These include the need to properly develop the people and the region, to ensure proper funding of the ministries responsible for the programme, and then to hold them accountable. These features have become sacrosanct. Other challenges include regulating the actions and activities of the multinational oil companies and preventing an avenue whereby unscrupulous politicians and oil companies encourage a relapse to militancy.

He concluded by stating that the amnesty programme was one of the broadest and boldest efforts at peace building in the conflict-ridden region. More so, it has succeeded in establishing a

ceasefire and guarantees opportunities for progress. Yet, despite this, these achievements in the post amnesty regime have created a ‘no war, no peace situation’ as the general tendency for war still remains apparent (Osumah 2013, p.259).

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that the amnesty programme, in its present state, still faces challenges that bedevil it. Equally evident is that all the scholars agreed that amnesty provides an ample opportunity to move from what I term “a peace of the graveyard”(that is, a state of peacelessness, where there is no war and no peace as it were) to an enduring peace because a failure to do so will be disastrous for all the parties (the government, the oil companies and the people). The government, on its part, needed a peaceful atmosphere to achieve its economic interests. The same is true of the oil multinationals. Likewise, the people, whose economic and social interests coupled with the development of the region, can only be achieved in a peaceful environment. This further explains why sustainable peace can only be achieved by the combined efforts of the government, the oil companies and the people. Thus, I claim that amnesty provides a useful opportunity to fully transform the conflict in the Niger Delta to an enduring peace. This view is equally shared by some scholars who are quite optimistic that the amnesty programme can be further employed to entrench sustainable peace and stability in the region.

In supporting this view, Oluwatoyin (2011) underscores the painstaking efforts made by the Nigerian government to ensure that amnesty works, through proper funding. There have also been attempts on the part of the Nigerian government, according to her, to improve on the package in the programme. Considering the fact that the programme suffered some setbacks after

the death of the former President Yar'Adua, the programme according to her has since been fully funded and coordinated. This is noticed in the enormous amount of money pumped into the programme for the training and development of ex-militants. Rather than viewing all the shortcomings noticed in disarmament and demobilisation as that which would work against the success of the amnesty programme, she argues that amnesty has the capacity to transform conflict to peace and she provides evidence for this statement by citing the experiences of the countries where amnesty has worked. She further argues that for amnesty to fully achieve its conflict transformation goal, it must be done through a coordinated effort. In this effort, emphasis should be on developing the people and the community and the money expended by the government should be for the development of the entire community rather than targeted at the militants.

Commenting still on this, Ako (2012) argues that amnesty provides a window of opportunity for the oil multinationals to explore ways to improve and deliver their corporate social responsibility to the people. He noted that such a responsibility should ensure the needs of the people in the region. He warned that it should not be modeled after the corporate social responsibility needs of the developed world because the needs in these two worlds are different. The developed countries areas of needs are advanced and may include issues such as consumer protection, fair trade and green marketing among others. Such may not be appreciated in the Niger Delta region where the requirements of basic survival such as poverty alleviation, health care provision, infrastructural development and education form their priority needs (Ako 2012, pp.9-22). He reiterates further that the oil-multinationals and the federal government should seize the

advantage of the ambience of relative peace provided by the amnesty programme to re-invent their relationship with the people.

Olubayo and Olubisi (2012) argue that the amnesty programme provides an ample opportunity to consolidate peace in the Niger Delta region. They aver that the clamour for inclusion by some groups like women, non-combatants and some combatants who initially rejected amnesty, or are not included in the programme, indicates that amnesty is on course. They advised that government should use this opportunity to clean up the environment of arms and ammunitions, as the amount of ammunition surrendered compared to the number of repentant militants⁶² indicates that there are still lots of arms in circulation. They further advised that the government and the multinational oil companies should use the amnesty programme to adopt an integrated approach where all groups of people in the region will be included in the scheme, and some contradictions noticed in the programme will be promptly addressed. They warned that amnesty should not be seen as a ploy on the part of the government to ensure the continued and uninterrupted extraction of oil in the Niger Delta, but one that should help to promote and consolidate peace, jump start development, raise the standard of living, promote environmental justice and other important related needs (Olubayo et al 2012, p.61).

Sharkdam (2012) in an examination of the amnesty programme and the challenges of ending youth militancy in the region offers some useful advice to strengthen the programme. He counsels that various agencies set up for the management of the amnesty programme, such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) (see chapter three for the role and function of

⁶²It was reported that 1,798 rifles, 1,981 guns of various types, 70 RPGS, 159 pistols, one spear and six cannons were submitted, compared with 26,358 militants that registered for the programme (see Agbo 2011).

the NDDC), the Ministry of the Niger Delta and the like should be properly funded, monitored and coordinated to ensure they enhance the development of youth capacity, job creation and the development of the community. While not denying that the amnesty programme as an ongoing scheme is faced with some challenges, he particularly noted that for the gains of amnesty to be sustained, it must be accompanied with increased funding for development project, the creation of employment opportunities to enhance proper reintegration, and a concerted effort should be made to address environmental injustices in the region (Sharkdam 2012, p.164).

At this juncture, it is important to note that previous studies on amnesty in the Niger Delta region have focused on the process of disarmament and demobilization. There has been very little attention upon the reintegration drive because many of the ex-militants are still undergoing training, while very few have completed their training both at home and abroad. Moreover, there is no empirical work on the topic. Hence, in this study I explore, through extensive fieldwork, the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region. In this study, I therefore interrogate the reintegration drive of the ex-militants, and the subsequent efforts to systematically develop the region and address the root causes of the conflict. Moreover, I explore how these efforts impact on the sustainability of the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. As compared against the non-empirical work, that is speculative and projective, my empirical exploration of the amnesty programme provides first hand information on the programme and the perceptions and context of it, which is absent in the former studies. The empirical field work undertaken for this study has provided a clear understanding of the amnesty programme and the conflict in the Niger Delta. It benefited the study through the opportunity to directly engage the

former militants, the human and environmental rights activists and the officials in charge of the amnesty programme. This invariably is a key strength of this dissertation.

1.19 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY: CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THEORY

There are dissenting views on how one might conceptualize the terms conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The variation implies that while conflict management and resolution can only mitigate the incidences of conflict for a short period and thereby get it resolved, conflict transformation is conceived as the process of changing, and adequately providing, a lasting solution to long term intransigence. This takes place over a long period of time and it is said to be applicable for resolving contemporary conflict. For instance Miall (2004) defines conflict management as the art of appropriate intervention to achieve political settlements, particularly by those powerful actors who possess the power and resources to bring pressure to bear on the conflicting parties in order to induce them to settle. It is also the art of designing appropriate institutions to guide the inevitable conflict into appropriate channels (Miall 2004, p.3; see also Bloomfield and Reilly 1998).

Conflict resolution theorists such as Azar and Burton, in contrast, reject this political power view of conflict, arguing instead that in communal and identity conflicts people find it difficult to compromise on their fundamental needs. However, they argue that it is possible to transcend conflicts if parties can be helped to explore, analyse, question and reframe their positions and interests. Conflict resolution theorists (Azar and Burton), therefore, emphasise intervention by skilled but powerless third-parties working unofficially with the parties to foster new thinking

and new relationships. They seek to explore what the roots of the conflict really are and to identify creative solutions that the parties may have missed in their commitment to entrenched positions. Conflict resolution is about how parties can move from zero-sum, destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum constructive outcomes. The aim is to develop 'processes of conflict resolution that appears to be acceptable to the parties in dispute and effective in resolving conflict' (Azar and Burton 1986 cited in Miall 2004, p.4).

In efforts towards building a definition with conceptual clarity for the term conflict transformation, Lederach (2003) defines conflict resolution in contrast to conflict transformation suggesting that it is a process that is content-centred rather than relationship-centred. The process is aimed at immediate agreement rather than the long term process, and is committed only to de-escalation rather than also including escalation to pursue constructive change (Lederach 2003, p.33). In this regard, advocates of conflict transformation see it as the process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if need be, the very constitution that support the continuation of violent conflict (Miall 2004, p.4).

However, according to Ramsbotham et al (2011) making this kind of distinction is like creating a caricature of the field. While some analysts see conflict transformation as a continuum which incorporates an expansion of terms like conflict management, conflict resolution, and then conflict transformation, others like Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse (2011;1999) view conflict transformation as the further development of the concept of conflict resolution, and not a new paradigm. For them, the aim of conflict resolution is to transform conflict. Perhaps more importantly, they also suggest that the transformation concept provides some utility regarding

our understanding of peace processes in the sense that transformation denotes a sequence of necessary transitional steps. Such a transformation represents not only removing the sources and causes of the situation that brought about the conflict, but also necessitates a psychic transformation in the attitudes and relationship between the parties. This underlying assumption - that conflict transformation provides for a transformation of the parties and their relationships, and structural changes that conflict resolution methodologies do not render is obviously a part of the semantic refinement, and perhaps also comprises operational differences of opinion with regards to these terms and their practical application (Botes 2003, p.4). The submission of Miall et al, is that both conflict resolvers and conflict transformers are engaged in the same enterprise. The aim of both is to build and guarantee sustainable peace.

Moreover, the aim of building peace is to intervene in the rebuilding of lives and society that have both short and long terms objectives, which in the long run will have transformed the conflict situation to a peaceful one. On this, Lederach (1997) argues that peace building is a long term transformation of a war system into a peace system, inspired by a quest for peace and justice as well as for truth and mercy. This concept, according to Karbo (2008) requires sustained processes of designing programmes that address the security and political realities of the country as well as looking at measures that will transform the personal, social, economic and cultural relationships of that country. The key dimensions of this process are changes in the personal, structural, relational and cultural aspects of conflicts, brought about over the different short, mid and long term periods (Miall, 2004). Such interventions include factors such as the cessation of hostility which the amnesty programme guarantees, and the subsequent processes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) that are necessary for redressing and

resolving the security situation. Amnesty, therefore, is inextricably linked to post-conflict peace building programmes.

However, the impression of conflict transformation as simply a further extension of conflict resolution seems to be in contrast with the arguments of some of the strongest proponents of the term. In their view (Curle, Kriesberg and others) conflict transformation is a conceptual departure in theory and practice from conflict resolution. For these forerunners among the ‘transformers’ of conflict (Curle 1990; Kriesberg 1989; Rupesinghe 1994), and in particular Lederach (1995a) who has become their main proponent, the term conflict transformation came from a search for a more precise term to describe the overall peacemaking and peace building venture. From this concept, they believe to have discovered a more encompassing approach that best suits their endeavours contrary to the management or resolution of conflict. Moreover, for Lederach, conflict transformation offers more than the mere elimination or control of conflict (as is promised by the resolution or management of conflict). It points to the inherent dialectical process, the ability to transform the dynamic of the conflict and the relationship between the parties, indeed to transform the very creators of the conflict (Botes 2003, p.7).

For Lederach (1995b, p.17), this process provides ‘transformative human construction and reconstruction of social organization and realities.’ Building on the ideas of social scientists such as Coleman (1956) and Boulding (1962), he further claims that the notion of transformation more aptly represents the role and dynamics of social conflict as it moves through phases of transforming relationships and social organization. However, there are important questions that come to mind. How is this different from the same social patterning and dynamic phases of

conflict that lead to social or systemic change that is described by scholars like Rubin, Pruitt and Kim, 1994? Did the notion of conflict transformation truly create new ideas and knowledge and, therefore, new notions of practice in the hands of practitioners or analysts? Or did we simply get better or clearer descriptions of the basic conflict resolution process?

Galtung (1995) provides an answer to these questions. In his investigation of conflict resolution as conflict transformation, Galtung (1995, p.51) offers reasons why a conflict transformation perspective has more to offer. He contends that underlying the conflict resolution perspective is an assumption that every conflict has a finite life and a clear end and can, therefore, be solved or declared intractable. From this argument - that conflicts are never-ending waxing and waning of social interactions - also flows the idea that the ongoing energy and behavioural contradictions that arise from this will not be amenable to resolution, but need to be transformed (Botes 2003, p.8).

In his further analysis, Galtung (2000) provides a clearer explanation of conflict transformation. He says that to transform a conflict is to transplant it in reality. To transform a conflict would mean to transcend the goals of the conflicting parties, defining some goals, lifting a conflict out of the platform the parties have prepared for it, including the discourses to ensure that the impossibility become possible. He further noted that conflicts are generally not solved, resolved or dissolved. Parties, goals and incompatibilities (issues) are usually still there. 'To think we have the conflict totally behind us may be a major error'(Galtung 2000, p.124). However, through conflict transformation the conflict as it was, with hatred, violence and a sense of being blocked or marginalized, recedes into the background. He avers that conflict transformation is like leaving the hospital; not the same as a clean bill of health. The prognosis is that real health

will come about as the result of self acting as his/her own health worker, including relying on the body's self healing capacity (immune system), with body, mind and spirit pulling in the same direction, and the occasional assistance from the health workers who are on call (Galtung 2000, p.124). What this means is that the involvement of the conflict parties in the process of transforming conflict to achieve peace is very important. Once transformation has taken its course, the parties later serve as the harbinger of peace. The immunity has been built to prevent possible retrogression, and this is very important for a true transformation.

Lederach (2000a) provides insight into the conditions required for transformation to be said to have occurred. They include: *Personal*, or individual, changes in the emotional, perceptual, and spiritual aspects of conflict; *Relational*, or changes in communication, interaction, and interdependence of the parties in conflict; *Structural*, or changes in the underlying structural patterns and decision making in conflict; and *Cultural*, or group/societal changes in the cultural patterns in understanding and responding to conflict (Schirch 1999 cited in Botes 2003, p.8). Intrinsic in the above descriptions of what conflict transformation is, lies the notion that personal, relational, and structural transformation is essential to deal effectively with conflicts. These comprise the basic components of conflict transformation.

Conflict transformation is an open-ended, long-term, multi-track and dynamic process, which significantly widens the scope of actors involved. It effectively combines Track I, II and III activities along the continuum of short, middle, and long-term involvement. It is thus likely to engage a wide variety of actors, including official, military and political leaders (Track I);

informal conflict resolution experts, INGOs and NGOs working in conflict resolution (Track II); and the grassroots, such as indigenous NGOs providing development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (Track III). The basis for this approach is anchored, first, in relationships, which form the basis for the conflict as well as the solutions to it. Providing deep insight into the need to employ a combination of principles inherent in the three approaches to conflict for effective conflict transformation, Reimann (2003), posits that on its own, Track I activities and strategies may not be well equipped to take on the lofty goals of long-term reconciliation and social justice. While Track III activities may foster these broader objectives, they will in the end remain ineffective, if not doomed to failure, unless they are complemented by structural changes on the Track I level. These structural changes include the embodiment of models of minority rights and power-sharing and autonomy models across ethnic boundaries in legal and governance structures (Reimann 2003, p.12). What this implies is that building peace in the contemporary period requires more than just one principle of conflict settlement or resolution.

For Lederach (1998, p.34-35), peace building is not limited to the concrete indicator of peace, such as the signing of agreements, or the cessation of hostilities. It is an ongoing, multifaceted and holistic concept that should be tied to society's social, cultural, political, spiritual, economic and developmental fabric. Lederach's framework provides an indicator to view conflict transformation mechanisms in the form of a pyramid, which introduces healing, truth-telling, restorative justice and reparation as sources of a relationship. Table 1 shows the transformers of conflict.

Table 1.Transformers of conflict

	Type	Examples
1	Context transformations	-change in the international or regional environment
2	Structure transformations	-change from asymmetric to symmetric relations -change in power structure -change of markets of violence
3	Actors transformations	-changes of leadership -changes of goals -intra-party change -change in party's constituencies -changing actors
4	Issue transformations	-transcendence of contested issues -constructive compromise -changing issues -delinking and re-linking issues
5	Personal/elite transformations	-changes of perspective -changes of heart -changes of will -gesture for conciliation

Source: Miall 2004,p.10

From the above table, it is obvious that the work of a transformer is a Herculean one, and thus requires a combination of efforts which transcend the work of a reformer. Using the above table to analyse the Niger Delta conflict, the context of the conflict includes the Niger Delta region specifically and the entire country as a whole. This further extends to international communities like the USA and China, among others, that have a particular interest in the Niger Delta oil because of its strategic importance to them (see Watts 2004; Obi 2009). Countries which also facilitate illegal arms trading and oil theft for the militants like Russia, Sao Tome, and Equatorial Guinea, Lebanon, (Asuni 2009; Rinkel 2015; Watts 2008) among others are all included. The structural transformation here will include changes in the various institutions of the state, developmental agencies in the Niger Delta region, which will later engender transformational

change between the people in the region and the entire country. That kind of change gives people a sense of belonging, corrects the inequalities that pervade the region, and develops the capacity of the population generally. By merely appointing somebody from the region as the President of Nigeria, or the establishment of ministries or developmental agencies do not suffice for the transformation required. The transformational change should bring about development in human capacity and in the entire region. The actors in the Niger Delta's case are the federal government of Nigeria, the multinational oil companies, the governors of states in the federal system, militants, local chiefs and local elites. The main issues are the marginalization of the people, environmental degradation resulting from uncontrolled and reckless activities in oil exploration, and the degradation of the region by oil multinationals, conflict over the control of resources and developmental issues. The acceptance of amnesty, in the first instance, could be said to have transformed the militants who are at the forefront of the conflict. While all other types of transformers of conflict can be achieved within the short and medium term, to transform the context and structure always requires additional, painstaking efforts and it takes a much longer time for transformation to be achieved (see Miall 2004). Thus, for transformation to take place, all other levels of transformation as noted above have to be considered and transformed. As such, this makes the theory appropriate for interrogating the conflict in the Niger Delta region.

Still corroborating the above thesis, theories of conflict transformation suggest approaches of transforming conflict to peace through the implementation of activities and programmes that have structural implications for peace and security in war-torn areas and address the root causes of the conflict (Oluwatoyin 2011). Such approaches include the changing of social structures, economic viability and infrastructural development within which amnesty, disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration processes are essential. It recognises that transforming conflict requires a series of phases and it takes a longer period to achieve which includes the granting of pardons (i.e. amnesty), disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration, and long term development programmes.

In the Niger Delta region, amnesty was used as a mechanism to attempt to transform the violent and deep-seated conflict. In this study, I explore and assess the ongoing amnesty programme in the Niger Delta and draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the programme in sustaining peace in the region. While I recognize various components within which conflict transformation is nuanced, I also understand conflict transformation as consisting of principles in conflict resolution, management and conflict settlement. It is thereby a coalescence of other principles of resolving conflict. I prefer to use the term conflict transformation because it incorporates contemporary realities in transforming deep rooted structural conflict. This is in consonance with the multi-track approaches to resolving modern day conflict of which amnesty, as a conflict resolution mechanism, plays a significant part. This, of course, builds on Lederach's conception of conflict transformation.

Amnesty is one of the mechanisms used under a transitional justice system. Transitional justice according to Olsen, Payne and Reiter (2010, p.804) is the array of processes designed to address systematic or widespread human right violations committed during a period of state repression or armed conflict. It comprises of truth commissions, trials, reparations, lustration and amnesty. They argue that in most of the analysis made, that states adopt multiple mechanisms in their attempt to solve and transform conflict. Thus, amnesties persist alongside trials and truth

commissions. In the Niger Delta conflict, amnesty is used alongside disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, to achieve post conflict peace building in the Niger Delta region. My central hypothesis is that *amnesty is an effective mechanism for conflict transformation.*

In conclusion, I have claimed in this study that conflict is a natural phenomenon in human behaviour. This is against the backdrop that relationships among humans are prone to conflict where they are forced to compete for scarce resources. The sense of depravity as a consequence of this scarcity can further bind warring communities together to face those they consider as a common enemy. I have equally claimed that the greed/ resource curse thesis does not entirely explain the cause of the conflict in the Niger Delta region. Using diverse perspectives to interrogate the dynamics of the conflict, I claim that it is more likely that the cause of the conflict is located in the socio-economic deprivation of the people in the region, occasioned by the neglect and grievances that have built overtime. It is for this reason that I have opined that the conflict requires a transformational strategy to engender a lasting peace, stability and development in the region.

In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology and methods employed in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REFLECTION ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Following the preceding chapter, which introduced the underlying concepts and questions that inform this dissertation, the task in the present chapter is to provide detailed information on the process of answering the research. To achieve this, I start by defining the concept of methodology and methods as they are used in the study. Research methods experts argue that ‘methodology is conceptually different from methods’ (see Onapajo 2014, p.45). According to Neuman (2011, p.2), ‘methodology means the understanding of the entire process of research - including its social organization, context, philosophical assumptions, ethical principles, and the political impact of new knowledge from the research enterprise’. Alternatively, the term methods refers to the particular techniques used in the study to gather information and to analyse it. Consequently, in this part of the dissertation I answer questions regarding the nature of this research project, the processes involved in case selection, data collection procedures, sampling procedures, data analysis, ethical principles, and the challenges encountered in the process of conducting the research, and how they were addressed.

2.1 THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This dissertation is qualitative in its orientation. This is because the main questions of the research seek to create understanding and new knowledge on the processes of the Nigerian amnesty programme, and the ways in which it represents a useful mechanism for conflict resolution and the transformation of conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Therefore, the questions asked are viewed through the lens of a qualitative research methodological approach.

Vromen (2010, p.250) avers that a qualitative research methodology is concerned with addressing research questions that ‘require explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their contexts’. It derives its orientation from the interpretive paradigm or social sciences meta-theory which is predicated on providing “interpretive explanation” with the aim of enhancing the understanding of social and political realities in their natural settings (Neuman 2011, p.105).

In correlation with this philosophical framework, this research is explanatory and descriptive in nature. It explains “what” the amnesty programme entails in the context of the Nigerian conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, and also provides a description on “how” peace could be sustained through the mechanism of the amnesty policy and the transformation of the conflict in the Niger Delta region.

The themes of this dissertation are approached through a case study orientation. This follows the idea that one of the basic characteristics of qualitative research is its case-study approach (Onapajo 2014, p.46), to provide “deep” knowledge of social and political phenomena through its contextual lens. This is because qualitative research focuses more on providing detailed and in-depth explanations of complex social and political phenomena, which can only be meaningfully done with one case, or a few cases, in contrast to the quantitative research paradigm that works with a large number of cases in search of general patterns of behaviour (see Neuman 2011, p.177; Vromen 2010, p.256). In this study I adopt specific cases. I focus upon three locations in Nigeria. They are Bayelsa, Port Harcourt, and Abuja in Nigeria, to provide in-depth explanation of the central arguments that drive the work. The next section provides a detailed discussion of the reasons for the cases adopted and the process involved in their selection.

2.2 CASE SELECTION

As noted in the previous section, qualitative research make use of cases to provide a detailed explanation or description of phenomena. In this process, special procedures for the selection of cases are employed. Gerring, for example, notes that a case study should be ‘an intensive study of a single unit, a spatially bounded phenomenon e.g. a nation-state, revolution, political party, election, or person - observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time’ (2004,p.342). Single case study analysis can therefore be valuable for the testing of theoretical propositions, provided that the predictions are relatively precise and the measurement error is low (Levy 2008,p.12-13). There are different methods to select cases, depending on the research question and the variable(s) of interest (Georgeand Bennett 2005). For example, a researcher may want to select typical cases that exemplify the general understanding of a phenomenon and that are, therefore, representative.

Furthermore, extreme cases, in turn, exemplify unusual values relative to a normal distribution (e.g. countries that exemplify excessiveness in a particular situation or show extremely low progress in a particular instance or outcome). Influential cases are useful to alter an existing assumption, while diverse cases aim to capture the full range of variation in the variables of interest (see Seawright and Gerring 2008, p.294-308).In this study I adopt a multiple case analysis approach, and it is woven around a typical case to show what is considered or agreed as average, or normal. What this means is that theses profiles can serve as illustrations to those unfamiliar with the programme (http://betterevaluation.org/evaluation-option/typical_case). In this instance, it aims to enhance our general understanding of how the amnesty programme was used to bring about peace in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

As stated above, a typical case is most relevant to this study, considering the fact that the focus is to enhance the understanding of how amnesty, as a peace resolution mechanism, is useful in resolving and subsequently transforming the conflict in the Niger Delta region. The period chosen for in-depth investigation spans from 2009 to 2015 and covers the period when amnesty was introduced and through its various phases of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The period between 1999 to 2009 (i.e. from the return to multiparty democracy in 1999) represents the extreme case, considering that various initiatives and interventions were introduced, yet the crisis did not abate. The conflict became more volatile with the introduction of democracy. Politicians utilized the situation to arm the militants and this changed the dynamics of the struggle.

The Niger Delta case is typical, in the sense that it helps to interrogate the effectiveness of amnesty in resolving the conflict in the region, considering the fact that the region has for a long time been enmeshed in a conflict. Prior to the introduction of amnesty, the crisis was tense and seemed irresolvable thus; the need to interrogate how amnesty was able to bring the country back from the precipice of collapse is instructive.

Bayelsa and Port Harcourt in Nigeria were chosen for on the site assessment, and to interview people. The choice of Bayelsa State is because it is the hub of Nigeria's Niger Delta, the home state of Oloibiri, where oil was first discovered in Nigeria and the home base of Niger Delta agitation. Port Harcourt is also one of the leading oil producing states and where the struggle

against exploitation is very tense and the militants are active. The researcher also visited the amnesty office in Abuja to interview the programme manager, and examine primary documents.

The time period before amnesty was introduced in 2009 was considered as the most challenging period in the history of the Niger Delta conflict (see Obi 2009, 2011, 2014; Idemudia 2009; Abigboa 2014; Crisis Group 2009). For instance, during these periods, spates of kidnapping and all forms of criminality were at an all time high. The level of oil production dropped from 2.3 million barrels per day to about 700 barrels per day (Asuni 2009; Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011; Ahonsi 2011). At this time the region was already posing a great threat to the country, and the need to find an immediate solution which would eventually lay the ground for lasting peace was inevitable. The conflict was tense in both Bayelsa and Port Harcourt, and the level of criminality was very high. Moreover, the volume of oil in these two states is high, and this is important because of the significance of oil to the Nigerian economy. The two states are core to the Niger Delta, and they are in the hub of the crisis. These conditions informed the selection of these two states for this study. The level of conflict in these state, and the extension of aggression to neighbouring countries like Cameroon and the Gulf of Guinea make the cases useful. This, coupled with other societal problems was one of the possible reasons the USA National Intelligence Council (NIC) conference held in 2005 predicted a possible break up of Nigeria (see This Day news 2012; Ukiwo 2007). Also, the amnesty programme is recent, thus the case will provide a contemporary dimension to the phenomenon being studied.

This methodology helps to assess the effectiveness of amnesty as a conflict resolution mechanism, because as stated above, the conflict was already gathering significant momentum,

and the region has already become a no-go area where all forms of criminality thrive. Moreover, as the economic nerve of the country, the conflict in the Niger Delta has begun to affect the activities of the government, as the revenue required for the day to day running of the country was already being threatened. Therefore, the criminality and banditry occasioned by the conflict in the region make the cases selected worthy of interrogation to investigate the effectiveness of amnesty as a conflict resolution mechanism in Nigeria.

However, it should be noted that the cases selected are mainly used as a template to assess in detail how amnesty was used to transform a hitherto conflict ridden region to one of peace, going by the principle of illustrations in the qualitative research paradigm. As a result, examples are drawn from various parts of the globe where amnesty has been employed to foster peace under a transitional justice system. The conclusions reached in this dissertation can equally apply to the broader context beyond the Niger Delta. Where adequate measures are put in place for the implementation of amnesty, it is a useful mechanism for the resolution of conflict more broadly.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative researchers generally rely on four methods for gathering information: (a) non participant observation, (b) participant observation, (c) in-depth-interviews, and (d) documentary analysis. For this study, two principal techniques were adopted for the process of data collection. These include in-depth interviews and documentary analysis techniques.

2.4 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

The review of documents is an unobtrusive method, yet can also be rich in providing a snapshot into the values and beliefs of participants in their context. Minutes of meetings, logs, announcements, formal policy statements, letters, and so on are all useful in developing an understanding of the setting, or the group studied. Also research journals and samples of free writing about the topic can also be quite informative. Archival data comprise the routinely gathered records of a society, community, or organization and may further supplement other qualitative methods (Marshall and Rossman 2006, p.97).

This method forms an important aspect of the data collection procedure for the following reasons: first, the topic under investigation is sensitive and discreet in nature. This is because some information cannot be easily accessed because it is confidential, and thus part of the national security imperatives of the country. Other regions of Nigeria are beginning to see the amnesty programme as a way of improving the conditions and granting opportunities for a particular region. Moreover, Nigeria comprises of a heterogeneous population and there are large amount of written records from different agencies on the conflict in the Niger Delta and the reasons that it has lingered for so long. Second, the method comprises unobtrusive research and enables independent analysis of documents. This provides an opportunity to access information from different perspectives on the motivations behind, and the reasons for, the introduction of the amnesty programme. Third, the issue under investigation has a historical dimension which can be analysed through the documents. Fourth, the method is useful because it allows analysis of a large volume of information which is sometimes difficult to access in other ways. Moreover, the policy on amnesty is driven by the government; hence, through the principle of public access to information, there is documentation available to researchers.

Documentary sources proved particularly useful to this study from the following institutions and organisations: reports from the Amnesty Office, International Crisis Group, United States Institute of Peace, independent observer report commissioned to assess the progress of the programme, newspapers and magazines (editorials, reports, columns, interviews, press releases, and advertorials).

My use of news media sources was selective, noting that there are often economic, ideological and political biases (Onapajo 2014, p.54). Documents, while providing “facts” also provide insights into perceptions, beliefs and opinions (the very nature of qualitative research). In my selection of news sources I mainly chose *The Punch*, *ThisDay*, *The Guardian*, the *Vanguard*, *The Nation*, and *Sahara Reporters*. Much of the content of news reports were further confirmed by interviewees (see the section on interview process).

The newspapers and magazines were accessed using the following two mediums: the library archives of a number of the media outlets at their head offices (the *Vanguard*, and *The Punch* in Lagos) and the official websites of the various news media and the media section of the amnesty office website.

In addition to media reports, it is equally important to note that reports from the amnesty office were carefully studied and compared with other commissioned reports and reports from international agencies to balance the “facts” and explore the discrepancies. The following are the agencies whose reports were used for data collection:

- International Crisis Group Report. The international Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict. It was founded in 1995, and has offices across the continent.
- United States Institute of Peace Special Report. USIP is an America non-partisan, independent, federal institution that provides analysis of and is involved in conflict understanding and prevention around the world. The institute was established by an act of US Congress that was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1984.
- An ANCEC Global Service is an independent observer commissioned in 2013, to make objective assessment of the activities of amnesty programme in various countries and centres where Niger Delta people and former militants are receiving training.
- UN Agenda for Peace report June 1992, submitted to the United Nations through the Secretary General's, Boutros Boutros Ghali, New Peace Initiative where the concept of DDR was first introduced.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report of South Africa October, 1998.

2.5 INTERVIEW METHOD

Qualitative research relies extensively on in-depth interviews which can be described as conversations with a purpose (Kahn and Cannell 1957, cited in Marshall et al 2006, p.101). Marshall et al (2006) note that it may be the overall strategy, or one of several methods employed in research. This method is geared toward observing people in their natural environment to elicit needed information and understanding in context. Interviews were used in this dissertation in order to provide first-hand information from people about the impact and

activities of the amnesty programme in the region, their experiences of it, their attitudes, opinions and beliefs about it and the challenges that they faced.

The interview method served three further purposes, beyond those above, in this dissertation. First, it was used as a means to compare and verify the information available in the documents and to explore that information further. Second, it was used to seek clarification for information that was unclear or contradictory in the documents. Third, the method proved useful to explore themes that were based upon information which was unavailable in documentary sources.

Three categories of interviewees participated in the research. They include the elites (the category of people who have a direct stake in the formulation and implementation of the amnesty programme), activists (members of the civil society groups advocating for both environmental and human rights of the peoples of the Niger Delta); and the ex-militants. In the case of the elite interviewees, those interviewed included (i) the Technical Assistant/ Head of the Reintegration Department, Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (Mr. Lawrence Pepple). (ii) The chairman Technical Committee for the resolution of Niger Delta Conflict, which parts of the committee's recommendation, was amnesty, (Mr. Ledum Mittee), (iii) Felix Tuodolo, the former President of the Ijaw Youth Council, now Commissioner for Culture and Ijaw National Affairs, (iv) General Cecil, who was the Chief of staff to General Abbey, the commanding head for the disarmament and demobilization of the former militants, (v) Dr Onapajo Hakeem, he was one of the evaluators contracted to assess the progress of ex-militants at their various schools and vocational centres in South Africa. These categories of people were

personally interviewed in their offices and residences in Abuja, and Bayelsa respectively based on their individual preferences, Dr Onapajo was interviewed in South Africa.

The activists interviewed are: (i) Chief Eze Chriastian Akani, a traditional ruler, an academic, and human right activist, (ii) Dr Uyi Ojo, an environmental activists and academic, (iii) Dr Odion Akhaine, a human rights activist, an academic, and Director of the Centre for Constitutionalism and Democratization in Nigeria; (iv) Patrick Nagbaton, a journalist and activist, (v) Celestine Akpobari an Ogoni and environmental activist. These categories of people were interviewed in their hotels, residences and offices in Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Lagos respectively, based on individual preferences.

The ex-militants interviewed include: (i) Alhaji Mujaheed Dokubo Asari, the former president of the Ijaw Youth Council, and the leader of one of the deadly groups, The Niger Delta Frontier Force, (ii) Ex-general⁶³ Sunny Clark a leading head in the Tompolo group, (iii) ex-general Nature and some other members. These groups of people were interviewed in their hotel accommodations and offices. The researcher was able to interview some of the ex-militants invited to be part of the interview process by one of the leaders of the groups at the Nicon Nugar Hilton hotel in Abuja. Also, a visit to Port Harcourt in Rivers state also afforded the researcher, while interviewing ex-general Nature to have access to other members who are now part of a group propagating peace in the region. Efforts were made to personally interview Tompolo, one of the leaders of the militant groups, but all phone calls made to him went unanswered. There were also sources that have remained anonymous and I respect this as part of contract of

⁶³ The ex-general used in this context is the title the former militants gave to themselves, as somebody who has engaged in real combat against the state. It should not be mistaken for the military title bestowed on someone who works for the state in a military capacity.

informed consent. The researcher was also cautious about the privacy of the respondents, especially the elites who cherish their private schedules. The researcher gave them the option of deciding the venue and time to interview them. One example of this was the interview which was conducted at a hotel - Nicon Hilton Hotel in Abuja - where the interviewees were already holding a workshop on a Sunday.

One of the major challenges in field work research is time and resources. In terms of resources I worked on a limited budget, but still managed to accomplish interviews and documentary analysis. The timing of the fieldwork was important. Elections were approaching, and tensions were high in the region. Many people in the Niger Delta saw the former President, Goodluck Jonathan, as their true representative and desired a second term of office for their advocate. Despite tension in the area at the time of the interviews, people were willing to talk to me and very openly about the amnesty programme in the region.

Sometimes, meeting the ex-militants could be very frustrating. The number of days the researcher planned to spend interviewing was extended. For example, the researcher had to stay extra days in his hotel in Port Harcourt waiting to meet the journalist who had to reschedule his initial appointment due to a tight schedule. It was at a workshop held in Port Harcourt that he was eventually tracked down (at the same event where the researcher had another appointment with an environmental activist Dr Uyi Ojo who was the organizer of the workshop). On another occasion an appointment had to be rescheduled when the researcher was informed that the Commissioner for Ijaw National Affairs would not be available as earlier scheduled, due to a

meeting with the governor of the state. The researcher then waited for almost five hours to see the Commissioner past the re-scheduled appointment time.

The respondents were asked semi-structured, open-ended questions about their involvement in the militancy in the region and their involvement activities in the implementation of the amnesty programme as it applied to individual respondents. The researcher cross-examined responses with documents collected (before and after the interviews were conducted) and in other interviews. Also, the researcher used the method of “member validation” by confirming responses and claims from people who were seen to be non-partisan (see Onapajo 2014, p. 60).

2.6 SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

In qualitative research, the selection of respondents is based on the relevance of them to the research topic (Flick 1998, p.41, cited in Neuman 2011, p.241) and participants are chosen who can provide insight and understanding of the issues under investigation. Thus, the extent to which the samples could provide considerable and meaningful explanations was the most important factor in the selection of the respondents. For this reason, the researcher initially defined the basic criteria for the selection of the respondents. They must have considerable involvement in the militant activities, as well as in the implementation of the amnesty deal in the Niger Delta region. Therefore, respondents were selected on the basis of their involvement in the Niger Delta struggle to include participants who were combatants, activists speaking against degradation in the region, and those that are involved in the formulation and implementation of amnesty.

This was combined with the referral (snowball) technique, where available respondents also offered useful information on further individuals that could provide useful information. As a result, all interviewees were directly relevant to the study. At the end of the process, the interviewees comprised 26 respondents. The following is the breakdown of the categories of respondents: former militants (10); amnesty implementation committee (6); environmental activists/human right activists (10).

The principle of saturation also guided the number of respondents used in the study. The researcher continually added participants to the study until the point when incremental benefit for additional respondents dropped off, or become repetitive. Data saturation entails bringing new participants continually into the study until the data set is complete. This is shown by the replication of data or redundancy of information. In other words, saturation is reached when the researcher gathers data to the point of diminishing returns, when nothing new is being added (Bowen 2008, p.149). However, managing the saturation process can be rather tedious, as Glaser (2002) has observed. A large number of data transcripts require a great deal of time for coding and analysis. The analysis of complex transcripts is also time-consuming and demanding (Glaser 2002, as cited in Bowen 2008, p.149). The researcher was able to deal with these challenges by constant comparison of data. It took the researcher close to two months for transcription because he had to categorise various questions into themes, and compare them with responses from various respondents. When there were no new insights to the question raised, and the answers given were becoming repetitive, the researcher realised he had reached the saturation point.

2.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was constructed into themes. This was done on the basis of the principal research question, coupled with a number of issues that surfaced from the reading of the entire data set. The themes were organized into two broad categories. These are, amnesty as a conflict resolution mechanism, and the Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that sub-themes were constructed which are used to show the pattern of relationships among the variables. In the context of amnesty as a mechanism for conflict resolution the sub-themes created include: the reintegration component of amnesty in the Niger Delta, an evaluation of the reintegration component, successes and challenges of the amnesty programme. On the Niger Delta conflict: creed and grievances in the Niger Delta conflict, and changing phases of the conflict in the Niger Delta region.

The researcher created a detailed typed verbatim transcript to preserve the validity of the interview transcription of audio-taped interviews into texts. The researcher made a concerted effort in the writing of this dissertation to present the wordings in their original forms. Tables were used in some instances as a means to summarise information, especially the reports emanating from the amnesty office.

2.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

2.8.1 DOCUMENTS

Documentary research is not characterised by direct contact with the people which makes it less susceptible to ethical questions. Nevertheless, some remarks are appropriate to highlight how the researcher dealt with a few ethical issues regarding the documents used. First, the documents (both primary and secondary) used for this study are available for everybody to access on the

internet and in various archives, which definitely reduced concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of the documents used for data collection. References were provided appropriately as a standard practice for using intellectual materials. The researcher clearly indicated areas where he added his own emphasis to the texts in the documents. Thus, incorrect quotations were avoided in the preparation of the research report.

Second, the researcher strictly adhered to the principle of objectivity while handling documents that are sensitive in nature, especially those emanating from the amnesty office. Third, the researcher sought permission from the librarians in charge of the archival material used. Where identification was required, an official letter from the School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, identifying the researcher as a doctoral candidate and stating the purpose of the research was provided. Fourth, in documentary analysis, documents are produced in context for a specific purpose. Thus many researchers then use them out of context for another purpose when doing research. For this study, efforts were made to preserve quotations from documentary sources within the context that was intended in the original document to ensure that meanings were not distorted.

2.8.2 INTERVIEWS

Obviously, it is at the stage of interviews that qualitative researchers deal with many ethical issues. Many qualitative research experts have offered the most common issues that are critical to ethical principles in qualitative interviewing. Babbie (2008: 66-77) identified some useful principles which include: the principles of voluntary participation, inoffensiveness to participants, anonymity and confidentiality, and the avoidance of deception. In terms of voluntary

participation, the researcher designed an informed consent form, which was approved by the ethical clearance committee of the College of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which clearly indicated the voluntary nature of participation in the research (see the appendix for the informed consent form). Respondents were informed that they could willingly opt out of the research at any point, especially when they felt uncomfortable with the nature of questions asked. They could choose to refuse to answer any questions in the interview and withdraw completely as a participant at any time. No-one who agreed to be interviewed withdrew. This speaks to the rapport that the interviewer built during the interview process, including the way the questions were designed and asked.

In addition, a major dilemma of the researcher was how to relate with some of the respondents especially those directly involved in taking up arms against the state and reporting on some of their activities in the dissertation, without harming them. This was not altogether resolved (see also Francis, 2009). In some cases, interviewees were asked whether they objected to the information being reported in the dissertation because of the sensitivity of it. Some of this information thus was reported and some was not. The researcher clearly indicated that the research had no affiliation with the government or any political party but was for the academic purpose of completing a doctoral degree. This, it is believed, enabled the interviewees to express themselves freely. The researcher also provided a copy of the transcribed interview to interviewees that requested it. These verbatim transcripts also provided interviewees with a further sense of security.

Also, the interviewees were given the choice of whether they wished to remain anonymous. Most of those interviewed did not require anonymity. The identities of these respondents have been declared.

In the next chapter, I discuss the historical basis of the conflict and the its changing dynamics.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT

The history of the Niger Delta predates the advent of colonialism in Nigeria. The peoples in what would later become the Niger Delta region enjoyed what is referred to as high context culture; that is, a system of coexistence that regulates daily activities and conflict between individuals and group within the community, and thereby entrenches peace in the community (Austin 2005, p.75). Just like many other pre-colonial societies in Africa, which had mechanisms for peaceful cohabitation, the Niger Delta peoples also lived peacefully, until slave trade and other external activities infiltrated the region. Rather than over-emphasising an idealized picture of the area, it is equally important to note that there were internal squabbles resulting from land disputes, territorial expansion, headship (chieftaincy) and the like even before the advent of colonialism. The emphasis here is that conflict was limited in scope and did not impact much on the social structures and cultural values of the people which colonial incursion and the discovery of oil subsequently inflicted on the region.

In this regard, Jack-Akhigbe (2013) argues that several scholarly works on historical legacy of Niger Delta conflict suggest that the British trading companies and the colonial state laid the basis for the NigerDelta Development crisis and the failure of state efforts. However, all of the studies seem to neglect the internalmake-up of the communities. None of them examined the role played by local traditional allies who, for theirselfish interest, collaborated with the Europeans to exploit their communities. Thus, an indigenous elite played a role in sustaining thestructure of underdevelopment laid by the Europeans (Jack-Akhigbe 2013, p.256).

Omoweh (2007) also contends that although the colonial government as well as the trading companies put in place the modalities for capitalist exploitation and initiated the forces of underdevelopment, Shell Development Company and other multi-national companies concluded the process of the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta. He asserts that there is an intricate linkage between the relatively reckless manner in which crude oil is explored and produced, the degradation of the environment of the Niger Delta host communities and the increasing incapacity of the people to reproduce themselves. This, according to him lies at the heart of the Niger Delta development crisis and failure of the state to initiate sustainable development in the region (Omoweh 2007 cited in Jack-Akhigbe 2013, p.256).

While not discounting Omoweh's submission, it is equally important to note that the arrival of the colonial masters further changed the dynamics of coexistence in the areas. Oil discovery and post-independence activities in Nigeria are not the only factors that have contributed to the present state of affairs in the region. In this chapter I shall explore the geographic and demographic context of the region, provide a historical analysis of the conflict in the Niger Delta and examine the various phases of the conflict. The central objective here is to interrogate the events and issues that have changed and continue to change the dynamics of the conflict by discussing the various phases.

3.1 THE NIGER DELTA: LAND AND PEOPLE

Niger Delta is simply an agglomeration of several groups that inhabit a contiguous stretch of territory (Austin, 2005, p.24). The Niger Delta is located on the Atlantic Coast of Southern Nigeria where the Niger river divides into numerous tributaries (Awosika cited in

Odoemene2011, p.4). It is situated within the Ibo Plateau and the Cross River Valley. A watery maze of intricate marshland, creeks, tributaries and lagoons is flung across approximately 70.000 square kilometres; the delta has an extremely delicate and sensitive ecosystem. It is Africa's largest wetland and the second largest in the world after the Mississippi (Nseabasi cited in Odoemene 2011, p.2; *African volunteer network* 2014). About 2,370 square kilometres of the Niger Delta area consists of rivers, creeks and estuaries. Stagnant swamp covers about 8,600 square kilometres. The delicate ecological nature of the region makes it easily prone to adverse environmental changes occasioned by climate change.

The Niger Delta is made up of nine states namely: Abia, AkwaIbom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Rivers and Ondo. However, the volume of oil produced from each state differs (Barrett, 2008,p.14, Austin, 2005, p.24). The ethnic groups inhabiting each state are also different. The region according to Austin (2005) is categorised into core and peripheral Niger Delta: this is determined by the quantity of oil produced in the state. The core Delta states produce large amount of oil and the peripheral states are those in which levels of production are low. Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta are ranked among the core Niger Delta states. The Niger Delta region is ranked among the ten most important wetland and coastal marine eco- systems in the world and is home to some thirty-one million people (Ibeanu, 2006; Obi, 2009). Six of these states (excluding Abia, Imo and Ondo) form the South–South geopolitical zone (SSZ) ⁶⁴of Nigeria, an area in which several minority ethnic groups predominate (Agbiboa, 2014; Suberu, 1996). Some authors refer to this area as the ‘geographical Niger Delta’ in contradistinction to the official Niger Delta (Oyefusi, 2008,p.540). Importantly, the Niger Delta is also the site of

⁶⁴Nigeria has six geopolitical zones which include: North central, North West, North East, South West, South East, and South-South.

massive oil deposits, which have been extracted for decades by the oil multinationals in the region. Although an estimated US\$600 billion has been generated by the oil industry in Nigeria since the 1960s (Onuoha, 2009, p. 245), the majority of Niger Delta inhabitants are mired in poverty while their region is engulfed by an inexcusable sense of neglect (Agbiboa, 2014; Ibeanu, 2006; Osha, 2006).

As stated above, the Niger Delta is about 70,000 square miles. It is one of the largest wetlands in the world. The area has three main ecological zones namely: the sandy coastal area, the fresh water swamps and the dry forest land areas. There are more than 20 different ethnic groups. The Ijaw ethnic group is reputed to be the largest in the region. Others include: Urobo, Kwale, Isoko, Itsekiri, Yoruba, Ikwere, Etchie, Ndoni, Ogba and Abua, Andoni, Ogoni, Nembe, Engenni, Ogbia, Epie, Atissa, etc (Austin 2005, p.74).

The Niger Delta peoples, just like any other ethnic groups in Nigeria, have myths of origin that could either be traced to heaven, the east or the ocean. For instance, Ndoki people claim that they originated from the Atlantic Ocean. The peoples of Niger Delta belong to what Austin (2005) refers to as high context cultures. This implies that they are more communal in lifestyle than individualist. Farming is the basic unit of social organization. The father is the head of the family; the main occupation is farming and fishing. They produce mainly tubers like yam, cocoyam and cassava. They also grow palm trees and other fruits like pears, mango, paw-paw etc. (Austin 2005, p.75).

There are variations in the pattern of political organization amongst the peoples of the region. While some ethnic groups in the Niger Delta have centralized political organizations, others are organized in small community units. For instance, the Itsekiri of present day Delta State have an elaborate kingship system, while the Ndoki may be classified as stateless society (Austin 2005, p.76).

The age set system is highly developed among people of the Niger Delta. Elders play a very important role in the communities. Age is respected and revered. Many of the people still are influenced by the ontology of African Traditional Religion (ATR). They have four different categories of the world. First, they have the world of the unborn; second, the world of ancestors; third, the realm of the living dead and fourth, the world of the living (Austin 2005, p.76).

They believe that for order, harmony, peace and progress to prevail, the relationship between these four zones of being must be cordial. With the advent of Christianity, many have converted but still kept some of their traditional beliefs and practices like fishing festival and the almost mystical relationship with the rivers. This mystical belief subsequently was to have relevance in the Niger Delta struggle: the formation of 'egbesu' movement for instance is borne out of the belief that 'egbesu' god is a just god, and bestows power of invincibility on whoever is embarking on a just struggle (Ukiwo 2011, p.18).

Furthermore, to an average Niger Delta indigene, conflict is bad and should be avoided. This is because they belong to the high context group of cultures, in which group harmony and solidarity is very much valued. They have an elaborate and intricate web of indigenous conflict resolution

mechanisms. Conflict or disagreements are usually handled at the family level. If they are not satisfactorily resolved, they are handed over to either the daughters of the compound or the married women. If all these failed, the elders take over. If resolution is still not successful, the matter is referred to the entire community gathering of adults. It is the belief of the people that peace naturally will be achieved by the time all these processes are followed. However, sanctions for non-compliance with societal norms could be very severe. They range from ostracisation, to banishment, exile, slavery and fines. The gods and ancestors played a great role in community issues. There is also an elaborate ritual of reconciliation among the people (Austin 2005, p.76).

It is perhaps necessary to point out that a community that is so close to nature, and where every individual counts, and where communal spirit is highly cherished is at the moment more mythical than real, people remember it with a forlorn sense of nostalgia. In its place is a community that is struggling to define itself and make a sense out of its present predicament. What accounts for this change?

As time passed, the region gradually drifted, and the initial conflict within the community became insignificant compared to later developments. The social structure and composition which existed in the pre-colonial era became distorted, and the region was faced with new challenges. The introduction of slave trade, the coming of Christianity, western education, and colonialism contributed in part to changing the conflict dynamics. Moreover, the tune of the conflict further changed and became compounded with the discovery of oil in Oloibiri in the present day Bayelsa state in 1956 (see Austin 2005, Idemudia, 2009, Obi, 2014).

The Niger Delta has come to be known for multidimensional conflicts which range from land disputes, to chieftaincy issues, tribal conflicts, marginalization and neglect, among others. All these are further compounded with the discovery of oil in the region, and it is important to note that all the aforesaid crises have been subsumed to face a perceived common enemy: the federal government and multinational oil companies. Moreover, it is argued that the discovery of oil and appropriation of oil resources in the region underpin and equally change the dynamics of the conflict in the region. Oil has gained predominance in the region to the extent that some conflict, apparently separate from oil issues, is often linked to the problem of oil; this is what Omeje (2004) refers to as “oilification” of the conflict.

The activities of oil exploration has an adverse effect on the community, in that such activities further deplete and reduce the amount of land available for farming. The leadership and chieftaincy disputes also gained impetus because negotiation with the oil companies and the benefits accruable from such negotiations are shared by the chiefs and various heads of the communities. This unequal distribution of benefits informed the increasingly fierce and uncontrollable nature of the conflict, and has progressively changed the conflict from creed to greed (Austin, 2005; Idemudia 2009). Having noted that the dynamics of the conflict have changed in recent times, we briefly turn to the pre-colonial period.

3.2 THE ERA OF COLONIAL INCURSION

The Niger Delta first had contact with foreigners through trading activities. In the pre-colonial period, the peoples in the Delta started trading with the Portuguese as far back as 15th century on the Atlantic coast. The indigenous community of the Niger Delta exchanged notable forest and

sea products with Europeans visitors and fellow Africans - notably the Igbo from the interior, until a change in trade (Austin 2005; *African Volunteer Network* 2014).

The change was the introduction of the Atlantic slave trade. As the integral part of the notorious “Slave Coast” of West Africa, the Niger Delta region incorporated some of the most densely populated parts of the African continent. The communities which inhabited the region became the most important sources of and export centres for the inglorious Atlantic slave trade from the early 15th century to the 19th century (Law 1991, p.90). Thus, when the Europeans came shopping for slaves, the local people of the region adjusted to the trade, supplying slaves from amongst themselves and their hinterland neighbours to Europeans slave traders. In consequence, the modest settlements on the Niger Delta coast were radically transformed into major slave ports, such as Bonny, New Calabar, Okrika, and Brass (Odoemene, 2011; Maier, 2000; Law, 1991).

The slave trade came to an end in the 19th century. As a result, the Niger Delta chiefs sought a new trade which they found in oil. The oil in question here is not fossil fuel, but that derived from the processing of the oil-palm nuts. The lucrative palm oil trade also became the commodity which later sowed the seeds of destruction in Niger Delta. Due to the gains and wealth linked to the product, the British, especially through Sir George Dashwood Taubman Goldie, began scheming to cheat the Niger Delta chiefs, dominate the trade and regulate its prices. Making little effort to convince them in this direction but successfully banding the various palm oil companies of the delta in 1879 into the United Africa Company (UAC) (Odoemene 2011, p.6; *African Volunteer Network* 2014).TaubmanGoldie effectively laid the

foundation for eventual subjugation of the Niger Delta (Odoemene 2011, p.6). His imperialist ambitions led him to lobby London for Royal Charter to establish a British-controlled commercial empire in West Africa. When the request was finally granted on the 10th July 1886, the Charter empowered the company to govern the Niger Delta area, in which it already had extensive trading interests. Taubman Goldie and Major Edward Hewell, the British consul at the time, began to create conditions which would enable them to exploit the economic resources in the region. To guarantee further protection of British interests and protect the excesses of the British merchants, a military force was established by the home government (in Great Britain), and this was subsequently used to repress the indigenes and prevent them from resisting the unsavoury nature of the trading activities (Odoemene 2011, p.7).

This further emboldened Taubman Goldie. He started signing treaties with the local chiefs, many of whom did not understand the meaning of such treaties. By 1884, they had secured thirty-seven such treaties and maintained a fleet of twenty gunboats at sea to punish anyone who challenged their authority (Ayandele 1980, p.73). It is worthy of note that these treaties were eventually used by Taubman Goldie to strengthen British claim in the Delta region at the subsequent Berlin conference (Mailer 2000,p.120). Sequel to this development, the inhabitants of the Delta not only lost their sovereignty, but also were no longer in control of their fate, and thus, they descended into the firm grip of economic stagnation from which they never recovered (Mailer 2000 cited in Odoemene, 2011, p.5). In 1893, the region's former name, the Oil River Protectorate, was changed to the Niger Coast Protectorate; the regions were later merged with Lagos and was named the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In 1914, the Northern and Southern territories (protectorates) were amalgamated by Lord Lugard for administrative convenience.

The amalgamation was not fully accepted by the diverse Niger Delta minority groups. By 1950s, these groups revived their argument that the 19th century treaties signed between their leaders and the British gave the colonialists no right to hand them over to the new nation-state. This position was confirmed by one of the militant leaders (of the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force) Asari Dokubo, in this researcher's interview with him (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). This issue became a source of conflict in the new nation-state, threatening to degenerate into a breakdown of peace. Tensions were heightened with the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity in Niger Delta's Oloibiri village in 1958. In response to the aforementioned demand of the minority groups, the colonial government set up a Commission on Minority Groups, headed by Sir Henry Willink, in 1957 to investigate the complaints of the minority groups and make recommendations about the Commission's findings (Odoemene 2011; Obi 2014; Agbiboa 2014).

While the Commission's report rejected the twin demands of the Niger Delta people for independence and the status of a state within Nigeria, it concluded that a case had been made for special treatment of this area. According to the report, the region was said to require special effort because it was poor, backward, and neglected (Willink Commission Report 1958; see also Odoemene, 2011, p.5). The government responded to this report by setting up the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) in 1961, to consider the problems of the area. This board, however, failed to address the main problems of underdevelopment, and in its composition, there was no representative from the Niger Delta. This was seen as a deliberate attempt to undermine the

wishes and aspirations of the people by trivialising the matter: thus, the Board failed right from its inception.

In the next section, the chapter discusses the roots of the Niger Delta struggle and the clamour by the region's inhabitants for autonomy over their local resources.

3.3 THE STRUGGLE FOR LOCAL AUTONOMY AND RESOURCE CONTROL

The roots of the Niger Delta conflict, as earlier noted, lie in the history of the struggles for self-determination, local autonomy⁶⁵ and democracy by the ethnic minorities in the region, which goes as far back as 1914. As demonstrated earlier, the creation of Nigeria by the British as its colony in 1914 relegated the peoples of the Niger Delta to the status of ethnic minorities in contradistinction to the ethnic majority groups (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) in what later became the Northern, Western and Eastern regions of the country. Prior to the country's independence in 1960, the need to collectively attain independence induced a kind of nationalist spirit in the people. This gradually became eroded when regionalism was introduced in the country in 1946. Nonetheless, there was still the need to collectively fight for independence which brought the nationalists together. During this period, each region was given the right to explore and appropriate its resources through the principle of 'derivation' which gave the region the right to its natural resources. As time passed, the principle of 'derivation' gradually gave way to the principle of 'need', whereby the federal government takes over the exploration and appropriation of resources from each region, and allocates revenue to individual regions based on need. The successive institutionalization of revenue sharing and power distribution along regional lines

⁶⁵ Local autonomy here refers to the clamour by the Niger Delta people to have control over their resources.

tended to reinforce the politicization of ethnic identity, and its mobilization in the struggles for access to power and resources. On this basis, smaller groups defined as “ethnic minorities” tended to lose out, while the dominant ethnic groups asserted power at the regional (North, Hausa-Fulani; East, Igbo; and West, Yoruba) and the national level. The initial reaction of the minorities was to protest against the perceived “majoritarian” stranglehold of the three ethno-regional blocs’ (Mustapha 2003, p.8) over power and resources by forming political parties representing their interests, and seeking local autonomy through state or region creation in the context of Nigerian federalism. These parties included the Cross River Ogoja State Movement (COR), the Midwest Movement, and the Niger Delta Congress (NDC) (Obi, 2014, p.114). Although they did not succeed in their quest for the creation of new states before Nigeria’s independence in 1960, in 1966, the Niger Delta attempted a redress in the political landscape of the country by declaring a revolution against the federal government. This struggle, which was spearheaded by Isaac AdakaBoro, was subsequently crushed by the state.

The civil war between 1967 and 1970, however, provided new opportunities. Shortly before the eruption of war between the Federation and the secessionist state of Biafra in the Eastern region in June 1967, the four regions of Nigeria (North, East, West and Midwest), were abolished and replaced with twelve states, of which the ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta had three. The rationale behind the creation of states was to break the Niger Delta away from the Eastern region and thereby remove the control over oil from the Biafran, that is, the Eastern region. The creation of states reinforced the confidence of the people, and made them believe that their access to the oil fields would be increased, and that everything would be brought under their control. One of the early actions of the Igbo political elite was to show Biafra’s claim to the oil in the Niger

Delta and demand the payment of royalties and taxes by oil companies to the Biafran government. In response, the federal government imposed a naval blockade on the Bonny and Port Harcourt oil export terminals and attacked Biafran forces in the Niger Delta (Ikein and Briggs-Anigboh 1998, p.128). Thus, the Nigerian civil war was perceived as an oil war and it was logical that the victorious federal army went on to establish its full control over the oil during and after the war (Obi 2014, p.115). In this way, oil became the main issue around the politics of revenue allocation after the end of the Nigerian civil war. By the 1970s, the Niger Delta had become the main source of oil and gas, and as a result the new fiscal basis of the Nigerian State (replacing agriculture), accounting for over 80 percent of national revenues and 95 percent of export earnings (Obi 2014, p.116). In spite of the ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta having their 'own' states, the federal government, largely controlled by the political elite from dominant ethnic groups, had seized monopoly control of the collection and distribution of oil revenues. Just as the states were created by military decree, federal monopoly over oil resources was similarly established through Decree No. 51 of 1969 and Decree No. 9 of 1971 (Obi 2014, p.116).

Apart from the state creation exercise, and the centralization of power over oil, the revenue allocation principle of derivation was progressively changed to reduce the share of oil producing states of the Niger Delta from 50 percent in 1966 to 1.5 percent in the 1990s (Obi, 2014, p.116). The gradual reduction of the derivation principle – which provided for revenue allocation in proportion to the contribution to the federal purse by each state – and the introduction of the Distributive Pool Account (DPA) or federation account that emphasized the allocative principles of population size and need (and de-emphasized derivation), was viewed as an injustice by the

ethnic minorities, particularly in the context of decades of marginalization and neglect of the Niger Delta by past governments⁶⁶. It was also strongly felt that the principle of derivation which gave 50 percent of revenues to the old regional governments, which were controlled by the dominant ethnic groups, was abandoned in order to enable these same groups to control the oil wealth produced from the oil minority states. Hence, the struggle between the oil minorities/states of the Niger Delta and the non-oil producing ethnic majority groups/states/federal government became the object of the politics of controlling oil revenue or resource control. The campaign (non-violent until recently), which in Nigeria's political lexicon is referred to as 'resource control', is based on the demand for self-determination to control the resources within the 'territory' of the Niger Delta (inhabited by minorities), compensation for damages inflicted upon the territory by oil production (pollution, degradation, loss of livelihoods), and access to an increased share of oil revenues (Obi 2014; Agbiboa 2014).

The manipulative intention behind the federal government's decision to change the revenue formula from the derivation principle to the principle of population and needs was viewed as an affront and a deliberate injustice to the people of the Niger Delta who have assumed the status of oil producing majority group. This further explains an increased perception of marginalisation and neglect of the peoples of the region. This neglect has resulted in a submission of 'poor quality infrastructure, high unemployment rates (among its predominantly youthful population), high levels of HIV/AIDS infection rates and high levels of poverty estimated at an average of 69

⁶⁶The derivation principle states that revenue sharing formulae will be based on the amount of resources that each region produces. In this regard, the Northern region was known for its groundnut production and had exclusive control over it, the same applied to the Western region which had cocoa, and the Eastern region which had palm oil. The Niger Delta perceived the principle of need as unfair to them because such policy on revenue appropriation was not introduced when the majority ethnic group had control over their resources. The principle of need implies that revenue allocation will be based on need, which includes determining the number of people in the area, and how big the territory is to consider what represents the need of the area.

percent' (UNDP 2006, pp.15-18). Additionally, it is claimed that the peoples of the Niger Delta are discriminated against in the federal distribution of political and socioeconomic opportunities, entitlements and welfare services and development in general. Federal control of oil is also perceived as the result of an unfair political arrangement that enables the ethnic majorities to 'colonise', exploit and persecute the ethnic minorities, who they feel 'cannot pose any real threat to federal hegemony' (Okonta 2005, p.206).

This era, when the revenue policy changed and the Niger Delta peoples clamoured for more inclusion and improvement in the region, was termed by Idemudia (2009) as the era of 'needs'. The sincere need for the development and upliftment of the state and conditions of the peoples and the region culminated in social unrest. Various Niger Delta ethnic minority groups like, for instance, the Niger Delta volunteer force, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta, the Ikwere boys, the Egbesu boys led the agitation for resource control. Some environmental/human rights groups such as the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People protesting against the exploitation, neglect and pollution of the region by successive governments and oil companies also supported them. They expressed the view that the control of their oil resources by outsiders was akin to 'internal colonialism' and demanded the right to control their own (oil) resources (Obi 2014, p.118). Such demands were largely ignored by successive military regimes that also violently repressed peaceful protests against oil exploration in the region. It was not until Nigeria returned to democratic rule in May 1999 that President Obasanjo, in a bid to address the growing insurgency in the region, sponsored a bill to the National Assembly and the derivation principle was subsequently increased to 13 percent. The increase was in response to international campaigns and local protests by ethnic minorities, and constituted a strategy of the new

democratic regime to win legitimacy on the basis of attending to the grievances of oil-producing communities of the Niger Delta. Part of the calculation was also to demobilize the protest groups by providing patronage to the local elite, co-opting the leadership of the protest and activist groups and creating enabling conditions for the operations of the oil industry by stemming the tide of restiveness. The method adopted then was strictly palliative, and that explains why it failed to proffer a lasting solution to the agitation (See Obi 2014; Idemudia 2009; Ukiwo 2011).

In 1999, according to Idemudia (2009) the struggle in the Niger Delta entered a new era called the “era of greed”. The relative peace enjoyed in the 1980s was a product of the hope the Niger Delta peoples reposed in the post-civil war creation of states which, it was hoped, would grant more autonomy to the region. Also, the brutal repression of peaceful protests during the military era equally contributed to enforcing peace and stability in the region. In the meantime, the people had come to realise that their peaceful protests would not be enough, and would in the long run not yield any positive result, hence, the search for a better alternative was expedient (see Obi 2014; Agbibo, 2014; Idemudia, 2009). The sharing of oil revenues was again a source of acrimony at the National Constitutional Reform Conference in 2005 where most of the delegates were nominated by the state and federal governments. The conference ended up in deadlock over its inability to reach an agreement between northern and southern delegates, notably, the demand of delegates from the Niger Delta for an upward increase in the derivation formula from 13 to 25 percent, and a progressive increase within five years to 50 percent (IRIN News, 2005). This further increased the frustration of the people of the Niger Delta and fuelled demands for the restructuring of the Nigerian federation in ways that decentralized power and emphasized local autonomy and resource control.

The struggle became more fierce and militarized. This was partly due to the worsening socioeconomic conditions, the cooptation of some armed groups by local politicians, and growing frustration and discontent among the youth that democracy had not addressed the roots of their grievances, and demands for improved welfare in the context of the continued extraction of non-replaceable oil and gas resources from their region.

Related to this, is the discontent among the oil minority group that they have been denied their ownership to land. They believe that the dominant groups who control the federal government always derive pleasure in making policy that further marginalizes the region. One of the legacies of military rule was the 1978 Land Use Decree (which later became the Land Use Act), the onshore offshore policies which transferred every accruable resource to the federal government. The transfer of ownership of land from the communities to state governments, which gave the latter the power to use land for (oil) 'development' purposes (Omeje 2005, p.323) is among the reasons the peoples in the region feel the government is not being fair to them. As Omeje (2005) notes,

what evidently compounds the institutional disadvantage of the oil-bearing communities and the stultification of their customary land rights is the fact that the 1978 Act denies courts the jurisdiction to inquire into matters of compensation relating to the provisions of the Act (Omeje 2005, p.342).

Thus, not only can the state government acquire communal land according to the law, it also determines what compensation is paid for surface rights including the facilities on the land, such as buildings, shrines, trees, crops, etc. and to whom they are paid. Therefore, the Act largely has been seen as yet another ploy to dispossess the Niger Delta peoples of their oil-rich land. Another problem is that state control of land has also fed into the politics of compensation

(payments), which has become a source of intra- and inter-community tension and conflict in the region. The land is overstretched and becomes depleted due to increased activities of the multinational oil companies, and the modus operandi for compensating for lands are crude and unregulated; this has fueled communal crisis in the region (Omeje 2005; Ukiwo 2011; Obi 2014). The next section explores the changing phases of the conflict.

3.4 THE CHANGING PHASES OF THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT

3.4.1 THE ERA OF TRUE AGITATION, 1966 TO 1990

The Niger Delta people soon realised that the situation in the region will continue to deteriorate, and if there will be any meaningful improvement in the situation of things, they have to begin to take their destiny in their hands. The earliest attempt to take control of their fortune was in February 1966, when an ethnic minority Ijaw militant, ex-policeman and undergraduate led a group of youths named the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) in an abortive attempt to secede from Nigeria, and establish a Niger Delta republic. The issue on the front burner then, as now, was the ownership and control of the oil in the region, which Boro and his supporters feared would be seized by the Igbo ethnic majority-dominated Eastern region government, and the new unitary Nigerian military government, led by General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Igbo officer. The masterminds of the aborted revolution were initially sentenced to death after being found guilty of treason by a court. However, Boro and his followers were freed after another military coup in July 1966 which was carried out by military officers of northern origin resulted in Ironsi's over-throw and death. Subsequently Colonel Yakubu Gowon became the new head of state. Upon his release, Boro joined the Nigerian Army and fought in the civil war on the federal side, apparently to defend the oilfields of the Niger Delta from falling into the hands of the rebel

Biafran (Igbo) forces. Boro died at the war front shortly before the Nigerian civil war ended in 1970. His bravery and exploits in furthering the cause of Ijaw freedom made him a hero in the eyes of the people. This struggle was to be revived in the 1990s by Niger Delta militants in a quest for local autonomy and resource control.

After the war ended in 1970, several developments had significant implications for the struggle of the Niger Delta ethnic minorities. The developments were as follows. The increased transfer and centralization of the control of oil revenues from the regions to the federal military government, the OPEC-led oil-boom of the 1970s, the transfer of the ownership of oil-rich land from local communities to the federal (and state) governments, and the huge expansion in local oil production and its impact on the fragile Niger Delta environment. These developments led to agitation among the ethnic minorities who felt that the federal military government had short-changed and denied them the opportunity to have unfettered access to their land and resources, bearing in mind that the support given by minorities to the government during the civil war was expected to eventuate in substantial resource autonomy. In return, what they gained thereafter was loss of access to a considerable proportion of the oil produced from their region (see Obi 2014; Agbibo 2014; Sharkdam 2012). Moreover, the derivation principle was further reduced from 50 percent to 3 percent in the 1980s. The introduction of population size and need as the basis for revenue sharing, further confirmed the injustice of the majority groups, who also occupy major political offices as well as high positions in the oil industry. This was seen as the height of insensitivity, and a deliberate attempt by the majority ethnic groups to deny the Niger Delta peoples what is rightfully theirs. This snowballed into a craving era which Idemudia (2009) refers to as the era of creed. The Niger Delta sincerely craved inclusion, recognition, and

development of the region, which informed the formation of an ethnic based organisation led by the Ogonis to spearhead the peaceful agitation.

3.4.2 THE ERA OF CREED AND CLAMOUR FOR INCLUSION, 1990 TO 2000

In order to correct the injustices outlined above, by the late 1970s various groups in the region had begun to mobilise. This mobilisation started in the form of peaceful protest. The methodology extended to writing of petitions, reports and articles in local newspapers. The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) moved the struggle to its next phase in the 1990s when it presented the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) to the government, demanding local autonomy and control of its oil, and waging an effective international campaign against Shell on account of its exploitative and polluting activities in Ogoniland, which threatened the survival of the people (Saro-Wiwa 1995). The government felt threatened by the activities of MOSOP, and instead of responding to the issues raised by this group, they laid an allegation of treason against the Ogoni activists. The state preferred to use military solution to crush the Ogoni uprising. Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with another nine of MOSOP's leading members were sentenced to death by hanging by a military tribunal in November 1995: a decision which had future ramifications. It equally sent a signal to the ethnic minority groups in the region that government would not tolerate any attempt to disrupt access to the oil wells, and further gave an impression that the government would not change its usual attitude to the region unless something drastic was done.

3.4.3 THE ERA OF MILITARISM AND GREED, 2000 TO 2009

In December 1998, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) was formed. The formation emerged at a meeting of Ijaw activists and representatives from forty Ijaw clans from across the coastal states

of southern Nigeria. It comprises a confederation of youth associations of the Ijaw ethnic group of the Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states of the Niger Delta. Its overriding goal was to ‘fight against the marginalisation, neglect, underdevelopment, militarisation, and repression of the minorities in the Niger Delta by the federal government and multinational oil companies’ (Personal Communication 2014; Omotola 2009, p.136). Perhaps the major achievement of the IYC was the famous Kaiama Declaration (KD) of 11 December 1998, made at a meeting of 5000 youths drawn from 500 communities, 40 clans, and 25 organisations, held at Kaiama in Bayelsa State (Agbiboa, 2011, p.13). The Kaiama Declaration demanded (among other demands) the control of oil by the Ijaw people and subsequent evacuation of military forces from all oil installations in the region.

In order to send a signal to the government that the dynamics of the struggle had changed and that the Ijaw youth would do anything to realise their dream, the IYC, using the slogan ‘Operation Climate Change’, demanded that all oil companies should leave the Niger Delta before the end of December 1998. Like MOSOP, the IYC mobilized the youth and ordinary people, by drawing upon local Ijaw idioms and a culture of resistance. Part of this included the use of Egbesu (literally the “Ijaw god of war”) whose real significance lay deep in Ijaw cosmology as a symbol of spiritual protection (invincibility) for the Ijaws when fighting a ‘just war’ for liberation. Rather than respond to the demands of the KD, or seek to enter into dialogue with the IYC on the need to negotiate a withdrawal of the Operation Climate Change, the government used the military to repel the protest against multinational oil companies, which caused the injury of many protesters (see Obi 2014; Agbiboa 2014; Omotola 2009).

The return to democratic rule in May 1999 coincided with the above event. Indeed, the democratic transition would later change the dynamics of the struggle. Expectations were initially high in the Niger Delta that the country's return to democracy would lead to the demilitarization of the region, and bring the dividends of democracy to the people. During this period, the local political class exploited the vulnerability of various groups for their selfish political ends by using them as political thugs. It is worth noting that the weapons given to these groups by local politicians later proved useful for all forms of criminal activities in the region. After the 1999 elections, the presence of the security forces in the region was still noticeable but they maintained a low profile. The Odi massacre was another sad experience which sent a signal that the government would never refrain from their military approach against the region. In an account reported by the News (1999), it was stated that:

One Ken Nneweira, an indigene of Odi and a dangerous criminal was responsible for the killing of twelve police men. The gang leader, who allegedly had a gang of bandits perpetrating armed robbery on the East-West Road and piracy on the waterways, was responsible for the killing of the policemen (*The News* 6 December, 1999).

Information has it that Ken Nneweira evicted his late father's wives and took over his house, converting it to the "command headquarters" of his "army". His late father, according to Alameiyeseigha, the then governor of Bayelsa state, was a police officer. When the news got to Odi that the Odua People's Congress (a militant group in the South West of the country) clashed with Ijaws in Ajegunle, Lagos, during the funeral of an Odi indigene, Ken Nneweira started training Odi youths for a future showdown with the OPC. According to the report 'the police heard about this and wanted to pre-empt him'. However, according to the report, some of the murderous youths, including Ken Nneweirawere linked to Alameiyeseigha's electioneering campaign. His campaign organisation had allegedly recruited them to strike fear into his

opponents. The governor promised financial settlement to the gang after he won the election but failed to fulfill his promise. In return, the hoodlums allegedly took over a part of Yenagoa and imposed a regime of terror. The News reports that ‘they extorted money from innocent passers-by of the place that came to be known as “black market”’ (*The News* 6 December, 1999). People were routinely robbed and women raped. After a time, the police moved in and after a fierce battle, dislodged the hoodlums. The police head (The Area Commander for Yenagoa), Mr. Thomas Jokotola, Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP), led that operation in September. There were some casualties, some of the “black market boys” were killed; a good number were arrested and placed in detention. As the criminals were fleeing from police onslaught, the hoodlums encountered some soldiers along Harbour road, Yenagoa. The unsuspecting military men were mowed down. After the bloody clash in Yenagoa, life seemed to return to normal. However, two months after, CSP Jokotola, reappeared in Odi, with six other policemen, on “special duty”. The hoodlums, who had retreated to that town, pounced on him and his colleagues. Their corpses were discovered days after. This ugly incident exacerbated the general mood of insecurity in the country. The News reported that:

This incident irked the President and he gave Alamiyeseigha, a fourteen day ultimatum to produce the culprits. However, sources disclosed that the federal government believed that the governor might not be able to handle the situation. The ultimatum was considered as a subtle indictment on the governor. The federal government did not however, wait till the expiration of the ultimatum before heavy artillery of soldiers were sent, and the whole community was razed down (*The News* 6 December, 1999).

What remained of the community were a few buildings and dozens of injured and dead people. After Odi, military forces also raided other communities in the Niger Delta such as Olugbobiri, Liama and Gbarantoruto put an end to their nefarious activities (Human Rights Watch 2002).

The continued militarization of the region after democratisation contributed to the feeling in some scholarly circles, the activists and the people in the region that those that had held the oil-rich Niger Delta “captive” would neither listen to the demands of the people nor respect their rights (Human Right Watch 2002; Obi 2014). Such views were informed by the apparent failure of peaceful protests to effect change in the attitude of the state-oil alliance toward the Niger Delta. As mentioned earlier, the response by such groups as the Ijaw Youth Council, MEND, and others was to adopt violence, either in navigating the complex terrain of survival in the region, or in resisting what was seen as the predatory instincts of the state-oil alliance and wrest the control of oil from them (Obi 2014, p.120). It has now got to the point that every typical resident in Niger Delta believes that the Nigerian state and their allies, the multinational oil companies, are utterly insensitive and non-receptive to the people’s yearnings. They believe that the only message to which they respond is force, and that they (the government and the oil companies) will not stop at anything when their interests are threatened. This further compounds the frustration and anger of the people at the impunity with which the region is being plundered by the state-oil alliance, with complicity of some local elites and violent youth. The violence of resource extraction in the Niger Delta by the state-oil alliance has dialectically resulted in the violence of local resistance. However, it must be noted that the very nature of dialectics is complex, and sometimes contradictory: the various forces find expression at different levels, and alliances are built, destroyed and reconstituted in various ways, and greed has gradually infiltrated the initial sincerity of protest action. As noted earlier, politicians in their craving for power empowered the youth and gave them weapons to unleash violence on their opponents; the weapons later became tools used to cause mayhem in the region. For example, three state governors in the Niger Delta in 1999 were able to penetrate and sponsor some of the militia

armed groups in the region to unleash violence upon and intimidate their political opponents and voters. Of note was the case of the governor of Rivers State, who got two of the leaders of such groups, namely, MujahedAsariDokubo, then Vice President and later (with the governor's support), President of the IYC, and Ateke Tom, then leader of the Okrika Vigilante (later Niger Delta Vigilante), to 'help' him during the 1999 and 2003 elections (Human Rights Watch 2005 cited in Obi 2014, p.121). Now estranged from the politicians and the military that have declared him a wanted person, Ateke has been accused of attacking police stations in Port Harcourt just before the Presidential elections in April 2007, destroying the stations and killing some officers in the process. Apart from these two groups, there has been a proliferation of other armed groups or 'cults' (Coventry Cathedral 2009cited in Obi 2014, p.121). While there are other groups in the region, the most potent militant group engaging in local resistance, but targeting a global audience, is the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). MEND is renowned for launching daring raids into fortified oil installations onshore and offshore and kidnapping foreign oil workers. MEND has also detonated explosive devices near oil vicinity, and fought pitched battles on land and at sea with Nigeria's military forces. It has publicised its activities locally and internationally using modern technology (Obi 2014, p.121).

3.5 PUTTING THE CONFLICT IN PERSPECTIVE

As earlier noted, the Niger Delta conflict predates the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate in 1914. It began in the era of colonial incursion which is here referred to as the evolution era which introduced the structural imbalance in the process of state creation. The manner of trade and the forceful annexation of the region have defined the region from the outset as marginal region. Feelings of disenchantment and fear of majority domination were first

expressed before independence, and it was hoped that the Willink's commission of inquiry would provide solutions to these structural imbalances. However, the reverse was to be the case as British pattern of administration was transmuted wholesale to the country. This further widened tribal sentiment (which undergirds politics and administration of the country to date).

Against a background of colonial exploitation, the 1956 discovery of oil in Olobiri heralded the beginning of the era of need which equally changed the dynamics of the conflict in the region. The most important need then was the development of the region and equitable distribution of natural resources. This period, according to Idemudia (2009), spanned the 1950s to the 1980s. After the Boro twelve-day revolution in 1966 and subsequent civil war which lasted from 1966 through to 1970. The politics of civil war which divided the country into twelve states gave Niger Delta three states out of the states created. The impression after the creation of states was that the federal government was ready to actually meet the needs of the region and afford it a sense of equal participation. This, coupled with the military regime in the country explains why the region experienced a semblance of peace during this period (that is, in the 1980s).

Moreover, the corporate misdemeanors of the oil multinational companies also inform the dynamics of the conflict in the region. The expansion of the oil industry from less than 100 oil wells in the 1950s to over 606 oil wells in the 1990s meant oil companies acquired a significant amount of scarce arable lands to build oil production infrastructures, and lay pipelines that deprived people of their major source of livelihood which are farming and fishing. Similarly, between 1976 and 1996, there were more than 4,835 incidences of oil spills of at least 2,446,322 barrels (102.7 million US gallons), of which an estimated 77 per cent were lost to the

environment. According to Human Rights Watch over 10,000 families and another 4,500 people (in 1995 alone) lost their farmland to either installation of oil infrastructure or to oil spills (Idemudia, 2009, p.318). Hence, by the mid-1990s, after over 40 years of oil extraction, the reality was that oil wealth brought nothing to the people of Niger Delta, except ecological catastrophe, social deprivation and political marginalisation. This, together with previous failure of the state, helped to stimulate a feeling of distrust and disenchantment among the people. Idemudia (2009) called this the era of creed, during which the common apprehension of the harm wrought by environmental degradation motivated people in the region, especially the Ogoni people, to come together in the 90s to speak against the ordeal imposed on them by the state and the multinational oil companies. The movement was later crushed using military solution.

The militaristic response of both the state and oil companies to a grassroots peaceful protest effectively reinforced the belief that the problems of the Niger Delta cannot be resolved through dialogue and civil protest. This was because the Government was very unlikely to surrender any of its power over rent and royalties, and it would require a more serious uprising than that of the Ogonis to force it to do so.

This interpretation of the failure of the Ogoni struggle and a widespread feeling of relative deprivation set the context for the metamorphosis of the conflict into the next phase and the more violent path the conflict later took. The discussion so far has suggested that structural problems associated with the state-nation⁶⁷ status of Nigeria generated need issues, and the sub-systemic

⁶⁷A state nation is defined by ethnic plurality, religious diversity, difference in regional experience of colonialism. These factors in themselves are not the issue, but it is when they are used to advance political or a particular gain that they become a factor. The transmutation of British administrative tribalism into Nigerian political tribalism and

anomalies in the Nigerian society due to structural deficiencies inherent in the state allowed for the intersection of need and greed in ways that impelled the conflict towards further escalation.

Violence became intense after the inception of democratic rule in 1999 because of the enabling environment. This progressively launched the era of greed which was preceded by need and greed. In the period between 1965 and 2004, 85 per cent of oil revenue went to 1 per cent of the population, the per capita income fell from US\$250 to US\$212, the number of people subsisting on less than US\$1 a day grew from 36 per cent to more than 70 per cent, from 19 million to roughly 90 million. Today, socio-economic realities in the Niger Delta are worse than the conditions described by the Willink Commission report of 1958, which characterised the region as poor, backward, neglected and a harsh terrain to live in (Idemudia 2009, p.316). Taking into cognisance the socio-economic context, the devastating experience of people of Oloibiri and Ogoni people in the previous phases coupled with the realisation by the communities that oil is exhaustible generated an urgent need to act. These experiences for many in the region reinforced the perception that if they were to sit back and not take their future into their own hands then the oil might dry up with nothing to show for it. Moreover, it cannot be denied that the Niger Delta situation has become particularly volatile as a huge number of youths roam about around the region feeling alienated and powerless. They expect to be able to compete with other people from other regions in Nigeria a hope which seems blurred and unrealistic.

This feeling of alienation inspired the proliferation of youth activism across the region. The platform for militancy was laid with the emergence of different minority ethnic self-

the forced amalgamation of the country in 1914, bequeathed a state-nation status on Nigeria (see Idemudia, 2014 for more on this).

determination political movements in the region, such as Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Isoko Development Union (IDU), Urhobo, Itsekiri National Patriots (INP), Chikoko and the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), that attempted to follow in the footsteps of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). However, because these movements had multiple goals such as the environment, human rights and democratisation, they were pushed in different directions by different social forces. Similarly, these movements were often largely driven by youths who sometimes also had other different affiliations and agendas. Consequently, these associations were loosely organised and weakly accountable at all levels, and therefore were easily subjected to organisational capture (Idemudia 2009, p.320). The fact that the aforementioned associations were relatively easy to capture and manoeuvre, either by youth leaders or political elites, effectively ensured the progression and escalation of conflict in the region. This situation was exacerbated by the introduction of democratic rule in 1999.

Paradoxically, the shift from military rule to democracy in 1999 effectively allowed for the expansion of the patron-client base, previously dominated by only military dictators and their cronies, to include local politicians and area boys in the region. Here enters the greed dimension to the conflict. The shift to democratic government meant an increase in the flow of oil revenue into the region partly because of the increase and implementation of the 13 per cent principle of derivation. For example, since 1999 Rivers State alone has received more than US\$636 million, with the 23 local government areas' average monthly allocations increasing more than fourfold over the same period. Consequently, the influx of money increased the intensity with which people jostle for political office and assume it to be an end in itself (Obi 2014; Idemudia 2009; Watts 2008).

Also, elections became an instrument of factional mobilisation in which readily available unemployed youth became important tools for self-interested political elites to draw upon to win elections. The possibility of winning elections of course largely depended on the ability of political elites that vie for public office to establish or reinforce existing patron-client relationships with different youth groups in the region. In spite of the inflow of resources, the development of the region still remains abysmal because the politics during this time was undergirded by sharing of booty. For example, militias in the region are regularly reported to be given control over rewarding oil bunkering routes in exchange for support to governors in the state to win elections as well as maintain their rule (Idemudia 2009, p.323).

Today, in the Niger Delta, neo-patrimonialism has transformed into the political economy of disorder. The political economy of disorder is the deliberate fostering of conflict by political elites for the direct purpose of gaining and retaining control of the state for both primitive accumulation and to further the neo-patrimonial order. Proceeds from patron-client relations either via direct exchange or through political cover for illegal oil bunkering activities are used to buy weapons such as rocket propelled grenades, AK-47 assault rifles, machine guns, satellite phones and speed boats used to confront the state, oppose other militias or to hold on to political office (see Idemudia, 2009, Watts, 2008). Whenever such patron-client relationships are broken, violence in the region escalates as disgruntled patrons or clients tend to compete against each other using all means at their disposal. An example is the violence that erupted between the Niger Delta Vigilante led by Ateke Tom and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force led by

AlhajiAsariDokubo, both funded by local politicians with oil monies (Idemudia 2009; Watts 2008).

Furthermore, after the Ogoni crisis in the previous phase, rather than engaging in a carefully designed strategy for supporting sustainable community development, oil companies were driven by profit logic, and instead chose to pursue a strategy of throwing money at any and all forms of community relations problems. For instance, Shell's community relations spending jumped from only US\$330,000 in 1989 to roughly US\$67 million in 2002. The consequence of this increase in community spending which does not include all other forms of payment to youth either for security or sit-at-home allowance invariably feeds into the political economy of violence manifested in intra- and inter-community conflict as well as intra- and inter-militia violence. Ironically, the oil monies that are often at the heart of the competition responsible for the intra- and inter-community and militia conflicts are also used to purchase weapons to prosecute such conflicts (Idemudia 2009, p.324). The monetisation of community relations also undermined traditional institutions, as youth in the region often accused their traditional leaders of corruption and in the process killed or dethrone some of them. Ukiwo (2007) noted how youths in Evereni in Delta State decapitated their traditional ruler for allegedly appropriating community funds. Such incidences create a governance gap that neither the state nor the youths can legitimately fill, and undermine traditional mechanisms and institutions for conflict resolution (Idemudia 2009, p.325).

Again, the use of force to manage the conflict as in the destruction and killing of innocent people in Odi village (1999) and Odiana (2005) by the civilian government of Olusegun Obasanjo

serves to heighten the conflict. This is because, unlike the early 1990s when government had a monopoly of violence, today increases in oil monies via governmental allocation, oil companies spending and bunkering activities mean that militants are more than capable of meeting governmental force with force. In addition, given the difficult nature of the Niger Delta terrain and decades of governmental failure to develop the transportation and communication networks in region, the Government is largely unable to police the region effectively. Thus, the topography of the region makes it suitable for conflict to thrive, because of various hide outs which the militants easily navigate.

Additionally, the traditional governmental approach of co-opting traditional leaders and the Niger Delta elites to support its position is no longer viable as such institutions have either been undermined or elites now seem to benefit more from the political economy of disorder than any alternative inducement provided by the centre. The conflict in the region today is best understood within the contest of need, creed and greed. The interface between these phases properly explains the dynamics and progression of conflict in the region in recent times.

3.6 CONCLUSION

As noted earlier, the foundation of the conflict in the Niger Delta was laid before the colonial incursion. During this time, the internal communal crises which came as a result of land/ leadership disputes were routinely resolved by the internal conflict resolution mechanism. The change in trade from palm oil, slave trade and the eventual incursion of colonial masters and their interest in trade equally changed the dynamics of the conflict. The conflict however, became complicated with the discovery of oil in the fifties. The inaction and lack of proactive

resolve on the part of the government and the oil multinationals also helped to complicate the crisis. The military solution adopted by the state, coupled with local connivance which came from selfish interest of political class further helped to change the dynamics of the conflict. As noted earlier, the conflict has traversed through multiple phases of need, greed, and greed, as interest over time became distorted and beclouded the real intent of resource mobilisation, control, environmental development and the like which undergird the rationale behind the conflict at the initial stage became complicated. It soon dawned on the government that what the Niger Delta conflict requires goes beyond military solution and palliatives. In fairness to government, the state has attempted to intervene in the conflict using different mechanisms, but several contradictions which include lack of political resolve, coupled with corruption among others makes the conflict to endure for so long. The next chapter discusses some of the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted by the state in response to Niger Delta conflict and why they failed.

CHAPTER FOUR

STATE INTERVENTIONS IN THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT AND THEIR FAILURES

The preceding chapter dwelt extensively on the historical evolution of the Niger Delta, its people and location within the Nigerian federation of states. It discusses the cultural setting and how the people of Niger Delta traversed the region before the colonial incursion, as well as during and after colonial rule. This background helps to underscore the significance of the terrain, the impact of colonial rule and the peculiarity of the conflict at that time, and how the discovery of oil changed the dynamics of the conflict in the region. In light of the new phase of the conflict due to the discovery of oil and how that has changed the tone and dynamics of the conflict, our focus now is to interrogate various attempts by the state to address the lingering crisis in the region and the reasons for the failures of the attempts. The government, in its bid to stem the spate of violence in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, has introduced various interventions to resolve the incessant conflicts in the region. These interventions range from persecution in the form of military ‘diplomacy’ to pacification; this is what Frynas (2001) refers to as concession, repression and public relations. Similarly, Aghalino (2009) opines that the state has adopted three main strategies to address the Niger Delta conflict. Aghalino refers firstly to an institutional approach, which involves establishment of Commissions; secondly to a legislative approach which is the making of relevant laws, and thirdly, to the stick approach which is what is referred to here as military diplomacy (see above). In the conception of Shoremekun (2012), the most recent strategy is co-optation; that is, a situation whereby certain individuals, seen as important figures in the Niger Delta, are given rewards in the form of positions and contracts: the

appointment of the former President Goodluck Jonathan is perceived as emblematic of a position bestowed as a reward. The previous intervention efforts, however, failed to address the hydra-headed conflict in the region because of government's lethargy, weak capacity, and several other complications which include the lack of political will to address the conflict. Moreover, the strategic importance of oil to the economy has very often compelled the government to find palliative measures to address the Niger Delta conflict. Hence, failure on the part of the government to realise *ab-initio* that resolution of the Niger Delta issues requires strong political will explains in part why the conflict has persisted for so long and seems intractable.

As mentioned earlier, this chapter explores various intervention efforts on the part of the government and the reasons why they failed. This is necessary because our understanding of various hindrances to the resolution of Niger Delta conflict in the past will provide the present study with hindsight to learn from the past mistakes. It will also enable a contribution to the present discourse on how amnesty can be utilised to guarantee sustainable peace in the region. We now turn to state management of the conflict from the time when crude oil was first discovered in the region up to the 1990s.

4.1 THE NIGERIAN STATE AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT, 1958-1990

The first attempt at responding to emerging issues in the Niger Delta occurred on the cusp of independence. The Niger Delta people feared the dominance of the major ethnic groups and were apprehensive that they might not have a voice in the emerging state. This concern was expressed in the 1957 constitutional conference which took place in London. In response to the concerns of

minority ethnic groups, a commission of inquiry was set up by the colonial government, which was headed by Sir Henry Willink⁶⁸ in 1957, to look into the peculiar developmental needs of the Niger Delta region. The commission submitted its report in 1958 and recommended a development board for the area. Referring to the report, Agbokhan (2007) notes the following recommendations:

- a. The development of a special area should be placed on the concurrent list.
- b. A special area should be created in the Niger Delta region to cover the Rivers Province except Ahoada and Port Harcourt, and including the Western Ijaw Division.
- c. A board with a federal chairman should be created for the special area to which the Federal, Western and Eastern Regions should contribute funds and staff for the purpose of a conducting a survey of the particular problems of the special area, and which would then draw up plans for its development.
- d. The board should initiate schemes to supplement the normal development of the special area which should be carried out by the government concerned.
- e. The federal government contribution should be one-third of the capital cost and one-third of the recurrent cost for periods which may extend to ten years.
- f. A report regarding the plans made by the board and the progress made in carrying them out should be laid annually on the tables of the Federal House of Representatives and the Western and Eastern Houses of Assembly.
- g. The existence of any special area should be reviewed continually. As soon as the features that made it a special area are reduced, the need to terminate special area status or to

⁶⁸Sir Henry Willink was the chairman of the Commission of Inquiry, which was set up in 1957 to look into the fear of the minority groups in Nigeria.

convert it to a minority area should be considered (Willink Commission Report 1958, cited in Aibgokhan 2007, p.244).

Subsequently, the Tafawa Balewa⁶⁹ government established the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) via an Act of Parliament in 1961 (NDDDB Act 1961) to fulfil the above needs. The board, however, could not provide any meaningful development for the Niger Delta region due to a number of factors including, for instance, failure to include the indigenous Niger Delta people who initially expressed the fear of domination; funding; regionalism (that is, individual regions focused upon developing its region, this benefited the majority ethnic group) intense politicisation of the time, and administrative problems because of lack of political will and commitment on the part of the government (see Okumagba and Okereka, 2012; Obi 2009; Adeyeri 2012; Aigbokhan 2007). Above all, the Federal Military Government suspended the constitution after the military took over in 1966. The autonomy of the region was consequently taken away by military decrees and the Niger Delta Development Board ceased to operate.

As part of the strategy of the military government to retain a firm grip on the Niger Delta region from the Igbos who were seen as the impending contender, the Biafran soldiers were already eyeing the crude oil in the Delta, and the Niger Delta people did not want to be subservient to the Igbo⁷⁰. Hence, the creation of new states served a good political / war strategy during the civil

⁶⁹Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was the first elected Prime Minister in Nigeria. He came to power in 1960 after Nigeria received independence and left office in 1966 through a bloody coup. He was one of the African leaders who encouraged the formation of the Organisation of African Unity. He also encouraged cooperation between former British and former French colonies. He believed in pan-Africanism and his foreign policy was Afro-centric (see Osaghae 1998; Adeyeri 2012).

⁷⁰The Igbo believed the Niger Delta people were their close neighbour and thought the region would naturally come under their control. On the other hand, the Niger Delta people cherished their autonomy and did not want to be subservient to the Igbo. This informed their resolve to support the federal government.

war in 1967⁷¹. The government divided the country from four states to twelve states. In the new arrangement, the Niger Delta had three (Mid-Western State, Rivers State, South Eastern State) of the twelve states created⁷². This also served as a reward to the Niger Deltans⁷³ for fighting on the side of the Federal government. This gesture, according to Idemudia (2009), helped to calm the Niger Delta people for a reasonable period in the eighties. Idemudia further argues that this serves as an assurance that the Nigerian state was ready to include the Niger Delta in the scheme of things and allow it to have substantial control over its resources. The failure on the part of the federal government to devolve the envisaged autonomy to the region, and improve on the socio-economic condition of the region explains in part the violent nature the agitation later took (see Obi 2014, Idemudia 2009).

As a flash-back, it is worth recalling that in 1969, the federal government promulgated the Petroleum Decree (Petroleum Decree Act 1969, p.350) which vested it with control of oil exploitation and laid the foundation for the relegation of derivation as the principle of distribution for federal revenue. The implication of this is that the Niger Delta people could not challenge in court unregulated activities of the oil multinationals, and if there is need for compensation due to oil spillage, it is only the state government that can determine who gets what. This Decree tactically rendered the people helpless and gave all the power of land

⁷¹The politics of the 1959 election led to a Hausa Prime Minister and an Igbo ceremonial President. This, coupled with the counter coup of 1966 made the Igbo uncomfortable in the new government arrangement in the country. Hence, the Igbo preferred to secede from the entire country. The refusal of the federal military government to grant this secession bid led to the outbreak of civil war in 1967, which later ended in 1970.

⁷²North-Western state, North-Eastern state, Kano state, North-Central state, Benue-Plateau state, Kwara state, Western state, Lagos state, Mid-Western state, Rivers state, South-Eastern state, East-Central state.

⁷³Isaac AdakaBoro a retired police officer who led the twelve day revolution against the state in 1966. Participated in the civil war on the part of the Federal government. Some scholars argue that the reason why he participated was to ensure the liberation of the Niger Deltans from eastern region domination by the Igbo who are in the majority. And also for the autonomy of the Niger Delta people to be realised under a unified Nigeria (see Obi 2009, Idemudia 2009).

ownership to the state. In the same vein, during General Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure as the Military Head of State, he established ten River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) via Decree 87 of 1979 in all parts of the country, even where no river existed. Its objectives, as stated in schedule 4 of the Act, include: (a) To undertake comprehensive development of both surface and underground water resources for multipurpose use with particular emphasis on the provision of irrigation infrastructure and the control of floods and erosion and for watershed management; (b) to construct, operate and maintain dams, dykes, polders, wells, boreholes, irrigation and drainage systems, and other works necessary for the achievement of the Authority's functions, and hand over all lands to be cultivated under the irrigation scheme to the farmers; (c) to supply water from the Authority's completed storage schemes to all users for a fee to be determined by the Authority concerned, with the approval of the Minister; (d) to construct, operate and maintain infrastructural services such as roads and bridges linking project sites, provided that such infrastructural services are included and form an integral part of the list of approved projects; (e) to develop and keep up-to-date a comprehensive water resources master plan identifying all water resources requirements in the Authority's area of operation, through adequate collection and collation of water resources, water use, socio-economic and environmental data of the River Basin (*RBDAs ACT 1979*, p.3).

It is worthy of note that the regime proceeded to provide far more funds to the additional RBDAs than to the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA), which was already in existence, to bring about necessary development to the region. This angered the Niger Delta people, as the act was seen as a deliberate attempt to cripple the development activities of the latter. A situation where the government deliberately duplicated efforts and saddled another

agency with the function that the Niger Delta Development Board ordinarily was supposed to carry out, was seen as a deliberate affront, and an indication of government insincerity. This ignited another round of protests, particularly as the Niger Delta had by that time become the economic nerve centre of Nigeria, resulting from the oil boom in the seventies and the fortune it brought to the country (Adeyeri 2012, p.102).

President Shehu Shagari's administration responded to the Niger Delta problem and the emerging youth restiveness in the region by re-establishing the principle of derivation⁷⁴ with the payment of 1.5% derivation to the oil-producing areas. In addition, the government created a Presidential Task Force to manage the fund. However, the amount allocated was considered grossly inadequate and thereby heightened the level of disaffection in the region (Etekpe 2009; Obi 2009; Idemudia 2009).

During the period under review, the government used an admixture of concession and military diplomacy (persecution). The establishment of the NDDB, the creation of states, the establishment of River Basins, the restoration of the derivation principle and promulgations of decree were all put in place but did not adequately address the problems of underdevelopment and exclusion that emerged from the region.

⁷⁴The derivation principle holds that each region (then the eastern, western and the northern region) will be allocated or given federal government allocation in proportion to what the region produces and what is derivable from such product. Before the advent of oil, the eastern region were renowned for producing palm oil, the western region known for producing cocoa, and the northern region was famous for the production of ground nuts. It was on this basis that federal allocation was implemented. With the discovery of oil, the principle of derivation gradually gave way for the principle of need, i.e. federal allocation is now based in relation to what each region needs and no longer on what each region produces. This principle, the Niger Deltans find unacceptable and unfair.

All these policy interventions have from the outset exposed the lack of willingness and sincerity on the part of the government, and as such, added to the grievances the Niger Delta people have against the state. The 1990s promised to be compensatory because it was believed, considering the economic importance of oil, and the continued agitation from the Niger Delta people, that the government would have learnt their lessons, and would improve on its previous policies. Although there were incremental policy innovations and slight improvements, the responses were not sufficient to prevent the level of degeneration the region witnessed and this contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

4.2 THE NIGERIAN STATE AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT, 1990-1999

During this period, the government adopted a combination of force and conciliation to the Niger Delta issue. The Babangida regime in the 1990s repressed popular protests in Umuechen, resulting in massive destruction of lives and property. In July 1993 and April 1994, government and oil companies orchestrated violence against the Ogoni, while military occupation of discontented oil communities and harassment of those protesting injustice in the area became common from 1994 (Isumona 2003). Other instances of violent repression by government include the Egbona crisis (1989 to 1991), Oburu violence (1989), Bonny Ijugba Square tragedy (1992), Egi-Obaji Mayhem (1994), Tai-Biara massacre reportedly sponsored by Wilbrose, a servicing company to Shell (1994) and the Ubima tragedy of 1995 (Ovwasa 1999 cited in Adeyeri 2012, p.104).



Relics of a building destroyed in Umuechen in Port Harcourt during the military onslaught in the 1990s



A cross-section with Chief Anyaun, the Secretary of Umuechen village and Nnamdi who assisted the researcher round the village. Chief Anyaun was narrating their ordeal during the military operation in the 1990s to the researcher.

In spite of this brutal repression, the agitation in the Niger Delta region continued unabated. The agitation, coupled with the failure of previous intervention efforts by the government, informed the need to accede to some of the demands of the people. Government therefore increased the derivation formula from 1.5% to 3%, and also created the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992. The aim of this organisation was to boost the infrastructural development of the region. OMPADEC's major task was to judiciously administer the 3-percent (N13.6 billion in 1998) allocation and to coordinate development projects in the

oil-producing communities (Agbu 2005; Frynas 2001; Ovwasa 1999). Its major responsibilities, according to Omotola (2007, p.79), were:

- a. To receive and administer the monthly sums from the allocation of the federation account in accordance with confirmed oil-production ratio in each state;
 - i. for rehabilitating and developing oil-mineral-producing areas;
 - ii. for tackling ecological problems that have arisen from the exploration of oil minerals;
- b. To determine and identify, through the commission and the oil-mineral-producing states, the actual oil-mineral-producing areas and to foster the development of projects agreed upon with local communities in the oil-mineral-producing areas.

With the establishment of OMPADEC and the increased federal allocation to the region, it was envisaged that most of the Delta's environmental concerns could be appropriately dealt with. At its earlier stage, the Commission was involved in capacity building of the people in the area of educational acquisition, but the achievement was lower than expected (see Gabriel 1999, p.95).

Contrary to expectations, this Commission also performed woefully as a result of rampant corruption (Okumagba et al, p.2). Although it carried out some projects, such as, building schools to improve educational capacity of the people, electricity and provision of pipe-borne water in the communities, most of its funds were misappropriated. Alluding to the corruption in the agency, Frynas (2001) reported that the first two sole administrators of the OMPADEC, Albert K. Horsfall and Professor Eric Opia, were dismissed because of corruption-related cases. Opia was removed in September 1998 for his inability to account for N6.7 billion, then worth almost U.S. \$80 million (Frynas 2001, p.38). Omotola (2007) argues that OMPADEC was

known 'for its wastefulness, massive mismanagement and corruption'. The situation worsened, as Omotola (2007) argues, due partly to lack of appropriate regulatory mechanism. Sanya (2006) equally argues that in the first three years of existence, OMPADEC committed itself to projects worth \$500 million, but the bulk of money paid out for projects "completed" was to contractors whose addresses could not be traced. Other major problems that confronted OMPADEC included the inadequacy of its funds and its eventual politicization. The federal government reportedly withheld about N41 billion due to the commission, while the agency only received N20 billion in the six years that it really functioned (*IRIN Special Report 1999*). There was also a general feeling among the Delta people that OMPADEC was not representing their interests, but was merely another arm of federal government bureaucracy (Omotola 2007, p.79).

The Abacha government (1993-1998), which marks another era in government's management of the Niger Delta crisis, was exceptional for its ruthless repression of popular agitations in the Niger Delta. The regime responded to the Niger Delta agitations by stationing what Adeyeri (2012) called an "army of occupation" in the oil-producing communities to suppress protesting youths, individuals and groups through brutal force in order to maintain the free flow of oil for the Nigerian State. Environmental, minority and human rights activists in the area were often harassed, arrested and incarcerated indefinitely without trial, or even murdered by government (Adejumobi 2005 cited in Adeyeri 2012, p.101). The Ogoni revolt⁷⁵ that followed the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni nationalists in 1995 compelled the oil companies in the

⁷⁵Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists were alleged to have incited the youth in the region which led to the death of some oil workers in Ogoni land. Their grievance was that the oil exploration activities of the oil multinationals have continued to destroy the land, hence deprived the people their basic subsistence. The struggle which was led by Ken Saro Wiwa against the government and oil companies was referred to as the Ogoni revolt. This was led through peaceful protest and externalisation of the people's plight in the region through local and international media.

Niger Delta to establish the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES) in that year with the aim to assess the environmental conditions in the region and make suggestions for ameliorating the hardship of the people of the oil communities. However, violent agitations continued because the issues that originally gave rise to them still remained. The establishment of OMPADEC, NDES and state repression could not prevent the agitations of the Deltans.

Rather than reducing discontent in the Delta, the OMPADEC and NDES appear to have increased it. With the failure of these Commissions to make meaningful impacts on environmental and developmental concerns, the search for alternative institutional measures that could adequately address the environmental and ecological degradation of the area continued. This later resulted in the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

4.3 THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF NIGER DELTA CONFLICT DURING DEMOCRATIC ERA (1999 TILL DATE)

Following the democratic transition in 1999, the civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo came with the prospect that a lasting solution to the Niger Delta conflict would be achieved. On his assumption of office, Obasanjo sent a bill to the National Assembly to establish the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The bill, however, received many criticisms, especially from the Deltans on the grounds that the major stakeholders were not consulted or included in the drafting of the bill.

Notwithstanding the criticisms, the bill was eventually passed in 2000 (NDDC ACT 2000, p.131). The basic mandate of the NDDC was comprehensive, although it is essentially limited to

addressing the environmental and developmental concerns of the Delta. The essential duties of the Commission as stated in section 7 of the Act include:

- (a) Formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger-Delta area;
- (b) Conceive, plan and implement, in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for the sustainable development of the Niger-Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, education, employment, industrialisation, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply; electricity and telecommunication;
- (c) Cause the Niger-Delta area to be surveyed in order to ascertain measures which are necessary to promote its physical and socio-economic development;
- (d) Prepare master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger-Delta area and the estimates of the costs of implementing such master plans and schemes;
- (e) Implement all the measures approved for the development of the Niger-Delta area by the Federal Government and the member States of the Commission;
- (f) Identify factors inhibiting the development the Niger-Delta area and assist the member States in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger-Delta area;
- (g) Assess and report on any project being funded or carried out in the Niger-Delta area by oil and gas producing companies and any other company including non-governmental organisations and ensure that funds released for such projects are properly utilised;
- (h) Tackle ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger-Delta area and advise the federal government and the member States on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution;

- (i) Liaise with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution prevention and control; and
- (j) Execute such other works and perform such other functions which, in the opinion of the Commission, are required for the sustainable development of the Niger-Delta area and its people (NDDC ACT 2000, p.A103).

The basic mandate of the NDDC was to coordinate development plans in the region; it was also empowered to access contributions from each of its member states to achieve this plan. In this regard, the act also provided other sources of funding including: statutory allocations from the federation account, (that is, the general account where all revenues accruing to the federation are deposited before being allocated to the three tiers of government in accordance with constitutional provisions). Section 14 of the act provided that all stakeholders in the Delta areas and oil companies should support in financing the NDDC. For instance, it stipulated that the federal government would contribute 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocations due to member states of the commission from the federation account (NDDC ACT, 2000).

Oil-producing companies, including gas-processing companies operating onshore and offshore in the delta were mandated to pay 3 percent of their total annual budget to the commission (NDDC ACT, 2000). With these sources of expected income for the Commission, it is expected that the commission would no doubt have enormous financial resources at its disposal. The Commission also recognised that an effective regulatory mechanism is *sine qua non* for the effective discharge of its duties. This is addressed by providing monitoring and accountability mechanisms for the Commission. Section 18 of the act stated that the President should always

present its annual budgets to the National Assembly for approval and he should keep a proper book of account, which must be audited at specified intervals. It equally empowered the President to appoint a monitoring committee. Its members are to monitor the management of the commission's funds and the execution of its projects, and are empowered to have unhindered access to the Commission's book of accounts and other records; the committee is expected to submit periodic reports to the president (NDDC ACT, 2000).

These provisions stimulated a feeling of hope that the NDDC would provide a real solution to the problems facing the Niger Delta region. As Okumagba et al (2012) note, the Commission was saddled with the task of implementing a comprehensive development master plan in the region. Omotola (2007) reports that between 2002 and 2003 the NDDC executed 810 projects in different parts of the region. Okumagba et al (2012) state that the focus of the Commission's project since inception has been on Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)⁷⁶ such as Education, Regional power supply, Road Construction, Human Capital Development, Health, Jetties and Agriculture (see also Aghalino, 2009). According to Aghalino (2009), an assessment of the activities of the Commission has shown that in the past ten years, it has engaged in programmes that it claimed had impacted on all strata of human life in the Niger Delta. Within the ten years of its operation, it itemized surprised achievements. It awarded a very large 3,112 life enhancing infrastructural projects scattered across 112,110 kilometres that make up the region. Out of this staggering figure, 1,412 projects have been completed and commissioned (Aghalino 2009, p.45).

Omotola (2007) however expresses reservation that, despite these huge projects, the Commission has not been able to significantly impact on the social and environmental development of the

⁷⁶A Quick Impact Project is one that has immediate benefits to the people and the region.

region. He equally states that some of the official claims of projects executed may be fictitious and exaggerated, and where projects are actually executed, they are merely an exercise in public relations. This implies that they are not relevant for people's needs, and not geared to the advancement of public interest. The major need of the people is the amelioration of their living conditions (Omotola 2007; Frynas 2001). Table 1 shows some of the projects executed by the NDDC between 2002 and 2003.

Table 1. A Summary of Projects Executed by the NDDC in Various Sectors between 2002 and 2003

Project type	2002 Projects	2003 Projects	Completed Projects	Commissionable Projects	Commissioned Projects	Total No of Projects
Building	402	15	316	275	138	417
Canalization	9	9	0	0	0	18
Electrification	130	24	125	106	46	154
Flood control	1	0	1	1	0	1
Jetty	41	6	32	31	11	47
Roads/Bridges	40	18	20	12	4	58
Water	91	24	76	70	21	115
Grand Total	714	96	570	495	220	810

Source: Omotola (2007, p.82)

Going by the character of Nigerian state, and the abundant human and natural resources, the inability of the state to tackle the Niger Delta problem is not a capacity deficit but a will deficit. The reason Ihonvbare (1989) advances is that the political class is only interested in adjusting an existing situation by creating an intervention mechanism, because it is only within this framework

of intervention that it can ensure its survival and dominance (Ihonvbare 1989 cited in Jack-Akhigbe 2013, p.258). Consequently, measuring the effectiveness of the NDDC presents us with what Omotola (2007) calls a measurement dilemma. The popular view, according to scholars like Jack-Akhigbe, Omotola, and Aghalino, is that the NDDC has failed to live up to expectations and thus no longer has any relevance in the development discourse of the region.

Despite the numerous critics of the Commission, some groups of people, mainly traditional rulers, support the Commission. Omotola (2007, p.81) refers to them as collaborators of the government and oil multinationals; hence, what matters most to them is their own selfish interest. He asserts that ‘Opinions are sharply divided regarding the effectiveness of the NDDC in discharging its responsibilities, and a large proportion of available views on the issue are negative’ (Omotola 2007, p.81). Those that criticise the activities of the Commission are scholars and environmental activists whose interest is in the development of the region.

In regard to the first group, Omotola (2007) cites the view expressed by Prince MaikpobiOkarewe, National Secretary of Traditional Rulers of Oil Mineral Producing Communities of Nigeria (TROMPCON)⁷⁷, in an interview with *Thisday* in 2003:

Many people just talk, open their mouth without knowing how much the Commission has and what its mandate is really in the Niger delta. ... If you look at the overall set up of the Commission and the NDDC mandate, you see that the commission has done well given the funds at its disposal. Look at the East-West road, before now it was impassable, but with the intervention of the NDDC, it is possible now. Drive through it. Look at some of the roads in Delta, Bayelsa, Akwalbom that were so bad. The NDDC has done them. ... So we in the oil producing communities are impressed. But we are saying that given more funds, the Commission can do more. (Quoted in Djebah 2003, cited in Omotola 2007, p.82)

⁷⁷TROMPCON aims to serve as unifying body for all the traditional rulers in the region, to garner support for the region in its developmental drive and protect the heritage of the community.

The above statement would ordinarily have been taken as being representative of people's views, considering the fact that the person who expressed the view is the secretary of traditional chieftaincies, which is assumed to be a people's institution. But because of the long rule of the military, the significance and honour the institution once enjoyed has been eroded. The integrity of the institution is perceived as compromised by the people and scholars, and as no longer truly representative of the people. Omotola notes that successive military governments have used this institution to earn recognition and support from the people; this has eroded substantially the trust and representativeness that the institution previously enjoyed (Omotola 2007, p.82).

A much more prominent criticism is that the NDDC is underproductive and ineffective. This view was so strong that an advocacy workshop on Oil Revenue Management and Budget Monitoring in Niger Delta States, held on 22 December 2004 and chaired by Gordon Abiama, of the Center for Geo-Classical Studies, Yenegoa, Bayelsa State, passed a vote of no confidence in the NDDC. The majority of its attendees called for the outright scrapping of the NDDC, and very few advocated that the federal government should strengthen it. The workshop communiqué called for scrapping the NDDC for its alleged inefficiency, corrupt disposition, and unresponsiveness to the plight of the people (African Network for Environment and Economic Justice, 2004 cited in Omotola 2007, p. 83). Other studies, for example, Samuel Uwhejevwe-Togbolo, Homestead Study Group, have equally castigated the NDDC and asserted that the projects and the programmes of the commission do not get to the mass of people who actually need it (Omotola 2007, p.83).

In the same vein, Jack-Akhigbe (2013) reports several abandoned or poor quality projects in the region. She notes that:

In Ebedie and Umutu communities in Ukwani Local Government Area of Delta State and Ologbo in Ikpoba Okhia Local Government Area of Edo State, as a result of poor execution, none of the facilities provided by the Niger Delta Development Commission has made any appreciable impact on the people's lives. Although there are overhead watertanks with taps in different locations, the taps do not flow. In these communities, the bulk of the people still depend on the streams for their main source of supply. Also a multimillion naira hospital project initiated by the same Commission at Ologbo, has been abandoned for several years. To the community this facility is more of a monument than a development project (Jack-Akhigbe 2013, p.259).

Similarly, the present researcher also noticed abandoned projects in Umuechen village in Port Harcourt during his visit. The people in the area informed the researcher that some of the projects, even those completed, have been abandoned and not put into use for close to a decade.



A cottage hospital in Umuechen village in Port Harcourt built by the NDDC and abandoned since its completion.

The foregoing analysis suggests that the NDDC, despite its statistics of developmental projects embarked upon, has not lived up to expectations. The rising conflict and incessant break down of rules and order prominent in the region are clear testimonies to severe disappointment in the NDDC. This situation is not unconnected with the inherent problems with which the Commission contends. First, the Commission suffers financial limitations. According to Chief Onyema Ugochukwu, the former chairman of the Commission, comprehensive development of the region would require more than N400 billion (NDDC 2004 cited in Omotola 2007, p.83). As of October 2004, the NDDC had spent N80 billion. Also, oil companies in the Delta have not

been contributing the statutory 3 percent of their annual budget to the NDDC. Moreover, the states in the Niger Delta have not been fully responsive to their contribution to the commission (Ojameruaye 2004 cited in Omotola 2007, p.84). Corruption remains another problem; this is very evident in the change in leadership which has taken place three times in less than six years of existence. Between 2000 through to 2006, Aghalino (2010) reports that:

One major drawback of the NDDC is that successive Managing Directors and Boards of the Commission have flouted and brazenly violated the Act establishing the Commission. Incidents of such are legion. They ranged from the award of contracts without due process; non-implementation of the Board's decisions; and undue interference with the statutory function of state representatives to creating due process unit, which is used as an excuse to perpetuate huge financial crimes in the Commission. In fact, the award of N4.228 billion road design contract in 2010 by the NDDC without approval by the Federal Executive Council as demanded by existing law was audacious and this irked the President. Investigation showed that the amount was paid to Pearl Consultants as advanced fee for the commencement of the second phase of the design of the East-West road, which stretches from Akwa Ibom to Lagos. More importantly is the practice whereby bidding for contracts exceeding fee approving threshold of N250 million by the NDDC, are advertised on notice boards at the Commission's offices instead of in the newspapers. In awarding inch contracts, technical, pre-qualification processes were never followed. Indeed the NDDC has become a cesspool of corruption. For the better part, the NDDC has become a theatre of interminable crisis (Aghalino 2010, p.46)

Jike (2005) cites an instance where a Managing Director of NDDC, Mr Godwin Omene, was given an indefinite suspension for embezzlement, and awarding contracts beyond his statutory limit. Omene's case, argues Jike, is a true reflection of the cases of corrupt leadership bedeviling the Commission. The politics in of which state produces the chairman is another problem which limits the autonomy and effectiveness of the commission; in this regard consideration for appointment is based more on favouritism than capacity for effectiveness.

What the foregoing suggests is that, in spite of the multiple sources of revenue and the regulatory mechanisms of the Commission, the Commission is still seen as in effective. The reason for this

can only be fully understood by taking into account the predatory nature of Nigerian state, and the character and contradictions inherent in the philosophical and structural foundations of the NDDC itself (Omotola 2007; Olukoshi and Agbu 1995; Osaghae 1998a). As Omotola surmises:

Its rapaciousness perhaps explains its inability to execute its decisions effectively. This contradiction is likely to have been a decisive factor in the extension of perverse incentive structures, which allow and nourish opportunism in the NDDC. It may have contributed to the festering of the environmental insecurity of the delta (Omotola 2007, p.84).

In addition to the establishment of the NDDC, in 2001, the Federal government initiated the Special Security Committee on Oil Producing Areas. According to Adeyeri (2012), the outcomes of the committee's recommendations to government indicate that, during the Obasanjo regime, the Niger Delta issue was regarded as primarily political, and thus as requiring political solutions. For example, in order to guarantee greater oil security, the committee recommended a review of policies and laws that have fuelled discontent and agitations in the region such as the Petroleum Act and the Land Use Act (*see Petroleum Act of 1969 and Land Use Act of 1978*). It also suggested that the government increase the derivation principle to 50% (*International Crisis Group Africa Report, 2006 cited in Adeyeri 2012, p.101*). Just as in the case of previous reports which have not always seen the light of the day, the federal government did not implement the committee's report and this was perceived by the people as a further attempt to subjugate the region.

On 18 April, 2006, President Obasanjo's administration also inaugurated the Consolidated Council on Social and Economic Development of Coastal States of the Niger Delta (CSEDND) to undertake what was described as a "Marshall Plan" that would create new jobs in the military and police forces, and initiate a \$1.8 billion road project (Adeyeri 2012, p.101; Aghalino 2010,

p.47). However, the Council, from its inception, suffered from serious legitimacy problems. The council consisted of the governors of the oil producing states and other local elites that have been accused of wasting and siphoning Federal allocation and money meant for the development of the region. Moreover, leaders and representatives of credible civil society groups in the Niger Delta were not appointed to the Council. This, of course, caused serious doubts about government's sincerity for the development of the region. Again, militant groups and citizens in the region felt insulted and angered by Obasanjo's offer of employment in the same military and police force which, over time, had killed Niger Delta civilians and razed down their villages (*International Crisis Group Africa Report, 2006* cited in Adeyeri 2012, p.102; Aghalino 2010, p.47). Therefore, the militant groups rejected the Council. Similarly, the plan received many criticisms from the Abia and Imo State governments, which the NDDC Act recognizes as part of the Niger Delta but are excluded from the CSEDND (Adeyeri 2012, p.102). The two state governments viewed the initiative as a design to erode solidarity among oil producing states. To really prove their disapproval for the plan, MEND exploded its first car bomb in Port Harcourt; just a day after Obasanjo inaugurated the Council in Abuja. On 29 April, MEND announced that it was responsible for another bomb explosion that had destroyed petrol tankers and buildings in the outskirts of Warri, Delta State.

It is worthy of note that the stick approach employed in the resolution of the Niger Delta issue has only succeeded in escalating the problem: a few examples may suffice here. In response to increasingly militant attacks, the Federal government launched Operation Restore Hope⁷⁸, by deploying a joint military task force (JTF) involving the army, navy and personnel of other

⁷⁸Operation Restore Hope comprises of the combined forces of the army, navy, and other security personnel. It's mandates is to ensure the security of lives and properties, and to prevent illegal activities of the militant groups in the region.

security agencies. The JTF used force to reduce issues such as inter-ethnic conflicts and oil bunkering in the Niger Delta. The operational tactics, in many instances, resulted in destruction and deaths in various villages. One such instance is a case reported by the International Crisis group (2006) where JTF in August 2006, while patrolling the creeks, killed nine Ijaw youths and a Shell Community Liaison Officer who had just helped the Bayelsa State government to secure the release of a kidnapped oil worker (*International Crisis Group Africa Report*, 2006 cited in Adeyeri 2012, p.102). The military expedition which led to the killing of people in Odi⁷⁹ village in Bayelsa is another example of the stick approach. Aghalino (2010) reported that over 2000 people were killed in that expedition. The implication of that, according to him, is that the government is not ready to tolerate any form of resistance from the people, and thus has replicated the brutality of the military regime that preceded the dawn of democracy in 1999. It is, he argues, evidence that the Nigerian state is not willing to disconnect from the high-handedness which the previous regime used in addressing the issue in the region. The aftermath of this is the over-militarisation of the region. The over-militarisation is visible in the presence of military everywhere to protect oil installations and escort various oil workers in the region (Aghalino 2010, p.49).

The crisis in the region persisted throughout Obasanjo's administration (which ended in 2007); the conflict was tense to the extent that part of the Seven Points Agenda⁸⁰ of the incoming administration was to find a lasting solution to the conflict in the Delta. At the end of the

⁷⁹ Some criminals in Odi village killed 17 soldiers in protest of their discontent with the government, they hide their criminal act under the general discontent towards the activities oil multinationals and brutal occupation of the region by the military, the Odi massacre came as a reprisal to the killings of the soldiers.

⁸⁰The Seven Points Agenda include: 1. Power and Energy, 2. Food Security and Agriculture, 3. Wealth Creation and Employment, 4. Mass Transportation, 5. Land Reform, 6. Security, 7. Qualitative and Functional Education, plus two special interest issues on 1. The Niger Delta, and 2. Disadvantaged Groups.

Presidential election, Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua emerged as the winner. On assumption of office, the President instituted a Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee in 2008 to broker peace agreements with militants in the core Niger Delta States. This resulted in the release of Asari Dokubo⁸¹, the leader of the Niger Delta Volunteers Force (NDVF), the "Governor-General" of the Ijaw, the then governor of Bayelsa State, Dipreye Alamiyesegeha and Henry Okah⁸², the ostensible leader of MEND. This was seen as a precondition for peace negotiations with the government by the militants; more so, it was believed to be necessary to build the required trust in the Niger Delta people, about the sincerity of the government to actually make peace with the militants (Aghalino 2010, p.50; Adeyeri 2012, p103).

Furthermore, the administration also involved the militants in monitoring the waterways. The Bayelsa state chapter of the Niger Delta Conflict Resolution Committee in December 2007 distributed 10 speed boats to some militant groups. The boats were to be deployed for surveillance and monitoring of activities of criminals along the waterways. Due to their understanding of the terrain, it was believed that incorporating the militants into the measures to secure the Niger Delta waterways would ensure effectiveness and reduce criminal activities. Government also encouraged some of the militants to establish and register private security companies which would be employed by the government for the protection of pipelines and other oil installations (Aghalino 2010, p.50; Adeyeri 2012, p.103). With this gesture from the government, it is believed that the federal government was prepared to find a lasting solution to

⁸¹Asari Dokubo was the former president of the Ijaw Youth Congress before assuming the headship of the militant group he formed.

⁸²Asari Dokubo and Henry Okar were arrested for disturbing the peaceful coexistence of the state as the leaders and spoke persons of their respective groups that were responsible for series of attacks and hostage taking. Alamiyesegeha was imprisoned for embezzling state fund, but the people of the region felt that his arrest was a witch-hunt and an attempt to ridicule one of the leaders of the Ijaw people.

the Niger Delta conflict. Moreover, if such a position is sustained, this can help to re-ignite people's trust and confidence in the government; thus preparing a good avenue for sustainable peace in the region. It is equally important to note that it was that background confidence building which came about as a result of a negotiated settlement that prepared the ground for the amnesty deal which was later brokered.

In conclusion, some of the oil multinationals supported government efforts in assuaging the problems and challenges facing the people in the region in connection with the government intervention effort in the Niger Delta. This was carried out in the form of corporate social responsibility rendered to facilitate smooth operation of the companies in the troubled region. Reporting on the effort of Shell, one of the major oil companies in Nigeria, Ite (2007, p.12) observes that in its effort to develop the community where it operates, the company embarked on various programmes ranging from community assistance (CA), community development (CD), to sustainable development (SD). However, these efforts have not reduced the dependence of the people on the oil company and have not brought meaningful development to the region. Moreover, most of the projects embarked upon are aimed to launder the image of the company and to enhance its smooth operation, and are not geared towards alleviating the people's suffering (see also Frynas 2001). Ite therefore suggests that a true intervention towards addressing the Niger Delta problem should include a tri-sector partnership approach and framework between the oil companies which Shell represents, the Nigerian government and civil society (Ite 2007, p.13).

In this regard, government efforts at involving other useful agencies like Shell, civil societies, the people in the region and elsewhere will help to provide useful and long lasting solutions to the Niger Delta conflict. The recent effort by the government to demilitarise and decriminalise the militias by offering them amnesty is a step in the right direction. The government plan to use amnesty to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate the militants into the society It is considered to be the first step, and a necessary precondition for complete transformation in the region. With the introduction of amnesty, peace has gradually returned to the region (as will be shown in subsequent chapters). The militants have been disarmed and demobilised, and the process of reintegration is already taking place.

The next chapter extensively explores amnesty, and the processes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. It provides a background to the programme and discusses, from the perspective of scholars, major challenges encountered since the commencement of the programme, with a view to understanding ways of sustaining peace in the Niger Delta region.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

This chapter deals with the process that led to the declaration of amnesty in the Niger Delta region. It also focuses on the disarmament, demobilisation, training, and reintegration which emerged from the declaration of the amnesty programme. Additionally, the chapter details the objectives of the amnesty programme, and the challenges which have emerged during the process of implementation and management of the programme. This is quite important for the study, as the understanding of the implementation and challenges of the programme provide the study with leverage to explore how amnesty, and the resultant challenges, could be managed. This will help to advance an enduring conflict resolution mechanism in the transformation of conflict in the Niger Delta, and the overall development of the region. I claim that despite the initial lull occasioned by the politics that surrounded the death of the former President Yar'Adua, and other concerns raised by scholars about the programme, the subsequent administration of the programme has largely addressed some of these concerns. Yet a lot still needs to be done to sustain the gains of the amnesty programme.

5.1 THE MAKING OF AMNESTY IN NIGERIA

In the early 1990s, the struggles of the Niger Delta ethnic minorities were largely nonviolent and were targeted at both the Nigerian state and oil multinationals. These were driven by demands for self-determination, respect for human and environmental rights, resource control or a fair share of oil revenues explored from the region. When the initial demands, which were peaceful, were ignored, ethnic minorities like the Ogoni, through MOSOP, embarked upon a successful

national and global campaign for self-determination, resource control, ethnic minority and environmental rights that was eventually met with high-handed repression by the Nigerian military (Obi 2014:254; Amunwa and Minio 2011). By the time Nigeria returned to elected civilian rule in 1999, the ethnic minority struggles of the preceding decade had altered the context of the struggle for resource control. This opened the door for a faction of the Niger Delta elite to gain increased access to power at the federal and regional levels – while also paving the way for some civil society actors, erstwhile resistance activists and a new generation of militants to become key actors in the region (Obi 2014; Agbibo 2014). More importantly, this gave the Niger Delta elite a moral basis for greater demands and status within the ruling elite and further emboldened them to demand resource control. With enormous wealth within their control, they have enough leverage to engage in political manipulation. In the struggle that resulted from the introduction of democracy, Obi (2014) notes that there were collaborations between individuals within the Niger Delta elite, between the Niger Delta elite and militant/armed groups in the region, and between the Niger Delta elite and those from other ethnic majority groups in Nigeria. Also, the economy of rebellion and rent seeking officials equally explains the aggressive dimension the conflict later assumed, because now the conflict seemed more lucrative for these collaborators (also see Idemudia 2009).

While the point about the connection between the escalation of violence in the oil region and the creation of an enabling environment for the ‘complicit union’ to thrive is relevant, it is partly reflective of the opportunistic manipulation of deep-seated grievances in the region by a Niger Delta elite and militant youth commanders. These groups of people were keen to strengthen their positions at the local and national levels. In some ways it captures an aspect of the twists and

turns in the long-standing conflict in the region, and extends the logic of mutually beneficial opportunism that marks the expedient co-optation of armed groups for political and strategic ends (thugs for intimidating the electorate and rigging elections, attacking political opponents and waging inter- or intra-community struggles). It also points to the contradictions and complexities that underpin some of the alliances of convenience that are characteristic of the Niger Delta insurgency, in which alliances and tactics are fluid, and actors move across, or straddle, different sides based on exigent calculations of political and personal gain. At different times, and in different places, the elements, motivating factors, and conflict vary in intensity, but remain anchored in the region's history, national politics and its position in the international political economy of oil.

The legacy of five decades of oil production – alienation, the paradox of plenty, repression, militarisation and high levels of unemployment – and the new opportunities opened up by government co-optation and oil theft have fed into a volatile and complex situation. Of note is the legacy of repression and militarisation which had fuelled militancy and criminality among Niger Delta youth. The youth came to see violence as a means of struggle, negotiation, survival, and as a way to accumulate political gains. Several commentators have noted the blurred boundaries between resistance and criminality (Obi 2014; Ikelegbe 2011). Thus, when a coalition of ethnic minority Ijaw, named the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), took over the struggle in 2006, the conflict tactically assumed a violent dimension. MEND engaged in kidnapping of expatriate oil workers and publicised the abductions. They carried out armed attacks on government forces and damaged oil installations in the area. This began the era

to which Obi (2014) refers to as a transition from uncoordinated protests and conflicts into a trans-Delta insurgency.

By 2007, after initially dismissing MEND as criminals, the Nigerian state had recognized the adverse impact of growing insecurity in the form of huge losses in oil production and revenues, and the strong reverberations of the insurgent attacks on the global oil prices (in the context of a global war on terror). The regime therefore began to consider an alternative to the military approach that had largely failed to halt MEND's attacks on oil infrastructure in the Niger Delta. A few examples may suffice here: Aghalino (2010) reports that as of 1998, there were 92 attacks on the oil industry, which resulted in the fall of crude oil exports down to 1.6 million barrels per day. As a result, the country lost at least \$23.7 billion to oil theft, sabotage and shut down in production in the first nine months of 1998 and about 1,000 people were killed within the same period (Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, Vol. 1, Nov. 2008: 9). Also, the production from the offshore business had dwindled to 300,000 barrels per day as at March 2009 from the initial one million before the crisis in 2004 (Aghalino, 2010, p.48). Accordingly, the attack on Bonga, a 43.6 billion floating, production, storage and offloading vessel and deep water subsea facility, 120 kilometres off the coast, and the attack on Atlas Cove woke the government from their slumber and symbolised the dawn of new stage in the crisis. In fact, these attacks resulted in the loss of production of 225,000 and 125,000 barrels per day, respectively reduced the country's crude oil output by 345,000 barrels per day with dire consequences for the economy (Eni, 2008, p. 29 cited in Aghalino 2010, p.49).

Needless to say the crisis was multidimensional, as it also increased the spate of criminality in the region. About 40 reported incidents of piracy were reported in the Delta including 27 vessels boarded, five hijackings, 39 crew members kidnapped in 2008 (Aghalino 2010, p.49). In 2009, the attack by gunmen on the M.T. Meredith, a tanker carrying 4,000 tons of diesel fuel, suggested that the country was becoming the next pirate zone and threatened to seriously damage its reputation (Aghalino 2010, p.50).

Prior to the declaration of amnesty, the military had carried out massive military bombardment in the region. One of the most significant examples was the military escapade carried out in May 2009 by the military Joint Task Force⁸³ in the Gbaramatu area of the western Niger Delta, targeting some militia camps and destroying the camps and communities that were suspected of being sympathetic to their cause (Obi 2014, p.254). The inability of the military to completely neutralise the insurgents made it necessary to consult with the militant leaders when the presidency eventually resolved to address the issue through dialogue. Obi (2014) argues that the consultation which later involved the militants and their local sponsors occurred because the militants had demonstrated the capacity to threaten oil interests. While this is true to a large extent, the military exploit was also strategic, as the continuous bombardment of the militant camps made any alternative other than amnesty seem improbable and unreasonable. This, as Major General Cecil (retired)⁸⁴ informed the researcher, was to compel the militants to see amnesty as a soft landing. So the Nigerian government used a discreet but subtle military approach to compel obedience. According to Major General Cecil:

⁸³The Joint Task Force is the combination of the army, navy, and other security personnel. It was formed in 2000 to restore peace and order in the region. Its mandate also includes the protection of oil facilities and the prevention of criminality in the region.

⁸⁴General Cesere Cecil was the Chief of Staff to Major General Godwin Abbe (retired), the former Minister of Interior and Headed the Presidential Amnesty and Demobilisation of the militants.

Let me tell you amnesty offer is an option. That doesn't mean if you refused to key in initially and you now want to get involved in criminal activities that government will allow you to go free. The military onslaught before amnesty was tactically deployed to compel obedience. There are consequences for every action, if you didn't key into amnesty, and you now want to cause problem, of course you get the full wrought of the law. That is why there is still a task force to maintain security in that place (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

The election in 2007 marked a new dawn, because for the first time in the history of the country, an indigene of Niger Delta, Goodluck Jonathan emerged as the Vice President alongside President Umaru Yar'Adua. At this time, there was a lot of pressure on the presidency regarding the activities of the militants, which had not only derailed normal activities in the region, but also impacted greatly on the oil economy of the country. Obi (2014) reports that one of the first steps embarked upon by President Yar'Adua's administration to curb the militants' activities were a series of consultations involving the state governments of the Niger Delta, the NDDC, the Vice-President, President, Niger Delta elites, and oil and gas industry operators. This culminated in the inauguration of the Presidential Niger Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee (NDPCRC) in July 2007, with the following terms of reference: recommend to the federal government how to adequately address issues of the Niger Delta; liaise with the groups in the Niger Delta region, security agencies and report to the federal government (Nigeriafirst.org 2007 cited in Obi 2014, p.255). A similar body was also inaugurated by the then Bayelsa state governor, Timipre Sylvia, to replicate the same peace-building process in the state (Obi 2014: 255).

Obi further observes that apart from engaging the source of the threat to continued (legitimate) access to oil and fostering the status quo ante, the state also avoided engagement with popular organisations and environmental rights-based groups that had long adopted non-violent protest

(and international campaigns) in pressuring government to address the deep-seated grievances and demands for social justice, equity and respect for the dignity and human rights of the Niger Delta people. Such groups had earlier successfully opposed the appointment of Ibrahim Gambari, a UN Under-Secretary (and a former federal foreign affairs minister under the military) as mediator of the Niger Delta conflict (Obi 2014: 255).

Moreover, after the government abandoned the plan for a Niger Delta peace summit in 2008, because it was criticised for being another talk show, given that there have been a series of such summits in the past, and their recommendations have never been implemented. Thus, government later set up a 44-member Technical Committee on the Niger Delta (TCND)⁸⁵, including several credible stakeholders and activists from the Niger Delta to, among other things, ‘make recommendations that would assist the federal government to bring about sustainable development, peace, human and environmental security in the Niger Delta region’ (TCND 2008, p.5). It is instructive to note that it was the committee which recommended amnesty for the militants in order to achieve space for sustainable development.

5.2 THE DECLARATION OF AMNESTY AND TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAINING FOR THE MILITANTS

As stated above, one of the recommendations of the 44 member Technical Committee was the introduction of amnesty. Amnesty, according to the conception of the federal government, is to grant absolute pardon for any militant who unconditionally renounces militancy and puts himself/ herself forward for the necessary disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration

⁸⁵The technical committee was constituted in 2008, its mandate was to collate all previous reports and recommend to the government on how to bring an end to Niger Delta problem.

package of the amnesty programme. Moreover, according to Eke (2014), amnesty promoters, including the government, oil multi-nationals and the United Nations, had hoped that sustainable peace would: (i) stop disruptions to oil production; (ii) increase government rents; and (iii) increase the possibility of the economic growth and development of the region, with a predominant anchor on infrastructural development (Eke 2014:6). While the aspect of development is key, the government realised that no meaningful development could be achieved without peace in the region. Thus, the need to consider the implementation of some of the aspects of the Technical Committee report that would lay the foundation for peaceful coexistence was imperative.

In part, the policy recommendations of the Technical Committee as contained in the report, states that the federal government should:

1. Establish a credible and authoritative DDR institution and process including international negotiators to plan, implement, and oversee the DDR programmes at regional, state and local government levels;
2. Provide for open trial and release on bail (with a view to eventual release) of Henry Okah⁸⁶ and others involved in struggles relating to the Region;
3. Grant amnesty to all Niger Delta militants willing and ready to participate in the DDR programme;
4. Address short term issues arising from amnesty to militants, by promoting security for ex-militants and rebuilding of communities destroyed by military invasion;

⁸⁶Henry Okah was the spokesman for the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. He was arrested in connection with militant activities in Nigeria and was subsequently released as part of the negotiation for amnesty. He has since been rearrested in connection with the bombing in Abuja on October 1st 2010, and is currently serving a twenty four years jail term for acts of terrorism.

5. Work out long- term strategies of human capacity development and reintegration for ex-militants; and
6. Reflect on a time- line with adequate funds for the DDR programme to takeplace (*NDTC* 2008, p. 66).

The findings of the committee were later passed on to another committee for consideration⁸⁷. In June 2009, due to the exigencies of implementing peace in the region, Yar'Adua announced an offer of unconditional amnesty to all militants in the Delta. In addition, the Presidential Committee on Amnesty and Disarmament for Militants under the Minister of the Interior, Major General Godwin Abbe (rtd), was established to execute a post-amnesty programme of socio-economic development in the Niger Delta worth about 50 billion Naira (Adeyeri 2012, Ketefe 2009). The training that former militants received in the Obubra Camp⁸⁸ was the first step at transforming the erstwhile militants, and deconstructing their past characterised by militancy. This is expected to give them new orientation about peaceful coexistence and prepare them to become members of civil society. This is to precede the later transformational training that was expected to build the capacity of the militants as useful members of the society. Scholars like Obi (2014) and Ushie (2014) have argued that the government decided to adopt amnesty from the recommendation because of their continuous interest in oil production which has been jeopardised by the conflict. While this is true to a large extent, the need to stabilise the region by ensuring peace cannot be totally ruled out, because without peace, there is hardly any developmental project that can be carried out.

⁸⁷An unnamed committee within the government was set up to consider the report and issue a white paper. Such a committee is usually constituted within the government ministries.

⁸⁸Obubra is located in Cross River State in Nigeria. The camp is where the former militants were demobilised, housed, and taught non-violent methods before they were sent out for further training.

In accordance with the Amnesty programme, the militants were required to give up their arms and in return they were to receive a Presidential pardon, opportunities for education, training and general rehabilitation. Agbiboa (2014) argues that the amnesty programme was a response to security conditions in the Niger Delta at the time. It was a response by the then President to reduce fundamentally the violence that was taking place. After consultation with stakeholders, it was decided that there was a need to get the militants to lay down their weapons. That was the basis of the amnesty pardon which was meant to stabilise, consolidate and sustain the security conditions in the Niger Delta region, as a requisite for promoting economic development in the area (*Daily Independent*, June 3, 2012 cited in Agbiboa 2014, p.14).

At the expiration of the October 4, 2009 deadline set by the Federal government for the agitators to disarm, virtually all the key militants had yielded to the amnesty deal. Available records indicate that a total of 8, 299 militants registered with the Presidential Implementation Committee⁸⁹ from seven of the nine Niger Delta States, with most weapons coming from Bayelsa State which had 130, 877, Rivers 82, 406 and Delta 52, 958 (Aghalino, 2010 cited in Agbiboa 2014:15). According to the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta Affairs, and the Chairman of the Amnesty Committee, Hon. Kuku⁹⁰, during the first phase of the amnesty programme, on June 25, 2009, a total of 20,192 former militants accepted amnesty, another 6,166 were added in November 2010, while another 3,642 former militants were added in October, 2012 totaling 30,000 (*Agency reporter* 2012).The amnesty programme, unlike the

⁸⁹The Presidential Implementation Committee was established shortly after amnesty was granted in 2009. It was mandated to see to the total implementation of the presidential amnesty programme.

⁹⁰Hon. Kuku was the Special Adviser to the President on the Niger Delta and the Chairman of the Amnesty Implementation Committee. He was formerly a law maker in the Ondo State House of Assembly in Nigeria, and had worked closely with the former Special Adviser to the President on the Niger Delta, Mr Timi Alaibe.

previous mechanisms adopted by the government, is aimed at a win-win approach, and incorporated conflict transformations strategies, where the aim was to transform the people and pave the way for the eventual development of the region. The management of the programme from the period of disarmament, demobilisation, and up to the reintegration stage has been carefully implemented by the officials. However, at the inception, the programme suffered some setbacks especially due to the death of the former President Yar'Adua. His sickness and later demise from it hampered the speed at which some of the decisions that required his consent – such as the release of funds and further extension of amnesty to the willing militants. Also the politics surrounding whether the vice president could assume the presidency after the president's death also contributed to a lull in the programme.

In laying down arms, the militants were expected to go to the nearest screening centre to turn in their arms and ammunitions, take the oath of renunciation of armed violence, and subsequently receive presidential amnesty, after which the repentant militant would be registered for a rehabilitation and reintegration programme (see Obi 2014; Agbiboa 2014; Oluwatoyin 2011). Major General Cesere Cecil informed the researcher that at this point the ex-militants were given the UN code which implies that in spite of the fact the programme was home-grown, it has UN blessing. In his words:

Everybody that went through the amnesty has a UN code, but what I just want you to know is that it is a novel idea; this is one of the few cases of countries that went through the DDR process at its own initiative, at its own expenses, at its own effort (*Personal communication* Nov. 2011).

According to Korpamo-Agary, the disarmament and subsequent reintegration of the militants is only a first step towards bringing urgently needed development to the Niger Delta region, since

there cannot be development without peace (Agbiboa, 2014). In writing about the amnesty's objectives and deliverables, Agbiboa (2014) reports that the Nigerian government identified the following three phases:

- (1) A disarmament phase to take place between 6 August 2009 and 4 October 2009 and to include the collection of biometric data of the entire militants;
- (2) A demobilisation and rehabilitation phase to last six to twelve months and to include the provision of, among other things, counselling and career guidance for the participants;
- (3) A reintegration phase to last up to five years and to include the provision of, among other things, occupational training and microcredit for the participants (see also Oluwatoyin 2011).

The biometric data captured was to later serve as a useful security measure to trace the ex-militants in case of recalcitrance. It also serves a dual purpose of knowing the number of people who enrolled in the programme. It should be noted that two of the phases have been completed, so far, and that the disarmament and demobilisation phases were successful. However, some of the challenges which include (among others) poor clean up of arms poor conditions at the camp, coupled with demobilising those who are not real militants as a consequence of the dispensing of favouritism, are discussed under the challenges. The important thing to note is that the completion of a phase naturally signals the beginning of another phase. During the course of a discussion with the researcher, the technical adviser to the Special Adviser to the President on amnesty and the Head of Reintegration stated that DDR operates a kind of cyclical arrangement, where an end in one phase automatically dovetails into the other. According to Mr Lawrence Pepple, from the pronouncement on the 25th of June, 2009, a sixty day grace period was provided where the armed agitators were expected to turn in their weapons, which ended on the

4th of October 2009. During that period, arms and ammunitions of various descriptions were turned in. On the 22nd of May, 2010 all arms gathered were symbolically destroyed at Lapanta near Enugu, in Enugu State, signifying the end of the disarmament component of the DDR programme.

This kick-started the demobilisation component. The Cross Rivers state government, under the leadership of the former state governor Liyel Imoke, granted the request of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to use NYSC camp in Obrubra, Cross Rivers state as the demobilisation camp for the presidential amnesty programme. At the end of that programme, 21,192 thousand agitators had deposited two thousand weapons and ammunition of various description at the camp.

Mr Lawrence further stated that as the demobilisation phase was progressing, by November 2010, there was an upsurge of demands from ex-militants, who said that they turned in their arms but they were afraid to be part of the programme, thinking it might be an entrapment exercise by the government. Because of this, another window was opened for 6,166 persons who were covered in the second phase of the programme, and by 2012, another opening was granted for 3,462 bringing the case load of the programme to 30,000 beneficiaries.

During the demobilisation phase in Obrubra, there was collaboration with the Martin Luther King Centre in United States⁹¹, as well as peace-building outfits in South Africa. The ex-militants were taught principles of non- violence as advocated by Martin Luther King. At the end of that exercise, the reintegration component kick- started. During the demobilisation stage, the

⁹¹The Martin Luther King Centre was established in 1968. It was formed to entrench and teach a non-violent approach in the resolution of disputes. The centre was involved in the teaching of the former militants a non-violent approach to issues.

delegates at that programme were brought into camp, processed and interviewed before the necessary placement was done. According to Mr Lawrence Pepple

You will learn their health concern, their economic concern, their request, and various other things they will need. Some of them as at the time we brought them you can even be moving them for surgery, because some came with bullet injuries that had stayed with them for years, some of them are tuberculosis infected, some are HIV positive, so, their concern were now taken over by us (Personal Communication Nov. 2014).

The technical head noted that ‘the militants were being removed from their comfort zone so to speak, they were in their palace, their camps, and their creeks, removing them, you are removing them from their means of livelihood’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). In addition, ‘they have in those camps means of physical security and social security, their weapons were providing them means of livelihood and social security’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). To remove their weapons from their hands, you needed to replace it with something, in the interim. Because of this, they were placed on ‘monthly stipends of sixty five thousand naira, that will cover feeding, some bit of accommodation challenges, while we are settling to move them to the reintegration component of the DDR’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

The reintegration phase was the most challenging of all the phases because while all other phases are tangible and you can count the number of arms collected, the number of people demobilised and so on. Reintegration is more of attitudinal change which comes as a result of both psychological changes and the opportunity that the programme has to initiate those changes (chapter six explores the reintegration phase in more detail). To ensure that the programme is well accepted by the people, state governments were required to support the rebuilding of communities destroyed by military invasion, and establish youth development centres and community demobilisation and reintegration committees to enhance reintegration and capacity-

building. State governments were also required to provide social amenities, including health centres and schools at the site of former militant camps (*NDTC 2008, p.67*).

Corroborating the above narration by the technical assistant and head of reintegration, Mr Lawrence Pepple Agbiboa (2014) reports that in July 2009, a budget of N52 billion (US\$145 million) was announced for the amnesty deal, the money was intended to cater for the training and rehabilitation of 20,192 registered militants. According to him, the budget did not state clearly how the money was to be expended. The proportion that was to be allocated to monthly allowances versus the proportion allocated to a broader reintegration and rehabilitation package were not clearly stated. This happened at the initial stage of the programme. As the programme progressed, Humphrey-Abazie (2014) reports that the way and manner in which the money allotted was to be spent was clearly stated, as the budget goes through some formalisation and approval before money is disbursed. According to him:

The Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (OSAPND) through the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (SAPND) will directly defend the amnesty budget before the National Assembly so as to receive approval as part of the year budget; its disbursement is made directly from the Central Bank of Nigeria to OSAPND (Humphrey-Abazie 2014, p.6).

He further confirms a statement credited to Hon Kingsley Kuku that:

A total of N234, 133,917,560 (USD\$14, 233,064, 89.72) budgetary allocation has been spent since its actual implementation programme began in March 2010. This budget spending involves overhead cost for staff, delegate's stipends, and DDR project cost (Humphrey-Abazie 2014, p.6).

Furthermore, former combatants who registered for the 42-month period of training, reintegration and rehabilitation in government-designated residential training centres received

monthly allowances of N65, 000 (US\$413) (Agbiboa 2014:16). The table below shows the DDR budget description since the implementation began in 2010.

AMNESTY 2014 BUDGET PROPOSAL

S/N	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	NAIRA	USD\$
1	Stipends & Allowances of 30,000 Ex-agitators	23,625,000,000	\$ 144,098,813.25
2	Operational Cost	3,699,933,814	\$ 22,567,452.77
3	Reintegration of Transformed Ex-agitators 35,409,859,972	35,409,859,972	\$ 215,979,631.72
4	Reinsertion/Transition Safety Allowances for 3,642 Exagitators (3rd phase)	546,300,000	\$ 3,332,113.51
	Total	63,281,093,786	\$ 385,978,011.25

Source, Humphrey-Abazie (2014 p.5)

The disarmament phase of the Niger Delta amnesty covered a period of 60 days. This period saw over 15,000 militants surrender their weapons by the expiry date of the Disarmament and Demobilisation phase. Weapons surrendered to the Presidential Amnesty Committee included ‘2,760 assorted guns, 287,445 ammunitions of different calibre, 18 gun-boats, 763 dynamite sticks, 1,090 dynamite caps, 3,155 magazines and several other military accessories, such as dynamite cables, bulletproof jackets and jack-knives’ (Agbiboa, 2011; Onuoha, 2011: 52). Many militants also turned themselves in as well, although major militant groups like MEND viewed the amnesty with suspicion as preceding a dialogue that would not address the root causes that gave rise to the struggles in the first place (*Radio France International* cited in Agbiboa 2011,

p.15). In an interview posted in the *Daily Independent* newspaper (3 June, 2012), NdutimiAlaibenoted that ‘these militants... wanted assurances... Some of them went to the mundane level of committing me to take an oath with them’. The popular belief is that militants only handed in a small fraction of their arms as most of them doubted the government’s genuine commitment to the amnesty deal (Onuoha 2011, p.52).

The demobilisation phase commenced with putting militants into camps at temporary centres with support packages to cover their basic needs and those of their families (including food, clothes, shelter and medical services). This phase also involved non-killing and non-violence transformational trainings, ending with graduation and demobilisation. According to Joab-Peterside et al. (2012: 11), ‘23,358 ex-militants have been successfully demobilised from June 2010–December 2011’. The demobilisation phase of the DDR officially ended on 24 September 2011. The United States’ Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2010 stated that, between June and December 2009, an estimated 20,000 ex-militants had completed training programmes in non-violence, in a camp in Obubra, in Cross River State (US, 8 April 2011 cited in Agbibo 2014, p.17). According to the Special Adviser to the President of Nigeria on the Amnesty Programme, between June 2010 and May 2011, 15,434 people had participated in the training programme offered (*The Nation*, 26 June 2011).

The aim of the reintegration phase was to enable the ex-militants to acquire real civilian status by providing them with training that would help increase their capabilities to responsibly take control of their lives. These skills are meant to help them gain sustainable employment and income as well as reconcile with local communities. According to a statement released on 11

December 2011, 7556 ex-militants (at home and abroad) have graduated from the programme (Agbibo, 2014, p.16). In addition, the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs stated that the Ministry had organised a job fair meant to link the youths in the amnesty programme with potential employers (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2011 cited in Agbibo 2014:17).(See the next chapter for a detailed discussion of reintegration).

Having discussed the process and the implementation of the amnesty programme, the next discussion will focus on stating some of the challenges of the programme from the perspectives of scholars. This is to precede other challenges noted by the researcher during the field- work which are detailed in the next chapter.

5.3 PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOLARS ON THE CHALLENGES OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME

One of the major setbacks suffered by the amnesty programme during the initial stage of implementation was the lull that was due to the death of President Yar'Adua, which slowed down the demobilisation and reintegration processes of the programme. Commenting on some of the challenges embedded in the programme from the outset, Obi (2014) argues that the criteria used to establish eligibility for inclusion into the amnesty programme were largely unclear, with the number of intended 'beneficiaries' widely believed to have been inflated. This was as a result of the fact that militants, who were supposed to be incorporated, were left out of the programme due to favouritism. The phenomenon of favouritism has the potential to sabotage the sustainable peace that the programme is expected to bring about because the dissatisfied militants may decide to "return to the creek" (the haven of criminality in the Delta) and take up arms against

the state. Some of the people in the region saw the amnesty programme as a lucrative business, and thus tried to manoeuvre their way into it, as confirmed by Mr Ledum Mittee, the Chairman of the Technical Committee in the Niger Delta during a discussion with the researcher (discussed extensively in the next chapter). This, among other issues, was what encouraged favouritism and manipulation in the initial stage of the programme.

As noted by various scholars, (such as Obi 2014; Agbiboa 2014; Ushie 2014; Eke 2014; Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011; Oluwaniyi 2011; Akinwale 2011; Onukwugha, Eke-Ogiugo and Okhomina 2014) what prompted the proposal of the amnesty programme was not the environmental tragedy in the Niger Delta region but the urgent need to stem the tide of MEND's crippling attacks on oil facilities in Nigeria, which had negatively affected the country's oil productivity. In short, 'the prime concern of the Nigerian state in the management of the oil conflicts in the Niger Delta has been to maximise oil revenues' (Omeje, 2004 cited in Obi 2014:257). Scholars noted that the need to achieve peace at all costs necessitated the methodology adopted by the government, and was also the government's undoing. Despite amnesty, there have been occasional bombings and kidnappings in the region. For example, the March 2010 bombing of the city of Warri, in Delta State⁹², was considered a threat to the newly established amnesty deal (UN-IRIN, 2010 cited in Obi 2014).

The Amnesty programme is also considered as a way of buying peace and this is seen as very dangerous for sustainable peace in the region. Obi (2014) argues that amnesty in the Niger Delta is a process of buying peace, and expresses doubt about the kind of training provided which, he

⁹²The bombing took place where an amnesty meeting was taking place in Warri Delta State. Many people were reported dead.

says, focuses more on working in the oil industry. He adds that government, in its desperation to achieve unhindered access to oil production, decided to buy local agitators. Moreover, training people to work in the oil industry may in the long run not be feasible, as there are limits to how many former militants the industry can employ. Obi further comments that the internal wrangling between the former Chairman of the Amnesty Committee, Timi Alaibe, and the former Bayelsa State government over their governorship ambition shows that the government is not yet ready to deal with the problems in the region. He argues that the present peace enjoyed in the region is due to the fact that the President is from the region, what Shoremekun (2011) refers to as ‘politics of cooptation’. Furthermore, Obi alleges that the amnesty package has not been able to finally put an end to corrupt practices which bedeviled former intervention efforts, which partly explains why development has been elusive in the region and why violence thrives in the region (Obi 2014, Agbibo 2014).

Agbibo (2014) avers that the Amnesty Programme itself is bedeviled by a number of challenges, even though there have been several claims by the implementers of the programme that the programme has provided a panacea to the Niger Delta problem. Agbibo (2014) cites a human rights activist in the United Nations Integration Regional Information Networks (IRIN)⁹³ who noted that ‘the rehabilitation centres... do not have essential equipment... the programme is failing’ (UN-IRIN, 2010 cited in Agbibo 2014, p.16). Similarly, he recounts that an analyst in the International Crisis Group criticised the insufficient effort invested in the rehabilitation and reintegration of the Niger Delta militants (UN-IRIN, 2010 cited in Agbibo

⁹³IRIN is Independent Reporting from the Frontline of Humanitarian Crisis. It is an independent news agency that has a global mandate. There is IRIN new Africa, Asia and so forth (<http://www.irinnews.org/irin-africa.aspx>)

2014, p.16). Supporting the view of *Le Monde*⁹⁴, he argues that ‘a new outburst of violence should not be ruled out in the Niger Delta, due to the fact that the amnesty programme did not resolve anything political (UN-IRIN, 2010 cited in Abgiboa 2014, p.16). Agbibo reports that in April 2011, an online press release by MEND stated that ‘with billions of naira spent, the amnesty and reintegration program is an obvious failure, given that the initial programme objective was overlooked for political ambitions and personal interests’ (PANA 2011 cited in Abgiboa 2014, p.17). Commenting on the administrative misdemeanour, Joab-Peterside et al. (2012, p.11) draw attention to:

the slow paced process in deployment of ex-militants offshore as a result of complexities in funds transfer and immigration matters, the random emergence of groups queuing up for benefits associated with the amnesty process, a lack of adequate and specialised training centres in Nigeria, low availability of jobs after training, low level of involvement of oil and gas companies in the program and reconciling those ex-militants who have been outlawed by their communities and village and justice issues (Joab-Peterside 2011 et al cited in Agbibo 2014, p.17).

Commenting on some of the challenges faced by the programme, a former National Coordinator of the Amnesty Programme, Ndotimi Alaibe, noted that:

Some of the challenges facing the programme today have to do with the background of some of the militants themselves and the initial process of de-briefing. You may take them abroad, and on arrival find that the individual is not even psychologically prepared and then indulge in negative habits and in the process, they get deported. There is therefore need to properly engage the ex-militants to determine their career aspirations before re-integration. The programme has recorded fundamental success in terms of some of them who have been trained in specialised disciplines; and more can still be achieved. There are those who have graduated as pilots. Managing 26,000 ex-militants through reintegration can be very challenging. The cooperation of all stakeholders is imperative (*Daily Independent* 3 July, 2012, p.1–2).

⁹⁴The French newspaper. The title is translated as The World.

Most of these challenges were initial setbacks that were recorded in the early stages of the commencement of the programme. The movement from various stages of disarmament, demobilisation, reinsertion, and now reintegration has made most of the observation above less frightening. Yet, they are very relevant to understanding the implications the initial debriefing had on the successful execution of the amnesty deal. Stability in oil production and continuous peace in the region have always been key to the programme's claims to success.

Ushie (2014) further queries the Nigerian government's rhetoric of the success of the amnesty programme. He argues that the programme has not been totally inclusive, and it does not address the underlying grievances which necessitated violent conflict in the first place. He notes that previous attempts to "forgive" Niger Delta militants in 2004 and 2007 were plagued by poor implementation. Cash for arms deals, which purportedly involved the exchange of arms for cash payments, did not make a dent on the conflict, and only aided more stockpiling of weapons by armed groups. He, however, recognises the fact that the present amnesty programme differs from previous attempts in its depth, given the level of organisation, political commitment and delivery of stated objectives. Nonetheless, it has been dogged by criticisms of poor planning and implementation, large-scale corruption and the exclusion of important stakeholders. (Oluwanniya 2011; Ojeleye 2011; Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011; Nwozor 2010; Akinwale 2010).

Ushie recounts the criticism that the amnesty programme is too top-down and susceptible to the discretionary influence of powerful ex-militant commanders without reflecting local needs and aspirations. This undermines the government's credibility, as the ex-commanders appear to have been more interested in newfound access to state patronage than in addressing the needs of their

local fighters (Oluwanniya 2011; Ushie 2014:17). Similarly, the monetisation of the grievances of oil-producing communities by undue emphasis on monetary payments to ex-militants is a questionable approach. Coupled with the wider access to political patronage for ex-militant commanders, these substantial monetary transfers paradoxically reinforce the vicious cycle of conflict that the amnesty programme was designed to break. They place unrealistic expectations on the provision of state largesse and employment, and raise the prospect of arms proliferation and further violence in the long term as job opportunities and easy money fail to materialise and idle youth seek refuge in the conflict economy. In connection with this, corruption and nepotism have taken root in an otherwise laudable initiative. The amnesty programme appears to have created a new 'peace industry' (Ushie 2011) in Nigeria, with the emergence of contractors, consultants and mediators or 'peace ambassadors' who have cynically positioned themselves to benefit from state largesse (Ushie 2011).

An uncomplimentary review of the rehabilitation component of the amnesty programme in 2010 revealed that 80% of the programme budget had been expended on payments to consultants and contractors, while just 20% was devoted to the rehabilitation of ex-militants (Oluwanniya 2011, Ushie 2014).

Another important point to note is that the amnesty programme excluded important conflict actors, thereby fueling grievances which could result in inter-communal strife. The scale of the amnesty programme, which has targeted more than 30,000 former combatants in a region with high poverty and youth unemployment, and suffering from long years of neglect is not adequate. This has created disaffection among militant groups that feel excluded from the entire exercise.

For instance, the failure to include several MEND warlords and neutralise MEND's infrastructure created room for aggrieved MEND elements to continue with their violent struggle. While leading MEND commanders such as Generals Boyloaf⁹⁵, Ateke Tom⁹⁶, 'Young Shall Grow'⁹⁷ and Government Ekpemupolo (a.k.a. Tompolo)⁹⁸embraced the amnesty and rapidly established themselves as regional power-brokers, the detention and trial in South Africa of Henry Okah, another central figure in the group, points to the exclusionary, divisive legacy of the amnesty programme. This allowed aggrieved MEND elements to carry out sporadic, deadly bombings such as the Independence Day 2010 bombing, and engage in criminality, including kidnapping and oil-bunkering (Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011, Ushie 2014).

Another noteworthy challenge is that some of the third phase of amnesty recipients complained of unfair treatment meted out to them by the amnesty team. Some former militants in Edo and Delta, who were not included in the third phase of the amnesty by the federal government, protested their exclusion from the programme. Their protest was contained in a petition addressed to the Special Adviser to President Goodluck Jonathan on the Niger Delta and Chairman of the Presidential Amnesty Committee, Mr Kingsley Kuku. The letter was copied to the President,

⁹⁵Ebikabowei Victor Ben(also known as Boyloaf) joined the newly formed Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta in 2006. Boyloaf soon rose to prominence in the ranks of MEND due to his expert commanding skills and was ranked 3rd highest in the ranks of MEND after Dokubo Asari, and Henry Okah. The name Boyloaf became well known throughout the Niger Delta and Boyloaf recruited hundreds of men and turned them into well trained soldiers.

⁹⁶AtekeTom is the leader of the Niger Delta Vigilante, an Ijaw militia. In August 2007, following days of gun fights between various militia groups and security forces in Port Harcourt, Ateke Tom wrote to the Governor, Celestine Omehia, requesting for amnesty in response to an offer of clemency and rehabilitation. He was granted amnesty alongside other militant groups by President Yar'Adua.

⁹⁷Kile Selky Torughedie (alias the Young Shall Grow) was one of the Niger Delta militants and a formidable force in the struggle. He was recently elected into the River State House of Assembly.

⁹⁸In 1998, Ekpemupolo joined the newly formed Ijaw Youth Council and became a well respected member. He later joined the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. He quickly rose to a high commander in MEND and with his vast wealth he was able to supply MEND with large amounts of weapons and new equipment. Ekpemupolo was in command of thousands of militants. During his time as a guerrilla commander, he, under the auspices of MEND, was able to drive the Nigerian government to grant amnesty to MEND members who decided to surrender.

both chambers of the National Assembly, the Police and the State Security Service (SSS).

According to the former militants, through their counsel, Mr UghaKurumah, the letter reads:

[That] some people close to some political appointees who were not registered in the programme were benefitting from the exercise at the detriment of “real militants”. The petition said that Beni-Obiri Camp headed by OjuemiPrediseghbofa keyed into the third phase of the amnesty programme with 1,300 persons and surrendered over 109 automatic weapons and several ammunition. It said that only seven slots were allocated to them in the monthly stipend, while that of Pina-Ofini Camp headed by Saturday Ajemiri entered the programme with 1002 persons. The camp was said to have surrendered 49 arms, but was given only five slots. The petition said 800 persons from Oweikontei Camp headed by EmmanuelAboh subscribed to the amnesty and surrendered 49 arms and several rounds of ammunition, but got only five slots. It also said the Toruiyesinghan Camp headed by AyefaghaYeriyemi surrendered 351 persons and handed over 55 arms and several rounds of ammunition, but also got five slots. The Ukurisi Camp, it said, headed by Jacob Ikpi, keyed into the programme with 277 persons and surrendered 40 arms and several ammunition, received four slots. On the other hand, Kala Osuwo Camp headed by Agama Peter with 219 persons and surrendered 22 arms and several ammunitions, got only one slot. The petition further read that, Urhode Camp headed by OvwighovieOvayebewho entered the programme with 150 persons, surrendered several ammunition and 12 arms, but got only one slot for monthly allowance. Okuku camp headed by Isaiah Ajemiri entered into the programme with 200 persons and surrendered several ammunition and 26 arms, got only three slots, among others. It said that “these inappropriate engagements are making life after amnesty miserable and unbearable for all members of the entire camps” (Vanguard August, 2014).

One can argue that the desperation to be included by some of the former militants and people in the region is a sign of success – that the programme is desirable and has tangible benefits to those participating. However, it can also be argued that this is an indication that most people in the region need employment opportunities and the kinds of empowerment which the amnesty programme offer. In general, it is safe to say that all the criticisms recounted in the above pages are significant enough to have the capacity to reverse the successes of the amnesty programme. Moreover, grassroots communities, civil society organisations and vulnerable groups, such as women and children that shunned violent struggle were also inadvertently excluded from state largesse, while continuing to grapple with the adverse effects of oil activities, particularly

environmental degradation and the loss of livelihoods (Nwozor 2010; Oluwaniyi 2010; Ushie 2014;). The failure of the local and federal governments to address environmental management issues and institute a systematic approach towards providing public infrastructure and social goods also reduced the effectiveness of the amnesty programme (Akinwale 2010, p.207). Furthermore, delays in paying militants' allowances and allegations of government insensitivity (occasioned by the lack of a swift response to the needs of the militants and the people in the region) undermined the integrity of the programme (Oluwaniyi 2011, p.50). Aggrieved amnesty beneficiaries resorted to public demonstrations, issuing threats, engaging in violent protests, destroying public property and, in some cases, returned to criminality as a result of their frustrations (Davidheiser and Nyiayaana 2011, p.53).

Ushie (2014) noted that the cost of executing the amnesty programme is substantial and, due to volatile oil revenues, the government's commitment to maintaining cash payments and support to militants to abandon violence will be put under pressure. Aside from these economic concerns, other ethnic groups that are perceived to be excluded from the distribution of state largesse may turn to violence, in expectation of some form of monetary settlement. The commitment of the region's political elite to genuinely support the amnesty programme in the medium term can also be questioned, as political electioneering in the Niger Delta has been linked with violence, criminality and the proliferation of arms (Human Rights Watch 2002; 2005; Omeje 2006; Ushie 2014).

Above all, the continued use of military force in the Niger Delta contradicts the avowed commitment of the Nigerian government to peace, and prevents a wider engagement with local

communities about their grievances against the state and the multinational oil corporations (MOCs). As a direct consequence of the violence and conflict that have plagued the region, the militarisation of the Niger Delta has created what Ushie (2014) refers to as ‘a siege’ mentality among indigenes that has legitimised the instrumental use of violence by militant groups to confront the Nigerian state and the MOCs (Obi 2010; Watts and Ibaba 2011; Idemudia 2009; Ukiwo 2011; Ushie 2014).

For his part, Eke (2014) while appreciating the fact that amnesty programme has been able to bring about relative peace and stability in the region, notes that there have been snags in the implementation of the amnesty programme. According to him, while the giving of handouts may have restored relative peace in the region; the amnesty programme has begun to experience some problems. The first is that, devoid of real development efforts, the amnesty programme simply reflects a ‘cash for arms’ policy and becomes attractive to criminals who violently engage the government for the purpose of enjoying state largesse. Secondly, the promise of infrastructural development by the government has yet to go large scale. Its focus is mainly on the repentant militants which may well have adverse effects. Finally, continued environmental insensitivity by oil multinationals⁹⁹ may bring a relapse in the deal, and make renewed struggle inevitable (Eke 2014, p.8).

Discussing the challenges the cash for arms deal poses to the amnesty programme, Eke (2014) argues that the claim of government that it is indisposed to ‘cash for arms’, is not sustainable in light of the sudden affluence of the ex-militants. This has prompted some of the militants who

⁹⁹ The oil multinationals are insensitive in the sense that they employ unrefined modes to explore the oil. This has serious ramifications as there have been reports of several oil spills which further deplete the arable land, gas flaring the effect of which has resulted in acidic rain, increasing the health hazards of the people.

fall out of favour or did not initially accept the amnesty deal (due to suspicion that amnesty may be a trap) to clamour for inclusion. Seemingly, violence has become a commodity, a legal tender to be exchanged for access to state resources. Consequently, the exclusion of some from the benefits of the amnesty led to several protests in various cities across Nigeria's Delta. Such protests, according to Eke (2014), were organized in Benin City, Yenagoa, Calabar, Warri, Port Harcourt, and even outside the Niger Delta enclave in Lokoja and Abuja. This led to a blockade of major roads such as the East- West road between Warri and Port Harcourt, the Benin-Shagamu road, and the Abuja-Okene road for several hours with all the attendant discomfort to the commuters (Akasike, 2011 cited in Eke 2014, p.10).

Furthermore, Eke (2014) avers that the relationship between government and 'repentant' ex-militants reveals that it is disposed to buying peace. Referring to government expenses, he notes that in 2012 and 2013, the Federal Government (FG) spent N72 billion and N88 billion, respectively on its programme for the pardoned Niger Delta militants (ThisDay, 2012 cited in Eke 2014, p.10). This, according to him, far exceeds what government spends yearly to deliver basic education to children. In addition, government continues to award contracts to the ex-militants as a form of pacification.

Highlighting government's desperate move to buy peace, Eke (2014) reports that ex-militants 'General' Ateke Tom 'General' Ebikabowei 'Boyloaf' Victor Ben, 'General' Government 'Tompson' Ekpumopolo and AsariDokubo were offered oil pipeline protection contracts totalling N560 million, N3.6 billion and N1.44 billion respectively (Punch, 2012; ThisDay, 2012 cited in

Eke 2014, p.11). Federal government's distribution of largesse to ex-militant leaders is reflected in the life of affluence and opulence which they currently live.

This life of opulence is seen in a show of grandeur and a statement of the arrival of easy wealth. For example, Chief Ateke Tom, or Godfather as he is "affectionately" addressed by his teeming supporters, was conservatively estimated to have spent a whopping N30 million on the ceremony for the birth of his nephew. The source of the money is obvious. In accepting the 2009 amnesty deal, Chief Ateke submitted 10,000 names of the active combatants under his command but sources close to the ex-rebel revealed that the correct figure is somewhere around 1000 fighters. With N65,000 paid as monthly stipends to each repentant militant (the names of which were never verified), Ateke receives from the Amnesty Office, on a monthly basis, an impressive sum of N650,000,000 (Uchegbu, 2013 cited in Eke 2014, p.11). The 'Godfather' is said to be living in opulence in his multi-million Naira residence in Amuwo Odofin in Lagos, having several other properties in Abuja and Lagos, including choice locations such as Victoria Garden City (VGC) and Lekki (Eke 2014, p.12).

Nor is Ateke the only former militant to enjoy a very high standard of living. Several other former militant leaders in his rank, such as Mr EbiKabowei Victor Ben, Asari Dokubo, also enjoy enormous wealth which they acquired from the state.

Government Tompolo is said to own an oil block and a private jet worth N2.12 billion (Ileowo, 2013 cited in Eke 2014, p.14). Today, his status has metamorphosed from that of an "inhabitant of the creek" to that of a wealthy socialite. His company Global West Vessel was also granted

Global West Vessel Specialist Limited (GWVSL) a contract worth USD 103.4 million (over N 15 billion) to supply 20 vessels for use by the nation's military authorities to secure the country's waterways (Eke 2014:15). According to a report carried by an on line media outlet, Tompolo was said to have been able to balance what he missed in education through militant activity (*Sahara Reporters*, 2013).

In addition to being violent, ex-militants' engagement with the state also demonstrates a larger character of criminality. Such crimes as armed robbery, kidnapping and oil bunkering have been on the rise in most parts of the region. In March 2012, for instance, the 102-year-old mother of the Ovie (King) of Masogar Kingdom in Ethiope LGA of Delta State was kidnapped from her home and a ransom of N150 million was demanded for her release. At the same time, a former employee of Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC¹⁰⁰) was also abducted with a N10 million ransom demanded from his family. In May 2012, two Indian nationals with the Asaba Aluminium Company and the younger brother of the Speaker of Delta State House of Assembly were kidnapped. Although not all crimes in Nigeria's Delta are committed by ex-militants, a significant number of ex-fighters have been arrested by security agents for kidnapping, piracy, armed robbery, and similar crimes. (Bivbere and Ejoh 2011; Amaize, 2012; Daily Sun 2012; Eke 2014).

The imperfect implementation of the DDR strategy, while enhancing daily oil production (the only meaningful peace achieved), has failed to resolve the proliferation of arms in the region. Furthermore, the inability of the government to obtain accurate estimates of weapons stockpiles

¹⁰⁰DESOPADEC is a Commission established to enhance development in the Delta State, as one of the oil producing communities.

has precluded any real chance of effective disarmament. Thus, large caches of arms remain in circulation and the consequence has been the continuance of kidnapping, armed robbery, piracy and oil theft on an even larger scale in some cases (Eke 2014, p.18). Eke concludes by asserting that in spite of amnesty given to ex-militants, criminal activities such as piracy, oil bunkering, and arm banditry still persist in the region. While acknowledging that not all criminal acts have been perpetrated by the ex-militants, he affirms that a substantial number of these crimes are perpetrated by the former militants. The methodology of operation, according to him, now is that of kidnapping wealthy Nigerians, because the multinational oil companies operating in the region have reduced the number of expatriates they employ, and those available are being provided with formidable security.

Onukwugha, Eke-Ogiugo and Okhomina (2014) in their review of the successes of amnesty programme, further corroborate that in spite of the initial lull in crime, most of the participants who are dissatisfied with administration of the programme had been directly or indirectly involved in crimes including attacking oil infrastructure, oil bunkering and kidnapping oil workers. They reported a case of Casely Omon-Irabor, a lawyer based in Warri, Delta State, who has represented militant groups for nearly six years, argues that those who accepted amnesty later went back to engage in criminality and carried guns again. He said that:

His clients include leader of the militant Niger Delta Liberation Front, John Togo, who took amnesty but later returned to fighting. The militants are already back – they just don't have enough arms yet (Casely Omon-Irabor cited in Onukwugha et al 2014, pp.1-5).

Onukwugha et al (2014) further report that one of the findings from their survey was that violence has declined but has not disappeared. They cite three civil society leaders in the Niger Delta who told them that they were aware of cases where militants who had taken the amnesty later returned to fighting. They further affirm that other former militants are turning their skills to piracy. In their words: ‘A lot of the militancy has simply moved. Offshore piracy is the new site for the armed militants’ activities’ (Onukwugha et al 2014, pp.1-5).

They conclude by averring that the amnesty programme became shaky and the success was threatened due to the fact that the root causes of the problem seems to have been overlooked. Government’s preference is to purchase peace rather than to deal with issues sincerely. Moreover, the fact that some people accepted the amnesty grudgingly, thinking that failure to do so may warrant severe military attacks against them, still provide an opportunity for people to return a haven of criminality when they don’t find satisfaction in the programme or are left out completely from the scheme.

The challenges with the programme that are discussed above are rather daunting, and they are capable of impacting negatively on the sustainability of peace in the region. While the government, through the amnesty office, is doing everything possible to sustain the present peace deal, a failure to adequately address some of these challenges is like sitting on gun powder. It is important to note, however, that events have overtaken some of these challenges and that some of the challenges posed have been addressed by the amnesty office. For example, the problem of finance and management of the programme which resulted from the death of the former President have been addressed. Also, most of the problems which came about as a result of the

non-inclusion of some militant groups (who initially were sceptical about the programme) have been subsequently tackled by the extension of phases, from phase one to phase three. Moreover, states, local government, federal government agencies like the NDDC, oil companies, and the like are expected to invest in training and capacity building for the people in the region. Additionally, it can be argued that criminality in the region is not essentially a failure of the programme because with or without the amnesty programme and the non inclusion of some ex-militants, people still get involved in crime in any social institution. This is not to imply that all the challenges raised have been completely or indeed comprehensively dealt with; there are still many which the programme continues to address.

In the next chapter, the study explores the activities of the amnesty committee in the reintegration process, and how that has impacted on the peacebuilding effort in the region. These include recent challenges posed to the programme, and efforts made so far to address some of these challenges holistically. The chapter also looks at the successes of amnesty so far, and how it has transformed the ex-militants to peace ambassadors in the region. It critically assesses the extent to which these efforts and the execution of the last phase of the amnesty programme are immune to future threat, and are capable of sustaining the present peace effort.

CHAPTER SIX

AMNESTY AS A MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THE NIGER DELTA EXPERIENCE

This chapter provides an analysis of the fieldwork data on the topic of the amnesty programme as a mechanism for conflict resolution within the context of the Niger Delta conflict. The analysis shows in detail how the amnesty programme has been used in rehabilitating the youth and how this has been able to impact on peace in the region. The chapter focuses essentially on the reintegration aspect of the programme, and how this has been tactically managed to improve the capacity of the ex-militants, as well as “the impacted communities”¹⁰¹; that is, those groups of individuals that did not take up arms against the state but were affected by the activities of militancy and military onslaughts in the region. The chapter discusses in-depth how the amnesty programme has been able to transform the crisis-ridden region to a region with hope for development, and how the hitherto violent militants have been transformed into peace ambassadors. The chapter argues that the ex-militants now willingly submit themselves to the civil authority of the state, and are ready to constructively engage the state in bringing about desired development to the region.

In previous chapters, this study has attempted to provide answers to some of the key questions asked in the project. It has provided a useful explanation of the idea of amnesty in conflict resolution and peace-building processes in the literature review, taking into consideration perspectives from the international justice system, transitional justice system, social scientists’ points of view, and within the context of the Niger Delta region. While the international justice system emphasises legality and the need to exercise caution in the implementation of amnesty

¹⁰¹ The impacted communities are the communities that did not engage in armed conflict against the state, but are directly affected by the militant activities and the onslaught of the state against the people in the region. This, according to Mr Lawrence Pepple, the Technical Assistant to the Senior Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta, and Head of Reintegration, is to reduce ill feelings that strict focus on the ex-militants alone may generate, and also to enhance easy reintegration of the ex-militants to these communities (Personal Interview conducted by the researcher, Nov. 2014).

(hence the need for limited amnesty) social scientists emphasise the rationality of using amnesty to advance peacebuilding and conflict resolution. They focus on the need to achieve peace as against focusing exclusively on the legality and morality of the crime committed, arguing that if granting pardon to a few belligerents can save lives and properties, it is not too high a price to pay. This goes to the heart of the position of the justice theorists earlier discussed in this dissertation. Within the context of this study, the amnesty programme is conceived as a home-grown conflict resolution mechanism, initiated by the state to achieve the immediate cessation to hostility in order for development to eventually take place in the Niger Delta region. Needless to say the objective for which amnesty programme was introduced has been achieved, and has provided room for the re-introduction of a development discourse in the region. However, it is useful to state that scholars, activists, militants and amnesty managers have differing views on what the amnesty programme signifies within the context of the Niger Delta. While some of the region's people consider the amnesty programme as a stop-gap measure to enhance unhindered access to oil production, some see it as a fraud, while others see it as a useful strategy proffered by the state to bring immediate peace to the region for the eventual development to take place. The next section presents some of the respondent's perceptions of the amnesty programme.

6.1 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME

All the twenty six people that were interviewed were asked about what they understood as comprising the amnesty programme and how they perceived it. Some of these people are environmental activists, academics and militant leaders. A few of their submissions will suffice here.

The section begins with three respondents who consider that the amnesty programme is a fraud.

The respondents are one of the militant leaders Asari Dokubo, an environmental activist Dr Uyi Ojo, and Chief Eze Christian Akani¹⁰². According to Asari Dokubo:

The amnesty programme, as far as I am concerned, was for the advantage of the Nigerian state so that the resources of Niger Delta will flow unabated, so that they would bribe some people with sixty five thousand, with going to school, with going to acquire school, and the oil will flow. This is a temporary measure that will fail ultimately, because the fundamental problems and issues of self-determination and resource control had not been addressed (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

In the same vein, Dr UyiOjo opined that:

The amnesty programme is a government strategy deployed in the phase of the manifestation of a failed state. It is the way of a neo-liberal system to get back on track to continue resource extraction. So the primary objective of amnesty is to continue to drain oil behind military shield (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Similarly, Chief Christian Akani, a human rights activist, traditional ruler, and an academic could not see the rationale for granting amnesty and compensation to those who have inflicted very great pain and havoc on their people. In his words:

The amnesty programme did not come because of the altruism of the federal government, but because the activities of the militants have affected the economic jugular of the state, hence, something very fundamental has to be done, if not Nigeria would have collapsed. Unfortunately, this group of people who have wrecked untold hardship on their people were later pardon, to me this is not fair, and amnesty programme itself to me is a fraud (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

As has been noted in an earlier chapter, it has been argued that the amnesty programme was structured in such a way that it did not address the fundamental issues of resource mobilisation, control, and environmental degradation which necessitated the conflict in the first instance. Thus, it is arguable that the accusation that amnesty programme has not been able to address the root causes of the conflict may not necessarily be used to assess the success of the programme. The Amnesty programme was initiated to provide immediate cessation to militant activities in the

¹⁰² Chief Eze Christian Akani is a traditional leader in of one of the Ekwere communities in Port Harcourt, River state. He is an activist, and played a prominent role under the military regime for the installation of democracy in Nigeria. Chief Akani is also an academic because he lectures in River State University of Science and Technology.

region, so that the environment of peace provided by this will provide room for the development in the region. Speaking in line with this view, Dr Dion Akhaine a human rights activist and an academic, said that:

The amnesty programme is a state response to the insurgency in the Niger Delta. It is a way of persuading the insurgents to disarm, and embrace other peace building measures, and response to some of the demands which they have made over time, such as access to resource control. It is a halt to further degradation of the environment, and waste of resources, in terms of gas flaring, and all other within the Delta (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

In the same vein Ex-General Nature, who happens to be one of the ex-militants, conceives the amnesty programme as a negotiation brokered between the militants and the state to achieve an immediate truce to enable development to take root. He said:

Amnesty came as an agreement; it came as the only option for the boys to down their tools so that the federal government can go into negotiation with their leaders to see how they resolve the issue of neglect, and marginalisation of the region (Personal communication Nov. 2014).

Similarly, Ex-general Sunny Clark, a former militant in the Tompolo's camp, sees amnesty as an experiment. Considering the fact that an indigene of the region was the Vice President, then the need to give peace a chance through the acceptance of amnesty was worth trying. He said:

Amnesty started during Yar'Adua, they started using the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) as the link with the militants. Understanding that Goodluck was going to be the deputy to the President, the militants were persuaded to drop their arms, and we say let us start from there (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Corroborating the above view, the head of reintegration, Mr Lawrence Pepple, articulated the governmental perspective during a discussion with the researcher. He said there is no way any development activity could have been embarked upon in the region if there was no cessation to hostility. It would be rather unfair to think that the whole essence of introducing amnesty was to

access oil in the region. While economic explanation could not totally be jettisoned, he nonetheless said that the need to entrench peace, stability and development in the region were directly behind the introduction of the programme. He asked rhetorically if it would have been better to allow the militants, insurgent activities and the killings to continue when such could be averted by a “win-win” solution that the amnesty programme has provided. In his words, amnesty is:

The Nigeria DDR is otherwise known as amnesty. It is a programme that is internally nurtured, initiated, put in place, sponsored, funded, run exclusively by Nigerians, and no external body. The uniqueness of it is that it is only one of the DDRs currently running, initiated by the natives, run by the natives, funded by the natives hundred percent. It was introduced to replace the hitherto weapons that they (the militants) were having with skills and intellect. This home grown DDR is not readily cash for arms as it is alleged, I am not saying it is completely bad, cash for arm has its own benefit of speedily bringing about peace in a community where every business has completely collapsed (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

As can be seen from the above submissions, opinion differs on the understanding of the amnesty programme – and its merits and intent - from the perspective of activists, former militants and those in charge of the programme. This is understandable given the fact that previous government intervention efforts could not assuage the suffering in the region. Moreover, the quantum of problems which the neglect and laggard approach of successive regimes have bequeathed to the region present the amnesty programme with challenges and issues that are not ordinarily within its scope. Notwithstanding the differences of opinion, the amnesty programme from the perspective of the Niger Delta conflict, is a home-grown peacebuilding initiative. It was introduced to bring immediate cessation to hostility in the region, to pave the way for eventual development of the environment-which includes both human and infrastructural facilities development. Having attempted to conceptualise amnesty from the perspective of the officials and the stake holders in the region, the next focus will be to examine how far the amnesty

programme has been able to resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta. This aspect is dealt with considering the reintegration phase of the programme and how it has impacted on the people and the region.

6.2 THE REINTEGRATION COMPONENT OF AMNESTY IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION

6.2.1. THE PRE-REINTEGRATION PHASE

As stated earlier, the disarmament phase started on 6th August 2009 and ended on 4th October 2009 (a sixty days window period). During the first phase, the former militants were registered and their bio-metrics were obtained for adequate recording. The arms collected were symbolically destroyed on the 22nd May, which officially signaled the end of disarmament. This phase was followed by the demobilisation phase which included training in a non violence approach and preparing the ex-combatants for the subsequent capacity building that followed. While the demobilisation phase officially ended on the 24th of September 2011, the final (i.e. the third phase of the demobilised ex-combatants) began in 2012, at the end of which a total of 30,000 ex-militants had been demobilized, signaling the commencement of the reintegration phase.

The reintegration phase was directly coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (OSAPND), under the then Hon. Kingsley Kuku. A committee was set up to coordinate the reintegration phase which comprised consultants from different backgrounds with skills in development and security projects, key stakeholders, and government officials (Humphrey-Abazie 2014, p. 4). The Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (SAPND)

was the Chairman of the Amnesty Committee. Through the committee, according to Humphrey-Abazie (2014) ‘a working plan was developed and the project is designated as an intervention project where amendments to its components are regularly reviewed and updated as its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)’. The committee operates as a consensus building platform of the DDRproject. One of the interesting elements that makes up this committee, according to Humphrey-Abazie, is what OSAPND call ‘the leaders’. In their rank are the key stakeholders; also included are the warlords and militiacommanders. It is important to note that the home-grownDDR programme development originated from the mutual cognition and recognition of inputs fromdifferent key stakeholders and ministries in the Post Amnesty Programme (PAP)¹⁰³ committee to form the SOP¹⁰⁴ (Humphrey-Abazie 2014, p.5).

The reintegration process is anchored by two important agencies: the Presidential Amnesty Office and the Oil and Gas Industry Foundation (OGIF). The Presidential Amnesty Office is the governmental agency solely established under the presidency to administer the reintegration programme. On the other hand, the OGIF was the foundation created by twelve notable oil companies operating in the area (Oando PLC, Niger Delta Petroleum Resources Limited, Chevron, Exxon-Mobil, Shell BP, Total, Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Limited, Schlumberger Oilfield Services, Pan Ocean Oil Corporation, Nigerian Petroleum Development Company, Nigerian Agip Oil Company, and Addax Petroleum) in partnership with the Presidential

¹⁰³ The Post Amnesty Programme (PAP) is the detail of activities that were carried out or implemented after the initial two phases. The PAP includes training and molding of the ex-militants and people from the impacted community in formal and vocational education. The programme was designed to transform the people and the region.

¹⁰⁴Standard Operating Procedure here refers to upholding the best procedures and quality in training of ex-militants. This involves the constant reappraisal of strategies and the involvement of professionals and technocrats in the programme.

Amnesty Office to train and empower three thousand ex-combatants and youths (Abazie-Humphrey, 2014, p.6).

During the reintegration stage, the main focus is to ensure that the ex-militants are properly re-absorbed into society so that they do not constitute a nuisance and a threat to the society. Also, the communities which have suffered from the militant activities are equally provided with incentives of including them in the amnesty package so that mutual re-absorption can exist, and sustainable peace can be achieved in the region (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014; also see Humphrey-Abazie 2014). Tables two and three show the phases of demobilisation and their distribution according to states in the region respectively.

TABLE 2. THE DEMOBILISATION PROCESS

Phase 1	20, 192
Phase 2	6,166
Phase 3	3,642
Total	30.000

Source: Amnesty Office, 2014

TABLE 3. STATE DISTRIBUTION OF THE EX-MILITANTS

S/N	STATE	PHASE1	PHASE2	PHASE3	%	TOTAL
1	ABIA		18		0.07	18
2	AKWA IBOM	163	178		1.29	341
3	BAYELSA	6,963	2,649		36.47	9,612
4	CROSS RIVER	160	210		1.40	370

5	DELTA	3,509	1,916		20.58	5,425
6	EDO	300	82		1.45	382
7	IMO	300	45		1.31	345
8	ONDO	1,200	360		5.92	1,560
9	RIVERS	6,997	708		29.23	7,705
	**NDDC	600	0		2.28	600
	TOTAL	20,192	6166	0	100	

Source: OSAPND, 2014

6.2.2 THE PROCESS OF REINTEGRATION

The reintegration component, according to Lawrence Pepple, the head of reintegration, is ‘aimed at bringing someone (the former militant) who was hitherto a violence prone person to a civil citizen, subsuming himself and putting himself under civilian rule, putting himself under the civil responsibility of the state, and obeying the laws of the state’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). That is the reason the former militants were made to go through non-violence training during the demobilisation phase, and provided with opportunities in various trades and educational institutions to build their capacity of standing on their own.

As noted in an earlier research paper by the present author and Onapajo (2015), the reintegration programme was designed in two dimensions. First, the government formulated the strategy of “constructive engagement” with the leadership of the combatants by employing them to establish their own private security firms that would be hired to secure oil pipelines and other installations on multi-billion Naira contract agreements (International Crisis Group, 2009:11) (see chapter five’s discussion of contracts given to the former militant leaders). However, there

have been criticisms-that the state is empowering the ex-militant leaders and this may be counterproductive in the long run. For example Chief Eze Christain Akani expresses his disapproval of the fact that former militants are celebrated and even empowered for having destroyed their own land and people. According to him,

The leaders submitted all their arms, and they were taken to Abuja and have presidential hand shake for killing their own people. In Okrika, Ateke Tom brought a reign of terror there, Asari Dokubo killed a lot of people in Kuguma, in Ikwere here, Obakere killed many people, as we are discussing here they we just come and shoot two of us. Unfortunately, the amnesty glorifies these people, and was paying them heavy money every month and even gave contracts to their leaders. They live in fabulous wealth, Ateke Tom has gigantic house in Abuja, same with Asari Dokubo who have university in Republic of Benin for not working, for killing their own people you paid sixty five thousand naira, now people use militancy to woo and threaten people, saying “I am an ex-militant oo” using this to threaten people. The singular reason of being an ex-militant is the passport for survival (Personal Communication, Nov 2014).

Similarly, Dr Uyi Ojo expresses displeasure with the lavish distribution of money to those he called the ‘entrepreneurs of violence’. He said:

The amnesty is put in place as a kind of rewarding the entrepreneurs of violence. These entrepreneurs have failed, the state has failed, and government is siphoning all the money and we don’t get anything. You keep giving us empty promises, and therefore we have to put our destinies in our hands, and we demand a stake in the state and the resources, so the demand is quite strong, because it’s backed with arm as well. So as a result, if these people are gathered, and they pay them so much, you know the history thirty something to forty millions dollars every year for contract to secure oil pipeline, this is telling everybody that might is right (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Notwithstanding the criticisms, the logic behind this strategy is to find a meaningful means of constructive engagement with the militant leaders. These leaders had been exposed to stupendous wealth and lifestyles given their incomes from ransom kidnapping, oil bunkering and political patronage to have alternative and legitimate source of income after they renounced violence. This will prevent them from returning to their violent past. In addition, it is believed that these individuals, given their experience with vandalising oil pipelines and installations,

would better provide the needed security in that regard. According to the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Amnesty Affairs, Kingsley Kuku:

I believe that only the people of the communities where the pipelines crisscross their backyards can conveniently work with the security agencies to stop oil theft and protect the facilities (*Vanguard News*, 2013).

This package is considered as a temporary arrangement, and it is believed that this task will naturally revert back to the state as peace is strengthened and consolidated in the region; this submission was noted in my personal communication with the head of reintegration. With the inauguration of this present administration on May 29th 2015, the government is determined to allow the state security agents to take over pipeline protection, thus it is tactically considering reviewing some of the oil pipeline protection contracts awarded to the former militants. Recently the government has refused to renew the contracts and some of the militant leaders like “Boyloaf” have said they will not return to their initial place of hiding in the region where criminality is perpetrated because they have already accepted amnesty (see Punch June 28, 2015, Vanguard 16 May, 2015).

The second dimension is a direct one, targeting the general combatants, non-combatant and youths of impacted communities for socio-economic empowerment. It should be noted that one of the major criticisms of the traditional model of DDR is its focus on combatants only in the reintegration process while neglecting the other members of the society. This gap is addressed in the Niger Delta’s reintegration programme as the programme also includes non-militant youths of the Niger Delta. During the interviews conducted with the Head of Reintegration, Mr Lawrence Pepple, he said that over 742 women were included in the programme (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). In a similar research study conducted by myself and Onapajo

(2015) it was reported that significant numbers of such women were noticed at the training centres in South Africa during a visit by one of the researchers. According to the Head of Reintegration, the government put in special effort to engage what he called ‘women in DDR’, because:

Unlike men, the women require a special package for their minds to be fully attuned to the programme, because some of them were nursing mothers, wives, and a number of them came into the programme with pregnancy. So all these were factored in to decide the type of training, country and institutions where women were sent to for their training (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

The reintegration package includes 65 thousand naira (\$400, at an exchange rate of 163 to a dollar as at Jan 2014) monthly stipend. In the Nigerian context the programme did not immediately lead to the exchange arms for money. What happened is called an unconditional renunciation of violence, the turning in of weapons and then the government will do the following: replace arms with skills, and education so that the ex-militants can fend for themselves in a non-violent way, Mr Lawrence informed (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). This is followed by reinsertion, that is, giving the demobilised militants Transitional Safety Allowances (TSA)¹⁰⁵ to enable them to replace their houses that were bombarded during military onslaught (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). To enable them to access health, where the need arises, the amnesty committee was responsible for treating serious medical challenges of those who are covered in the programme. On this Mr Lawrence Pepple observed that:

This programme has shown that if you show any man that he is valued by bringing them from the creek, you demystify them, and they are not wishing to return to that life again. And now they have a name, they have been captured biometrically which can help law enforcement to track them, so this man and most of them we not like to return to a life of violence. By coming out of the creek, they have tasted the good side of life, while we are doing that, we are not directly handing them money, we are handling them respect and opportunity in place for their weapons, we have helped them to change their mind set

¹⁰⁵The Transitional Safety Allowance is the monthly stipend paid to the ex-militants for their upkeep.

about even themselves, and their dependants. Because most of them are registered on the programme side by side with their wife, their concubine, and their children, so if you removed this burden from the man, and you have replaced it with skills, and intellect, the attraction to a life of violence is highly reduced. More so, because we are not sure we can give a man who did six month training immediate employment, that stipend he takes remains the reason why he will stay where you want him to stay, where people who are doing monitoring and evaluation we see him. It is “a conditional cash transfer process”, wherein he must qualify by character and attitude to earn the next month’s own, because we will always sanction (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Inferring from the statement above, the cash transfer is strategically deployed to make the former militants concentrate on the training they are being given. It is to also to serve as a means of compensation for some losses they might have suffered during the military onslaught. It equally serves as a means of savings, as many of those included in the programme used the money saved from the monthly stipend to kick-start their own business. This, of course, goes contrary to the claim that the programme was just a means to buy peace at any cost. Again, it would be too simplistic to say that the amnesty programme is just “cash for arms” as it is often alleged. Because, if the government is really serious in taking the ex-militants out of the creek, and really wants them to surrender their weapons for the replacement of skills, allowances such as the Transitional Safety Allowance were necessary to provide an alternative means of revenue and support for the ex-militants.

The reintegration process also involves vocational skills training and formal education programmes for its beneficiaries. The vocational skills training involve a wide range of skills that would potentially empower the ex-combatants after reintegration into the society. The skills include piloting, carpentry and furniture making, welding, boat building, marine operations, heavy duty operations, automobile technology, agricultural operations, oil and gas technical operations, electrical and mechanical engineering, and other relevant skills. In formal education,

the reintegration process creates the opportunity for ex-combatants willing to pursue formal education to acquire quality education up to the tertiary levels (undergraduate and postgraduate) in local and foreign universities. A document from the Amnesty Office indicates that the education and skills training programmes cover 157 universities and 22 vocational skills training centres in thirty countries across the world. The local education and skills training programmes involve nine universities and nineteen vocational training centres in eight states in Nigeria (*Strides of the Presidential Amnesty* Nov. 2014).

With regard to the reason why most of the training is located abroad, and only a few options are located in the country, the Head of Reintegration said it was due to the paucity of spaces and institutions that have the capacity for the kind of training they wanted to give to the youth (ex-militants and non-militants alike). According to him:

Considering the sensitivity of the programme, any delay in posting these people for skill acquisition may provoke undue apprehension. Moreover, because the scheme is time bound, they needed a place where there is guarantee that somebody who is suppose to spend three or four years for his/ her studies is not hindered by unforeseen circumstances (Personal Communication, Nov.2014).

Tables 4 and 5 show the institutions for specialised training and vocational training and the number of former militants and non-combatants who graduated from these institutions. Table 4 below illustrates the specialised training on offer.

TABLE 4. SPECIALISED TRAINING

S/N	Institution	Course	No of Delegates	Location	Status
1	Schlumberger Technologies	Drilling Engineering	29	Melon, France	Graduated
2	Lufthansa Aviation	Instrument	21	Frankfurt,	In Training

	Academy	Rating, Type Rating and Fixed Wings		Germany	
3	CAE Oxford Aviation Academy	Airline Transport Instrument rating, Type rating	9	Kinglington, United Kingdom	In Training
4	Schneider Electric	Power Generation & Management, process and machine management	29	France	Graduated
5	Institute of French Petroleum (IFP)	Geoscience, Reservoir Engineering, Gas Exploration, Production, Refining, Engines and hydrocarbon Utilizations	40	France	In Training
6	Airstar Flight School	Helicopter	9	Italy	In Training
7	Comair	Type Rating	11	South Africa	In Training
8	Flight Simulation Company	Type Rating	4	Netherlands	In Training
			143		

Source: OSAPND, 2014

The next table illustrates vocational training.

TABLE 5: VOCATIONAL TRAINING

S/N	COURSE CATEGORY	NO	GRADUTED
1	Agriculture	716	

2	Automobile Mechanics	601	79
3	Welding & Fabrication	4837	300
4	Entrepreneurship	2074	
5	Carpentry, Plumbing & Pipefitting	398	
6	Electrical Installation/Maintenance	562	100
7	Information & Communication Technology	331	
8	Crane/Heavy Duty Operations	1426	
9	Health Safety & Environment (HSE)	249	
10	Music/ Fashion/ Entertainment/ Catering	1334	50
11	Others	377	
12	Oil & Gas/ Maritime	2019	72
13	Aviation	46	
14	Boat Building	152	
	TOTAL	15.171	

Source: OSAPND, 2014

Table 6 shows the spread of former militants and non-combatants in formal education.

TABLE 6. FORMAL EDUCATION

S/N	INSTITUTION	NO	COUNTRY	DEGREE AWARDED
-----	-------------	----	---------	----------------

1	Coventry University	61	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.Sc,MBA,M.Eng, LLM) BSc(1)
2	Portsmouth University	3	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc, M.Eng)
3	Cranfield University	7	United Kingdom	Postgraduate(M.sc Thermal Power)
4	BPP University	7	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc Management& Finance)
5	Salford University	5	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc in HSE, M.sc Finance)
6	Bradford	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc Sustainable Operations Mgt)
7	University of Liverpool	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.A Intl Relations)
8	University of Manchester	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc Asset Management)
9	University of Reading	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc Asset Development Planning & Research)
10	University of Newcastle	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc Offshore Engineering)
11	University of Swansea	16	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree (M.sc, LL.M, M.A)
12	Anglia Ruskin University	4	United Kingdom	M.sc Intl Business Information System, M.sc Engr
13	Murdoch University	6	Dubai	Postgraduate Degree (MBA.M.A. MHRM)
14	Linton University College	53	Malaysia	Graduate Degree (B.sc,B.A&B,sc (Hons)
15	The City University	1	USA	Postgraduate Degree
16	Limkokwing University of Creative Technology	2	Malaysia	Postgraduate Degree
17	Belarusian State University	3	Belarus	Postgraduate Degree
18	University of Dundee	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree

19	University of Kent	3	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
20	Bedfordshire University	8	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
21	City University	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
22	Kingston University	3	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
23	University of Aberdeen	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
24	Huddersfield University	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
25	Leeds University	7	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
26	Oxford Brooks University	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
27	Leicester University	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
28	University of Derby	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
29	Herriot Watt University	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
30	Kings College	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
31	University of Alstom	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
32	Prifysgol Bangor University	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
33	University of Cardiff	2	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
34	Greenwich University	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
35	University of West of London	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
36	Abertay University	1	United Kingdom	Postgraduate Degree
37	Portland State University	1	USA	Postgraduate Degree
38	World Maritime University	1	Sweden	Postgraduate Degree
39	European University, Lefke	1	Cyprus	Postgraduate Degree
40	University of Westminster	1	UK	Postgraduate Degree

Source: OSAPND, 2014

As of November 2014, official reports indicated that a total of 18,706 ex-combatants and youths in the reintegration programme had acquired formal and informal education, out of which 15,392 have graduated. Another 11,294 individuals are being enlisted for the reintegration programme.

6.3 CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING THE TERMINATION OF THE PROGRAMME

It is noteworthy that the government has indicated that the reintegration programme will conclude at the end of 2015. In this regard, the Special Adviser to the President remarked that:

It will be in the best interest of Nigeria for government to terminate the presidential amnesty programme by 2015. If it is not closed by 2015, it will lose its taste. This is because it will become an alternative government in the Niger Delta (*Vanguard News*, 2013).

This has, however, been a source of controversy as many actors in the region are calling for the extension of the programme for further years until criminality is totally eradicated and substantial development achieved in the region. According to Mr Denis, the Personal Assistant to the Commissioner on Culture and Ijaw National Affairs, ‘...amnesty is a good one, the amnesty programme is basically to bring out those who are in the creeks, bring them out and teach them the importance of peace...’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014), but while this is on, there are other groups of people who also suffer the same fate as those who have borne arms. ‘So if you say amnesty programme is only for those who pick up arms, yes one day those who did not carry arms could say if it is arms language they understand, let’s too pick up arms to be heard’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). He concluded that ‘to me the amnesty programme should be sustained (i.e. extended) to accommodate different levels of people in the region, for as long as oil is still being exploited in the region, the programme should be sustained’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). Similarly, Mr Felix Tuodolo, the Commissioner for Culture and Ijaw National Affairs, and former president Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), said that amnesty has helped to improve the capacity of the people in the region in terms of vocational training and educational acquisition. According to him:

The problem our people have is lack of capacity building which further aggravates the unemployment in the region, amnesty has done quite well in this regards, for this, it should be allowed to stay a little longer to train more people in the region (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

In a much more critical manner, Patrick Nagbaton, a travel journalist and an activist, is of the view that amnesty still has a lot of work to do. Speaking rhetorically, he asked: ‘why do people keep arms?’ The answer, according to him, is because people feel insecure in the area where they live. They keep arms to protect themselves from criminals in their neighbourhood, from fellow gangs, and from the government security agency. He argues that:

If people still keep arms within the community which of course may promote criminality, then talking about the closure of amnesty may not be relevant now. Amnesty should be made to stay to further increase confidence building among the people, to teach them skill so that they can fend for themselves, and should be reorganised to accommodate more people for training if the government is sincere of ridding the region of criminality (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Contrary to the above views, General Cecil said that the amnesty programme as a process must definitely have a ‘draw down phase’. He said people must look at amnesty as a process and not necessarily as a programme that will be permanent. According to him:

DDR is a process, when you begin to look at it as a programme, you begin to look for the beginning and end date. It a process, hence, elastic, that there is time frame that it is going to end at a particular time is just a starting point. Are you telling me that people that are doing five years programme, or people admitted into the university in 2014, because the programme ends by 2015, they will be abandoned? No, in any DDR, there is what we call “draw down phase”, that is what these people are doing right now. They say 2015 is the end of the programme, which means anybody that is enrolled before the deadline is still cover by the programme. The draw down phase is about not getting involved, not admitting any more people into the programme. And don’t forget that there have been a strategic plan; the people who are in charge know what they are doing, they know the exact number of people they want to cater for. Initially they were 27 thousand, later 30 thousand; right now we have about 33 thousand people, so it is a progressive training programme, it is not a thing that can be achieved at a set time (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

In the same vein, the Head of Reintegration argues that the fact that the programme is winding down by 2015 does not mean all those who are currently enrolled in the programme will not be catered for. He said that the government will put a plan in place to ensure everybody registered in the programme will effectively complete their training. In his words:

The 2015 deadline was set because it was an intervention programme, like any DDR it must have a close date, it was for the 20,192. From this number we can comfortably say about 16,000 of them are already in school, some will be graduating this year (2014) that is the one that is expected to end the first phase in 2015. Of course there is a second phase in 2011, there is a third phase in 212, all that will be rounding off as a five year development plan. But if the office decides that we are shutting down, it is a government agency, it will take its assets and liabilities. For instance, on training and scholarship, there is Nigerian Department for Employment (NDE) we can transfer our expertise to them so that they can run what we have kicked started. But to say whether any one of them will be left in hanging, no! For those in school if this programme is winding up, I believe my boss will secure an approval to wire (send) their money. Government will ensure that since they have started school they must complete it (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

While one may agree with the above submission from the Head of Reintegration, there may also be a genuine fear that the programme may not be effectively managed if it is transferred to another ministry considering the kind of expertise the current management team has brought to bear on the programme. Again, the fear of transferring assets and liabilities may not be that easy when one considers the sheer effort and number of years it has taken the present management team to achieve this level of implementation. Moreover, previous experiments, when government intervention failed woefully because of the inadequacies of the managers, are instructive. Given this fact, government cannot expect not to be asked: why disband the winning team if success is being delivered, especially in the case of a critically important amnesty programme? Moreover, considering that the programme has been effectively managed in improving the capacity of the people in the Niger Delta, subsuming this programme under an existing government in the form of the Ministry of Labour and Productivity may be counterproductive. It is this genuine fear that

is being expressed by some stake holders, that informed the resolve of the study that amnesty programme should be given periodic extension until such a time when substantial development and capacity building would have been achieved in the region.

6.4 AN EVALUATION OF THE REINTEGRATION COMPONENT OF AMNESTY: SUCCESSES

The successes of the programme can be measured through tangible and non-tangible means. The tangible means are assessable through the quantum of people that were able to go through training in both formal and vocational education. This is also visible in the peaceful coexistence in the region, and the increase in oil production which surged from 700 barrels per day in 2009 to 2.4 million in 2013 (see Humphrey-Abasie 2014, Obi 2014, Agbibo 2014). The non-tangible successes are noticeable in the way and the manner that ex-militants conduct their affairs within civil society, and the manner in which they are ready to abide by the stated rules of society and to express their grievances when necessary, going through constitutional means.

6.4.1 THE IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF ARMED HOSTILITIES

Prior to the declaration of amnesty, the crisis in the region was at breaking point, and oil production was at an all time low. The programme has restored hope to the region, and the spate of kidnapping, bunkering, and violent disruption of the region has decreased. The oil flow stations are peaceful and have since commenced operations. By the same token, this has encouraged some development in the region. Driving through Port Harcourt to Balyensa, the researcher noticed, through personal observations, road upgrades and construction in the State. This has become possible because of the cessation of hostilities. Construction of roads is possible

only when the fear of being kidnapped or killed has been assuaged. Also, given that part of the mandate of the amnesty programme is to partner with other agencies of the state, the fact that NDDC, State and other groups are able to begin infrastructural development, is because of the atmosphere of peace that has been established. Additionally, the economic activities of the region have gradually returned. People now freely move from one place to the other even in the night without fear of being kidnapped. The driver of the vehicle used by the researcher confirmed this, and when the researcher interacted with most of those interviewed they confirmed that normal activities have resumed in the State. The fact that the researcher was able to spend close to three weeks moving from Port Harcourt to Balyelsa without any hitch is also an indication and a testament that a level of normality has been restored in the region.

In terms of the increases in oil production, the Technical Assistant to the Special Adviser to the President and Head of Reintegration, Mr Pepple, informed the researcher that the ‘entire money budgeted for amnesty amounts to one and a half day loss to bunkering and oil facilities vandalism before amnesty’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). If government can prevent this kind of wastage, and judiciously channel funds that otherwise would not be available to the training and development in the region, then it can be argued that it is one of the strengths of the programme.

The following segment shows a graphic picture of the flow stations, federal government intervention project, and road construction in Port Harcourt and Bayelsa state.



A flow station in Umuechen village in Port Harcourt, November 2014



A federal government intervention project comprising of a primary school in Port Harcourt built in 2009.



A federal government intervention project in Port Harcourt (a health centre).



A road project under construction in Port Harcourt en route to Balyelsa State, November 2014.



A federal government road project on a major road linking parts of Balyelsa State, November 2014.



A road project inside Balyesa en route to Balyesa State Ministry of Art and Culture, November 2014.



A road project at the entrance of Bayelsa State, November 2014.

It is instructive to note that most of these projects become possible due to the atmosphere of peace occasioned by the amnesty programme, and the cessation of hostilities.

6.4.2 QUALITY TRAINING PACKAGE

One of the positive impacts of the reintegration process of the DDR is the quality of training being designed for the ex-combatants and the non-combatants alike. It should be noted that many reintegration exercises, especially in post-conflict African states, offer low quality training programmes (in both formal and informal education) to ex-combatants, usually characterised by a paucity of funds, which actually limits the opportunities of ex-combatants after reintegration into civilian life. For example, many Sierra Leonean ex-combatants ended up as small-scale

artisans, entrepreneurs and farmers because of the kind of training they were offered during the reintegration process. For this reason, many of them are currently unemployed in Freetown and vulnerable to violent activities (Harch, 2014, p.3). This was also one of the challenges of reintegration in Liberia (Alusala, 2011, p.66). For instance Alusala reports that nearly a decade after Liberia's programme of disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) ended, thousands of ex-combatants still roam the streets without any meaningful sources of livelihood. According to him, 'only 75 000 out of the 103 019 DDRR caseload had been placed in donor-funded training programmes to learn skills such as plumbing, carpentry and masonry, by the end of 2007 when donor fatigue set in' (p.66). In the Nigerian case, the reintegration process offers high-quality educational and vocational skills training programmes that have good capacity to empower the demobilised combatants after their training programmes.

It is useful to state that the universities in which demobilised combatants and youths of the Niger Delta are offered places comprise some of the most high-profile and academically excellent universities in the world. These include Coventry University, Portsmouth University, Salford University, Bradford University, University of Liverpool, University of Reading, University of Newcastle, University of Dundee, University of Kent, Leeds University, Kings College and others in the United Kingdom. Others include high-profile universities in Malaysia, Dubai and Sweden (*Strides*, Nov. 2014) (See table 6 above for the spread of former militants and non-militants in formal education).

It could be argued that graduates of many of these universities have far better prospects for jobs and economic independence than reintegrated combatants in other parts of Africa. This also

applies to some of the vocational and skills training institutes available to the beneficiaries of the reintegration programme. Some of the training centres include Schlumberger Technologies based in France (for drilling engineering), Lufthansa Aviation Academy based in Germany (for advanced pilot training), CAE Oxford Aviation Academy in the United Kingdom (for advanced pilot training), Schneider Electric in France (for electrical engineering), Institute of French Petroleum in France (for petroleum industry technicians), Airstar Flight School in Italy (for pilot training), Com Air in South Africa (pilot training), Flight Simulation Company in Netherlands (for pilot training), Afrika Union Aviation Academy in South Africa (pilot training), Adcorp Technical Training in South Africa (mining industry technicians), Furntech Furniture in South Africa (for furniture making), and a host of others in different parts of the world. (See table 4 above for the spread in specialised training).

In my personal communications with the managers of the reintegration programme, they affirmed that the reason for sending ex-militants to globally renowned institutions was to prepare them for job markets in the future. Considering the competitive nature of the market and the preferences of employers of labour, it was decided to settle for the best. Mr Lawrence Pepple confirmed to the researcher that, ‘I decided to send most of the ex-militants interested in welding to Philippines, because I noticed that most of the oil companies recruit their welders from that country’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). Moreover, the paucity of space, availability of quality training institutes and exposure of the ex-militants to a new life in a new environment also informed the reason why they were sent abroad. According to Mr Pepple:

DDR, ones you finished with the disarmament and demobilisation, what remains is a game of figure. The people who did not subscribe to this, when they see the number of people being turned out for training will be attracted to it. Because if we have finished demobilisation and you keep telling them, we are still waiting for Yaba College of

Technology to finish their renovation, the institute of oceanography that can take only 50, or you making excuses, saying the welding school in Warri say they can take only twenty five people, you will have a new phase of problem. That was the reason why we consider taking them abroad to prevent undue delay that can cause apprehension. And when you take a man from the back water of Niger Delta and toss him in Green Street in environment where things work in Malaysia, there is a tendency that he thinks straight and act well. It happens with prominent people like me and you, when we are in UK we straighten up, but as we get back to Lagos we revert (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Hence, the quality training given to the ex-militants prepares the ex-militants for the true transformation the programme intends to achieve.

6.4.3 IMPROVED LOCAL CAPACITY

The amnesty programme also helps in improving local capacity. The training and deployment of the former militants and non- militants requires the support and expertise of local consultants, academics, and peace experts. In most cases, what the officials of the programme do is to encourage, and even to initiate, collaboration between foreign partners and local consultants. With this in place the local expertise cum capacity is enhanced and could be useful for future peacebuilding engagement anywhere in the world. As Mr Pepple avers:

While we send the former militant abroad, capacity building locally is improving, because we encourage Nigerian locally to engage or get into partnership with foreign partners, because we do not award contract to a foreigner, we award contract to a Nigerian who enters into an MoU with a foreign partner. Now when we are building capacity of the ex-militants, we are equally building the capacity of a local consultant who can approach the North Eastern part of Nigeria and be bold to say I did it in the Niger Delta, so I can do it here. To that extent, we have built international capacity that can approach Liberia and say this thing you are doing aren't doing it well, that I can train this ex war lords to become a pilot, and the man learnt it from participating in Nigeria DDR. To that extent we recorded huge success (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

6.4.4 BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

One of the major concerns of scholars and practitioners in the early days of the reintegration process was the seeming difficulty in transforming the behaviour of the demobilised combatants into a civilian and decent one. Truly, this represented a major challenge at the different camps and training centres. However, a personal observation of the activities of the ex-combatants at their different training centres shows an improvement in their attitude to life. As stated in a recent study conducted by myself and Onapajo (2015) in South Africa, access to all their centres revealed a surprising change in their attitudes. In an encounter with some of the ex-militants in Port Harcourt, there was a noticeable improvement in their attitude. One of the ex-militants confirmed to the researcher that he now uses the peace training he acquired from the Martin Luther Institute in South Africa to spread the gospel of peace in the region. According to him, ‘I now have a nongovernmental organisation whose responsibility is to entrench a culture of peace in the region’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

The Head of Reintegration cited two cases as examples. One is that of an ex-militant who contested for the position of House of Assembly in Rivers State but lost to his opponent. The same person, although convinced that he was short changed, did not resort to violence. Instead, he decided to take the case to court for redress. The second example is that of an ex-militant who just got married. He paid all the necessary fees he is required to pay, and subjected himself to the conditions of marriage given by his in-laws, thus integrating himself within the prevailing societal norms.

Also, going through the reports of one of the evaluators of the programme (who consulted on behalf of Ancec Global Services for the Office of the Special Adviser on Amnesty and Niger

Delta Affairs in 2013) it was reported that he asked their leader at a centre if there were frequent cases of fights among the former militants. The ex-militant simply responded (originally in the broken English popular in Nigeria) that, ‘It is only someone who does not understand the reason why he is here that will engage in unnecessary fight...for me, I am not here for that’ (Personal Communication, Feb. 2015). The evaluator further shared his encounter with a group of the ex-militants in one of the universities where they are undergoing diploma and degree programmes. One of them told the evaluator that, ‘there is no type of gun that I have not used before...just name it. But I am now a changed person. I thank the government for this opportunity.’ According to him, ‘this truly shows a good improvement in the behaviour of the ex-militants’ (Personal Communication, Feb. 2015).

According to the evaluator, the above behavioural change can also be observed in the statements derived from the instructors at their training centres. For example, an official of the International Students Office in one of the universities in South Africa stated that the students under the reintegration programme were ‘very eager to learn the new environment. They want to be successful’ (Personal Communication, Feb. 2015). Also, this behavioural change, according to the evaluator, reflected in their academic reports to which he had access. The reports on their individual conduct and progress are quite impressive. This also includes their individual academic performance.

The evaluator further noted that there have, however, been some cases of misbehaviour amongst the trainees which was evident during the period in which they were evaluated. The evaluator attributed this to “cultural shock” and “sudden environmental change” which foreign students

usually experience outside of their countries (Personal Communication, Feb. 2015). Still on the topic of behavioural change, the submission of ex-General Nature, a former militant is instructive. He was explaining that for peace to be sustained in the region, former President Jonathan, being a native of the Niger Delta area, should be allowed to rule for a second term. He warned that:

If by any means Goodluck Jonathan does not go back, I don't believe he will not go back because we are working hard for him, but if he does not, I won't guarantee security in the Niger Delta. I can guarantee security for myself that I will be peaceful because I have learnt to live a peaceful life, even over three hundred young men who have inculcated that principle from me will also be peaceful, but for the rest sir, those that have not been transformed I can't guarantee it, it going to be risky (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

One can easily deduce from the above statement that former militants who have been able to go through transformation training at home and abroad are most unlikely to go back to their violent past. This is against the backdrop that their capacity has been improved, and that the educational and vocational training, coupled with the exposure given to these people has inculcated into them that there are several other ways of expressing grievances without necessarily turning to violence. Moreover, somebody who now has a job and other responsibilities like a family, and businesses he/she manages is believed to be less receptive to violence. For example Ex-General Nature now has a peace advocacy group where he trains people in the principles of non-violence. He also was one of the aspirants that took part in the House of Assembly elections in Port Harcourt during the last poll in 2014, and he is from Ogoni Land.

6.4.5 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Although, it can be concluded that not enough achievement has materialized in this area, it nonetheless should be acknowledged that the high quality training acquired by the beneficiaries

of the reintegration programme is seemingly producing good outcomes with specific regard to economic opportunities. Some examples include the following: fifty of the trainees that went for welding and fabrication training at Proclad Group in Dubai were automatically offered employment by the institution upon completion of their training; forty-nine trainees who underwent training at ScuolaEdile Genovese in Italy also gained employment at different shipping companies locally and internationally after their training; fourteen trainees who trained as mechatronics and welding engineers were employed at Samsung Electronics (*Strides*, 2014); and Schneider Electric in France employed fifteen trainees in power management after their training at the company (*Vanguard News*, June 2014). In addition to the direct employment offers, the government is also making available some funds for the establishment of small scale business enterprises for four thousand beneficiaries of the reintegration programme (*Strides*, 2014). In summary, it was reported in December 2014 that ‘a total of 2,072 ex-agitators have since secured gainful employment or have been empowered to set-up their own businesses’ (*Vanguard News*, Dec. 2014).

6.5 SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME

Notwithstanding the successes recorded by the amnesty programme, it is observed that the programme still faces challenges. The focus now will be on stating those challenges and how some of them have been managed. Without doubt, the reintegration programme has a number of challenges which explain the huge number of criticisms of the programme. The following are some of the challenges observed while studying the reintegration process.

6.5.1 CORRUPTION

The problem of corruption is increasingly permeating the reintegration programme of the DDR. This manifests in several ways. By its design, the Amnesty Office contracts out to private agencies the training of the ex-combatants at training centres, including universities and vocational skills training centres, both locally and internationally. In bidding for the contract, which is usually competitive, accounts suggest that bribes are usually offered to the government officials in order to secure the huge budget contracts (Humphrey-Abazie 2014, p.5). As a result, inexperienced people who lack the capacity to train the ex-combatants sometimes secure the contracts. In an interview with an evaluator of the programme, he also gave examples that some trainees were flown abroad ostensibly for training, only to be stationed in hotel accommodation where they received the monthly stipend for a long period of time without being trained. According to him, 'this partly explains the reason for setting up of independent monitoring and evaluation teams to sanitise the system' (Personal Communication, Feb. 2015).

Similarly, Chief Eze Christian Akani, Dr Uyi Ojo, and Nagbaton decried the rate of corrupt practices in the programme. They averred that the successes recorded are not commensurate with the amount of money that the government has invested in the programme. Chief Akani said 'the money invested in the amnesty programme is more than the budget of some countries in the Sub Saharan states, yet the output is not equal to what is invested in the programme' (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). Also, Dr Uyi Ojo lamented that 'the amnesty office operates their budget in secrecy; the only explanation for this could be that they have something to hide' (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). The corrupt practices extended to the militant leaders, according to Mr Patrick Nagbaton, who said 'these so called former war lords will collect money

and pay their foot soldiers paltry amounts, that is the reason some of them cannot come to their region because the angry boys will kill them' (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

In similar vein, some news reports suggest that the money budgeted for the reintegration programme is being embezzled by government officials and contractors. For example, a news report claimed that eighty percent of the N 50 billion budgeted for the take-off of the reintegration process was pocketed by consultants and contractors (Guardian, Nov. 2010).

Another dimension of corruption in the programme manifests in the process of selection of trainees for programmes, especially in respect of attractive skills and degree programmes at high-profile universities and training centres abroad. The evaluator interviewed (by the researcher) affirmed this pattern of corruption but suggested that there was no concrete information of the illegalities around this process. However, it was alleged by a number of the trainees he assessed that individuals were usually selected for programmes on the basis of favouritism. He said this allegation could be confirmed by the number of the trainees at the high-profile schools and centres that were clearly seen to be ineligible for the training programmes because they were neither ex-combatants nor youths of the Niger Delta.

This equally corroborates the position of the Chairman of the Technical Committee for the Niger Delta, Mr Ledum Mittee, who argued that part of the challenge of the programme is identifying who the real militants are. According to him, a lot of people who are not real militants presented themselves for the programme because of the money, and many of the real militants were left out (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). Two reasons accounted for this problematic: one,

favouritism; two, the real militants in some cases will never come out, ‘because these people are the chorister in the church on Sunday, and militant during operation’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). For these people to be accommodated, according to him, ‘there has to be a whole lot of confidence building, and overall inclusion of the youth in the region, so that this set of people can be naturally absorbed by the programme’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

6.5.2 ARMS PROLIFERATION IN THE REGION

One of the challenges that has the potential to affect the entire achievement of the amnesty programme and to promote criminal activities in the region is the presence of arms. Some of the respondents believed that due to the scepticism some militants felt about the programme during the initial stage, they refused to subscribe to the programme. Also those that subscribed did not fully turn in their entire set of weaponry because of their fear of the unknown. This is further complicated by the movement of Boko Haram¹⁰⁶ insurgent group who are fleeing from North Eastern Nigeria to the South because of the attempts by the government to restore order, constitutionalism and respect for human rights in that part of the country. According to Patrick Nagbaton:

The growing unemployment and pollution (i.e. oil pollution) rate in the region has to be addressed. There is crisis in the Northern Nigeria, a lot of people are moving into southern part and most of these people are those that are also involved in crimes, proliferation of arms and all those things are threatening the sustainability of peace in the region. Not until these issues are addressed, the peace in the region is still dicey (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

6.5.3 THE PROBLEM OF INCLUSION AND PLACEMENT

¹⁰⁶Boko Haram is a terrorist group in the North Eastern part of Nigeria who claim to want to establish Islamic law in the North. They believe that anything “Western” is forbidden, including education.

The issue of inclusion and placement of ex-combatants for training programmes marks another major challenge to the reintegration programme. Official reports indicate that 30,000 (*Strides of Presidential Amnesty*, 2015) combatants were demobilised in different phases after the declaration of amnesty in 2009. Of this number, only 18,706 demobilised combatants have been included for reintegration programmes (out of which 15,392 have graduated while 3,314 are still undergoing training). This suggests that only 62 per cent of the ex-combatants have been considered for reintegration (*Strides of Presidential Amnesty*, 2015), while the government has indicated that the programme will officially end in 2015. The fact that a considerable number of the ex-combatants are yet to be enlisted for programmes is a negative indicator for the peace efforts in the Niger Delta. On the other hand, the Head of Reintegration informed the researcher that the winding down of the programme by the end of 2015 will not in any way affect the training of those who are already included in the programme (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). While this could be true, the fact that those who originally were responsible for the training and posting of the former militants may no longer be directly responsible for their training may affect the smooth running of the programme.

Related to this problem is the continuous agitation for inclusion into the reintegration programme by ex-militants who initially refused to be demobilised in 2009. Following the government's refusal to consider this group for reintegration, because they did not sign up during the 60-day period (between 6 August and 4 October 2009) earmarked for the acceptance of amnesty for the militants, the group has gone to court to challenge the decision of the government on the matter.

The fact that there is still an emergent group of aggrieved ex-combatants¹⁰⁷ in the region represents another danger to the sustainability of peace in the Niger Delta.

Given the above, it is not surprising that oil theft has steadily been on the rise in the Niger Delta after the amnesty policy was implemented. According to reports, an estimate of 100,000 barrels of oil is stolen in Nigeria on a daily basis. Furthermore, it is estimated that Nigeria loses about 8 billion USD a year to oil theft (*Havoscope*, Sep. 2013). The existence of neglected members of the society including youths, women and children who were not fully taken into account in the process of reintegration contributes significantly to increasing oil theft in the region. Research conducted by Ben Naanen and Patrick Tolani on oil theft in the area revealed that: ‘Women play pivotal roles in the transportation and marketing of the refined products, as well as cooking and provision of sexual services for the predominantly male operators’ (*Havoscope*, Sep. 2013) in the illegal oil fields. In addition, children, mostly orphans and aged between 10 and 13, also work in the illegal bunkering sites and run errands at the camps, while absentee owners of illegal refining sites always appoint managers to run the operations’ (*The Nation News*, Oct. 2014 cited in Onapajo and Moshood, 2015).

6.5.4 POLITICISATION OF THE PROGRAMME

Politicisation of the government’s management of the reintegration policy is clearly another problem bedeviling the programme. This manifests in the way the programme is perceived by other ethnic groups, regions and political actors in the country given the huge budget allocation the programme attracts, namely, as a project used to specially empower youths of the Niger

¹⁰⁷The word ex-combatant is used interchangeably with ex-militant because when the researcher interacted with the former militants, he realised that they preferred to be called ex-combatant or ex-general. Moreover, ‘ex-combatant’ was regarded by former militants as a term which rescued them from stigmatisation.

Delta and as a conduit to enrich elites of the area from the national oil wealth while neglecting other ethnic groups and regions of the country. Thus, there have been increasing demands for the extension of empowerment programmes to other parts of the country. It is for this reason that some elites in Northern Nigeria have been calling for the introduction of another DDR programme for the Boko Haram insurgents in the North-Eastern region (Onapajo and Abubakar, 2015, p.116). General Cecil, one of the personnel who demobilised the ex-combatants also confirmed this when he said the ‘...Northerners are currently seeing the amnesty programme as a settlement for the Niger Delta people, forgetting that it was their brother, the late President Yar’Adua was the one who initiated the programme...’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Also, in this regard, elements of the federal government under the former President Goodluck Jonathan seized the opportunity to use the multi-million Naira projects around the reintegration programme to secure patronage and political support from leaders of the ex-combatants. For example, the ex-militants’ leaders were used to threaten the opposition and garner support for the president in his bid for re-election in the 2015 general elections (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). These individuals ostensibly re-armed the youths to orchestrate attacks against the opposition (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). This partly explains the source of the violence that surfaced in some states of the Niger Delta especially in Rivers State during the 2015 electoral period. In fact, one of the militant leaders confirmed to the researcher that ‘...should the majority of ethnic groups gang up against Jonathan’s re-election bid, that gun will decide if Nigeria will still continue to exist as a single entity...’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014)’.

It is important to note that the electoral period almost succeeded in turning the amnesty programme into a political affair. The presidential amnesty was becoming a political party event, a situation that was capable of negating both the significance, and the gains of the programme.

6.5.5 POST-TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A general challenge facing DDR programmes in post-conflict states is the availability of job opportunities for reformed combatants. This is a major challenge to peace-building efforts in the states. Watson has noted that the economic systems of post-conflict states are often in disarray, afflicted by the breakdown of economic markets and the development of non-monetary economies, combined with minimal levels of public and private investment and low levels of government revenues. In such a situation, job opportunities are 'rare' (Watson, 2010, p.8). In research conducted among Liberia's ex-combatants, the ex-combatants confessed that they were ready to fight again because of unemployment and lack of sustainable income (Hill et al 2008, p.3).

The Nigerian case is not an exception in respect of job scarcity in the post – training period. Worse still, Nigeria is a country where there is a worrisomely high rate of unemployment. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's unemployment rate increased by 7.5 percent in June, 2015. The reports say that a total of 17.7 million people between the ages of 15 and 65 were either unemployed or under employed within the first quarter of 2015 (NBS June, 2015 report). Thus, securing jobs for the former combatants represents a major challenge despite the fact that a few of them have already been employed. Some of the problems border on the issue of stigmatisation from the community. Indeed, the fear of securing suitable jobs after the

training programmes featured prominently in a series of discussions with the ex-combatants according to the evaluator interviewed by the researcher. He noted that a group of trainees at their graduation in Cape Town, South Africa, appealed to the government at their graduation in 2013 that, ‘now that we have completed our training in various fields, we passionately appeal to you to grant us the enabling environment to be able to practicalise the skills acquired’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). In similar vein, the Head of Reintegration laments that ‘...I have had the capacity and capability to train them [the ex-militants], but do not have the capacity to give them jobs. Every DDR promises to give skills, but did not promise to expand the economy to absorb the trained ex-agitators...’ (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

It is also noted from findings that most of the ex-militants want places in the oil and gas industry while unmindful of the fact that oil and gas sectors are structured like a pyramid - as you go higher the more the capacity to employ people reduces (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). Every one of the ex-militants wants to work in the sector because of the immense monetary benefits associated with the industry. Pepple said:

If a suggestion is made to them that agriculture will pay, building construction will pay, the beneficiary of this programme, most of them are megalomaniac in nature, and for a man who was once referred to as a general, to give him the opportunity for a menial job, low paying job, he will tell you he cannot do because people has addressed him in the past as a general. So after war time, or during peace, it is very difficult to ask a man who people have known for his notoriety to come and work in what fits his qualification or status. Here, the problem of a bloated ego is a challenge (Personal Communication, Nov.2014).

One factor related to the challenge above is what is referred to as ‘group mentality syndrome’.

As noted by the Head of Reintegration,

‘...even where there is a job, the ex-militants have recorded what we called “group mentality” on their heads, hence, they often ask a question on how they can now begin to look for jobs from people who have looked upon them as a top person.... To come down

and find jobs where they grew up and tormented people becomes an issue. Because these people have been used to a life of getting whatever they needed by force and in groups, the large percentage of them still have to keep re-orientating their minds... how to put themselves under civil authority, to obeying rules, to adjusting to work ethics, resuming everyday by 8 o'clock... So a substantial number of them are still battling to attune to the reality of going to an office, so all these discipline, character are the challenges to the programme..' (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014)

Despite the high rate of unemployment in the country, it is believed that the quality of training received will give the ex-militants opportunities where jobs are available.

6.5.6 ENTITLEMENT SYNDROME

Another challenge is the "entitlement syndrome". Quite a number of the ex-militants, and the Niger Delta youth believe that the oil belongs to them; hence they should have absolute rights over it. According to Mr Lawrence Pepple 'Their hands seem to be perpetually under, for people who have borne arms, they have expectations from everybody for owing them, everybody owes them something but they do not owe anybody anything....' (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

This has serious ramifications as the former militants we need to appreciate the fact that oil is a common wealth of Nigeria, and as such will be regulated collectively. The clamour for inclusion and to have a voice within this comity of nations is a natural phenomenon which the Niger Delta people will always as right to, and which no government should deprive them of such right.

6.5.7 PROCUREMENT CARRYING CAPACITY ON EMPLOYMENT LIMITED FOR DDR

Other challenges associated with the DDR relate to rules and procedures. The DDR programme does not follow the laws of employment in the country. Procurement laws are alien to the DDR programme. What this implies is that when five thousand or ten thousand people are trained by DDR, providing jobs for them is not instantaneous. This is against the backdrop that the carrying capacity of an institution to provide jobs under a minister or executive is limited. To expand the chances available to accommodate those trained under the DDR will require an amendment from the Federal Executive Council. Pepple lamented:

And if you need to go to the Federal Executive Council for approval, it reduces the number of speed you will cover if you have the opportunity to do this thing faster and clearer. So the administrative bottlenecks associated with most government ministries reduce the chance of having to accommodate a substantial number of people for employment (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Thus, special procedures should be put in place to accommodate the peculiarity of a DDR programme in order to achieve the objectives behind its formation.

6.5.8 UNMET EXPECTATIONS

The programme also suffers from what the Lawrence Pepple called unmet expectations (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). This happens where there is high hope of realising personal dreams and desires at the commencement of the programme for the ex-militants. The hope of securing better jobs, having a better life and so on may not be easily achievable. This has a tendency to lower the morale of the management team, thereby affecting their performance output.

Despite all these challenges, it can be argued that the amnesty committee is doing everything to turn the challenges into successes. With regard to how those in charge of the programme intend to tackle the issue of employment for the ex-combatants and non-combatants alike, the

researcher was informed that entrepreneurial training has been introduced as part of a mitigating tool. This is expected to inculcate the skill of developing a business proposal in programme participants so that former militants and the youth are able to independently provide jobs for themselves.

Furthermore, the names of those who have completed their training or education is placed on the website of the organisation that is the amnesty office. This, according to the Head of Reintegration, is to pave the way for intentional job placements for the ex-militants. Additionally, government is also encouraged to build local capacity to accommodate the very large number of youths who require employment. He says:

...We are redirecting most of our training now to turn them to become entrepreneurs. For example, if I trained a man to be a welder and he cannot find a job in the oil and gas sector, I am converting him to a welder, making rot iron in Port Harcourt. Some of the people who are already trained, I am retraining them on a two/three weeks basis to become entrepreneur, teaching them basic book keeping, basic scheme, how to grow, how to write a business plan and all that..., turning them around to become self sufficient and self employed. That is one area deployed to solve the problem. Second area I am attempting is to make sure the people I am training, if I can't find them job in Nigeria, I will throw them into the job market abroad through the IT world. We upload their qualifications. By this, we are pushing them away while we are battling to create capacity in the country to be able to provide jobs for some of them (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Despite some of the challenges recorded by the programme, it can reasonably be asserted that the programme has been able to increase the capacity of people in the region, and that the peaceful environment has encouraged and empowered developmental projects. One important lesson from this is that the amnesty programme has the capacity to transform conflict more broadly if effectively and efficiently managed. This was extensively discussed in the literature review of the present study where the researcher showcases instances and ways amnesty has been used to

achieve and entrench peace in warring countries across the globe. The amnesty programme in Nigeria is just a recent endeavour to espouse the effectiveness of amnesty, and to demonstrate how the home-grown amnesty programme was utilized to engender peace and development in the Niger Delta region.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter records, reflects on and analyses the meaning of the amnesty programme from the perception of those interviewed environmental and human rights activists, ex-militants and amnesty officials. The chapter discusses the reintegration component of the programme and provides details about some of the successes it thus far has achieved. To provide a balanced account, the chapter also looks at some of the challenges facing the programme, the efforts made so far to address the challenges and whether or not the efforts are adequate. Arguably, the programme has achieved considerable success in entrenching peace and improving the capacity of the youth in the region. It thus is worth noting that that there have been calls that the programme should be extended to consolidate its gains (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). The administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, which came into power on May 29, 2015, is expected to consolidate and further strengthen the amnesty programme. Given that the government promised to provide employment opportunities across the country, it is envisaged that this will also help to provide job opportunities for a very large number of unemployed youths in the Delta region, and support the drive for infrastructural development in the region.

The next chapter – the conclusion of this dissertation – I provide a summary of the arguments and findings in the study make recommendations and conclude by identifying areas for further study beyond the scope of this dissertation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION TO THE DISSERTATION

This study explored amnesty as a mechanism for conflict resolution, using the Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria as a case study. Its main objectives included underscoring what the amnesty programme meant within the context of Niger Delta conflict. Considering the lengthy and seemingly intransigent nature of the conflict in the Delta region, the study also examined to what extent the amnesty programme has been able to resolve the conflict. Given that there have been several attempts at resolving the conflict in the region, the study equally interrogated several challenges faced in the implementation of the amnesty programme and how such challenges were managed. Amnesty as a concept is not new to peacebuilding efforts in the world. Hence, the study expatiated on how amnesty, as a conflict transformation mechanism, could be useful more broadly. It is, however, important to note that the underlying reason for introducing amnesty programme is to bring about immediate peace to the region, to instill confidence in the various parties to the conflict, and to prepare the ground for the realization of human and structural development in the region. The study argues that thus far, the amnesty programme has achieved the objectives which it was set to achieve. Moreover, the study provides substantive evidence to support its case.

For the purpose of a concluding chapter, the objectives of the study are reintroduced to give a brief explanation of how they have been answered during the course of the thesis. They are as follows:

7.1 THE MEANING OF AMNESTY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE NIGER DELTA REGION

The study has aptly explained the meaning of the amnesty programme within the context of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. Starting with the broader meaning which conceptualises amnesty as developing from the root word “amnesia” which means to forget or go into oblivion. The technical meaning implies that a sin or crime that has been committed by an individual or groups is said to be pardoned by the state, and perpetrators are deemed not to have committed the crime in the first place. The study explicates various forms of amnesty from minimal amnesty where those who are the policy makers, and are responsible for the crime or crimes committed are later brought to justice during the post conflict period. Examples of Chile and Argentina were cited where military heads of state were made to face the wrath of the law even when they have initially enjoyed the amnesty (see Arriaza and Gibson, 1998, p.830).

Mutatis mutandis, the Amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region is somewhat similar to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission where the state provided the opportunity for individuals to confess their sins, and even went as far as compensating those who had been wronged.

The amnesty programme in Nigeria required that the militants must fully and unconditionally renounce violence; this renunciation, according to the head of reintegration, will qualify the former militant for the kind of pardon which the state extends. This pardon includes replacing weapons with skills and transforming ex-militants into peace ambassadors through the kind of training and opportunity to which they are exposed (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). As

indicated in the study, the process occurs in phases: first, the militant must disarm, and be demobilised. Militants later are arranged into clusters for training in principles of non- violence. This training occurs in conjunction with the monthly stipend given to the militants. The last and most crucial phase, as shown in the study, is the reintegration phase. With regard to this phase, the study noted that ex-militants and youth from impacted communities are sent for training which could be either formal education or vocational training. The essence of this training is to transform the former militants, and other youth in the region, to enhance their capacity, and to make them employment worthy and able to fend for themselves. The kind of training given to the former militants actively encourages them to become law abiding citizens, and this is aptly reflected in the behavioural changes noticed in ex-militants by researchers, and the way and manner a good number of them go about their civic activities.

At this juncture, it is important to note that scholars and activists differ in the way they perceive the amnesty programme within the context of Niger Delta conflict. Some scholars and environmental activists, as noted in the study, perceive amnesty as immediate ‘cash for arms deal’. Some opine that the amnesty programme was an instrument deployed by the state to enable its unhindered access to oil production, and not a policy driven by the altruism of the government. The study also identified that some groups of ex-militants perceive the amnesty programme as an experiment. This identification is made against the backdrop in which the former vice president and later, president was from the region, so the conception of amnesty here is viewed in terms of his solidarity with his kinsman.

By and large, the study avers that rather than considering the amnesty programme within the context of Niger Delta conflict as effecting cash for arms, a settlement for political friends and associates, or an attempt to foster continuous access to oil flow, the programme is more usefully conceived as a home-grown peacebuilding mechanism, employed to achieve an immediate cessation to hostility. It was adopted to encourage concessions or/and a win-win situation among the conflicting parties, to build trust and confidence in the sustainability of peace in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. As indicated in the study, opinion differs on the conception of amnesty programme, not least because several intervention efforts have been implemented by successive government but failed to achieve desired results. It was this post-independence sequence of unfulfilled hopes that increased scepticism and dissention which informed differences of opinions about the programme.

7.2 AMNESTY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE NIGER DELTA

This study demonstrates that the amnesty programme has been able to impact positively on peace in the region. In so doing, the study contradicts the array of scepticisms which narrowly defined the amnesty programme as a measure employed to buy off the militant leaders, and as an approach adopted to enhance government's unhindered access to oil exploration in the region. The study uses empirical processes to show that the amnesty programme, besides the immediate cessation of hostility in the region, has been able to transform a number of people who previously took up arms against the state. These people now cautiously and peacefully navigate their role within the society. The programme successfully disarmed 30,000 former militants, out of which over 16,000 militants have been made to go through several skill acquisitions, ranging from formal and informal education and vocational skills training. The quality of training given

to the ex-militants and the youth in the region, and the process of reintegration when compared to other countries in Africa where similar programmes were deployed such as South Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone and others, demonstrably prepared the people for the job market at home and abroad. From observation of the programme, it is deemed unlikely that products of high quality training processes will want to revert to violent lives.

It is argued by the study that when an individual is given amnesty, and is not condemned to the guilt of the past, and also, when the state takes it upon itself to add value to the person through capacity building that the person in effect becomes a new born. He/she wants to sustain the present status, because he or she has become a transformed person. This, according to the study, is what it means to be transformed. Here, the study is informed by an inference from Galtung (2000) that real transformation takes place when an individual is now capable of taking vital decisions peacefully, able to fend for him/herself and live a wholesome life after going through a process of redemption that the amnesty programme provided.

Through the kind of skills they have acquired, the ex-militants and other youth in the region are better positioned to seek their means of sustenance in a peaceful manner. Whilst unemployment is being taken care of, the former militants, the youth, and the stake holders in the region will now continue to agitate for the development of the region through peaceful means. As some of the ex-militants confided in the researcher, the kind of training they received and the exposure given to them by the programme, have inculcated in them the method of peacefully demanding their rights from the state, and peacefully conducting their affairs with fellow human beings. (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

Moreover, apart from the behavioural changes, capacity building, and employment openings the programme's achievement in providing peace and security for the people of the region is another strength of the programme. The improvement in infrastructural development in the region (albeit slow paced) and the increase in oil production capacity is due to the terrain of peace, given that little or nothing can be achieved in these areas if peace does not exist in the region.

7.3 THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME

While findings in the study show that the programme has some noticeable achievements, the study also identified some of the challenges that are bedeviling the programme. They include corruption, problems of inclusion and placement, politicisation of the programme, post-training opportunities, a group mentality/ entitlement syndrome, and the problem of unmet expectations. Since corruption is one of the problems hindering Nigeria's development, the amnesty programme cannot be treated as an incorruptible exception to the rule. Corruption problematics include, for instance, selection for training. Here, the study identified some anomalies in the selection, where due to favouritism, some real militants are left out and non-combatant relatives are brought in. In the area of contracting the training to consultants, some people who are not qualified were given contracts due to bribes and other dubious practices (Personal communication with an evaluator, Nov. 2014). Thus, the level of successes recorded is said (by authoritative respondents and reputable sources quoted in the study) not to be commensurate with the money budgeted for the programme. Without doubt, this adversely affected the number of people that would otherwise have benefitted from the programme.

Another challenge identified in this study is that of inclusion and placement, given that a number of former militants and youths who initially were sceptical about the programme now want to be included, having seen the successes and benefits provided by the type of training given to the beneficiaries. This, according to findings in the study, has caused some of the aggrieved militants and youths to sue the amnesty office, claiming that they were excluded from the programme. This partly explains the reason for the recent gradual increase in oil bunkering and occasional skirmishes in the region.

It was also discovered during the course of the study that job placement is another major challenge to the programme. This is because many of the ex-militants who have graduated from various skills and educational programme are still struggling to find meaningful employment. In addition, the research further showed that the programme is faced with several criticisms as many people expected that the amnesty office can do better than they are in fact doing at the moment. This increase in expectations is understandable against the backdrop that previous intervention efforts in the region were not this effective. When most people in the region are seeing the quality of training and opportunity that the amnesty programme afforded the participants, a lot of people want to be part of it and to benefit from the programme. Careful observation of the programme shows that the initial purpose for introducing the programme was mainly to address the immediate challenge of militancy; however, realities on the ground made the sole admittance of militants into the scheme impracticable, hence, the reason why some other youths and marginalized groups in the region were subsequently included.

In spite of these challenges, the amnesty office claims it has been addressing the vexed issues as efforts have been made to redirect the focus of training by including entrepreneurial skills to afford the participants necessary skills to provide jobs for themselves. Moreover, the amnesty office is also assisting the participants in job searches at the international level to mitigate the effect of joblessness in Nigeria. Also, the recent pronouncement by the new president which was geared to improving and addressing developmental challenges in the region in his inaugural speech is a move in the right direction.

In addition to the above, President Buhari upon his ascension to power has displayed his strong commitment to restructuring the amnesty programme. In this regard, he appointed a new head for the amnesty programme on July 28, 2015. Also, he ordered a clean-up of decades of oil spill in the Ogoni area of the Niger Delta on August 6, 2016. This measure seems convincing as a means to address some of the lingering problems in the region. With this gesture, it is expected that the amnesty programme will be further strengthened to impact positively on the developmental deficit in the region.

7.4 AMNESTY AS A MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION MORE

BROADLY

The study presented instances in the literature where amnesty was used to transform the hydra-headed conflicts in various countries. Citing cases in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Chile, Argentina, Libya, South Africa, and Nigeria, the study presented the ways in which amnesty was used under the transitional justice system to salvage war-torn countries emerging from military rule and / or rebellions against deep rooted injustices. Amnesty in most of these countries was used as a

negotiated settlement to persuade the warring parties to drop their weapons, and pave the way for post conflict nation building.

South Africa's case was particularly useful for this study. Amnesty in this context was used to galvanise post-apartheid nation building. The essence of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was to reconcile the society, to compensate where necessary the cheated, and to transform the nation from one which was hitherto divided, discriminatory, and predatory to a nation where equality and justice prevail. Gibson (2002, p.550) puts it succinctly when he argues 'that the ANC traded amnesty for peace; the leaders of the apartheid government accepted freedom from persecution for human right abuses in exchange for power sharing' (Gibson 2002, p.550).

Specifically, the study impacted on extant knowledge by identifying various ways in which amnesty as a peacebuilding mechanism has been used to resolve conflict over time. It showcases instances where, despite the amnesty granted, some of the war offenders were later brought to justice. This suggests that amnesty could be tactically deployed: in some instances, full amnesty can be granted, and in others, limited or minimal amnesty could be applied. The reason for this is that in order to guard against impunity, the context and situation should undergird how amnesty is deployed.

Having said that, the study, through various cases cited in the literature, shows the indispensability of amnesty in restoring hope and confidence in war torn or rebel infested areas. It also noted that good management of amnesty, funding, and quality training are key to the

success of the programme. Amnesty programmes in previous cases were managed and funded by the UN office and other multinational organisations. Here, the study noted that where a country has the capacity and can evolve a home-grown DDR process and take full responsibility, the possibility of its success is high. This is against the backdrop that issues such as financial fatigue and post training opportunities will be lessened, as the country responsible will be committed to implementing a successful programme. The study noted that what it means to become transformed is informed by improved capacity and by how former militants subsequently are attuned to civilian life styles.

7.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study does not claim to provide a comprehensive answer to the problems of the Niger Delta. Niger Delta issues have many facets which arise from the governance¹⁰⁸ challenges in Nigeria. Therefore, the study focused on the amnesty programme. It looked at the reintegration aspect of the amnesty programme, and how the programme has been effectively used to resolve insurrections and militancy issues in the region for deeper development to take place. Also the theoretical and methodological framework helped to limit the scope of the study. In spite of the fact that amnesty is aimed at transforming the hydra-headed problem of the region and providing lasting peace, the initial problems of resource control, resource mobilisation, self-actualisation, the developmental deficit which caused the militancy challenge in the first instance broadly go beyond the scope that amnesty is set to achieve.

¹⁰⁸The problem of state failure being experienced by Nigeria has caused observers to describe Nigeria as a failing state, fragile state, sleeping giant, and usages of several other qualifications. This is against the backdrop that a state in the classical conception of Max Webber as having the monopoly to the legitimate use of force has been strongly contested in recent times. The reasons according to many analysts boil down to the problem of leadership, corruption, weak institutions among others which help to exacerbate ethnic schism, insurrections and the like (see Ikejiaku 2013; Adeyemi2012; Suberu 1999; E.U. report 2009).

At the initial stage of disarmament and demobilisation, there were significant efforts to mop up light arms and small weapons. However, according to the study's field work findings many weapons are still in the arsenals of former militant groups which did not fully subscribe to amnesty due to scepticism about the programme in the initial stages. This, coupled with the internal migration from the North East to safe havens in the South, has further increased the threat of arms proliferation in the region. Further studies may want to interrogate the effect of arms proliferation on criminal activities in the region.

Also, further study may tend to focus essentially on the role and significance of a failing state in the development of militant activities in the country. One of the lessons learnt from the study is that effective management and diligent intervention of government to societal challenge like that of militancy in the Niger Delta, has proven to be efficient in transforming a conflict ridden region to an abode of peace. Hence the issue of governance is very important to strengthening various government institutions, and providing benefits and development to all strata of society in the state.

Finally, amnesty in itself has some ramifications in entrenching violent culture in the state. This has been the argument of people who criticised the amnesty programme for rewarding former criminals. The researcher was informed during the study by a traditional ruler, academic and activist, Eze Christian Akani, that former militants now use their status as ex-militants as meal tickets. Moreover, they often threaten their neighbours by simply saying 'I am an ex-militant ooh' (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014). Although extant literature reveals the different

types of amnesty that have been employed under the transitional justice system, ranging from minimal to full amnesty, it will be useful if further research examines the implication(s) of amnesty in a multi-ethnic society. Recommending when to declare amnesty is imperative, as is recommending the type of amnesty most likely to prevent a culture of impunity. Additionally, future research may instructively examine the politics behind the criticisms of the amnesty programme. Also, scholarly assessment of the long-term success of the programme after a number of years may be necessary, not least as a way of rejuvenating peace discourse in the region.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) For the current peace in the Niger Delta region to be sustainable in the long-term, the root causes of the conflict should be addressed and promptly, too. The question of why did they take up arms in the first place should urgently be addressed. If rebels represent a popular belief that the region has suffered phenomenal neglect, a prompt and peaceful solution should be found. This should culminate in massive infrastructural development of roads, schools, hospitals, bridges, employment and the like. Government should go into partnership with the oil companies and private sector to create jobs.

(b) With the assumption of office by the new president Muhammadu Buhari, the amnesty programme is expected to be boosted further, as stated by the president in his inaugural speech. It is recommended that the new administration should not wind down the programme in December, 2015, given its achievements in rehabilitating ex-combatants in the Niger Delta. Rather, the amnesty programme should be transmuted to assume a new phase and extended beyond 2015;

the agency should be strengthened to spearhead human capital development in the Niger Delta. The body should remain in place, and its activities reviewed after every five years to assess its developmental impact in the region. It is important that the government includes neglected members of the society, specifically women and children and aggrieved youths, in the empowerment programmes.

(c) There should be a synergy among the existing agencies responsible for promoting development in the Niger Delta with the aim to guarantee all round development. These include the ministry of Niger Delta, The Niger Delta Development Commission, and the Presidential Amnesty Office. While the ministry of Niger Delta should oversee the development activities in the region, the Niger Delta Development Commission should assume its primary function of coordinating development activities in the region. The amnesty agency should continue with the training and capacity-building of the youths and the people in the region. This is to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, moreover, the development drive of the local government, the state government, the federal government, the oil multinationals, and the international agencies should be coordinated by, and channeled through the aforementioned bodies.

(d) In addition, addressing corruption is ostensibly a major agenda of the present government, but as yet has experienced very qualified success. It therefore is expected that the government take the issue of corruption in the amnesty programme very seriously, and block the leakages that not only encourage corruption in the programme but also limit the successes of the programme.

(e) With regard to the issue of identifying who the real militants are, as expressed by the Head of the Technical Committee for the Niger Delta, Mr Ledum Mittee and other discerning observers, it is recommended that government should embark on a serious confidence building drive. This has already been kick started by the show of interest in the programme by many who failed to subscribe initially. The programme, as earlier stated, should accommodate all the unemployed youth in the region. The current officials have performed creditably well but the programme could be further strengthened by the inclusion of respected leaders in the region and the country. Ranging from activists, traditional rulers and religious leaders, this will instil confidence in the people; it will give room for more open involvement, and accountability, LedumMittee avers that:

...The militants will naturally bring out all their arms once they have trust in the managers and now that they have been included through open access¹⁰⁹, moreover, the prevailing situation will make it apparent that the weapons would no longer be useful (Personal Communication, Nov. 2014).

(f) Government should embark on a complete arms clean up in the region, and provide a situation where the need to keep weapons will no longer be necessary or lucrative. The security of lives and properties should be ensured.

(g) The amnesty programme is a government intervention programme; its activities should not be shielded from the public. The amnesty office already has a website where some of its activities, programmes and news are relayed. The public want to know how much was allocated, at what

¹⁰⁹ Open access here is the situation where the programme targets all the youth in the region more broadly and is not restricted to ex-militants alone or few numbers of privileged youth from the impacted communities. The programme will incorporate the ex-militants, non-combatants and the women in the region.

time and how it is expended; all these should be put in the public domain for scrutiny. It is hoped that when the public demand for transparency is considered, there will be some level of checks and openness in the administration of the programme, thus warranting more public acceptance.

References

Personal Interviews

I conducted personal interviews with 26 respondents who hold information and have experiences that have a direct bearing on my work. They include: environmental/human rights activists, former militant leaders and former militants, officials of amnesty programme, and one of the evaluators for the programme. For reasons of anonymity the names of these interviewees are not listed here. Some of the environmental activists and human right activists whose names appeared in the text provided informed consent for that. For examination viewing purposes, the full list of interviewees in which there is full disclosure is lodged with the Supervisor of this dissertation and with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Government Publications

Asuni, B. Judith, (2009). Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta, *Council on Foreign Relations Inc.*, United States of America.

Hanson, S., (2007). The Niger Delta's Umbrella Militant Group, *Council on Foreign Relations*, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/12920/> 2-7.

Human Rights Watch, (2002). Niger Delta: No Democratic Dividend, New York: *Human Rights Watch*.

Human Rights Watch, (2005). Rivers and Blood: Guns, Oil and Violence in Nigeria's Oil-Rich Rivers State, New York: *Human Rights Watch*.

Human Rights Watch, (2012). International Justice: Taylor Trial Sets Positive Example- Sierra Leone Special Court Offers Lessons for Prosecuting Highest-level Suspects, July 25th 2012.

NDDC ACT, (2000). Niger Delta Development Commission (Establishment; ETC.) ACT, 2000, pp.1-31.

NBS Report, (2015). National Bureau of Statistics, June, pp.1-30.

Collier, Paul, (2000). The Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their implications for Policy (Washington DC: The World Bank).

RBDAs ACT, (1979). River Basin Development Authorities ACT, pp.1-13.

TCR, (2008). Report of the Technical Committee on Niger Delta, November, pp.1-147.

The Report of Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), (1998) presented to President Nelson Mandela Oct. 29, 1998.

Transparency International, (2015). Nigeria's Corruption Challenge, May 28th 2015.

United States Institute of Peace, (1993). Truth Commission: El Salvador Report

UNDP, (2006). Niger Delta Human Development Report, Abuja: UNDP.

UNDP Nigeria, (2006). Niger Delta Human Development Report, Abuja: UNDP. Zack

United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime Control (UNODC), (2015), Anti-Corruption Climate Change: It Started in Nigeria, *Speech by UNODC Executive Director Costa*.

Books

Acemoglu, Daron and James, A. Robinson (2006). *Economic Origin of Dictatorship and Democracy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Agbu, Osita, (2005). *Oil and Environmental Conflicts in Nigeria Under Democratic Rule, 1999-2003*, (vol. 2, edited by A. Hassan Saliu. Ibadan: University Press).

Alagoa, E.J. (1972), *A History of the Niger Delta, Ibadan: (University Press)*.

Amunwa, B., and M. Minio,(2011). *Counting the Cost: Corporations and Human Rights Abuses in the Niger Delta*, (London: Platform).

Andrea, S. (2002). *Amnesty for Crime in International Law and Practice*, (Hague: Kluwer Law International).

Anifowose Remi, (2005). *Violence and Politics in Nigeria the Tiv and Yoruba experience*, (first academic publisher Apapa, Lagos).

Angell, Alan, (1991). *The Cambridge History of Latin America, Vol. VIII, 1930 to the Present*, (Ed, Leslie Bethell, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press) ISBNBN 978-0-521-26652-9.

Austin, Onuoha, (2005). *From Conflict to Collaboration Building Peace in Nigeria's Oil-Producing Communities* (Adonis & Abbey publishers Ltd. London).

Austin, G. (2015). *African Economic History in Africa, Economic History of Developing Regions* (ahead-of-print): pp.1-16.

- Ayandele, A. Emanuel, (1980). *External Relations with Europeans in the Nineteenth Century: Explorers, Missionaries and Traders*, In Ikime (ed.) *Groundwork of Nigeria History*. (Ibadan: Historical Society of Nigeria and Heinemann Education Books).
- Azar, E. and John W. Burton, (1986). *International Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner and Wheatsheaf).
- Boulding, Kenneth, (1962). *Conflict and Defense*, (New York: Harper and Row).
- Babbie, E. (2008). *The basics of social research* (4th ed). (Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education).
- Bryman, A., and Bell, E. (2003). *Business Research Methods*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford).
- Burke-White B.L. (1987). *The Two Sides to Amnesty*, (Port Harcourt: Sunray Publishers).
- Chaplin, J.P., (1979). *Dictionary of Psychology*, (Dell publishing, Company: Belmont, California).
- Charles, Darwin, (1909). *The Foundation of the Origin of Species: two essays written in 1842 and 1844 by C. Darwin*, (Cambridge University Press).
- Chigara, B. (2002). *Amnesty in International Law: The Legality of under International Law of National Amnesty*, (Harlow: Longman).
- Coleman, James, (1956). *Community Conflict*, (New York: Free Press).
- Coser, Lewis, (1964). *The Functions of Social Conflict*, (New York: Free Press).
- Curle, Adam, (1990). *Tools for Transformation*, (United Kingdom: Hawthorn Press).
- Dahrendorf, Ralf, (1959). *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, (Stanford, Calif. Stanford University Press).
- Morton, Deutsch, (2006). *Cooperation and Competition*, In Deutsch Morton, Peter T. Coleman and Eric C. Marcus (ed.) *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice* (2nd edition). (Jossey-Bass, United States of America).
- Morton, Deutsch, (1973). *The Resolution of conflict*, (Yale University, New Haven).
- Diamond, Louise (1996). *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*. (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press).
- Eghosa E. Osaghae (1998). *The Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence*, (Indiana

- University Press).
- Flick, U. (1998). *An introduction to qualitative research*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).
- Freud, S. (1905). *Three essays on the theory of sexuality*, (SE. 7).pp. 136-243.
- Galtung, Johan (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London, (UK: SAGE Publications).
- Huth, K., Paul, & Todd, L., Allee, (2002). *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Ikein, A. and Briggs-Anigboh, C.(1998). *Oil and Fiscal Federalism: The Political Economy of Resource Allocation in a Developing Country*, (Aldershot: Ashgate).
- Jike, V. (2005). *The Political Sociology of Resource Control in the Niger Delta in Nigeria under Democratic Rule, 1999-2003*, (vol. 2.edited by A. Hassan Saliu. Ibadan: University Press).
- Johnson, D. W., and Johnson, R.T. (1989). *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and Research*, (Edina, Minn.: Interaction).
- Johnson, J.B & Reynolds, H.T. (2012). *Political science research methods* (7th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications).
- Law, Robin, (1991). *The Slave Coast of West Africa 1550-1750. The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Lederach, John Paul, (1995b). *Preparing for Peace*, (New York: Syracuse University Press).
- Maier, Karl, (2000). *This House has fallen: Nigeria in Crisis*, (London and New York: Penguin Books).
- Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels, (1967). *The Communist Manifesto*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex Penguin).
- Miall, Hugh, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, (1999). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, (Great Britain: Polity Press).
- Mitchell, C. R. (1981). *The Structure of International Conflict*, (London, Macmillan).
- McCulloch, G. (2004). *Documentary Research in Education, History and the Social Sciences*. (London and New York: Routledge Falmer).
- Newman, E., R. Paris, and O. Richmond, (2009). *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding*, (eds Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press).

- Neuman, W.L. (2011). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (Boston, M.A: Pearson).
- Omeje, K. (2006). *High Stakes and Stakeholders: Oil Conflict and Security in Nigeria*, (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate).
- Peter, Inupha (1971). *Explanation of Political Violence Some Psychological Theories Versus indignation, politics and society*, (volume 2 in Anifowose Remi (2005) violence and politics in Nigeria the Tiv and Yoruba experience).
- Przeworski, Adam, (2006). *Democracy and the Limits of Self-Government*, (Cambridge University Press) www.cambridge.org
- Przeworski, Adam et al. (2000). *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*, (Cambridge University Press).
- Ramsbotham, O., WoodHouse, T. and Miall, H. (2011). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of deadly Conflict*, (3rd eds Polity Press, USA).
- Rawls, John (2001). *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, (Harvard University Press).
- Rubin, Jeffrey, Dean Pruitt, and Sung Hee Kim (1994). *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement*, (United States: McGraw-Hill Inc).
- Rupesinghe, Kumar,(1994). *Protracted Conflict*, (London: MacMillan).
- Ruth, A. Wallace and Alison Wolf (1999). *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Expanding The Classical Tradition* (5th edition). (Prentice Hall).
- Russett, Bruce (1993). *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, (Princeton,NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Saro-Wiwa, K. (1995). *A Month and a Day: A Detention Dairy*, (London: Penguin Books).
- Sriram, C. Lekha, (2005). *Globalizing Justice for Mass Atrocities: A Revolution in accountability*, (New York: Routledge).
- Stewart, Frances (2010). *Horizontal Inequalities as a Cause of Conflict: A Review of Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) Findings*, (Oxford University).
- Suberu, T. Rotimi (1996). *Ethnic Minority Conflicts and Governance in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited).

Chapters In Books

- Aghalino, S.O. (2010). From NDDC to Amnesty: Change and Continuity in the Development of the Niger Delta Crisis. *Essays in Honour of Professor Abednego Ekoko* (ed.) by Leo E.Otoide, pp. 43-60.
- Ahonsi, A. Babatunde, (2011). Capacity and Governance deficits in the response to the Niger Delta Crisis in *Oil And Insurgency In The Niger Delta: Managing The Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by Obi and Rustard (Zed Books Ltd. London) pp.28-41.
- Aigbokhan, E. Ben, (2007). Reconstruction of Economic Governance in the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria: The case of the Niger Delta Development Commission, IWIM-Institute for World Economics and International Management. *In Reconstructing Economic Governance after conflict in Resource-rich African countries: Learning from country experiences* (edited by Karl Wohlmuth).
- Ayandele, A. Emanuel, (1980). External Relations with Europeans in the Nineteenth Century: Explorers, Missionaries and Traders. *In Ikime (ed.) Groundwork of Nigeria History*. (Ibadan: Historical Society of Nigeria and Heinemann Education Books).
- Bloomfield, D. and Ben Reilly (1998). The Changing Nature of Conflict and Conflict Management, *in Peter Harris and Ben Reilly* (eds.), op. cit.
- Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, 1859.
- Galtung, Johan (1995). Conflict Resolution as Conflict Transformation: The First Law of Thermodynamics Revisited. In Kumar Rupesinghe, (ed.), *Conflict Transformation*, (New York: St. Martin's Press).
- Hadden, T. (2004). Punishment, Amnesty and Truth: Legal and Political Approaches in Adrian G. (ed), *Democracy and Ethnic Conflict: Advancing Peace in Deeply Divided Societies*, (Palgrave: Macmillan).
- Ikelegbe, A. (2011). Popular and Criminal Violence as Instrument of Struggle in Niger Delta Region, in *Oil And Insurgency In The Niger Delta: Managing The Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by Obi and Rustard (Zed Books Ltd. London) pp.125-135.
- Karbo, T. (2008). Peace Building in Africa, *In Peace and Conflict in Africa*, edited by David J. Francis (London and New York: Zed Books).
- Kriesberg, Louis (1989). Transforming Conflicts in the Middle East and Central Europe in Louis Kriesberg, Terrell Northrup and Stuart Thorson, (ed.) *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press).

- Lederach, John Paul (1995a). Conflict Transformation in Protracted Internal Conflicts: The Case for a Comprehensive Network, In Kumar Rupesinghe, (ed.) *Conflict Transformation*. (New York: St. Martin's Press).
- Lederach, John Paul (2000a). Conflict Transformation: A Working Definition, In Carolyn Schrock-Shenk, (ed.), *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*. (Akron: Mennonite Conciliation Service).
- Miller, Gerald R. and Simons, Herbert W. (1974). Perspectives on communication in social conflict, (ed.) *Englewood cliffs*, (New Jersey Prentice-Hall Inc).
- Obi, C., and Rustard, S.A. (2011). Petro-violence in The Niger Delta-the Complex Politics of an Insurgency, in *Oil And Insurgency In The Niger Delta: Managing The Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by Obi and Rustard (Zed Books Ltd. London) pp.1-14.
- Obi, C., and S. Rustad (2011). Amnesty and Post-Amnesty Peace, is the Window of Opportunity closing for the Niger Delta, *In Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by C. Obi and R. Rustad, (London: Zed Books) pp.200-210.
- Olukoshi, Adebayo, and Osita Agbu (1995). The Deepening Crisis of Nigerian Federation and the Future of the Nation-State, *In Challenges to the Nation State in Africa*, edited by Adebayo Olukoshi and Lisa Laakso, (Uppsala: Nordiska Africa institutet).
- Oluwatoyin, O. Oluwaniyi (2011a). Women's Protest in The Niger Delta Region. *In Oil and Insurgency in The Niger Delta: Managing The Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by Obi and Rustard (Zed Books Ltd. London) pp.150-156.
- Okorobia, A. Mark; (2009) History in E.J.Alagoa, T.N Tamuno and J.P Clark (Eds), *The Izon of the Niger Delta*, (Port-Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications).
- Ovwasa, Lucky (1999). Oil and the Minority Question, *In Issues in Contemporary Political Economy of Nigeria*, edited by Hassan A. Saliu Ilorin, (Haytee Books) pp.81-98.
- Sanya, Osha, (2006). Slow Death in the Niger Delta. *Africa Review of Books*, (Retrieved 6 January 2007 from [www.codesria.org/Links/Publication.Saturday Independent. 2006.11 December](http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publication.Saturday%20Independent.2006.11December)).
- Robin Horton (1997) Eastern Ijo Origins, Expansions and Migrations in N.C Ejituwu (Ed), *The Multi Disciplinary Approach to African History*, Essays in Honour of Ebiegberri Joe Alagoa, (Port –Harcourt: U.P Press).
- Soremekun, K. (2011). Nigeria's Oil Diplomacy and The Management of the Niger Delta Crisis. In *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by Obi and Rustard (Zed Books Ltd. London).

- Snape, D. and Spenser, L. (2003). The foundations of qualitative research, In J. Ritche and J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice*, (London: Sage Publications).
- Ukeje, C. (2011). Changing The Paradigm of Pacification: Oil and Militarisation in Nigeria's Delta Region.in*Oil And Insurgency In The Niger Delta: Managing The Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by Obi and Rustard (Zed Books Ltd. London) pp.83-98.
- Ukiwo, U. (2011). The Nigerian State, Oil and the Niger Delta Crisis in Obi, C. and Aas Rustad, S. (eds), *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-violence*, (London: Zed Books) pp.17–27.
- Ukiwo, U., (2011). The Nigerian State, Oil and the Niger Delta Crisis, In *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics of Petro-Violence*, edited by Obi and Rustard (Zed Books Ltd. London) pp.17-27.
- Vromen,Aradne, (2010). Debating Methods: Rediscovering Qualitative Approachs. In David Marsh & Gerry Stoker (Eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Third Edition, (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan).

Journal Articles

- Adejumobi, S. (2005). Ethnic Militia Groups and the National Question in Nigeria, *Soc. Sci Res. Council, GSC Quarterly*, New York, USA, pp.1-8.
- Adeyeri, Olusegun (2012). Nigerian State and the Management of Oil minority conflict in th Niger Delta: A retrospective view, *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 6 (5) pp.97-103.
- Agbiboa, E. Daniel (2014). Transformational Strategy or Gilded Pacification? Four years on The Niger Delta Armed Conflict and the DDR process of Nigerian Amnesty Programme, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Dol: 10117710021909614530082, pp 1-25.
- Ariye, E.C. (2013).The Ijo (Ijaw) People of Delta State: Their Early History and Aspects of Social and Cultural Practices, *Historical Research Letter www.iiste.org*. Vol.8, pp.25-30.
- Ajiboye, O., Jawando, J.O., and Adisa, W.B. (2009). Poverty, Oil Exploration and Niger Delta Crisis: The Response of the Youth, *African Journal of Political Science and International Rel.* Vol.3 (5) pp.224-232.
- Akinwale, A.A. (2010). Amnesty and Human Capital Development Agenda for the Niger Delta, *Journal of African Studies and Development*, vol. 2 (8) pp.201–207.
- Ako, T. Rhuks, (2012). Re-defining The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Nigeria's

- Post-Amnesty Oil Industry, *Africa Journal of Economic and Management Studies*. Vol.3 (1) pp.9-22.
- Arriazo N. Roht and Gibso Lauren (1998). The Developing Jurisprudence on Amnesty, *Human Right Quarterly*. Vol. 20 (4) pp.843-885.
- Asuni, B. Judith, (2009). Blood Oil in The Niger Delta, *United States Institutes for Peace* (special report). www.usip.org.
- Apartheid South Africa Road to Democracy 1989-1994, www.matricnotes.com/roads-to-democracy.html
- Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management*, pp.2-20.
- Bowen, G. A. (2008). Naturalistic inquiry and the saturation concept: a research note. *Qualitative Research*, 8 (1), pp.137-152.
- Collins, C. (2006). Grounding Global Justice: International Networks and Domestic Human Rights Accountability in Chile and El Salvador, *Journal of Latin America Studies*. Vol. 38 (4) pp.711-738.
- Courson, E. (2009). Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND): Political Marginalization, Repression and Petro-Insurgency in the Niger Delta, *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala*, Vol. 47: pp.5-26.
- Collins, Cath, (2006). Grounding Global Justice: International Network and Domestic Human Rights Accountability in Chile and El Salvador, *Journal of Latin America Studies*, Vol. 38, p.711-738.
- Cyril, Obi, (2014). Oil and the Post-Amnesty Programme (PAP): What Prospects for sustainable development and peace in the Niger Delta, *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 41(140) pp.249-263.
- Davidheiser, M., and K. Nyiayaana (2011). Demobilization or Remobilization? The Amnesty Program and the Search for Peace in the Niger Delta, *African Security* vol.4 (1) pp.44-64.
- David, Kinsella, and Rousseau, David (2006). Democracy and Conflict Resolution, *Bercovitch: Conflict Resolution*, (Handbook) pp.477-493.
- Dixon, J., William (1993). Democracy and the Management of International Conflict, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol.37(1) pp.42-68.
- Eke, J. Surulola (2014). No Pay, no peace: Political settlement and post-amnesty violence in

the Niger Delta, Nigeria, *Journal of African and Asian Studies*. Dol: 10117710021909614541085, pp.1-15.

Edward, Andrew (1983). Class in itself and Class against Capital: Karl Marx and His Classifiers, *Canadian journal of political Science/ Revue canadienne de science politique*. Vol.16 (13) pp.577-584.

Etekpe, A. (2009). The Niger Delta Development Commission and Peace-Building in the Niger Delta, *National Development Review*. Vol.1 pp.24-42.

Galtung, Johan, (2000). Transformation by peaceful means: The Transcend Method, *United Nation Disaster Management Programme (DMTP)*.

Filho, C., Paulo (2012). Truth Commission in Brazil: Individualising Amnesty Revealing the Truth, *The Yale Review of international Studies*. pp.1-12.

Frynas, G. Jędrzej, (2001). Corporate and State Response to Anti-Oil Protest in the Niger Delta, *African Affairs*. Vol.100, pp.27-54.

Gabriel, Amakiiivi (1999). OMPADEC and Educational Development in Nigeria: 1992-1997, *IJERD* Vol.1 (1) pp.92-100.

Gibsons, L. James (2002). Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation: Judging the Fairness of Amnesty in South Africa, *America Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 46, (3) pp.540-556.

Goodhand, Jonathan and Hume, David (1999). From war to Complex Political Emergencies: Understanding Conflict and Peace-Building in the New World Disorder, *Third world Quarterly*. Vol. 20 (1), pp.13-26.

Gurney J. Neff and Tierney J. Kathleen (1982). Relative deprivation and Social Movement: A Critical look at Twenty Years of The Theory and Research, *The Sociology Quarterly*. Vol.23 (1) pp.33-47.

Gurr T. Robert (1973). Revolution and Social Change Nexus: Some old Theories and New Hypothesis, *Journal of Comparative Politics*. Vol.5 (3) pp.359-392.

Gray, John (2006). The Political Theory of Modus Vivendi, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. Vol. 9, pp.155-169.

Hamber, B. (2009). Living with the Legacy of Impunity: Lessons for South Africa about Truth, Justice and Crime in Brazil. *UNISA*.

Henrard, K. (1999). The Viability of National Amnesties in View of the Increasing Recognition of Individual Criminal Responsibility at International Law, *Journal of International Law*. Vol. 7 pp.595-602.

Idemudia, U. (2009). The Changing Phases of the Niger Delta Conflict: Implications for

- Conflict Escalation and the Return to Peace, *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development* .Vol.9 (3) pp.307-331.
- Ibeanu, O., (2006). Civil Society and Conflict Management in the Niger Delta, Lagos: *CLEEN Foundation*.
- Jannie, Botes, (2003). Conflict Transformation: A Debate over Semantics or a Crucial Shift in Theory and Practice of Peace and Conflict Studies, *International Journal of Peace Studies*. Vol. 8 (2) pp.1-27.
- Joab-Peterside S, Porter, D. and Watts, M. (2012). *Rethinking conflict in the Niger Delta: Understanding conflict dynamics, justice and security*. Economies of Violence Working Paper No. 26: Niger Delta. Washington DC: *The United States Institute of Peace*; Berkeley, CA: University of California, Institute of International Studies.
- Isumonah, V. (2003).The Obasanjo Administration and the Management of Niger Delta Conflicts in Nigeria, *African Journal Peace Conflict Studies*. Vol. 1(2) pp.210-225.
- Ite, E. Uwem (2007). Changing Times and Strategies: Shells Contribution to Sustainable Community Development in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, *Journal of Sustainable Development*. Vol. 15 (1) pp.1-14.
- Jack-Ahkigde, O. P. (2013). The State and Development Intervention in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 3(10), pp.255-263.
- Lake, A. David, & Rothchild, Donald, (1999). Containing Fear: The origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict, *International Security*. Vol. 21(2) pp.41-75.
- Méndez, E. Juan (1997). Accountability for Past Abuses, *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol.19, (2).
- Miall, H. (2004). Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task. *Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management*, pp.2-18.
- Naqvi Yasmin (2003). Amnesty for War Crimes: Defining the Limits of International Recognition, *RICR*. Vol.85 (851) pp.583-625.
- Nwozor, A. (2010). A Delta of a Minefield: Oil Resource Conflict and the Politics of Amnesty in Nigeria, *in Conflict Trends*,(1) pp.28–35.
- Notter, Jamie and Louise Diamond (1996).Building Peace and Transforming Conflict: Multi-Track Diplomacy in Practice, *The Institute for Multi-Track diplomacy*. Occasional Paper Number 7.
- Naraghi, Sanam and Conaway, P. Camille (undated). Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration in Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace:A Toolkit for Advocacy and action, *Security Issues*. pp.1-10.

- Obi, C. (2010). Structuring Transnational Spaces of Identity, Rights and Power in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, *Globalizations*. Vol. 6 (4) pp.467–481.
- Obi, Cyril, (2009). Nigeria's Niger Delta: Understanding The Complex Drivers of Violent Oil-Related Conflict, *Journal of Africa Development*. Vol. XXXIV, (2) pp.103-128.
- Obi, Cyril, (2014). Oil and The Post Amnesty Programme (PAP): What Prospects for Sustainable Development and Peace in The Niger Delta?, *Review of Africa Political Economy*. Vol. 41 (140) pp.249-263.
- Ogege, O. Samuel (2011). Amnesty Initiative and Dilemma of Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, *Journal of Sustainable Development*. Vol.4 (4)pp.249-258.
- Ojakorotu, V. (2008). Internationalisation of Oil Violence in the Niger Delta Nigeria. Alternatives, *Turkish Journal of International Relations*. Vol.7 (1) pp.92-118.
- Okonta, Ike (2006). Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human Rights and Oil, *Africa Review of Books*. (Retrieved 6 January 2007 from www.codesria.org/links/publication).
- Olsen, D. Tricia, Payne, A. Leigh and Reiter, G. Andrew (2010). Transitional Justice in the World, 1970-2007: Insight from a new dataset, *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 47(6) pp.803-809.
- Olubayo, Oluduro and Olubisi, Oluduro (2012). Nigeria in Search of Sustainable Peace in The Niger Delta Through The Amnesty Programme, *Journal of Sustainable Development*. Vol. 5 (7) pp.48-61.
- Olukunle, Ojeleye (2011). The Application of Demobilisation, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) of the sub-National level in the Niger Delta, *Civil wars*. Vol. 13(2) pp.141-156.
- Oluwaniyi, O. (2011). Post-Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta: Challenges and Prospects, *Conflict Trends*. Vol. 4: pp.46–54.
- Oluwaniyi, O.O. (2010). Oil and Youth Militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Vol. 45(3) pp.309–325.
- Omeje, K. (2005). Oil Conflict in Nigeria: Contending Issues and Perspectives of the Local Niger Delta People, *New Political Economy*. Vol. 10, (3).
- Omotal, J. Shola (2007). From the OMPADE to the NDDC: An assessment of State Response to Environmental insecurity in the Niger Delta, *Africa Today*. Vol. 54(1) pp. 33-89.
- Omotola, J. Shola (2009). Dissent and State Excesses in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, *Studies in*

Conflict Terrorism. Vol. 32 (2).

- Onuoha, F.C. (2011). Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Human Security in Nigeria, *Conflict Trends*. Accord Paper 1:5056. http://www.accord.org.za/images/downloads/ct/ct_2011_1.pdf (accessed 3 April 2014).
- Onuoha, G., (2009). Energy and security in the Gulf of Guinea: A Nigerian perspective, *South African Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 16(2) pp.245–264.
- Orentlicher, F. Diane (1991). Settling Accounts: The Duty to Prosecute Human Rights Violations of a Prior Regime, *Yale Law Journal*. Vol.100 (8).
- Osaghae, E. Eghosa (1998). Managing Multiple Minority Problems in a Divided Society: Nigerian Experience, *Journal of Modern African Studies*. Vol. 36(1) pp.1-20.
- Osha, S., (2006). Birth of the Ogoni protest movement, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Vol. 41(2) pp.13–38.
- Osha, S., (2006). Birth of the Ogoni Protest Movement, *Journal of Asian and African Studies* Vol. 41(2) pp.13–38.
- Osumah, Oarhe, (2013). No War, No Peace: The example of Peacebuilding in The Post-Amnesty Niger Delta of Nigeria, *African Security Review*. Vol. 22 (4) pp.244-263.
- Oyefusi, A. (2008). Oil and the probability of rebel participation among youths in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 45(4) pp.539–555.
- Rinkel, Serge, (2015). Piracy and Maritime Crime in the Gulf of Guinea: Experience-based Analysis of Situation and Policy Recommendation, *Kieler Analysen zur Sicherheitspolitik* Nr. 41 August 2015.
- Reimann, Cordula, (2004). Assessing the State-of-the-Art in Conflict Transformation. <http://www.bergof.handbook.net>
- Reiter, G. Andrew (2011). Amnesty for Peace? Analysing the impact of Amnesties in Civil Wars, *The Minerva Centre for Human Rights*. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- Sebba, L. (1997). The Niger Delta: Managing Resources and Conflicts. Ibadan: *Development Policy Centre*.
- Schey, P.A. (1977). The Pardoning Power and the Value of Amnesty, *Journal of Criminology*. Vol. 9, pp.325-333.
- Sharkdam, Wapmuk (2012). The Amnesty Programme and the Challenges of Ending Youth Militancy in Nigeria Niger Delta, *Insight on Africa*. Vol. 4(2) pp.153-168.

- Sikkink, K., and Carrie B. Walling (2007). The Impact of Human Rights Trials, In *Latin America Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 44, No. 4, pp.427-445.
- Sujian, Guo, (1999). Democratic Transition: A Critical Review, *Issues and Studies*. Vol. 35(4), pp.133-148.
- Snyder, J., and Vinjamuri, L. (2003). Trials and Errors: Principle and Pragmatism. In Strategies of International, Justice *International Security*. Vol. 28, (3) pp.5-44.
- Seawright, J. & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options, *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 61 (2), pp.294-308.
- Sikkink, Kathrin, and Walling, B. Carrie (2007). The Impact of Human Right Trials in Latin America. *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 44(4) pp.427-445.
- Tee, K. Keng, Roper, J. and Kearins, K. (2007). Corporate Social Reporting in Malaysia: A Qualitative Approach, *Int. Journal of Economics and Management*. Vol.1 (3) pp.453-475
- Tieman William, (2004). "Cause" in History and The Amnesty at Athens: An Introduction, *Transaction of America Philological Association*. Vol. 132 (1/2) pp.63-69.
- Traversa, Fedrico (2014). Income and the Stability of Democracy: Pushing Beyond Borders of Logic to explain a strong correlation? *Constitutional Political Economy*, November 2014. Doi: 10. 1007/s10602-014-9175-x
- Therborn, Goran (1977). The rule of capital and the rise of democracy: Capital and suffrage (cover title). *New Left Review*, Vol. 1 (103) (The advent of bourgeois democracy): pp.3-41.
- Ukiwo, U., (2007). From "Pirates" to "Militant": A Historical perspective on Anti-State and Anti-Oil Company Mobilisation among the Ijaw of Warri, Western Niger Delta, *African Affairs*, Oxford University Press, pp.587-610.
- Uyigüe, Etiosa & Agho, Mathew, (2007). Coping with Climate Change and Environmental Degradation in The Niger Delta of Southern Nigeria, *Community Research and Development Centre Nigeria*.
- Watts, J. Michael, (2008). The Anatomy of a Petro-Insurgency in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, *Institute of International Studies*, University of California, Berkeley, USA.
- Williams, A.B., (1999). 'Sierra Leone: The Political Economy of Civil War, 1991- 98', *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 20 (1).
- Vanessa, Ushie (2013). Nigeria's Amnesty Programme as a peacebuilding infrastructure: A Silver Bullet? *Journal of peacebuilding & Development*. Vol. 8 (1) pp.30-44.
- W., Andy Knight (2008). Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration and Post Conflict

Peacebuilding in Africa: An overview, *African Security*. Vol.1 (1) pp.24-52.

Watts, M. and Ibaba, I.S. (2011). Turbulent Oil: Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta, in *African Security*. Vol 4(1) pp.1–19.

Unpublished Dissertations

Francis, Suzanne, (2008). *The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature: Political Elite Formation and Change 1994-2004*, A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2009

Onapajo, Hakeem, (2014). *The State and Electoral Fraud in Nigeria, 2007-2011: Case Studies from Ekiti State in South-West*, A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Oluwatoyin, O. Oluwaniyi (2011b) *Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) And The Post-Conflict Peace building In Nigeria's Niger Delta: Challenges And Prospects*, Post-Doctoral Unpublished work.

Conference Papers, Conference Proceedings, and Symposiums

Courson, Elias (2009). Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND): Political Marginalisation, Repression and Petro-Insurgency in The Niger Delta. *The Nordic Africa Institute: Discussion Paper 47*. UPPSALA.

Humphrey-Abazie, I., Margaret (2014). Engaging the Nigeria Niger Delta Ex-Agitators: The Impacts of the Presidential Amnesty Programme to Economic Development, *at a workshop organised by Amnesty office on Responsible Polycentric Inequality, Citizenship and Middle Classes* 14 EADI General Conference 23-26 June 2014, Bonn www.gc.2014.org

Howard, Philip, and Dixon, H., Thomas (1999). Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Chiapas, Mexico, Occasional Paper Project on *Environmental, Population and Security*. America Association for the Advancement of Science and the University of Toronto.

Ibeanu, O., (2006). Civil Society and Conflict Management in the Niger Delta. Lagos: *CLEEN Foundation*.

Mustapha, A. R., (2003). 'Ethnic Minority Groups in Nigeria: Current Situation and Major

Problems', Paper prepared Commission on Human Rights, *Sub- Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Minorities, Ninth Session*, May 12-16, Mimeograph.

Odoemene, Akachi, (2011). Historicizing the Niger Delta Palaver up to the 'Amnesty' Deal: Documenting a Conflicted Past, Building a Sustainable Future. In *Confronting the Challenges of Development, Environmental Management and Peace Building in the Niger Delta: Beyond the Amnesty*. TTI AND CPED Workshop series Nigeria.

Soremekun, K., (2009) Understanding the concept and scope of peace, prepared paper for *Msc class*.

Stewart, Frances, (2009). Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict, *Bradford Development Lecture* (Accessed 14 September, 2015), http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTWDR2011/Resources/6406082-1283882418764/WDR_Backgrou

News Papers Articles (Named Authors)

Adejumobi, S. (2009). Niger Delta: What Amnesty. *Guardian*, 26 July, 2009 pg. 2.

1

Amaize, E. (2012). Gunmen Kidnap Two Indians, Delta Speaker Brother. *Vanguard*, p.29.

Anayo Onukwugha, Kola Eke-Ogiugo and Osa Okhomina(2014). Amnesty Programme: The impact so far, *LEADERSHIP NEWS PAPER*, October, 2014. R O

Barrett, L. (2008). Niger Delta: The True Story. *New Africa*, January, p.12-20

Bivbere, G. and Ejoh, E. (2011). Illegal bunkering: NIMASA issues arrest warning to ship owners, others. *Vanguard*, 13 December.

Bromwich, Brenda, (2008). Environment degradation and conflict in Darfur: Implication for Peace and Recovery. *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, issue 39.

Castañeda, Vanessa, (2014). Amnesty Law, final report, *The News*, 19th December, 2014.

Chukwudi, Akasike (2015). militants won't return to creeks over cancelled contracts- Boyloaf. *Punch*, June 28.

Levinus, Nwabughioqu (2015). Pipe surveillance: Buhari to revoke Jonathan's contract to OPC, ex-militants. *Vanguard*, May 16 2005.

Nwajah, Osita, (1999). Obasanjo Condemned For The Situation In Nigeria, *The News*, 6th December, pp.1-10.

Odiegwu, M. (2013). "Bayelsa: 10 Bodies of Slain Policemen Recovered", *Punch*, 10 April, 2013, p.14.

Okonta, I., (2005). 'Nigeria: Chronicle of Dying State', *Current History*, May.

Onwukwe, D. (2013). "4 years of amnesty in Niger Delta: The pains and the gains" *Sun News* 24 July, 2013 p.27.

Ruhfus, J. (2010). Crude Amnesty. *Aljazeera Doc*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=99rtyn8.

Thale, Geoff, and Beltran Adriana (2013). 20 Years after the Salvadorians Truth Commission. *Advocacy for Human Rights in Americas*, 15th May, 2013.

Willems, Rens, (2012). When do Inequalities Cause Conflict? Focus on Citizenship and Property Rights. *The Broker*, December 2012.

News Papers Articles (Unnamed Authors)

'FG enlists 30,000 ex-militants in Amnesty Programme' *Agency Report*, December, 2012, <http://thenationonlineeng.net/new/fg-enlists-30000-ex-militants-in-amnesty-programme/>

'Nigeria: Constitutional change conference deadlocks over oil dispute', *IRIN News*, August 2 2005, <http://www.irinnews.org/report>.

"Gunfire explosions in Tripoli". *CNN*, 20 March 2011. Retrieved 20 March 2011.

"Justice at last?" *The Economic* 31 May 2007. Retrieved 5 August 2007. "Taylor Sierra Leone war crimes verdict welcomed". *BBC*, 26 April 2102. Retrieved 1 May 2012.

"Libya History" *Global EDGE* (via Michigan State University). Retrieved 14 August 2011.

Ex-militants protest exclusion from amnesty programme. *Vanguard* August, 2014, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/08/ex-militants-protest-exclusion-amnesty-programme/>

Jonathan to present new vision for Amnesty Programme. *The Nation*, 26 June 2011. Available at: www.thenationonlineeng.net/2011/index.php/news/1054-jonathan-to-present-new-vision-for-amnesty-programme.html.

Libya Live Blog-March 19 March. *Al Jazeera*, Achieved from the origin from the origination 19 March 2011.

Niger Delta History. *African Volunteer Network*, 2014 (Accessed 8 September, 2015) http://www.african-voluteer.net/niger_delta.html

Niger Delta's most wanted kidnap kingpin arrested in Port Harcourt. *Sahara Reporters*, 25 September. Available at: <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/niger-delta%E2%80%99s-most-wanted-kidnap-kingpin-arrested-port-harcourt> (accessed 26 May, 2014).

Nigeria: IRIN Special Report on Proposed Niger Delta Bill *IRIN Special Report*, 1999, (19990906), University of Pennsylvania? African Studies Centre. Retrieved 6 January 2007 from <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Newsletter/irinw9699.html>.

Revealed: US never predicted Nigeria's break up by 2015. (2012, May 15). *This Day*, p.31.

Robbers declare war on Delta communities. *Daily Sun*, 17 May 2012.

The Nation, (2011) Amnesty can only postpone doomsday. *The Nation*, 6 August.