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# Urhobo Culture and the Amnesty Program in Niger Delta, Nigeria: An Ethnographic Case Study

John Oghenero Tobor  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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John Tobor

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## Review Committee

Dr. William Benet, Committee Chairperson,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Morris Bidjerano, Committee Member,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Mai Moua, University Reviewer,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer  
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2014

Abstract

Urhobo Culture and the Amnesty Program in Niger Delta, Nigeria: An Ethnographic

Case Study

by

John O. Tobor

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

September 2014

## Abstract

Despite abundant oil resources, the residents of the Niger Delta endure extreme poverty, polluted environments, poor infrastructure, and high unemployment. In the early 1990s, these problems led to a violent uprising against oil exploration. In 2009 the government of Nigeria attempted to end the uprising by implementing an amnesty program for the militants that was designed to address the region's problems. The amnesty program resulted in suspending the violence but so far has not resolved the region's problems. If these problems are not addressed, the uprising may resume. Although the Urhobo people comprised the largest number of militants from the Western Niger Delta, there has been no research on whether there are aspects of the Urhobo culture that may be helpful for strengthening the amnesty program and preventing a return to violence by Urhobo ex-militants. Benet's polarities of democracy model served as the theoretical framework for this ethnographic study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations of 20 Urhobo ex-militants to learn what might prevent their return to violence. Content analysis was used to identify significant themes. Findings indicated that aspects of the Urhobo culture, such as communal obligations, respect for elders, and commitment to social justice and equality, may contribute to strengthening the amnesty program and preventing a return to violence. Recommendations include incorporating meaningful participation of Urhobo elders in the further development and implementation of the amnesty program. Implications for social change include informing policy makers of the importance the Urhobo culture may play in strengthening the amnesty program.

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God for his grace in making my dream a reality. I would also like to dedicate this research work to the memory of my late parents Mr. John G. Tobor and Patience Gbenedio. They did everything they could to make sure that I get to this point in my life but could not be alive to share in this wonderful achievement. They instilled in me a love for education and learning. Their life lessons are a treasure and a source of inspiration.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The Niger Delta is a vast, fertile, and naturally endowed region with enormous gas and oil deposits (Ogege, 2011). Researchers have emphasized that despite the huge oil revenue derived from the region that sustains Nigeria economically, the Niger Delta region is still a place of poverty, characterized by destroyed social structure, polluted environments, impaired health, dearth of serviceable infrastructure, inadequate provision of functional educational system, and destroyed source of livelihoods (Anele & Omoro, 2012; Idowu, 2012; Ogbodo, 2010; Ogege, 2011). Decades of exploitative and explorative activities of petroleum resources have had an adverse effect on the host communities in the Niger Delta region (Ogege, 2011).

Okpo and Eze (2012) contended that the Niger Delta with its naturally endowed resources has the problem of economic impoverishment, exploitation, environmental apocalypse, cultural destabilization, and total neglect of the region by the federal government of Nigeria. The indigenous people of the region, according to Paki and Ebiefa (2011), live in abject poverty and in a state of chronic squalor despite the abundant wealth the region possesses. In lieu of development, Badmus (2010) argued that the region that has produced the bulk of the nation's wealth within the last 4 decades is synonymous with environmental degradation, poverty, deprivation, ecological destruction, and suffers from socioeconomic injustices. According to Omitola (2012), the exploitation and exploration of crude oil continued unabated without due regard or consideration to the views, demands, and aspirations of the indigenous people of the oil

bearing communities by both the federal government and the multinational oil companies (p.254).

In the face of this predicament, Ogege (2011) explained that the region has become a place of frustrated expectations. The direct result of neglecting the region by the federal government of Nigeria is a reflection of the current crisis that has engulfed the region (Ekpeyong & Dienye, 2010; Etemike, 2012). The blame for neglect cannot be on the federal government alone. Ewharieme and Cocodia (2012) argued that traditional and political leaders have also contributed to the suffering, poverty, and despoilment in the region. The implication is that the initial struggle for developmental and environmental justice has metamorphosed into youth militancy with its attendant consequences. Etemike (2012) argued that youth restiveness in the region is a direct consequence resulting from historical deprivation, marginalization, oppression, and dispossession. These odds threaten the existence and survival of the inhabitants of the region, and in response the youths of the region resort to violent agitations that include kidnappings, hostage taking, oil bunkering, and attacks on oil installations (Ogege, 2011).

It is against this background that the late Nigerian President Musa Yar'Adua introduced the Amnesty program in 2009 as a means to create an enabling and peaceful environment to address the developmental issues and problems of the Niger Delta region (Akanji & Oyitso, 2012; Idowu, 2012; Ogege, 2011; Oluwaniyi, 2011). In other words, the amnesty program is a developmental initiative that was created and aimed at ameliorating the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis. The introduction of the amnesty initiative witnessed a temporary reduction in the crime rate and violence that is



characteristic of the Niger Delta region. However, it did not completely eliminate the Niger Delta crisis. What this means is that the amnesty program still faces some critical and significant challenges and this leads to the issue of whether something is fundamentally wrong with the implementation process. While researchers agreed that the amnesty initiative has been partially successful, they maintained that the main reason for its inability to achieve an overwhelming success was because the program failed to address the root causes of militancy in the region (Amaraegbu, 2011; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012; Oluwaniyi, 2011).

A majority of researchers writing on the Niger Delta crisis proffered possible solutions without considering the significance of the culture of the people for whom the program is meant. Etemike (2012) and Badmus (2010) recommended that the Nigerian government restructure the federal system on a more equitable basis. Idowu (2012) recommended stringent measures against oil companies that fail to adhere to pollution free environment and pointed out that there is need for the stakeholders to engage in constant dialogue to forestall cumulated aggression. Akpan and Ering (2010) recommended that the Niger Delta crisis can be addressed once and for all if the Nigerian government addresses the environmental, economic, and political factors that ignited the crisis. Okpara (2012) posited that the panacea to the Niger Delta crisis is a reformed Nigerian constitution that provides an explicit right to a healthy and clean environment as a fundamental human right that is available to every individual. Ogege (2011) recommended a holistic framework that effectively addresses the issue of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region.

There may be a connection between culture, amnesty program, and its implementation process in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Torri and Hermann (2011) suggested an answer by pointing out that the cultural beliefs, customs, and practices of a community play an important role in enhancing community-based initiatives such as the amnesty program, particularly those programs that aim to achieve sustainability in the long term. Supporting this view, Akanji and Oyitso (2012) posited that any meaningful development initiatives in a given community need to be experiential and people centered (p. 170). In other words, such a development initiative as the amnesty program should be derived from the past social, economic, political, and cultural experiences of the indigenous people and must not be imposed or determined for them by external forces (Akanji & Oyitso, 2012). Okuyade (2011) maintained that culture is a means of exemplifying and expressing indigenous or ethnic identities that has been prevalent since postcolonial Nigeria. According to Okuyade, there is advantage in upholding indigenous culture.

Those who implemented the amnesty initiatives failed to take into cognizance the significant function of the cultures of the Niger Delta communities. Brennan, Flint, and Luloff (2009) highlighted the importance of culture and noted that far less often is the local culture of an indigenous community afforded a significant role in understanding the community development process (p. 97). Brennan et al. maintained that there appears to be scant empirical researchers who addressed or considered the role of local culture in fostering a more complete understanding of community development or initiating a developmental program, such as the amnesty program. Culture continues to be viewed as

an outgrowth and as reflecting extant economic and other experiences. This perspective suppresses the role of culture and may have contributed to a total lack of understanding of how the Niger Delta people would respond to the amnesty program.

A careful look at previous studies on the Niger Delta crisis indicated that culture was rarely mentioned or discussed as a possible solution to the Niger Delta crisis (Anele & Omoro, 2012; Ekpeyong & Dienye, 2010; Etemike, 2011; Idowu, 2012; Ogbodo, 2010; Ogege, 2011). There is a need to address this identified gap which failed to take into account the role of culture in relation to the amnesty program. How and if culture may contribute in any way towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program informs this study. In order to address the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis, I examined the implementation process of the amnesty program from Urhobo cultural perspective. The study of culture may provide for the conception of more inclusive and effective policies that integrates both modern and indigenous knowledge systems and practices.

The Urhobos make up a sizeable and significant portion of the total population of the Niger Delta region. Ekeh (2008) emphasized that the Urhobos are the most populated group in the Western Niger Delta region and for this reason exploring its culture and its impact on the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region appears relevant and significant. This provided an important reason and impetus for this study. Ekeh (2005) posited that studies in Urhobo culture represents a relatively new area of research especially one that is approached from a native or indigenous perspective. As an indigene from Urhobo origin, I am familiar with the Urhobo cultural values,

practices, and traditions. Such understanding is an advantage that enabled me to articulate comprehensively what has been learned about the Urhobo culture, its relevance to the amnesty program if any, and also explain in detail the natural progression of the amnesty program from its inception to date. This informs the decision to limit the study to the Urhobo culture and how it may affect the implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

An understanding of the sociocultural values of the Urhobo speaking communities of the Niger Delta region may help to shape the vision of the amnesty program. The social implications of this study are that the research findings derived from the study may contribute towards formulating policies that will address the root causes of the crisis and help alleviate the current sufferings that are being experienced by the indigenous inhabitants of the region. The findings may bring about awareness and convey the benefits of understanding the role of culture generally in the implementation of any development initiative, and specifically the role of Urhobo culture in the implementation process of the amnesty program.

Chapter 1 of the study includes the historical background of the Niger Delta region and its people. The research problem, purpose of the study, assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, significance, and social change implications of the study are addressed in this chapter. This chapter is also an explanation of the theoretical framework through which the research questions of the study were addressed. There is also a section that includes the meanings of key terms and concepts as used in the study.

## **Background**

The increasing magnitude of violence in the Niger Delta has reached dangerous dimensions. Ekpeyong and Dianye (2010) argued that the longer the crisis lasts, the more these seeming tendencies will continue to suffer contradictions. The resort to hostage taking of oil workers and expatriates, piracy, oil bunkering, pipeline destruction, oil pilferage, and killings has become widespread in the region. This has adverse consequence on the production level of oil, security, and economy of the country. The implication is that it affects not only the revenue of Nigeria but also the international price regimes (Ekpeyong & Dianye, 2010). The rising violence in the region is a function of the continuation of the struggle for resource control by any means necessary. It is therefore not a surprise to associate criminal tendencies that usually accompany such struggles. Important and urgent steps need to be taken to ameliorate and address the problem.

The Nigerian government granted presidential amnesty to the Niger Delta militants on conditions that they renounce violence and give up their weapons during a stipulated period in 2009 (Akanji & Oyitso, 2012; Idowu, 2012). The amnesty initiative also provided access to rehabilitation programs, training, and education to the militants (Akanji & Oyitso, 2012). According to Ogege (2011), the amnesty program was created to restore stability, enable peace and reconciliation in order to facilitate the institution of a wide range package of reforms to address the concerns of the communities of the Niger Delta region, with particular reference to issues of the underdevelopment, poverty, good health care, roads, unemployment, and basic infrastructure amenities. While

expressing a similar view, Okuyade (2011) noted that the cardinal aim of the amnesty is to create a platform that will facilitate infrastructural development in the region and emphasize the importance of ecological and human justice.

In spite of the laudable achievements of the amnesty initiative, it has been viewed with skepticism from various quarters. Akpan and Ering (2010) noted that granting amnesty to the militants without addressing the major reasons that instigated them to initially take up arms would in the long run amount to nothing. Paki and Ebienufa (2011) argued that the amnesty program was an attempt to assuage the agitation, frustrations, discontent and grievances of the Niger Delta militants in order to mitigate the adverse consequences on the economy of the nation. Paki and Ebienufa (2011) further explained that any conception that includes training and educational initiatives for the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region would have been a positive development that would most likely have restored stability, security, and achieved lasting peace. However, according to Paki and Ebienufa, the amnesty package introduced by the federal government of Nigeria failed in its entirety to achieve its desired goals because of lack of sincerity, faulty planning, and corruption.

Akpan and Ering (2010) maintained that the amnesty policy was not intended to address the social, political, economic, and environmental issues that were the main reasons for the conflict in the Niger Delta region. Rather, the program was designed to enable the federal government uninterrupted access to oil and gas resources (p. 146). Ogege (2011) reiterated this view and described the amnesty initiative as a calculated federal government strategic policy with the goal to peacefully, but deceitfully

encourage the Niger Delta youthful militants to lay down their arms. Ogege further posited that this would enable the region to return to normalcy and also create an enabling environment for the multinational oil corporations to resume steady and unhindered drilling and oil exploratory activities. This theoretical perspective explains the political consideration of security as a precondition for optimum economic opportunity for the multinational oil corporations and revenues for the Nigerian government.

Any options or strategies that will be adopted in regards to implementing the amnesty initiative in the region need to rise above the cosmetic solutions of previous interventions. These interventions must involve talks that include inhabitants of the communities, and address environmental and developmental concerns of the communities. From the literature reviewed it became clear that the culture of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region was a topic that was rarely mentioned or identified as a possible solution that may contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the region. Consequently, it becomes imperative to respond to this gap that has been identified in the literature. This informs the need to undertake this study.

Ekeh (2008) maintained that the Urhobo cultural group accounts for the largest and most dominant ethnic group in the Western Niger Delta region. The Urhobo population is big enough to make the study of Urhobo culture and its impact on the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region relevant and significant. Ekeh (2005)

posited that studies in Urhobo culture represents a relatively new area of research especially one that is approached from a native or indigenous perspective.

### **Problem Statement**

While research exists about the crisis that engulfs the Niger Delta region (Akinwale, 2010; Amaraegbu, 2011; Egwemi, 2010; Ogege, 2011; Oluwaniyi, 2011), there has been little or no reference to the role of culture as it affects the implementation of the amnesty program in the region. Odoemene (2011) posited that culture is a traditional phenomenon that is central to the lives of the people of the Niger Delta region and it guides the daily activities and interactions of most of the communities in the region (p. 128). From studies in Ireland and the US, Brennan, Flint, and Luloff (2009) emphasized that understanding the local culture of an indigenous community is critical because it may contribute significantly towards the successful implementation and sustainability of a community development initiative. Thus, understanding the culture of the Urhobo may contribute to the successful implementation of the amnesty program. The research problem addressed in this study is that the Urhobo culture has not been studied to see if and how it can contribute positively towards enhancing the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to critically examine and explore Urhobo cultural values, practices, traditions, and beliefs and explain whether they may or may not contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program. I described



and interpreted the experiences of 20 participating ex militants from Urhobo origins who are currently enrolled in the amnesty program. The Urhobo cultural characteristics including their experiences, ways of doing things, behavior, and perceptions of the amnesty program are a reflection of their Urhobo cultural background. An understanding of the Urhobo cultural values, practices, beliefs, and social adaptations may help address the key research question of whether culture has any role in shaping the Urhobo speaking communities' view of the amnesty program with regards to how it is being implemented in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

I sought to provide answers to the research questions of whether there are factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for community participation, environmental protection, managing the polarities of democracy, and whether these factors can contribute towards resolving the persistent crises in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. An understanding of the Urhobo culture may also provide insights to key stakeholders including the federal government and multinational oil corporations to identify better ways that they can relate to the people of the Niger Delta communities. The experiences of the 20 participating ex-militants were investigated through an ethnographic case study approach.

## **Research Questions**

### **Central Research Question**

Are there factors in the culture of the Urhobo speaking community that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region?

**Sub Questions**

1. What are the most distinctive socio cultural values of the Urhobo speaking communities?
2. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for community participation?
3. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for environmental protection?
4. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for managing the polarities of democracy?
5. What is the Urhobo speaking communities' view of the amnesty program with regards to how it is being implemented in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
6. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that can contribute to resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
7. In what ways can the amnesty program be better structured to achieve greater effectiveness?

**Conceptual/Theoretical Framework**

A review of the literature provided the theoretical framework. Problems cannot be articulated except within a conceptual system. Since the problem is a function of its framework, the problem can best be understood if its basic system is well articulated. The conceptual framework for this study was based on Oakley's (1989) concepts of

community participation, while Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy provided the theoretical framework for the study.

According to Oakley (1989), community participation in a broad sense means to sensitize the people with the goal to increase their receptivity and ability to respond favorably to development programs. It also means including the people in decision making processes, involving them in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs and also sharing in the benefits derived from there (Oakley, 1989). Community participation provides a platform for community empowerment and it encourages the active involvement of the inhabitants of the community. They will be the people who will define the critical issues and problems of the Niger Delta region. Oakley (2008) identified four essential concepts (namely empowerment, sustainability, efficiency, and ownership) that will allow people to understand their own problems and partake in addressing these issues and concerns. According to Oakley (2008), using these four factors will create empowerment for the people and sustainability for community development programs.

This conceptual framework guided the study in providing answers to the research questions. Through this framework, I examined the Urhobo culture and provided answers to the research question of whether the Urhobo culture has any contributory role towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the community. Community participation approach aims to be democratic. The adoption of a participatory approach gives a voice to the community in speaking about the culturally complex ways the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region construct their identities, ethics, norms, values, and how these are bound up with the locally grounded traditions and

customs of their daily life. Community participation is an effective approach to community development that seeks to provide an avenue and opportunity for the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region, particularly the Urhobo speaking indigenes, to speak freely about their issues, problems, and ideas.

Adopting community participation as a conceptual framework appears to be a perfect fit for this study. For instance, in order for me to get an accurate depiction of the views and perceptions of the participants for this study, it was important that I avoid the problem of theoretical and researcher distance. In support of this assertion, Mallan, Singh, and Giardina (2010), asserted that community participation aims to avoid the problem of theoretical and researcher distance from the phenomena under study and strive to establish non exploitative relations between the communities and the researcher.

Community participation encourages empowerment. Aujoulat, Hoore, and Deccache (2006) explained that the concept of empowerment is embedded in the social action ideology of the 1960s and the self-help viewpoints of the 1970s. Larkin et al. (2008) posited that empowerment is a process that develops as individuals gain control over their lives and increasingly take part in decisions that affect them. According to Aujoulat et al. (2006), empowerment places emphasis on the abilities and rights of the communities and individuals and not on their needs and deficits. Empowerment is a process that is often equated with liberation. Goodman et al. (1998) emphasized that community empowerment is not possible without the grassroots actively participating in defining and resolving community needs. However, Goodman et al. maintained that for

empowerment to occur, it has to go through a democratic process where community members share information and power.

Democracy can serve as a guide for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a social change effort such as the amnesty program. Benet (2006, 2013) explained that democracy can be an effective tool to achieve positive social change especially in areas that experience economic, environmental, and militaristic challenges such as the Niger Delta region. Benet further posited that the polarities of democracy model can serve as a unifying theory of democracy that is able to guide social change efforts. According to Benet, this unifying theory of democracy is consistent with the philosophical perspective of critical theory which seeks to overcome oppression and achieve human emancipation.

The amnesty program is a social change effort aimed at improving the lot of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region, with the ultimate goal and aim to restore peace and achieve enduring stability within the region. This explains the reason why Benet's (2006, 2013) polarities of democracy appear to be a suitable theoretical framework for this study. This theoretical framework is particularly significant to this study for several reasons. The theoretical framework is compatible with the conceptual framework used for this study. It is significant to point out that the polarities of democracy support the idea that community participation and empowerment are essential elements of democracy. These essential elements are necessary to address the social, economic, political, and environmental challenges that may actually threaten the survival of the Urhobo people in particular and the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region in general.

The struggles of the Niger Delta people can also be appreciated through the lens of the political economy approach. Political economy falls within the broader critical theory perspective as does the polarities of democracy model. Ekpeyong and Dienne (2010) utilized the political economy approach to effectively amplify the problems of the Niger Delta region. The approach posits that economic relations defines or reinforces the struggle for power, which ultimately results in conflicts. However, the continued denial of any effective political identity provided the motivation and impetus that gave rise to the crisis in the Niger Delta region. The problems of the Niger Delta can be associated with the aspirations of the indigenous people for effective representation in government that would translate to political, social, and economic emancipation. The polarities of democracy model provides a theoretical framework for examining the political economy struggle for power and determining if the Urhobo culture offers ways to peacefully resolve that struggle.

### **Research Design**

The research design for this study is the qualitative method. The ethnographic case study was determined to be the most appropriate research methodology that can be utilized for this type of study. Rudestam and Newton (2007) emphasized that ethnography has expanded to include critical inquiry that entails trying to understand the cultural characteristics of the group of people that is being studied. I used an understanding derived from studying the characteristics of the Urhobo cultural group to address some of the key reasons that prevent the amnesty program from being successfully implemented in the Niger Delta region. Ethnographic case study was an

appropriate methodology through which the issues in this study could be examined and understood. The research questions were adequately addressed through this methodology. Ethnographers are of the view that culture is an evolving phenomenon that influences the belief systems, values, norms, behaviors, and perceptions (and structures the experiences) of every human group. Ethnographers endeavor to acquire perspective information about the cultures of the participants that are being studied. Information about the cultural characteristics of a group of people is often deeply embedded in the cultural experiences of the participants, but they may not necessarily be consciously aware of it (Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2006).

Data collection methods included field notes compositions, observations, journal entries, discussions, and face-to-face interviews. The telephone was used when I was unable to meet anyone of the participants in person. Documents about the amnesty program, including its successes and failures were also reviewed. Audio equipment such as tape recorders were used to record my interviews with the permission of the participants. The data analysis technique utilized in this study is content analysis of data. A cohort of 20 ex-militants from the Urhobo speaking tribe within the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria that were enrolled in the amnesty program were used for this study. Utilizing an ethnographic case study approach enabled me to document the cultural ideas that came up during the research process. An understanding of the cultural characteristics of the people under study helped to address the key research question of: are there factors in the culture of the Urhobo speaking community that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region?

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

*Abject Poverty:* Total lack of adequate resources in basic human necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. This is a state or condition characterized by inadequate health facilities, unemployment, high infant mortality, low-life expectancy, and poor quality of education, (Ibaba & Ebiede, 2009, p. 73).

*Amnesty initiatives:* A strategic state policy that is in the form of legislative or executive clemency in which those involved in unlawful actions or offenders are officially pardoned. Amnesty is usually granted with accompanying conditions (Ogege, 2011, p. 250).

*Community:* A group of people living together who share common traditions, values, belief systems, culture, practices, norms, and behaviors. They have common needs, aspirations, purposes, and goals that need to be achieved over a period of time (Midgley, 2008, p. 34).

*Community development:* A process of developing a community through the efforts of nonprofit and governmental organizations with the aim to improve the economic and social lives of the individual beneficiaries that inhabit the community (United Nations, 2008, p. 13).

*Community participation:* An approach that provides individuals an opportunity to contribute their skills, talents, and input towards development projects at the local community levels (Sproule, 2006, p. 231).



*Corporate colonialism:* The short term exploitation of people and the earth by the multinational oil corporations for the sole purpose of making profits for the few (Moruku, 2012, p. 899).

*Corporate social responsibility:* The commitment of the multinational corporations to put some of their gains to the communities where they do business (George, Kuye, & Onokala, 2012, p. 1).

*Deprivation:* A state or condition of being less advantaged in a society or group. This manifests in lack of access to basic social services and amenities (Ibaba & Ebiede, 2009, p. 70).

*Development:* A continuous process in which the end product results in the improvement of humanity (Anele & Omoro, 2012, p. 111).

*Empowerment:* A process that provides opportunities for people to manage, take control, and influence their personal development agenda (Aujoulat, d'Hoore, & Deccache, 2007, p. 6).

*Environmental insecurity:* When a population feels that exploitation of crude oil with its devastation on farmlands and fishing waters threatens its livelihood and environment, it feels insecure (Bassey, 2012, p. 86)

*Ex- militants:* Youths who have been granted presidential pardon. They have renounced violence and accepted to participate in the amnesty program (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012, p. 50).

*Kidnapping*: The act of illegally taking a person and keeping him or her as a prisoner in order to get money or something in return for releasing that person (Nwagboso, 2012, p.251).

*Militancy*: For the Niger Delta people, this is a positive force used to agitate for fair and equitable share of the resources exploited from their region and provision for decent life (Anele & Omoro, 2012, p. 112).

*Militants*: The youths in different movements or groups who contest and resist the federal government through hostage taking, blackmail, killings, and other rebellious strategies (Ogege, 2011, p. 253).

*Niger Delta Region*: The area comprising the oil producing communities of the southern part of Nigeria (Odoemene, 2011, p. 124).

*Resistance*: A collective action directed at preventing further environmental deprivation, expropriation, and alienation (Obi, 2010, p. 220)

*Resource control*: The ability of a particular group to control the benefits that accrues from its own natural resources (Obi, 2010, p. 220).

*Social movement*: An organized activity planned to discourage or encourage some form of social change. This activity may resist or promote change in the society (Anele & Omoro, 2012, p. 108).

*Sustainable development*: This concept refers to efforts at improving the ecological and the socio-economic status for the purpose of improving the quality of human life in such a way that the needs of future generations are not jeopardized (Adebayo, 2010, p. 219).

### **Assumptions**

The knowledge base of assumptions is important as a guide for the researcher on what one assumes to be true but could not be verified to be true. The purpose of this study was to find out how Urhobo culture can contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty initiative. I assumed that the ex-militants that would agree to participate in this study would be willing to cooperate and supply truthful information during the interviews. The supposition was that face-to-face interviews were conducted objectively to reduce bias and that the participants responded honestly to the interview questions. Honest or truthful responses provided by the respondents were likely to determine the reliability of the data that were collected and the findings of the study. The assumptions were that the responses that would be obtained from the ex-militants accurately reflected their perceptions about their experiences. It was assumed that gaining access to the ex-militants would not pose any significant problem. It was also assumed that the participating ex-militants would be willing to allow me to carry out multiple observations of their work environment and that they would be willing to grant interviews and respond to the questions voluntarily.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This study was delimited to the time frame of 4 weeks. This study was done with the understanding that most researchers who utilize the ethnographic approach may take a longer period of time. However, this time frame was adequate and provided enough time to address the research questions and to complete the study. This study was also delimited to the culturally responsive practices of one particular cultural group, the Urhobo ethnic

tribe of the Niger Delta region. I was aware that the Niger Delta region comprises other ethnic tribes, which may account for cultural diversities of the region.

### **Limitations**

The study was subject to some limitations. This study was limited to ex-militants from one particular ethnic group as opposed to including ex-militants from the other tribes that makes up the Niger-Delta region. Focusing the study on only participants from Urhobo tribe may appear to limit the understanding of the Niger Delta crisis to one particular ethnic group. A limited number of participants may have represented the views of just a small number of individuals from the Urhobo tribe as opposed to representing the views of the Niger Delta people. However, the focus was deliberate because of the need to narrow the research study to one particular ethnic group. The scope of this study did not allow for coverage in its entirety. On the positive side, the advantage of limiting the study to one particular tribe is that it may add to the knowledge base and literature on the Urhobo cultural group which represents the largest ethnic group that dominates the western Niger Delta.

Another limitation is that I employed secondary sources of data collection by utilizing the literature that has been written on the Niger-Delta crisis. A common feature of most secondary data is that they are usually historical and do not provide access to respondents. The main disadvantage is that such data are not collected with the present study in mind. It may therefore not have met the needs for this study. However, these were primarily peer-reviewed articles that were written within the last 5 years. It was necessary to make use of literature that has been written on this subject matter in order to

establish a link between what has been written in the past and the present. An understanding of what has been written will provide a perception and an appreciation of this study.

Another possible limitation is that data collected from locals may not be the true, intended response to the research questions asked. Although English is the official language, a majority of the Niger Delta people speaks Pidgin English. Responses to research questions in English might limit the ability of the locals to express themselves accurately. Squire (2009) recommended employing the services of a translator or interpreter to overcome this limitation, but this technique can threaten the trustworthiness of the research and subsequently the applicability of the result findings of the study. However, I speak Pidgin English and I am fluent in the language. All efforts were made to minimize this potential threat.

### **Significance**

I examined the most distinctive sociocultural characteristics of the Urhobo communities and their effects on the implementation of the amnesty initiatives in the Niger Delta region. The study is therefore a pragmatic shift from prior studies (Akanji & Oyitso, 2012; Akpan & Ering, 2010; Bassey, 2012; Ifedi & Anyu, 2011; Omotola, 2010; Oluwaniyi, 2011) which focused on the crisis that engulfs the Niger Delta region with no reference to the role of culture as it affects the implementation of the amnesty program in the region. This study fills the existing gap in the literature regarding the role of culture and whether it may contribute or not towards the successful implementation of the

amnesty program. I described the issues that plaque the Niger-Delta region from the Urhobo cultural point of view.

The study is significant in that I explored the role of Urhobo culture and examined existing economic, political, and social issues in the Niger Delta region as highlighted in the works of (Akanji & Oyitso, 2012; Akpan & Ering, 2010; Omotola, 2012). The findings may be useful in contributing to the development of policies that address those issues. Similarly, key stakeholders equipped with such vital information derived from the result findings may understand, appreciate, identify, and develop appropriate strategies and guidelines that can be used to address matters, issues, problems, and concerns associated with implementation of the amnesty initiative in the region. In this regard, the study may add to the literature on topics related to this subject matter, close literature gaps, and raise awareness on the significance of Urhobo culture and the need to inculcate it when formulating policies and initiating development projects in the region. All of these may lead to improvement in the lives of the indigenous people that inhabit the land of the Niger Delta region in general, and the Urhobo cultural group in particular. It may enable the multinational corporations to operate in a peaceful environment, contribute steadfastly and uninterruptedly to the Nigerian economy, and lead to positive social change.

### **Implications for Social Change**

There are several implications for social change. The study may contribute to the ongoing peace efforts embarked on by key stakeholders. Prior researchers made little or no reference to the role of culture in addressing the Niger Delta crises. For instance,

Akpan and Ering (2010) recommended that addressing economic, environmental, social, and political concerns of the Niger Delta people is a likely solution to the crises. Akanji and Oyitso (2012) recommended effective communication among stakeholders as a panacea to the Niger Delta crises. Omotola (2010) recommended the federal government to invest hugely on sustainable human capital development in the Niger Delta region as a probable solution to the crises. This study differs in that I focused on the role of culture and the findings derived from the study may serve as an invitation to the multinational oil corporations, the communities, and policymakers including all tiers of the government to re-examine their perceptions, practices, beliefs, and behaviors with regards to how to approach the Niger Delta issue. The study will provide a factual report and description of the Urhobo culture. A better understanding of the Urhobo culture may be useful to key decision or policy makers who will be involved in creating policies that will address core reasons for the incessant turmoil and turbulence that have persisted in the last several years.

Findings of the study may also contribute to positive social change by providing insights towards developing support programs in addition to the amnesty program that may help alleviate the problems and sufferings of the people in the Niger Delta region. This study is meant to be a starting point or springboard for further discussions that may take place amongst the various key stakeholders. This study may also bring greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the issues that has resulted in the incessant crisis in the region. There is no gain saying the fact that a peaceful Niger-Delta will contribute significantly to the Nigerian economy and to the global oil price. This is

why it is absolutely necessary and critical that this program be successful in its entirety. Finally, it is my hope that the findings will contribute towards restoring stability and may bring about lasting peace in the region

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to examine and explore the role of Urhobo culture and how it affects the implementation process of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research methodology chosen for this study was the ethnographic case study. Through this research design, 20 ex-militants from Urhobo speaking cultural background that are currently participating in the amnesty program were observed in their workplace environment for extended period of time. I conducted several on-site observations on different multiple occasions. Journal entries and field notes were composed during and after the observations. Interviews were conducted with the participating ex-militants. Their perceptions about the amnesty initiative were accurately written down and tape-recorded. This interview process became yet another way of data collection.

The significance of this study can be viewed from different perspectives. It may inform and bring awareness to key stakeholders about the importance of norms, practices, behavior, and the culture of the Urhobo indigenous people that inhabit the Niger Delta region. It may contribute to the literature and knowledge base on the subject matter. It may lead to reviews and reformulation of meaningful policies that will contribute to the development of the Niger Delta region.



Chapter 2 is a review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 is an explanation of the methodology that will be used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter 4 is a report of the findings and Chapter 5 is a summary and analysis and interpretation of the data.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review was to present a focused review of the instability, violence, and unrest that persist in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This chapter is an overview of literature that relates to the amnesty program and the current trends that exist within the region. The literature reviewed provided background information needed for a comprehensive understanding of the issues that plague this region. An understanding of these issues will provide a clearer picture of the research topic and it will also help define the direction this study will take.

The focus of the literature review was to provide in-depth information that will help address the main research question and sub questions, identify gaps in current literature, broaden the knowledge base on Urhobo culture and on the amnesty program and also to prevent duplication of knowledge. In order to get a comprehensive perspective on Urhobo culture and on the amnesty program, the literature search strategy involved an extensive and comprehensive review of research studies, current peer reviewed articles, and journals obtained from several electronic sources. Online library such as the Walden library and the United Nations library were the primary search engine source utilized. Other electronic databases used included the Nigerian governmental website of the Federal Ministry of Education, the official websites of the amnesty program and the Urhobo Progressive Union.

Through Walden University Library resources, I used Multidisciplinary EBSCO databases (Academic Search Journals and Business Search Journals), ProQuest Central,

SAGE Full Text Collections, Science Direct, Public Policy and administration databases and Theses-Full Text databases. I also used Google and Google Scholar to identify literatures that are relevant to the subject matter. I used the funnel approach to research by using a keyword search to narrow the research from the general to specific topics related to the theme of the research. Keywords and search items used included *Urhobo culture, amnesty program in the Niger Delta, Niger Delta crisis, conflict in Nigeria, Urhobo, amnesty program, Nigeria, conflict resolution in Niger Delta region, development initiatives, development programs in Niger Delta, social justice, Urhobo communities, culture, community participation, and empowerment*. This research strategy yielded in excess of 400 articles, of which about 90 articles related to the research topic. Specifically, a majority of these articles helped to provide guidance and focus for the study.

The review of the related literature had bearing on identifying the gaps in literature and provided me the practical knowledge base on the research topic. The literature reviewed helped me to gain the knowledge base of what is yet to be addressed with regards to prior literature that has been written on this subject matter. For instance, the works of a majority of Nigerian writers such as Akanji and Oyitso (2012), Akpan and Ering (2010), Bassey (2012), and Omotola (2010) attributed the root causes of the Niger Delta crises to political, economic, social, and environmental factors and offered varied possible solutions with little or no reference to the role of culture as a possible solution to the crises. However, some studies from non-Nigerian authors indicated the importance of culture as a concept that may need to be utilized when addressing political,

environmental, socioeconomic, and social justice issues. For example, Tubadji (2012) indicated empirical evidence that culture in Germany has the potential to greatly influence socioeconomic development in a given community. Tubadji revealed that culture determines the efficiency with which human capital will interact to exploit the available productive capital in the community. This analysis contributed to my decision to study the role of Urhobo culture and explain whether culture may be an exogenous factor that is likely to contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region.

In an interview based on her more than 3 decades of research in a Mayan town in Guatemala, Rogoff explored the many ways culture shapes the course of human development. Rogoff (as cited in Glaveanu, 2011) explained that culture and human development are intrinsically interwoven, in other words, they go together. Sungkharat, DOUNGCHAN, Tongchiou, and Tinpang-nga (2010) lent support to this view. In a study conducted on community culture and production processes in Thailand, the findings indicated that development cannot occur when social, cultural, and economic problems are isolated from each other (Sungkharat et al., 2010). The authors maintained that people can only respond to governmental plans if they are encouraged to find the right way to solve their own problems (Sungkharat et al., 2010). This analogy may also apply to the people of the Niger Delta region. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the amnesty program, the Urhobo culture may be taken into consideration by including the Niger Delta communities in the planning and execution stages of the amnesty program. Rogoff (as cited by Glaveanu, 2011) emphasized that it is a widely accepted precept to

encourage and include the people for whom the programs are designed as contributors in the planning and implementation phases of the programs.

In support of the views expressed by Rogoff (as cited by Glaveanu, 2011) and Sungkharat et al. (2010), Howard (1998) argued that Western and Third World traditionalists will defend their culture and social norms against any form of undermining and thus encourage a bottom up approach that includes the indigenous peoples in any program initiatives or policies development. These analyses encouraged and further strengthened my resolve to examine whether the Urhobo culture may in any way contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The literature review begins with the historical background of the unrest in the Niger Delta region. This unrest metamorphosed into what is today commonly referred to as the Niger Delta crisis. There are significant references to the impact of the amnesty program in the region including its prospects, challenges, successes, and failures. The intent was that an understanding of these factors will help me to identify what needs to be done in order to enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the region from the Urhobo cultural point of view. This section is an examination of the works of several authors who have contributed to the literature on Niger Delta crisis. I attempted to have a critical review of the issues raised in the literature with the hope of enabling a deeper understanding and comprehension of the Niger Delta issues and the resulting crisis that engulfs the region. The literature review concludes with

recommendations based on discussions derived from critical examination and analysis of these studies.

### **Historical Background of the Niger-Delta Crisis**

An understanding of the historical background of the Niger Delta region and how it metamorphosed into the current crisis provides a better perspective to comprehend and appreciate the reasons for the persistent unrest that currently exists in the region. The incessant Niger Delta crisis has assumed a dimension that continues to pose serious concerns to the Nigerian government, international community, multinational corporations, people of the Niger Delta communities, and other interested stakeholders, including scholars and academia. It is therefore not a surprise that various conceptualizations, interpretations, and analysis of the Niger Delta crisis are usually articulated from different viewpoints. In other words, the root cause of the crisis in the Niger Delta region has been the subject of extensive debate in the literature. Amaraegbu (2011) agreed with this view and contends that the diversity of views is an indication of the enormous variety of efforts to understand and describe the problem. Agbonifo (2009) pointed out that some scholars have inadvertently or deliberately mischaracterized conflicts in the Niger Delta region.

One reason for this controversy is because of the motivational underbelly of the conflicts. Researchers such as Akpan and Ering (2010), Bassey (2012), and Paki and Ebienfa (2011) argued that the root cause of the crisis are legitimate; and they attribute political, social, developmental, and economic factors as reasons which engendered endemic poverty, marginalization, and gross environmental degradation. Amaraegbu

(2011) summed up this view by pointing out that the Niger Delta conflict has escalated into a multidimensional resistance with varied strategic undertones. This in turn triggers widespread social discontent, sense of powerlessness, relative deprivation, and frustration on the part of the inhabitants of the region (Amaraegebu, 2011). Agbonifo (2009) and Amaraegbu alleged that the connection between environmental degradation, perception of injustice, dispossession, infrastructure development issues, and political marginalization provides the context within which to understand the persistent violence in the region.

An historical account of the Niger Delta region and its people provides an informed perspective about the reasons for the persistent crisis in the region. An understanding of the historical background of the region will deepen the appreciation for the suffering of the endangered people who inhabit the Niger Delta region. Several researchers defined the Niger Delta region to include nine states namely Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Abia, Cross River, Ondo, and Imo State (Badmus, 2010; Idowu, 2012; Odoemene, 2011; Okpo & Eze, 2012; Olankunle, 2010). A majority of the literature on Niger Delta provided a vivid description of the region. For instance, Obi (2010) described the Niger Delta region as a vast coastal plain situated at the southernmost part of Nigeria where the River Niger drains into the Atlantic Ocean. Paki and Ebiefa (2011) referred to the region as one of the richest deltas in the world. The region covers about 70, 000 square kilometers of watery maze of intricate marshland, lagoons, tributaries, extensive fresh water swamps, rich fisheries deposits, and creeks (Obi, 2010; Odoemene, 2011; Okpara, 2012; Omotola, 2012). The region is made up of ecological zones that range from sandy coastal ridge barrier to lowland rainforest teeming

with towering mangrove plants, marine life, bird, giant ferns, and the forests (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012; Obi, 2010). It is considered to be the largest wetland in Africa and one of the largest in the world (Ifedi & Anyu, 2011; Nte, Eke, & Anele, 2010; Obi, 2010; Ogbodo, 2010; Omotola, 2010; Paki & Ebiefa, 2011).

Obi (2010) emphasized that the region provides a habitat for a vast biodiversity from its rich resource base. According to Omotola (2010), the region has natural gas reserves of about 163 trillion cubic feet and harbors crude oil reserves of 33 billion barrels. The region has a population of about 28.9 million people (Ogege, 2011; Okpara, 2012). Badmus (2010) described the Niger Delta region as a zone of demographic minorities comprised of different ethnic tribes that include the Urhobos, the Ijaws, Ibibios, Kalabari, Itshekiris, Efiks, Isoko, Nembe, Ndom, Andoni, and Ikwerre (Badmus, 2010; Okpo & Eze, 2012). The Urhobos are the most dominant and largest ethnic group from Southern Niger Delta region (Ekeh, 2008). Ekpeyong and Dienye (2010) argued that the region became very important in Nigeria's economic, social, and political equations when oil was first discovered in commercial quantities in Olobiri in 1953. Obi (2009) described oil as a strategic viable source of energy for transforming nature into commodities, which is then exchanged to realize surplus. A majority of the researchers on Niger Delta agreed that oil is the predominant source of revenue for the Nigerian economy and accounts for over 90% of export earnings and about 80 % of federal revenues (Agbonifo, 2009; Badmus, 2010; Etemike, 2012; Obi, 2010; Okpara, 2012; Ogege, 2011). Agbonifo explained that the Niger Delta has about 11 multinational oil corporations that operate about 159 oil fields and 1,481 oil wells.



Researchers on Niger Delta described the current state of the region in various forms. For example, Badmus (2010) described the region as experiencing the so-called paradoxes of the plenty. On the other hand, Idowu (2012) described the region as the goose that lays the golden egg but the most environmentally fragile. Paki and Ebiefa (2011) referred to the region as one of the least developed parts of the nation. Nte et al. (2010) described it as one of the most insecure places in the world. According to Okpara (2012), the gas deposits and abundant oil, which should have been a blessing in the Niger Delta region, are now referred to as the oil curse. The gas flares produce constant brightness every day and night. Egbe (2012) maintained that the chemicals produced by the gas flares can cause heart problems, chest pain, breathing problems, bad odors, cancer, eye irritation, global climate change, induce asthma attack, increase death rate, and reduce ability to exercise (p.168).

Nte, Eke, and Anele (2010) explained that the story of the Niger Delta abounds with stories of conflicts based on invasions, nationalistic attacks, insurgency, and counter attacks for self-preservation. The crisis in the Niger Delta can be traced back to the period when Nigeria was still under British colonialism. The British regional restructuring of Nigeria and the subsequent dismantlement of the Niger Delta ethnic enclaves represented the foundational violence of the regional crisis. The traditional rulers of the region were humiliated, deposed, or deported. Moruku (2012) posited that the raids on their kingdoms were accompanied with plunder and exploitation, which led to resistance, and this in turn led to violent suppression characterized by deportations and acts of massacres. Idowu (2012) emphasized that violent resistance has met neglect, lack of social infrastructure,

environmental degradation, and deprivation of the Niger Delta region since 1958 to the present armed militant response.

Nte et al. (2010) viewed the present crisis in the Niger Delta region as a matter that is better understood as a long drawn out historical process, driven by complex international political and economic forces, which the indigenous people of the region have been trying to resist, with varying degrees of success. Moruku (2012) utilized the colonial and postcolonial frameworks to historicize the experiences of human rights abuses and exploitation of the Niger Delta people. This theory provides an insight into the origins of the regional crisis and reasons for the behavior of its inhabitants. Akpan, Eteng, Ering, and Abia (2012) argued that the destruction that petroleum processing and production has inflicted on the inhabitants of the region, including their sources of livelihood is a central factor in understanding the conflict dynamics in the Niger Delta region. Bassey (2012) emphasized that if the Niger Delta crisis is left unattended, the consequences will be devastating for the Nigerian mono-cultural economy. In agreement with this view, Paki and Ebienu (2011) argued that the consequences of militancy on the economy of the country are indeed multidimensional and constitute a huge constraint on the nation's economic development. Also in support of this view, Nwagboso (2012) posited that if left unchecked, the spate of security threats could further distort the economy of Nigeria.

Over the years, the Nigerian government has adopted several policies and implemented different developmental and poverty alleviation programs aimed at enhancing socioeconomic development, eradicating or alleviating poverty in the Niger

Delta region (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). While some of these government initiatives and development projects are laudable, they have however failed to achieve enduring peace in the region (Akpan et al, 2012; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). In support of this view, Nwagboso (2012) emphasized that in spite of these intervention strategies, the insecurity and conflicts in the region persisted.

### **Root Causes of the Niger Delta Crises**

Anele and Omoro (2012) asserted that oil revenue derived from the Niger Delta region accounts for more than 90% of Nigeria's wealth. In spite of the Niger Delta's dominant contribution to the national economy, the general state of the region is characterized by underemployment, pollution, extreme poverty, neglect, underdevelopment, and lack of proper and adequate infrastructure (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012; Obi, 2010). Anele and Omoro agreed with this view and posited that the natural endowment of the region has become a source of its greatest predicament. Paki and Ebiefa (2011) maintained that oil appears to be a curse to the indigenous people of the region. According to Ewharieme and Cocodia (2012), suitable sanitation is available to less than 25% of the population of the region and water related diseases are a common feature and most likely the main health problem in the region.

Another significant root cause of the Niger Delta crisis is the unanswered cries and agitations of the indigenous people to control their own natural resources. Even though the Niger Delta region is the backbone of the Nigerian economy, it is home to some of Africa's poorest of the poor. Omotola (2010) maintained that the region remains one of the least developed regions of the country. Benet (2012) explained that social

economy plays a significant role in creating and retaining community wealth by ensuring that the profits of economic activity are retained in the community where they are generated. This notion has been a bone of contention between the people of the Niger Delta region and the federal government for many decades. Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011) argued that the reluctance of the federal government and its claim to exclusive legitimacy and sovereignty is a major reason why the indigenous militants resorted to militancy.

The consequences of oil exploratory and exploitative activities compelled the Niger Delta youths to be militants in their approach. Anele and Omoro (2012) justified this approach because of the perception that the federal government is insensitive to the sufferings of the people. In support of this view, Omitola (2012) argued that the inability of the federal government to provide the basic needs of its citizenry such as food, water, employment, hospitals, and good roads amongst others are contributing factors to the root cause of the Niger Delta crisis (p.262). Adebayo (2010) viewed this approach as a way to liberate the region from Nigeria and to control the naturally endowed resources by themselves.

The multinational corporations explore and drill for oil in the region, and yet the Niger Delta is saddled with environmental and developmental challenges, including severe environmental degradation, declining agricultural production, and devastating levels of poverty, all of which results in social conflict (Adebayo, 2010; Ifedi & Anyu, 2011). Torri and Hermann (2011) asserted that numerous studies emphasized the strong link between cultural diversity and biological diversity. The use of sustainable resources

and management is a common feature amongst local communities. According to Torri and Herman, bio-cultural diversity contributes to the maintenance and formation of biodiversity through the creation of habitat patterns (p.173). Torri and Herman posited further that the survival of a great number of communities around the world with such vast biodiversity, including the Niger Delta region, depend on the present resources in the forest. The degradation of the ecosystem results in low economic value of significant resources used by the indigenous inhabitants (Torri & Hermann, 2011). Chindah, Braide, Amakiri, and Onokurhefe (2011) posited that the poor yield of other resources, including the poor natural regeneration of mangrove after such ecological abuse has caused great concern and apprehension among various stakeholders including the farmers, fishermen, and wood carvers that inhabit the region. According to Chindah et al., the long-term effect of oil in the environment may cause defoliation and death (p.275).

Badmus (2010) presented the Niger Delta region as an environment that has been severely degraded with its attendant negative physical and socioeconomic consequences. This has been a major source of constant struggles by the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region that eventually put them at loggerheads with the Nigerian government and the oil multinational corporations. Akpan et al. (2012) argued that the indigenous inhabitants of the region have not received a corresponding benefit from the exploitation and drilling of oil resources, which has given rise to the series of crisis between the inhabitants of the oil producing communities on one hand and the federal government and oil companies on the other hand. Obi (2009) maintained that the role of the multinational oil corporations

as actors in the globalization of the Nigerian oil industry connects them to the deepening social contradictions, tensions, repression, inequities, and conflicts in the Niger Delta.

Oluduro and Oluduro (2012) emphasized that the quest to correct the perceived injustices of the Niger Delta people from whose land and waters the oil is extracted has led to a prolonged violent agitation and insurgency in the region. In support of this view, Omitola (2012) explained that the struggle of the Niger Delta people against the federal government, its ruling elite, and the multinational oil corporations, and lately the ruling elite of the oil bearing communities have always been defined by the need to redress the lopsidedness whereby the major ethnic tribes dominate the oil minority tribes in terms of economic management of the country and political marginalization. Nte et al. (2010) argued that frustrated youths took up arms and utilized the opportunity of genuine agitations to unleash illegal military expeditions to assert their relevance and acquire illegal wealth through hostage taking, oil bunkering, pipeline destruction and all forms of domestic terrorists' acts. According to Obi (2010), the main thrust of their struggle centers on their determination to repossess and control their natural resources, particularly gas and oil. In support of this view, Akpan et al (2012) explained that from a simple and peaceful demand for equity in sharing the oil revenue, the indigenous people of the Niger Delta region also are now demanding ethnic and regional control of the oil resources.

Researchers on the Niger Delta crisis agreed that the oil industry which provided a boost to the Nigerian economy has not promoted any substantive development of the region (Odoemene, 2011; Okpo & Eze, 2012; Olankunle, 2010). The discovery of oil brought extreme hardship to people of the region rather than blessings (Olankunle, 2010;

Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). Okpo and Eze described the experiences of the people of the region as being characterized by killings, poverty, crisis, and environmental degradation. Omotola (2012) identified the theories of rising expectations and relative deprivation theory as the two most popular explanations of violence that characterize the Niger Delta region. Nwagboso (2012) utilized this relative deprivation theory to trace the historical antecedence of agitations, conflicts, and frequent rise of groups and individuals against the federal government of Nigeria. Nwagboso argued that the abysmal failure on the part of the Nigerian government to address critical issues and challenges with regards to development, environmental problems, unemployment, poverty, and lack of basic amenities in the Niger Delta region are the key reasons for internal insurrection by armed militant groups against the Nigerian State (p. 250).

Deprivation theory is one competing theory of social movement that can be used to explain the phenomenon of militancy in the Niger Delta region. According to Anele and Omoro (2012), Marx, the foremost exponent of this theory, used it to explain how the working class under the capitalist system of production was exploited. The relative deprivation theory is when people feel that they deserve more than what they have got. This may lead to frustration, which in turn leads to aggression. It often occurs when expectations are rising but are not met. Nwagboso (2012) explained that when expectations exceed actual achievement regardless of the attainment of absolute levels of economic consumption, frustration sets in, which turns to anger and violence. According to Omotola (2012), the end result of this theory is that human beings will always resort to violence to either protest or challenge the existing structure of deprivation and struggle

for compensation, reparations, or redress (p. 39). This analogy can also be used to explain what led to the American Revolution against the British Empire. Weintraub (2009) explained that the outspoken American colonists resented paying taxes because they were not adequately represented in the parliament. Weintraub posited that as a solution to their discontent, the colonial farmers, merchants, and craftsmen began proposing a new concept of liberty (p.33). This was the start of a small-scale and unexpected rebellion that blossomed to become what is today known as the United States of America. Parent (2009) posited that the supporters of the European Union hope to be like the United States of Europe, an amalgamation of different nations with its own voice and character but unified democratically and peacefully along the lines of the United States of America.

### **Amnesty Initiative: Prospects and Challenges**

It is against the above-mentioned background that President Umaru Yar'Adua introduced the amnesty program in June 2009 as partial implementation of the 2008 Mittee Committee report (Etemike, 2012; Nwagboso, 2012). Oluduro and Oluduro (2012) explained that the amnesty initiative was the panacea that was adopted as a solution to the Niger Delta crisis considering the inability of past successive governments to address the issues that plaque the region. Amnesty is a strategic policy adopted by state governments or nations to formally pardon offenders or lawbreakers in the form of legislative or executive clemency (Ogege, 2011). Once an individual is granted amnesty, all records of the person's wrongdoing are disregarded, purged, or cast into oblivion. In other words, whatever atrocities previously committed can never be



used against that individual. What this means is that the antisocial acts of that individual are now totally wiped out.

The amnesty package that was adopted by the late Nigerian President Yar'Adua was offered to the Niger Delta militants whose actions posed a significant threat to the nation's resources and cherished values of peaceful existence in the society (Ogege, 2011). The amnesty package introduced by the federal government serves as a measure to address the dramatic drop in daily oil production which results in substantial drop in accruing revenue. Oluduro and Oluduro (2012) emphasized that the amnesty initiative is also expected to improve the nation's low human capital development. Nwagboso (2012) and Ogege asserted that the amnesty was offered on the condition that the militants will give up their illegal weapons and renounce violence within 60 days from August 6 to October 4, 2009. Oluwaniyi (2011) noted that the militants who agreed to surrender their weapons were taken to designated collection centers (See Appendix A) in six of the Niger Delta states, with a promise of N65,000 (about \$407 USD) monthly payment and an offer of vocational training.

According to Oluduro and Oluduro (2012), the amnesty program was to be implemented in three phases: (a) the disarmament and demobilization of the youthful militants, (b) the integration and rehabilitation of the ex-militants, and (c) the final phase, which is the post-amnesty initiative that promotes massive infrastructural development within the region. The first and second phase of implementing the program was indeed successful. Ogege (2011) noted that the first phase of the amnesty program commenced with about 20,182 militants comprised of about 20,049 males and 133

females respectively from across the nine states of the Niger Delta region. Oluduro and Oluduro maintained that about 26,358 ex-militants accepted the offer before the given deadline of October 4, 2009 and participated in the amnesty program. According to Oluduro and Oluduro, only a small number of about 6,166 ex-militants representing those that initially accepted the offer were able to participate in the second phase because they could only be trained in batches as the centers could only accommodate small numbers of registered ex-militants. Akinwale (2010) emphasized that a survey conducted on the aspirations of the ex-militants reveals a significant preference for about 10 job sectors that include fabrication and welding technology, maritime services, oil/gas, exploration, production, and processing engineering. Akinwale posited that the training duration of these programs is projected to range from 3-18 months, while those interested in furthering their education were also provided the opportunity to do so in the amnesty package.

The amnesty initiative generated controversy from various quarters. There were divided opinions on the issue of the amnesty. According to Ogege (2011), some people viewed the offer of amnesty as an ill-conceived notion that encourages individuals to carry out criminal or illegal acts knowing that they will not be punished if they simply put an end to such negative behaviors. Ogege posited that the supporters of the amnesty concept argue that it is cheaper and a lot easier to embrace a strategy that will make people surrender their weapons than to confront and punish them. In spite of the controversy surrounding the granting of amnesty, the rationale behind it remains viable.

The introduction of the amnesty witnessed a significant attainment of peace and security within the region (Egwemi, 2010; Nwagboso, 2012; Ogege, 2011). In support of this view, Moruku (2012) maintained that this was the period when an uneasy calm reigned within the region as a result of the temporary cease-fire declared by the armed militant groups amidst the offer of amnesty. The amnesty program gave the region a new lease of life and presented the country with a positive image among the comity of nations. However, Etemike (2012) viewed this perception as a ploy by the federal government to pacify the western world that it was doing something to address the issues that plague the Niger Delta region (p.587). Egwemi (2010) praised the amnesty program and encouraged the federal government to sustain the momentum by demonstrating the political will of creating more jobs, massive infrastructure development, and confidence building measures among other things. According to Egwemi if the federal government fails to adhere to this suggestion the post amnesty peace and stability that has been attained will disappear. It is significant to mention that not all the armed groups accepted the amnesty offer. Moruku posited that the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and a faction of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) shunned the offer. According to Moruku, their argument is that preventing oil corporations from exploiting their natural resources does not constitute an offence and so does not warrant a state pardon.

Bassey (2012) posited that the government's offer of 60 days amnesty amounted only to dictating instead of negotiating peace. Bassey explained that amnesty alone does not address the core issues such as injustice and underdevelopment of the region that

precipitated the revolt in the first place. Akpan and Ering (2010) presented a similar view and emphasized that the amnesty policy was not geared towards addressing the social, economic, political, and environmental problems that were the main drivers of the conflict, but rather designed to enable the federal government unimpeded access to gas and oil resources. While also presenting a similar view, Ogege (2011) posited that the amnesty initiative was merely a cosmetic solution to create an enabling environment for the multinational corporations to continue their oil exploratory and exploitative activities without hindrance or disturbance.

Ogege (2011) explained the motive behind the economic penetration of the oil corporations and the issue of considering security as a precondition for optimum economic opportunity (p.253). Without the guarantee of security, the multinational corporations will be unable to operate profitably in the region. Nte et al. (2010) and Obi (2010) asserted that the transformation from initially uncoordinated peaceful and nonviolent protests into a full-blown violent insurgency with its attendant insecurity in the region poses a significant threat to the multinational oil corporations. Nwagboso (2012) utilized the democratic peace thesis to explain the importance of security in the Niger Delta region, its challenges, and the Nigerian economy. According to Nwagboso, the theory posits that security to a large extent depends on the commitment of liberal institutions including the multinational corporations to discharge their social responsibilities creditably. Nwagboso argued that for Nigeria to address its security challenges there is a need for government to embrace and faithfully implement adopted strategic policies and viable socioeconomic programs. The premise of this theory is that

government and the multinational corporations need to execute meaningful development projects and programs in the communities where they operate.

While proposing a similar view of the amnesty initiative as that propounded by Etemike (2012), Ogege (2011) maintained that the federal government implementation of the amnesty initiative was merely a superficial and well thought out ploy that was purposely designed to trick the militants into surrendering their arms. Idowu (2012) considered the amnesty initiative as a source of empowerment for some of the ex-militants and pointed out that these were social responsibilities foisted on the people and unlikely to meet the needs and aspirations of the Niger Delta people. According to Idowu, the needs and aspirations of the Niger Delta people have to do with dialogue that involves all relevant stakeholders on issues such as autonomy, resource control, and justice.

Ogege (2011) examined the efficacy of the amnesty package by situating his discourse within the economic integration framework. Ogege used the Economic Penetration and Integration Theory of Development to explain the advent of capitalists into the Niger Delta region and their ability to influence some members of the political class to legitimize their occupations of this viable region. This theoretical perspective succinctly indicates the intention behind the economic penetration of the multinational oil companies and how they controlled the domestic politics of the Nigerian state. While Etemike (2012) agreed that the amnesty program was not the solution to the Niger Delta crises, he called for the restructuring of the nation on a more equitable basis (p.588). Supporting this view, Akinwale (2010) maintained that the federal government's

adoption of top-down measures was unproductive and an ineffective approach to address the Niger Delta crisis. Akinwale examined the relationship between the amnesty initiative and the human capital development and lambasted the federal government for implementing the amnesty initiative without empowering the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region. In addition to an all-inclusive amnesty initiative, Akinwale called for more participatory and innovative measures that will include all key stakeholders such as the youths who will participate in the amnesty program.

While offering a different approach to the Niger Delta crisis, Idowu (2012) proposed the employment of the alternative dispute resolution as a viable tool of resolving the Niger Delta crisis. Its proposal may likely be satisfactory and acceptable to all stakeholders because it's a non-judicial tool. A resolved conflict through the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) produces a cost-effective and more efficient resolution of disputes with better satisfaction to the parties in dispute. Idowu is of the opinion that ADR will engender safe environment work places, an increase in developmental activities, increased organizational effectiveness and efficiency, improved productivity and GDP, increased workers' participation and engagement, pollution free environment, and peace and stability in the region.

### **The Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility**

Organizations have a significant role to play especially in the communities where they operate. However, such development initiatives must be holistic, participatory, people-centered, and inclusive of the communities. In support of this view, Akpomuvie (2011) asserted that such a development package must provide access to social services,

must be responsive to the needs of the people, and must also promote peace and social inclusion. Similarly, Akanji and Oyitsu (2012) posited that any meaningful development initiative must take into cognizance the past social, economic, and cultural experiences of the people and it must not be determined or imposed on them by external forces. This is why it is important that multinational oil corporations understand the concept of corporate social responsibility, because it provides appreciation of the demands of the indigenous people of the Niger Delta region.

Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) and Omotola (2012) recommended a greater sense of corporate social responsibility on the part of the multinational corporations. Obi (2009) argued that it had been a customary practice for the multinational oil corporations, which are the most powerful and richest organizations in the world, to partner with the Nigerian government to extract oil from the oil rich communities without regard to the adverse social and environmental implications (p. 472). Afinotan and Ojakorotu emphasized that the concept of corporate social responsibility is a prevailing world view and recommends the multinational organizations embrace this concept and participate in solving societal problems. In other studies, Ako (2012) and Idowu (2012) agreed that the multinational oil corporations need to take advantage of the ambience of peace in the region precipitated by the introduction of the amnesty initiative by delivering corporate social responsibility to their host communities. Ako pointed out that taking advantage of such a peaceful environment may enable the oil corporations to reinvent themselves, maintain peaceful relations with their host communities, and also optimize their business potentials.

Amadi and Abdullah (2012) utilized the triple bottom line theory to evaluate the concept of corporate social responsibility and to illustrate the involvement of multinational corporations in community development. According to Amadi and Abdullah, the principle of this theory is that the ultimate success of an organization should be measured by its contribution towards community development in terms of its performance with regards to ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities. Amadi and Abdullah posited that the concept of the triple bottom line theory has gained prominence, and is currently widely accepted and promoted especially amongst major corporations including Shell, British Telecom, AT&T, and Dow Chemicals.

Corporations are in business primarily for the purpose of making profit. In order for the multinational corporations to be able to make profit, they must operate in a stable and an enabling environment. Ako (2012) explained that the oil multinational corporations need to take advantage of the window of opportunity necessitated by the peaceful enabling environment, precipitated by the introduction of the amnesty initiative, to engage their host communities objectively. This move will contribute to a healthy relationship that is mutually beneficial to both parties and also contribute to sustainable peace. Ako maintained that this is a necessary condition that will sustain exploration, exploitation, and drilling for oil resources in the region.

Okpo and Eze (2012) pointed out that the multinational oil corporations such as Mobil, Agip, Texaco, Chevron, and Shell have a huge vacuum that is yet to be filled in terms of their commitment to social responsibilities in the host communities where they operate. On the other hand, George, Kuye, and Onokala (2012) argued that the



multinational corporations do everything possible to strike a balance between the conflicts of demands from the host communities where they operate, and other stakeholders including pressure groups, and governments. The point remains that the source of these conflicts including environmental improvement related issues, social and economic development of the communities in particular, and the country in general need to be addressed by the oil corporations. According to George et al., the oil corporations brought woes upon themselves as a result of their social irresponsibility. The paramount question then becomes have the oil corporations done enough in terms of their social responsibilities?

In providing an answer to the above question, Amadi and Abdullah (2012) offered a contrary view. The authors contended that Shell Petroleum Developing Company (SPDC), which is the pioneer multinational oil corporation in the Nigerian oil industry, has contributed immensely towards the development of these communities and that their efforts are inhibited and constrained as a result of social and political factors. Contrary to this view, George et al. (2012) argued that the failure of the multinational corporations to live up to their social responsibilities is a factor that accounts for the region's militant attacks including the kidnappings in exchange for ransom. However, Amadi and Abdullah contended that a good example of Shell's community development initiatives includes its contribution to educational initiatives, social investments, and providing healthcare to its host communities. For example, Shell has helped to train 1,074 private and public healthcare workers for malaria prevention and treatment, and

given grants to nongovernmental organizations and faith based organizations to participate in malaria control programs (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012).

Idowu (2012) offered a different perspective and maintained that the insufficiency of the social responsibilities on the part of the oil exploratory companies left much to be desired and it may have accounted for the frequent hostage taking and increased violent attacks on oil installations since 2006. According to Idowu, the police personnel deployed to protect the corporation's infrastructure are on the payroll of these companies and it is believed to be more than the total number of police that exist in the Niger Delta region. The huge investment in private security outfits, in addition to the ones in the corporation's establishment, is a reason that may likely have resulted in a significant reduction in funds available for other important corporate responsibilities. Idowu maintained that the amnesty had failed to resolve the Niger Delta crisis and that the country losses about 1,500,000 dollars daily. In agreement with this view, Etemike (2012) is of the opinion that the issue of amnesty is hardly the solution to the Niger Delta crises. Etemike proffered a holistic approach and recommended a comprehensive restructuring of the federal system.

### **Implementation of the Amnesty Initiative from a Cultural Perspective**

Amnesty has not resolved the crises; the conflict has assumed different dimensions. This particular reason necessitated the need for this study with the view to look at how the amnesty initiative can be implemented more successfully within the region. While many researchers agreed that the amnesty has been partially successfully, most of the researchers argued that the main reason for its inability to achieve an

overwhelming success was because they failed to address the root causes of militancy in the region (Amaraegbu, 2011; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). Addressing the root causes of militancy in the Niger Delta region can be viewed from varied perspectives. However, it was my objective to determine whether culture in any way can contribute meaningfully towards the successful implementation of the amnesty package in the Niger Delta region. Accordingly, understanding the role of culture of the inhabitants of the region becomes a prerogative in this literature review.

Culture is a system of shared basic assumptions, values, norms, traditions, belief systems, behaviors, and way of life that is unique and peculiar to a group of people. Okuyade (2011) referred to culture as the distinctive way of life of a people, social group, community, or nation. Values are shared ideas that include beliefs about what is morally wrong or what is culturally desirable. Brennan et al. (2009) emphasized that such values shape norms, ethics, rules, perceptions, views, or accepted ways of doing things that represent guidelines and conduct of the cultural group and how they act towards others.

Culture is an evolving phenomenon that the group has learned as it continues to solve its everyday problems of internal integration and external adaptation. These cultural concepts have worked well enough for them to be considered valued and therefore to be taught to new members as the right way to think, perceive, and feel in relation to those problems. Based on their research in Ireland and the US, Brennan et al. (2009) suggested that appreciating the uniqueness of the local culture will have a significant impact on the success of any development initiative such as the amnesty

program. Accordingly, the culture of any group defines the attitudes, belief systems, and represents entire ways of life, including rules, values, and expected behavior. This analogy is equally important to stakeholders because an understanding of the cultural group is an essential and invaluable process that is necessary prior to undertaking any meaningful development initiative such as the amnesty program.

Badmus (2010) agreed with the view postulated by Etemike (2012), on adopting a holistic approach to the Niger Delta crises. Badmus emphasized the need for consultations between the oil companies and the oil-bearing communities before the commencement of oil exploratory and exploitative activities. In agreement with this view, Egbe (2012) maintained that this principle of inclusion has been wantonly violated and unimplemented by both the oil multinational corporations and past successive Nigerian governments. It is an important strategy to always encourage community participation in any development program. This tactic should be employed and deeply entrenched in the Niger Delta region.

### **Implementation of the Amnesty Initiative with Community Participation Approach**

Oakley's (1989) concept of community participation was used as the conceptual framework for this study. Participation is a concept that has been widely recognized as both a basic human right and of significant importance to the success of any developmental initiative such as the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Oakley, 1989). Through this framework, I provided answers to the key question on the role of culture in shaping the Urhobo speaking communities' view of the amnesty program with regards to how it is being implemented in the Niger Delta region of

Nigeria. Kamanda et al. (2013) described community participation as a collaborative approach that includes the equitable and active involvement of those affected by the issue or problems. Kamanda et al. explained that the concepts and methodologies of community participation were extensively developed from the United States and in England, where majorities of the literature on this approach were written. Community participation provides an avenue and opportunity for the Urhobo people that inhabit a significant portion of the Niger Delta region to speak freely about their ideas. Parrill and Kennedy (2011) pointed out that this approach establishes trust through relationship building and open communication. It aims to be democratic and its emphasis is on empowering the inhabitants of the communities.

The adoption of a community participation approach will give voice to the Urhobo communities in speaking about the culturally complex ways they construct their identities, ethics, norms, values, and how these are bound up with the locally grounded traditions and customs of their daily life. In support of this view, Salimi et al. (2012) asserted that community participation will most likely address community empowerment related issues because it is an approach that encourages communication and information sharing between key stakeholders. Salimi et al. posited that researchers believe that effectiveness of community participation depends on the appreciation of the local culture of the community and on the strength of the effective communication.

Mallan, Singh, and Giardina (2010) posited that community participation aims to avoid the problem of theoretical and researcher distance from the phenomena under study and strive to establish non exploitative relations between the communities and the

researcher. According to Kamanda et al. (2013), community participation is characterized by engaging in community consultations, entering into meaningful community engagement from the beginning of the community development initiatives, through the interpretation process, to the completion of the projects or initiatives. It is in light of the above-mentioned reasons that community participation approach appears to be the most effective and appropriate conceptual framework for this study.

Community participation encourages the active involvement of relevant stakeholders who will be in a better position to define issues and problems of the Niger Delta region. Salimi et al. (2012) pointed out that interventions or developmental initiatives that involve active community participation have the potential to make significant differences that will contribute towards positive community changes and need to be encouraged. In support of this view, Kamanda et al. (2013) emphasized that community participation enhances the understanding of an issue or problem within the economic, political, social, and cultural context of the community and aims to take action to improve the quality of life and well-being of community members. To further validate this point, Salimi et al. conducted a research study in which the research findings indicate that out of eight intervention studies using the community participation approach, seven of those studies identified relative evidence of the effectiveness of this approach (p. 389). According to Kamanda et al., community participation increases the sustainability of an intervention and the possibility of its long-term success and influence.

Community participation approach guided this study in providing answers to the research questions. Through this framework, I examined the Urhobo culture and provided answers to the question of whether it has any contributory role towards the successful implementation of the amnesty initiative in the community, and also whether it can help bring about peace and stability in the region. The indigenous inhabitants of a community generally have comprehensive knowledge about their peculiar circumstances and production systems. Such invaluable knowledge can be used to identify constraints to developmental initiatives. Moreover, involving the inhabitants of the region in the amnesty initiative process increases its relevance and improves the chances of its being accepted by the end-users.

In support of this view, Kamanda et al. (2013) argued that community participation is likely to increase the possibility that any development initiative such as the amnesty program needs to be educationally appropriate and culturally acceptable. For instance, the involvement of the Urhobo people might have ensured the success of the amnesty program. Kamanda et al. maintained that the involvement of the community would ensure that the content and format of any development initiative including the amnesty program would better fit the cultural values, norms, and systems of the community. While agreeing with this posit, Nwagboso (2012) recommended a bottom-up approach where the people of the region remain the center stage and focus of any developmental initiative.

Omotola (2012) also emphasized the importance of community participation and stressed that any meaningful attempt at addressing the root causes of the Niger Delta

crisis needs to be a joint responsibility that involves the oil communities in the region including the militias, government at all levels, the multinational corporations, and the international community. While presenting a similar view, Okpara (2012) emphasized that such attempts need to be accompanied by an enabling statute that must provide meaningful redress and penalties for those corporations that fail to abide to environmental policies.

### **Polarities of Democracy Model**

Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy model provided an ample theoretical framework that gave understanding to, and assessed the effectiveness of the amnesty program in restoring peace, stability, and bringing about just, healthy, humane, and sustainable development to the Niger Delta region. Benet's polarities of democracy model consists of 10 elements that are organized as five polarity pairs namely diversity–equality, freedom–authority, participation–representation, justice–due process, and human rights–communal obligations. Benet explained that each of these elements has negative and positive aspects and that if true democracy is to be attained then the aim will be to effectively manage these polarities in order to optimize the positive aspects while minimizing the negative aspects of each element. These concepts of Benet's polarities of democracy model are drawn from the conceptual framework of polarity management as developed by Johnson (1996).

Democracy as a concept is a set of ideas and fundamental principles in which the ultimate power is vested in the people. In other words, people living as a democratic society must be responsible for taking decisions that affect their lives or at least partake



in such decisions. Civilized debate and due process of law are at the core of democratic ideals, principles, and practices. All around the world, democracy takes different forms and expressions among cultures and societies. However, Benet (2006, 2012, 2013) stated that the principles of democracy are universally applicable to all cultures around the world including the Urhobo culture.

Ekeh (2008) emphasized that the Urhobo people have a culture that has the tendency to act in response to challenges in ways that will ensure their basic survival considering the circumstances of the Niger Delta region (p.7). Ekeh posited further that Urhobo folk history suggests that the courage and heroism demonstrated by its ancestral fathers made it possible for them to conquer and occupy a sizeable chunk of dry lands, including prime tropical rainforests. The early migrants dared the environmental inhospitality of the Western Niger Delta and gradually subdued and conquered its territory. This is a characteristic of the Urhobo cultural people and it is important to consider such cultural trait when initiating and implementing a development initiative such as the amnesty program.

Benet (2013) posited that all around the world, democracy is being embraced as a concept that brings about positive social change to address our environmental, political, social, and economic challenges. The fundamental purpose of the concept of democracy is to overcome the oppression experienced by human beings. This concept becomes even more important because according to Benet, if economic, social, militaristic, environmental, and political challenges are not addressed, it may threaten the survival of human species. Freire (1997) emphasized that people who perceive the

reality of oppression as a limiting situation will engage in a struggle to transform that situation. The same analogy may represent the struggle of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region. The call for development projects, rights to economic resources for the development of the communities, social rights to education, and cultural rights to the development of their culture by the people of the Niger Delta region is a call to right the perceived injustice and a fight for social justice, equity, and protection of their environment and ecology from further degradation.

Benet's (2006, 2013) polarities of democracy were borne out of studies conducted through the philosophical perspective of critical theory. Critical theory focuses on promoting positive social change by overcoming oppression and achieving human liberation (Benet, 2012). Militancy is a social movement. Social movement draws attention to a cause or social action that demonstrates an act of injustice that may be particular or general in nature. Agbonifo (2009) explained that the aim is usually to champion the rights and interests of the dominated, or to put an end to a relationship of domination. It is not uncommon that the oppressed would want to identify with such a cause. People resort to militancy when they seek change. Social change can be consciously planned and executed in order to bring about desired positive change or development. The same analogy represents the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region who resort to militancy in an attempt to bring about positive social change and development to their region. Freire (1997) agreed with this view. Freire emphasized that people who feel that they are being oppressed will engage in an incessant struggle to emancipate and liberate themselves in order to regain their humanity. According to Freire, the struggle to

be more fully human is reflected in the continual struggle to transform a bad and unfair situation to a better, fair, and just situation.

The amnesty offered by the Nigerian government to the Niger Delta militants was based on renouncing violence and surrendering their weapons. Badmus (2010) used the social contract theory to explain why the youths of the region gave up their arms to accept the amnesty deal offered by the Nigerian government. According to Badmus, the social contract theory of arms posits that citizens will transfer the weapons in their possession to a legally constituted authority like the government with the agreement that the government will guarantee the security of its citizens. In this context, when the state or government fails to provide or honor their obligation of the contract, the citizens will withdraw and reclaim self-defense. This analogy may explain the arms proliferation that is a characteristic feature of the Niger Delta region. The route to peace and stability in the Niger Delta region is to encourage a democratic system, where the development of civil society, initiation and implementation of developmental programs and initiatives such as the amnesty program, including the universal respect for human rights is adopted and practiced. Benet (2013) posited that democracy is consistent with the goal of critical theory, which is to overcome oppression and to achieve human emancipation. Thus, using Benet's polarities of democracy model as the theoretical framework for this study allowed me to examine the extent to which the Urhobo culture can contribute to maximizing the positive aspects and minimizing the negative aspects of the model's elements.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

A necessitating factor in this review is the quest to understand the subject matter, quality, and importance of maintaining consistency in the critical issues that pertain to this topic. Odoemene (2011) maintained that the fundamental transformation of the Niger Delta region results in a departure from long-established deeply rooted customs, values, cultural traditions, principles, social norms and patterns of behavior that have long been entrenched in the lifestyles of the people of the region. In order to successfully implement any development initiative such as the amnesty program, it is important to understand the culture of the Niger Delta people, specifically the Urhobo people who are the dominant inhabitants of the Western Niger Delta. Kamanda et al. (2013) supported this view and emphasized that existing evidence suggests that adopting the principles of community participation will assist in effectively addressing critical health related issues in sub-Saharan Africa and may contribute towards finding sustainable culturally appropriate solutions.

However, literature and studies on the Urhobo culture and its relevance to the amnesty program are scarce. For instance, much has been written on the amnesty program, however, very little is known about the Urhobo culture. With this in mind, it is hoped that this study will add to the existing literature on the Niger Delta crisis in general and on the culture of the Urhobo indigenous people in particular. It is against this background that the literature reviewed focused on various subjects ranging from historical background of the region, possible root causes of the Niger Delta crisis, challenges, benefits, prospects of the amnesty program, and possible solutions to the

Niger Delta crisis. The review also shed some light on some central issues surrounding the adoption and implementation of the amnesty initiative in the Niger Delta region.

From the literature reviewed it became clear that the Urhobo culture was a topic or subject matter that was rarely mentioned or identified as a possible solution that may contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the region. Consequently, it becomes imperative to respond to this challenge in the gap in literature. A careful examination of the literature reviewed in this chapter supports this contention. A major concern that evolved from the literature reviewed is the lack of adoption of some or any of the recommendations made in other prior studies. I do hope that this study will help the key stakeholders and decision makers to consider and possibly adopt some of these recommendations. A deliberate application of these recommendations may bring about stability and contribute towards lasting peace in the region.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to critically examine the role of culture and how it affects the implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region. The identified gap in the literature is that the Urhobo culture has not been studied to see if and how it can contribute positively towards enhancing the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region. This gap in literature informs the purpose of this study, which was to examine and explore Urhobo cultural values, practices, tradition, and beliefs and explain whether they may or may not contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program.

The research questions were derived from the need to find out whether there are factors within the Urhobo culture that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, and whether these factors are particularly relevant for community participation, environmental protection, and managing the polarities of democracy. The intent was to find out whether there are factors such as traditions, beliefs, values, and practices in the Urhobo culture that can contribute to resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Major sections that were discussed in this chapter include the research design, the methodology utilized in the study, rationale for choosing this particular research design, and the appropriateness of the method used. There are also significant highlights on the population and sampling of the study, data collection methods, and data analysis method that were used for this study. An understanding of the Urhobo culture may help provide

answers to the research questions of whether there are factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for community participation, environmental protection, managing the polarities of democracy and whether these factors can contribute towards resolving the persistent crises in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. An understanding of the Urhobo culture may also provide insights to key stakeholders including the federal government and multinational oil corporations to identify how the amnesty program can be better structured to meet the needs of the people of the Niger Delta communities.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

Given the nature of the topic, the research design for this study was the qualitative research method because of the research questions that this study aims to answer. Qualitative research method involves a naturalistic, exploratory, and interpretive approach to the research topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000 as cited by Qazi, 2011). This method was also justified because I sought to identify and explain the usefulness of the cultural characteristics of the Urhobo people and how it may contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program. Qazi explained that qualitative research is an ideal interpretive vehicle through which a researcher can understand and interpret the actions of a group of people as they engage, encounter, and live through their daily-lived experiences. The meanings of these experiences were represented from the perspectives of the participants.

I was interested in a naturalistic and participatory approach to research and see this research method as the most appropriate option that would enable me to understand the phenomena that is being studied in its natural settings. Creswell (2007) contended that

the most appropriate method a researcher utilizes should be the one that explores and answers the research questions posed in the study. To effectively respond to the research questions of this study, qualitative research design was found to be the most appropriate to employ.

Interpretive ethnography was the approach used in this study. The works of Denzin (1997), a leading authority in this field, informed this study. Denzin emphasized that ethnography has evolved through five historical periods: the traditional (1900-World War II), modernist (World War II-Mid 1970s), blurred genres (1970-1986), crisis of representation (1986-present), and the fifth moment (now). According to Denzin, ethnographers are now in the “sixth moment of inquiry,” that is, a period characterized by intense reflection, anthropological and sociological poetry and thus recommend ethnographers to explore new types of literary journalism, evocative accounts, experimental texts, and narratives of the self to form a new ethics of inquiry.

Denzin (1997) posited that theory, writing, and ethnography cannot be separated and that researchers who write on culture also write theory. In other words, this approach is a reflexive form of writing that turns ethnographic and theoretical texts onto each other (Denzin, 1997). The aim of this study was to keep the text anchored in the world of lived experiences of the Urhobo study participants. This informed the decision to utilize an interpretive ethnographic approach.

An ethnographic approach enabled me to focus on the day-to-day lived experiences, social adaptations, behavior, and other interactions observed amongst the participating ex-militants that were under study (Hoey, 2011). I was then able to provide



detailed and exhaustive information of my observations. For instance, I described social interactions that were observed during specific situations including those behaviors that are shaped as a result of a particular situation.

## **Research Questions**

### **Central Research Question**

Are there factors in the culture of the Urhobo speaking community that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region?

### **Sub Questions**

1. What are the most distinctive socio cultural values of the Urhobo speaking communities?
2. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for community participation?
3. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for environmental protection?
4. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for managing the polarities of democracy?
5. What is the Urhobo speaking communities' view of the amnesty program with regards to how it is being implemented in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
6. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that can contribute to resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

7. In what ways can the amnesty program be better structured to achieve greater effectiveness?

### **Justification of Qualitative Research**

A qualitative researcher is able to use this approach to study things in their natural settings. Qualitative approach enabled me to describe or reveal the nature of certain settings, processes, relationships, people, or belief systems. The qualitative approach also enabled me to possibly gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon, develop a theoretical perspective or new concepts about the phenomenon, and then attempt to make sense of, or interpret that phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. In other words, as a researcher, I was able to use the qualitative approach to go deeper into matters of interest and explore nuances related to the problem at hand. What this means is that a qualitative researcher is able to explore or penetrate to the deeper significance of the research subject or topic that is being studied. The above-mentioned factors informed my decision to utilize the qualitative approach for this study. With the use of qualitative research method, I was able to measure, assess, and examine the ex-militants participating in the amnesty program in their undisturbed natural settings. My choice of the qualitative approach was also based on my ability to provide descriptions of my observations and interpretations of my research findings.

Qualitative research method provide a researcher with several participatory research strategies. However, the ethnography supports the idea that much of what is known about human behavior is through lived experiences in social context and unlike

the experimental research it can be done without predetermined hypothesis and goals (Willis, 2007 as cited by White et al., 2009). Field experience provides a researcher an opportunity to go out to the environment of the subjects, rather than make them come out of their natural environment. This enables a researcher to discover the true experiences of the people under study. It is against this background that the field experiences become an integral component of this study and inform the decision to employ the qualitative methodological design. Further justification of the use of qualitative approach is because the holistic nature of qualitative research makes it a perfect fit for the intended goal of this study. Finally, I also chose this approach so that the ex-militants who would be participating in the study would be able to share their lived experiences and thoughts on community participation, the amnesty program, and other possible development initiatives.

### **Justification of Ethnographic Case Study**

After a careful examination of the major qualitative research traditions, the ethnographic case study was determined to be the most appropriate research methodology that can be utilized for this type of study. Wilson and Chaddha (2009) posited that ethnographic case studies are likely to reflect theoretical insights that are inductive. In other words, this type of study involves inductive reasoning that is likely to illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied (Willis, 2007 as cited by White, Drew, & Hay, 2009). Creswell (2007) explained that a case study research is a qualitative approach that a researcher uses to explore a bound system or multiple systems over time. A researcher explores in great detail a program, event, process and activity of

one or more individuals. Case study is dependent on activity and time, in which in-depth information is collected using several data collection methods over a period of time (Creswell, 2007). In a case study, there is a comprehensive account and analysis of one or more cases.

Integrating ethnography and a case study allowed me to provide an in-depth account and critical analysis of the role of Urhobo culture and its impact on the amnesty program. With the use of this approach, I was able to thoroughly explore the failure, successes, challenges, and possible prospects of the amnesty program in great detail. The ethnographic case study also allowed me to provide a rich and holistic view of the amnesty program and also find ways of how to implement this program effectively. The ethnographic case study is an approach or strategy of inquiry that sought to examine contemporary real-life situations.

Making use of this approach enabled me to examine and understand the complex issues involved in implementing a successful development initiative such as the amnesty program and thus provide a basis for the application of ideas to what is already known through previous research studies, procedures, and over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, utilizing the ethnographic case study also enabled me to provide in-depth contextual analysis of the participating ex-militants and the amnesty program. This type of research method has been particularly useful to social scientists and other researchers from other varied disciplines. I utilized an understanding derived from studying the culture of the Urhobo people to successfully implement the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region. The ethnographic case study served as an appropriate

lens through which the issues raised in this study were examined and better understood.

The research questions were also adequately addressed through this methodology.

Thorne (2003) explained that ethnographers make use of a process in which cultural ideas that come up during the research process are represented and documented.

The ethnographic research tradition focuses on describing and interpreting the culture of a group of people by examining and observing the group's learned pattern of behavior, shared values, attitudes, ways of life, customs, norms, traditions, perspectives, interactions, and language of that group (Creswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Creswell emphasized that observing people in their natural and undisturbed settings is an attempt to determine pervasive patterns such as life cycles, cultural themes, and events.

Pettigrew (2000) maintained that observing and examining a group of people in an undisturbed and natural setting implies an attempt to present factual and exhaustive information about the similarities and differences of the group.

Creswell (2007) pointed out that both the process and outcome of the ethnographic tradition involves lengthy observations of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the daily lives of the people and/or participates in one-on-one interviews with the research participants. In support of this view, Hoey (2011) posited that this approach affords a researcher the opportunity to focus on the daily-lived experiences, language, behavior, and other social interactions that are observed amongst the group that is being studied. In this study the culture of the ex-militants from Urhobo ethnic group that currently participate in the amnesty program will be the phenomenon under study.

### **Challenges of Ethnographic Case Study**

There were several challenges to this type of study. There was the need for me to be well grounded in cultural anthropology and the concepts typically explored by ethnographers such as understanding the meaning and concepts of a sociocultural system. Another challenge was the time factor. Ethnography involves collecting extensive data, which means spending prolonged duration of time in the field. Creswell (2007) felt that because narratives in ethnographies are usually written in literary and almost story telling like approach, this may pose a challenge to some researchers who are accustomed to traditional approaches to writing human and social science research. After a careful analysis of the above-mentioned challenges, the challenges mentioned did not appear to pose any significant problem that cannot be overcome. The nature and scope of this study warranted an ethnographic case study as opposed to a full ethnographic study. The ethnographic case study usually takes a shorter duration period to complete than the full-fledged ethnographic study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Marshall and Rossman (2011) explained that the traditional role of qualitative researchers is to assume that knowledge is not an objective truth and therefore it is critical that researchers remain neutral and unbiased as they learn from participants and understand the meaning of their lives. Johnson and Christensen (2004) explained that a researcher studies the meanings of social interactions of the participants, their language, norms, and behavior from a cultural standpoint or orientation. Bernard (2006) explained that an ethnographic researcher is one who is engaged in fieldwork, gathering information

and materials through interviews and observations, which may become useful in developing a portrait and establishing cultural rules that may shape the group that is being studied.

A qualitative researcher must be sensitive to fieldwork issues such as how to gain access to the prospective group participants and individuals who are likely to provide access to the research site. According to Creswell (2007), it is important that a researcher locate key informants who may provide useful insights or vital information about the group and contacts. It is significant to mention that my approach, style, and personality were important factors in the interviewing process. It is my responsibility to consider several approaches instead of one way to communicate with the respondents and to gather their daily-lived experiences. In this regard, I had to create an enabling environment that made the participants feel safe, secure, and comfortable. I also had to adopt the best approach that elicited honest and comprehensive responses from the respondents.

Researchers must also be concerned about reciprocity between the participants under study and themselves. Accordingly, I needed to establish a good rapport with the participants. A researcher needs to encourage mutual trust, respect, and courtesy to engage the respondents in a friendly and sociable manner. This means that I had to abide according to the required ethical standards. The process of the ethnographic case study is flexible and typically involves contextually elicited responses with regards to the lived realities or experiences encountered in the field settings. Researchers also need to be sensitive to the audiences to whom they report their research. These are all relevant points that I implemented in this study.

Naaeke et al. (2011) argued that emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives are important for research because they impact the research process with regards to the argument made by a researcher, the findings of the study, and implications of the findings. This is because the focus of ethnographic studies is to interpret the culture of the group under study and the researcher's perspective may impact the knowledge produced about that particular cultural group (Naaeke et al, 2011). The goal of the ethnographic researcher is to gain an insider perspective and render it meaningfully (O'Reily, 2009). In support of this view, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) posited that the perspective of the qualitative researcher is to tune in or indwell with the experiences and meaning systems of the study participants and at the same time to be acutely aware of how one's own biases may influence what he or she is trying to understand.

There were challenges in this study like in any other study. I am an Urhobo indigene from the Western Niger Delta region and have an insider advantage in interacting and collaborating with the prospective participants in English language, the traditional Pidgin English, and the native Urhobo language. Brannick and Coghlan (2007) argued that inside researchers are native to the setting and perceived to be prone to charges of being close and thereby may not be objective. As an Urhobo indigene, I was aware of the possibility of being biased in favor of my culture and tried as much as possible to remain objective. The concept of an insider enhances the breadth and depth of researchers understanding of the population that may be inaccessible to non-indigenes (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). It was an advantage to be a member of the Urhobo group that was being studied. This led to greater depth of the data that were gathered



because I was more acceptable to the study participants than a non-native. In other words, they were most likely more open and forthcoming with their responses to the research questions. Participants were willing to share their views and experiences because of the assumption of understanding that “I am one of them.”

My role as the researcher was to gather information about the Urhobo culture and refrain from allowing my personal experiences to interfere in any manner. The advantage of being an insider is that I had a better understanding of the culture dynamics and language, and had easy access to the population. These advantages facilitated data interpretation from an understanding of responses in a culturally appropriate way. Trondsen and Sandaunet (2009) maintained that the critical role of the qualitative researcher is to provide a unique possibility of exploring the social context of the study, while engaging the research respondents in a way that elicits their own analysis of the social issues that affects them and how these issues can be addressed.

### **Establishing Working Relationship**

In order for me to establish a good working relationship with the study participants, I needed to gain their trust. As part of the strategy to achieve this aim, I initially explained the purpose of the study to them and emphasized the benefits of the study to society, key stakeholders such as the inhabitants of the region, the government, and the multinational oil corporations. I had to assure and ensure the participants of their safety, confidentiality, and privacy throughout the research process.

The term *bias* is often used to describe external or internal factors that may unintentionally contaminate the data collected and distort the results. Biases can

effectively reduce, amplify, or cancel out the real effect a researcher is trying to describe. This is one critical issue with qualitative research studies. Several factors can cause bias and thus affect the results or outcome of a study. For instance, the tendencies exist for researchers to be immensely and subjectively involved in the study.

I guarded against being subjectively immersed in this study. I was acutely aware and understood that being an indigene from the Niger-Delta region, encountering bias could not be ruled out. However, the problem arises when I fail to recognize the bias. I avoided biased research by sticking to basic research guidelines and by maintaining credibility as an astute researcher who did not assume to know too much.

### **Participants**

Sampling frame is a significant component of a research study and its use is very important to any form of research. Denscombe (2007) described a sampling frame as an objective list of the population from which researchers make their selection. I made use of a sampling frame that consists of a list of all the ex-militants from the Urhobo speaking tribe that currently participate in the amnesty initiative. In order to ensure accuracy of the sampling frame, I made sure that the frame was relevant, precise, complete, and current. The list was obtained from the local branch office of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) located in Warri, Delta State.

Sampling is also a critical component of a research study, which helps to determine the quality of a study (Gibbs et al., 2007). Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) defined sampling as a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population. Denscombe (2007) posited that the two main types of sampling techniques

are probability and nonprobability sampling. Participants in this study were not randomly selected, but rather they were chosen based on certain distinctive features. The 20 ex-militants that were chosen cut across status, age, gender, and religious background. Some of the respondents came from various professional backgrounds that may include fishermen, farmers, activists, artisans, business, and private individuals. I intended to choose participants that may never have been interviewed with regards to the reasons why the fierce militancy persists in the region despite the inception of the amnesty initiative. This is part of the new grounds that may strengthen my claim to originality.

I used purposeful sampling. Pettus-Davis, Grady, Cuddeback, and Scheyett (2011) described purposeful sampling as a nonprobability sampling technique that researchers utilize to recruit study participants from a specific predefined group. The purposeful sampling is believed to create a realistic view to better understand the phenomena that is being studied. Purposeful sampling is about selecting participants with a specific purpose in mind. This reflects the specific qualities of the participants and their relevance to the topic that is being studied. Denscombe (2007) asserted that this method of sampling is informative and economical. Once the participants had been identified, initial communication to study participants was done through the mail, which included cover letters of introduction and the consent form that formally requested participation in the study (Appendix A attached). The purpose of the research study was clearly stated in the letters. All willing participants were required to sign the informed consent form indicating that they were willing to participate in the study voluntarily and understand the purpose of the study. Signed consent forms are also shown in the attached Appendix A.

At the end of the study, all identifying characteristics of the participants that were interviewed were coded anonymously.

### **Sample Size**

Sample size is generally determined based on the objectives and purpose of the research study. According to Castillo (2009), the selection of the sample size depends on the reliability and desirability of the sampling procedures. Curry, Nembhard, and Bradley (2009) explained that adequate determination of a sample size reflects the principle of theoretical saturation and although it may not be possible to categorically define the number of participants in advance, a range of 15-30 interviews may achieve saturation. I used this method to select approximately 20 ex-militants from the list obtained. The number 20 was determined to be adequate for the reason that the fewer participants in this type of study, the more depth I was able to get from the interviews.

### **Primary Sources of Data Collection**

Creswell (2007) asserted that data collected in ethnography are considered rich in depth, detail, capable of eliciting the respondent's perspective, and the data collection process is inductive and holistic in nature. Data collection methods that were used in this ethnographic case study included field notes compositions, participant observations, discussions, and interview techniques (face-to-face interviews). I took field notes during the interviews to record information. Data collected were used for reflection and served as a resource for developing ideas on the research topic. Field notes were an essential and necessary resource that served as back up in the event that the audiotape was difficult to

hear. The field notes also helped to reduce researcher bias in the data analysis process (Babbie, 2007).

### **Observations**

Kawulich (2005) explained that a researcher uses observation method to observe the activities of the participants in their undisturbed natural environment while data are being collected. I recorded every account of my observations by taking notes in a detailed and in-depth manner.

### **Interviews**

Another important primary source of collecting data is through oral interviews. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005) emphasized that the interview method gets people to open up and talk about their opinions, experiences, and feelings and it is thus an ideal method that I utilized to collect data for my research study. The face-to-face interviews were done in English language. Interviews were made to last at least 1 hour. However, in situations where this was not possible or in instances where the allocated hour were adequate to cover all the interview questions satisfactorily, then follow-up interviews became necessary and scheduled accordingly.

### **Interview Questions**

Interview questions provide valuable information that may not be available in publications or public records. It is because of this reason that I used a guided questionnaire that included semi structured and open-ended questions to guide the interview process. The goal was to ensure coverage of all intended and follow up questions. I worded the questions so that they do not influence the answer or sound

judgmental. I needed to keep the wording neutral and avoid leading questions. Patton (2002) asserted that open-ended questions are not worded in such a way as to predetermine the dimension of the response (p.350). Accordingly, the questions began with what, why, and how. This gave the interviewee freedom to express their views. The goal was to allow for the respondents to speak out freely without reservations.

I asked questions that follow up interviewees' replies and varied the order of questions and even the wording of questions. I was flexible. Qualitative interviewing tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview and perhaps adjusting the emphasis in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge during the course of the interviews. All interviews were audio taped with prior permission obtained from the participants. Both the observation and interview process were conducted over a period of 4 weeks.

### **Informed Consent**

Prior to conducting interviews, it was important that I verbally explain to the participants the aim and purpose of the research study. The participants were advised that the research study is for academic purposes and its outcome will be made available to key stakeholders who were involved in policy formulations that might contribute to the development of the Niger Delta region, the academic community, and to social change. I established an initial contact with the participants either through the phone, face-to-face interactions, or by e-mail. An informed consent form (Appendix A) that contains a brief description and purpose of the study, background information, the researcher's name, e-mail address, phone number, Walden University representative phone number, purpose of

the research study and the content form was sent to them. I read out and explained the contents of the form and advised each participant that they were not obligated or committed to sign the informed consent forms. I also personally signed the form to confirm acknowledgement of the researcher-participant agreement.

A confirmation of the place and scheduled time of interview was conveyed by phone calls to the research participants. Respondent validations were also utilized to ensure credibility. This involved feeding back participants' interview transcripts or interpretations of the findings and confirming that the findings between the research participants and the researcher were the same. After completing the interview process, participants were requested to review and verify their recorded responses, as well as responses recorded in writing for accuracy.

### **Data Organization Techniques**

Data organization is critical for effective data analysis. Given and Olsen (2003) posited that the idea for organizing data is to retrieve from raw data that which is relevant. There are several ways that I used to manage collected data. Transcripts of the data that have been collected were coded in accordance with the responses from each participant to the question asked. I typed the transcripts into a computer file that was created especially for that purpose. I labeled the tapes in order to avoid any mix up with the tapes and also to prevent them from being recorded over. Security measures that were adopted included the use of Drop box software to save data and only accessible to the researcher. I also backed up my data by using an external storage device, such as an external hard drive, flash memory device, and my workplace computer. I made duplicates, which served as

back-up copies as a final act of data management. Mack et al. (2005) advised that the duplicate copies should not be stored in the same location as the original tapes.

Throughout the duration of conducting the actual research, I used a computer that was only accessible to me and the password was protected. Employing a checklist is another effective method that I used to manage data. I made a checklist of all the things that I would do during the interview process. For example, I had a list of to do items that were contained in the checklist. To do items in this case included the written consent forms that had my signature and that of the participants, hand written notes, audiotapes of the interview, expanded notes, videotapes (if necessary), typed and hand written translations of transcripts. I kept the data collected under lock and key in my home office. Data will be securely kept for a minimum of 5 years after completion of the study. Afterwards all data will be destroyed, according to the principals established by Mack et al. (2005).

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis technique used in this study was content analysis of data. Content analysis was used to determine the presence of certain words and concepts within the text data. The meanings and relationships of such words and concepts were then analyzed and conclusions drawn from the information contained in the text data. I applied conventional content analysis by using open-ended questions. The research participants were asked 23 open-ended questions to determine what they think about the relationship between the implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the



Urhobo culture. The information derived from their responses were then compared and analyzed in order to form a comprehensive report.

### **Transcription**

Interviews were conducted in English. I then transcribed the tape records that contained the responses of the interviewees. The transcribed data were then analyzed. This method of analysis was chosen in order to understand the experiences of the participants, how they make sense of these experiences and what meaning these experiences hold for them.

I also used reflective journal entries and field notes. Inferences and conclusions were drawn from the primary data collected. Data analysis in ethnographic case study is an ongoing process that begins with the observation and interview stages and continues until the study is finally completed. Hatch (2002) posited that ethnographic case researchers will continue to construct meanings as they interact with the data on an ongoing basis until they reach an information saturation point. I had to make sure that there was enough data saturation to yield adequate results for this study.

I deliberately limited the study to the Urhobo ethnic group for several reasons. In order to achieve a realistic objective on the ground fieldwork, there was need to limit this study to one particular ethnic group considering the time and resources that would be needed to complete a much broader study area. This would appear to be more difficult to achieve if the study included the other ethnic tribes that makes up the Niger Delta region. The Urhobo cultural group is the largest ethnic group in the Western Niger Delta region (Ekeh, 2008). The size of the Urhobo population is large enough to make

the study of Urhobo culture and its impact on the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region meaningful, relevant, and of significance.

Ekeh (2005) posited that studies in Urhobo culture represents a relatively new area of research especially one that is approached from an indigenous viewpoint. As an Urhobo indigene, I am familiar with the culture and believed that a research study on Urhobo culture would likely be conducive to both the conceptual and theoretical framework that was utilized for this study. For example, the concept of community participation served as an ample structure to enable me to articulate what has been learned about the Urhobo culture and also explain the natural progression of the amnesty program from its inception to date. The polarities of democracy model provided an adequate lens through which I could view the Urhobo culture, describe, and provide a synthetic analysis of its impact on the amnesty program. I analyzed all data manually to maximize personal interaction with all data that were collected.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in research ensures that the findings of the study represent the data that has been collected. Trustworthiness establishes that the findings of the study are interpreted creditably. Considering the inherent descriptive and naturalistic nature of qualitative research there is the need for rigor. Rigor refers to the means by which a writer can demonstrate the competence, integrity, and the legitimacy of the entire research processes and procedures. The basic strategy that a qualitative researcher uses to ensure rigor is to utilize a systematic, self-conscious research design, data collection method, communication, and interpretation of data.

In order to establish trustworthiness for this study, I reduced or completely eliminated conflicting ideas that may be subjective to the study. In this regard, I used a combination of validity strategies that included clarification of researcher bias, comparing results findings by cross checking with other different sources like the peer reviewed articles, checking transcribed data for obvious mistakes, utilizing the views of respondents that have been recorded in field notes, and checking with research participants to corroborate accuracy of data collected from them on a frequent basis (Creswell, 2009).

According to Morse et al. (2002), without rigor, research is worthless, loses its credibility and usefulness, and it becomes a work of fiction. Morse et al. posited that some studies substitute reliability and validity with the concept of trustworthiness containing four aspects that include confirmability, credibility, transferability, and dependability (p. 14). Murphy and Yelder (2010) explained that reliability in qualitative research describes how far these four aspects are present in the research procedures. Morse et al. explained that some specific methodological strategies that researchers may use to demonstrate qualitative rigor or to attain trustworthiness include categorizing, audit trail, peer debriefing, structural corroboration, member checking, and confirming results with participants.

### **Confirmability (Objectivity)**

Validity strategies in this study include triangulating data sources, using rich thick descriptions to convey the result findings, and clarifying researcher bias. Whitmore et al. (2001) posited that developing validity in a qualitative research study is

challenging because of the need to incorporate rigor, creativity, and subjectivity in the research process. In order for me to achieve confirmability in the research study, I took steps to demonstrate that my result findings emerged from the data and not my own predispositions. The rationale behind confirmability is that it helps to ensure that the data and interpretations of the inquiry have logical and clear linking associations. I took all necessary steps to ensure that the findings of my study are the results of the ideas and experiences of the participating ex-militants and not my preferences as the researcher.

A key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which I admit my own predispositions. To this end, contained within the research report is a well-stated acknowledgement of the methods adopted, weaknesses in the techniques employed, explanation of the choice of a particular approach as opposed to others, and reasons behind decisions made. I used rich thick descriptions to convey the result findings.

### **Credibility (Internal Validity)**

Credibility means establishing that the findings of the study are credible, believable, and true. Merriam (2008) posited that validity of the study is a question of whether the findings of the study match reality that can be observed in multiple or different ways. Trochim (2001) emphasized that the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results findings are the participants themselves. However, a researcher may be involved in assisting and ensuring the validity of the study. Ihantola and Kihn (2011) emphasized that the primary focus of validity in a qualitative study is for a researcher to capture the lived experiences of the participants under study and to represent them authentically in such a convincing manner that indicates an in-depth

comprehension and understanding of the phenomena. Also important are the characteristics of a researcher, who must have the ability to clarify concisely, summarize, adapt to changing circumstances, and be responsive, sensitive, and holistic (Morse et al., 2002). Good research is a reflection of the investigator's creativity, flexibility, sensitivity, and skill in using the verification strategies that ultimately determine the reliability and validity of the research study.

Golafshani (2003) emphasized that the researcher is the instrument in a qualitative study and as such the credibility of the study depends on the ability and efforts of the researcher. Patton (2002) explained that to assure the credibility of the researcher, it is important that researcher reveal their personal information. I included an appendix that contains information about my past experiences, prior knowledge about the research topic, professional status, and training. My personal and intellectual biases, prejudices, and orientations that may likely have shaped the interpretation and approach to the study were made clear (Creswell, 2007). The distance between the participants and I was discussed. The perspectives of the research participants were also used to generate the credibility of the study. The participant must view the interview process as professional and the researcher must view the interviewee as competent within the scope of the interview. This understanding establishes credibility within the research study. However, this trustworthiness can be hindered if the interviewees perceive or observe any bias on my part.

Triangulation is another validity strategy that was used to ensure credibility of this study. Triangulation means combining two or more approaches to the investigation of a

research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. Triangulation has come to assume different meanings although using more than one research method within a strategy of convergent validity appears to be the most common. My data collection method involved the use of observations and in-depth interviews, which is referred to as methodological triangulation. According to Mays and Pope (2000), triangulation ensures comprehensiveness and encourages a more reflexive analysis of the data. Triangulation increases confidence in research data, by creating innovative ways of understanding a phenomenon, revealing unique findings, and it provides a clearer understanding of the problem. This further explains the reason behind this ethnographic case study as the most suitable for this type of study. In support of this view, Patton (2002) asserted that researchers use blended or multiple approaches in a study because no single method sufficiently solves the problem of rival causal factors. In other words, each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality.

Another means for establishing credibility of my study was using research methods that are well established. Multiple sources of data collection methods such as literature reviews, periodicals, and semi structured interviews were used to address credibility of the study. Merriam (2008) agreed with this view and commented that multiple sources of data collection may be used to provide creditability, validate research findings, and reduce researcher bias. In other words, a researcher who collects the same information from different sources provides credibility to the research study.

### **Transferability (External Validity)**

According to Merriam (2008), external validity in a research study refers to the extent to which research findings can be generalized or transferred to other settings or contexts. In this regard, I created an account of method and data that can stand independently so that another skilled researcher or peer could examine and analyze the same data in the same way and come to basically the same conclusions. It is critical and important that the reader is able to trace the course of the research step-by-step via the procedures described and the decisions made. I provided a comprehensive and detailed description of the methodology, which will help the reader to determine whether or not to accept the data and constructs that emerge. In other words, a detailed report will enable the reader to determine whether the research findings can be generalized beyond the setting in which they were generated or applied in similar settings (Beverland & Lindgreen, 2010).

Preliminary theories that ultimately were not borne out by the data will be highlighted. I accomplished this goal by examining different themes that may provide support for my research findings and also explored other alternative explanations for the data that has been collected. Mays and Pope (2000) emphasized that a long established tactic that researchers utilize in improving the quality of explanations in qualitative studies is to search for and discuss elements in the collected data that appear to be contradictory or contradict the emerging explanation of the phenomena that is being studied. According to Mays and Pope, such case analysis helps qualitative researchers to

refine the analysis until it can explain all or a vast majority of the aspect of the phenomena under study.

### **Dependability (Reliability)**

Dependability criterion is based on the concept of repeatability or replicability. Reliability as used in this content means whether the result findings of a study could be measured the same over time with the same outcome. The researcher is accountable and responsible for describing and explaining whatever changes if any that may occur during the research and how these changes may affect the study.

Dependability of qualitative research requires that the study provide detailed information that will enable other researchers to replicate the process and attain the same or similar results. It is therefore important that readers understand clearly the processes or methods used in the study. Audiotape was used in the interview process of this research study. This serves as another way to ensure the retest reliability of the data analysis process. An advantage of audiotape is that it documents the process of analysis in detail through meticulous records of the observations and interview process.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical norms promote the aims of research. Values such as accountability, mutual respect, and fairness are fundamental to collaborative. Hickman (2010) posited that ethics is a system of moral values or principles of right conduct. Creswell (2007) explained that all research studies need to demonstrate and maintain integrity throughout the research process. Creswell also maintained that there need to be clear and ethical measures outlined to protect participants. Researchers conduct research studies within a



broad array of institutional settings that include prisons, schools, hospitals, colleges, and universities (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). It therefore becomes even more important because there are some participants such as the mentally handicapped, children, and prisoners that may belong to the vulnerable category and so may need to be protected.

The purpose of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to ensure that the research study complies with ethical standards with regards to human participants in the study. A certificate issued by the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research with certificate number 703942 is attached (Appendix C). This demonstrates that I do understand ethical considerations and the importance of protecting human participants in any research study. As a researcher, the safety of the participants is of paramount importance and in this regard, I had to ensure the welfare and safety of all research participants. I treated all research participants with respect and courtesy at all times. This helped to enhance mutual trust and generate an effective researcher-participant relationship. It was equally important to provide participants the opportunity to review interview transcripts to ensure that responses are accurate and also provide validity to the research instruments.

I took a number of measures to ensure the ethical protections of the research participants. One way to do this was to protect the identity of the participants and thus ensure their confidentiality. My approach was to avoid using real names. Instead I assigned numeric codes. Participants were informed that participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without providing any reason. Participants were also informed about the duration of the interview process and advised

that whenever they felt discomfort they were free to take a break or stop the interview. I took into account that data, evidence, findings, and conclusions are not fabricated, misrepresented, or falsified as proposed by Creswell (2007).

Important aspects of ethics that deal with data that can be easily influenced include the emotions, reactions, and subjective opinions of the researcher (Creswell, 2007; Trochim, 2001). It is important that I maintained honesty and objectivity throughout the research process. All the above mentioned factors were taken into cognizance in my dealings with the research participants, as these considerations ensured the integrity of the research study. Transcribed data including audiotapes of interviews obtained from participants will be securely stored for 5 years in my personal computer in my home office. This computer will require a unique password. After 5 years, the folder and manual files will be destroyed in compliance with ethical research practice and universal research standards.

### **Summary and Transition**

The methodology a researcher employs drives the research study and ensures that the topic being investigated including the research questions that the study seeks to answer are satisfactorily and adequately addressed. I outlined and justified the selection of the qualitative research tradition and the ethnographic case study as the most appropriate choice for this type of research study. The research questions in this study were adequately answered. The methodology that was applied in this study involved multiple observations in the field, including ongoing interviews, dialogues, and conversations. There was a discussion on the role of the researcher and the sampling

technique. The data collected were analyzed following the qualitative tradition of content analysis. Content analysis was used to provide valuable historical/cultural insights of the Urhobo cultural group through an in-depth analysis of the Urhobo culture and its impact on the implementation of the amnesty program. Themes that were generated and patterns that were discovered during the review of literature were compared. This form of analysis also enabled me to identify the intentions, focus, and communication trends of the Urhobo cultural group. For instance, the emotional state (attitudinal and behavioral responses of the Urhobo cultural group towards the amnesty program) was described in great detail. This chapter concluded with the reliability and validity of methods and techniques adopted. The next two chapters present the data, analysis, and provide a detailed discussion on the applicability of the findings, implications for social change, and recommendations for actions and further studies.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to examine Urhobo cultural values, practices, traditions, and beliefs and explore whether they may or may not contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The ethnographic technique used in this study involved spending time with the study participants in order to gain a thorough understanding of their daily realities. Findings were then relayed in a descriptive and interpretive manner. I sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

### **Central Research Question**

Are there factors in the culture of the Urhobo speaking community that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region?

### **Sub Questions**

1. What are the most distinctive sociocultural values of the Urhobo speaking communities?
2. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for community participation?
3. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for environmental protection?
4. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for managing the polarities of democracy?

5. What is the Urhobo speaking communities' view of the amnesty program with regards to how it is being implemented in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
6. Are there factors in the Urhobo culture that can contribute to resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
7. In what ways can the amnesty program be better structured to achieve greater effectiveness?

This chapter is a presentation of the results of the data collection process, demographic descriptions of the participants, the data analysis processes, evidence of the trustworthiness of the study, and the results of the study.

### **Participants Demographic Data**

The samples for this study included 20 ex-militants from Urhobo ethnic background who currently participate in the amnesty program. In order to address the issue of confidentiality, each of the participants is identified and designated with a letter P (for participant) and a corresponding number (for instance, P1, P2, P3, etc.) assigned to them in the order in which they were interviewed, which was determined by their individual schedules and my schedule. All the study participants were males and their ages ranged from 20 to 45 years. The educational backgrounds of the participants ranged from high school drop out to university graduate. The gross annual income level of the participants ranged from about 780,000.00 Naira to about 1,020,000.00 Naira, which is an equivalent of about \$ 4,588.00 and \$6,000.00 respectively at the current exchange rate of 170.00 Naira to \$1.

The socioeconomic characteristics of the participants are provided in Table N1. Figure N1 depicts a graph that shows the age distribution by individual study participants. The age distributions of the participants by age ranges are shown in Table N2, while a graph that also depicts the distribution by age ranges is shown in Figure N2. Table N3 shows the distribution of gross annual income levels of the participants both in Naira (Nigerian Currency) and in the United States Dollar equivalent. The educational level distributions of the participants are provided in Table N4. Figure N3 shows a graph that depicts an overview of trainees and training allocations for the Phase 1 implementation process of the amnesty program. A global map that indicates all the countries where trainees were sent for vocational trainings and skills acquisition is provided in Figure N4. The source of both Figures N3 and N4 were documents reviewed in the office of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) located in Warri.

### **The Data Collection Process**

A preliminary meeting was held with the coordinator of the amnesty program that is under the direct supervision of the local branch office of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) located in Warri, Delta State. Contact information including phone numbers of all potential participants of Urhobo origin who currently participate in the amnesty program was obtained from the coordinator of the amnesty program. Purposeful sampling was the method used to select participants from this list. This method was utilized in order to ensure that participants cut across age, educational, and professional background. Participants included individuals from three different organizations located in Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. I also made sure that none of the participants had

previously taken part in any similar study. This was purposefully done in order to strengthen my claim to originality.

### **Interviews**

I contacted a majority of the potential participants by phone, while others were contacted in person. During this initial contact with the participants, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to each of the participants. The participants were assured that their names would not be disclosed in the study but that they would rather be assigned numeric codes to protect their identities. The assigned numerical codes were also recorded on the audiotape before taping of each interview began. This enabled me to accurately match the notes that were written down with the audio taped interview.

The initial contact with potential participants paved the way for subsequent meetings and discussions. In my initial meeting with the study participants, I explained to the participants' their responsibilities and rights as clearly indicated by the IRB guidelines and regulations. All the study participants were given an opportunity to review and sign the consent form. They were also given the chance to ask questions that related to the study. Participants were informed that the study findings or outcome would be shared with them and other interested key stakeholders. This initial meeting with the participants did help to reduce any fear or suspicion that the participants might have had about the study. All the potential participants contacted were willing to participate in the study.

Participants were also advised that whenever they feel discomfort they were free to take a break or stop the interview. Participants were also encouraged to choose

locations that were appropriate and convenient for their participation. All the participants chose private conference rooms located within the workplace environment. These environments were free from interruptions, obstructions, noises, and distractions. The participants were advised that the interviews would be kept on an average of between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Each one of the participants was willing to talk about their daily lived experiences without hesitation and expressed their opinions and views without reservation. Participants were also advised that their participation is voluntary and that they could opt out of the study without giving any reason or cause.

Twenty face-to-face interviews with the use of 23 open-ended questions (Appendix D) were conducted in a 4-week period from February 10 to March 14, 2014. When necessary, follow-up questions were also used to elucidate further details, explain and clarify responses. The time frame for these interviews varied and it was based on each participant's personality as some were more willing to elaborate further than others. Each interview was only between the participant and me.

The interviews were recorded on a Sony PCM-M10/B portable digital field audio recorder and subsequently stored on a laptop computer. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim into a Microsoft word document. Prior permission for the audio recording was granted by each of the participants. This process provided over 14 hours of oral data focusing primarily on participants' views and experiences concerning the amnesty program and perspectives on how the amnesty program affected their lives.

The tones of the interviews were casual, informal, and conversational. The participants were initially deliberately engaged in a brief small talk on general and



inconsequential issues. This was done to put them in a relaxed mood. The handwritten notes and tape recordings are all secured and locked in a safe place. I am the only one with access to this safe location. I intend to safe guard these documents for a period of at least 5 years.

### **Nonparticipant Observation**

Nonparticipation observation is a relatively unobtrusive qualitative research strategy for gathering data without interacting directly with its participants. In this case, I was physically present in the natural work environment of the participants. In each instance of the observation period, I observed the participants' activities, recorded my observations by utilizing field notes without interacting directly with the participants. The reason I chose the nonparticipant observation method was because of the need to make the observation as natural as possible.

Field notes were utilized to capture the daily activities and observations of the study participants. Observing the participants enabled me to focus on the phenomenon of the topic concepts. For instance, through this method, I was able to gain a better understanding and insight of the culture and settings of the participants. Observing the participants also enabled me to get close to the setting and acquire some information that the participants might have been disinclined and unwilling to discuss during the interview process. During these periods of observations, I took field notes, log entries and carefully documented what the participants said and did. With the use of reflective journaling and field notes, I was able to reflect on the data that was being collected during the observation process. It is important to mention that field notes were collected before,

during, and after each field observation trip. The reason for composing field notes before each observation trip is to strategize and map out a specific plan on what I need to focus on during the observation. The field notes also helped me not to forget any important point that may be crucial to understanding the phenomena that I was studying. The log entries and reflective journal notes are my evaluations and reflections on the data that were collected while they were still fresh in my mind.

It was important to ensure that all necessary and critical components of cultural responsiveness of the participants were covered during the observation process. Consequently, I developed an observation guide (Appendix I) that provided a structure and point of reference as observations were conducted. The guide also helped me to remember key things to take note of during the observation process.

For instance, there were three goals I needed to accomplish. First, observe the total environment of the participants, while taking note of the cultural demographics of the other staff members and the general work area. Second, observe the interactions and activities of the participants, while taking note of the general rapport. Third, observe the presence or absence of other people including other cultural and ethnic groups, guest speakers, community members, and nonparticipating members.

The initial period of fieldwork for the nonparticipant observation took place over a period of 1 month. The participants in this study were observed 2 hours daily, three times a week for a period of 4 weeks. I completed a total of 24 hours observations of the participants while at work. Ideally, the observation periods should have been longer than

2 hours a day; but, time constraints on the study meant that longer periods were impossible.

The environment in which the participants were working was sometimes cramped, making it difficult to follow them around discreetly, without bumping into them. A variety of situations were encountered. It is important that I mention that on numerous occasions, I had to observe more than two subjects at one time. This proved to be decisive because inevitably I had to abandon the observation if details were to be recorded simultaneously. Despite this limitation and also the limited number of days that could be allocated to observation of the participants, the study revealed a rich variety of data.

I observed the three workplace environments of the participants. This included the physical settings of the participants' workplace organizations. In one of the organizations, the centralized computer systems observed in the computer rooms were orderly and neatly arranged. There were libraries of training materials, manuals, books, software, and other technical materials neatly arranged on one side of the room. I observed that the reference and training materials were frequently used and easily accessed. I observed decorations in the computer room which took the form of posters related to technology. Some of the technology posters observed included hardware and software vendors such as Compaq, Microsoft Corporation, and Cisco Systems. There were also pictures of different types of printers and computers which adorned one side of the wall. I also observed the cultural demographics of most of the other staff members. A majority of the staff members observed in all three sites were people from the Niger Delta region,

including indigenes from the Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw, and Itshekiri tribes with a few noticeable exceptions of expatriates from the western world. There were also quite a few staff members from the other major ethnic tribes such as the Ibos and Yorubas.

The physical setting of the computer room was quite different from the work area of the machine operators and forklift drivers as I observed in the other organizations. The primary difference is that the physical setting of the work area of the forklift drivers and machine operators conveyed an atmosphere of restrictions. Restrictions ranged from signs warning that access was restricted to only authorize personnel to sophisticated coded locking devices where entry could only be gained by using an electronic identification card or by entering a special combination of numbers. The work areas observed in all the sites had specialized tools including work benches. I observed technician tools which appeared to be well maintained in all the sites.

Throughout the study, numerous activities and interactions were observed that helped to inform this study. For example, I observed that the participants tend to stay together during lunch breaks even when they work in different departments. On one particular day, one of the organizations had a general meeting and all of the participants sat together. They appear to share a common bond amongst themselves. I observed this routine throughout the duration of the observation period. This common bond appears to be related specifically to their culture as Urhobos and probably to their past activities as militants. I observed that it appears that general social interactions within the workplace environment were rare except during lunch breaks and general meetings.

Participants that were machine operators exhibited a knowledge of technical know-how when solving a technical problem (e.g. when a machine broke down). I observed that one of the participants acting in his capacity as the primary IT management staff reviewed other staff performances, answered their questions, gave advice, and directions with utmost professionalism. On one occasion, a nonparticipant technician made a recommendation to a participant to solve a problem. The participant indicated that the recommendation was inappropriate and offered a different solution which the nonparticipant technician readily accepted with thanks. This interaction indicated that there was a general good rapport between participants that were ex-militants and other non-participating members.

### **Description of Data Analysis Process**

The data collected were content-analyzed. This involved examining the data collected in an inductive manner. This process involved several steps such as organizing and interrogating data to develop relationships, patterns, themes, explanations, and interpretations. Data were collected via field notes compiled during observations, formal interviews with study participants, and review of documents relating to the amnesty program. After each interview, the voice recorded conversations were transferred to a computer file with a distinct file name for each interview. I listened to the audio tapes several times and read and reread transcribed texts several times to ensure that the transcriptions were accurate. Rereading data and keeping an accurate record of the relationships was vital to data organization in this research study. As a result of an exhaustive review of the interview transcripts, I was able to strategically analyze and

identify common themes that emerged from the study. It was imperative to ensure that all the study questions were adequately addressed. Raw data were grouped into segments of related information, and then coded and categorized according to the most important meanings/themes from the research questions and/or participant responses to each question.

I applied the selective reading approach by highlighting statements that appear to be revealing of the main themes/meanings in the responses of the study participants. This process enabled me to identify themes/meanings in the interview texts that convey participants' perception about the amnesty program and also about the Urhobo culture. For better management and organization, the identified themes are ordered and represented in such a way that they became talking points in the presentation of the results. I made sure that the written narratives obtained from the interviews represented the actual stories of the participants and tried as much as possible to use the participants' actual words. For better interpretation and valid conclusion, I took the findings and stories back to all the participants for any refinement, alteration, clarification, and verification. It is important to mention that my interaction with the data helped me to have an informed opinion and conclusions about the responses from the participants.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The process of establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative research study involves addressing the areas of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In order to ensure evidence of trustworthiness, I employed member checking during and after the interview. In other words, I checked the accuracy of the

data collected from the research participants during and after the interviews. I sent transcripts of the transcribed data to the study participants for confirmation and assurance that they were not misinterpreted or mischaracterized.

### **Credibility**

Credibility in qualitative studies means establishing that the findings of the study are credible, believable, and true. The credibility of qualitative methods depends on the competence and skill of the researcher. Triangulation is a validity strategy that was used to ensure credibility of this study. Triangulation means combining two or more approaches in the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. According to Yin (2009), corroborating interview data with other sources is an effort to remove bias. Using an ethnographic research design in this study reduced threats to validity by employing multiple sources to collect data that led to triangulation over an extended period of time. In support of this view, Wang (2011) emphasized that the use of triangulation for the generalized research findings of a single case study authenticates the results of the study. I utilized both observation and interview methods to gather data on participants' perspectives of the amnesty program. In addition, data collection in this study was done by interviewing participants from three different organizations in order to get diverse views.

### **Transferability**

External validity in a research study refers to the extent to which research findings can be generalized or transferred to other settings or contexts (Merriam, 2008). In order to enhance transferability, I provided detailed description of the research context,

including the Urhobo culture, amnesty program, and the assumptions that were central to the research.

### **Dependability (Reliability)**

Dependability criterion is based on the concept of repeatability or replicability. Reliability as used in this context means whether the study would achieve similar results if the same methods were applied in the same contexts. Vivid descriptions of the research design, its implementation, and in-depth details of the data collection process, including a reflective appraisal of the research study are some of the ways used to ensure the dependability of this qualitative research study. I also provided detailed information about the methods and processes used in the study. For example, I described in great detail the data collection process, while also providing in-depth descriptions of the data gathering methods such as field notes, observations, and the use of audio tapes for interviews. This also serves as another way to ensure the retest reliability of the data analysis process. In addition, dependability is enhanced by the thick descriptions contained in the data obtained through the interview process.

### **Confirmability (Objectivity)**

The rationale behind confirmability is that it helps to ensure that the data and interpretations of the inquiry have logical and clear linking associations. In order to achieve confirmability in the research study, I took steps that demonstrated that findings emerged from the data collected and not from my personal predispositions. It was important that I recognized my personal feelings and experiences as potential biases which could influence the process unless they were set aside. Consequently, I used



reflexive bracketing to give meaning to the daily lived experiences of the study participants. I made conscious effort to quote participants and refrained from making any revisions or changes to the views and comments expressed by them. In order to ensure authenticity, after transcription of the interviews, I returned the transcripts to participants to verify accuracy and corroborate the data analyzed. This provided an opportunity for the participants to review and clarify any ambiguities, the meanings of their statements, views, and comments expressed during the interview process. A security code known only to me was assigned to the transcripts.

### **Results**

The result presented herewith is a holistic interpretation on the data derived from the entire set of 23 questions (Appendix D). In other words, it was not until all questions were asked and answered that actual value patterns emerged on questions about cultural values. The primary goal of the data analysis portion of this study was to identify common themes and interpret meanings. The analysis focused on the most recurring themes which are the expressions, views, and ideas most often displayed in the data. Observation was an important aspect of this ethnographic case study. Throughout the interviewing process, hand written notes were taken with regards to what was observed about the facial expressions and body language of the participants. These non-verbal communications also served to inform the study.

### **Central Research Question**

The sub questions mentioned in Chapter 3 were designed to answer the central research question addressed in this study which is: are there factors in the culture of the

Urhobo speaking community that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region? The Urhobo culture is a key concept in this study. It is therefore important to identify Urhobo cultural values, practices, traditions, and beliefs and explain whether they may or may not contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. To answer this question, 23 semi-structured interview questions (Appendix D) were utilized to help find answers to the overall research question.

### **Cultural Themes Identified**

There were five major cultural themes identified. The findings are presented according to the most recurring themes.

**Social justice, equality, and fairness.** This was a notable cultural theme identified. When asked what the valuable belief systems of the Urhobo people are, all of the participants mentioned the strong belief in rights, social justice, equality, fairness, and rights to natural resources. P20 explained:

The Urhobo people have a strong belief in social justice, equality, and fairness.

The average Urhobo man would not want to be cheated of what rightfully belong to him. We have Warri Refinery, Kokori Flow Station and other oil installations in our land and yet our people continue to suffer, while other people who do not have oil continue to benefit from our resources. I think this is very unfair to our people; that is why we will continue to fight for our entitlements.

P2 shared similar thoughts about the Urhobo people having strong beliefs in their rights to their natural resources and rights as human beings and stated that:

A valuable belief system for most Urhobo people is their rights as human beings. The Urhobos are proud people and would do anything to protect their human rights. We inherit our proud heritage from our forefathers and we will not allow what rightfully belongs to us to be taken away while our people suffer. We have to fight for what belongs to us. We have been peaceful and yet nothing has been done about our suffering. Look at our farmlands, they have been destroyed by these oil companies and our people have not been adequately compensated. No light, no good roads, no good hospitals, and yet other areas with no oil have better water supply and roads than we have. Is that fair in your opinion?

While expressing similar views on the Urhobos belief systems in their rights to their natural resources, freedom from oppression, social justice, and fairness P14 stated that:

The Urhobos valuable belief systems include rights for their resources, social justice, and freedom from oppression. We as a people generally do not want to be oppressed and yet that is exactly what we feel like because we are in the minority. Look at Minna in Niger State for instance. Minna has a better drainage system, you cannot see gutter in the whole of Minna. They have good roads, constant supply of electricity and yet Minna do not produce anything. Minna has an international airport that is under-utilized, and yet look at the whole of Urhoboland, what do we have? Nothing. With all our oil resources. Nothing to show for it.

P19 confirmed the similar thoughts as expressed by the above mentioned participants and stated that:

The Urhobos believe in social justice, fairness, and their rights to their God given resources. They would do anything to fight for what rightfully belongs to them. I heard the amnesty program will come to an end in 2015. If it ends there will be problems in the region. We will destroy the gas plant in Otujeremi. I am ready to die for this cause because my brothers and families are all suffering. How is it that we have resources and yet others benefit from it, while we suffer? The Urhobos will not allow this to continue.

This belief in their rights, social justice, fairness, and equality helps to inculcate the ideal of harmonious living among Urhobo people. However, one needs to know the content of the belief to be able to understand and appreciate how it helps the people to realize the community ideal of harmonious living. For example, the interviews conducted in the course of this study revealed that the concept of culture is deeply enshrined in ancestral belief and in traditional religion which has been greatly observed and transmitted from one Urhobo community to another. This may help to explain why the concept of culture cannot be ignored when considering factors that may contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the region. P5 expounded on the significance of ancestral belief for the average Urhobo person and explained that:

The structure for traditional Urhobo is fundamentally holistic, sacred and highly integrated. Hence, the belief in ancestors and the supernatural order provides

traditional Urhobo society a useful system that helps people to impose divine authority and sanction to their life. The average Urhobo people believe strongly in ancestral divine interventions and usually invoke their presence in many of their daily activities.

**Empowerment.** This was also a notable cultural theme identified based on the responses from the participants. Twelve of the participants used the word *empowerment* and suggested empowering the indigenes through job trainings and subsequent employment. When asked in what ways they thought the government or the multinational oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta region can contribute towards sustaining stability and restoring lasting peace, P10 said:

The federal government can contribute towards restoring peace and stability in the region by bringing development to the area. This can be achieved if the government decides to build schools, hospitals, good roads, and providing drinking water and electricity. The government can also empower the people through training and by providing good paying jobs.

While answering the same question, P17 shared similar thoughts on empowering the indigenous people and stated that:

It is important that the multinational corporations operating in the region to empower the people and compensate them for destruction to their farmlands and properties. The introduction of the amnesty program is a good way to start. It is important that the government also provide jobs for those that have successfully completed the program. This was the original agreement. However, that has not

been the case. For instance, about twenty of my boys who dropped their weapons have not been trained nor compensated in any way. In fact, some of them think that I have been bribed and conspired with the federal government to deceive them to surrender their weapons for nothing. As I speak with you, some of these boys are threatening to return to the creeks.

Similarly, P1 also emphasized the importance of empowering the people and maintained that:

The federal government should empower the people by training them and giving them jobs. Some people have been trained and yet do not have jobs. The multinational oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta region can contribute towards sustaining stability and restoring lasting peace by helping to train and employ the indigenous people and also develop the area where they do business. How can an oil company profit from the area where they do business and yet fail to develop that area? Peace can be achieved if the people are empowered through training, vocational skill acquisition, and then provide employment to the indigenous people and also bring some form of development to the area.

**Sense of community/communal living.** 10 participants identified a sense of community/communal living as important Urhobo cultural values. The idea of community and communal living are highly cherished values that are features which characterize the life of traditional Urhobo society and thus need to be taken into consideration in the development and implementation of the amnesty program. Statements from the participants indicate that the Urhobo culture specifically relates to

the successful implementation of the amnesty program. For example, P20 emphasized that:

Community-living is an important and cherished cultural value among traditional Urhobo people. These cultural values are important because they help to promote peace and foster harmony. For instance, communal farmland, the public shrine, market-place, or stream are generally surrounded with taboos, including who may or may not enter, and when and under what circumstances people are permitted or not to enter such places. These cultural values of the Urhobo people include our norms, taboos, and prohibitions that are directed towards protecting us as a community. They have been handed down to us from our forefathers and we simply cannot disregard them. This is what identifies us as a people and we strongly respect and cherish them.

The above statement helps to explain the significance of taking cognizance of the Urhobo culture when considering the successful implementation of the amnesty program. In explaining the importance of Urhobo culture, P6 added:

One important cultural value of the Urhobos is communal living. The Urhobos share life intensely in common. There are communal shrines, market squares, masquerades, ritual objects and festivals for social, economic and religious purposes. From when I can remember, we have always done things together as a group. If anyone of us suffers for anything, it affects the rest of us. This is why we hold such values sacred and consider them very important.

This statement remains true in spite of the rivalry experience of modern politics and brutal internecine strife in certain parts of Urhoboland. For traditional Urhobo, the community is basically sacred. P15 also expounded on the concept of communal living and stated that:

For traditional Urhobo, communal living is an expression of deep common interests and values and much more than simply a social grouping of people bound together by reasons of natural origin. Primary community loyalties to one's extended family and village continue to influence people including those people who are resident outside their communities.

Ten of the participants who identified a sense of community as distinctive Urhobo cultural value said it was important because community provides their identity as a people. P5 pointed out the importance of culture to the Urhobo people and explained that:

As a people, we celebrate important traditional rituals and cultural events like initiation, title-taking or festival. For example, it is customary for the Urhobo People to generally return to their villages from their residence in the cities from time to time to join members of their village community to celebrate important traditional rituals and cultural events like initiation, title-taking or festival. From their residence in urban cities, the Urhobo indigenes send substantial financial contributions to their rural home communities to support various development projects like provision of pipe-borne water, building of educational institutions and scholarship awards, funds to send young men and women on further studies



in foreign countries or in one's own country. These are some of our customs that help to bind us together as a people.

P6 confirmed the views expressed by some of the participants and further validated the significance of culture to the Urhobo people and pointed out that:

The experience of sharing communal farmland, streams, markets, shrines and festivals have brought about a sense of community among the Urhobo people.

Culture represents our distinctive way of life as a people, social group, community, or nation. As a group of people we share and do things together.

The responses from the participants corroborates the assertion that Urhobo people cherish their cultural heritage mainly because it is seen as their identity as a people. Sense of community is an important Urhobo cultural value. It represents culture for the Urhobo people. Taking part in communal affairs is a significant way of living amongst the Urhobos. In other words, community represents who they are. This explains why respect for customs and traditions is an important communal obligation.

**Respect for customs and traditions.** Four of the participants who identified customs and traditions as distinctive Urhobo cultural values said it was because cultural values control much of their social, moral, and political systems. For example, the responses from the participants indicate that the Urhobos have a tremendous belief in traditional religion. When asked in what ways these cultural values are distinctive or important, P14 stated that:

The Urhobos have a strong respect for our customs and tradition. Customs and traditions represent our ways of life. They identify us as a people. A good

example of an important cultural value for the Urhobo is their belief in the traditional religion which clearly plays a distinctive role as the ultimate source of supernatural power and authority that sanction and reinforce public morality. It is this belief of the average Urhobo individual in traditional religion that is able to maintain social order, peace and harmony. For instance, traditional Urhobo society believes that success in life, including the gift of children, wealth and prosperity, are all blessings from the gods and ancestors.

Highlighting the importance of respect for Urhobo customs and traditions, P8 explained that:

Our community represents our customs, traditions, and ways of living that has been passed down from our fore fathers. These ways of living has helped to sustain us as a people. We cherish these values and customs. It is what makes us who we are. It is our identity as Urhobo people.

**Respect for elders and respect for authority.** Another notable theme identified is respect for elders who are seen as people of authority within the Urhobo community. Sense of respect for authority and the elders are strong Urhobo cultural values. Practically all the participants mentioned elders as people who can best represent their interests. Three of the participants identified respect for elders as the most distinctive cultural value of the Urhobo people. When asked in what ways are these cultural values distinctive or important, three of the participants who identified respect for elders as distinctive Urhobo cultural values said it was important because elders are believed to possess wisdom and experience in the affairs of people. P13 explained that:

Elders are seen to possess wisdom because of their age. Age is a symbol of experience and intelligence, and the mistreatment of elders is viewed as taboo act. These cultural values are important because they help to promote peace and foster harmony. The elder in most traditional Urhobo communities begins the day by offering prayers and supplications to the ancestors for good health for himself, that of his family, for progress, peace, harmony, protection from the attack of evil forces, witches, and for the elimination of his enemies. It is also the role of the elders to explain the significance of different rituals for human beings.

### **Other Identified Notable Themes Related to the Amnesty Program**

Two of the sub questions identified in Chapter 3 were designed to gain an understanding of the participants' attitude towards the amnesty program. Based on the strength of the responses to these questions, I was able to identify two other themes that related to the amnesty program. There appears to be discrepancy about how the amnesty program is perceived. On the one hand, the program is perceived to be a good program that had brought peace to the region and also provided employment opportunities to the militants. However, the participants believe the program is yet to bring development to the region. These two themes are discussed as below.

### **Amnesty Program – a Good Initiative**

The responses from all the participants indicate that they understand what the amnesty program is all about and viewed the program as a good initiative. It appears that the urge to return the region to normalcy was a significant factor that made most of the ex-militants embrace the amnesty program. All the participants took the opportunity to

surrender their weapons in exchange for training and subsequent job employment. Their respect for customs, tradition, elders and their belief in a sense of community are important significant cultural values that appear to indicate that culturally the Urhobos abhor violence and would prefer to live in peace and harmony. The responses from the participants affirm this indication. P7 explained that:

The amnesty program is a program introduced for us to embrace so that peace can reign in the region. We as a people do not like violence. All of us want peace to reign in our land but our people are suffering so we have to do something that is why we became freedom fighters. The introduction of the amnesty program offered a new opportunity for many of us to change our way of life. Living in the creeks and destabilizing oil operations was a strategy adopted to get attention for our concerns. The introduction of the amnesty program made many of us to surrender our weapons and bring peace to our land.

The responses from the participants indicate that the amnesty program was a successful venture. For example, all the participants agreed that the amnesty was able to restore relative peace and stability to the region. Based on the responses from the participants, another identified success of the amnesty program is that it offered the ex-militants an opportunity to change their lifestyle from living in the creeks to being gainfully employed. When asked what made them decide to participate in the amnesty program, all of the participants said it was because it offered an opportunity to change their life. The responses from Participant 7 as stated above and most of the other participants indicated a willingness to surrender their weapons and renounce violence in

exchange for the training opportunity offered by the amnesty program and the subsequent offer of job employment.

The various themes identified from the responses of the participants such as respect for authority and elders, customs and tradition, and a sense of community indicate that the traditional Urhobo society cherish their cultural values which promote peace and harmony. These cultural values which also include the belief of the average Urhobo individual in its traditional religion, have provided a basis for maintaining social order, peace, and harmony in Urhoboland. These are cultural values that appear to abhor violence. The responses from the participants confirm these assertions. P1 stated that:

I wanted to change my life that is why I accepted the offer of the amnesty program. This was an opportunity to change my way of life for a better life. I abhor violence. However, I cannot stand by and watch my people suffer in silence. Our people have oil and yet we do not have good roads, no hospital, no good water to drink and our people are suffering. This is why I became a freedom fighter. However, when the amnesty was introduced, it provided me an opportunity to change my way of life and also bring peace to our land.

While expressing similar thoughts on the Urhobos being peaceful people who abhor violence, P3 stated that he took advantage of the opportunity provided by the amnesty program to change his way of life for a better way of living:

This was a good opportunity to turn my life around. Whenever the armies raid our village in search of us, they destroy our homes and bring more hardship to our people. However, our people understand that we do what we do in order to bring

attention to our cries for help. By nature we the Urhobos are a peaceful tribe, but we have been quiet for a long time and yet nothing has been done to develop our areas in spite of our oil. Our people have oil and yet we do not have good roads, no hospital, no good water to drink and our people are suffering.

The above responses from the participants affirm the success of the amnesty program. When asked what their experiences with the amnesty program had been thus far, 14 of the participants had positive reviews of the program. This is an indication that the amnesty program was indeed successful. P5 said:

Well, the amnesty has provided me an opportunity to advance my professional aspirations and goals in life. Our farmlands and fishing ponds have been destroyed without any adequate compensation. I no longer have to worry about how to feed my family. The amnesty program provided me a second chance in life. Without the amnesty, I probably would be in the creeks today fighting for a just cause. I became a freedom fighter because of the suffering of my people. We have been marginalized for too long. It was time for us to take action.

When asked, in what ways have you benefitted thus far from the implementation of the amnesty program in this region, all the participants agreed that the amnesty program has given them a job. P10 stated that:

A major benefit is that I received a 3 months computer training course in Enugu. Prior to the introduction of the amnesty program I had no training. But after completing the program I was given a certificate that I can use anywhere in the world. I dropped my weapons in Jan 20, 2011. I was then documented and an

account was opened for me. Ever since I completed the computer training program, monthly allowances have been dropped in my account. I no longer have to live in the creek without my wife and children. I have benefitted a lot from this program.

### **Lack of Development**

In spite of the identified success of the amnesty program, there were also failures that a majority of the participants mentioned. For instance, when asked what kind of development the amnesty program has brought to this region, all of the participants mentioned that the amnesty program has not done enough to bring any kind of meaningful development to the area. All the participants agreed that the program had been successful and was a good initiative. However, they mentioned that it had failed to bring the much needed development to the region. In explaining some of the failures of the amnesty program, P2 said:

Look around you and tell me if you see any development. In my view, there is no meaningful development whatsoever. The amnesty program has not brought good roads, good drinking water, or electricity. The amnesty program has not done enough. The program has failed to bring the much needed development to the region. Also, the amnesty program has not empowered the people as it was initially promised. For instance, the amnesty program has only offered jobs to a few of the indigenes who have completed the training program. There are many more freedom fighters that have surrendered their weapons and completed the training program that are yet to be employed.

Another failure of the amnesty program was identified by P5 who explained in great detail that:

The amnesty deal was supposed to go side by side with infrastructural development of the region. However, not much of that is happening now and I think that is something that the government needs to pay attention to. Also, the amnesty program was supposed to provide jobs for those that completed the training. That was the initial agreement. It is important that the government keep to its promise so that the conditions that necessitated militancy in the first place will not arise again. I know that the present administration is working hard in trying to transform the region but there is a lot that still needs to be done. This will help in the absorption of the program participants, because it will encourage investors to come in and invest in the country.

When asked what the major causes of the crises in the Niger Delta region were, all participants mentioned factors such as lack of good roads, hospitals, pipe borne water, electricity, destruction to farmlands, environmental pollution, and degradation. The above mentioned factors appear to be some of the reasons why the participants joined militant groups. P8 explained that:

Our people have oil and yet we do not have good roads, no hospital, no good water to drink and our people are suffering. Our people cry out for help and the responses from the oil companies which destroy our lands have been very poor. The responses from the federal government which allow the oil companies to



destroy our farmlands and source of livelihood have also not been very encouraging. We the youths have no choice but to fight for a just cause.

P9 expressed a similar concern and stated that:

Our ponds are polluted, our farmlands are destroyed, and the roofs of our houses get black in less than 1 year because of air pollution and yet there is no compensation. We have suffered for too long without any compensation. Enough is enough. The federal government and oil companies need to develop the region and employ those that have been trained. If they fail to do something there will be problems in 2015. You can quote me on that.

When asked in what ways the indigenous inhabitants of the Urhobo communities have responded to the Niger Delta crises, all participants said they resorted to violence because it appeared to be the only way that their cries could be heard. P1 stated that:

The youths have resorted to do whatever it takes to bring attention to their cries for help. I will always remain loyal to a just cause such as fighting for the freedom of my people. Our people have been marginalized for too long, maybe because we are in the minority. How can you explain a situation where we have a gas plant in Otujeremi and yet our people are not employed; instead, the gas company employs people from other regions?

Responses from the participants indicate that the peaceful methods earlier embarked on to address their concerns failed to generate the needed attention and so the participants joined militant groups and adopted other tactics to bring attention to their concerns and issues. P2 expressed similar views and said:

We have to fight for what belongs to us. We have been peaceful and yet nothing has been done about our suffering. The federal government should built schools and give scholarships to our people. They need to provide electricity and built good roads and hospitals. Empower the people and compensate them for destruction to their farmlands and properties.

The responses from the participants indicate that most of them chose to become militants because of their commitment and loyalty to the interests of their people. Further affirmation of this fact may be viewed from their cultural background as a people who cherish cultural values that include a sense of community. For the Urhobos, a sense of community is a significant cultural value and its people are willing to do whatever it takes to draw attention to their peoples' cries for help. The responses from the participants indicated that they see themselves as freedom fighters and not militants; people who are willing to sacrifice their comfort and life to prevent their people from suffering untold hardships.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, a brief overview of the purpose of this ethnographic case study and the research questions that the study seeks to address were presented. The demographics of the research participants were also presented. I also provided a detailed description of the settings, data collection and data analysis processes. The data collected were analyzed in a way that enabled me to place related data into categories and extract themes based on the frequency of specific responses. The results of the study are based on field observations which I conducted and on the responses of the participants to the

questions asked in the research study. Methods utilized to ensure the trustworthiness of the research study were also elucidated. Based on the responses of the study participants and in conjunction with the other data collected, it appears that there are factors in the Urhobo culture that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region.

Chapter 5 is the interpretations of the findings of the research, a discussion of the limitations of the study and implications for social change, and concludes with my recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to examine Urhobo cultural values, practices, traditions, and beliefs and explore whether they may or may not contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Prior to this study, there was limited empirical research data on the role of culture as it affects the implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region, in Nigeria. This necessitated the need for this study. In an attempt to address this gap in literature, I used qualitative research methods embedded in the ethnographic tradition, which included field notes of observations, in-depth interviews, and review of available documents associated with the amnesty program. The ethnographic case study was selected for this study because it probes into the experiences of 20 ex-militants that currently participate in the amnesty program. This approach allowed the participants to provide a description of their lived experiences in their own words, which in essence helped me to understand such experiences.

The main goal of the discussion of research findings is to offer evaluative assessment and interpretation of the findings of the research study as indicated by the responses of the participants to the research questions and observations made. The findings of this study have also led to possible solutions and conclusions drawn from the research study. The discussion concludes by offering recommendations for further studies and on related topics or concepts that this research study failed to address. The conclusion of this qualitative study is presented in this chapter.

The overarching goal of this study was to answer the following central research question: Are there factors in the culture of the Urhobo speaking community that might enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region? The study was guided by sub questions mentioned in Chapter 3 which were designed to answer the central research question. The findings derived from an analysis of the observations and interviews conducted for the participants, supplemented by the review on literature are discussed in the following section.

### **Interpretation/Discussion of the Findings**

The conceptual framework utilized for this study was Oakley's (1989) concepts of community participation, while Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy provided the theoretical framework for the study. Most of the discussions focused on the meanings or themes that emerged from participants' comments or responses to questions asked. Through the semi structured interview process, participants were asked 23 questions that related to the amnesty program and the Urhobo culture. Below are described five of the identified important cultural themes/meanings that emerged from the study.

#### **Cultural Themes Identified**

**Social justice, equality, and fairness.** Based on the responses from participants, it appears that the Urhobo culture has certain elements contained within it that may be particularly relevant for effectively managing the polarities of democracy. For example, the responses of the participants indicate that though the Urhobos respect authority, they also believe strongly in social justice, equality, fairness, and rights to natural resources. Some of the elements contained within the polarities of democracy model such as

*freedom, justice, human rights, communal obligations, and equality*; these were words frequently used in the participants' responses to questions. Benet (2013) posited that the polarities of democracy model consist of 10 elements, organized in five pairs: freedom-authority, justice-due process, diversity-equality, human rights-communal obligations, and participation-representation. According to Benet, each element has positive and negative aspects, and the goal is to manage the polarities successfully in order to optimize the positive aspects and minimize the negative aspects. The results obtained from the study suggest that restructuring the amnesty program by drawing on the identified strengths of the Urhobo culture, particularly in terms of the identified themes of commitment to social justice, equality, fairness, and respect for elders, customs, traditions, and authority, might contribute to maximizing the positive aspects of authority, justice, and equality, while minimizing the negative aspects.

The responses from the participants also suggest that some of them became militants because of their strong belief in these concepts. Thus, these responses from the participants are also consistent with what was suggested in the literature. Freire (1997) emphasized that people who perceive the reality of oppression as a limiting situation will engage in a struggle to transform that situation. The response from the participants indicates that they felt they were being oppressed because their source of livelihood had been destroyed without adequate compensation. This was a reason why they joined militant groups. This downside of justice can be properly managed, in other words maximized, by the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the region.

The participants agreed to participate in the amnesty program because of their perception of the program as an upside of justice. In other words, they felt their sense of justice has been accommodated because of the view of the amnesty program as an adequate compensation for destruction of their lands and also as an avenue to empower them through job training and subsequent employment. In agreement with the view posited by Freire (1997), Agbonifo (2009) maintained that militancy is a social movement that draws attention to a cause or social action that demonstrates an act of injustice. Democracy as a concept is a set of ideas and fundamental principles in which the ultimate power is vested in the people. People living as a democratic society must be responsible for taking decisions that affect their lives or at least partake in such decisions. The responses of the participants indicated that factors such as the Urhobos strong belief in social justice, fairness, and equality are relevant for managing the polarities of democracy.

Findings of the study indicate that the strength of the Urhobos' belief in their rights, social justice, and fairness, and their willingness to do anything to preserve these democratic features, are consistent with what was suggested in the literature. For example, Ekeh (2008) maintained that the Urhobos have a tendency to act in response to challenges in ways that will ensure their basic survival considering the circumstances of the Niger Delta region (p.7). Ekeh posited further that Urhobo folk history suggested that the heroism and courage demonstrated by its fore fathers made it possible for them to conquer and inhabit a substantial chunk of dry lands, including prime tropical rainforests.

Benet (2013) posited that the polarities of democracy model can serve as a unifying theory of democracy that is able to guide social change efforts. The adoption of community participation aims to be democratic and tends to give a voice to the Urhobo community in speaking about the culturally complex ways its indigenes would construct their identities, values, norms, and ethics and how these will bound up with the locally grounded traditions and customs of their daily life. The Urhobo culture may be useful in maximizing the positive aspects of participation within the polarities of democracy model. The Urhobo commitment to participation may provide an effective approach to community development that seeks to provide an avenue and opportunity for the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region, particularly the Urhobo speaking indigenes, to speak freely about their issues, problems, and ideas. Oakley's (1989) community participation conceptual framework serves as an adequate concept that provides the Urhobo people an opportunity to participate in strengthening the amnesty program.

**Empowerment.** Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy and Oakley's (1989) community participation support the idea that community participation and empowerment are essential elements of democracy and that these elements may be essential to address the social, economic, political, and environmental challenges that may actually threaten the survival of the Urhobo people in particular and the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region in general. Oakley (2008) identified four essential concepts (namely empowerment, sustainability, efficiency, and ownership) that will allow people to understand their own problems and partake in addressing these issues and concerns. According to Oakley, using these four factors will create empowerment for the people



and sustainability for community development programs. Participants' responses confirmed the literature reviewed. For example, all the participants identified community participation as an approach that provides a platform for community empowerment and stressed the need to involve the community in the development and implementation of any developmental initiative including the amnesty program.

The findings of this study relate to Oakley's (1989) concepts of community participation which is the conceptual framework and Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy which is the theoretical framework utilized in this study. For instance, responses from the participants indicate a strong support for community participation which promotes inclusion and diminish domination. This relates to Benet's polarities of democracy, in which the objective is to optimize the positive aspects of participation and minimize the negative aspects. Communities bear the effects of the gas and the burst pipeline and thus need to be involved in any program that is intended to benefit them. Community participation is a form of empowering the indigenous people to participate in addressing any possible problems that pertains to them.

The results of the study were consistent with the literature reviewed. According to Goodman et al. (1998), community empowerment is impossible without the active involvement of the grassroots in defining and resolving community needs. Goodman et al. emphasized that empowerment has to occur in a democratic process where community members share information and power. Empowerment is a process that is often equated with liberation. Empowerment places emphasis on the rights and abilities of the communities and individuals (Aujoulat, Hoore, & Deccache, 2006). Larkin et al. (2008)

posited that empowerment is a process that develops as individuals gain control over their lives and increasingly take part in decisions that affect them. Based on the literature reviewed and on the responses from the participants, it does appear that encouraging the community to participate in the development and implementation stages of the amnesty program will help ensure and facilitate the success of the program in the region. This is a concept that obviously encourages empowerment.

**Sense of community/communal living.** Communal obligation was another significant element mentioned in Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy. Findings of the study indicate that this element is an important Urhobo cultural value and if successfully managed, it will enhance the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the region. The Urhobos have a strong sense of communal living. Culture of the Urhobos can help enhance the positive aspects of authority. This can be possible if the government involves the Urhobo elders in the development and implementation of the program. It is important to mention that all the research participants emphasized that the key to an effective and sustainable development initiative such as the amnesty program is to encourage the active involvement of the inhabitants of that community for whom the program is meant. According to Oakley (1989), community participation means including the people in decision making processes, involving them in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs and also sharing in the benefits derived from there.

The findings of the study revealed that the amnesty program is well-accepted by the people of the Niger-Delta region and has the potential to restore peace and stability in the region. However, for such a program to be successful, the federal government has to

encourage community participation. Responses from the participants' suggested that culture has an important role that needs to be taken into cognizance when implementing the amnesty program. By drawing on this aspect of the Urhobo culture, it may be possible to maximize the positive aspects of communal obligations within the polarities of democracy model.

There are factors in the Urhobo culture that are particularly relevant for community participation. All the participants identified culture as an important concept that needs to be embraced if the amnesty program were to be implemented successfully. The responses of the participants are thus consistent with what was suggested in the literature. For any program to be successfully implemented, it has to consider the culture of the indigenous people. For example, Brennan et al. (2009) conducted a research in Ireland and the United States which suggested that appreciating the uniqueness of the indigenous culture will have a significant impact on the success of any development initiative. Rogoff (as cited by Glaveanu, 2011) emphasized that it is a widely accepted precept to encourage and include the people for whom the programs are designed as contributors in the planning and implementation phases of the programs. Empowerment, social justice, equality, fairness, and a communal sense of living appear to be some relevant cultural factors that may help enhance the implementation of the amnesty program in the region.

Community participation is important because it is the people themselves that know where it hurts them most. It follows that any good program must carry the people along by involving them from its planning stage through its developmental and

implementation stages. The findings of the study relate to both the conceptual framework and theoretical framework used in this study. Oakley's concept of community participation is of the view that the active involvement of the community is a significant factor for the indigenous people to contribute to the decision-making process that will result in the highest level of productivity and effectiveness. Butts (1980) articulates the upsides of freedom to include self-fulfillment, human dignity, promotion of justice, freedom, and equality for others, all of which can contribute to the effective management of Benet's polarities of democracy. The document analysis indicates that the polarities have not been properly managed. For example, documents reviewed from the Niger Delta Amnesty Office indicated that the oil production and exploratory activities have led to environmental degradation and pollution as a result of gas flaring, oil spills etc. This has had an adverse impact on the sources of livelihood (farming, wood carving, and fishing) for a majority of the indigenous inhabitants of the region (Niger Delta Amnesty Office, 2013). This is a downside of justice that can be properly managed if the amnesty program is successfully implemented in the region.

**Respect for customs and tradition.** Responses from the participants suggest that the Urhobos have a strong respect for their customs and traditions. The Urhobos consider customs and traditions important because of the control it has on their social, moral, and political systems. Some of these customs and traditions include the norms, taboos, and prohibitions that are directed towards protecting the community. The responses from the participants also indicate that these cultural values are important because they help to promote peace and foster harmony.

The responses from the participants relate to Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy and Oakley's (1989) concepts of community participation and are also consistent with what the literature reviewed suggested. For example, Torri and Hermann (2011) emphasized that the cultural beliefs, customs, and practices of a community play a significant role in enhancing community-based initiatives particularly those programs that aim to achieve sustainability in the long term. Torri and Herman posited further that the survival of a great number of communities around the world with such vast biodiversity, including the Niger Delta region, depend on the present resources in the forest. The degradation of the ecosystem results in low economic value of significant resources used by the indigenous inhabitants. Lending support to this, Chindah, Braide, Amakiri, and Onokurhefe (2011) posited that the poor yield of other resources, including the poor natural regeneration of mangrove after such ecological abuse, has caused great concern and apprehension among various stakeholders including the farmers, fishermen, and wood carvers that inhabit the region.

The findings of the study and the literature reviewed relate to Oakley's (1989) concepts of community participation that suggest the importance of including the indigenous people in the development and implementation phases of any development program. Howard (1998) argued that Western and Third World traditionalists will defend their culture and social norms against any form of undermining and suggested an approach that will include the indigenous peoples in the development and implementation of any program initiatives. Drawing on the Urhobos commitment to customs and

traditions may contribute to maximizing the positive aspects of authority while minimizing the negative aspects.

**Respect for elders and respect for authority.** Respect for elders was identified as an important Urhobo culture. Responses from the participants indicate that the Urhobos have a tremendous respect for their elders who are seen as symbols of authority. These are people who are seen as possessing a great deal of wisdom because of their age. Eight of the participants mentioned that the governance structure begins with the King, chiefs, elders, and youths in that format. Twelve of the participants said they did not have a king, but had chiefs and elders. The responses from the participants indicate that the elders had an appreciable authority in the community. This suggests that the elders may be able to ensure that strict environmental rules and regulations are enshrined in statutes that would protect the communities from environmental pollution.

The responses from the participants correspond with Oakley's concepts of community participation and with the expectations derived from the literature reviewed. For instance, Omotola (2012) stressed the importance of community participation and suggested that any meaningful attempt at addressing the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis needs to be a joint responsibility that involves the multinational oil corporations, the federal government, and the communities in the region, particularly the elders who are tremendously respected. In support of this view, Kamanda et al. (2013) argued that community participation is likely to increase the possibility that any development initiative such as the amnesty program will be culturally acceptable. Failure to embrace community participation may be seen as a great threat to freedom. According to Benet

(2013), an individual's loss of security and sense of belonging are contributing factors to the fear of freedom and thus can be viewed as a downside of freedom. Benet (2013) further posited that the upsides of freedom provide the opportunity for individuals to act and to think independently.

This view relates with the conceptual framework used in this study. Oakley's (1989) concepts of community participation encourage the active involvement of the Urhobo people right from the development phase through the implementation phase of the amnesty program. This provides an opportunity for the indigenous people to think independently about the problems and issues associated with their communities and to act in the best possible ways that will benefit the entire communities in the region. Oakley's concepts of community participation also encourage individuals to move beyond the constraints of being told what to do and to take charge of their own destinies. Benet (2013) offered the view that the challenge is in developing our own sense of self-worth so that we can overcome these fears and embrace the upsides of freedom.

#### **Other Identified Notable Themes Related to the Amnesty Program**

Two other identified themes related to the amnesty program that emerged are as follows:

**The amnesty program – a good initiative.** It is noteworthy to mention that all the participants agreed that the concept of the amnesty program was a very good initiative of the federal government promulgated to address the issues that plaque the Niger Delta region. The findings are consistent with what was expected in the literature reviewed. Kuku (2012) explained that the amnesty program represents the strongest link for success in

Nigeria. However, the responses of the participants' suggested that the program can be better structured to achieve greater effectiveness. What the respondents have said is consistent with the positive aspect of justice, which is an essential component of the theoretical framework used in this study. The participants had diverse suggestions. Seven of the participants recommended that the federal government needs to replace the current coordinators of the program with people from the Niger Delta region. The argument was that they would understand and appreciate the plight of the people because it also affects them.

On the other hand, 13 of the participants suggested implementing the program as originally planned by the previous government. When the program was incepted in 2009, it was originally planned that ex-militants will be trained in various vocations and then subsequently given employment upon successful completion of the training program (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012; Oluwaniyi, 2011). However, the responses from the participants suggest that this was not the case. Failure to provide jobs for ex-militants upon completion of the amnesty program will get the downside of justice. According to O'Manique (2003), justice arises as a necessary condition of human evolution. The upside of justice can be viewed as addressing the evolutionary developmental needs of the human species (O'Manique, 2003).

Responses from the participants are consistent with the theoretical framework. For example, the findings of this study suggests that Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy model can be used to plan, guide, and evaluate social change efforts including the amnesty program that was instituted by the Late President Yar'adua. This can be



achieved by effectively managing an essential component of the polarities of democracy (i.e. optimizing the positive aspects of justice). In this case, the federal government needs to implement the program as originally planned by the previous administration of the late President Yar'adua by promptly giving employment to those ex-militants that have successfully completed the job training or acquired skills. The upsides of justice can also help overcome any perception of oppression particularly amongst the people of the Niger Delta region.

**Lack of development.** The overarching theme of lack of development in the region was frequently mentioned by the participants. All the participants stated that the amnesty program has brought little or no development to the region. The responses from the participants are consistent with what the literature reviewed suggested. For example, past studies (Anele & Omoro, 2012; Idowu, 2012; Ogbodo, 2010; Ogege, 2011) described the Niger Delta region as a place of poverty, characterized by destroyed social structure, polluted environments, impaired health, dearth of serviceable infrastructure, inadequate provision of functional educational system, and destroyed source of livelihoods. Similarly, past researchers identified lack of development, basic and social amenities, environmental degradation, marginalization, and the continued use of repressive forces by the federal government as a response to peaceful protest from the people of the region in their quest for control of the revenue from the oil production (Etemike, 2012; Ibaba, 2011; Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). The implication is that the initial struggle for developmental and environmental justice has metamorphosed into youth militancy with its attendant consequences.

The findings of this study suggest that the failure to achieve development will result in obtaining the negative aspects of Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy model, particularly in the elements of justice and equality. If the federal government and the multinational oil corporations embrace the Urhobo desire for some meaningful measure of development, it can contribute to attaining the positive aspects of justice and equality within Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy model.

Oluduro and Oluduro (2012) and Ibaba (2011) called on the federal government to address the core issues that have since plagued the region. The result of this cycle of hardship, despair, and agony led to protests (initially peaceful) by the indigenous people which were met with both violent/repressive and non-violent responses from the federal government (The Niger Delta Amnesty Office, 2013). The direct result of neglecting the Niger Delta region by the federal government of Nigeria is a reflection of the current crisis that has engulfed the region (Ekpeyong & Dienye, 2010; Etemike, 2012). Omitola (2012) argued that the inability of the federal government to provide the basic needs of its citizenry such as food, water, employment, hospitals, and good roads amongst others are contributing factors to the root cause of the Niger Delta crisis (p.262). Lack of development is not an effective model of the polarities of democracy. Benet (2013) posited that failure to effectively manage the polarity of democracies would lead to stifling of creativity and commitment to excellence, which are downsides of equality. The upsides of equality include the potential to eliminate poverty and the promotion of self-esteem. The upsides and downsides of equality provide benefits and negatives for the people of the Niger Delta region. Failure to get the upside of justice and equality may

result in the downside of justice and equality for the people that inhabit the communities in the Niger Delta region. This may also lead to the downside of authority. The downsides of authority may include abuses perpetrated through authoritarian hierarchical structures like the federal government which have resulted in the oppression of the Niger Delta people.

Democracy is as much about opposition to the arbitrary abuse of power as it is about the collective self-government. The concept of democratic justice relates to the idea of overcoming oppression. In other words, the upsides of justice help to overcome oppression and constrain power. The upsides of justice can be viewed as the very moral basis of a democratic society. Butts (1980) agreed with this view and described the upsides of justice as what governs the conduct of the people in their relations to one another. Also in agreement with this view, Rawls (1971/1999) emphasized that justice means human rights include the most extensive system of equal liberties for all and arranging social and economic inequalities so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to experiences and descriptions of participants from one particular ethnic group as opposed to including people from the other tribes that make up the Niger-Delta region. The views of the participants from only one ethnic group may not necessarily reflect the views of the entire people of the Niger Delta region. However, the focus on only the Urhobo culture was deliberate in order to narrow the scope of the study that would enable coverage in its entirety. Furthermore, the advantage of this limitation in

the study is that it may add to the existing knowledge base and literature on the Urhobo tribe.

Another limitation is that the study was conducted in only three organizations located in Warri, Delta State. Some of the participants were trained to work in the computer department, whilst others were trained as forklift drivers and machine operators. This means that ex-militants from the Urhobo origin who live in other cities or those trained in other vocations or skill acquisition programs were not subject to this study. The implication is that they may have different views, opinions, knowledge, or perceptions about the program. It therefore follows that the results of this study may not necessarily be generalized. Nevertheless, the results of the study could be compared to experiences in other parts of the region or the world in ways that might point out the importance of culture in the development and implementation of program initiatives.

Another limitation is in the number of study participants. Twenty participants may be too small a number to adequately represent the Niger Delta population. However, Curry, Nembhard and Bradley (2009) explained that adequate determination of a sample size reflects the principle of theoretical saturation and suggested that a range of 15-30 interviews may achieve saturation. The goal is to achieve thematic saturation; the number 20 adequately represents the population of the Urhobo people in this regard. Twenty participants were chosen because the fewer participants in this type of study, the more depth the researcher can get from the interviews.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

Based on the literature reviewed, there is scant literature that deals with the impact of culture on development initiatives in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria including the amnesty program. There is therefore a need for additional research to better understand the impact of culture on development initiatives in any community. I discovered that if any development initiative such as the amnesty program is to succeed then the culture of the people for whom the program is meant must be taken into consideration.

A study population that includes only the Urhobo people may not generally reflect the views and opinions of the other tribes such as the Ijaws, Ibibios, Kalabari, Ishekiris, Efiks, Isoko, Nembe, Ndom, Andoni, and Ikwerre. Further study is therefore recommended that will include participants from these other ethnic groups that represent the entire people of the Niger Delta region.

The number of participants in this study appears to be relatively small. A study that involves a larger number of participants may produce different results because of its statistical attributes especially one that employs a quantitative research method as opposed to the qualitative method which this study utilized.

Finally, I recommend that future researchers take into consideration important issues such as availability of adequate funds and time constraints before undertaking similar research studies because of their potential impact. The cost of undertaking a research of this magnitude, especially one that utilizes the ethnographic method, is a prime concern. Moreover, the process of developing a research plan and a schedule to

complete such a study becomes an important factors that needs to be considered. All these recommendations are relevant to future research on the amnesty program. It is my hope that sharing the findings of the research study through publications and presentations at conferences and professional development workshops would enhance greater awareness amongst key stakeholders and trigger further discussions amongst educators on the research topic.

### **Implications**

There are several implications of this study for positive social change that should focus on strengthening democracy by drawing on the strengths of the Urhobo culture. This positive social change can be brought about by actions of the Nigerian government, the multinational oil corporations, and the international community as a whole. However, while Benet (2006, 2013) found that the overall concept of democracy serves as a solution for oppression (rather than a polarity to be managed) to advance democracy requires that the elements contained within the polarities must be successfully managed. Benet posits further that failure to manage the polarities of democracy effectively may manifest itself in continued conflicts rather than partnership. Managing the polarities of democracy effectively will help to reduce such conflicts between the communities on one side and the multinational oil corporations/federal government on the other side.

The purpose of using the polarities of democracy model as a theoretical framework is to plan, guide, and assess the amnesty program in terms of its effectiveness in optimizing as many of the positive aspects of each polarity element as possible while minimizing as many of the negative aspects of each polarity element as possible. Benet's

polarities of democracy model (2006, 2012, 2013) also describes how the five polarities are interrelated and strengthening one polarity may have positive effects for other polarities within the model. This study contributes to positive social change by identifying the strengths of the Urhobo culture that may result in more effectively managing the polarities of democracy in order to successfully implement the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region.

By using the polarities of democracy model (Benet, 2006, 2013) as the theoretical framework, results of the study offer possible insights into how community participation may contribute effectively towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program. Consistent with the works of Aujoulat, Hoore & Deccache, 2006; Goodman et al. 1998; and Larkin et al. 2008, I found that involving community members in any development initiative is a form of empowering them to take leading roles to address their own peculiar issues, needs, and problems with the support of key stakeholders. This is especially true if that involvement includes the meaningful participation of Urhobo elders. Such engagement will not only result in more effective management of the participation-representation polarity, it will more effectively manage the freedom-authority polarity by providing greater legitimacy to the authority of the amnesty program.

Findings from the study also indicate that community participation in the amnesty program can help in restoring lasting peace and stability in the region, which is needed to enable sustainable development in the region that also will contribute to more effective management of the diversity-equality polarity. Ogege (2011) asserted that without peace

and stability in the region, there can be neither investment nor infrastructural development. Bassey (2012) and Nwagboso (2012) lend support to this view and posited that if left unchecked, the spate of security threats could further distort the economy of Nigeria. The amnesty program is one such initiative intended to contribute towards the security stabilization of the region through the demobilization, disarmament, rehabilitation, and sustainable reintegration of the ex-militants.

Effectively managing the participation-representation polarity within the amnesty program also can positively enhance the human rights–communal obligations polarity. This is consistent with Brennan et al. (2009), who suggested that appreciating the uniqueness of the local culture will have a significant impact on the success of any development initiative. For example, a development project such as the amnesty program can be successful if the community is involved in the planning, development, and implementation phases. Such involvement needs to include key community members such as the elders and representatives of the youths in partnership with key stakeholders such as the federal government and multinational oil corporations. In turn, the meaningful participation of these key stakeholders can lead to an enhanced understanding of their communal obligations and not just their human rights.

Another example of successfully managing the participation-representation polarity would be to encourage key stakeholders to assess their roles and explore all possibilities for strengthening existing processes of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. The amnesty program needs to adopt the concept of community participation as a strategic and tactical approach to foster maximum community support



and cooperation throughout its implementation phase. The main objective of participation is to make community-informed decisions. This is consistent with Badmus (2010), who suggested the need for consultations between the oil companies and the oil-bearing communities before the commencement of oil exploratory and exploitative activities. Organizers of the amnesty initiative must be honest about what the program can achieve in terms of its impact. Key stakeholders engaged in the discussions need to know what the role of local participants will be.

The findings of the study also may contribute to positive social change by providing insights towards developing support programs that may help alleviate the problems and sufferings of the people in the Niger Delta region that result from inequitable distribution of resources. Without such insights, Moruku (2012) argued that it would be difficult to understand the experiences of human rights abuses and exploitation of the Niger Delta people. For example, decisions that ensure more equitable economic investment on the part of the federal government and multinational oil corporations may likely contribute towards developmental projects and/or programs for the communities of Niger Delta region that will enhance the diversity-equality polarity. Benet (2006, 2012, 2013) suggests that such efforts also will generate greater upsides of justice.

Such developmental projects or support programs may include education and outreach programs that would provide vital information to community members. Ensuring that all community members have access to vital information also contributes to successfully managing the diversity-equality polarity. By ensuring that all members of the community have access to vital information, the needs of the communities can be

identified through dialogue between the local communities and the federal government. This in turn will enhance the participation-representation polarity. Badmus (2010) supports the assertion that such dialogue offers opportunity to members of the communities to share their views, opinions, and thoughts. Idowu (2012) emphasized that the Niger Delta people have a need and desire to engage in dialogue that involves all relevant stakeholders on issues such as resource control, infrastructural development, and justice. For instance, all the study participants mentioned the need for infrastructural development of the region. Agbonifo (2009) and Amaraegbu (2011) alleged that there is a connection between environmental degradation, perception of injustice, dispossession, and infrastructure development issues that provides the context within which to understand the persistent violence in the Niger Delta region. The federal government through the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) may be able to address this persistent concern of the region by implementing programs that can enhance infrastructural development in the region. Massive infrastructural development projects will in turn become avenues for employment for those that have been able to successfully complete the amnesty program.

Information provided to strengthen the upsides of the diversity-equality polarity also would help community members make informed decisions on what is best for the general population of the community. Documents reviewed from the Niger Delta Amnesty Office (NDAO) indicate that NDAO has utilized some of these public education mediums, however it is still lacking in some aspects. The NDAO also should use television commercials to enlighten the public on the extent of transformation of the ex-

militants as a result of the non-violence trainings they obtained through the amnesty program.

In terms of managing the amnesty program, respondents had two significantly differing opinions with regards to solutions or recommendations for those implementing the amnesty program. While some of the participants recommended changing the coordinators of the amnesty program, others wanted the federal government to establish an effective system of monitoring the program. Based on the responses from the participants, it is my recommendation for a continuous monitoring mechanism that will allow for periodic review and assessment of the program, particularly involving representatives of the Urhobo elders being provided with meaningful participation in this process. Parrill and Kennedy (2011) emphasized that participation establishes trust through relationship building and open communication. This exercise is needed to systematically and objectively assess progress towards the achievement of desired results or goals. The meaningful involvement of the Urhobo elders will significantly enhance the legitimate authority of the amnesty program and may bridge the divergent views of the study participants. Salimi et al. (2012) pointed out that developmental initiatives that involve active community participation have the potential to make significant differences that will contribute towards positive community changes and need to be encouraged.

The study may also serve to spur key stakeholders such as the federal government, multinational oil corporations, policy makers, and the local communities to re-examine their views and cooperate, collaborate, and coordinate efforts that are geared towards creating policies that will address core reasons for the incessant turmoil and

turbulence that have persisted in the Niger Delta region. The findings of the study may bring greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation of those critical issues that have resulted in the persistent crisis in the region; and how gaining greater upsides of participation, equality, and justice may decrease or eliminate this violence. In support of this view, Kamanda et al. (2013) emphasized that community participation enhances the understanding of an issue or problem within the economic, political, social, and cultural context of the community and aims to take action to improve the quality of life and well-being of community members. It is significant to point out that a peaceful Niger-Delta will contribute significantly to the Nigerian economy and to the global oil price.

The themes identified in this study may also serve as a model to help develop policies that would contribute towards the successful implementation of future developmental initiatives. For instance, elements within the polarities of democracy such as equality, justice, human rights, and communal obligations are some of the cultural aspects of the Urhobo culture that can contribute to successfully managing the polarities of democracy to bring about positive social change. The federal government agency in charge of the amnesty program or the multinational oil corporations may choose to incorporate all or some of the identified themes as part of their strategy or plan for community participatory programs. The identified themes in this study may also contribute to positive social change by enhancing an understanding of the lived experiences of the ex-militants that currently participate in the amnesty initiative. Moruku (2012) explained that studying the experiences of human rights abuses and exploitation of the Niger Delta people provides a platform to better understand their issues and problems.

These experiences may be used to develop or enhance policies that may contribute towards the successful implementation and sustainability of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region.

It is well known that underdevelopment and insecurity of post conflict environments is a breeding ground for threats to domestic, regional, and international security through international criminality and terrorism (Nwagboso, 2012). This portends the significant role the international community can play in the peace process of the Niger Delta region, considering the important role of Nigeria in Africa and across the world. Responses from the respondents indicate that the multinational oil corporations operating in the region have not done enough to bring development to the region. This is consistent with what the literature review suggests. For instance, the works of Adebayo, 2010 and Ifedi & Anyu, 2011 posited that the multinational corporations explore and drill for oil in the region and yet the Niger Delta is saddled with environmental and developmental challenges. The international community should become advocates for the multinational corporations and the Nigerian government to effectively manage the polarities of democracy by enhancing local development efforts that result in greater upsides of justice and equality for the people of the Niger Delta region.

O'Manique (2003) saw an aspect of attaining the upsides of justice as seeking to optimize environmental quality and embracing a focus on the global problems that threaten our species. Obtaining an upside of justice would require the Nigerian federal government to regulate the multinational oil corporations that negatively impact the Niger Delta environment. In support of this view, (Hartmann, 2003; Rawls, 1971/1999)

emphasized that justice requires that multinational corporations should be responsible for environmental damage.

Other responses from the participants indicate that they believe in their legitimate claim to some of the profits and gains of the multinational oil corporations operating in the region. Benet (2012) explained that the social economy plays a significant role in creating and retaining community wealth by ensuring that the profits of economic activity are retained in the community where they are generated. Benet (2006, 2012, 2013) also explained that an upside of justice would be to maximize the positive aspects of the elements contained within the polarities of democracy. In this case, the multinational oil corporations may need to effectively apply and manage the human rights-community obligations polarity pairs. In other words, it is the corporate social responsibilities of multinational oil corporations to contribute meaningfully to the development of the communities where they operate. This can be achieved either through the actions of the multinational oil corporations themselves, or if the federal government promulgated laws, regulations, and taxation. Okpara (2012) supports this view and emphasized that such attempts need to be accompanied by an enabling statute that must provide meaningful redress and penalties for those corporations that fail to abide by environmental policies.

The upsides of justice can be achieved through corporate social responsibility if the multinational oil corporations are able to implement positive developmental programs that equitably share the profits of their enterprise. The upsides of justice will be to help the Niger Delta communities who are helpless and powerless against the environmental devastation of the multinational oil corporations. Justice is thus an important weapon in

the fight for freedom and growth for the people of the Niger Delta region and their communities. The responsibilities of the multinational oil corporations may include partnering with the federal government in infrastructural development, as well as protection and repair of the environments they operate in. The international community on their part can help in the resolution of the violence in the region by encouraging the multinational oil corporations to conscientiously implement their corporate social responsibility. It has been argued that corporations use their power and wealth to attain all the benefits ascribed to human beings, usually without any consequences or responsibilities for their actions (Hartmann, 2003). Benet (2006, 2012, 2013) posited that this is an illegitimate use of authority that undermines the ability to effectively manage the polarities of democracy. It therefore becomes even more important for people to have a source of power strong enough to counter or control the vast power amassed by corporations in order to regulate their activities. The legitimate use of power is necessary to attain the upsides of authority. Authority is legitimate if it is done within the confines of rules made by the consent of the governed. Some of the mechanisms that can be used to attain the upsides of authority include the freedom of press and speech which are important virtues of democracy and are absolutely indispensable for the preservation of a free society in which government is based on the consent of an informed citizenry and is dedicated to the protection of the rights, justice, and equality for all including the minorities such as the people of the Niger Delta region.

The international community can assist in employing graduates of the amnesty program. Documents reviewed in the Niger Delta Office indicate that while some

countries where the ex-militants were trained are already employing graduates of the program, there need to be more countries doing the same. Those that cannot directly hire the program participants after their training should provide internship or job shadowing opportunities for them. The international community can contribute immensely in this regard and thus help to absorb some of the program participants. The international community can also assist in the implementation of other capital-intensive training programs. It is important that the international community help to enhance the reintegration of ex-militants into civil society by assisting with the implementation of capital intensive training programs. This will be particularly useful for those ex-militants that have combat skills but lack the qualifications of civilian professionals.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to critically examine the role of the Urhobo culture as it affects the implementation of the amnesty program. The study was designed to answer one central research question and seven sub research questions. The findings of the study amplified the scholarly, peer reviewed knowledge on the Niger Delta crisis with particular emphasis on the implementation of the amnesty initiative in the Niger Delta region, while focusing on its failures, successes, and potential future prospects. Previous research studies on this topic did not take into account the role of the Urhobo culture and how it might affect the implementation of the amnesty program, particularly in terms of more effectively managing the polarities of democracy. The research findings suggest that the polarities of democracy can be used as a unifying model to plan, guide, and



evaluate the amnesty program that is designed to build healthy, just, humane, and sustainable communities.

I emphasized the importance of the Urhobo culture in any development initiative including the amnesty program. The Urhobo culture plays a significant role and it is embedded in community participation. Engaging and involving indigenous citizens, particularly Urhobo elders, in the affairs of the communities (including initiating and developing programs such as the amnesty program) is not only the right thing to do but taking into account the strengths of the Urhobo culture can lead to increased quality of decisions, access to new information, enhanced fairness, and improved environmental outcomes and legitimacy.

In evaluating the credibility of the qualitative data collected, the researcher phrased the questions in different forms with similar themes and responses that emerged consistently to indicate a logical relationship to each other. The responses from the participants led to more data probing and new areas of research interest that could be explored in future research. Efforts were made to reiterate the responses, and the participants were asked to validate the accuracy of the responses. The researcher maintained an appreciable distance between his personal values and those of the participants and refrained from influencing the responses with his own values and bias. The participants' perspectives and experiences were considered and documented. There are similarities in the results and findings from this study when compared with previous studies. Findings from this study support a similar study suggesting that African culture is deeply rooted in the values and cultures of their ancestors. Significant findings also

revealed that when cultural elements are positively addressed, they could be of benefit and advantageous in contributing towards the successful implementation of a development initiative such as the amnesty program.

The failure to take into account the strengths of the Urhobo culture may contribute to an inability to reintegrate ex-militants economically and socially, which may result in both short and long-term impacts. Short-term impacts could be an immediate return of ex-militants to violence or conflict thereby threatening the security and peace of their various communities. Long-term impacts could be that ex-militants would continue to hinder the political, social, and economic development of the nation.

A successful amnesty program requires policy makers, program implementers, and other key stakeholders to draw on the strengths of the Urhobo culture and adopt community participation as an approach that will more effectively manage the polarities of democracy and put in place effective and sustainable outreach programs that will inform and educate prospective amnesty participants in particular and members of the Niger Delta communities in general. Such an approach empowers the indigenous people and at the same time equips them with the much needed skills and knowledge that will enhance their understanding of the amnesty program and the process. Finally, it is my hope that a successful amnesty program that draws upon the strengths of the Urhobo culture to effectively manage the polarities of democracy will contribute to restoring stability and may bring about lasting peace in the Niger Delta region.

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## Appendix A: Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are being invited to participate in this research study that will explore your experiences of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region. Your invitation is based on your current participation in the program. Please read the consent form and indicate your interest to participate in the study by signing and dating the form. The purpose of this form is to ensure that you understand the study so that you can make a decision on whether or not to participate. The researcher conducting the study is John Oghenero Tobor a doctoral student at Walden University.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of conducting this study is to critically examine the role of culture and explain whether it affects the amnesty program or not. The study is important because findings may contribute towards developing policies that will improve the development of Niger Delta region.

### **Procedures:**

If you accept participation in this research, the researcher will conduct a face-to-face interview with you at a comfortable and convenient place of your choice. The interview will also be audio recorded for those who wish to be recorded or notes taken for those who do not wish to be recorded. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes or one hour. You may also be contacted for follow-up interviews should it be

necessary. I will also be conducting an observation of participants at their place of employment. The observations will last approximately 1 to 2 hours daily, three times a week for a period of 4 weeks. You can refuse to continue with the study at any time without any penalties.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the interviews, or withdraw your responses at any time with or without reason. You may also wish not to respond to any questions that you are not comfortable with.

**Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study:**

There are no major risks expected from your participation in this study. However, there is a possibility that you may experience guilty feelings after providing personal information to the researcher. Your benefit from this study is that the findings may help the federal government to improve your quality of life and that of the people of the region.

**Compensation:**

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:**

The researcher guarantees confidentiality of all information that you disclose during the interviews. Your name will not be included in the information you provide and this information will only be used for the research study.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher can be contacted by calling the phone number [REDACTED] in the USA or [REDACTED] in Nigeria. The e-mail address is John.tobor@waldenu.edu in case you have any questions before or after the interviews. My address in Nigeria is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You can call the Walden University representative Dr. Leilani Endicott on phone number 001-612-312-1210 in case you need to discuss anything privately regarding your rights as a participant. The Walden University's approval number for this study is [REDACTED] and it expires on \_\_I will leave a copy of this form for you to keep.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read and understand fully all the information contained in this consent form and hereby voluntarily participate in this study. By signing below, I agree to all terms described in this form.

Respondents' Name (Initials) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Consent \_\_\_\_\_

Researchers' Signature \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B: NIH Certification

**Certificate of Completion**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **John Tobor** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 06/17/2011

Certification Number: 703942



## Appendix C: Demographic Info and Interview Guide

**Demographical Data:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_M \_\_\_\_\_F

Age: Less than 20 years; 21-30 Years; 31 – 40 Years. 41 Years and Older

Primary occupation:

Annual Income:

**Questions**

- 1) What is your understanding of the amnesty program?
- 2) What made you decide to participate in the amnesty program?
- 3) What are your experiences thus far of the amnesty program?
- 4) In what ways have you benefitted thus far from the implementation of the amnesty program in this region?
- 5) What kind of development has the amnesty program brought to this region?
- 6) In what ways can the amnesty program be better structured to achieve greater effectiveness?
- 7) What are the most distinctive cultural values of the Urhobo people?
- 8) In what ways are these cultural values distinctive or important?
- 9) What are the valuable belief systems of the Urhobo people?
- 10) What is the governance structure of the Urhobo communities?
- 11) In your view who will best represent the interests of the Urhobo nation and why?

- 12) What are the major causes of the crises in the Niger Delta region?
- 13) What are the effects of the crises on the Urhobo people?
- 14) In what ways have the indigenous inhabitants of the Urhobo communities responded to the Niger Delta crises?
- 15) In your view who is to blame for the environmental problems in the region and why?
- 16) How do you view the responses of the federal government?
- 17) How do you view the responses of the multinational oil corporations?
- 18) In what ways do you think the federal government can contribute towards restoring peace and stability in the region?
- 19) In what ways do you think that the multinational oil corporations operating in the Niger Delta region can contribute towards sustaining stability and restoring lasting peace?
- 20) In what ways are you responsible, loyal or committed to the interests of your community and people?
- 21) What are your personal views and perceptions about community participation in any program initiative?
- 22) What solutions or recommendations do you have for those implementing the amnesty program?
- 23) Do you have any questions or comments you would like to add?

## Appendix D: Observation Guide

*Observation Point 1:* Observe the total environment of the participant. Take note of the cultural demographics of the other staff members and the general work area.

*Observation Point 2:* Observe the interactions of the participants. Take note of the general rapport.

*Observation Point 3:* Observe the presence or absence of other people including other cultural and ethnic groups, guest speakers, community members, and nonparticipating members. What roles do they play in this environment?

## Appendix E: Checklist

- 1) Explain the purpose of the study. Advise participants that the study is voluntary and that they are free to leave without giving any reason.
- 2) Explain the benefits of the study to the participants, the community, the federal government, and the multinational oil corporations.
- 3) Inform the participants about the duration of the interview process and advised that whenever they feel discomfort they were free to take a break or stop the interview.
- 4) Have participants sign written consent forms.
- 5) Have your pen and note pads ready.
- 6) Ask permission to audiotape interview, if granted, proceed with interview.
- 7) Thank the participant for taking their time to participate in the study.
- 8) Have reflective journals ready to jot down reflections immediately after completing the interview.

## Appendix F: NHREC



**National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC)**

Promoting Highest Ethical and Scientific Standards  
for Health Research in Nigeria  
Federal Ministry of Health



NHREC Protocol Number  
NHREC/01/01/2007-16/07/2013  
NHREC Approval Number  
NHREC/01/01/2007-27/07/2013

Date: August 1, 2013

Re: Implementing the Amnesty Program in Niger Delta, Nigeria from Urhobo Cultural

Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) assigned number: NHREC/01/01/2007

Name of Student Investigator: John Tabor

Address of Student Investigator: PhD Candidate  
Walden University  
tobor\_nero@yahoo.com

Date of receipt of valid application: 16-7-2013

Date when final determination of research was made: 27-07-2013

Notice of Expedited Review and Approval

This is to inform you that the research described in the submitted protocol, the consent forms, advertisements other participant information materials have been reviewed and *given expedited committee approval by the National Health Research Ethics Committee.*

This approval dates however still remain the same; from 27/07/2013 to 26/07/2014. Note that no participant accrual or activity related to this research may be conducted outside of these dates. *All informed consent forms used in this study must carry the HREC assigned number and duration of HREC approval of the study.* In multiyear research, endeavour to submit your annual report to the HREC early in order to obtain renewal of your approval and avoid disruption of your research.

*The National Code for Health Research Ethics requires you to comply with all institutional guidelines, rules and regulations and with the tenets of the Code including ensuring that all adverse events are reported promptly to the HREC. No changes are permitted in the research*

*without prior approval by the HREC except in circumstances outlined in the Code. The HREC reserves the right to conduct compliance visit your research site without previous notification.*

Signed



Clement Adebamowo BMChB (Hans Gas), FWACS, FACS, DSc (Harvard) Honorary  
Consultant Surgeon, Director, West African Center for Bioethics and Chairman,  
National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria (NHREC)

Department of Health Planning, Research & Statistics

Federal Ministry of Health

1st Floor, Federal Secretariat Complex Phase III

Ahmedu Bello Way Abuja

Tel: +234-09-523-8367

E mail: chairman@nhrec.net secretary@nhrec.net

deskofficer@nhrec.net

URL: <http://www.nhrec.net>

## Appendix G: NHREC Certificate of Completion



West African Bioethics

Tuesday, July 16, 2013

NHREC/TR/02/06/2007a

## Certificate of Completion

In recognition of successful completion of the human-subject protection education requirements based on the Collaborative IRB Training (CITI) Program – an online training program of the West African Bioethics Training Program and the University of Miami, Florida. This certifies that

John Tobor

## AS A SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE INVESTIGATOR

- reviewed regulatory and informational documents on human- subject protection
- passed a quiz on the responsible conduct of human studies
- signed a statement of commitment to the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in research.

Dr. Clement A. Adebamowo BM ChB (Hons),  
FWACS FACS ScD Professor of Surgery  
Director, West African Bioethics Training Program  
cc: Program Administrator, WA



## Appendix H: Tables and Figures

Table N1

*Socioeconomic Characteristics of Participants*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Gross Annual Income</b>	<b>Age</b>
P1	Forklift Driver	High School Dropout	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	20
P2	Machine Operator	Complete high school	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	27
P3	Computer Department	Some College	900,000.00 (\$5,294)	30
P4	Forklift Driver	High School Dropout	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	31
P5	Computer Department	Bachelor's Degree	1,020,000.00 (\$6,000)	41
P6	Computer Department	Associate Degree	900,000.00 (\$5,294)	30
P7	Machine Operator	Complete high school	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	33
P8	Computer Department	Bachelor's Degree	1,020,000.00 (\$6,000)	45
P9	Machine Operator	Complete high school	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	23
P10	Computer Department	Some College	900,000.00 (\$5,294)	23
P11	Computer Department	Some College	900,000.00 (\$5,294)	33
P12	Computer Department	Associate Degree	900,000.00 (\$5,294)	28
P13	Forklift Driver	High School Dropout	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	33
P14	Forklift Driver	Complete high school	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	34
P15	Computer Department	Associate Degree	900,000.00 (\$5,294)	28
P16	Machine Operator	Complete high school	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	32
P17	Machine Operator	Complete high school	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	26
P18	Computer Department	Associate Degree	900,000.00 (\$5,294)	30
P19	Forklift Driver	High School Dropout	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	34
P20	Forklift Driver	Complete high school	780,000.00 (\$4,588)	35

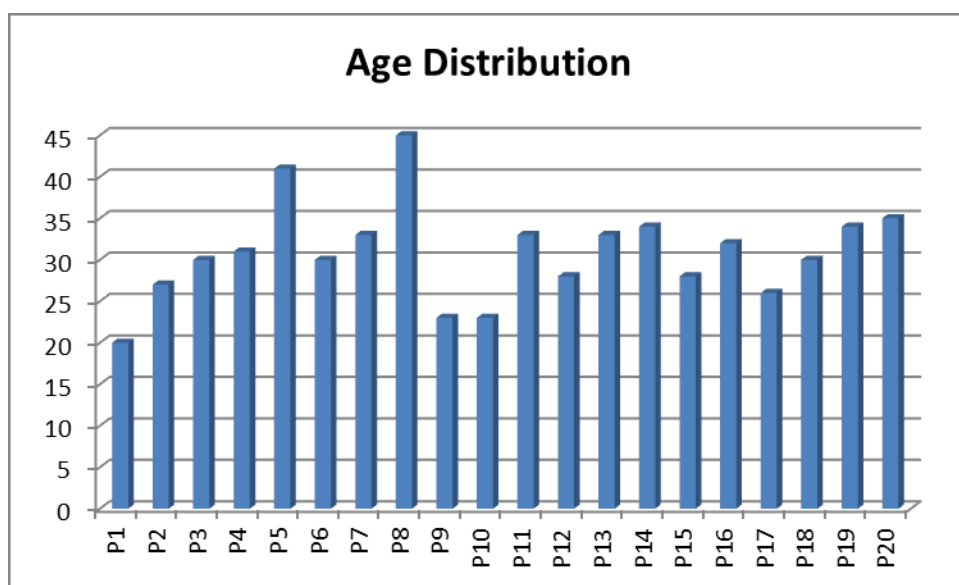
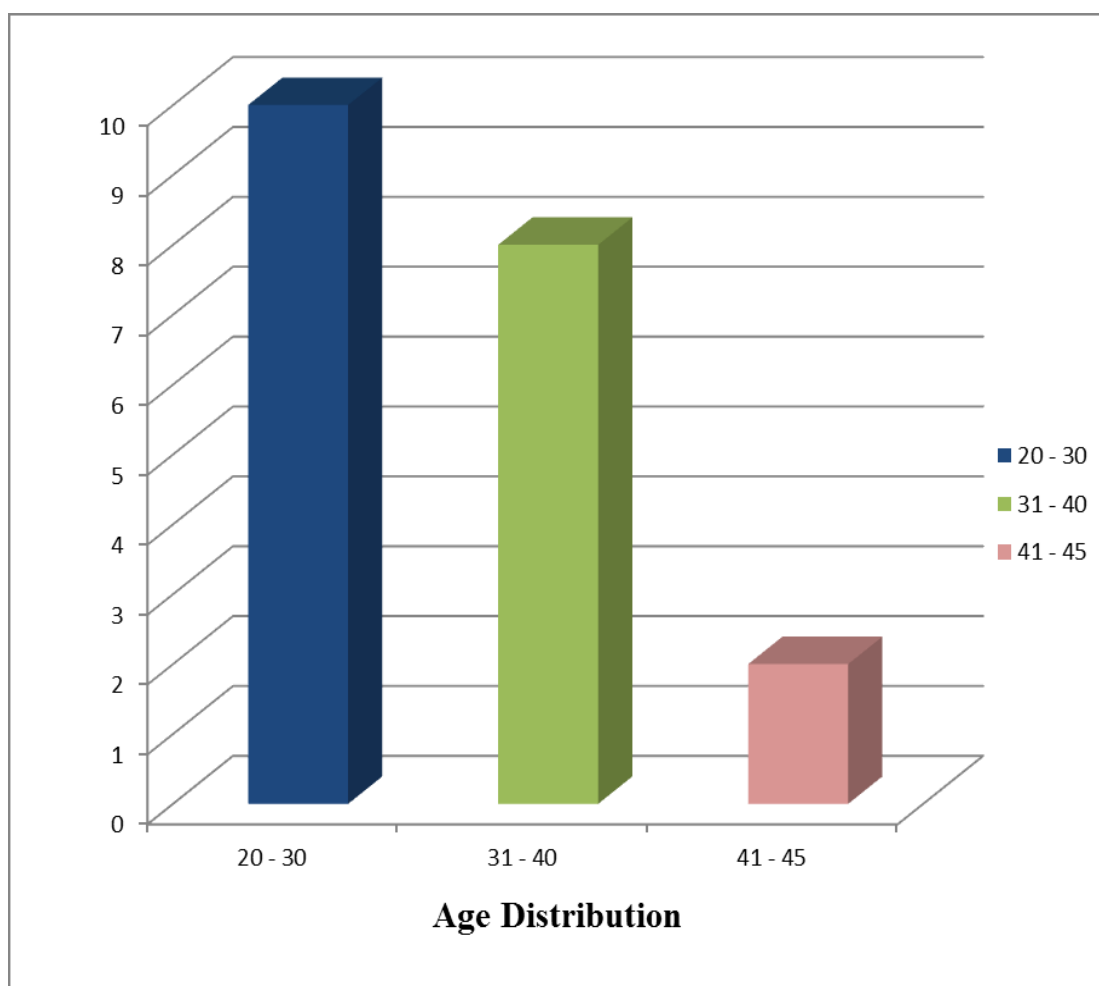


Figure N1. Age distribution of study participants.

Table N2

*Age Range of study participants*

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
20 - 30	10 (50%)
31 – 40	8 (40%)
41 - 45	2 (10%)



*Figure N2. Age Distribution of Study Participants.*

Table N3

*Distribution of Gross Annual Income level of Participants in Nigerian Currency*

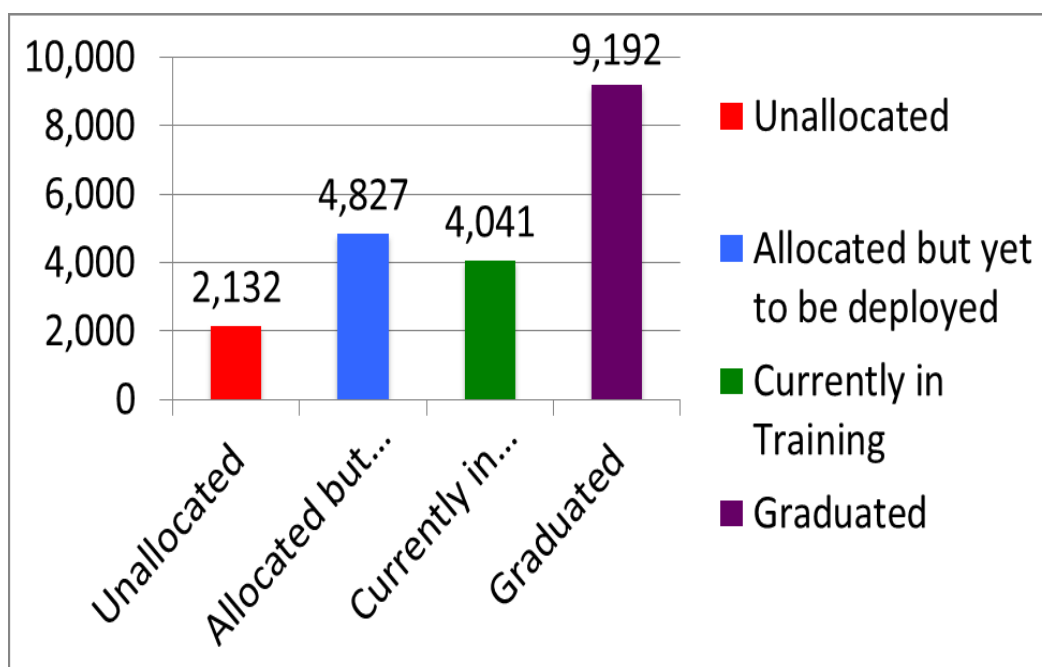
*(Naira)/United States Dollar Equivalent*

<b>Gross Annual Income</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
780,000.00 (\$4,588)	11 (55%)
900,000.00 (\$5,294)	7 (35%)
1,020,000.00 (\$6,000)	2 (10%)

Table N4

*Education Level Distribution of Participants*

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Bachelor's Degree	2 (10%)
Some College	3 (15%)
Associate Degree	4 (20%)
Complete High School	7 (35%)
High School Dropout	4 (20%)



*Figure N3.* Overview of Trainees and allocations for Phase 1 implementation of the Amnesty program. Source: Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA).



*Figure N4.* Trainees sent to various countries on the global map.

Source: Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA)

## Curriculum Vitae

John Oghenero Tobor

Tobor\_nero@yahoo.com

John.tobor@waldenu.edu

**Education:**

- Masters in Business Administration (MBA). University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria (1997)
- Bachelor of Arts in English Education (BA Ed) Bendel State University renamed Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria (1991)

**Ongoing Educational Career:**

- PhD in Public Policy & Admin – Specialization in Terrorism, Mediation & Peace  
Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. (2011-Present)

**Employment/Professional Experience:**

June 2005 to Date: Correctional Case Management Specialist II.

Maryland State Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

401 E. Madison St, Baltimore, MD 21202

June 2003 – June 2005. Correction Officer II.

June 2001 – April 2003. Operations Associate II

Brown Brothers Harriman & Co.

525 Washington Blvd, Jersey City, New Jersey.

1995 – 1997. Students Affairs/Welfare Officer. Federal School of Fisheries and Marine Technology, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria.