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Niger Delta Stakeholders' Expectations of IOCs' Peacebuilding Programs: A Multiple Case Study

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Abstract

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B.Eng. University of Nigeria, 1991

M.E.M. University of Port Harcourt, 2001

L.L.M. Robert Gordon University, 2018

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Scholars within the business and peace literature domain identified a knowledge gap in the understanding of community stakeholders' views and expectations about the specific strategies that support corporate peacebuilding in conflict-ridden host communities. The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study is to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' (IOCs') peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. To address the research problem and purpose of the study, qualitative data were collected from multiple sources of evidence including semistructured interviews with eight community stakeholders, archival data, and reflective journaling notes. This study was framed by Jennings' concept of peacekeeping as enterprise and Ingenhoff and Sommer's concept of stakeholder expectation regarding the social engagement of companies. Thematic analysis and cross-case synthesis of data from the interviews revealed 13 themes encased within the following five coding categories: (a) stakeholder expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs, (b) corporate-community conflict on peacebuilding as through enterprise, (c) stakeholder engagement in corporate peacebuilding program, (d) IOCs investment in education and training needs of local communities, and (e) IOC-driven initiatives to strengthen a peacebuilding economy. This study gave voice to the Niger Delta's community stakeholders' expectations in corporate peacebuilding programs, representing a promising avenue for driving positive social change for more effective peacebuilding programs and renewed community trust in IOCs' peacebuilding programs in the region.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family and to all those who provided me with encouragement, special assistance, and inspiration throughout my academic journey.

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I thank the organizations and people who permitted the use of their copyrighted materials. I am also forever grateful to Dr. D. Halkias, Dr. D. Banner, and to other faculty, supervisors, colleagues, family, and friends who contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Scholars within the business and peace literature domain state that a knowledge gap exists in the understanding of community stakeholders' views and expectations in terms of the specific strategies that support corporate peacebuilding in conflict-ridden host communities (Atienza, 2019; Kohl, 2015). Given the vast resources available to multinational corporations, and specifically, international oil companies (IOCs) in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, these firms can make a scalable impact on host communities through the United Nation's model Business for Peace (B4P) programs (Egbon et al., 2018). However, following various studies, it is evident that community expectations could be at variance with peacebuilding activities conceived and implemented by the IOCs in the Niger Delta (Neufeldt et al., 2020; Kohl, 2015).

Excluding key community stakeholders from peacebuilding decision making can further aggravate existing conflicts (Idemudia, 2017). Consequently, corporate peacebuilding programs have yielded few positive impacts in the conflict-ridden communities of the Niger Delta region (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018), and there is a need to examine how business–community collaboration in fragile states may support business–host community partnerships for peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). For as long as community stakeholders' expectations of the IOCs' peacebuilding programs are rarely explored in the extant literature or considered by IOC leaders, animosity by the host communities towards the IOCs may continue unabated (Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018).

This chapter presents the background literature leading to the problem statement that identifies the gap in the scholarly literature. Following is a logical

alignment between the problem, purpose, research questions, and the study's conceptual framework. Finally, this chapter also presents the significance, assumptions, and limitations of the study and the definition of key terms used throughout this document.

Background of the Study

The Niger Delta is the region in southern Nigeria adjacent to the Gulf of Guinea and measuring about 70,000 square kilometers. The nine states in the Niger Delta are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers. The region has a combined population of about 30 million (Ebiede, 2017). Petroleum was first discovered in the region in 1956. The oil-rich Niger Delta has strategic economic importance to Nigeria because crude oil production contributes 70% of Nigeria's export income (Ebiede, 2017). Ironically, the region is one of the poorest in the country (Persson, 2018).

It is well recognized that IOCs' activities can have negative social and environmental impacts (e.g., corruption, conflicts, and pollution) on local communities in developing countries (Oetzel & Doh, 2009). This has been the experience of the communities in the Niger Delta, hence the strong negative perception about IOCs reported by Odera et al. (2018). The IOCs are perceived as insincere in their efforts to prevent or mitigate pollution incidents, thereby evoking emotions of "dissatisfaction, frustration, anger and despair" (p. 87). The legacy of five decades of oil production in the region is a diminished quality of life: lack of social amenities, environmental degradation, and abject poverty (Omokhoa, 2015; Moshood et al., 2018). About 70% of the people are poor, and youth unemployment is estimated at 40% (Ebiede, 2017). Contrary to people's expectations, oil production resulted in

environmental pollution and economic ruin (Odera et al., 2018). Development was also stunted due to “corruption, mismanagement and social tensions” (UNGC, 2013).

In Nigeria, revenue and royalties from oil production go to the federal government, from where portions are allocated to the various levels of government. Apart from a 13% *derivation* reserved for them, there is little additional preferential consideration for oil-producing states. The Niger Delta people, who are minorities in the Nigerian federation, have had limited political power at the center and it is argued that this is why they are unable to attract enough development funding to their region (Ebiede, 2017).

Before the 1990s, civil protests in the Niger Delta where mostly nonviolent actions targeted against the government and the assets of the IOCs. Such actions were largely ignored until they metamorphosed from uncoordinated protests into a regional insurgency, dimming the boundaries between civil resistance and criminality (Moshood et al., 2018). Frustration and militancy were triggered by environmental degradation, lack of basic amenities, unemployment, and feelings of being betrayed by the Nigerian State and the IOCs (Odera et al., 2018; Okolie-Osemene, 2018).

Thus, while militants regularly kidnapped oil workers and vandalized oil installations, opportunistic rent-seeking elite hijacked the ensuing “economy of rebellion” to aggravate the conflict for pecuniary gains (Moshood et al., 2018). When protests escalated ferociously to levels that impacted global oil prices, the Nigerian state, in cahoots with some of the IOCs, responded with repressive measures (Udoh, 2013) that catalyzed the emergence of militia movements such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force .

The economic impact of the Niger Delta conflict is devastating. In 1998, for example, more than 1,000 people were killed in conflict-related violence. Furthermore, Nigeria lost $24 billion due to associated sabotage, oil theft, and deferment of oil production within the first 9 months of that year (Moshood et al., 2018). The associated bombings disrupted the IOCs' operations and cut Nigeria's oil production by more than 40% in 2016 (Fick, 2016; Guardian, 2017). The loss in revenues was recently estimated at 5 billion dollars per annum (Gaffey, 2016).

The Nigerian government attempted several nonmilitary solutions, including the 2009 Presidential Amnesty Program (PAP), a peacebuilding initiative that sought to pacify militants in the Niger Delta, thereby stopping violence and ending the destruction of oil production facilities (Moshood et al., 2018). Although the PAP is mainly considered successful to the extent that it deescalated the conflict (Omokhoa, 2015; Moshood et al., 2018), the much-desired enduring peace is still a mirage.

Problem Statement

Given the vast resources available to multinational corporations, and specifically IOCs in the Niger Delta, these firms can make a scalable impact on host communities through the United Nation's model B4P programs (Egbon et al., 2018; Idemudia, 2017). Inaugurated in 2013, the United Nations' B4P initiative established that businesses are partners in local peacebuilding in conflict-ridden regions (United Nations Global Compact, 2013). The B4P program benchmarked over €8 trillion in investments for this effort with 20,000 companies as signatories to expand private sector action for peacebuilding in fragile states (Miklian et al., 2018). It is noteworthy that cross-sector collaborations are particularly needed for business peacebuilding efforts in fragile states to maximize the shared value created for all stakeholders

(Idemudia, 2018; Oetzel et al., 2007). The social problem is that multinational firms' peacebuilding efforts in fragile states are only assessed at the firm level and risk missing more considerable social consequences for host communities (Obeki et al., 2018; Miklian & Schouten, 2019).

There is still a need to examine business–community collaboration from the expectations of all the actors involved, to refine and improve business–host community partnerships for peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). According to notable African researchers, corporate peacebuilding programs have yielded limited positive impacts where they are most needed; for example, in the Niger Delta (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). Scholars within the business and peace literature state a knowledge gap exists on understanding community stakeholders' views and expectations on which specific strategies support corporate peacebuilding within conflict-ridden host communities (Phiri, 2017; Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019). The specific problem is that host community stakeholders' expectations of the IOCs' peacebuilding programs are rarely considered, thus fueling continued animosity amongst the host communities towards the IOCs (Odera et al., 2018; Imoh, 2019; Neufeldt et al., 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study is to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. To address the study problem and remain consistent with the qualitative paradigm, a multiple case study method was used to meet the study's purpose through multiple-source data collection (Yin, 2017). To support the trustworthiness of the data analysis and results of the final study, I conducted

triangulation using semi-structured interviews with a range of eight participants, in conjunction with journaling/ reflective field notes and archival data (Denzin, 2009; Guion et al., 2011).

Research Questions

How do host community stakeholders describe their expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta?

Conceptual Framework

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study, which was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta: 1) Jennings' (2015; 2018) concept of *peacekeeping as enterprise;* and 2) Ingenhoff & Sommer's (2011) concept of *stakeholder expectation regarding the social engagement of companies.* In their seminal research on companies as peacebuilders, Ralph and Conley Tyler (2016) argued that managing community members' expectations is important for company leaders' consideration to avoid disappointment or disillusionment with community-based approaches to peacebuilding and sustainable development in conflict zones. This empirical investigation aims to advance knowledge and a deeper understanding of community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta and contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

Peacekeeping-as-Enterprise

Jennings (2015) defined peacekeeping economies as the backstage commercial enterprises associated with peacekeeping in post-conflict communities; especially how the national staff, skilled workers, expatriate businesspeople, intermediaries, and

service workers are typically sidelined in mainstream research. In her later works, Jennings (2018) writes that the peacekeeping economy concept may be used as an analytical tool that enables qualitative studies of the everyday interactions between peacekeepers and locals, allowing a unique insight into the political practice of modern peacekeeping.

At present, the concept of 'peacekeeping economics' remains underexplored and is founded on economic growth theory (Schumpeter, 1934) that defines capital as responsible for only a small amount of increased output that cannot lead to long-term equitable growth. Schumpeter's (1934) theory suggests that companies' learning, and innovation are heavily influenced by choosing a specific location and context. Due to large amounts of destruction and capital flight in the specific context of a post-conflict environment, capital stock levels must be restored quickly for an economy to stabilize its weak economic situation (Martin-Shields, & Bodanac, 2018.)

Stakeholder Expectation Regarding the Social Engagement of Companies

Through stakeholder engagement, a business considers the interests of various stakeholders in decisions and projects. Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) identified stakeholder-driven interventions through three CSR intervention models, whereby businesses act responsibly for positive social change. Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) founded their conclusions on defining stakeholder expectations and companies' social engagement based on two key theories. Firstly, Ingenhoff and Sommer used as a theoretical foundation the shareholder value theory (Van Marrewijk, 2003), which suggested that the company also has to balance a multiplicity of stakeholders interests; and, secondly, the corporate citizenship theory (Moon et al., 2005), which identified "specific roles and responsibilities for corporate, governmental, and other

actors in society" (Moon et al., 2005, p. 430) and which focuses on the role corporations play in society.

Nature of the Study

To ensure that the proposed method aligned with the purpose of this research and provides adequate data for the research question, this study's nature was qualitative. The qualitative approach was used because it is suitable for the "naturalistic perspective and interpretive understanding" of human experience and expectations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 10). The qualitative research method is appropriate for an investigation about meanings, opinions, expectations, and behavior. Given that the study's purpose required a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta, an exploratory multiple case study (Yin, 2017) was applied. Qualitative research aligns with the worldview that learning is active and constructive. Since qualitative research is consistent with the constructivist paradigm, scholars use it to explore individual experiences in a specific social and cultural setting (Cooper & White, 2012).

Conversely, the quantitative research method was not relevant for this study because the exploratory multiple case study does not investigate any statistical relationship and does not seek to manipulate any experimental variables (Harkiolakis, 2017). As was further emphasized by Harkiolakis (2017), qualitative research is more suitable when field observations of reality are analyzed exclusive of numerical methods, or where the intention is to conclude from coded data. To align with the purpose of this study and gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta, a

qualitative research method was used to allow for a flexible approach to collecting and analyzing data.

According to Yin (2017), a multiple case study investigation allows the researcher to investigate phenomena through replication strategy. Replication logic implies that each case is analyzed as a stand-alone experiment whereby the researcher seeks to understand "the central research question within each case" and afterward, making an attempt to replicate emerging insights across the cases. Through replication, the researcher endeavors to reproduce similar results across several cases "by exploring the differences and similarities between and within cases" to produce evidence that is both robust and reliable (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

Yin (2017) also noted that within the multiple case design, investigating a social phenomenon can entail an individual within a specific context as a separate unit of study. To meet that goal, this study's central phenomenon was the individual, and the context was communities within the Niger Delta region (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). In developing a study of individuals living within a community and not the whole of the community itself in such a study, the optimum qualitative design to retrieve data with the goal of theory extension is an exploratory, multiple-case study design (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). The unit of analysis in this study was the individual community stakeholder.

Participants for this multiple case study were recruited using purposeful criterion and network sampling strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I screened candidates for participation in my study with the following inclusion criteria: adults over the age of 18; male and female; born and residing in a community in the Niger

Delta; possessing knowledge regarding the peacebuilding programs of IOCs within their community; and, literate in the English language.

Unlike quantitative logic, case study research employs non-random sampling, specifically because of such cases' unique suitability (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). As such, maximum variation sampling is relevant (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). In terms of sample size for multiple case study research, five to 15 participants are recommended because larger sample sizes may constitute an obstacle for in-depth investigation (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

Similarly, Schram (2006) also recommended a range of five to ten participants for a qualitative study, stating that a larger sample size could be a barrier to an in-depth, qualitative investigation. Therefore, I recruited participants and conducted eight in-depth, real-time online individual interviews with participants recruited for this study until data saturation was reached. In using the multiple case study design, I implemented the cross-case synthesis method for data analysis to generate themes representing the convergence and divergence of participants' experiences within and between cases (Yin, 2017). I triangulated interview data themes with data from other sources, reflective field notes, and IOCs' reports on peacebuilding programs to enhance findings' trustworthiness and make suggestions for further research (Guion et al., 2011).

Definitions

Business for Peace (B4P): The term refers to the UN-supported leadership platform that promotes private sector participation in local communities' peacebuilding efforts (UNGC, 2015).

Community stakeholder: Stakeholders are individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by an organization's actions. Community stakeholders are the people, groups, organizations, etc., who live in the areas where IOCs explore and produce oil and gas, and therefore, can affect or be affected by the actions, objectives, policies, or programs of the oil companies. It is noteworthy that shareholders, employees, consumers, and governments are usually referred to as the primary stakeholders, whereas the community, general public, and NGOs are referred to as secondary stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011).

Corporate citizenship: This refers to the activities and processes used by businesses to achieve their social responsibilities and a sense of belonging and responsibility to the community (Jamali, 2008; Maignan et al., 1999; Yin et al., 2013).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR): This term refers to the commitment by corporations to conduct their operations in a manner that ethically contributes to economic development and improves the quality of life for employees, the local community, and society. CSR is the voluntary decision by companies to contribute to a better society by investing in people, the environment, and relations with their stakeholders (El-Bassiouny et al., 2018; Jamali, 2008; Osamuyimen et al., 2018; Renouard & Lado, 2012)

Cross-sector collaboration: This term refers to a partnership between businesses and NGOs in CSR programs toward the community. Collaboration with NGOs can be in the form of donations, skills training, and capacity building. It noteworthy that such collaborations may be conducted with government-organized NGOs (GONGO) (Yin et al., 2013).

Fragile state: This term refers to countries where the government cannot or is unwilling to provide its core responsibilities and functions to most people. Characteristics of fragile states include widespread poverty, institutional instability, insecurity, and pervasive corruption (UNODC, 2009).

Host communities: The term refers to the communities in which the oil and gas companies explore and produce oil and gas. In Nigeria, the host communities are typically in the Niger delta. (Osamuyimen et al., 2018)

International Oil Companies (IOCs): This term refers to multinational or transnational oil and gas producing companies that operate in geographic regions around the world. Examples of IOCs include Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron/Texaco, Total, and Agip-Eni (Odera et al., 2018).

Peacebuilding projects and programs. These are projects and programs used to prevent or resolve violent conflicts, consolidate peace when violence has been removed, and or use reconstruction programs to sustain the peace and prevent relapse to violence (Akpomuvie, 2018; Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019; Omokhoa, 2015). They include integrated activities that transform the society from conflicts into peace by addressing the direct, structural, and cultural causes of violence. Examples of projects and programs include community development projects that provide health and social amenities, pro-peace advocacy, anti-corruption initiatives, community empowerment programs, literacy support, scholarship programs, etc.

*Peacekeeping economies***:** This term refers to backstage commercial enterprises that are associated with peacekeeping in post-conflict communities, and which include the national staff, skilled workers, expatriate businesspeople,

intermediaries, and service workers that are typically sidelined in mainstream research (Jennings, 2015).

Shareholder value theory: This term refers to the approach that considers that it is the primary responsibility of the business to maximize its profits, and therefore, that the interest of the shareholder is the motivation of the company. This contrasts with the stakeholder approach, where organizations are held accountable not only to their shareholders but also to contribute to their multiple stakeholders' needs through CSR or related programs (Marrewijk, 2003).

Stakeholder: This term refers to people, groups, organizations, businesses, or any other party that can affect or be affected by the actions, objectives, policies, or programs in the region (Marrewijk, 2003).

Stakeholder-driven interventions: This term refers to peacebuilding measures with a high level of local stakeholder participation and ownership as in our context. This contrasts with the otherwise intrusive “top-down” interventions where the actions are imposed on the communities by external actors (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011).

The Niger Delta Region: This is the region in southern Nigeria where oil corporations conduct oil and exploration and production. (Ugochukwu, 2018).

Assumptions

The first assumption in the study was that by using a multiple-case-study qualitative research method, we may better understand host community stakeholders’ expectations of IOCs’ peacebuilding programs in the Niger Delta. The study’s central phenomenon was the individual, and the context was communities within the Niger Delta region. Qualitative research is more suitable when field observations of reality

are analyzed exclusive of numerical methods or where the intention is to conclude coded data

A second assumption was that selected participants had adequate experience with the Niger Delta situation and that they were disposed to sharing such individual experiences and describing their expectations regarding strategies that support corporate peacebuilding in the Niger Delta.

A third assumption was that a better understanding of community stakeholders' expectations in business-peacebuilding programs may benefit the IOCs in their decision-making processes relating to corporate-community collaborative efforts for peace in the Niger Delta (Miller et al., 2019).

Scope and Delimitations

This study's scope and delimitation were relevant to the research problem, which was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs in the Niger Delta. This problem was selected from a literature review on the Niger Delta situation, which demonstrated that private corporations could add relevant contributions to local peacebuilding in line with promoting private sector participation in peacebuilding efforts advocated by the B4P mandate (UNGC, 2015).

IOCs can make a scalable impact on host communities through the United Nation's model B4P programs in the Niger Delta, given the vast resources at their disposal (Egbon et al., 2018; Idemudia, 2017). Unfortunately, studies reveal that corporate peace-building programs in the Niger Delta have failed to address the enormous social and economic impact of the Niger Delta conflict (Moshood et al., 2018; Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018).

Despite several studies that demonstrate how managing the expectations of community members is essential in order to avoid disappointment or disillusionment (Ralph & Conley Tyler, 2016), few studies have enquired into the forward-looking expectations of the community stakeholders in the context of their future relationship with the IOCs (Atienza, 2019). Consequently, there is a knowledge gap in our understanding of community stakeholders' expectations of the strategies that support corporate peacebuilding in conflict-ridden host communities (Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019; Phiri, 2017).

In the interviews, I considered only participants with relevant knowledge and experience of the Niger Delta situation in areas where the IOCs operate. In the field investigations, I focused on individuals in the Niger Delta communities who experienced the Niger Delta conflict firsthand and were familiar with inter-relationships between the IOCs and the community stakeholders.

Consequently, I did not include in the study community stakeholders in "marginal oil fields" where local (non-IOC) oil and gas producing companies are the operators. This scope was selected to address the fact that host community stakeholders' expectations of the IOCs' peacebuilding programs are rarely considered. Peacebuilding efforts by multinational firms in fragile states are only assessed at the firm level, thus potentially missing the more considerable social consequences for host communities (Miklian & Schouten, 2019; Obeki et al., 2018).

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. As such, my selection of candidates for participation in the study was based on the following criteria: adults over the age of 18; male and female; born and

residing in a community in the Niger Delta; possessing knowledge regarding the peacebuilding programs of IOCs within their community; and literate in the English language. These inclusion criteria are similar to those used in previous and related research studies (Makaba, 2018; Ogula, 2012).

Participants were also recruited for in-depth online individual interviews for this study until data saturation was reached. The minimum number of interviews conducted for a multiple case study is five participants, and I continued past this number until I reached data saturation, with similar data noted from Participants 5, 6, and 7 (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Schram, 2006). I conducted eight in-depth, online, individual interviews with participants purposefully recruited for this study with coding starting at the eighth interview when data saturation had been attained.

Limitations

Limitations are those elements of a study that are out of the researcher's control and can impact the results' trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). This study's first limitation was that the researcher, being a Nigerian, may inadvertently contribute to cultural bias in the study. Motivations and influences based on a personal cultural lens can create ethnocentrism in judging research participants' qualitative responses (Chenail, 2011). To minimize culture bias, a peer debriefer not belonging to the Nigerian culture and skilled in qualitative research methods analyzed the same data, with all discrepancies discussed until a consensus was established (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

The second limitation of the study was that the case study method has received scholarly criticism for not offering statistical generalization of data results to Nigeria's general population from this study's purposive sample of eight host

community stakeholders from the Niger Delta (Yin, 2017). The multiple case study method is not used for this purpose but to support qualitative data's trustworthiness, indicating convergence and divergence of data across cases, cross-case comparison, and for advancing theory extension (Stake, 2013). While I used the multiple-case study to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta, the primary data collection process was limited to eight participants, based on saturation of the data (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

Participants' willingness to answer the interview questions straightforwardly and honestly contributes to the third research limitation, although it was assumed that participant responses to interview questions were truthful and transparent (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Lack of willingness could have originated from uncertainty or fear of disloyalty to the participants' indigenous community (Lancaster, 2017). The political atmosphere, anxiety, and personal bias regarding IOCs' issues in the Niger Delta region could have limited the interview process. Consequently, I depended on our commonality and shared cultural background to put the participants at ease.

Host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta may provide a platform for improved relations between both parties. The limitation for transferability of the findings from this study is situated within the context of stakeholder-driven interventions (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011), Jennings' (2005) concept of peacebuilding as an enterprise, as well as Ralph and Conly Tyler's (2016) concept of community involvement in peace interventions.

The results of this research may be transferable to host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs in other geographic

regions marked by local violence and the challenges of rebuilding after an armed conflict.

Significance of the Study

B4P building efforts are the most visible public symbol of the private sector's broader effort to become peacebuilders and global governance participants. Community perceptions often form the basis for community actions to either support or disrupt corporate activities (Idemudia, 2007). This study may be significant in addressing the need for a better understanding of community stakeholders' perceptions about potentially problematic issues in business- peacebuilding programs and may prove beneficial to the IOCs in their decision-making processes relating to corporate-community collaborative efforts for peace in the Niger Delta (Miller et al., 2019).

Significance to Practice

Researchers suggested that a host community's absorptive capacity for business-peacebuilding can become overwhelmed when the host community stakeholders are excluded from the process. The cumulative spillover effects of business peacebuilding projects may inadvertently create a collective negative effect (Schrich, 2018). A deeper understanding of the Niger Delta people's expectations about corporate-sponsored peacebuilding programs within their communities will better inform policymakers and IOC leaders about community stakeholders' perceptions, considering that they constitute a significant stakeholder group within the IOC-Niger Delta peacebuilding dynamic (Imoh, 2019).

Multinational firms' peacebuilding efforts in fragile states have thus far only been assessed at the firm level and risk missing more considerable social

consequences for stakeholders within host communities (Miklian & Schouten, 2019; Obeki et al., 2018). Community stakeholders-informed policy will support IOC executives in applying necessary corrective measures to their existing programs and engaging more effectively with the local communities (Phiri, 2017).

Significance to Theory

Even though there are several studies from diverse academic scholars and researchers on business–community peacebuilding corporate programs in the Niger Delta, few have brought forth the community stakeholder viewpoint to refine and improve business–host community partnerships for peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). This study may bring about a unique contribution to existing theoretical literature in the business-for-peacebuilding field and advance knowledge on community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. Empirical analyses on the outcome of collaborative community strategies adopted by businesses for peacebuilding have been limited (Ford, 2015; Haufler, 2015; Kolk & L'Enfant, 2015) rather than focus on community stakeholders' views of corporate peacebuilding efforts (Katsos & Forrer, 2014, p. 154).

With this research, I aspire to extend the theoretical foundations of the study's conceptual framework by contributing original qualitative data to the extant literature on host community stakeholders' expectations on peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. The theoretical foundations of my study's conceptual framework include economic growth theory (Schumpeter, 1934), shareholder value theory (Van Marrewijk, 2003), and corporate citizenship theory (Moon et al., 2005). Academic researchers may also benchmark this research's findings using other business peacebuilding programs at different geographical locations for future research.

Significance to Social Change

A better understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations could help policymakers and corporate leaders develop and implement more effective peacebuilding programs and renew community trust between the IOCs and the Niger Delta region (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). The study's outcome may drive positive social change by providing policymakers and executives in the Niger Delta with a better understanding of community stakeholders' expectations to shape practical and consensual corporate peacebuilding programs. The goal of researching the Niger Delta to thwart further local violence and conflict aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 16, which aims to "reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere" (Atienza, 2019; United Nations, 2018).

Summary and Transition

The first chapter of this study provided a detailed introduction and background of the study issues, leading to the specific problem: host community stakeholders' expectations of the IOCs peacebuilding programs are rarely considered, thus fueling continued animosity amongst the host communities towards the IOCs. Aligning the purpose with the study's problem and the research gap provided the foundation of literature to develop a conceptual framework and overarching research question.

Despite the countless literature on the general management problem addressed in the chapter, in-depth qualitative research using a multiple case study design has not been conducted to explore host community stakeholders' expectations of the IOCs peacebuilding programs. With this research, I aspire to extend the theoretical foundations of the study's conceptual framework by contributing original qualitative

data to the extant literature on host community stakeholders' expectations on peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta.

The study's outcome may drive positive social change by providing policymakers and executives in the Niger Delta with a better understanding of community stakeholders' expectations to shape effective and consensual corporate peacebuilding programs. In Chapter 2, I develop the literature search strategy appropriate for the study and delve further into the development of the conceptual framework. I present a detailed synthesis of knowledge and critical analysis on seminal and updated literature on the study topic and thereafter, a chapter summary.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Because of the vast resources available to international oil companies in the Niger Delta, these firms can make a scalable impact on host communities (Egbon et al., 2018; Idemudia, 2017). The United Nations' B4P initiative promotes businesses' participation in local peacebuilding efforts in conflict-ridden regions to benefit all stakeholders (Idemudia, 2018; Oetzel et al., 2007). Scholars state that since multinational firms' peacebuilding efforts in fragile states are currently evaluated only at the firm level, larger social consequences for host communities are missed (Miklian & Schouten, 2019; Obeki et al., 2018).

Recently implemented corporate peacebuilding programs have yielded few positive impacts in the Niger Delta (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018), and a knowledge gap exists in our understanding of community stakeholders' views and expectations on peacebuilding strategies (Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019; Phiri, 2017). The specific problem is that host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs are rarely considered, thus fueling continued animosity amongst the host communities towards the IOCs (Imoh, 2019; Neufeldt et al., 2020; Odera, et al., 2018).

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study is to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. This chapter will initially present the literature search strategy alongside the conceptual framework upon which the research is grounded. This chapter will show a synthesis of knowledge on the role of community stakeholders' views and expectations on peacebuilding strategies of

international oil companies in the Niger Delta region. Chapter 2 will finally include a synthesis of knowledge and critical analysis of the study topic's literature.

Literature Search Strategy

The rationale for this literature review is to present a narrative synthesis and critique of past and current research knowledge and scholarly thinking on the topic of study, which in this case is Niger Delta stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs, and thereby present a comprehensive overview that highlights the gaps in literature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

A narrative essay, rather than an approach organized around themes, was selected because of the broad diversity of literature within the discipline area and to help place into perspective, the perceptions of community stakeholders regarding IOCs' peacebuilding programs (Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018). In their seminal paper on narrative literature reviews, Baumeister and Leary (1997) wrote that a narrative review identifies all potentially relevant research traditions that have implications for the studied topic and provides an understanding of complex areas within that specific topic (Snyder, 2019).

The literature used in this research was primarily obtained from scholarly peer-reviewed books, journals, and articles from the Walden University research library and other online library databases and search engines. These online library databases and search engines included ABI/INFORM Collection, Academic Search Complete, ACM Digital Library, Business Source Complete, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, TQR Publications (NSUWorks), Wiley Online, and ProQuest. The literature review's primary focus was the last five years to ensure that the most recent articles are consulted and capture the most current knowledge and think on the topic.

The key terms used in the searches were: *Niger Delta conflict; Niger Delta conflict; business for peace; peacekeeping; peacebuilding; peacekeeping; fragile states; stakeholders; expectations of stakeholders; sustainable development; multinational corporations, oil and gas corporations; extraction and conflict; developing countries; oil-producing communities;* and *peacekeeping as an enterprise.*

Many of the key terms were linked in various combinations to obtain additional or richer search results specific to the Niger Delta. Such combinations included: *business for peace programs in the Niger Delta; peacekeeping in fragile states; peacekeeping in the Niger Delta; peacebuilding in the Niger Delta; stakeholder expectations in the Niger Delta; stakeholder participation in peacebuilding; stake-holder driven interventions; sustainable development; resource extraction in developing countries; causes of conflict in oil-producing communities;* and *peacekeeping as an enterprise.* Using keywords and keyword combinations across the databases mentioned above, the searches returned a wide variety of peer-reviewed, full-text articles and books across various study disciplines.

Conceptual Framework

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study, which was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta: 1) Jennings' (2015; 2018) concept of *peacekeeping as enterprise* and 2) Ingenhoff & Sommer's (2011) concept of *stakeholder expectation regarding the social engagement of companies.*

In their seminal research on companies as peacebuilders, Ralph & Conley Tyler (2016) argued that managing community members' expectations is important

for company leaders' consideration to avoid disappointment or disillusionment with community-based approaches to peacebuilding and sustainable development in conflict zones. In a related, more recent study, Omobhude and Chen (2019) found that stakeholders' deliberate engagement helps to deliver quality economic and social benefits for the communities.

Scholars also argue that to produce sustainable global frameworks for the social engagement of companies in developing countries, researchers must look beyond reporting on company activities and pay adequate attention to local community stakeholders and their relationship with resource industries in the context of sustainable development (Idemudia, 2017; Lertzman & Vredenburg, 2005). This empirical investigation aimed to advance knowledge and a deeper understanding of community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta and contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

Peacekeeping-as-Enterprise

Jennings (2015) defined peacekeeping economies as the backstage commercial enterprises associated with peacekeeping in post-conflict communities; especially the national staff, skilled workers, expatriate businesspeople, intermediaries, and service workers who are typically sidelined in mainstream research. In her later works, Jennings (2018) writes that the peacekeeping economy concept may be used as an analytical tool that enables qualitative studies of the everyday interactions between peacekeepers and locals, allowing a unique insight into the political practice of modern peacekeeping.

From her study of peacekeeping economies in post-conflict peacekeeping missions in Africa, Jennings (2015) concluded that the local people typically perceive peacekeeping-as-enterprise (PAE) as insensitive and predatory; creating wealth in a few hands in a manner that reinforces preexisting inequalities. At present, the concept of 'peacekeeping economics' remains underexplored and is founded on economic growth theory (Schumpeter, 1934) that defines capital as responsible for only a small amount of increased output which cannot lead to long-term equitable growth. Schumpeter's theory (1934) suggests that companies' learning, and innovation are heavily influenced by choosing a specific location and context.

Due to large amounts of destruction and capital flight in the specific context of a post-conflict environment, capital stock levels must be restored quickly for an economy to stabilize its weak economic situation (Martin-Shields & Bodanac, 2018). Jennings' (2015) PAE concept contrasts with other narratives such as peacekeeping for development. Elements of Jennings' PAE construct are visible in Andreas' (2008) criminalized wartime economy, such as the underground commercial systems that flourished during the Sarajevo siege.

Jennings' (2018) peacekeeping economy can also be contrasted with Autesserre's (2014) notion of "Peachland." While Jennings' (2014; 2015, 2018) focus was on how backstage commercial transactions impact peacekeeping, Autesserre articulated the impact of expatriates' social habits on the effectiveness of peace intervention efforts. PAE contrasts with other narratives such as peacekeeping for development because peacekeepers in the PAE construct pursue their interests. Ultimately, PAE may be beneficial but insufficient for sustainable peace development (Jennings, 2018).

Stakeholder Expectation Regarding the Social Engagement of Companies

Through stakeholder engagement, a business considers the interests of various stakeholders in decisions and projects. Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) identified stakeholder-driven interventions as one of three CSR intervention models, whereby businesses act responsibly for positive social change. Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) documented how stakeholder-driven interventions respond to social pressures from stakeholder groups. The authors highlighted how important it is to understand stakeholders' expectations and ensure that the business communicates the results effectively to stakeholders (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011).

Idemudia (2014) reported how a pay-as-you-go approach to community relations by IOCs before the 1980s contributed to the breakout of conflicts in the 1980s in the Niger Delta because such approach did not consider the expectations of the people. Instead, they treated community stakeholders as recipients – but not agents – of peace and development. Consequently, most of the projects failed to address community expectations, and in some cases, precipitated inter-community violence.

Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) founded their conclusions on defining stakeholder expectations and companies' social engagement based on two key theories. Firstly, Ingenhoff and Sommer used as a theoretical foundation the shareholder value theory (Van Marrewijk, 2003), which suggested that the company also has to balance a multiplicity of stakeholders interests; and, secondly, the corporate citizenship theory (Moon et al., 2005), which identified "specific roles and responsibilities for corporate, governmental, and other actors in society" (Moon et al., 2005, p. 430) and focuses on the role corporations play in society. Both Ingenhoff and Sommer and Kohl (2015) demonstrated that the expectations of local citizens could be

at variance with the perceptions of corporate leaders involved in peacebuilding programs.

Literature Review

Perspectives on Peacebuilding and Peacekeeping

Conflicts arise only when the interests of parties are divergent (Akpomuvie, 2018). Peacebuilding encompasses processes or mechanisms that (a) prevent or resolve violent conflicts, (b) consolidate peace when violence has been removed, or (c) use reconstruction programs to sustain the peace and prevent post-conflict relapse (Akpomuvie, 2018). Analogously, peacebuilding actions are "integrated activities, processes, roles, and functions that [are] centered on transforming a society … with intensive and [prolonged] conflicts into peace" (Omokhoa, 2015, p. 9). Hence, peacebuilding focuses on eradicating the causes of conflicts rather than "mere reconciliation or mediation" (p. 9). In peacebuilding, the aim is to restore amicable relations between the groups that have been conflicted. Peacebuilding necessarily requires elements of "forgiveness, cooperation negotiation, facilitation, creation of mutual understanding, and reconciliation" (Akpomuvie, 2018, p. 10) as well as trust (Omokhoa, 2015).

The current peacebuilding lexis was received from Johan Galtung following his 1976 article that distinguished between peacekeeping, peace-making, and peacebuilding (Cravo, 2018). Galtung's (1976) definition of peace was the absence of violence; where violence itself was defined as the situation in which human beings are influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realization are below their potential. These definitions extend beyond the dominant notion that violence is a deliberate act by an identifiable actor to incapacitate the victim (Cravo, 2018). Galtung (1976) also

provided a dual definition of peace, namely: (a) negative peace as the absence of violence, and (b) positive peace as the integration of human society.

Research for peace in this perspective involves studying conditions that bring humanity close to producing general and complete peace. Moreover, there is a distinction between (1) "direct violence" (i.e., the intentional act of aggression involving a victim, an action, and a perpetrator), (2) structural violence (i.e., social structures such as oppression and exploitation, and (3) cultural violence (i.e., the system of norms and underlying behaviors which legitimize structural and direct violence). Such social cosmology accepts repression and exploitation as normal or natural. Structural violence is, therefore, more difficult to eradicate (Cravo, 2018).

Peace-making is a more comprehensive approach anchored in conflict resolution beyond the cessation of hostilities and focuses on ways to transcend inconsistencies and contradictions between the parties (Cravo, 2018). On the other hand, peacebuilding is an associative approach to conflict resolutions that cope with the direct, structural, and cultural causes of violence; it is the process of identifying and supporting the structures that strengthen and solidify peace to avoid returning conflict (Belloni, 2020). It encompasses the complementary tasks of (a) the dangerous task of preventing the resumption of hostilities and (b) the positive task of addressing the root causes of the conflict. The United Nations eventually adopted Galtung’s propositions in 1992 (Cravo, 2018).

Haider's (2009) concept of peacekeeping refers to actions needed to transition from conflicts towards long-term peaceful relations. Haider (2009) described a Community Based Approach (CBA) to peacebuilding, empowering the local community to determine and control project decisions and execution. The CBA

approach recognizes that, as strategic stakeholders, the local people are best positioned to prioritize their needs.

Therefore, the CBA is more relevant to the beneficiaries' specific expectations (Haider, 2009). IOCs are relevant to peacebuilding in the Niger Dela because their operations are in direct contact with the local communities. In the absence of government structures, the IOCs are the only potential development agents available to the people. The IOCs typically engage in CSR projects to build social capital and guarantee their sustainability. Nonetheless, such CSR projects consistently fall short of the people's expectations, hence the frustrations and consequent violence such as attacks on oil infrastructure and installations (Ebiede, 2017).

Jennings's (2018) peace as enterprise concept and, to a more considerable extent, Jennings and Boas' (2015) concept of peacekeeping economies were used by Kohl (2015) to characterize the failings of peacebuilding initiatives in Guinea Bissau. Kohl (2015) further highlighted that in some contexts, it could be in the interests of elements of the local population (as well as those of international peace promoters) to precipitate peacebuilding failures and thereby prolong peacebuilding operations for personal gain. Jennings (2018) further developed the concept to conceptualize peacekeeping not as benevolence, but rather as political and economic transactions such that in peacekeeping economies, various groups of people aim to grab as much profit as possible while peacekeeping lasts.

Corporations in host countries with weak institutions face extreme social, political, and economic uncertainties in addition to security, economic, and reputational risks. Options available to any multinational corporation in such a

situation include: (a) exiting the country, (b) attempting to make economic benefits from the situation, (c) continuing with business as usual, or (d) actively intervening via proactive engagement (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2015).

Since International Oil Companies (IOCs), by the nature of their long-term investments, are less likely to exit a country at short notice, proactive involvement in peacebuilding becomes a more viable option. The roles of the multinational corporations have expanded to include human rights and conflict prevention driven by (a) the changing dimensions of conflicts, and (b) the reality of weak and failed nation-states, and (c) globalization (Miklian et al., 2018).

Following an investigation of how businesses and non-governmental entities support peacebuilding efforts in conflict zones, and after an examination of which policies and actions promote economic activity in conflict regions, Alexander (2013) concluded that peace promotes economic development, whereas conflicts impede development. Some of the reasons why conflicts impede economic growth are the physical and financial risks they impose. Alexander (2013) and Webb (2009) emphasized how the UN Global Compact Office (UNGCO) framework encourages businesses to contribute to peace and commerce in conflict zones.

The contributions of businesses may include dispute resolution, prevention of bribery and corruption, withholding assistance to armed groups, and promoting collaboration with civil society and NGOs. Thus, peace agreements can be the most efficient means of durable peace (Belloni, 2020). Like the studies about the roles of corporations in peacebuilding, several parallel studies have also been conducted on civil society's role in conflict resolutions. For example, Mudasiru and Moshood

(2017) found that the integration of civil society organizations (CSOs) in governance can enhance political stability and participatory democracy. The authors reported how some CSOs successfully brought together the government, the local community representatives, and the international oil corporations to sign cooperation and development agreements.

A humane understanding of businesses' role in conflict regions has advanced beyond elementary stereotypes to include sophisticated models and hypotheses (Slim, 2012). Slim (2012) went on to identify eight potential roles for business in armed conflict to include: (a) the victim, (b) the perpetrator, (c) the supplier, (d) the humanitarian actor, (e) the peacebuilder, or (f) the conflict preventer. Businesses are more frequently the victims and not the perpetrators of armed conflict. In most violent conflicts, businesses are attacked, and their staff may be wounded, killed, or raped.

Abeki et al. (2018) presented a few cogent theories on peacebuilding. One of such theories is "Structural functionalism," a theory that is used to decline how "…structures, systems of behavior, institutions, and concerted pro-peace actions enhance peace culture" (p. 5). Abeki et al. (2018) argued that a "peace accord" can form the basis for peace but cannot create peace without the supporting societal infrastructure. Furthermore, Structural functionalism requires collaborative and integrative engagement on development programs between the government, the IOCs, and the communities, in a format where the beneficiary communities define their developmental needs (Abeki et al., 2018).

It is relevant to mention that peacebuilding can impact the social and economic conditions in affected regions. For example, Martin-Shields & Bodanac

(2018) observed that even mere "perceptions of peace and stability" (p. 413) could impact economic development. Like other multinational corporations, IOCs could contribute to economic stability and growth in the same manner as traditional post-conflict peace interventions by (a) infusing foreign capital, (b) driving local demand, or (c) through the provision of institutional stability.

Contrarily, IOCs could alter the socio-economic equilibrium in their host communities (Amuyou et al., 2016). For example, Martin-Shields & Bodanac (2018) reported how foreign missions distort the socio-political economies in host communities by creating income disparity between international and local staff (Martin-Shields & Bodanac, 2018). Martin-Shields and Bodanac (2018) argued that such distortion "… drives prices up relative to real, local incomes" (Martin-Shields & Bodanac, 2018, p. 427) hence robbing the government and local companies of the most talented workforce who are attracted by the better wages offered by the IOCs.

Corporations can use ethical business practices to contribute to social development and more peaceful societies (Amuyou et al., 2016; Katsos & Alkafaji, 2019; Silvius & Schipper, 2019). Businesses can typically become the victims of armed conflict when their facilities or personnel are attacked. In recent times, a new role for businesses in conflict situations has evolved such that it is now recognized to include contribution and investments in peacebuilding. Businesses can also confront the root causes of armed violence by strengthening local economies, building trust, engaging with the stakeholder communities and the state authorities, direct engagement with belligerents, providing financial support, preventing corruption, and being pro-peace advocates (Katsos & Alkafaji, 2019). This focus is in line with the

aim of contemporary peacebuilding operations, namely: to prevent future violence by supporting reconciliations and democratization (Thompsell, 2019)

Placing the Niger Delta Region Violence in Context

The Niger Delta is the third-largest wetland and one of the most important in the world (Lenshie, 2018). The region includes areas with deltaic characteristics comprising the Nigerian states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers states (see Oluwaniyi, 2018). Most of Nigeria's crude oil production originates from these states. It is relevant to mention that the Niger Delta is mostly populated by minorities, including the Ijaw, Itsekiri, and Ibibio ethnic groups (Nwobueze, 2018). The terrain and fragile ecology of the Niger Delta circumscribes the occupation of the people to subsistence farming, fishing, trading, and artisanal jobs. The living conditions are appalling (Lenshie, 2018), and the people's perception of marginalization stems from their deplorable conditions amid humongous revenues from oil production (Lenshie, 2018). Before discovering oil, agriculture was indeed the mainstay of the Nigerian economy (Umukoro, 2018). After oil discovery and the start of petroleum production, oil export became the mainstay of the economy, thereby relegating agriculture to the background. It is estimated that about 90% of the Nigerian government's gross earnings are from crude oil exports (Albert et al., 2018; Umukoro, 2018).

Origin and Evolution of Agitations in the Niger Delta

Peace is the absence of violence, and violence is any situation in which people are so influenced that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential (Johan Galtung, cited in Cravo, 2018). Nigeria is one of the many countries

facing resource-based conflicts (Lenshie, 2018). The country is the sixth-largest exporter of oil and is the sixth largest in OPEC (Albert et al., 2018).

The impact of oil production on the environment is significant in terms of social, cultural, and economic dimensions. Albert et al. (2018) documented some of the broader impacts to include: (a) erosion of cultural values, (b) loss of sources of livelihood and related support structures, (c) loss of jobs and tourism opportunities, and (d) increased levels of frustration and restiveness.

Political agitation in the Niger Delta region has historically been tied to the fear of domination and neglect by the larger ethnic groups in Nigeria, namely, the Hausa-Fulani, Yorubas, and Igbos. The Niger Delta crisis mirrors the typical path in the evolution of ungoverned spaces: the emergence of "warlords, tribal leaders, and criminal gangs … in control of carved territory" who can challenge the legitimacy and authority of the central government (Lenshie, 2018).

The Niger Delta was recently characterized as "one of the volatile ungoverned spaces in the world" (Lenshie, 2018, p. 33), wherein the central government has been unable to establish full control. Ungoverned spaces are the typical hallmarks of weak and fragile states (Lenshie, 2018).

Although many agitation and protests have been targeted against the government and the IOCs, there has also been parallel inter-ethnic violence and campaigns for supremacy (Nwobueze, 2018). Indigenes of the oil-producing Niger Delta find themselves disadvantaged – in terms of the level of development in their communities – compared to other non-oil producing communities in Nigeria (Nwobueze, 2018).

Therefore, militancy in the Niger Delta can partly be explained as the determination of the oil communities to address their perceived marginalization. Nwobueze (2018) surmised thus: "Niger Delta agitators seek to curtail the lopsided developmental approach, which is evidenced by federal government's deployment of revenue from oil towards the development of states, towns and villages of ... majority ethnic groups to the consternation of the oil communities" (Nwobueze, 2018, p. 118).

The repercussions from widespread violence – especially on women – have been rather grave for the communities. For example, Nwobueze (2018) reported how "cases of rape and survival prostitution have been increasing with women trading sex for safety, food and shelter" (p. 118). There have also been reports of sexual exploitation by the military officers drafted to maintain peace. (The Guardian, 2017).

Right from the onset, the Niger Delta communities' protest action was influenced by (a) the degree to which the community leadership was either centralized or fragmented, and (b) the social status and education level of the leadership. Accordingly, community leadership was either intellectual, radicals, or violent militants (Mai-Bornu, 2019).

The Era of Peaceful Protests and Civil Disobedience: 1980 – 1995

The initial anti-oil protests and agitation were against the government, though the focus eventually shifted to the IOCs who were seen as "accruing all the benefits from extracting the natural wealth" (Umukoro, 2018). From the late 1980s, indigenous groups began to raise concerns about the negative impacts of oil production and began to challenge the IOCs' operations. Hallmark (2017) observed that the initial victims of attacks were oil assets such as drilling sites, tankers, tank

farms, pipelines, etc. (instead of innocent victims) because the intention was "to stifle oil production and cripple the Nigerian government economically" (Hallmark, 2017, p. 2).

One of the most vocal, organized communities was the Ogoni people under the leadership of the late Ken Saro-Wiwa, an environmentalist (Hallmark, 2017). The major protestations by the Ogonis were related to environmental degradation and other adverse effects of oil production. During the period of peaceful protests, there were instances of civil disobedience and the occasional acts of sabotage (Hallmark, 2017). As with the Ogonis, most community protestations in the early period of agitation were peaceful. Other examples included the Ogharefe protests in 1984 and the Ekpan women protest in 1986 (Ashe & Ojong, 2019). In 1990, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) was formed. The government's response was swift and brutal, including their leader's (the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) eventual hanging in 1995.

The Birth of Militancy: 1995 – 2010

After 1995, rebel groups multiplied and funded themselves by kidnapping people for ransom, and by stealing and selling petroleum products (Hallmark, 2017; Okolie-Osemene, 2018; Umukoro, 2018). Hallmark (2017) further highlights how the IOCs accepted such attacks as part of the region's challenges.

As the initially peaceful protests escalated into fierce conflicts of local and international proportions, the Nigerian state in cahoots with the IOCs responded with punitive actions, deadly raids, and other repressive measures. Such repression pushed

the civil agitation into the emergence of militia movements such as the MEND and the NDPVF.

The militias launched a terrorist campaign in the region via kidnappings, assassinations, and bomb attacks against oil installations and became one of the biggest security threats to the government (Okolie-Osemene, 2018). The major militant groups included the MEND, the Supreme Egbesu Assembly (SEA), the reformed Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), etc.

The Niger Delta communities felt betrayed by successive governments and the IOCs (Okolie-Osemene, 2018). Oil-related conflicts included not only clashes between militias and government but also clashes between rival ethnic groups and attacks against oil personnel and production facilities (Umukoro, 2018). The widespread violence had significant and negative impacts on government revenue both in the short -, and longer terms (Udoma et al., 2018).

In 2006, the MEND was formed. MEND radically transformed the sophistication and dimensions of the Niger Delta protests. For example, MEND typically issued email releases to broadcast their message after each act of sabotage (Hallmark, 2017). MEND was also better equipped and better trained compared to their predecessors. MEND's attacks shifted to strategic targets to curtail the government's ability to produce and export oil through kidnapping and killing of oil workers and bombing oil production facilities.

At the peak of their influence, the attacks by MEND had a global impact on the crude oil market aside from the loss to the Nigerian government estimated at "billions of dollars in lost oil earnings" (Hallmark, 2017, p. 5).

By 2009, the Nigerian government had realized that the Niger Delta debacle could not be solved by sheer military force. Hence, it announced the PAP on July 11, 2009. The program involved the release of convicted militants, payments to, and the training of ex-militants. In exchange, the militants agreed to lay down their arms and embrace peace. This disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (i.e., Amnesty) program launched by the Nigerian government (Okolie-Osemene, 2018) had taken effect by 2010.

The Post Amnesty Period: 2010 – Date

After the "Amnesty programme" introduced in 2009, there was a progressive reduction in the frequency and ferocity of attacks, up till mid-2015. It is striking that this period of rapprochement also coincided with the emergence of Mr. Goodluck Jonathan (himself a man of Niger Delta extraction) as the vice president, and later, as president of Nigeria in 2010. The Amnesty program – which has been described as one of the most expensive in the world – has been credited with the conflict's de-escalation (Okolie-Osemene, 2018).

In 2016 there was a resurgence of militancy with the formation of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), who, like MEND, had the goal of frustrating the production of oil by the IOCs in the Niger Delta. NDA was reportedly responsible for several strategic attacks on oil assets such as Shell's Forcados pipeline, Chevron's Okan platform, and ExxonMobil's Qua-Iboe terminal (Hallmark, 2017; Runsewe, 2018). NDA's attacks cut Nigeria's production by 40% to a 25-year low of about 1.4 million barrels a day (Hallmark, 2017). The attacks demonstrated that brute military force could neither defeat the militant groups in the Niger Delta nor protect the oil

infrastructure spread across the Niger Delta region. Although the government eventually negotiated a ceasefire with the NDA, the combination of the crippling attacks and the low oil prices plunged the country into the first recession in almost three decades (Runsewe, 2018).

In summation, Table 1 below is a composite timeline of milestones in the historical evolution Niger Delta violence

Table 1

Historical Milestones in the History of Niger Delta Violence

Date	**Milestone**	**Comments**
1956	Discovery of oil in Nigeria	Shell discovered oil in commercial quantities in Oloibiri, a community in the Niger Delta in present-day Bayelsa state
1958	Production of crude oil commenced in Nigeria	Production started at 5,100 barrels of oil per day in 1958
1966	The Isaac Adaka Boro rebellion	A 12-day secessionist revolution led by Isaac Adaka Boro in February 1966 to protest general neglect of the Ijaw communities. The rebellion was crushed on 7th March 1966 by Nigerian military forces.
1986	Ekpan community women NNPC blockade	On 25th August 1986, community women from Ekpan picket the offices of the national oil corporation (NNPC) and associated oil companies to demand for the preferential employment for their sons and daughters, the provision of water and electricity, and for monetary compensation for their lands, etc.
1990a	The formation of MOSOP, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People	The mass movement was established to galvanise the Ogoni (an ethnic minority in Nigeria) to protest peacefully against environmental pollution, and loss of livelihood arising from crude oil exploitation and production.

Date	Milestone	Comments
1990b	The proclamation of the Ogoni Bill of Rights	On 26th August 1990, Ogoni leaders published their demand for political autonomy and the right to control and use their resources for own development. The proclamation was deliberately nonviolent but was nevertheless met with ferocious oppression by the Nigerian state. Ken Saro Wiwa, their leader, was eventually executed by hanging in 1995
1992	MOSOP issues the $10 billion ultimatum	Ogoni activists demand 10 billion dollars as compensation for accumulated damages, and royalty. They threaten mass action to disrupt oil production. The MOSOP ultimatum shifted the focus of the Niger Delta agitation from the federal government towards the IOCs. The ensuing military repression led to the mother of 4 Ogoni leaders in 1994, and the eventual execution of Ken Saro Wiwa (the environmentalist and Ogoni leader) in 1995
1994	Execution of 4 Ogoni leaders	Four Ogoni leaders were killed by their own people for perceived complicity with the government and an IOC
1995	Execution of Ken Saro Wiwa	Conviction and execution of environmental activist Mr. Ken Saro Wiwa.
1998	Formation of the Ijaw youth Congress (IYC)	The Ijaw youth Congress (IYC), a pan-Ijaw organization was launched
1999	The all Ijaw Youth Conference with the theme "Regaining control of our destiny"	On 11th December 1999, the IYC issued the Kiama declaration to demand self-government and control of the resources in their land, and to protest their perceived economic and political marginalization
2002	Ugborodo community protest	In July 2002, protesting youths and women shut down Chevron's facilities in Escravos. Such protests were to recur in the succeeding years
2003	The creation of the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF)	The NDPVF was created to advance Ijaw rights through total control of resources
2006	The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta active since 2004, unleash a ferocious onslaught on oil workers and oil facilities	MEND pledged to destroy the capacity of the Nigerian government to export oil • https://corpwatch.org/article/nigeria-shell-may-pull-out-niger-delta-after-17-die-boat-raid • https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/africa-jan-june06-mend_03-10

Date	Milestone	Comments
2010	Emergence of Jonathan Goodluck as Nigeria's President	On 6th May 2010, the then acting president, Mr Goodluck Jonathan became the substantive president and 14th head of state following the death of president Yar'Adua. In 2011, he successfully ran for the post of president on his own for the first time. Jonathan is of the Ijaw ethnic minority in the Niger Delta and his ascendancy to the Presidency coincided with significant de-escalation of the agitation in the Niger Delta
2015	Defeat of President Jonathan (an Ijaw) in the national elections of 2015	Defeat of Jonathan in the national 2015 elections coincides with the resurgence of militant activities in the Niger Delta, including the subsequent creation of several militant groups
2018	Ugborodo community protest	On 20th June 2018, protesting youths and women from Ugborodo community in Delta State lay siege to the Chevron's oil facilities to protest deprivation of water and jobs.
2016	Formation of the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)	Formed in March 2016, the aim of the NDA is self-determination and full control of the resources in the Niger Delta. The NDA has been associated with daring attacks on oil production facilities. In 2016, the resulting shutdown of oil production reduced the country's oil output to the lowest level in more than twenty years
2020	Presentation of the new Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB 2020)	The PIB was introduced in 2020 and as of January 2021, was undergoing public hearing at the national assembly. The bill has a provision for a community-managed development fund funded directly by proceeds from oil production.

Thematic Interpretation of the Niger Delta Violence

The violence in the Niger Delta has several themes in literature, including allusions to (a) the consequence of environmental degradation and diminished livelihood (Odera et al., 2018), (b) the social and political marginalization context (e.g., Mai-Bornu, 2019; Udoh, 2013); and (c) the resource-curse syndrome (e.g., Mai-Bornu, 2019). Concerning the thematic causality of environmental degradation and

diminished livelihood, it is relevant that Ojakorotu et al. (2018) determined that both the IOCs and the communities are culpable in the Niger Delta violence.

Since peace is complementary to development, peacebuilding actions should include building relationships and inclusive participation instead of a misguided focus on state structures' imposition (Abeki et al., 2018). This thematic is also evident in other scholars' findings (e.g., Umar & Othman, 2017; Odera et al., 2018). The social and political marginalization thematic is significantly reinforced in the study by Tobor and Odubo (2017), in terms of provision of training and alternative employment for militants, and from the study by Folami (2017), in terms of the author's observations about the redistribution of oil-wealth among the region's ethnic groups.

However, Mai-Bornu (2019) noted that resource exploitation, marginalization, etc., do not fully explain the region's violence because the approach overlooks the impact of local perceptions. Mai-Bornu's (2019) exposition presented how different Niger Delta communities responded differently to their shared environmental pollution experience. For example, the Ijaw people in the region have chosen mainly violent confrontation with the government through Ijaw-led organizations (e.g., MEND, NDA, etc.) compared with the Ogoni people's choice of dialogue through MOSOP, the pan-Ogoni organization.

Based on recent studies (Lenshie, 2018; Odera et al., 2018; Okolie-Osemene, 2018; Okorie, 2018; Mai-Bornu, 2019; Nwozor et al., 2019; Oghenerobo, 2019; Uduji, Okolo-Obasi & Asongu, 2019, etc.) several themes are discernible in categorizing the genesis of the Niger Delta violence. Such themes are both intertwined and overlapping. For our purpose, therefore, it is relevant to synthesize

the emerging arguments. As such, the following themes are adopted to contextualize our understanding of the Niger Delta violence: (a) political marginalization of the Niger Delta people, (b) widespread environmental pollution and degradation, and (c) the failure of the Nigeria state.

The Niger Delta Violence as a Consequence of Perceived Political Marginalization.

Several studies have examined whether perceptions of political marginalization have influenced the Niger Delta conflict. For example, there is evidence that community people's perceptions feed and drive their actions to support or disrupt oil operations (Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018). Initial anti-oil protests were directed against lack of employment opportunities, non-provision of necessary infrastructure, and commensurate compensation for environmental pollution (Odera et al., 2018).

Lenshie (2018) also found that the reason why Niger Delta communities consider crude oil more of a curse than a blessing is partly because of an apparent absence of such economic and human capital development as are found in other oil-producing regions of the world (e.g., Dubai, Norway, Qatar, Kuwait, Texas, etc.). Government presence in the region is minimal, and the IOCs are not doing enough via CSR. Various scholars (Lenshie, 2018; Osamuyimen et al., 2018; Tantuaa et al., 2018; Umukoro, 2018) therefore contextualize the region's violent agitation because of perceptions of political marginalization by the Niger Delta people.

The Role of Environmental Pollution and Perceived Insensitivity of IOCs

Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta has been somewhat reckless, and this has contributed to the conflicts in the regions and to what Acey (2016) aptly described as “economies of violence.” As already mentioned, key stakeholders in the Niger Delta

conflict include the government, IOCs, and local communities. However, the oil resource is widely perceived to benefit not all of these stakeholders.

Only a privileged few have benefitted from oil exploration and exploitation "to the detriment of the vast majority given its negative impacts on the environment" (Mai-Bornu, 2019, p. 1284). Studies have documented how oil production activities have caused severe environmental pollution in the Niger Delta (e.g., Lenshie, 2018; Mai-Bornu, 2019; Nwozor et al., 2019; Okorie, 2018).

The environmental and social impacts of pollution have also been documented in several other studies. Okorie (2018) reported, for example, the evidence that groundwater in some communities was contaminated with carcinogenic petroleum products at levels more than 1,000 times above the drinking water standard. Such blatant pollution is partly responsible for the initial community resistance led by environmental activists such as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Despite the scale of pollution in the Niger Delta, no "implementable blueprint" for mediation has been launched (Nwozor et al., 2019, p. 7). Lenshie (2018) concluded that the devastating impacts of crude oil production on their environment are one of the reasons why Niger Delta communities consider crude oil a curse instead of a blessing. Lenshie's (2018) argued that crude oil exploitation deprived the communities of their sources of livelihood but benefited the state and the IOCs. Thus, only a people-oriented and pragmatic approach can end the conflict (Lenshie, 2018).

The resources available to the IOCs provides them a disproportionate economic power compared to the other stakeholders. Given the vast resources available to them, it is evident that IOCs – like other multinational corporations – can make a scalable impact on the economic, social, and political systems in the areas where they operate.

As such, the IOCs in Nigeria are perceived to have the resources to impact the Niger Delta communities' social fabric. Therefore, it is relevant for them to pursue the advancement of peace – or abatement of violence – in the areas where they operate (see Trivedi, 2016).

In the Niger Delta, as in other developing countries, where firms use CSR to fill the void arising from weakened state institutions (Melissen et al., 2018), CSR becomes the tool used to address social and economic challenges, and by which a firm may achieve the social legitimacy described by Melissen et al. (2018). Though CSR projects have been the traditional path to social license for the IOCs, many find it challenging to correctly estimate such CSR projects' effectiveness or suitability (Idemudia & Osayande, 2018).

CSR by the IOCs typically encompass healthcare facilities, roads, water projects, education, scholarships, etc. However, some CSR projects by the IOCs are not coordinated with other organizations and stakeholders and are ultimately unsustainable. As inequality in human capital formation impedes inclusive growth, the Niger Delta became “a theatre of incessant violent conflicts” (Uduji et al., 2019, p. 726) where militant youths frequently sabotaged oil assets “in order to extract concessions and composition from oil companies” (p. 726). Ultimately, the Niger Delta communities feel betrayed by successive governments and the IOCs (Okolie-Osemene, 2018).

The Niger Delta Violence as the Consequence of a Failed Nigerian State

Udoma et al. (2018) consider that Nigeria is a failed state because it is “a good example of a country where the government has failed in its duties to provide political gains to the citizens” (p. 1199). Furthermore, the government cannot maintain durable

peace in the region (Babatunde, 2019). Related to this, Nigeria has consistently been ranked poorly on the corruption perception index (Udoma et al., 2018; Transparency International, 2019).

For example, in 2018, Nigeria was ranked 144th out of 180 countries with a score of 27 (Transparency International, 2019) on a scale of 0 (i.e., highly corrupt) through 100 (i.e., very clean). The global average for all surveyed countries was 43%. Udoma et al. (2018) concluded that state failure had been a significant theme in explaining the origins of militancy in the Niger Delta.

As already mentioned, the Niger Delta communities have been betrayed by successive governments (Okolie-Osemene, 2018; Umoh 2018). Essentially, the adverse effects of crude oil production on their environment created an "ungoverned state which militants exploited to direct their aggression at the multinational oil companies and the Nigerian states" (Lenshie, 2018, p. 32). The communities in this oil-producing region suffer "in the midst of plenty" (Nwobueze, 2018, p. 113) because government presence is minimal, and the IOCs are perceived as not doing enough via CSR projects and associated interventions. Odera et al. (2018) documented how oil communities' perceptions are harmful and why they feel that oil has been more of a curse instead of the expected blessing.

Fubara et al. (2019) found that crude oil production can significantly impact revenues for oil-producing states in Nigeria. This is relevant because most of Nigeria's oil-producing states are in the Niger Delta. However, oil revenue has failed to grow the national economy because of structural defects such as over-reliance on the single commodity, corruption and managerial ineptitude (Oghenerobo, 2019).

The Role of Business in Peacebuilding

At the strategic level, peacekeeping may be conceptualized as a political-economic exchange instead of a project of generosity. Local stakeholders expect peacekeeping to lead to development (Jennings, 2018). Consistent with such expectations, Kohl (2015) and Miklian et al. (2019) highlighted how consultation with local community actors facilitates inquiry about their expectations. Such inquiry is an essential requirement for creating access to the lowest local voices and ensuring success in peacebuilding initiatives such as those involving determining the Nigerian community stakeholders (Omokhoa, 2015).

Conflicts arise from divergent interests, goals, and aspirations (Akpomuvie, 2018). Peacebuilding requires interventions that are focused on the restoration of relations between parties that are in conflict. Although the term "peacebuilding" has been extensively used in post-war military scenarios, peacebuilding can also describe situations requiring socio-economic development and institutional reforms (Akpomuvie, 2018). Barnett et al. (2007) noted that various agencies and organizations had used the term peacebuilding to refer to closely related conflict resolution concepts (e.g., Peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding, etc.).

While Haider (2009) described Peacekeeping as the combination of actions needed to transform from conflicts towards long-term peaceful relations, Barnett's (2007) definitions mention "activities relating to the underlying causes of conflicts and the longer-term needs of the people" (Barnett et al., 2007, p. 39). Barnett's et al. (2007) research was about peacebuilding in the context of the UN agenda for peace program where peacebuilding is conceived as a program to identify and support

structures that reinforce peace and prevent reversion to conflict; actions that prevent the eruption of, or a return to, violent conflict.

The traditional delineation of roles between companies and governments is no longer clear-cut, such that businesses are increasingly saddled with solving societal challenges, including peacebuilding (Shoji, 2019; Van Marrewijk, 2003). Research indicates that international players' peacekeeping actions can affect local economic outcomes (Martin-Shields & Bodanac, 2018). An essential argument of the stakeholder approach to corporate responsibility is that corporations should be accountable not only to shareholders but also to other stakeholders' interests (Van Marrewijk, 2003). Such a broader “societal approach” to CSR is necessary to the extent that corporations are accountable to the society that gives them the license to operate.

It is interesting to note that some scholars indicate that there have been situations where businesses did not support peacebuilding. The decision as to whether businesses supported or obstructed peacebuilding depended on three factors: (a) the perceived costs of the armed conflict versus the expected gains of ending the conflict, (b) the level of unity exhibited by businesses in exerting corporate pressure during peace negotiations, and (c) the level of access to policymaking process (Pospisil, 2019).

While appreciative of the role of businesses in peacebuilding and community development, Wopara (2016) argued that Corporate Social Responsibility should be complementary to – but should not become the substitute for – community development efforts by the government. Thus, governments should not abdicate their

responsibility to develop the communities simply because there are oil corporations in the region (Wopara, 2016). In a related vein, Westermann-Behaylo et al. (2015) examined the contributions of businesses to peace from the perspective of "corporate diplomacy."

Corporate diplomacy is the active approach whereby multinational firms address governance gaps or political conflict where local institutions are weak. Corporate diplomacy allows corporations to combine political action and peace-making for private and public benefit and includes the roles that multinational corporations play in addressing governance gaps in less developed, conflict-prone host countries (Ingenhoff, & Marschlich, 2019).

Business can also support peacebuilding via advocacy (Rehbein & Fort, 2015; Westermann-Behaylo). For example, the Confederation of British Industry gave momentum to the political processes that eventually ended the conflict in Northern Ireland. Granted that lack of economic opportunity is an incentive to violence (e.g., people who lack access to economic opportunity have little to lose by resorting to crime and violence), businesses may also contribute to conflict reduction by providing economic opportunities (Miller et al., 2019).

The questions posed by Westermann-Behaylo et al. (2015) to future researchers are: (a) when should firms engage proactively to resolve political disputes, (b) who can successfully engage in such efforts, and (c) how can multinational enterprises (e.g., IOCs) understand when they should not intercede and when interventions would exacerbate tensions? We shall return to these challenging questions later. Businesses have also contributed to peacebuilding via "closed-pipe

supply chains" and responsible Supply Chain management, especially in the challenge of conflict "technology minerals" such as tantalum, tungsten, and gold (Taka, 2016). These technology minerals are described as conflict minerals because they finance and support the armed groups operating in the areas where such minerals are produced.

The responsible Supply Chain incorporates human rights as part of the producer's responsibility via legally binding supply chain responsibility (Taka, 2016). In the Closed-pipe Supply Chain management program, each actor in the chain, from the miners to the smelter or final user, is identified and codified. Such a Supply Chain contributes to peacebuilding by facilitating long-term stakeholder relationships and transforming the socio-economic structures in the producing communities.

Business-NGO partnerships can be vehicles for social development as they offer businesses the opportunity to avoid or reduce social risks, seize new market opportunities, and stimulate innovation (Idemudia, 2017). Partnerships can be categorized by their focus, namely: philanthropy, engagement partnership, or transformation partnership. They can also be categorized by ideology, for example, "Insider" versus "Outsider" ideologies (Idemudia, 2017). Businesses can initiate collaborative leadership partnerships and focus on the process and the outcomes of supplementing weak local institutions while ensuring that businesses-NGO partnership meets corporate sustainability targets in developing countries (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018).

Some multinational enterprises address conflict issues via Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities or by engagement through NGOs already on the

ground. They assist in knowing the local context and experience regarding how best to engage the communities (Kolk & L'Enfant, 2013). CSR projects can also be an opportunity to intervene positively in the provision of needed healthcare in the communities (Uduji et al., 2019), and thereby contribute to enduring peace.

Collaboration efforts between companies, NGOs, and the government may help increase the state's abilities to effectively tackle fraud and corruption, which are the causes and results of fragility. However, the concern is that interventions in the social domain may create a dependency culture and weaken the government's role, thereby encouraging the state to disregard its duty to care for its citizens. Related to this is the possibility that the citizens may lose confidence in public authorities, thereby making fragile states even weaker. While acknowledging that the definition of what constitutes a valid contribution to peace is a political argument, Miklian and Schouten (2019) suggested that the local communities should play a much more significant role in defining and prioritizing their peace initiatives.

From the preceding, the role of businesses in peacebuilding is well understood. Business initiatives for peacebuilding are known to have significant and positive impacts (Miklian & Schouten, 2019). Nonetheless, peacebuilding solutions (e.g., post-conflict institutions) cannot be designed and transplanted at will. Barma (2017) argued that peace advocates should focus on incremental improvements in governance and that political space should extend beyond post-conflict elites.

Barma's (2017) contention is that a few elites can exploit the bureaucratic processes in post-conflict peacebuilding intervention to the broader community's detriment. Hence, ambitious re-engineering of governance and institutional structures

is likely to fail, whereas incremental or experimental improvements of institutional structures and their capacities are more likely to succeed.

Extrapolating to the Niger Delta conflict, the learning here is that the political elite (including militia leaders, local chiefs, etc.) must be prevented from hijacking the post-conflict peace process. In respect of the youths' role, Katu-Ogundimu (2019) found from an investigation of youths' role in conflict and peacebuilding that political marginalization could trigger violence by the youth. As such, peacebuilding practitioners must increase youth participation in peacebuilding projects and initiatives.

Businesses can enjoy reputational rewards from peacebuilding, while the communities benefit from improved peace and social development (Miklian & Schouten, 2019). Nevertheless, whereas it is expected that such benefits should translate into a win-win context for the generality of impacted communities, the reality is that contributions by businesses are sometimes perceived as spoils to be fought over in a win-lose context, where the distribution of benefits are unequally spread across the social strata in the different communities (Miklian & Schouten, 2019). Miklian and Schouten's (2019) synthesis of the emerging B4P agenda shows how businesses – the private sector – have become major actors in peacebuilding due to their resources, competence, and local presence.

At the United Nations level, the private sector is an essential partner in pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Miklian & Schouten, 2019). It is also noteworthy that in contexts where national authorities dictate or curtail multinational corporations' role in peacebuilding, multinational corporations'

participation in peacebuilding may exacerbate pre-existing social disparities that fuel conflict. In any case, there is evidence that pessimistic local perceptions about foreign businesses operating in the extractive industry may be too onerous to overcome (Miklian & Schouten, 2019).

Nigerian Community Perceptions of Oil Companies' Peacebuilding Initiatives

Local community perceptions arise from historical antecedents and previous disappointments, that lead to deep-seated cynicism (Miklian & Schouten, 2019). Amos (2018) examined how communities in developing countries understand CSR and expect corporations in the extractive industry to address their expectations and found that perceptions of a corporation's commitment to CSR strengthens the corporation's legitimacy and survival. Therefore, firms can use information about their activities' public perception to establish measures to respond to undesirable opinions (Ernest et al., 2018). In fragile state situations, as in most developing countries, multinational corporations are usually expected to act as agents for social and economic development through their CSR projects, an expectation that is even more relevant for multinational corporations in the extractive industries (Amos, 2018).

Granted that IOCs can provide substantial tax revenues to their host countries, the reality is that such revenues are seldom used to propel economic growth and decrease poverty levels due to corruption, mismanagement, and misapplication of funds (Ionescu-Somers, 2019). The unfortunate outcome in Nigeria and many other fragile countries is that few of the anticipated benefits are delivered to the oil industry's host communities. Instead, the region has been "completely devastated by

six decades of oil exploration, exploitation, and ecological warfare" (Nwosu, 2017, p. 42). Oil production is conducted without regard to environmental regulations, with numerous spillage cases and devastating ecological damage (Nwosu, 2017).

Since the government's priority is to maximize revenue, Onwuazombe (2017) surmises that the IOCs are encouraged to boost oil production with little attention paid to regulations. Consequently, international health and safety practices are not systematically implemented, resulting in environmental pollution.

Gas flaring and low agricultural productivity was the norm in the region. Industrial effluents routinely contaminate farmlands and sources of water. Only 25% of rural communities in the region have access to safe potable water (Nwosu, 2017). The sewage systems are decrepit, electricity supply is epileptic, and water-borne diseases are rampant (Nwosu, 2017). The lack of economic and human capital development is responsible for the region's perception that crude oil has been a curse and not a blessing (Lenshie, 2018; Umukoro, 2018). There are no efficient institutional structures to tackle oil exploitation's negative environmental impacts (Supreme, 2019). In most of the region's communities, the people wallow in poverty, are unemployed, and cannot practice agriculture due to polluted farmlands and rivers (Babatunde, 2019).

The consequence of environmental pollution can be catastrophic for the local communities in terms of the resulting unemployment, hunger, and poverty (Okeke-Ogbuafor et al., 2019). By way of illustration, an infamous 2008 oil spill in the Bodo community is known to have caused the loss of jobs and the means of livelihood from

15,600 smallholders (Okeke-Ogbuafor et al., 2019). Such environmental degradation has contributed to the conflicts in the region (Babatunde, 2019).

It is on account of the preceding recap that Ionescu-Somers (2019) rightly ascribes the resentment of the community population to the perceived "… lack of improvement to the quality of life despite rich resources" (p. 175) in the region. Predictably, the communities resorted to agitation against the IOCs because protests to the government were mostly fruitless (Ionescu-Somers, 2019). Amos (2018) had also examined how communities in developing countries understand CSR and expect corporations in the extractive industry to address their expectations and found that perceptions of a corporation's commitment to CSR strengthens the corporation's legitimacy and survival.

On their part, the oil companies contend that the Nigerian government has the responsibility to develop the region since the government "appropriates the right over crude oil and gets all revenue accruing from its production including taxes" (Nwosu, 2017, p. 47). In terms of statutory obligations, IOCs are limited to the payment of hefty royalties and taxes to the government. Thus, the IOC's have no legal obligation to develop the communities. Hence, CSR – it is argued – is squarely "a demonstration of magnanimity" by the IOCs (Nwosu, 2017, p. 47). Notwithstanding, the IOCs report huge expenditure on CSR interventions. For example, Shell alone spent nearly $74 million in 2011 on community development projects. However, the reality is that their poorly implemented programs are mostly conceived without the requisite buy-in of the communities.

Furthermore, it is a known fact that even when IOCs create jobs for Nigerians, most of the jobs are taken by people from the majority ethnic groups in other regions of Nigeria, such that only a limited number of low cadre jobs are available to the people from the minority ethnic groups in the host communities (Nwosu, 2017).

Therefore, it is easy to understand why the communities care less about who "should" provide their basic needs, whether it be the government or the IOCs. Moreover, it is much easier for them to confront IOC's that are physically present in the region than a rather faceless government. Additionally, Nwosu (2017) highlights that even when CSR projects are executed, such projects are mostly ineffective because the IOCs have historically misinterpreted the needs of the communities.

Amos (2018) criticized the penchant by multinational corporations to ignore "local socio-cultural priorities" in executing CSR projects. The IOCs are often accused of conspiring with government officials (Amos, 2018; Ionescu-Somers, 2019) and taking advantage of Nigeria's ineffective laws. In the Ogoni region located in Nigeria's Rivers State, Shell's devastation of the region is well documented (Okeke-Ogbuafor et al., 2019). The people have been forced to live in a contaminated environment because Shell and the government are engrossed with maximizing oil production and do not bother to adequately remediate impacted sites (Okeke-Ogbuafor et al., 2019).

Nwosu (2017) recounted how it took several years of litigation both in Nigeria and internationally before the government was forced to commit to the remediation of the environmental devastation caused by decades of oil extraction activities in the Ogoni communities. In this context, Nwosu (2017) concludes that the conflict

between IOCs and host communities is a consequence of the perceived negative impact of the oil companies on host communities' economic status. This conclusion is consistent with Amuyou et al.'s (2016) observation that failure to quickly remedy the brunt of crude oil exploitation on the environment is a significant reason for the region's crisis.

Nwosu (2017) observed that “most local activists insist that [oil exploration and production] have proved negative for the host communities” (p. 44), noting that the Oloibiri community where crude oil was first discovered in commercial quantities in Nigeria, is still without the necessities of life: the region has remained poor despite their vast resources. The host communities argue that they should not dwell in poverty when their land produces the oil resource that sustains the national economy. Nwosu’s (2017) observations are coherent with the results of other studies in the region, such as Odera et al. (2017).

The youth in the communities feel marginalized by the corrupt elites in their communities (Ionescu-Somers, 2019). This observation is relevant because Katu-Ogundimu (2019) had demonstrated that in conflict situations, the exclusion of youths from critical decisions contributes to apathy and negative perceptions, in so far as the youths (i.e., ages 18 to 30) are the most impacted.

The IOCs have also been called out for aggravating the economic disparities between oil industry workers and the general workforce, a situation that excludes the “needy segments of the population” from the “benefits of economic growth” Nwosu (2017, p. 49). Consequently, the IOCs are criticized for not having a sincere desire to develop the oil-producing communities. This perception is fueled by the reality that

IOCs only invest in the provision of amenities in a manner that (a) facilities the exploitation and extraction of oil (e.g., the construction of access routes to and between oil and gas fields) and (b) prevents civil community unrest.

The IOCs have also been criticized for colluding with the elite in oil-producing communities. When there are environmental incidents such as oil contamination due to pipeline ruptures, the elite accept hefty bribes from the compromised corporations to cover up the pollution incident (Okeke-Ogbuafor et al., 2017). Such experiences catalyze economic inequality, strife, and distrust of IOC intentions.

As the community chiefs and elite lose their respect and integrity, conflicts between the youths and the elitist community leaders escalate, further deepening the region's social tensions (Okeke-Ogbuafor et al., 2019). This is corroborated by the study on the Ghanaian extractive industry conducted by Ernest et al. (2018). Ernest et al. (2018) found discordance between community members' perceptions and the corporation's actions in the extractive industry.

Literature Gaps in Multinational Firms' Peacebuilding Efforts in Fragile States

Multinational firms' peacebuilding efforts in fragile states are only assessed at the firm level and risk missing more considerable social consequences for host communities (Miklian & Schouten, 2019; Obeki et al., 2018). The UN Global Compact recognizes that private corporations can make relevant contributions to local peacebuilding efforts through their business practices and corporate activities. The associated B4P leadership platform promotes private sector participation in local communities' peacebuilding efforts (UNGC, 2015). The UNGC encourages

corporations to minimize their business operations' negative impact on conflict dynamics and maximize the potential positive contributions (UNGC, 2015).

Corporations in conflict zones are aware that capacity building (e.g., training and empowerment of the local people) is useful for peacebuilding (Katsos & Alkafaji, 2019). Businesses may further promote peace through (a) economic development, (b) track-two diplomacy, (c) canvassing the rule of law, or by (d) adoption of international best practices in conduct and risk assessment (Katsos & Alkafaji, 2019).

Three dimensions to peacebuilding are relevant to the Niger Delta situation: (a) the creation of stability and cessation of violence, (b) the restoration of State institutions, and (c) addressing the socio-economic dimensions of conflict (Barnett et al., 2007). Businesses in the Niger Delta are implicated in these dimensions, especially in the first and third, through human rights and social development programs (Obeki et al., 2018).

The Niger Delta conflict's detrimental consequences are well known (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). Several studies have also highlighted the significance of exploring local community stakeholders' perceptions for gathering data on their views of IOC peacebuilding corporate activities launched in local communities. Such perceptions may be influenced by the history of their local experiences with the IOCs; however, few studies have inquired into the community stakeholders' forward-looking expectations in the context of their future relationship with the IOCs (Atienza, 2019).

There is still a need to examine business–community collaboration to refine and improve business–host community partnerships for peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). According to notable African researchers, corporate

peacebuilding programs have yielded few positive impacts where it is most needed, such as in the Niger Delta (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). A literature gap exists in understanding community stakeholders' expectations about corporate peacebuilding and sustainable development in the Niger Delta region (Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018).

Summary and Conclusions

Conflicts arise when the interests of parties are divergent (Akpomuvie, 2018). On the other hand, peacebuilding incorporates mechanisms that prevent or resolve conflicts, consolidate peace after violence has been removed. Thus, peacebuilding actions are integrated activities that transform society from intensive conflicts into peace (Akpomuvie, 2018; Omokhoa, 2015). The UN B4P initiative promotes businesses' participation in local peacebuilding efforts in conflict-ridden regions to benefit all stakeholders (Idemudia, 2018; Oetzel et al., 2007). Evidence from various studies indicates that international oil companies can make a scalable impact on host communities (Egbon et al., 2018; Idemudia, 2017).

However, scholars do agree that corporate peacebuilding programs have yielded few positive impacts in the Niger Delta (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018) because a knowledge gap exists in our understanding of community stakeholders' views and expectations on peacebuilding strategies (Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019; Phiri, 2017). Moreover, host community stakeholders' expectations of the international oil companies' (IOCs) peacebuilding programs are rarely considered, thus fueling continued animosity amongst the host communities towards the IOCs (Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018).

From the preceding sections, it was evident that managing community members' expectations will help avoid disappointment with community-based approaches to peacebuilding and sustainable development in conflict zones (Ralph & Conley Tyler, 2016). The deliberate engagement of stakeholders helps to deliver quality economic and social benefits for the communities (Omobhude & Chen, 2019).

The total disregard of community stakeholders' expectations in the Niger Delta contributed to the breakout of conflicts in the 1980s in the Niger Delta (Idemudia, 2014) because community stakeholders were treated as recipients (instead of agents) of peace and development. Therefore, it is imperative to understand stakeholders' expectations and communicate the results effectively to stakeholders when the expectations are met (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011).

Chapter 3 examines the qualitative, multiple case study methodology to achieve the study's purpose and provide data for the fundamental research question. It outlines the sampling rationale and method and describes the method of data collection. It also provides the reason for the study and methodological support for the data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. There is a need to examine business-community collaboration from the expectations of all the actors involved to refine and improve business-host community partnerships for peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). Given that notable African researchers call for a deeper understanding of community stakeholders' views and expectations on which specific strategies support corporate peacebuilding within conflict-ridden host communities (Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019; Phiri, 2017), an exploratory multiple case study (Yin, 2017) was used to meet the study goals.

This study is critical because the findings may offer a unique contribution to existing theoretical literature in the business-for-peacebuilding field and advance knowledge on community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. This study's findings may be significant for theory building by using a multiple case study design to enable theory extension and develop recommendations for studying new theoretical directions on the topic (Bonnet, 2012; Yin, 2017).

This chapter provides detailed information on the research method and rationale for conducting an exploratory multiple case study. The central research question (CRQ) guiding this study is presented with the participant selection strategy, data collection strategies and data analysis, the researcher's role, ethical considerations, and a summary of the main points of Chapter 3.

Research Design and Rationale

Browne and Keeley (2014) recommend that the right questions in qualitative research need to address their study's purpose and drive the research strategy. Consistent with the purpose of this study, the CRQ is as follows:

CRQ: How do host community stakeholders describe their expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta?

A knowledge gap exists on understanding community stakeholders' views and expectations on which specific strategies support corporate peacebuilding in conflict-ridden host communities (Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019). Corporate peacebuilding programs have yielded few positive impacts in the conflict-ridden communities of the Niger Delta region (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). Scholars wrote that excluding key community stakeholders from peacebuilding decision making can further aggravate existing conflicts (Idemudia, 2017).

As long as community stakeholders' expectations of the IOCs' peacebuilding programs in the Niger Delta are ignored, hostilities by host communities towards the IOCs may continue unabated (Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018). Research exploring business-community collaboration from the expectations of all the actors involved is needed to refine and improve business-host community partnerships for peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019).

This study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research aligns with the worldview that learning is active and consistent with the constructivist paradigm and is applied to explore people's individual experiences in a specific social and cultural setting (Cooper & White, 2012). Harkiolakis (2017) emphasized that qualitative

research is more suitable when field observations of reality are analyzed exclusive of numerical methods and to draw conclusions from coded data.

To align with the purpose of this study and gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta, a qualitative research method was used to allow for a flexible approach to collecting and analyzing data. Qualitative research offers scholars opportunities to explore the reasons behind various aspects of behavior among and between individuals. Qualitative sampling strategies are purposeful, ensuring an in-depth understanding of a case study's collected data (Klenke, 2016).

In choosing the qualitative case study design, I considered other qualitative methods such as phenomenology and narrative inquiry; yet, said designs would be ineffective to answer the research question due to the methodological limitations of uncritical personal storytelling (Ritchie et al., 2013). Case study methodology offers several strategies to provide data for phenomena-driven research questions and offers the option to extend a theoretical proposition (Welch et al., 2020).

According to Yin (2017), a multiple case study investigation allows the researcher to investigate phenomena through replication strategy. When focused on a person, a single case concerns one individual, where a study of more than one person constitutes a multiple case study to replicate the same findings across multiple cases by exploring the differences and similarities between and within cases (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The evidence created in this way is considered robust and reliable and, thus, multiple case study has been chosen for this research since it concerns "how" and "why" questions about a contemporaneous phenomenon in a context that is beyond the researcher's control (Yin, 2017).

Yin (2017) noted that within the multiple case design, investigating a social phenomenon can entail an individual within a specific context as a separate unit of study. To meet that goal, this study's central phenomenon of study is the individual, and the context is communities within the Niger Delta region (see Eisenhardt, et al., 2016). In developing a study of individuals living within a community and not the whole of the community itself, in such a study, the optimum qualitative design to retrieve data with the goal of theory extension is an exploratory, multiple-case study design (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The unit of analysis in this study was the individual community stakeholder.

Case study research has been criticized for its weakness as a method for testing hypotheses and for the difficulty in generalizing from a specific case (Gaikwad, 2017; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Indeed, researchers using the case study researcher do not seek to discover hard rules or facts or to test hypotheses. This is notable because the researcher's overall aspiration is to make an original contribution to theory.

Recent academic literature sheds light on how this may be achieved. Instead of using hypotheses, the researcher may develop "theoretical propositions," which are used to direct the design and ultimate analysis of the case (Yin, 2017). Propositions may be derived from the academic literature, theories, analysis of empirical data, or personal experience. Propositions are comparable to the hypotheses of quantitative research methods (Collins & Stockton, 2018).

The development of theory from a case study uses the empirical evidence collected to establish theoretical constructs (Collins & Stockton, 2018). The theory emerges from recognizing patterns in the collected data and the logical arguments that

underpin them (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2020). A multiple case approach is beneficial here since it allows the researcher to iterate and extend an extant theoretical model (Stake, 2013). The goal of a case study design is to replicate findings across cases. A multiple case study links the research question to the conclusion and can be used to investigate the convergence and divergence of experiences within and between cases (Yin, 2017).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the primary data collection instrument (Yin, 2017). The researcher who plays an active role in the research (Lainson et al., 2020) has the responsibility to ensure rigor and credibility. Mahajan (2018, p.24) aptly describes qualitative research as "a form of social action that stresses on the way of people interpret and make sense of their experiences." Considering the research questions in this study, qualitative research is potentially "more likely to provide meaningful contextualization and clarity" instead of formulating and testing hypotheses.

Using many participants, the qualitative researcher intends to cross-validate information from different sources and improve credibility (Azungah, 2018). Qualitative research works in the natural setting, thereby enabling the researcher to gather rich details by using the immersive involvement in actual experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Mohajan, 2018). Therefore, interviews and observations are the primary sources of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Qualitative research should explore local knowledge and perceptions, including "social processes and contextual factors" (Mohajan, 2018, p. 23). This

research approach aligns with the constructivist paradigm and is suitable to explore people's experiences in a specific social setting (Cooper & White, 2012). One of qualitative research's optional designs is the multiple case study, which was selected for this research.

The multiple case study research makes it convenient to investigate phenomena through a replication strategy (Yin, 2017). Moreover, participants could be recruited using purposeful criterion and network sampling strategies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Consequently, my role as a researcher was to interview participants and make observations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In terms of relationships, the candidates are not selected as participants if there are subordinate, supervisory, or instructor-type relationships with the researcher that involves power positions.

Credibility in qualitative research may be achieved through a strategy of triangulation. For example, "methodological triangulation" utilizes multiple methods, techniques, and data sources, to obtain more comprehensive data about the phenomenon of interest (Abdalla et al., 2018). Triangulation shall be used in this study to overcome errors in the method, thereby providing a more coherent and unbiased picture of reality (Abdalla et al., 2018). As this research adopted the multiple case study, each participant was treated as a unique case for triangulation (Yin, 2017). The interview-driven multiple case study was chosen for data collection because it can elicit conversation that will provide rich information and themes. I used reflexivity to mitigate bias and maximize the credibility of the investigation. In terms of reflexivity, and focusing on the level of Berkovitch's (2018) positional reflexivity, I performed self-examination to prevent potentially harmful relationships with participants. I collected data during several weeks in the Niger Delta.

My role as a researcher included questioning, listening, taking notes, and processing, transcribing, analyzing, and interpreting the data in line with the research's design. In terms of processing field data, I retained ownership considering that Hurst et al., (2019) reported how research transcripts (and hence, the research results) could be influenced by the worldview and interpretive lens of transcriptionists hired by the researcher. The transcription process is an essential phase for the researcher because the analysis can be initiated during the cycle of "listening and re-listening" (Hurst et al., 2019).

I took measures to represent study participants accurately and contribute significantly to knowledge (Paradis & Varpio, 2018). The researcher ensures that the identities of the participants are kept confidential. As the researcher, I made it clear to the participants that a researcher is not a therapist (Whitehead et al., 2016) or a solution provider.

Methodology

Case studies represent an appropriate method to explore and improve our understanding of specific social or cultural settings in a qualitative study. According to Yin (2017), a multiple case study investigation allows the researcher to investigate phenomena through a replication strategy. The multiple case study approach allows the researcher to evaluate the data both within and across situations to reveal beneficial differences and similarities. As such, findings generated from a multiple case study are robust and reliable, especially where it is essential to address "how" and "why" questions about a contemporary phenomenon in a context that is beyond the researcher's control (Yin, 2017).

The present study adopted the qualitative approach to explore people's expectations based on their experiences in a defined social-economic context. Field observations of reality are analyzed to conclude coded data (Harkiolakis, 2017). Specifically, this research used the qualitative, multiple case study approach to investigate and obtain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta.

The multiple case study design is recommended in the study of the relationships "between the personal, social, behavioral, psychological, organizational, cultural, and environmental factors…" (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Multiple case studies are therefore relevant to diverse areas of research, including information technology (IT) applications (e.g., Zimmermann et al., 2017); environmental conflicts (e.g., Rincón et al., 2019); supply chain optimizations (e.g., Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2017); and conflict management (e.g., De Pourcq et al., 2017). Multiple case studies can reveal such nuances across cases as could complement deductive interpretation (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). An individual may be treated as a unit of study within the multiple-case design during the investigation of a context-specific social phenomenon (Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Yin, 2017).

Consequently, the central phenomenon of study is the individual. The focus of this study is the individuals living in the oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. These people's expectations represent the context but not the target of the study (Yin, 2017). Specifically, this study investigated the expectations of selected individuals living in the Niger Delta region; it is not an investigation of the entire

community. The unit of analysis is a person living in the community and the communities' context is in the Niger Delta region.

Purposive sampling was adopted in the selection of participants for this multiple case study. Purposive sampling is a technique that allows the researcher to use their judgment to identify and select cases that are relevant to the context and phenomenon of the study (Ames et al., 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2020; Hancock, 2017; Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). In particular, participants must meet the following set of inclusion criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18; male and female; (b) born and residing in a community in the Niger Delta; and (c) possessing knowledge regarding the peacebuilding programs of IOCs within their community, and (d) be literate in the English language.

I expected to conduct between six and ten face-to-face individual interviews with participants recruited as described above (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Furthermore, I used triangulation to evaluate data sources, mitigate potential or actual bias, and facilitate data saturation (Fusch et al., 2018). The minimum number of interviews for a multiple case study is five participants, and I continued past this number until I reached data saturation, with similar data noted from Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8 (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Schram, 2006). Triangulation is a tested process that adds depth to the data that is collected. Thus, triangulation can be utilized to corroborate data from different perspectives, thereby deepening our understanding (Fusch et al., 2018). The data collection process shall be adopted following the relevant participant selection logic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Participant Selection Logic

Population

The objective of this multiple case study is to search for a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. To acquire the required data to fulfill the gap in the literature, the population of interest in this study is the host community group who are able and disposed to provide their opinions about their expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs in the region. The Niger Delta region is in southern Nigeria by the Gulf of Guinea, measuring about 70,000 square kilometers with more than 30 million people across the various states in the region (Ebiede, 2017).

Several sampling techniques apply to qualitative study in general and purposive sampling in particular (Benoot et al., 2016). The researcher has examined several options, such as intensity sampling, maximum variation sampling, criterion sampling, and typical case sampling. For example, criterion sampling which selects "all cases that meet some predetermined criterion" (Benoot et al., 2016) is desirable but impractical. Consequently, the researcher adopted maximum variation sampling (Benoot et al., 2016; Sharma, 2017), with all cases selected by the researcher to avoid the potential pitfalls of other options such as snowball sampling. The researcher selected participants from the states in the region based on their intimate knowledge of peacebuilding programs the region.

Sampling Criteria

Sampling criteria is an essential concept in evaluating rigor in qualitative studies (Anderson, 2017). As such, the criterion sampling strategy selected in a study

such as this should deliver rich information while retaining consistency with the chosen methodological approach (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Thus, participants in this study were selected from some of the states in the Niger Delta using typical case sampling (Benoot et al., 2016; Sharma, 2017) as the purposive sampling technique. Nonetheless, there is no requirement to sample representativeness, but rather, acquire rich data in line with sampling criteria and coherent with the concept being investigated (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

The inclusion criteria are that each participant must be: (a) an adult, over the age of 18; male and female; (b) born and residing in a community in the Niger Delta; (c) possessing knowledge regarding the peacebuilding programs of IOCs within their community, and (d) be literate in the English language. Participants that meet these criteria can easily be verified using information from their government-issued or other acceptable identity document, and by their fluency in the English language

The researcher recruited candidates with maximum variation sampling that meet the inclusion criteria using professional networks and databases. This approach is suitable because of the large number of individuals that meet the inclusion criteria. Snowball or network sampling is not suitable because of the difficulty is ensuring participants' confidentiality, but also because it is dependent on the first set of participants' networks, which may create "distortions and bias" (Bailey, 2019, p. 86). In-depth interviews by the researcher followed participant identification and selection. Conducting several in-depth interviews in this multiple case study supported triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018), expanded the scope of the data set (Bailey, 2019), and ensured rigor (Anderson, 2017).

Sampling Selection

In this study, literate adults from the Niger Delta, who are aware of IOCs' peacebuilding programs within their community, were purposefully selected. Nevertheless, the selection was not elitist, given the limitations of transparency and replicability arising from interviews with elite informants (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019). Eight in-depth interviews were conducted online, which is consistent with what is envisaged in qualitative case studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This number is considered adequate for data saturation, especially if the cases hold adequate information power (Malterud et al., 2019). It is noteworthy that the interviews were conducted at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, hence online (instead of face to face) interviews were conducted.

Sampling Strategy

In this study, research participants were purposefully selected from several cities in the Niger Delta region. In terms of sampling strategy, a replication logic was adopted. A replication logic approach allows the researcher to select cases iteratively until the incremental improvements become minimal, or when already generated data can predict similar or contrasting results (Hancock, 2017, Yin, 2018, Denzin & Lincoln, 2020; Miles et al., 2020). The replication logic approach is relevant and coherent with the critical research question (Yin, 2018). In the purposeful selection of participants, I used maximum variation sampling to non-homogenous cases across the different ethnic nationalities within the various states in the Niger Delta to reinforce maximum variability in the responses to the interview protocol (Miles et al., 2020). Among these separate groups of participants, participants' experiences and expectations regarding IOCs' peacebuilding efforts shall be provided to gain a more in-depth insight into the phenomenon.

I made personal contact with community stakeholders and recruited participants in line with the criteria already mentioned, namely, male and female adults over the age of 18; born and residing in the Niger Delta; possessing knowledge regarding the peacebuilding programs of IOCs within their community, and literate in the English language. Confirmation of eligibility was by candidate's self-report, in conjunction with the information in government-issued identification documents such as international passport, driver's license, or voters' card.

I recruited participants from major cities such as Port Harcourt and environs, Eleme, Warri, Eket, and Yenagoa. The recruitment started in Port Harcourt, and maximum variation sampling was adopted (Miles et al., 2020). In this study, I determined data saturation after eight in-depth interviews, and this is consistent with prior evidence in case study research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The minimum number of interviews conducted for a multiple case study is five participants, and I continued past this number until I completed eight interviews with similar data noted from Participants 5, 6, 7and 8 (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Schram, 2006).

Instrumentation

This study's interview guide (see Appendix C) consists of semi structured questions for gaining a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. The goal of utilizing specific instrumentation in a case study was to collect data from multiple sources and provide enough data collection instruments to answer the research question (Yin, 2017). The diverse forms of questions are grounded in the study's conceptual framework and the reviewed literature. Because changes to

instruments during data collection can lead to bias and threaten the validity of the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Ferguson, 2012), it is crucial that the choice of data collection sources and interview protocol aligns with the research purpose, the multiple case study design contributes quality data for theory extension (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

Rigorous and careful choice of instrumentation allowed for the emergence of themes to present host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. Three sources of data were utilized throughout this study: (a) a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C) whose items were designed and standardized by previous researchers, (b) archival data in the form of government reports, media, and business (Yin, 2017), and (c) reflective field notes (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), which the researcher kept throughout the entire data collection process.

Semistructured Interview Protocol

This study's interview guide (see Appendix C) consists of qualitative interview questions on host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. The interview protocol was developed by Idemudia (2017) in a study whose purpose was to understand better, how businesses can contribute to peace in conflict zones suggest that partnerships can be an effective vehicle for corporate peacebuilding is available as open-access document and therefore permission to utilize it for further research is not required. Since the interview protocol questions were validated by Idemudia (2017), no pilot study was required to repeat this process.

Idemudia (2017) examined how well the partnership between the Shell Oil Corporation and a set of NGOs in the Niger Delta region contributed to peace in the communities and found through qualitative data that such partnerships reduced violence from cultural sources but failed to stem structural causes of direct violence. Thus, Idemudia (2018) proposed that business–NGO partnerships are best suited for conflict preventing rather than resolving conflicts.

Idemudia (2017) adopted qualitative methods, conducted semistructured interviews for data collection, and achieved credibility through purposive sampling to select information-rich cases. Idemudia (2018) also recommended that there is a need for business and peace scholars to shift their conception of the relationship between business and conflict from a simple bilateral relationship (in which business as a bystander has to respond to conflict) to a form of interpenetrating relationships (in which business as part of a conflict context can have multiple positive and negative nodes of interactions with peace).

The implication is that future research should move beyond focusing on what business is doing or not doing concerning peace, to how the different social, economic, and political relationships of business within a conflict context can constrain, facilitate or exacerbate conflicts. Besides, there is also the need to explore how and under what conditions a partnership or other vectors of business engagement with peace might ameliorate structural violence.

Based on the similarities in scope and purpose between this study and Idemudia's study (2017), and after communication between my Committee Chair, Dr. Halkias, with Professor Idemudia, an Associate Professor at York University in

Canada, I adopted his interview protocol questions available on an open-access document. With this adoption of a validated interview protocol for my study, I followed up on Idemudia's (2017) recommendation for future research. Despite the insights generated from his data, his study did not directly measure the partnership's impact on peace within host communities. Consequently, Idemudia recommends replicating his study with host community stakeholders since this group's views might well be different from corporate executives and NFGO members' views.

Thus there is the need documented in the literature for future studies to explore the extent to which the findings presented in Idemundia's original case study are consistent or inconsistent with the views and lived experiences of members of local communities and to consider its implications for the role of business in conflict zones.

Archival Data: Government and Private-Sector Labor Reports

Evidence from other sources was used to validate the data generated during fieldwork from interviews, observations, and other qualitative data sources. Data triangulation (data gathering from three or more data sources) is relevant and central to case study research (Abdalla et al., 2018; Fusch et al., 2018; Yin, 2018). Triangulation can deepen our understanding by corroborating data from different perspectives (Fusch et al., 2018) to achieve a coherent and unbiased picture of reality (Abdalla et al., 2018; Yin, 2018).

Consequently, I triangulated the data from qualitative interviews with evidence from archival documents (Yin, 2018). Archival documents include reports and data published by (a) the various tiers of government in Nigeria, (b) the IOCs, and

(c) NGOs and other private stakeholders concerning peacebuilding programs in the Niger Delta.

Replication and contextual overlap between archival data and the interviews' results were observed during the review and analysis of interview transcripts. Such discovery could be meaningful when exploring the participants' perceptions, beliefs, experiences, and expectations with the IOCs' peacebuilding programs in the Niger Delta. This approach helps to ensure validity and reliability (Yin, 2018; Jones, 2020).

Reflective Field Notes

Researchers create field notes during field study for their subsequent use. The purpose is to document the behaviors, activities, events, and other contextual elements observed during fieldwork. Consequently, field notes produce an understanding of the cultural and social situation underlying the phenomenon under study (Schwandt, 2015; Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018).

In itself, the making of field notes is “an interpretive practice” (Schwandt, 2015). Field notes represent constructed, qualitative interpretations that are eventually verified or disconfirmed by other sources of data (Hancock, 2017).

In this study, I maintained descriptive field notes (my detailed descriptions of factual data and things that I saw, heard, or experienced), as well as reflective notes. I provide additions to the factual description of my thoughts, perceptions, prior experience and knowledge, synthesis of emerging ideas and connections, future lines of inquiry, prejudices, and changing perspectives (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018; Schwandt, 2015). Both descriptive and reflective field notes stem from recollections during the semi-structured interview sessions with study participants.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

In line with the selected replication logic and following the multiple case study approach, the researcher purposefully selected participants from the Niger Delta communities to reveal their experiences and expectations for IOC peacebuilding efforts in their communities (see Yin, 2017). In-depth, semi-structured personal interviews were conducted to generate data and reveal themes that make for practical interpretations. The researcher determined data saturation after interviewing eight participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The minimum number of interviews conducted for a multiple case study is five participants, and I continued past this number until I reached data saturation, which was eight participants, with similar data noted from Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8. (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Schram, 2006).

The personal interview's advantage is that nonverbal clues and insights are revealed to the researcher (Jones, 2020). Such clues and insights – especially auditory clues – were still evident despite that the interviews were conducted online using Zoom, MS Teams, telephone calls, or other media preferred by the participants. Therefore, the different sources of data in this research include direct observations, participant recollection, digital journals, etc., to ensure validity and reliability (Yin, 2017; Jones, 2020). The researcher took notes during the interviews.

Data from the interviews have been transcribed by the researcher manually and via specialized software. The data were subsequently analyzed to discover emerging themes. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions to reveal the participants' background, experience, and identity as a stakeholder in their community (Cater et al., 2016; Gaus, 2017).

Each unit of analysis (i.e., a “case” or participant) in a multiple case study design is treated as a different focus in the qualitative case study (Bengtsson, 2016; Burkholder et al., 2016; Yin, 2017), and this approach is known to support data triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018). The participants' recruitment was conducted via personal contacts, followed by formal notifications to participants through email messages or hand-delivered letters. Sending letters by surface mail (postal invitations) was not considered due to the currently unreliable postal system in Nigeria in general, and especially in the Niger Delta.

Each interview's duration and the gap between consecutive interviews are also relevant in qualitative research (Wilkes et al., 2017). Recruitment via social media was not considered because of (a) low Internet penetration and (b) ethical dilemmas (e.g., the vulnerability of participants' identity) as highlighted by previous research (Ferrigno & Sade, 2019; Fileborn, 2016).

Candidates who accepted to participate in the research were formally invited through an invitation email, and the researcher collected other additional contact information. After the approval by Walden University IRB, the researcher handed over to the participants the consent form, which includes information about the procedure, an option to withdraw from the study, and an explanation of potential risks and inconvenience that may arise from their participation in the study.

Other information shared to participants in the procedure includes a statement that their participation is voluntary and that no consequence will arise from their refusal to participate; their rights to confidentiality; and the study's benefits to their local communities, IOCs, the government, and the country in general. Given this study's central focus, the researcher engaged in data collection from research

participants' experiences and expectations concerning the peacebuilding efforts of international oil companies in their local communities. The sampling process encompassed decisions about the choice of sampling strategy and the number of cases (Yin, 2018).

Participants were chosen based on the criteria described above, namely: an adult over the age of 18; who was born and is residing in the Niger Delta; who has knowledge about the peacebuilding programs of IOCs within their community; and is literate in the English language.

As previously described, the researcher deployed purposive sampling with replication logic up to data saturation. Multiple cases reinforce study results via replication logic. Literal replication is relevant to the current study given the central research question, namely: How do host community stakeholders describe their expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta?

The primary data sources for qualitative research include interviews and observations, and artifacts (Fusch et al., 2018; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Semi-structured interviews have a mix of "more or less structured questions," which begin "with specific information desired from all the participants" before progressing to a list of pre-prepared questions based on the encounter with participants (Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 14). Consequently, I deployed semi-structured interviews in addition to personal field notes. These are supported and supplemented with reports and publications issued by the IOCs and other policy documents that are publicly available. Accordingly, the researcher relied on semistructured interviews

supplemented by respondents' observations and the review of artifacts (Fusch et al., 2018).

The selection of participants from local stakeholders was purposive and directed toward achieving variability and triangulation. The researcher utilized open-ended questions aligned with the central research question (CRQ) and phenomenon under study and presented in such a manner as to capture the individual experiences, opinions, perceptions, and expectations of the participants concerning the peacebuilding efforts of the IOCs in the Niger Delta.

The participants' responses were recorded and transcribed into the Microsoft Word application. The questions posed during the interview elicited detailed information regarding the participant's background and orientation, thereby revealing their views, behaviors, attitudes, and values. Besides, the researcher requested and received the Walden IRB approval before the commencement of data collection. Data collection was conducted over several weeks during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown of several Nigerian cities. At the time of the interviews, the participants were in different cities in the Niger Delta. Interviews continued until data saturation was attained.

Each interview session had a planned duration of between 30 minutes and an hour, starting with the question with the specific information desired from all participants (Merriam & Grenier, 2018) and diving deeper into other pre-prepared questions.

Data was recorded (Jones, 2020) in a digital audio recorder. The researcher's notes were handwritten spontaneously on a paper-type observer's notebook. Nevertheless, any discernible information linking the participants to the data is stored

separately. The researcher used a word processor to transcribe the data. For data analysis, coding and categorization, and thematic analysis, the researcher utilized a spreadsheet application such as Excel. This spreadsheet is also used for planning, organizing, and synthesizing the meeting actions.

The author retained the notes taken during the interviews for reference and triangulation (Bengtsson, 2016; Fusch et al., 2018) with the recorded interviews to provide additional insights. A transcript review is a critical element of the member checking process used to strengthen qualitative data's trustworthiness (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Transcription transforms the spoken word into the written (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). This process minimizes potential interviewer-induced bias and provides participants with opportunities to correct any inaccuracies through the process of transcript review (Mero-Jaffe, 2011).

Therefore, in this study, a transcript review process was implemented, and each participant received the transcript of their interview. Any information that might identify participants is deleted from transcripts and stored separately from the data. After the data collection phase, participants were informed that the materials associated with the study are strictly for research; and that such materials would eventually be destroyed after a retention period.

Data Analysis Plan

Deep and insightful interactions between the researcher and collected data are required in qualitative data analysis (Maher et al., 2018). Data analysis involves the examination and the coding, categorization, synthesis, tabulation, testing, recombination, and interpretation of the information received from data sources (Hancock, 2017; Yin, 2018).

As qualitative data from interviews are ultimately expressed in words (Bengtsson, 2016), the purpose of the data analysis is to “organize and elicit meaning from the data collected” (p. 10) and, from that place, arrive at reasonable conclusions. Qualitative data analysis has three concurrent activity flows: data condensation, data display, and conclusion-verification (Miles et al., 2020).

Through data condensation, the researcher fortifies the data by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and or abstracting the full body of data from the various sources. Data display is the process of organizing condensed information in a manner that facilitates “analytic reflection and action” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 8).

The conclusion and verification stream of activity in data analysis occur even from the beginning of data gathering because the researcher can interpret and give meaning to collected data by recognizing “patterns, assertions, propositions, explanations, and causal flows” (p. 9). This may happen, even though the conclusions do not appear until data gathering is concluded.

I documented in the field notes my feelings, observations, and participants’ nonverbal cues that transpire during the interview (Jones, 2020). Whereas the researcher can spontaneously deepen discussions during interviews based on participants' responses, interviews are a perfect choice because they provide more in-depth insights than written responses to open-ended questions (Bengtsson, 2016).

Data analysis strategies in multiple case studies must address the research questions with the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2018). The data analysis plan ensured that all the evidence from the collected data is duly attended to and reflected in the final interpretations (Yin, 2018).

Participants in the study were selected from community stakeholders who are adults who live in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and are familiar with the IOCs' peacebuilding efforts in their communities. Findings shall be aggregated to support the analysis of the data collected from participants with their experiences and expectations about peacebuilding projects in their local communities. Appropriate data collection methods will be adopted to ensure effective data gathering and categorize study information after the semistructured interview questions (Miles et al., 2020; Stake, 2016; Yin, 2018).

The sample size (i.e., number of cases or participants) in a qualitative study is driven by the nature of the information required to answer the research questions (Bengtsson, 2016) confidently. Yin's (2018) cross-case synthesis approach is recommended for multiple case studies to be adopted in this study. In cross-case synthesis, a case's integrity is retained, but the researcher progresses to compare identified patterns across the cases (Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). This approach is proven to facilitate a more in-depth "understanding and explanation" through the examination of "similarities and differences across cases (Miles et al., 2020, p. 95).

Coding is about the categorization of data segments using s short descriptive name; such that the names (i.e., codes) may assist the researcher to "sort and develop an understanding of what is happening in the social situation being studied" (Maher et al., 2018, p. 2).

The researcher might discover relationships during the coding process, for example, "between codes within interviews and between interviews." The traditional coding process used tools like sheets of paper, markers, and display boards, but digital tools (e.g., NVivo) are also emerging (Maher et al., 2018).

It is noteworthy that since social science research is a craft that involves "sociological imagination," digital analytical tools should be adopted with caution. This is because such tools could (a) stifle creativity and (b) ignore the importance of context in sociological phenomena (Maher et al., 2018). Therefore, the conclusion is that digital qualitative analysis techniques do not fully support the process of analysis even though they may provide excellent data management and retrieval functions.

Data analysis in this study involved two stages. The first stage is the within-case analysis of each of the selected cases. The second stage will be a cross-case analysis of data to seek similarities and differences across the categories and themes (Yin, 2017). For individual within-case analysis, data collected from transcribed interviews and field notes are arranged in segments, indexed with line numbers, and arranged according to the interview questions for easy identification of codes (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014).

I used the descriptive coding method (Saldaña, 2016) as the primary analytical technique for this study. The descriptive coding method is used to symbolically assign meanings to segments of data providing an inventory of words or phrases for indexing and categorizing data. The descriptive coding method is recommended by Saldaña (2016) for novice qualitative researchers.

The identified codes will be recorded in a matrix form using Microsoft Word table that has columns to capture the data segments, the assigned codes, and the researcher's reflective notes that will, among other things, capture emerging patterns (Saldaña, 2016). Codes that share common meanings will be classified and themes (Saldaña, 2016). Each case in the cross-case synthesis will be evaluated as a separate

case, but the synthesis of the data from each case will strengthen the robustness of the study's results (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2017).

As previously mentioned, triangulation through multiple sources of data (e.g., structured interviews, field notes, observations, publications, artifacts, etc.) will be adopted to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings from this study. Triangulation supports research findings by demonstrating that three or more independent evidence measures are in alignment (Miles et al., 2020). Specific to data triangulation, Yin (2018) emphasized that "multiple sources of evidence … provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon" (p. 128).

Accordingly, data triangulation was adopted in this study. After transcribing the recorded interviews, data from the interviews and other sources were organized and coded to prepare for content analysis at the level of themes and concepts (Stake, 2016) to support the interpretation. I used and retained handwritten notes to record impressions, observations, cues, emotions, and feelings that may otherwise not be obvious from the interview transcripts.

Therefore, I ensured that all participants answer the same set of questions and preferably in the same sequence to reinforce cross-case comparisons and facilitate the identification of non-repeating data (see Merriam & Grenier, 2015).

I gathered both descriptive and interpretive (i.e., both hard and soft) data described by Denzin and Lincoln (2020). Accordingly, a determination will be made regarding which data is essential and relevant for this study's purpose (Denzin & Lincoln, 2020). To reinforce trustworthiness through data triangulation, descriptive data from interviews were pre-checked against external sources in addition to reviewing the transcripts for inadvertent errors. Member-checking (Denzin & Lincoln,

2020; Miles et al., 2020) was adopted to validate data. Accordingly, after the interviews are transcribed, the participants were furnished with transcripts of their interviews for review and attestation of transcription accuracy.

I implemented an audit trail as a "verification strategy" to manage soft (interpretive) data. The audit trail is a tool to record – and therefore – remind me about my thoughts, plans, actions, and processes throughout the study. These measures aim to increase trustworthiness and establish the right level of rigor and reinforce the findings' quality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2020). Considering that digital tools might restrain creative insights and reduce the researcher's capacity to navigate various perspectives when interacting with the data (Maher et al., 2018), I used digital analytical tools only sparingly and with caution where relevant.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a measure of quality in qualitative studies (David, 2019). Specifically, trustworthiness defines the relevance of the study and the rigor applied in the research process (Daniel, 2019). A qualitative researcher "interprets the meaning of data based on what is observed," enriched by personal reflections and experiences of the social world (David, 2019, p. 101).

Interviews are the primary source for data collection, although the use of additional sources (i.e., data triangulation) can mitigate concerns about construct validity (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). In selected cases, the potential for rich information is a significant consideration. Besides, maximum variation sampling is recommended to ensure that the most significant variability is captured in the primary data (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Therefore, the researcher may use serial sampling criteria to include information-rich leaders and experts as study participants

purposefully, nevertheless being cautious to avoid such undue “elite bias” as was described by (Miles et al., 2020).

Implementing a systematic approach to gathering and analyzing data as already described herein safeguards trustworthiness by demonstrating the process that led to the conclusions and findings. Consequently, internal auditability shall be reinforced through a clear focus on the central research question and by enforcing alignment between the research design, the data analysis, and the eventual conclusions and interpretations from the study (Daniel, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2020; Roller. 2019).

The four primary criteria for building trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020; Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Roller, 2019). I promoted trustworthiness through in-depth engagement and observation of study participants in addition to adopting the sampling design, triangulation methods, and data analysis techniques already described herein (Johnson et al., 2020). Furthermore, I used reflexivity to acknowledge any bias and experiences relevant to the phenomenon under study (Johnson et al., 2020). I also used the “time out” maneuver during data analysis proposed by Roller (2019).

Credibility

Credibility (internal validity) in qualitative research is a reference to (a) whether the data is an accurate representation of the views of the interviewees, and (b) if the interpretation of such views by the researcher is accurate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020). To fortify credibility, I documented the systematic processes recommended by methodologists to guard against researcher-bias and other

related flaws (Johnson et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). One of the measures to ensure credibility is that the findings was shared with participants as part of the ethical debriefing process. Through this process, the researcher can receive feedback on the conclusions' credibility vis-a-vis the interviewees' information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017).

The researcher's background and experience, including personal experiences and biases, was shared with the research participants. Such communication was made in addition to the validation anticipated from the use of triangulation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Yin, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020), as well as the member-checking procedure (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Miles et al., 2020).

Furthermore, credibility is enhanced by allocating adequate time for listening to participants and taking field notes. Other measures included a robust audit trail and the adoption of cross-case syntheses (Yin, 2018; Miles et al., 2020). Member-checking helps the researcher "verify or extend interpretations and conclusions" and prevents the inadvertent revelation of a participant's identity (Johnson et al., 2020; Miles et al., 2020).

Given that this qualitative study seeks to understand how host community stakeholders describe their expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta, the researcher's reflexivity was diligently applied to interpret such experiences and expectations from the data gathered in the course of the study. Specifically, I synthesized participants' perspectives, opinions, and expectations in terms of similarities and differences, variety, complementarity, and coherence to gain a deeper understanding of the larger population (Miles et al., 2020).

Transferability

The notion of transferability (external validity) refers to how the researcher can provide "contextual information" that enables the reader to determine if the findings are relevant to other situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020; Miles et al., 2020). To support transferability, rich data is provided in terms of the context in the Niger Delta in terms of the location and general situation of the local communities and the operations of the IOCs in the communities.

I have also documented a description of the inquiry method, the research findings, my data sampling, the number of participants, and the scheduling for collecting and analyzing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020; Miles et al., 2020). The findings and the anonymized data shall also be provided.

Dependability

Dependability – the equivalent of reliability in the positivist worldview and quantitative research – can only be guaranteed using validated instruments (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Johnson et al., 2020; Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Miles et al., 2020).

I achieved dependability by "describing the study process in sufficient detail that the work could be repeated" by any other competent scholar (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 141). I also used semistructured interviews, which is one of the measures that a researcher can use to reinforce dependability. Other measures included triangulation (Yin, 2018), the retention of an audit trail, and the research method's comprehensive documentation (Johnson et al., 2020).

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research is the counterpart of objectivity in quantitative studies. Miles et al. (2020) described two different perspectives of bias:

(a) biases due to “researcher effect on the site” and (b) biases arising from the effect of the site upon the researcher. On the other hand, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) argued that bias could also manifest when the researcher omits or excludes (some) participants' voices. Besides, “elite bias” could also occur when the researcher attributes excessive relevance to data from the “articulate well informed, usually high-status participants” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 289).

The appropriate strategies to establish confirmability include reflexivity. Confirmability is reinforced if the researcher can demonstrate to the reader that the results and conclusions from the study are reflective of the information gathered during the study; and that such results and findings are not reflective of the bias, interests, predispositions of the researcher (Johnson et al., 2020).

Consequently, I reinforced confirmability by demonstrating how my conclusions and findings follow from the participants' viewpoints. One of the practical measures is to share the study results with participants through the member-checking process already described above (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Another measure to reinforce confirmability is to demonstrate how the findings are supported by evidence from different data sources (e.g., interviews, observations, documents, artifacts, etc.), otherwise referred to as data triangulation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017).

To further minimize my effect on the participants and the “site,” I was able to (a) clarify my intentions to the participants right from the beginning and (b) conduct some of the interviews in a congenial environment. To minimize the effect of the “site” and the participants on me, I (a) spread out the interviews over a reasonable period, (b) triangulated the evidence through various sources, (c) maintained focus on

the research questions to avoid wandering off toward “alluring leads,” and (d) purposively selected participants from different social strata in order to avoid “the ‘elite’ bias” described in Miles et al. (2020, p. 292).

Ethical Procedures

Ethical dilemmas often arise in a qualitative study involving human subjects. Miles et al. (2020) categorized such dilemmas to include (a) validity versus preventing harm to participants, (b) giving help versus confidentiality, (c) naturalistic observation versus intervention by the researcher, and (d) scientific knowledge versus the rights of individuals. Thus, qualitative research raises cogent concerns about participants' rights.

The Belmont Report (Adashi et al., 2018) outlined the framework for resolving ethical issues in qualitative research. The report fundamentally reset the ethics of human subject research following the “infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study” (Adashi et al., 2018, p. 1345). The principles for research on human subjects were articulated in the report: respect for persons, justice, and beneficence.

The principles in the Belmont Report addressed the wellbeing of human subjects in any research (Adashi et al., 2018; Bromley et al., 2015), recognized the primacy of research participants, and specifically mandated that researchers cannot unilaterally decide on ethical standards in respect of their research proposal when human subjects are involved.

The first principle – the respect of persons – imposed a dual requirement that researchers should acknowledge the individual autonomy of participants and the protection of people with diminished autonomy (Bromley et al., 2015). Quigley (2016) emphasized that this principle flows into the necessity for “individual

autonomy in informed consent" which in practice, is activated via "disclosure, comprehension, and voluntariness, and the actual written or oral consent" (Quigley, 2016, p. 26).

Therefore, I implemented full disclosure, comprehension, and voluntariness and ensured that written consent was obtained before the study. Specifically, the open communication to study participants mentioned the risks, benefits, and voluntariness of their enrollment into the study (Bromley et al., 2015).

The notion of beneficence is another principle in the report. Beneficence prescribes that the benefits of research projects should be maximized while harm to the human subjects should be minimized (Adashi et al., 2018; Bromley et al., 2015). To achieve this, I deliberately implemented the research design described herein to guarantee research participants' safety (Quigley, 2016; Adashi et al., 2018) and thereby strike a balance between the research benefits and the associated risks.

The third principle in the Belmont Report is Justice. This is the requirement that seeks a "balance between the needs of society and research subjects" (Bromley et al., 2025, p. 904). The ethical requirements imposed by this principle are that: (a) research participants must be selected through a fair, broad, and participatory process, and (b) the benefits of the research should be made available to all (Adashi et al., 2018). Therefore, I reinforced this principle by ensuring fairness in the purposive recruitment of participants, making the research findings available, and ensuring that any vulnerable people or stakeholders in the communities are not exploited as a result of my research (Quigley, 2016).

Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) are charged with reviewing the protective measures for human subjects in research proposals to ensure alignment with the

principles elucidated in the Belmont Report. The Walden University IRB approves all proposals for research projects involving human subjects to guarantee that the ethical guidelines described above are fulfilled in terms of mandatory informed consent, minimization of harm or risks, and prevention of unnecessary burden upon participants well as measures to guarantee confidentiality.

I, therefore, commenced data collection only after receiving IRB approval. After that – and before the commencement of data collections – I explained the purpose of the research clearly to participants and emphasized that participation is voluntary. I also secured informed consent and explained confidentiality and anonymity (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Miles et al., 2020). Furthermore, potential recruits were allowed to ask questions and seek clarifications regarding the research process. Besides, the participants were informed that they may withdraw from participation at any time.

I kept an audit trail and documented the materials and data related to the study. Documents and other data related to the study will be stored in a secure repository available to the researcher alone. Such data will be anonymized (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017) and stored for a retention period of five years, after which they may be destroyed. I administered, and also retain the standard Informed Consent forms before the commencement of data gathering.

As part of the requirements for informed consent, I ensured that the participants realized that participation was voluntary and that they have the full information about the study's purpose and the scope of their involvement (Miles et al., 2020). I acknowledged that each member of the population of interest who accepted to participate was doing the researcher a favor (Miles et al., 2020).

Summary

In Chapter 3, I have described my research design and explained the basis for the choice. This chapter also included arguments for the rationale of the study and a review of the study's ethical implications, my role as a researcher, and the measures put in place to ensure quality. Based on this study's nature, I have defined the study design, the purposive sampling technique, the criteria for participant selection, and the associated instrumentation in a manner that is coherent and aligned with the intended purpose of this study. Chapter 3 also discusses the concepts of trustworthiness and ethical principles, such as must be complied with and approval by the Walden University IRB. I have described measures to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In Chapter 4, I review the data collection process and discuss the analysis of research findings and the results' presentation. Thus, Chapter 4 will cover data gathering from various sources, data analysis, and coding techniques. The focus in Chapter 4 will be to offer evidence to answer the research questions in the study and present an evaluation of the results through data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. I developed the central research question to investigate the phenomenon at hand within Nigeria's Niger Delta region. By analyzing host community stakeholders' expectations, I gained more knowledge on the interface between peacebuilding programs in the Niger Delta and local community life. The central research question guided every step of this study: How do host community stakeholders describe their expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta?

I elaborated the study's central research question after an extensive literature review where I identified a need to examine business-community collaboration from the expectations of all the actors involved to refine and improve business-host community partnerships for peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). Unfortunately, corporate peacebuilding programs have yielded limited positive impacts where they are most needed, such as in the poverty and conflict-stricken region of the Niger Delta (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). I identified a knowledge gap within the business and peace literature on understanding community stakeholders' views and expectations on which specific strategies support corporate peacebuilding within conflict-ridden host communities (Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019).

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study, which was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs

within the Niger Delta: 1) Jennings' (2015; 2018) concept of *peacekeeping as enterprise* and 2) Ingenhoff & Sommer's (2011) concept of *stakeholder expectation regarding the social engagement of companies.* I aimed to advance knowledge and deepen understanding of community stakeholders' expectations of International Oil Companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta and contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. The results of a multiple case study design addressing the study's purpose and research question can offer recommendations for research and policy.

With this empirical investigation's findings, I brought forth local stakeholders' expectations on peacekeeping in the Niger Delta region. Consistent with such expectations, Kohl (2015) and Miklian et al. (2019) highlighted how consultation with local community actors facilitates inquiry about their expectations. Such needed research is an essential requirement for creating access to the lowest local voices and ensuring success in peacebuilding initiatives such as those involving determining the Nigerian community stakeholders (Omokhoa, 2015).

It was essential that the choice of data collection sources and interview protocol aligned with the research purpose, the multiple case study design, and contributed quality data for theory extension (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). This chapter describes this multiple-case study research results and is divided into two main steps. The first is a thematic analysis of the data collected based on the study's multiple sources: (a) a semi-structured interview protocol, (b) a semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix B), (c) archival data in the form of government reports, media and business (Yin, 2017), and (d) reflective field notes (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), which I kept throughout the entire data collection process. The second step follows a

cross-case analysis in which I synthesize the findings of the initial thematic analysis of data to answer the study's central research question. According to Boyatzis (1998) and Nowell et al. (2017), it is possible to adopt different approaches in using thematic analysis and yet obtain the same rigor.

In a multiple case study, the case itself may be a person, event, or another unit of analysis. When people are the unit of analysis, a single case focuses on one individual, whereas a multiple case study focuses on comparing collected data and the results from more than one person (Yin, 2017). Being that in business and management studies in the scholarly literature, the case itself is often a person, the interpretation of the multiple case study using individuals as units of analysis has often been used by researchers such as Komodromos (2014) with university employees in Cyprus, Santos and Halkias (2021) with community stakeholders in rural Angola, and Urbanati et al. (2020) with individual stakeholders in innovation projects in Italy and Sweden. The unit of analysis in this study was the individual community stakeholder in the Niger Delta.

This chapter provides evidence from the eight semistructured interviews to support how the study's findings confirm or disconfirm existing knowledge or extend it. Throughout this chapter are the following: coding categories and themes, tables summarizing demographics of the study's sample population, and a cross-case synthesis of themes across cases following Yin's (2017) recommendations for a rigorous data analysis process with multiple case study design.

Research Setting

In this multiple case study, I collected data via online interviews with adults living in the Niger delta who are familiar with peacebuilding projects in the area. I

used the interview protocol in Appendix C. I recruited some of the participants through their profiles on LinkedIn. I recruited the others through direct contact. There was no snowball sampling, as each participant was recruited directly.

The online interview sessions were scheduled after the participants granted their informed consent. There was no physical one-on-one interview as a result of the imposed protocols associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. To qualify for inclusion in the study, each participant had to meet the following criteria: (a) be an adult over the age of 18; (b) live in a community within the Niger Delta; (c) be aware of the peacebuilding programs of IOCs within their community; and (d) be literate in the English language. I administered the letter of recruitment to potential participants to ensure that they fully understood the inclusion criteria. The participants were fully aware that their identities would be protected to ensure confidentiality during and after data collection. One of the participants had been furloughed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A copy of the interview transcript was sent to each participant for member checking validation.

Demographics

All of the interviews were conducted using MS Teams, Zoom, or telephone calls, depending on the participant's preference. Some participants indicated a preference for telephone interviews because access to the internet-based tools (e.g., Teams, Zoom, etc.) would have been an additional financial burden. The telephone interviews were recorded with Voice Recorder, a free program that captures audio recordings. The interviews on MS Teams and Zoom were recorded with a different, free program called MP3 Skype Recorder. The shortest interview duration was about 24 minutes and 22 seconds, while the most extended interview took about 59 minutes

and 44 seconds. All participants were adults (over the age of 18) who live in one or several communities in the Niger Delta. They were all aware of the peacebuilding programs of IOCs in the Niger Delta. The interviews were conducted in the English language.

Demographic variables were taken into account (gender, place of usual residence in the Niger Delta, occupation, and experience with the region's business-community conflicts). These variables were relevant to the conceptual framework. The given pseudonyms are in an XY format so that X is presented by the generic letter P symbolizing "participant," and Y is the numerical identifier assigned to each participant. It is to be noted that some of the participants live and work across different states within the Niger Delta. None of the participants was an employee of any of the IOCs in Nigeria. The full demographics follow in Table 2.

Table 2

Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

Participant	Over 18	Gender	Good knowledge of the topic?	Participant's community (state) in the Niger Delta	Occupation
P 1	Yes	Female	Yes	Rivers	Procurement executive
P 2	Yes	Male	Yes	Bayelsa	Senior manager in the oil and gas industry
P 3	Yes	Female	Yes	Imo	Relations officer
P 4	Yes	Female	Yes	Bayelsa	Sales representative
P 5	Yes	Female	Yes	Rivers	Banker
P 6	Yes	Male	Yes	Rivers	Accountant

P 7	Yes	Female	Yes	Edo	Self-employed
P 8	Yes	Male	Yes	Akwa Ibom	Contractor

Data Collection

I received the IRB approval (i.e., Walden IRB 08-07-20-0517026) to start data collection on August 7, 2020, and it is set to expire on August 6, 2021. Subsequently, I commenced preparations for data collection to make the initial contacts, document informed consent, and schedule the interview sessions. Data started with the first interview on August 30, 2020 and continued until December 2020. Altogether, eight participants were interviewed during this study. Data saturation occurred from the data collected, beginning with fifth participant.

Participants were drawn from various occupations and backgrounds across the Niger Delta. The participants' responses were aligned mainly, and there were few outliers. I used triangulation (Yin, 2018) to corroborate the data from the interviews. Although the minimum number of interviews recommended for a qualitative, multiple case study is around five interviews (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020), I continued past this number until I confirmed data saturation after the fifth interview by having no new information presented itself with four interviews in a row, in this case with interviews 5 through 8.

My primary research tool was the semistructured interview with focused but open-ended questions (Yin, 2017). The interviews comprised six well-chosen, open-ended questions that are relevant to the dissertation topic. These questions were meant to elicit answers from the participants based on their experiences and expectations.

Accordingly, the interviews were centered around the six questions grounded in the conceptual framework and the literature review presented in Chapter 2.

The Introductory Recruitment Letter (see Appendix A) was sent to potential participants to introduce the research's nature and purpose. The Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) was administered to confirm the participants' informed consent. Subsequently, I scheduled the online interviews on dates and times convenient to the participants. I used the semistructured interview protocol (Appendix C) for the actual interviews after documenting the participants' consent. All participants matched the inclusion criteria for the study. All participants also consented to participate before the interviews. Although I contacted more than 15 people, eight eventually participated in the interviews. Snowball sampling was not used; all participants were contacted directly.

Initial Contact

The first initial contact was made in August 2020, via LinkedIn and through professional contacts. As the place of residence for many of the people that I contacted via LinkedIn was not apparent from their LinkedIn profiles, several of them were subsequently screened out when it became apparent that they did not meet one of the critical criteria for inclusion; namely, physical residence in the Niger Delta. On the other hand, some of the people I contacted on LinkedIn declined to participate for several reasons. One did not want to participate because the interview would be "recorded." Some other potential participants did not provide any reason. The interview participants were satisfied to receive a copy of the interview questions before the actual interview. After the interviews, the transcription was issued to the participants for review.

Interviews

I conducted all of the interviews online, using voice-only software. The Walden University IRB permitted alternative methods for collecting research data to include online conferencing software, telephones, and other forms of voice-only conferencing. This approach is also consistent with the conclusions by Sipes, Roberts, and Mullan (2019): namely, that voice-only interview platforms such as Skype – but also relevant to Teams, Zoom, and telephone interviews – are appropriate for research on sensitive topics. Two participants opted to interview using the Microsoft Teams application, which is more prevalent in Nigeria compared to Skype. The remaining participants elected to conduct the interviews via telephone. The calls were initiated by myself, and I recorded the interviews using Voice Memo, a free audio recording software.

Case study researchers seek to discover themes and categories (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). This qualitative case study was essential to ensure alignment between the conceptual framework, research questions, data, and analysis (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Interview questions were structured to ensure alignment. I used a semistructured format to present six questions to the participants (Appendix C). This interview protocol was adapted from a protocol developed by Idemudia (2017) in a study whose purpose was to understand better how businesses can contribute to peace in conflict zones. No interview question was modified nor dismissed for bias or prejudice during the study. The questions were presented to the participants in the same order. The follow-on questions were different for each participant, depending on the data elicited from that specific participant.

Reflective Field Notes and Journaling

The value placed on reflective field notes and journaling would be different from researcher to researcher. From Saberi (2020), we know that in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need to keep researchers and research participants safe; remote (online) research methodology can reduce research time and cost and enable research to be conducted safely. Therefore, I was open to the challenge of conducting this study remotely, given the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposed lockdowns in major Nigerian Cities.

I used my reflective field notes to track the number of individuals contacted, how they were contacted, the people who declined to participate, and why, in addition to tracking the number of interviews concluded. My field notes started with the first person I contacted and continued until the last participant was interviewed. These notes include the jottings of brief sentences and phrases to document the progress of the study. My field notes revealed patterns and challenges in participant recruitment and data collection. In line with the participant recruitment plan, snowball sampling was not considered, and each participant was contacted directly.

The data from the interviews were rich, detailed, and unique to each participant. The participants were recruited from various backgrounds and different areas of the Niger Delta. I kept observational data in my reflective field notes, and these were crucial to producing meaning and contextual understanding of the data. For instance, the second participant was eager to share their own experiences, opinions, and expectations around the subject, and this contributed to the long duration (59 minutes and 44 seconds) of the second interview.

I also noted that several participants were not quick to accept interview invitations using the internet-based formats (e.g., Teams, Zoom, Skype, etc.) This might have been due to the high cost of internet services associated with Teams, Zoom, Skype, and other Internet-based software. Participants were more enthusiastic when the telephone interview option was mooted. In Nigeria, GSM telephony is widely subscribed and relatively more affordable than Internet access. There are 208 million active telephone lines for a population of 190 million. Hence, the penetration rate is higher than 100 percent (NCC, 2020). For the telephone interviews, I also noted that I initiated – and therefore bore the full cost of – the telephone call for the interview duration. Hence no additional burden was placed on the participants.

In addition to personal observations, my reflective field notes necessitated the suggestion of telephone interviews to subsequent participants, a suggestion that they eagerly accepted. My field notes give a narrative of the data collection process, including the challenges, disappointments, frustrations when potential participants dropped out completely or postponed their interviews at the last minute. Data from participants were also cross-checked with information from government and other company sources to ensure triangulation. For example, the Eastern Gas Gathering System (EGGS-2) project mentioned copiously by Participant 2 was verified from other independent sources.

Transcript Review

All of the interviews had to be transcribed from the audio records. Each participant received the transcript of their interview to check for accuracy. The transcribed interview was delivered to each participant to document such, improve

credibility, and reduce concerns about accuracy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Coding and analysis commenced after the participant verified the accuracy of transcripts.

Data Collection Issues During the Pandemic

The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Nigeria on February 27, 2020 and announced to the public on the next day by the Minister of Health (NCDC, 2020). By December 26, 2020, there were 83,576 confirmed cases, out of which 11,834 were active cases; 70,495 people had been discharged, and – unfortunately – 1,247 deaths had been recorded (NCDC, 2020). The pandemic resulted in lockdowns in major Nigerian cities and mandatory quarantine requirements in Nigeria and worldwide. Such lockdowns led to a shutdown of all but the essential construction and maintenance projects throughout the country in general, including the oil and gas industry in the Niger Delta. Many workers were laid off or furloughed as a result of such a reduction in activities.

Consequently, the research participants were all affected – to varying degrees – by the pandemic. By the time I received my IRB approval in August 2020, the pandemic was already well established. As such, it was clear that data collection had to be conducted online as approved by Walden University IRB instead of the traditional face-to-face interview.

Notwithstanding the pandemic and resulting mitigation measures for data collection, the usual process using the Letter of Recruitment, the Consent Form, and the Interview protocol were duly applied. My choice of method for collecting data was the Microsoft Teams audio conferencing software, and the recorded telephone call as these options were compatible with the government's social distancing protocols in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Analysis

For raw data analysis, I utilized Saldaña's (2016) descriptive coding strategy. I adopted a descriptive coding strategy to the raw data to identify emerging words and phrases for categorization and thematic analysis. The raw data obtained from the transcripts (collected from the interviews) contained all eight participants (see Saldaña, 2016). The information collected from the participants' interviews provided an in-depth contextual understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta.

In qualitative research studies, data collection is driven by coding, which may cause modifying instruments and indictive interpretations as the study progressed (Saldaña, 2016). In this multiple case study, there was no need to modify instruments, and inductive reasoning led to theme development that emerged from the voices of host community stakeholders within the Niger Delta. Considering that qualitative exploratory studies are used to explore real-world issues within an under-researched area, the social phenomenon can be explored at the start of data collection and continues through the data analysis processes (Eisenhardt, 1989; Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

I used an inductive research approach as part of the multiple case study strategy because it allowed themes to emerge from the data, allowing the people in the Niger Delta to express their experiences and expectations (Yin, 2017). According to Hancock and Algozzine (2017), case study methodology is recommended where the objective is to gain an in-depth understanding of situations and meanings for the people involved. As utilized in this study, multiple case study was relevant for

exploring differences and similarities between and within cases to produce robust and reliable evidence (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

A multiple case study's capacity to elicit common findings from across different settings is one of its design strengths. In multiple case study research, theoretical replication involves testing theory by comparing the findings with new cases (Satke, 2016). If pattern-matching between data and propositions emerges in a series of cases, theoretical replication can manifest through a new series of cases that have contrasting propositions (Yin, 2018). The use of replication logic in case studies also allows for a rigorous qualitative data analysis process and theory extension (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

Theory extension achieved through a multiple case study design rests on three methodological foundations: a data analysis process of rich and comprehensive data, a functional research design, and a well-developed research question that directly aligns with the purpose of the study (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Each conceptual construct is grounded in well-measured and appropriate data from the literature. Rigorous multiple case study designs control theoretical variation that can weaken both transferability and generalizability (Stake, 2010). I conducted a broad and extensive literature review to identify new and or unanswered questions and refine contributions to theory following the study. The data triangulation process helped reinforce the evidence's credibility through a two-step process by evaluating multiple sources such as interviews, archival data in the form of reports or press releases, etc. (Yin, 2017). The first step used thematic analysis, whereas I adopted a cross-case synthesis process (Yin, 2017).

I conducted the thematic analysis by hand-coding the data to systematically mapping out code in a descriptive approach (Saldaña, 2016, p. 102). This descriptive coding method was used to assign meanings to the identified blocks of data, forming an inventory of words or phrases for indexing and categorizing data. For a novice scholar, Saldaña (2016) recommended that the descriptive manual coding method be more effective and suitable than Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) software programs.

Themes were generated from the interview data analysis that described the participants' perceptions, ideas, and experiences (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). As soon as the transcript review checking process was concluded, I hand-coded the interview notes and used a spreadsheet to register the participants' transcribed responses. Data triangulation and word coding also allowed for recognizing patterns and increased dependability by drawing attention to recurrent data between cases (Yin, 2017).

Yin (2018) recommends cross-case synthesis as an appropriate data analysis technique in multiple case study research. Cross-case synthesis is more efficient than content analysis for a Ph.D. study, whereby data is compared and contrasted across cases, not just within-case analysis (Yin, 2018). In the cross-case synthesis technique, the goal "is to retain the integrity of the entire case and then to compare or synthesize any within-case patterns across the cases" (p. 196). Thus, each case is treated as a separate study, and findings are aggregated across the various individual cases. Cross-case synthesis is materially similar to other research syntheses, whereby findings are aggregated and compared/contrasted across several individual studies. However, it contrasts with "data aggregation approaches" that aim for "conclusions about

variables but not necessarily about the cases" (Yin, 2018 p. 196). Designs that use both within-case and cross-case synthesis have been found to provide a better platform for theory extension and identifying conceptual category constructs than those that use only the within-case analysis (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

I adopted Yin's (2017) recommendation to analyze the data from the "ground up," allowing key concepts to emerge through scrutinizing data. This strategy was the most appropriate for analyzing multiple case study data that emanated from this study, as it permitted me to align emerging concepts with the central research question (see Yin, 2017). This strategy was also consistent with the descriptive coding method (Saldaña, 2016). After coding the interview questions, themes were linked to classifications grounded in both the conceptual framework and the scholarly literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The codes identified common themes that arose from the participants' responses during the research and from other notes that I acquired (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Following Stake's (2006) recommendations on the transferability of multiple case study findings through naturalistic generalization, the findings deemed necessary had at least three confirmations and validations by the participants. Cross-case synthesis allowed me to determine whether the case studies were comparable through analyzing convergence and divergence of the collected research data (Yin, 2017). Each of the cases provided evidence directly aligned with the study's purpose and provided answers to the central research question. The reflective field notes collected were kept throughout the data collection process for triangulation purposes with the within-case and cross-case data analysis. I triangulated the data from qualitative interviews with evidence from archival documents (Yin, 2018).

Following is a description of the finalized categories and themes which emerged from this multiple case study, illustrating how coding was done for each of the identified conceptual coding categories and themes.

In total, five coding categories grounded in the study problem and the conceptual framework enclosing a total of 13 themes were gleaned from the thematic analysis of this study's data. The categories are (a) stakeholder expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs, (b) corporate-community conflict on peacebuilding as through enterprise, (c) stakeholder engagement in corporate peacebuilding program, (d) IOCs investment in education and training needs of local communities, and (e) IOC-driven initiatives to strengthen a peacebuilding economy.

The five coding categories are grounded in the study's conceptual framework, aligning with the purpose of the study: 1) Jennings' (2015; 2018) concept of peacekeeping as enterprise*;* and 2) Ingenhoff & Sommer's (2011) concept of stakeholder expectation regarding the social engagement of companies. Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) founded their conclusions on defining stakeholder expectations and companies' social engagement based on two key theories. Firstly, Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) used as a theoretical foundation was the shareholder value theory (Van Marrewijk, 2003), which suggested that the company also has to 'balance a multiplicity of stakeholders interests; and, secondly, corporate citizenship theory (Moon et al. 2005) which identified 'specific roles and responsibilities for corporate, governmental, and other actors in society' (Moon et al. 2005, 430) and focuses on the role corporations play in society. Both Ingenhoff and Sommer (2011) and Kohl

(2015) demonstrated that the expectations of local citizens could be at variance with the perceptions of corporate leaders involved in peacebuilding programs.

The five coding categories listed below are grounded in the conceptual framework, and 13 themes gleaned from the thematic analysis.

Coding: Stakeholder expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs

Themes: 1) job development; 2) community development; 3) healthcare facilities

Coding: Corporate-community conflict on peacebuilding as through enterprise

Themes: 1) community mistrust and corruption; 2) neglect of poor infrastructure; 3) pollution and oil spillage

Coding: Stakeholder engagement in corporate peace-building program

Themes: 1) low individual participation; 2) low invited representation by IOCs

Coding: IOCs investment in education and training needs of local communities

Themes: 1) financial and technical skills training; 2) education opportunities for youth

Coding: IOC-driven initiatives to strengthen a peacebuilding economy

Themes: 1) fair community representation in peacebuilding activities; 2) transparency in IOC dealings with local communities; 3) community ownership of peacebuilding projects

Table 3 below shows the finalized categories and themes of this multiple case study, along with several examples of participant quotations to illustrate how the coding took place for each of those categories and theme

Table 3

Coding and Theme Examples

Participant	Interview excerpt	Category	Theme
Participant 1	The IOCs establishing Industries … would create more sources of living, jobs and business opportunities. These opportunities will … drastically reducing restiveness of the Indigenes	*Stakeholder expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs*	1) job development; 2) community development; 3) healthcare facilities
Participant 2	"… I expect basically that they should be in the line of developmental projects like social infrastructure geared towards education; … social infrastructure that would improve the health of the people, generate employment on the small scale; micro-financing, and (growth-oriented) infrastructure, etc."		

Participant	Interview excerpt	Category	Theme
Participant 3	The IOCs “should engage in rural electrification project. For example, mounting transformers within the community to boost the power supplies. Renovation and equipping old existing schools and then as well as building new ones within the community. And then also they should set up viable small and medium enterprises”		

Participant	Interview excerpt	Category	Theme
Participant 1	"The IOCs are expected to desist from divide-and-rule type of approach that breed division within the members of the Host Communities."	*Corporate-community conflict on peacebuilding as through enterprise*	1) community mistrust and corruption; 2) neglect of poor infrastructure ; 3) pollution and oil spillage
Participant 7	"I believe they should run the schools at least for while (for the period) they're there; or supervise the running of the schools to prevent corruption, embezzlement (of funds meant for running the schools), etc."		
Participant 3	"I think the IOCs should desensitize these offices – the offices of those people representing the community – because it leads to internal strife among the villagers."		
Participant 5	"They had a lot of pollution in the land, they had a lot of oil spillage, and different situations. So, they had a lot of bitter incidents… It caused conflict because, a lot of people's (sources of)		

Participant	Interview excerpt	Category	Theme
	livelihood were taken away from them.”		

Participant	Interview excerpt	Category	Theme
Participant 1	"If am taking from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest, I will take it as a 1. This is because the IOCs have, especially in this block that I mentioned, they were not really letting us know whatever they were doing"	*Stakeholder engagement in corporate peace-building program*	1) Low individual participation; 2) Low invited representation by IOCs
Participant 2	"Participation (by community people) is very minimal"		
Participant 5	"In my own perspective, I'll say there's not enough level of participation. There's not enough participation.		
Participant 8	"… these peacebuilding programmes are not receiving enough participation or support from the local community. There's support, but the support is not enough"		
Participant 1	"The IOCs should have workable scholarship program for primary school level to masters and PhD level.	*IOCs investment in education and training needs of local communities*	1) financial and technical skills training; 2) education opportunities for youth

Participant	Interview excerpt	Category	Theme
Participant 4	"the ones that are willing to go to school, you give them scholarship. The ones that don't want to go to school, they can acquire a skill that can at the end of the day, they can earn money for themself.		
Participant 6	"they should have literacy support and scholarship programs that'll help those that have sound mind, but don't have the resources to be able to obtain necessary trainings"		
Participant 8	"IOCs should provide the locals with means for education, healthcare and so on"		
Participant 1	"They should have a model which should be hinged on the community's interest; from inception getting to know what the community really needs and of course ensure to recruit some indigenes from the community as staff of the IOCs"	*IOC-driven initiatives to strengthen a peacebuilding economy*	1)fair community representation in peacebuilding activities; 2)transparency in IOC dealings with local communities; 3)community ownership of peacebuilding projects
	"the basic problem is duplication of projects, or to some extent,		

Participant	Interview excerpt	Category	Theme
Participant 2	carrying out projects that are not really beneficial to the people. The main thing is to embark on projects that have much benefit to the people.		
Participant 3	“before a project is initiated and executed, the goals of the project should align with the present need of the community. And then the project should also be self-sustaining. And then, the executors of this project should also be told who must work hand-in-hand with the villagers.		
	“I would suggest that the IOCs – whenever they are at fault – they should quickly be open and transparent in their dealings with the local communities.		
Participant 8	“When found wanting, IOCs should take responsibility and resolve any conflict on ground.”		

As previously noted, each of these themes belongs to their respective categories (see Table 3). The frequency of occurrence varied for several themes so

that specific ones figured more prominently in the data analysis than others, which is discussed in detail in the "Cross-Case Synthesis and Analysis" section of this chapter. Later in this chapter, a visual representation graph is developed to illustrate every theme's frequency of occurrence across the cases.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a measure of quality in qualitative studies (David, 2019). A qualitative researcher "interprets the meaning of data based on what is observed," enriched by personal reflections and experiences of the social world (David, 2019, p. 101). Interviews are the primary source for data collection, although the use of additional sources (i.e., data triangulation) can mitigate concerns about construct validity (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Selecting cases carefully and using maximum variation sampling can ensure that variability is captured in the primary data (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Therefore, the researcher may use serial sampling criteria to include information-rich leaders and experts in as study participants purposefully, nevertheless being cautious to avoid such undue "elite bias" described by Miles et al. (2020).

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is established if (a) the data is an accurate representation of the views of the interviewees, and (b) the researcher's interpretation of such views is accurate (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020). In this study, I documented the systematic processes recommended by methodologists to guard against researcher-induced flaws (Yin, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020), thereby reinforcing credibility. I shared my background and experience, including personal

experiences and biases, with research participants before the interviews. Besides, I implemented data triangulation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Johnson et al., 2020; Yin, 2018) and member-checking (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Miles et al., 2020) after each interview. Thus, each participant was allowed to review their transcripts post-interview. Such member-checking helped me "verify or extend interpretations and conclusions" and prevent the inadvertent revelation of a participant's identity (Johnson et al., 2020; Miles et al., 2020). One other measure to ensure credibility is that the findings will be shared with participants as part of the ethical debriefing process to receive feedback about the conclusions arising from the interviewees' information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). I allocated adequate time for the actual interviews, took notes, maintained a robust audit trail, and continued with the interviews until saturation was established. I also implemented the cross-case syntheses (Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2018) approach.

Furthermore, I applied my reflexivity diligently to the interpretation of experiences and expectations revealed through the interview data by synthesizing participants' perspectives, opinions, and expectations in terms of similarities, differences, variety, complementarity, and coherence to gain a deeper understanding of the larger population (Miles et al., 2020).

Transferability

Transferability or external validity refers to how I provided "contextual information" necessary for the reader to determine if the findings are relevant to other situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020; Miles et al., 2020). As such, I provide contextual information about the situation in the Niger Delta, the local communities, and the operations of the IOCs. I also documented my inquiry method,

my data sampling, the findings, the number of participants, and the scheduling for interviews and data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020; Miles et al., 2020).

Dependability

Dependability is the equivalent of reliability in the positivist worldview of quantitative research. I achieved dependability by relying on validated instruments (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2020) and by providing sufficiently detailed descriptions that would permit the work to be duplicated by any other competent scholar (Johnson et al., 2020, p. 141). For this reason, I used semistructured interviews, which reinforces dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research is the counterpart of objectivity in quantitative studies. Miles et al. (2020) described how bias could arise either from the "researcher effect on the site" or the site's effect upon the researcher. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) had previously concluded that bias could also manifest when the researcher omits or excludes participants' voices. Bias could also arise from "elite bias" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 289) when the researcher over relies on the most articulate or well-informed participants' opinions. Accordingly, maximum variation sampling (Halkias & Neubert, 2020) was adopted, as shown in Table 2.

I further reinforced confirmability by demonstrating herein how the results and conclusions are reflective of the information provided by the participants (Johnson et al., 2020) during the interviews and how these findings are supported by evidence from other sources such as observations, documents, and artifacts, etc. (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). For example, the Eastern Gas Gathering System

(EGGS-2) project mentioned copiously by the participant P2, the killing of environmental activists mentioned by participant P7, and the frequent spillages and pollution mentioned by participants P5 and P7 were all confirmed from independent sources.

To further minimize my effect on the participants, I clarified my intentions to the participants right from the beginning and ensured that the interviews were conducted online on a date and time convenient. To minimize the effects on myself, the interviews were spread out over around five months. During the interviews, I maintained a focus on the research questions and avoided wandering off. I purposively selected participants from different social strata to avoid elite bias (Miles et al., 2020).

Study Results

A multiple-case study can be used for gathering data to answer a qualitative research question with the goal of theory extension (Eisenhardt, 2020). Extension of theory using a multiple-case study design can offer new knowledge within a particular theoretical perspective and further delineate the original theory's boundaries (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Multiple cases are like multiple experiments; the previously developed theory can be compared and extended to account for the case study's empirical results (Yin, 2017). By recording host community stakeholders' expectations, a more in-depth understanding of the specific nature of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta was provided. The research question guiding this study was as follows: *"*How do host community stakeholders describe their expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta?" This multiple-case study revealed the

participants' perceptions and experiences about the phenomena under study and emerged as related themes and patterns from the data analysis process. The data analysis techniques used to generate the study's results are presented in this section in a two-step procedure: (a) thematic analysis of the textual data and (b) the cross-case synthesis analysis (see Yin, 2018).

A cross-case synthesis analysis examines the similarities, differences, and themes across cases and is utilized when the unit of analysis is a case –a bounded unit just as an individual, artifact, place, event, or a group (Yin, 2017). The constant comparative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Schwandt, 2015) was used to analyze data continuously. Each new group of data was essentially compared to already available data, which allowed us to compare and contrast thematic patterns across cases (Yin, 2017). In this initial phase of analysis, the objective was to create rich, dense commentary from each participant; comments that would reveal their perceptions of the phenomenon under exploration

The goal of the two-step process in the data analysis phase of a multiple case study was to develop thick, rich, relevant descriptions emerging from each interview participant that could further unveil their experiences and views on the study's central topic. The data analysis considers the comprehensive data that includes interviews, archival data, reflective journal notes, member verified transcriptions and seminal research articles' findings. The analysis continued with the procedure of cross-case synthesis for familiarity, unfamiliarity, and redundancy, and crystallization of the collected data (Stake, 2013). The themes that emerged were classified, and the findings were cross-referenced for graphic representation and the groundwork for

cross-case analysis, where each case is managed separately yet analyzed collectively with other cases in the study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2017). I followed the same procedure for collecting data for all eight participants and adopted a consistent process for manual coding, categorization, and identifying emergent themes across the eight cases (Yin, 2017).

First Phase: Thematic Analysis of the Textual Data

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and highlighting the themes discovered in a dataset to produce "produce trustworthy and insightful findings" (Nowell et al., 2017). The thematic analysis's written narrative provides "a concise, coherent, logical, nonrepetitive, and interesting account of the data within and across themes" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 1). The analysis has to record the logical processes that describe how the results were developed so that the dataset's inferences may be justified as credible and dependable. I adopted Gummesson's (2017) proposition and incorporated direct quotations from participants as an essential element of the final report. This section is the 13 themes that emerged, supported by the eight in-depth interviews' critical insights. These themes are analyzed and presented concerning the central research question.

Job Development

This theme refers to employment development as one of the major expectations of the community stakeholders. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the living conditions in the Niger Delta are appalling despite the humongous revenues from oil production (Lenshie, 2018). About 70 percent of the people are poor, and youth unemployment was recently estimated at 40 percent (Ebiede, 2017). The

challenge facing the participants is that in the absence of government structures to support job creation and development, the IOCs have become the only development agents available to the people. Participants therefore, expressed the hope that the IOCs will step in and fill the gap. For example, it is relevant to recall the commentary from Participant 1 who stated as follows:

> "The IOCs establishing Industries … would create more sources of living, jobs and business opportunities. These opportunities will … drastically reducing restiveness of the Indigenes"

Similarly, Participant 2 expressed the following expectation from the IOC:

> "… (the provision of) social infrastructure that would improve the health of the people, generate employment on the small scale".

Community Development

This theme refers to community development initiatives expected of the IOCs. It is relevant to recall that the Niger Delta is poorly developed such that the people live in deplorable conditions despite the humongous revenues from the oil produced in the region (Lenshie, 2018). All participants expect the IOCs to contribute to the development of their community. Participant 2 was very clear about this:

> "… I expect basically that they should be in the line of developmental projects like social infrastructure geared towards education; … social infrastructure that would improve the health of the people, generate employment on the small scale; micro-financing, and (growth-oriented) infrastructure, etc."

Participant 2 goes on to add that: "… since the government cannot meet up with their responsibilities (to) the people, then, all their expectations are on the IOC's to bridge the gap. So, these are the (reasons for the) entitlement mentality: that the oil is from us, therefore we should benefit (from it)…"

Similarly, Participant 3 stated as follows:

"they should engage in rural electrification project. For example, mounting transformers within the community to boost the power supplies. Renovation and equipping old existing schools and then as well as building new ones within the community".

Healthcare Facilities

This theme refers to the provision of healthcare facilities such as hospitals and clinics. The legacy of five decades of oil production in the region is a diminished quality of life from lack of amenities (Omokhoa, 2015; Moshood et al., 2018). Since the government has failed to provide adequate healthcare facilities for the communities, the IOCs are the only agents the people can reach to provide their healthcare needs. As such, participants expressed the hope that the IOCs will help them either provide new healthcare facilities or rehabilitate existing ones. For example, Participant 4 expects: "… good health facilities. If we have good health facilities in various communities, at least it will help and reduce the rate of infant and mortality death rate in our local communities."

Similarly, Participant 8 stated unequivocally that "… IOCs should provide the locals with means for education, healthcare, and so on."

Community Mistrust and Corruption

This theme refers to mistrust (a) among the community members themselves and (b) between the community members and the IOCs. It captures the perceived corrupt relationships between some community leaders and the IOCs. It is already recognized that IOCs' activities can introduce or exacerbate corruption in developing countries (Oetzel & Doh, 2009). In the Niger Delta, corruption – amongst other ills – has resulted in a strong negative perception about IOCs activities (Odera et al., 2018). The IOCs are primarily perceived as insincere.

Furthermore, Nigeria is consistently ranked poorly on the corruption perception index (Udoma et al., 2018; Transparency International, 2019). This is perhaps why development in the region is a challenge due to "corruption, mismanagement and social tensions" (UNGC, 2013). The participants clearly expressed their frustration with the situation. For example, Participant 1 stated as follows:

> “I know very well that the communities have their own issues; and they have various conflicting groups, and this has come up because over the time the local communities no longer trust their leaders that represent them before the IOCs. We are talking about the chiefs, the youth bodies, the Community Development Council (CDC) being set up, the various bodies and recently the armed militants…”

> “A keynote is for the IOCs to reform their internal system. They need to have people they can trust. Men and women of integrity in their peace building

programs because we have always seen with all the kickbacks, that they never get through to the grassroot."

Participant 7 expressed concern about the impact of corruption on sustainability of programs as follows:

"… I'm sorry to say this, but the country is corrupt, so they should just … while they're here they should just go all the way… They (should) build the schools, they ensure good teachers are employed, and maybe supervise the payments (to the teachers) …"

Neglect of Poor Infrastructure

This theme refers to the widespread neglect of infrastructure in the region. Participants are concerned that such projects become derelict when infrastructural amenities are provided because no deliberate efforts are made to ensure sustainability.

Participant 4 stated as follows:

"If you go to most of those interior communities in my Local Government (Area), there are some communities that they don't have good water; they don't even have good schools. Even the little schools they have, you'll find out that the roofs there are leaking. They don't even have good teachers"

Similarly, Participant 2 stated thus:

"The IOCs may come with the best intentions in providing these (amenities) but the problem is the un-intended consequences that it leaves at the end of the day. And somehow, there's no proper needs assessment before some of these

programs are initiated. That's one of it. So, you'll find duplication of projects, and I will give you examples here."

Participant 2 also stated as follows:

"Now, if I recall, some of the projects included the renovation of a primary school building … but there was an existing primary school which was not used to capacity and here they are, renovating a new (different) UPE building, duplicating the efforts that was not necessarily needed at that time. They also built a (youth corps members') lodge, which, of course, was beneficial too in terms of education – but that is a result of the dereliction of (duty by) government because actually, it is the government's responsibility to do that."

Pollution and Oil Spillage

This theme refers to the incidents of pollution from oil spillage and how the IOCs respond to such. Most of the participants focused on the kind of response expected of the IOCs in an oil pollution event. From Participant 5:

Let me talk about the one that just happened recently. We had a situation that one of these IOCs – in the process of building their plant and other facilities in one of those host communities – a lot of things were damaged. They had a lot of pollution in the land, they had a lot of oil spillage, and different situations. So, they had a lot of bitter incidents… It caused conflict because, a lot of people's (sources of) livelihood were taken away from them.

Participant 3 stated:

> "… there was an incident, back then in Delta State, of oil spillage from one of these IOCs into the stream probably rivers, that destroyed aquatic lives and farmland. This IOC never responded until the community in question led a protest to the IOC"

Participant 7:

> "… be transparent with them, and don't destroy their land. If you drill and there's (oil) spillage and all that don't try to cover it up: clean it up! There's a saying in my place: "if you can't improve on something, you leave it the way you met it, or make it better".

Low Individual Participation

This theme refers to the low level of participation of individual members of the communities in the IOCs' peacebuilding programs. All of the respondents agreed that the local communities' level of participation is low; and that where there is participation, representation was not inclusive, and the benefits to the community are not optimized due to corruption and mistrust. Participant 1 stated as follows:

> Quite low. If am taking from one to five, where five is the highest, I will take it as a one. This is because the IOCs have, especially in this block that I mentioned, they were not really letting us know whatever they were doing. Chiefs were not really involved. Every Christmas they just come and give our chief and king bags of rice and food condiments. Then they give cleaners and janitorial jobs to the community people. They weren't really giving good jobs.

> This is my community in Ogoloma so am telling you from firsthand knowledge.
>
> Participant 2:
>
> Participation (by community people) is very minimal because like I said, the instances I cited (was such) that the same people that were nominated to the Community Trust Board, were the same ones that (executed the contracts for community projects)

Low Invited Representation by IOCs

This theme refers to the low invited representation by the IOCs. As stated by Participant 2: "Level of participation is to the extent determined by the IOCs." Re-echoing such frustrations and reinforcing the call for more transparency and inclusive participation, Participant 3 went further to state as follows:

> I would say that my community is not well represented by the right and qualified persons. In this sense I mean that rational and trusted persons are often not recognized by the IOCs… Sometimes top personnel of the IOCs lobby so that they can benefit from what they'll have; they can benefit from what they intend to do. So, they lobby through these chairmen, local government rulers or community leaders and probably through the board of oil producing communities so as to put someone who would dance to their tune. So, whereby they lobby and puts the person, it means the community at large is not really well represented.

Financial and Technical Skills Training

This theme refers to the provision of financial and technical skills training for the youth in the community. The participants agreed that the youth in the communities require financial and technical skills.

Participant 1:

> … upgrade the standard of living of the host committees through offerings of opportunities … to boost the financial and technical skills of the host communities.

Participant 4:

> What I actually feel, a more realistic approach, is to meet the basic need and aspiration of the people which will involve … educational facilities, scholarships, vocational and skill acquisition centers …

Participant 6:

> there is supposed to be empowerment programs, that will help the communities, especially the young people, to gain particular skills, gain knowledge, and be able to stand out in some of the things they couldn't do on their own.

Education Opportunities for Youth

This theme refers to the provision of educational opportunities for the youth in the communities. Many participants report that they are aware of scholarship programs and school construction projects initiated by the IOCs. The main concerns relate to inclusiveness, sustainability, and transparency in the selection process from

their commentary. For example, Participant 3 expressed frustration with a “quota system” that is not based on merit. Participant 3 stated as follows:

> The quota system should be removed from the scholarship scheme and employment scheme. By this I mean … in most of these communities the scholarship schemes you hear stuffs like so and so region, they are expected to bring five persons for scholarship and then this other community you’re to bring three (people), and then this other one you’re to bring one or two. These quotas in my opinion, should be removed from this scholarship and employment scheme. They (schemes) should be based on merit and it should also cut across the communities involved irrespective of the size of the community…
>
> I want (the quota system) abolished so whatever scholarship or program or initiative by the IOC, it should be based on merit and it should cut across every individual in the communities involved.

It is quite interesting that most participants expect the IOCs to be fully committed to providing scholarship programs. Participant 1 stated:

> The IOCs are also to ensure the scholarship programs trickle down to those that really need these scholarships. The IOCs should have workable scholarship program for primary school level to masters and PhD level.
>
> Participant 6 stated:

> … they should have literacy support and scholarship programs that'll help those that have sound mind, but they don't have the resources to be able to obtain necessary trainings. So, through the literacy support and scholarship program by the IOCs they will be able to make headway.

Fair Community Representation in Peacebuilding Activities

This theme refers to the fair representation of the community in peacebuilding activities. Participant 8 stated:

> For that, from my own perspective, these peacebuilding programmes are not receiving enough participation or support from the local community. There's support, but the support is not enough. There's a little support from NGOs and a very few of the community (people); but not much support and one reason I think (is responsible) of that is lack of trust – both between themselves and the locals – and then with the IOCs. Lack of trust. That is, the community not trusting the IOCs fully, or the community not trusting the IOCs completely and then, another reason they do that (is) local communities are not educating their people enough about the importance of sustaining peace amongst themselves. The local communities (need) continuous education…If they're educated, often, about shifting away from managing and responding to crises, (and) working towards preventing conflicts, (the situation will improve) … The (community people) do participate (in IOC's peacebuilding programmes) but not fully. Just a few. Very few. I would say (the level of participation) is one. I would say one (on a scale of one to five).

Transparency in IOC Dealings with Local Communities.

This theme refers to transparency in the manner the IOCs deal with the communities. Many of the participants highlighted their concerns around transparency and sincerity in the relationships between IOCs and the community.

Participant 3:

> I would suggest that the IOCs – whenever they are at fault – they should quickly be open and transparent in their dealings with the local communities. It would go a very long way in curbing these crises within the communities; and they should also try to carry everybody, every member of the community involved, they should always try to carry them along

Participant 6 states as follows:

> … there is a way there some of the IOCs operate and you see they are not genuine; they are not sincere and that always becomes the starting point for conflict. So, for me, I think that IOCs need to be very sincere…

Participant 7:

> IOCs should be transparent. They should have open dialogues with leaders, with elders, youth and children – and even the ordinary members of the community. Also, IOCs should understand the history of the communities they are going into.
>
> … be transparent with them, and don't destroy their land. If you drill and there's (oil) spillage and all that don't try to cover it up: clean it up! There's a saying in my place: "if you can't improve on something, you leave it the way you met it, or make it better".

Community Ownership of Peacebuilding Projects

This theme refers to ownership of the peacebuilding projects by the communities. While the participants expressed the desire to be involved in the peacebuilding projects at the conception and construction projects, their commentary suggests that community stakeholders would prefer that the IOCs retain some control and supervision measures over the projects or programs even beyond their construction phase. This is probably hinged on the already identified mistrust of community leaders and the complete lack of confidence in community representatives' ability to manage the projects sustainably and transparently. Participant 7 commented as follows:

> I believe they should run the schools at least for while (for the period) they're there; or supervise the running of the schools to prevent corruption, embezzlement (of funds meant for running the schools), etc. … because in the long run if it is not done (properly), the IOCs get the brunt of the (anger) from the community members too.

Participant 2 highlights the need to facilitate community buy-in and ownership through inclusive participation at the project conception stage. For example,

Participant 7 stated thus:

> So, what I am saying in essence is that if a proper survey is done … they could carry out a study and know what these people really need. Then with the views of the various communities – "I want this, I want that" – they can put up a (proposal) and say okay: "why don't you come up with a single (comprehensive) project to be executed that would be beneficial to all?" And

> then they aggregate all and carry out the project. Or, if the people need specific projects in every community, then at the CDC level and at the expanded meeting with the chiefs and CDC's at the community level, if there is a concurrence that yes "we want these project", then it will be clear that yes that project is to the best interest of the people; but where you ask CDC (officials to nominate) projects, they will go and register (their own) companies and then nominate projects that they can use to make some profits.

Phase 2: Cross-Case Synthesis and Analysis

Cross-case synthesis is recommended in multiple case studies to reinforce external validity, trustworthiness, and rigor (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) by building abstractions across cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). By conducting both within-case and cross-case analyses in multiple case study designs, capturing patterns within the data is possible. Moreover, related literature may be presented at the appropriate time to hone constructs and theoretical mechanisms (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). It allows building a general explanation that fits all individual cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this study, therefore, a cross-case synthesis was adopted for data analysis to address the challenging task of detecting themes – patterns, and links – associated with an investigation of real-life experiences (Yin, 2017).

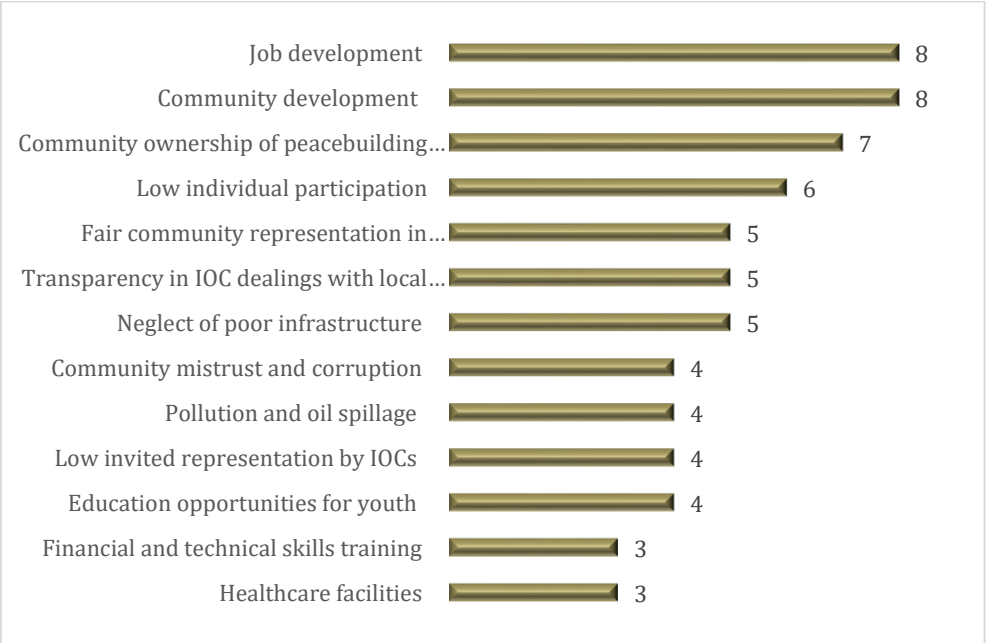
The cross-case synthesis technique helps achieve a systematic analysis of the reasoning connecting the research data to the study's conceptual categories (Cooper & White, 2012; Yin, 2018). Thematic analysis was followed by cross-case analysis being a continuous process as each of the seven cases was separately analyzed. Recurrence of themes drives theory extension by comparing similarities and

differences among cases in this multiple case study through cross-case synthesis (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Stake, 2013) to achieve the study purpose of exploring host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta.

Figure 1 below illustrates the cumulative frequency of theme occurrence by participants. I present a combination of thematic analysis results from each case such that readers are provided with a graphical representation of how numerous themes converged across cases from the findings of this multiple case study. The graphical representation represents a visual analysis of multiple cross-case analysis of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta.

Figure 1

Multiple Case Analysis (Frequency of Occurrence of a Theme by Participants)



The iterative cross-case analysis was done after analyzing each case separately and identified recurrent themes across the data set that achieve the study's purpose. The cumulative frequency of theme occurrence illustrates the convergent and divergent data across the eight cross-case synthesis analysis cases. The significance of the issues for the community stakeholder participants of this study that encase the seven most prominent themes emerging from the cross-case analysis is discussed below.

Job development, community development, and community ownership of peacebuilding projects were the three themes that reoccurred prominently across data collected from all eight cases. This would require the IOCs to invest in job creation and community development projects identified by, supported by, and delivered with the community's full participation. The prominence is given to job creation, and community development aligns with the accounts of widespread poverty in the region (Omokhoa, 2015; Moshood et al., 2018; Odera et al., 2018), and specifically, to the reports that about 70 percent of the people in the Niger Delta communities are poor, and that 40 percent of the youth in the region are unemployed (Ebiede, 2017).

In like manner, the prominence given to the theme of community ownership of peacebuilding projects is consistent with the stakeholder’s desire for stakeholder-driven interventions that guarantee a high level of local stakeholder participation and ownership as opposed to the intrusive "top-down" interventions imposed on the communities by external actors (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011). Thus, community participation and ownership of peacebuilding projects require the involvement of the community people in the various phases of the peacebuilding projects starting from

the needs assessment stage and covering all other phases such as the planning stage, the mobilization, and training stage, the implementation stage, and the post-implementation monitoring and evaluation phases.

Another prominent theme that reoccurred across data collected from six out of the eight cases was low individual participation. Six out of the eight participants commented that there is low individual participation in peacebuilding projects. At the individual level, the community people are hardly involved in the decisions and implementation of peacebuilding projects. As such, projects are not necessarily suited to the community's immediate needs (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018).

The next three prominent themes that emerged across data collected from five cases out of the eight cases included fair community representation in peacebuilding activities, transparency in IOC dealings within local communities, and poor infrastructure neglect. Fair community representation is essential to promote inclusive development. Fair representation guarantees that the voices of various intra-community groups and interests are considered to select peacebuilding projects and initiatives. As mentioned by the participants, it is necessary to include youth and women representatives and chiefs, and other community leaders in decision making or consultative forums that interact with the IOCs. The prominence of the theme of transparency in IOC dealings with the local communities highlights the IOCs' deep mistrust by the people in their host communities. Even when such intentions are well-meaning, the IOCs' intentions are viewed with suspicion in the communities. The theme of neglect of poor infrastructure highlights the inadequate assessment of needs and the misplacement of priorities in selecting and implementing projects by the IOCs.

Triangulation

The triangulation process in qualitative research promotes a targeted consideration of data and enhances data's overall trustworthiness while improving the study's quality (Guion et al., 2011; Yin, 2018). Hence, I ensured appropriate choice of instruments approved at the Dissertation Proposal stage by the Walden IRB that would yield themes to support insights resulting from studying host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta.

I used multiple sources of evidence during the data collection process to explore various perspectives with interview participants within the study context. Data triangulation strengthens the dependability of results and improves the research's methodological rigor (Stake, 2010). Delta Three sources of data were utilized throughout this study: (a) a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C) whose items were designed and standardized by previous researchers, (b) archival data in the form of government reports, media, and business (Yin, 2017), and (c) reflective field notes (Merriam & Grenier, 2019), which the researcher kept throughout the entire data collection process.

I used data triangulation to support the facts revealed from my multiple data sources (Yin, 2018) to reinforce credibility and internal validity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I further supported my reflexivity and positionality through the results arising from a precise transcription of the interviews. I sustained the credibility of the findings through the member checking process whereby the interview transcript was shared with each of the participants to review their transcribed words for possible inaccuracies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Though it was not possible to observe facial

cues since the interviews had to be conducted online because of restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, I kept handwritten notes where I recorded contextual nonverbal and non-visual cues such as laughter, tone, and inflection of voice. I subsequently used such cues to supplement the interview transcripts to provide a more comprehensive recording of the engagement and exchanges with the participants.

By adopting the standardized interview to guide the online, one-on-one semistructured interviews (see Appendix C), I ensured that the data collection process was standardized. An audit trail records the evidence concerning how the study was conducted and how it was analyzed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) and the documents, archival data, and observations related to IOC peacebuilding projects. Such data were carefully cross-referenced.

I ensured trustworthiness in data analysis (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). By reading approximately 300 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles, journals, and books, I achieved a holistic overview that facilitated the triangulation process towards answering the research question. In all, I annotated about 200 articles, including government reports and business or press releases that were pertinent to the topic, and specifically, relevant to the phenomenon under investigation.

I used articles, journals, and books to complement the online semistructured interviews. Information from the archival data described herein enabled me to articulate the meaning behind recurrent ideas and concepts that emerged from the data analysis and were grounded in the conceptual framework. Thus, triangulation helped to enhance the richness of data (Fusch et al., 2018). The study's results and findings

were analyzed and interpreted in the context of the conceptual framework and the extent to which the findings extend theory (Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented a case by case analysis of eight participants, followed by a cross-case analysis and synthesis to answer this study's central research question: "How do host community stakeholders describe their expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta? ". This multiple case study revealed the participants' perceptions, experiences, and expectations, which emerged from the data analysis as seen through the analysis of related concepts and thematic patterns presented in the study results.

The data analysis techniques to produce the study's results were presented in this section in a two-step procedure: (a) thematic analysis of the textual data and (b) cross-case synthesis analysis (see Yin, 2018). Five coding categories grounded in the study problem and the conceptual framework enclosing a total of 13 themes were gleaned from the thematic analysis of this study's data. The categories are (a) stakeholder expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs, (b) corporate-community conflict on peacebuilding as through enterprise, (c) stakeholder engagement in corporate peacebuilding program, (d) IOCs investment in education and training needs of local communities, and (e) IOC-driven initiatives to strengthen a peacebuilding economy.

Cross-case analysis and synthesis were utilized as a data analysis technique to consolidate findings from the individual case studies as soon as themes across multiple study cases were arranged. The 13 themes that emerged from the data

analysis process include (a) job development, (b) community development; (c) healthcare facilities, (d) community mistrust and corruption, (e) neglect of poor infrastructure, and (f) pollution and oil spillage. Other themes are (g) low individual participation, (h) low invited representation by IOCs, (i) financial and technical skills training, (j) education opportunities for youth, (k) fair community representation in peacebuilding activities, (l) transparency in IOC dealings with local communities, and (m) community ownership of peacebuilding projects.

To complement the interviews, I reinforced trustworthiness by adopting the triangulation of various data sources (see Yin, 2018), which included the semistructured interviews, archival data such as government and industry reports related to the peacebuilding projects by IOCs, and my reflective field notes (Yin, 2018; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The multiple case study results were subsequently analyzed and interpreted comprehensively within the context of the conceptual framework: 1) Jennings' (2015; 2018) concept of *peacekeeping as enterprise;* and 2) Ingenhoff & Sommer's (2011) concept of *stakeholder expectation regarding the social engagement of companies.*

In their seminal research on companies as peacebuilders, Ralph & Conley Tyler (2016) argued that managing community members' expectations is important for company leaders' consideration to avoid disappointment or disillusionment with community-based approaches to peacebuilding and sustainable development in conflict zones. This empirical investigation followed previous scholarly recommendations to advance knowledge and a deeper understanding of community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs

within the Niger Delta and contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework.

Chapter 5 will present a future interpretation of this study's findings compared to the literature review in Chapter 2 of this document. The implication of the findings to social change, theory, practice, and policy will also be detailed in Chapter 5. I will also demonstrate how my study extends the body of knowledge on the peacebuilding programs by the international oil companies operating in the Niger Delta. In conclusion, I will describe in Chapter 5 how future scholars and researchers can extend this study's findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of International Oil Companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. To address the study problem, meet the study's purpose, and consistent with the qualitative paradigm, a multiple case study method was used to achieve the study's purpose using multiple-source data collection (Yin, 2017). To support the trustworthiness of the data analysis and results of the final study, I performed triangulation using (a) semi-structured interviews with a range of eight participants, in conjunction with (b) journaling/reflective field notes, as well as (c) archival data (Denzin, 2009; Guion et al., 2011).

Using a qualitative research design, I gathered data reflecting on participants' perceptions and expectations regarding International Oil Companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. The primary data collection tool, the semistructured interviews, allowed the further elaboration of their personal experiences and the emergence of new knowledge on the study topic (Ferguson & Jacob, 2012). A multiple case study approach allowed me to voice the participants and gather data in response to the research question.

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study, which was to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of International Oil Companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta: 1) Jennings' (2015; 2018) concept of *peacekeeping as enterprise;* and 2) Ingenhoff & Sommer's (2011) concept of *stakeholder expectation regarding the social engagement of companies.* Using a multiple case study approach

was beneficial because it offered the methodological flexibility required to extend knowledge within the study's conceptual framework (see Stake, 2006). New knowledge emerges from recognizing patterns in the collected data and the logical arguments that underpin them (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Thematic analysis and cross-case synthesis of data from the interviews with eight participants revealed the following five coding categories grounded in the study problem and the conceptual framework: (a) stakeholder expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs, (b) corporate-community conflict on peacebuilding as through enterprise, (c) stakeholder engagement in corporate peacebuilding program, (d) IOCs investment in education and training needs of local communities, and (e) IOC-driven initiatives to strengthen a peacebuilding economy.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings from this multiple case study confirmed or extended current knowledge in the discipline, with each case presenting examples from the literature discussed and critically analyzed in Chapter 2. In this section, I present the study's findings in the context of the coding categories that emerged from the data analysis. I compare each of these five categories with relevant concepts from the conceptual framework and the research from extant updated literature. I provide evidence from the eight semistructured interviews to support how the study's findings confirmed or disconfirmed existing knowledge or extended it. The term "extension" refers to using multiple case studies to provide further evidence in developing a given theory (Eisenhardt, 1991). Extension studies, such as this multiple case study, provide replication evidence and support the extension of prior research results by offering new and critical theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012). Theory extension from case

studies represents a vital research strategy that may contribute theoretical insights on theorized phenomena that remain inadequately explored in the extant literature (Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Eisenhardt, 1991).

Stakeholder Expectations of IOC's Peacebuilding Programs

Scholars indicate that managing community members' expectations is important to avoid disappointment or disillusionment with community-based approaches to peacebuilding and sustainable development (Ralph & Conley Tyler, 2016). Scholars have also demonstrated that local citizens' expectations could be at variance with corporate leaders' perceptions involved in peacebuilding programs (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011; Kohl, 2015). My study results confirmed that the community stakeholders' expectations are at variance with the IOCs' peacebuilding projects. Study participants expressed their disappointment that IOCs' choice of projects does not address their communities' immediate needs and priorities.

Therefore, this study aligns with Kohl's (2015) findings that the community stakeholders' expectations do not necessarily align with the corporate leaders' peacebuilding efforts. It also confirms the findings by various scholars (e.g., Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018) that the community stakeholders' interests are not fully considered before selecting peacebuilding projects. This study results extend knowledge from various scholars' work (e.g., Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011; Kohl, 2015; Ralph and Conley Tyler, 2016) to include the specificities of the Niger Delta.

Corporate-Community Conflict on Peacebuilding as Through Enterprise

Scholars indicate that negative community perceptions arise from historical antecedents and previous disappointments that often lead to deep-seated cynicism (Miklian & Schouten, 2019). My study results confirmed that the relationship

between the IOCs and community stakeholders is characterized by mistrust, disappointment, and cynicism. Study participants expressed their frustration with the lack of transparency in the activities of the IOCs. Study participants specifically accused the IOCs of various forms of "divide-and-rule" tactics that breed animosity and strife within the communities. Therefore, this study aligns with Nwokolo and Aghedo's (2018) findings that trust lacks the relationship between international oil companies and the Niger Delta region communities. The study results extend knowledge based on Okeke-Ogbuafor et al.'s (2017) work concerning alleged sharp practices and cover-ups by the IOCs when pipeline ruptures create environmental pollution and how such experiences catalyze strife and distrust of IOC intentions.

Stakeholder Engagement in Corporate Peacebuilding Program

Scholars have highlighted that corporate peacebuilding programs have not yielded significant positive impacts in the conflict-ridden Niger Delta (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). The situation is aggravated by excluding key community stakeholders from project selection and decision making (Idemudia, 2017). My study results confirmed that there is low participation by the community stakeholders in selecting the peacebuilding projects. Study participants expressed dissatisfaction with the IOCs' processes in their selection of projects for the communities. Whereas they are happy to receive projects in their communities, the community stakeholders would appreciate a more inclusive process leading to the selection of peacebuilding projects. This study, therefore, aligns with Ralph and Conley Tyler's (2016) conclusions about the importance of managing community expectations to avoid disappointment or disillusionment and confirms other scholars' findings that hostility towards the IOCs

will linger if projects are executed without giving due consideration to community stakeholders' expectations (Imoh, 2019; Odera et al., 2018).

IOC's Investment in Education and Training Needs of Local Communities

Scholars have shown that corporations in conflict zones understand that capacity building (e.g., training and empowerment of the local people) is useful for peacebuilding (Katsos & Alkafaji, 2019). My study results confirmed that the IOCs in the Niger Delta provide training and other capacity-building programs to the communities. Study participants confirmed that training and scholarship programs are in place. However, the study participants complained about the criteria for selection into the programs and advocated for an increase in the scope of such training and other capacity-building interventions. Therefore, this study aligns with the conclusions that multinational corporations in the extractive industries in developing countries ought to act as agents for social and economic development (Amos, 2018).

IOC-Driven Initiatives to Strengthen a Peacebuilding Economy

Scholars have indicated that fair representation, transparency, and community involvement in peacebuilding projects are essential for sustainability and that the exclusion of key community stakeholders from peacebuilding decision making is counterproductive (Idemudia, 2017; Odera et al., 2018; Imoh, 2019). Specifically, Katu-Ogundimu (2019) recommended that peacebuilding practitioners should increase youth participation in peacebuilding projects. Scholars have also cautioned practitioners to ensure that the political elite (including militia leaders, local chiefs, etc.) are prevented from hijacking peacebuilding interventions in the communities (Moshood et al., 2018; Katu-Ogundimu, 2019).

My study results confirmed that community stakeholders expect fair representation, transparency, and inclusive participation in the peacebuilding interventions sponsored by the IOCs. The study participants decried their limited participation in project selection and decision-making. Participants described instances where project selection and execution were hijacked by corrupt elites for pecuniary interests with the IOCs' perceived connivance. Therefore, this study aligns with the observation by Moshood et al. (2018) and Katu-Ogundimu (2019) about the potential hijack of peacebuilding interventions by the political elite. My study results can extend knowledge in terms of how the subtle hijack of peacebuilding projects by the political elite can create dissatisfaction and intra-community strife to the detriment of the IOC's image that provides the funds to support the projects.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations refer to those elements of the study that are out of the researcher's control and may impact the study's trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). The first limitation was that of being a Nigerian, and I may inadvertently contributed to cultural bias in this study. Motivations and influences based on my cultural lens could have introduced ethnocentrism in judging research participants' qualitative responses (Chenail, 2011). My dissertation chair, not belonging to the Nigerian culture and skilled in qualitative research methods, analyzed the same data to minimize this cultural bias, with all discrepancies discussed until a consensus was established (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

The second limitation of the study was that the case study method has received scholarly criticism for not offering statistical generalization of data results to Nigeria's general population from this study's purposive sample of eight host

community stakeholders from the Niger Delta region (Yin, 2017). However, this multiple case study method was not intended for generalization but to support qualitative data's trustworthiness, indicating convergence and divergence of data across cases, cross-case comparison, and advancing theory extension (Stake, 2013). While I used the multiple-case study approach to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of International Oil Companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta, the primary data collection process was limited to eight participants, based on actual evidence of data saturation (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

A third limitation was participants' willingness to answer the interview questions straightforwardly and honestly. I assumed that participant responses to interview questions were truthful and transparent (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I noted that a lack of willingness could originate from uncertainty or fear of disloyalty to the participants' indigenous community (Lancaster, 2017) and that the political atmosphere, anxiety, and personal bias regarding International Oil Companies' issues in the Niger Delta region could limit the interview process and prejudice participants' responses. Consequently, I relied on commonality and a shared cultural background to ease the participants' concerns.

A better understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of International Oil Companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta may provide a platform for improved relations between both parties. The limitation of transferability of the findings from this study was situated within the context of stakeholder-driven interventions (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011), Jennings' (2005) concept of peacebuilding as an enterprise, as well as Ralph and Conly Tyler's (2016)

concept of community involvement in peace interventions. The results of this research may be transferable to host community stakeholders' expectations of International Oil Companies' peacebuilding programs in other geographic regions marked by local violence and the challenges of rebuilding after violent conflicts.

Recommendations

This study was centered around the experiences and expectations of community stakeholders in the Niger Delta in relation to the peacebuilding projects funded by the international oil corporations. Data collection was executed during the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, and such data have been carefully documented at every step to underpin more meaningful recommendations. Given the prevailing challenges of discord and dissatisfaction in the Niger Delta, despite huge reported expenditure on peacebuilding projects in the region by the IOCs, scholars question whether the projects represent the main priorities, needs, and expectations of the communities (Neufeldt et al., 2020).

Previous scholars already demonstrated the importance of addressing community members' expectations to avoid disappointment or disillusionment (Ralph & Conley Tyler, 2016), but few studies inquired into the community stakeholders' forward-looking expectations (Atienza, 2019). Consequently, there was a knowledge gap in our understanding of community stakeholders' expectations (Atienza, 2019; Córdova Paredes et al., 2019; Phiri, 2017). Now that this study is completed and community stakeholders' expectations have been thoroughly documented, the next question is how the knowledge of community stakeholders-informed policy will support IOC executives in applying necessary corrective measures to their existing programs and engaging more effectively with the local communities (Phiri, 2017).

Recommendations for Needs-Based Project Selection

As previously mentioned, multinational corporations are expected to act as agents for social and economic development in fragile states and developing countries (Amos, 2018). Participants in this study unanimously aligned with this expectation of the IOC as an essential driver of development. One significant reality that drives this expectation is the near lack of government presence in such communities. Therefore, it is taken for granted that IOCs must invest in peacebuilding projects either as CSR or as their social license to operate.

Furthermore, it was noticeably clear throughout the engagement with study participants that despite the IOCs' claims of millions of dollars of investments in peacebuilding projects in the Niger Delta, the IOCs have not acquired commensurate sustainable goodwill in the communities. This is attributable to the perceived imposition of projects in a top-down we-know-what-is-good-for-you approach adopted by many IOCs. Therefore, a key recommendation is that the IOCs should promote a needs-based, bottoms-up approach to the selection of peacebuilding projects. As one of the participants complained, peacebuilding projects should not be selected because they are fanciful or simply to "tick the boxes."

Recommendations for Inclusive Community Participation in Peacebuilding Projects

As discussed in this study, the local people themselves should play a significant role in defining and prioritizing the peacebuilding interventions in their communities (Miklian & Schouten, 2019). Notwithstanding how the IOCs are seen as an essential development organ, many participants criticized the IOCs process for the selection and implementation of projects. One participant described how project

selection and implementation had been hijacked for a few political elites' pecuniary interests, and all to the detriment of the wider community. Similar elite hijack of peacebuilding projects has been fully recognized by scholars (e.g., Barma, 2017).

Participants also recounted instances where non-essential projects are duplicated by the same or different development organs (e.g., government, IOCs, NGOs, etc.) while ignoring the community's pressing and essential needs. It is relevant to point out that “community participation” is not guaranteed simply by establishing “Community Trust Funds” or by signing the various form of social contracts (e.g., “Memorandum of Understanding – MOU,” “Global Memorandum of Understanding – GMOU,” etc.) with the communities. This is because study participants have decried the lack of internal democracy, diversity, and inclusiveness in the selection (or imposition) of community representatives that negotiate with the IOCs. Lack of inclusive representation means, of course, that the IOCs are not hearing the community people's voices. Consequently, the IOCs will find it challenging to co-opt real community participation and involvement in peacebuilding projects if the community's generality has no confidence in their so-called representatives.

Therefore, another recommendation is that every IOC should promote and insist that the principles of democracy, diversity, and inclusiveness are adopted in the selection of community representatives who will then interface with the IOC on matters relating to peacebuilding projects. This will guarantee that the IOCs hear the various voices in the communities. It will also ensure that project selection and implementation are conducted in the best interest of most people in the communities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on this study's findings, other recommendations for future research that might address more specific areas beyond what was covered in this study. For example:

- This study focused on the expectations of community stakeholders about the peacebuilding projects by IOCs. It would be worthwhile to extend this research to the local oil and gas companies. The outcome from such study will indicate whether the findings herein are transferable to indigenous oil companies operating in the Niger Delta
- The governance and regulatory landscape in the Nigeria oil and gas industry will shortly be impacted by introducing a new industry Bill. The Petroleum Industry Bill 2020 (PIB) is (as of January 2021) presently under consideration in the country's National Assembly. The PIB has provisions for a dedicated fund to be managed by the communities to develop healthcare and other facilities in those communities.
- After the PIB 2020 is passed into law, oil-producing communities will, by law, have direct access to funds contributed by the oil corporations for the development of healthcare and other facilities in their communities. Thus, it would be meaningful to research and document how the local communities describe their experience in project selection and execution in a post PIB environment.
- This study focused on the expectations of stakeholders in oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. It would be worthwhile to extend the

research to other communities rich in mineral resources in other geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

Implications

Implications for Positive Social Change

The findings may also guide further research in peacebuilding programs in other geopolitical regions in Nigeria, a country struggling with widespread poverty, inequality, violence, and armed conflicts. Finally, this study's social change impact may result from the formulation of evidence-based policies and associated peacebuilding programs by the IOCs in the local community and other communities in the Niger Delta and beyond. The goal of researching the Niger Delta to thwart further local violence and conflict aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 16, which aims to "… reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere" Atienza, 2019; United Nations, 2018).

Implications for Practice and Policy

My study results have implications for practice and policy by presenting an in-depth and reflective look at the Niger Delta people's expectations about corporate-sponsored peacebuilding programs within their communities. Policymakers and IOC leaders must consider community stakeholders' perceptions regarding IOCs' Niger Delta peacebuilding programs to minimize local conflict (Imoh, 2019). Multinational firms' peacebuilding efforts in fragile states have thus far only been assessed at the firm level and risk missing more considerable social consequences for stakeholders within host communities (Miklian & Schouten, 2019; Obeki et al., 2018). Community stakeholders-informed policy will support IOC executives in applying

necessary corrective measures to their existing programs and engaging more effectively with the local communities (Phiri, 2017).

Multinational enterprises are impacted by conflict by way of threats to personnel or assets. They are potential victims of plundering, extortion, and asset damage. Such impact may lead to the suspension of operations or divestment (Kolk & L'Enfant, 2013). Oetzel and Miklian (2017) reported that multinational corporations that can incorporate peacebuilding frameworks in their risk calculations tend to achieve a clearer mastery of local environments. Such mastery helps them achieve a "long-term advantage over international competitors that do not share the same understanding" (p. 270). However, a significant concern is that business interventions in the social domain may create a dependency culture and weaken the government's role, thereby encouraging the state to disregard its duty to care for its citizens. Related to this is the possibility that the citizens may lose confidence in public authorities, thereby making fragile states weaker. Oetzel and Miklian (2017) recount historical evidence that the results can be rather disastrous if businesses supplant government and civil society's role.

Therefore, multinational corporations' new role in conflict situations has evolved to include contributions and investments in peacebuilding (Oetzel & Miklian, 2017; Katsos & Alkafaji, 2019). Businesses typically become victims of armed conflict when their facilities or personnel are attacked. Where relevant, businesses can confront the root causes of armed violence by strengthening local economies, building trust, engaging with the stakeholder communities and the state authorities, or by direct engagement with combatants. Multinational corporations can also provide financial

support (Amuyou et al., 2016), fight corruption (Katsos, & Alkafaji, 2019), and promote pro-peace advocacy. Another approach is to use ethical business practices as a plank to contribute to more peaceful societies.

Implications for Theory

The process of analyzing and presenting empirical data evidence for theory extension in a multiple case study demonstrates both the inductive and deductive evaluation process of qualitative data (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Extension studies, such as this multiple case study, provide not only replication evidence but also support extending prior research results by offering new and critical theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012). I presented the recurrent themes and explanations within the data analysis process of calculating the main coding categories in detail with support provided by the participants' voices.

The Niger Delta unrest is a significant challenge for Nigeria because it has social, political, and economic ramifications. Understanding these perceptions through theoretical research provides a stepping-stone to fully grasp the effects of oil production on the communities (Odera et al., 2018). It is necessary to refine our understanding of business behavior during conflicts because businesses' disposition to peace efforts can largely influence the outcome of peace negotiations and their implementation programs (Hancock, 2019). The exact role of business in peacebuilding depends on perceptions of the conflict's cost, the degree of consensus in the pro-peace business community, and the levels of access to the peace policymaking process. The private sector can play a significant role in peace negotiations and

implement subsequent agreements because they control the resources (i.e., taxes, investments, and production) needed for peacebuilding. (Doblas et al., 2019).

With this research, I extended the theoretical foundations of the study's conceptual framework by contributing original qualitative data to the extant literature on host community stakeholders' expectations on peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. The theoretical foundations of my study's conceptual framework include economic growth theory (Schumpeter, 1934), shareholder value theory (Van Marrewijk, 2003) and, corporate citizenship theory (Moon et al., 2005). Academic researchers may also benchmark this research's findings using other business peacebuilding programs at different geographical locations for future research.

This study offered a unique contribution to existing theoretical literature in the business-for-peacebuilding field and advanced knowledge on community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. Empirical analyses on the outcome of collaborative community strategies adopted by businesses for peacebuilding have been limited (Ford, 2015; Haufler, 2015; Kolk & L'Enfant, 2015) and rarely focus on community stakeholders' views of corporate peacebuilding efforts (Katsos & Forrer, 2014).

Conclusions

According to notable African researchers, corporate peacebuilding programs have yielded limited positive impacts where they are most needed; for example, in the Niger Delta (Nwokolo & Aghedo, 2018). Scholars within the business and peace literature state a knowledge gap exists on understanding community stakeholders' views and expectations on which specific strategies support corporate peacebuilding

within conflict-ridden host communities (Atienza, 2019; Córdova et al., 2019). The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study is to gain a deeper understanding of host community stakeholders' expectations of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs within the Niger Delta. The participants in this study played a pivotal role in providing first-hand accounts of their experiences and expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs within their local communities.

The primary tool used in the research, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, allowed a cross-case synthesis analysis of shared experiences by the participants (Yin, 2017). The study's data was used to explore and describe business–community collaboration from the participants' viewpoint, with the social goals of refining and improving business–host community partnerships for peacebuilding (see Autesserre, 2019; Miller et al., 2019). It was demonstrated herein how the data from this study support previous scholars' findings regarding the disconnect between local citizens' expectations and corporate leaders' perceptions when it comes to peacebuilding programs (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2011; Kohl, 2015).

I recall that in 2015 when I had just started this journey, my interest was to contribute to the growth of peace and development in the Niger Delta. The premise then was that mutual understanding between the IOCs and the community stakeholders is a precondition to a conflict-free relationship between both parties. In the intervening years, UN-supported developments in peace-related initiates strengthened the basis for the study. The sixteenth UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) seeks to reduce violence and related death in all forms (United Nations, 2018). As the findings from this study align with the said SDG, I believe that when social

actors work together to reflect on the findings herein, they could help to address some of the root causes of the discord and acrimony in the Niger Delta by considering and respecting the divergence of perspectives, to improve peacebuilding, and minimize conflict.

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Appendix A: The Introductory Recruitment Letter

Good day, my name is Sylvester Ugwuanyi, a doctoral student at Walden University, inviting you to participate in my research project concerning how you would describe your expectations of international oil companies' (IOC's) peacebuilding programs within a community such as yours in the Niger Delta. As a Nigeria citizen from, and living in the Niger Delta, your participation, contributions as well as life experiences acquired concerning your expectations of IOC's peacebuilding programs within your community will be of great value and will make a great impact in this study

Eligibility for participation in this study includes the following criteria: **1) adults over the age of 18 male or female; 2) born and residing in the Niger Delta in Nigeria; and 3) possessing understanding about the phenomenon of study**. If you meet these criteria, please continue reading.

This study will attempt to bring to the research foreground the voices of local populations on community stakeholders' expectations in the Niger Delta, representing a promising avenue of social change through a better understanding of community stakeholders' expectations in respect of peacebuilding programs by IOCs in the region. The findings may also guide further research in peacebuilding programs in other geopolitical regions in Nigeria, a country struggling with widespread poverty, inequality, violence and armed conflicts. Finally, the social change impact of this study may potentially result from the formulation of evidence-based policies and associated peacebuilding program by the IOCs in your community, as well as other communities in the Niger Delta and beyond.

If you would be interested in being a part of this study please review and return the signed consent form to me personally, or if possible, to the email provided here. If you would like to request additional information, you may reply to this email at sxxxxxx@waldenu.edu. You can also reach me by calling +234803xxxxxx.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sylvester Ikechukwu Ugwuanyi.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Participant No. Identifier:_____

Region_____

Age_____

Gender_____

Occupation_____

Earns a Sustainable Livelihood_____

Any direct involvement with the local IoC:_____

1. Can you please describe your expectations of international oil companies' business activities which are part of peacebuilding programs within your community?
2. Corporate-community conflict suggests that significant gaps still exist between international oil companies and the local communities. Can you please describe how the perspectives of international oil companies' peacebuilding programs differ from perspectives on the issue of peacebuilding through business activities within your community?
3. Can you please share with me an incident or event representing a conflict between international oil companies and the local community?
4. How are conflicts with the oil company resolved?
5. Can you describe any business initiative where community leaders (chiefs, women, youth leaders, members of the village council) that have been involved with of international oil companies' on behalf of their community either in resolution of corporate-community conflict?
6. What actions do you believe international oil companies' can initiate and act on to better understand and the views and culture of your community?