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2018

# Examining the Causes of Militant Terrorism in the Delta Region of Nigeria

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Walden University
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Abstract


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by

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MBA, Athabasca University, 2010




Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration



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Abstract

Militancy in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria is a problem that affects government, private organizations, and individuals. The government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program encouraged individuals to denounce militancy in return for skills training and a monthly allowance. However, the amnesty program has not yielded the desired result of ending insurgent militancy. The purpose of this research was to better understand factors that cause individuals to join militant groups in the Niger Delta region, in order to proffer plausible solutions to address the causes of militancy. Using the root cause conceptual framework in this phenomenological research, I explored the causal factors of militancy in the Niger Delta region for an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. The key research questions focused on the motivating factors that spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region and whether the implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program mitigated the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Data were collected from 10 individuals through in-depth face-to-face interviews, while concept mapping was applied in completing the analysis of interview data. Key results revealed 8 core areas as causes of militancy: the lack of local control of resources, underdevelopment, relocation of local government headquarters, poverty, marginalization, environmental pollution, education opportunities, and poor implementation of the amnesty program. Implications for positive social change include using the findings to develop more effective programs and policies for addressing the problem of militancy and to implement strategies that will reduce or eradicate militancy and associated problems.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to Almighty God in gratitude for His bestowing upon me the ability and resources to complete this arduous path and obtain my PhD degree. I dedicate this as well to my wife for life, Dr. Evelyn Brisibe, for her continuous support and encouragement throughout this process.  To my late mother, Agbebor Josephine Brisibe, who would give anything for her children to be educated.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my Committee Chair, Dr. Christopher Jones: Your guidance and support throughout the dissertation process is very much appreciated; it helped me to become a better researcher and scholar. A big thank you also to my earlier committee members, Dr. Mark Gordon and Dr. Kathleen Schulin, for all your hard work and patience as I worked through completing this research.

A big thank you to Godfrey Ogbomon Paul and Yinka Oladipupo for all your support throughout the process of getting approval for data collection; without you, the process would have been much longer and harder.

To my father, the late Joseph Demene Brisibe, who ensured to make education a priority for all his children; to my loving mother, Agbebor Brisibe, who passed on to glory in the course of my completing this research, I miss you Mum; and to all my brothers and sisters, Henry, Sunday, Colin, Juanita, Timi, Teena, Idy, Tua, Ebi, Praise, Tula, Debbie, Ebila, Ebi, Rose, Fred, Pam, Julie, Tare, Linda, Charles, and Sarah, for all your understanding when I was not available for visits and family events while completing my studies.

Lastly, to every member of RCCG Cornerstone Chapel Calgary (my church family), thank you for supporting me when I had to mix full-time work, ministry, and academic work and for cutting me some slack when academic pressures affected my ability to be there for ministry work and also for holding me accountable to complete this research: You all are just the best.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The focus of this research was the causal factors of militant terrorism specific to Nigeria's Niger Delta region. In this research, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of such causes from the perspective of individuals who had been involved in militant terrorism, but who had now received amnesty from the federal government. The outcome of this research was expected to produce recommendations for public administrators and policy makers to devise effective strategies and policies. Revised policies may better discourage individuals from joining such groups and to curb the problem within this specific region and the rest of the country as well. Finding a solution to the problem of terrorism requires an understanding of the root causes (Çinar, 2009).

Almost every country in the world has directly or indirectly been impacted by terrorism and insurgency. According to the 2017 Global Terrorism Index, there were terrorism related deaths in 106 nations in the world, with at least one terrorist attack. Although the causes and intensity of terrorism may vary from location to location, the actions of the terrorists are the same (Canada, 2017). To cause fear among citizens, terrorists employ diverse methods and targets including kidnapping, bombing, armed attacks, assassinations, and destruction of lives and property (Santifort, Sandler, & Brandt, 2012).

Terrorism and militancy have come to the forefront in all parts of the world, especially after the September 11, 2001, with the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon building in Arlington, Virginia. Following these attacks, the United States has led the fight against terrorism and

extremism by providing support to countries such as Pakistan to combat both (Bapat, 2011). In addition, many antiterrorism alliances were formed, including national strategies to suppress, and defeat terrorism and insurgency; however, the phenomenon continues and remains a threat to everyone (Rădulescu, 2016).

Nigeria, like many other countries, is not spared the menace of terrorism. In Nigeria, terrorism has been an ongoing problem for the government, the oil and gas corporations, and Nigerian citizens. From kidnapping, suicide bombings, and assassinations, terrorism in Nigeria has become a problem for both Nigeria and neighboring countries, including Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (Alozieuwa, 2016). It is important to note that the continued escalation of terrorist activities not only has led to loss of lives and property, but also is threatening the country's unity as different parties cast blame and accuse particular regions of being responsible for these acts. Imhonopi and Urim (2016) claimed that Nigeria has become an enclave of regular acts of terrorism and that the emergence of *terror extremists* and acts of terrorism such as bombings affect the nation's industrial and economic development. Membership in terrorist groups in Nigeria cuts across many age groups, both genders, and different individuals from various states, making it difficult to point to particular individuals or areas that are inclined to attract people to join such groups.

Activities of terrorism in Nigeria include but are not limited to atrocities such as suicide bombings, destruction of private and public infrastructure, kidnappings, and mass killing of public and private citizens by organizations and groups involved in these acts. Terrorism affects wide segments of the country, including the Nigerian government,

public and private corporations, foreign investors, and foreign citizens working in different parts of the country because they are caught in the middle of the acts caused by these groups of militants. Observing the effect of terrorism on industrial development in the country, Imhonopi and Urim (2016) noted that terrorist activities, including:

suicide bombings, kidnappings, destruction of lives, public infrastructure, private and entrepreneurial investments, the climate of fear, panic and confusion and a heated and ungovernable polity has continued to make Nigeria an unsuitable bride for foreign investments. (p. 20)

For the country to be able to attract foreign investments, investors must have confidence that the host government can safeguard their investments by providing a safe business environment. This makes understanding the root causes of the problem of militancy important, as it will lay the foundation for developing solutions by the government to deal with investors' concerns regarding militancy.

While activities of militancy and terrorism continue to escalate in the country, a wide array of individuals and groups have experienced loss of lives, property, and foreign investments. Consequently, Nigeria is seen as unsafe for its citizens and the individuals living and doing business there, which in turn leads to loss of investments from foreign countries and organizations.

In this research, I reviewed the emergence of militant terrorism as it relates to Nigeria's Niger Delta region. I explored the factors responsible for the emergence of militant terrorism in this region. The topic specifically involved understanding the

reasons behind individuals' getting involved in terrorism and militancy despite the possibility of being arrested, prosecuted, incarcerated, or even killed.

It is important to get a better understanding of the factors causing individuals to become members of terrorist and militant groups, and taking part in terrorist and militant activities. Better understanding the causes may allow policy makers to offer strategies to facilitate individual disengagement from these groups and their activities. In this research I built on several studies that revealed an understanding of the root causes of terrorism, which can lead to the ability to combat the problem. For example, Çinar (2009) argued that it is important to understand the root causes of terrorism to develop appropriate policies to combat the problem (p. 114). Concurrently, Rath (2012) explained that "identification of the root cause may lead to the subsequent reduction, if not elimination" (p. 23) of the problem. These researchers give credence to the issue of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region while suggesting plans and policies to cope with and resolve the phenomenon.

Terrorism has continued to escalate in Nigeria over the last decade, despite the different measures that have been developed and implemented by the federal government. This could be due to the government's insufficient understanding of the root causes of this persistent phenomenon. Udoh (2013) noted that although the amnesty program has improved conditions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, it has not really addressed the sources of what has caused these conflicts (p. 85). By undertaking this research I plan to provide some answers to the questions and concerns expressed by Udoh. In this research, I set out deeply to explore, highlight, and address specific root causes that appeared to

push individuals to venture into terrorism and militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

I intended to share the results of this research with policy makers within the government to help in the development of policies and strategies. These policies and strategies could become a catalyst for the emergence of militancy and terrorism, avoiding the continued loss of lives and property. In addition, this model could be replicated in other countries to curb similar problems. Following these introductory statements, the Background sections provide an outline of the reasons for the escalation of terrorism and violence after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. In this section, I also review the terrorist attacks which have occurred in various part of the world, including Nigeria, and the efforts that Nigeria has put in place to tackle the problem.

In the Problem Statement section, I discuss the reasons for conducting this research, specifically to gain a better understanding of the root causes of terrorism and militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region to help develop policies that can avert the problem. As noted in the Purpose Statement, my purpose for this research was to address issues related to causes of terrorism and militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and to factors that spur individuals to join such groups and participate in terrorism and militancy activities.

Even though this research may not have found all the answers to what causes terrorism and militancy, it is focused on two research questions, specifically as they relate to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In the Conceptual Framework section, I present and discuss the framework upon which this research was based. I specifically note the use of

the root cause concept, which was used to study the causal factors of terrorism in the Niger Delta region.

In the Nature of the Study section, I present the methods applied in the research. The phenomenological method of inquiry was used because it enabled me to get a direct understanding of the experiences of the target population, which consisted of individuals who had participated in militant terrorism but have now received full amnesty from the federal government under the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program introduced on June 25, 2009. In the Definition of Terms section, I have identified, listed, and explained special words as used in this research, with the aim of making it easy for the reader to understand their meaning.

In the Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations section of his research, I first list factors that were not under my control and where I had to make assumptions. Such assumptions, however, do not make the research irrelevant. Delimitations set the scope, parameters, and boundaries of the research. Limitations highlighted any potential weaknesses that I identified in the research, and like assumptions, these limitations should not make the research any weaker. In the section Significance of the Study, I make the case for the importance of undertaking this research. I explain in detail the importance of determining whether the various causal factors of terrorism that had previously been identified were applicable to the phenomenon in the Niger Delta region. It should also be noted that conducting this research was intended to contribute to the knowledge pool and to an improved understanding of the root causes of terrorism and

militancy specific to this region, which can possibly be applied in other parts of the world as well.

## Background of the Study

In Nigeria, there have been continuing terrorist and militant activities over the last 10 years. Terrorist attacks or militant activity in Nigeria occur on almost daily basis. The varied attacks include suicide bombings, mass shootings, and kidnappings and have led to loss of lives and private and public property. Activities of terrorism and militancy are more prevalent in some northern states and the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Casualties resulting from acts of terrorism and militancy are not limited to members of the security forces. It has been reported that Boko Haram, the terrorist organization operational in some Northern states of Nigeria, has killed well over 2,000 Nigerians (Agbiboa, 2013a). Boko Haram attacks have resulted in as many as 1,500 deaths in the first half of 2012, a figure that has increased because the country has experienced even more brazen attacks by the Boko Haram terrorists after that year (Agbiboa, 2013a).

In response to the escalation of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and to stop or curb these activities, the government of Nigeria under the presidency of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua explored this situation through a special committee, tasked to make recommendations on how to address the impasse (Udoh, 2013). Part of the recommendation was the introduction of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. On June 25, 2009, the late President of Nigeria, Yar'Adua, announced the introduction of the amnesty policy; which, assured militants that those who would freely surrender their arms within 60 days (August 6 – October 4, 2009)

would be granted unconditional pardon. Furthermore, under the policy the government would not prosecute them for all previous crimes that they had committed against the state and for disrupting in the oil industry (Agbiboa, 2013b).

The Nigerian Amnesty and Reconciliation Program was designed to encourage individuals involved in militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta to give up their arms and, in return, be granted full amnesty by the federal government. They could then avoid any form of prosecution for any of their previous actions and be provided an opportunity to receive rehabilitation, skills development training for employability, monthly cash payments to sustain them until employed or engaged in legitimate business, and ultimately be reintegrated into the community as law abiding citizens.

The Amnesty and Reconciliation Program in Nigeria received a generally positive public reception because of the hope that it would finally bring militancy in the Niger Delta region to an end and be a beginning of enduring peace. However, over the years after its implementation, the success of the program was being questioned; it seemed doubtful whether it had achieved its set objectives. It appeared that the program had not succeeded in stopping the problem of militant terrorism in the region. Rather, there seemed to have been an upsurge in militant activities and the emergence of new militant groups. Such an ongoing problem, despite the introduction of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, emphasized the importance of getting to the root causes of the phenomenon of terrorism and militancy in this region.

Better understanding of the problem was expected to help in ensuring that developed and implemented policies would be successful and sustainable in addition to

having a better chance of achieving their set objective of curbing this phenomenon of violence. The fact that militant terrorism persisted even after the introduction of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program showed that strategies and policies developed without a full understanding of the root causes of the problem would most likely be unsuccessful. Any measures put in place will only be a temporary fix. Udoh (2013) noted that even though the amnesty program as implemented by the Government of Nigeria has provided a platform for peace, it did nothing to address the sources of violence in the Niger Delta. I addressed the sources of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region by using the root cause approach to reviewing militant terrorism in this region to determine why individuals join these groups and participate in acts of militant terrorism.

In the course of this research, I reviewed a number of earlier studies on the root causes of terrorism, as noted in the literature review of Chapter 2. Many of the authors noted that understanding of the root causes of terrorism can be effective in developing policies to curb this problem. Hence, this paper is focused on understanding the root causes of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. Although the Nigerian Amnesty and Reconciliation Program was designed to help stop violent activity in the region, the lack of a true of understanding of its root causes may be the reason for the program's apparent failure (Çinar, 2009).

The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States provided a different understanding of acts of terrorism and the extent to which terrorist groups will go to achieve their set objectives. The terrorist attacks that focused on and affected three key areas on the United States, including the World Trade Center in New York; the Pentagon Building,

which is the main United States military building in Washington, DC; and, an open field in Pennsylvania, had global effects. Over 3,000 individuals were killed, including 372 individuals who were citizens of countries other than the United States. Beyond causing human casualties, the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack also negatively impacted the world aviation industry. The industry had to contend with reduced airplane load capacity, because terrorist attacks instilled fear of flying in travelers who worried about further violence (Hyunjoon & Zheng, 2004, pp. 150–152). The attacks also caused an increase in airport security (Campbell, 2002, pp. 143–145) and in other critical infrastructure as well such as utility plants, oil and gas installations, and federal buildings, all of which were considered possible targets for terrorist attacks.

Acts of terrorism are a worldwide phenomenon and not restricted to Nigeria's Niger Delta region. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, many reports have surfaced about other terrorist attacks and activities in various cities and countries around the world, including London, Bali, Mumbai, and Nigeria. On July 7, 2005, it was reported that four suicide bombers joined other passengers in the London underground train system and on public transport buses and blew themselves up, using detonating devices that caused hundreds of injuries and 52 deaths (Hussain & Bagguley, 2013). October 12, 2002, a bombing occurred in Bali, Indonesia, outside a popular night club, where a terrorist group killed 202 people from 20 different countries (Hassan, 2007). March 11, 2004, the casualties were even greater in Madrid, Spain, when terrorists detonated 10 bombs at the same time on incoming and outgoing trains in proximity of Madrid's Atocha station. At that time, 192 people were killed and over 1,600 were

injured (Lia & Hegghammer, 2004). The November 26, 2008 Islamic terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, involving several landmarks of the city as well as businesses such as the Taj Mahal, the Chhatrapati Shivaji railway terminus, and the Hotel Oberoi, killed and injured over 470 people (Mate & Naseemullah, 2010).

If the international terror crisis is to be addressed effectively, it is important to maintain international global cooperation among countries. Such a premise was the backbone of the study of Ben-Yehuda and Levin-Banchik (2011), which focused on the international terror crisis and instability. However, there cannot be any form of international cooperation if the root causes of terrorism are not critically examined and understood from the perspective of the countries and specific locations where the problem emerges. My research suggests that different drivers are specific to the different locations in which they occur (e.g., terrorism in one location may be driven by a quest of the locals for resource control, while in another region, it may be driven by certain religious or cultural ideologies). Understanding the root causes will, therefore, help to synchronize forms of global cooperation.

In discussing the phenomenon of terrorism, one must also take into account issues arising from widely known and held traditional thoughts regarding the causes of terrorism. Franks (2009) emphasized the importance of taking the focus away from this type of thinking because there can be no one-size-fits-all approach to the root causes of terrorism as quite different triggers may be present in different locations. For example, acts of terrorism is not restricted to only Muslims, as there have been examples where

people of other religion have been involved in acts of terrorism both before and after
9/11.

It has long been held that the U.S. policy of promoting democracy worldwide, especially in countries with high activities of terrorism, would help to curb terrorism. However, Bapat (2011) and Freeman (2008) analyzed this policy and noted that the introduction of this policy in some regions has led to the emergence of terrorism and acts of terrorism against the United States. In conducting a study on the impact of social conditions as a contributory factor to the emergence and rise of terrorism in Africa, with specific focus on Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia, Feldman (2009) noted that such factors are a critical reason for terrorism and the absence of peace in several countries on the continent of Africa.

Like Feldman (2009), Khan and Azam (2008) researched the causes of terrorism in Pakistan; they also pointed to social conditions as well as cultural, religious, and economic factors as catalysts that induce people to become members of terrorist organizations. The authors also noted that individuals with high living standards and education are not likely to join terrorist organizations, thereby eliminating these two factors as drivers toward joining terrorist groups. Krieger and Meierrieks (2011) covered a wide range in their study of the origins and targets of terrorism. They noted demographic, political, and economic factors among others as causal factors prominent in instigating terrorism and choosing targets for terrorist acts.

The democratization structures and policies imposed by the United States in the Arab world as a factor in the emergence of terrorism was at the center of Freeman's

(2008) research. Freeman noted that these policies, especially in Middle Eastern countries, have been a contributory and motivating factor for individuals to develop a negative view of the United States and to become members of radical and terrorist groups. Bagaji, Achegbulu, Maji, and Yakubu (2011) focused on the inherent violence in the Niger Delta region. In their study, the authors reviewed how the natural resources in this region of Nigeria may be linked to acts of militant terrorism that have constantly occurred in this part of the country.

As previously discussed, if the root causes of terrorism are not understood, it is difficult to proffer solutions to mitigate the problem. Even though previous studies have reviewed and discussed the root causes of terrorism, they have not been reviewed from the perspective of individuals who had been directly involved in terrorism and militancy in the Niger Delta but have now received amnesty through the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. A review of relevant literature in this area suggested that many factors can be responsible for terrorism and militancy. However, these factors are not universal because of local differences that can be attributed to culture, location, religion, and a host of other factors. The goal for the current research was to determine if any of these factors show a correlation with the emergence of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region. In addition, by undertaking a review of related literature dealing with the root causes of terrorism, I was able to establish what was known at the start of this research project and contribute to an expansion of the knowledge pool and a better understanding of the root causes of militant terrorism specific to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**Problem Statement**

Terrorism and militancy were a complex and ongoing problem in Nigeria, and it did not appear that the problem was abating. Given the emphasis that had been placed on how understanding the root causes of terrorism would help in developing strategies to curb the problem, the question arose, if the continued problem of militant insurgency in Nigeria's Niger Delta region could be the result of a lack of knowledge regarding the root causes of the problem specific to the region. Not properly understanding the root causes before solutions are proffered is one of the problems I have tried to address. The importance of understanding the root causes of terrorism and how this understanding could help in providing strategies to address the problem had been emphasized by various researchers (Çinar, 2009; Rath, 2012).

Ehwarieme and Umukoro (2015) pointed out that, from the experiences of the militants in the Niger Delta region to the Boko Haram uprising in the Northern region, there has been an increase in insecurity related to terrorist activities in Nigeria. Imhonopi and Urim (2016) noted that the government, oil and gas corporations, and citizens of Nigeria have, in one way or another, been affected by this problem, and there did not appear to be any relief from these terrorist-related insecurities in sight. In the Niger Delta region, efforts by the government to contain the problem through the introduction of the Reconciliation and Amnesty Programs had not fully addressed the causes of conflict and could not be said to have yielded the desired result of long-lasting peace and an end to terrorism and militancy in this region. Udoh (2013) posited that introducing the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program in the Niger Delta region may have somewhat helped to

improve conditions in this region. However, it has failed to address the causes of the conflicts involving militant groups in this region. Okpara (2012) also noted that, despite the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program and the package contained therein, kidnapping and hostage taking by militants, which are part of the hallmarks of terrorism, persisted in the Niger Delta region. Thus, the present research was conducted to get a better understanding of the root causes of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region, which is critical to developing policies that will help to curb the problem and create a path for safety, peace, development, and growth.

To resolve the problem of militant terrorism in this region, some assumptions had to be made, especially with respect to basing these causes on the "traditionally known causes of terrorism" (Franks, 2009). To do the would be based on flawed assumptions, which may not be applicable to the current case of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region. Understanding the root causes of militant terrorism and using this knowledge to propose plausible strategies to curb this phenomenon can lead to positive social change in areas where terrorism persists.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to understand the causal factors that spur individuals to participate in terrorism and militancy against the government and oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region has become an endemic problem and a factor that impacts security in the country. This research is directly related to militant terrorism and the causal factors that may have an impact on enticing individuals to join these groups

and participate in militant terrorism activities, while not minding the implication that joining such groups may have on their lives. It is important to note that this research followed the advice of advocates of the root cause approach, whose goal was not counterterrorism, but rather gaining a better understanding of the factors that enable terrorism. Therefore, the focus of the present research was trained on the enabling conditions that tend to create terrorists rather than on fighting the latter (Taşpinar, 2009), and it ends with recommendations for developing plausible strategies to curb the problem based on a better understanding of the driving forces.

## Research Questions

1. What motivating factors spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

2. How has implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program helped to mitigate the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

## Conceptual Framework

The concept that understanding the root causes of terrorism would helped to proffer solutions of the problem has been featured prominently for years in many studies and discourses. Acts of terror can be reduced or eliminated if the root cause is identified and understood (Çinar, 2009; Rath, 2012). I employed the root cause concept in this research of the causal factors of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta of Nigeria to provide an in-depth understanding of the underlying causal factors of this problem as a "model for countering" (Çinar, 2009, p. 93). Central to the research of Çinar (2009) was a

discussion about the root causes of terrorism and that a solution to the problem of terrorism is contingent upon having an understanding on the root causes of the problem.

The root cause conceptual framework used in this research helped to provide clarity and understanding about why individuals in the Niger Delta region join these groups despite the risks associated with being members of terrorist and militant organizations. In addition, social, economic, religious, cultural, and political issues have been previously mentioned as causal factors of terrorism and militancy. Yet, in studying the Niger Delta region, these factors may not be applicable (Khan & Azam, 2008) and may lead to complications in trying to understand the problem.

This research is directly related to the root causes of terrorism, to looking at the different causes that have been suggested in different studies and by different researchers over time. Through the work of these researchers, multiple causes were noted. However, in reviewing all the causes, there does not seem to be an agreement on the exact causes of terrorism. Different studies have pointed to several different root causes, with no agreement on any one of them. Suggested causes in some of the studies (Bapat, 2011; Feldman, 2009; Igboin, 2012; Khan & Azam, 2008) pointed to a number of traditional or orthodox triggers, not taking into account the impact that other factors such as location and culture may have or if these causes might be a driver toward other forms of issues and not necessarily lead to terrorism. Most importantly, the direct and lived experiences of individuals who had participated in acts of terrorism in the past had not been considered in previous studies. This represents a gap in the research literature and an identified need for further study. The present research was undertaking in answer to this

need by considering the direct experience of individuals who had participated in militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region, which helped to determine if and what in these experiences held answers to the research questions with respect to causes of militant terrorism in this part of Nigeria.

## Nature of the Study

The methodology used for this research was qualitative in nature; specifically, I employed the phenomenological method of inquiry. Using this method was appropriate for gaining a better understanding of the human lived experience from the viewpoint of individuals involved in the phenomenon, which is what the research questions were designed to explore and bring out. The phenomenological research approach was used to describe and compare common or shared experiences among different individuals to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and expand on the existing knowledge base.

The research specifically focused on militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of the country with the goal of identifying what, if anything, might reveal itself as part of the root causes of these nefarious activities. For data collection, I employed several methods, including face-to-face personal interviews. I also undertook a thorough review of public documents relating to terrorism and militancy in Nigeria, involving documents from government departments as well as public and private agencies. Participants for data collection in the research were limited to 10 individuals who were ex-militants, who had been granted amnesty through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. Data collected

in the field such as transcripts of conducted interviews were code and analyzed using NVivo software. The results of the analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

## Definition of Terms

*Federal Amnesty and Reconciliation Program:* The Federal Amnesty and Reconciliation Program was introduced by the federal government of Nigeria June 29, 2009, to curb terrorism and militancy in Nigeria. The program was intended to encourage terrorists and militants to turn in their weapons and renounce these activities in return for payment, training, and employment. This program had a target of registering 20,192 militants with an initial budget of $145 million (Agbiboa, 2013b, p. 54).

*Militant terrorism:* For this research, militant terrorism involves acts of violence by militant groups in the Niger Delta region. These acts can include hostage taking, assassinations, and bombings, perpetrated against the government and large groups or gatherings to cause fear, intimidation, and pressure to achieve political, ideological, or religious goals.

*Relative Deprivation:* "The absence of opportunities relative to expectations" (Taşpinar, 2009, p. 78)

## Assumptions, Delimitations, Scope, and Limitations

### Assumptions

For the purpose of this phenomenological research, the individuals interviewed had been referred by the Amnesty Program through Quess Consulting; therefore, it can be assumed that they were militants at some point, although no other documentation was presented to support this assumption. Their statements were considered valid and utilized

for this research. It was assumed that the militants who were referred for this research would cooperate and provide information that is true during their interviews, based on their personal experiences, as this was key in determining the reliability of the data and the outcomes of the research.

**Delimitations**

The research was restricted to militant terrorism in Nigeria, with a special focus on these activities in the Niger Delta region of the country. Conducted interviews for this research were confined to individuals who had participated in militant terrorism but have since received full amnesty under the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, introduced June 25, 2009. The program encouraged militants in the region to turn in their weapons and renounce militant activities. In return, the government provided an allowance, training, and employment. This program had a target of registering 20,192 militants with an initial budget of $145 million. The program had over 15,000 militants surrender their weapons when it was launched (Agbiboa, 2013a). Ajayi and Adesote (2013) noted that 20,182 militants were reported to have registered for the amnesty and postamnesty programs, including 20,049 men and 133 women from all the states that make up the Niger Delta region.

Confining the research to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria was convenient in terms of travel and ability to reach individuals to be interviewed; this region has the highest population of individuals who fit the requirements for this research (i.e., those involved in terrorism and militancy, but having received amnesty through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program). Individuals I contacted and interviewed for this research

were referred for the purpose of this research by the Amnesty and Reconciliation Office, the government branch responsible for the implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. Based on this outreach, I assumed that I had the best and most credible information to identify individuals who had been involved in terrorism and militancy in the Niger Delta region and who had subsequently participated in the amnesty programs.

I was able to interview and collect credible data from 10 participants. Delimiting the research to individuals who had received full amnesty and participated in any of the amnesty programs was to ensure consistency and select persons who had actually gone through this full circle. Participants were informed about the reasons for the research, the purpose of the interview questions, the goals of the research, and the participants' rights and confidentiality. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the research, if they felt uncomfortable at any time or if they thought that they did not meet the required criteria. None of the participants withdrew.

**Scope**

The scope of this research was limited to militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, with specific focus on the root causes perceived by individuals who had participated in militant terrorism. The goal was better to understand the problem from the perspective of ex-militants. The concept that understanding the root causes would help to proffer more effective solutions to the problem was supported by Rath (2012), who pointed out that reduction or elimination of terrorism can occur because of identification of the root causes. The focus on root causes was chosen because understanding the root

causes directly from the personal experience of people who had been involved was expected to help in developing effective policies and strategies that could better address the problem. In addition, it will also discourage further involvement with these groups in the Niger Delta region.

**Limitations**

The limitations identified in this research were linked to the weakness of the chosen research method and to the way the research was conducted. This phenomenological research was undertaken to gain a better understanding of the causal factors that spurred individuals to participate in militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Data collection for the research involved individuals who had been engaged in militant terrorism activities in the past. However, the potential of not being able to gain access to such individuals in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria to collect the needed data was very real.

Of all the weaknesses in utilizing the qualitative research method, researcher bias while conducting the interviews was at the forefront. The possibility was considered that I might analyze and interpret the responses received during interviews in alignment with my own personal understanding, thereby disregarding the viewpoints of the interviewees. Commenting on this issue, Harwell (n.d.) noted that the analyzed data is what determines the quality of the research, which means that the strength of the analysis will determine the quality of the completed work. To address this potential weakness, transcription of the audiotapes was accomplished by a third party, subsequent to the field interviews. This transcription was followed by comparison with the original transcription done by me to

confirm the accuracy of the work and correctly captured the interview responses. The completed transcripts were sent to each interviewee, respectively, for member checking. This step served to validate and confirm that the transcripts accurately captured the responses as intended by the informants.

My presence during the stage of data collection was another potential weakness of this research method, as the interviewees might have provided biased responses, which in turn, had the potential to negatively affect the quality of the collected data and thus misrepresent the true nature of the phenomenon. The underlying reason for this issue, as it relates to the present research, would be the participants' fear that the data collection by the researcher was really for the government and might be used in one way or another against the research participants. To address this weakness, I established good rapport and to built trust with the interviewees; I took great care to ensure that there was full disclosure regarding the nature, intentions, and outcome of the research. I was also able to bring comfort to the interviewees by letting them know in advance that they would be provided with the transcript of their individual responses for review and validation to make sure that the content was aligned with their individual responses. I also assured the interviewees that the collected data would be published in aggregate form only and not be used in any way that allowed identification of any research participant. Further, I assured them that the transcripts would be store in a safe and locked space. I also spent considerable time in the field to gain a better understanding of the culture of the interviewees to create some ease in my interactions with the research participants. Creswell (2013) commented that "prolonged engagement in the field" helps researchers

build trust in the individual who is being interviewed (pp. 246, 250). In line with this comment, I ensured that I spent enough time engaging with the individuals who were interviewed for this research, which further helped to ease any apprehension that they may have had prior to the interview.

## Significance of the Study

Çinar (2009) suggested that understanding the root causes of terrorism may help to find solutions to the problem, and Rath (2012) asserted that acts of terror can be reduced or eliminated when the root causes are understood. When the root causes of militant terrorism are understood, there may be a better basis available for developing specific associated strategies to deal with the problem.

In this research, I explored the causal factors of militant terrorism that is directed against the government and oil and gas corporations, but which also has a devastating impact on citizens. Critical for this research was the understanding of these root causes for the benefit of policy makers to enable them to devise strategies that will help in curbing the problem, as explained by (Çinar, 2009). A review of relevant literature in this area suggested that many factors may be responsible for terrorism and militancy. However, these factors cannot be said to be universal because of differences attributable to culture, location, religion, and a host of other situations. The goal was to determine if any of these factors had a correlation with the emergence and existence of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

In addition, a review of the literature related to root causes of terrorism established what was currently known in this area of study and contributed to the

knowledge base I needed to employ and, then, pinpoint what applied specifically to the Nigerian Niger Delta region. An understanding of previous research helped me to direct the focus of this research to areas where knowledge gaps existed. This enabled me not only to complement the existing research, but also to contribute new knowledge toward the understanding of the root causes of terrorism and militancy. This deeper understanding will also help in the development of effective policies to dissuade individuals from joining militant groups and simultaneously contribute to curbing the problem of terrorism and militancy in the country. This research may also serve as a reference point for undergraduate and graduate students who are undertaking a study on terrorism and militancy.

The implication for positive social change includes the fact that the results of this research can be used to develop programs and policies specific to the issues of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria so that this problem can be more effectively addressed. It will eventually lead to long-lasting strategies that will soon reduce or eradicate the problem and loss of lives and property. This research will also help to provide a broader understanding of why individuals join militant terrorist groups, which in turn will help in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The outcome of this research can also be replicated in other regions where similar problems exist to help with curbing those problems.

### Summary and Transition

The problem of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region, which includes bombings of oil and gas pipelines and installations, kidnappings, and killings, affects

everyone, including public, private, and governmental organizations operating in Nigeria. Both local and expatriate residents and workers are affected as innocent individuals are caught up in these attacks. This research helped to provide insights that may be associated with the causes of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta. The difficulty with this issue is that there are several likely causes, which makes it challenging to develop remedies to address the problem. However, an understanding of the root causes will help in developing strategies aimed at what seems to incite the violence.

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to understand the causal factors that spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. With such understanding, policy makers are better equipped to devise policies that will help discourage individuals from joining these groups and reduce the phenomenon of regional terrorism and militancy. In addition to a review of relevant literature, I explored the root causes specific to militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region by collecting data on the direct and lived experiences of individuals who had been involved in militant terrorism in this region to gain an understanding of the phenomenon from their perspective.

In Chapter 2, I review related literature and note a number of sources related to terrorism and militancy around the world in general and the Niger Delta region in particular. I used a literature review strategy to find peer-reviewed research papers. The literature search revealed several traditionally known root causes that had been identified in prior research, and I discussed how these causes had impacted terrorism and militancy in the Niger Delta region. In concluding this section, I noted that a gap appeared to exist

in the current literature, specifically related to the root causes of terrorism and militancy. This gap involved the perspectives on the root causes by individuals who had previously been involved in terrorist activities, especially in the Niger Delta. This research was, therefore, an attempt to close this gap in the professional literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Introduction**

It is widely accepted that terrorism is a present danger and that no country is insulated from possible terrorist attacks. While stopping terrorism may be a large task, much has been written about the causes of terrorism and how tackling these causes would lead to a solution of the problem (Çinar, 2009; Rath, 2012). Çinar (2009) noted that examination of the root causes will not only provide an understanding of the problem but also suggest effective tools for developing a model to counter it.

Ajayi and Adesote (2013) described the Niger Delta militants as "ethnic militias, criminals, terrorists, rebels, freedom fighters, insurgents, revolutionaries and political agitators" (p. 508). This description was reminiscent of the opinions of earlier researchers (Bapat, 2011; Freeman,2008), despite the fact that some people held, with respect to militancy in the Niger Delta region, that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" (Lacqueur, as quoted by Ganor, 2002, p. 302). Based on all the definitions of terrorism and the summary of these definitions I provided, the modus operandi of militants, which includes kidnapping in exchange for ransom, as noted by George, Kuye, and Onokala (2012), carries the same hallmarks as terrorism. The purpose of this research was to understand the causal factors of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta and, by focusing on the root causes with the goal of helping with the development of policies to discourage individuals from joining these groups, to reduce and eventually eradicate the phenomenon of militant terrorism in this region.

**Literature Search Strategy**

To conduct the literature review for this research, I used multiple databases, including ProQuest Central, SAGE, Academic Search Premier, Google Scholar, and third-party databases provided by the Walden University library. Databases of main interest were EBSCO, Sage Publications, ProQuest Central, and Academic Search Complete. I also conducted online searches using Google, Yahoo, and Bing search engines. Searches were done by reviewing journals and studies used and referenced in other journals, as well as author searches, topic searches, and bibliographic mining. To ensure that the materials I used were peer reviewed, I utilized Ulrich Periodicals to check all databases and journal publishers. Some of the keywords I used to search the literature were as follows: *what causes terrorism*, *root causes of terrorism*, *causes of terrorism in Nigeria*, *causes of terrorism in Africa*, *causes of world terrorism*, *causes of militancy in Nigeria*, *causes of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta*, *causes of militancy in Niger Delta*, *causes of terrorism and militancy in Nigeria*, *Niger Delta militants*, *Nigeria Amnesty and Reconciliation Program*, *traditional causes of terrorism*, *Niger Delta militants*, *Niger Delta militancy*, *Niger Delta amnesty*, *7 July 2005 attacks*, *2002 Bali bombings*, *Madrid bombing*, *Mumbai terrorist*, and *Boko Haram.*

**Conceptual Framework: Root Causes**

The conceptual framework used in this research is called the *root cause concept.* The root cause concept was used to study the causal factors of militant terrorism in Nigeria, with specific focus on the Niger Delta region of the country. The goal of using this concept was to provide an in-depth understanding of the underlying factors that

motivated individuals in the Niger Delta region to take part in militant terrorism activities. It has been argued that the war on terrorism will have no long-lasting success as long as the root causes of this phenomenon remain in effect and are not better understood (Bjørgo, 2005).

It has been noted that the nature of terrorism and radicalism makes understanding the root causes complex (Taşpinar, 2009, p. 76). Just as terrorism has not had a single acceptable definition, a considerable debate revolves around the root causes of terrorism, and researchers have so far not been able to agree on a single root cause of terrorism. Pinpointing a specific cause to a phenomenon such as terrorism is difficult because causes of terrorism can differ depending on a number of factors and social, economic, cultural, psychological, and political conditions as well as particular objectives. Taşpinar (2009) noted that there are multiple causes of terrorism and trying to narrow it to a single cause will be misleading. In a study on the root causes of terrorism, specifically reviewing the relationship between poverty and terrorism, Godovicova (2012) defined root causes as *qualities that lay the foundation for individuals to be attracted to and actively participating in terrorism*. In essence, trying to define or look at terrorism from the prism of one lens only will be misleading and affect any solution and implementation that may be developed.

In line with Godovicova's (2012) definition of root causes, I describe the root causes of terrorism as *contributory factors that motivate an individual to join and participate in acts of terrorism*. Terrorism and militancy have been a concern for the government, oil and gas corporations, and citizens of Nigeria. There has been an

escalation of terrorist and militant activities, with incessant attacks led by terrorists and militant groups on facilities belonging to the government, oil and gas corporations, places of worship, and individuals in both the private and public sectors (Adesoji, 2010). These attacks were especially rampant in the northern states and the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

There has been an ongoing escalation of terror activities in the northern part of Nigeria since 2011, resulting in the death over 3,500 people (Agbiboa, 2013b). Boko Haram, which started as a group of Muslim devotees who were intent on promoting Islamic education and law in parts of the northern states of Nigeria, had turned into a violent group whose attacks targeted security; religious, public, and private infrastructures; and religious leaders (Imhonopi & Urim, 2016, p. 21). The direct effect of the activities of Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria included the displacement of between 5 and 7 million people from their communities, the killing or displacement of thousands of school teachers, the closing of thousands of schools, loss of access to education for thousands of children in affected communities, the closing or abandonment of thousands of churches, and the forced conscription of over 10,000 boys into Boko Haram (Okakwu, 2016). These problems have continued unabated in affected communities.

Efforts by the government to contain the problem through reconciliation, as well as amnesty programs, disarmament, and peace talks by a former president and other highly placed individuals in the country, have yielded little or no results. Agbiboa (2013b) noted that, escalation in the activities of Boko Haram included bombings and

suicide attacks on public and private facilities, including churches, military barracks,

police stations, churches, mosques, and the building that houses the United Nations

offices in Abuja, resulting in loss of lives and property. The continued escalation of

terrorism in the country now threatens the country's unity, for different regions have

called for Nigeria to be split along regional lines.

A review of the relevant literature on terrorism and militancy provided

information that showed that the problem of terrorism has been a growing concern the

world over. It also provided a knowledge base regarding the phenomenon of terrorism

and militancy. The literature highlighted the need to understand the causes of terrorism

and militancy, as well as the impact that these causes have had on the emergence of this

problem. Çinar (2009) noted that a critical examination of the root causes of terrorism

will both contribute to the body of knowledge in this field and provide tools to help

design measures to counter the problem of terrorism. In undertaking this research, I have

corroborated Çinar's comment and not only contributed to a better understanding of the

root causes of militancy, but also provided policy makers with some tools to develop

measures to counter the phenomenon, especially as it relates to the Niger Delta region of

Nigeria.

Current research on root causes of terrorism has not clearly focused on these

causes, specifically from the perspective of individuals who were involved in militant

terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and have now received amnesty through

the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. In a bid to determine the root causes of

militant terrorism from the perspective of individuals involved in this phenomenon, I

chose a qualitative approach and employed a phenomenological research method to record lived experiences from the viewpoint of the participants. This aligns with Moustakas's (1994) recommendations with the hope of gaining better insight into the reasons these individuals chose to join such groups. The goal of gaining a better understanding of this phenomenon was to provide tools to policy makers to develop a model that can be used for countering these motivating factors. Çinar (2009) noted that, until there is an understanding of the root causes of terrorism, a credible solution cannot be developed. The results of the present research will improve the understanding as it relates to the problem of militancy, so that it can be used by policy makers in government as reference material and guide in the development of solutions to the problem.

Several reasons had been mentioned in previous research as causal factors of terrorism, including social, economics, religious, cultural, and political ones (Khan & Azam, 2008). Rath (2012) noted that a number of reasons have been noted by scholars as being the root causes of terrorism, including poverty, religion, illiteracy, occupation of Muslim lands by foreign countries, and hatred of other religions by Muslim fanatics. It is important to note that the factors mentioned in studies by Khan and Azam (2008) and Rath existed in countries where terrorism thrives and where other social problems exist. The factors were also not examined specifically from the point of view individuals who have participated in terrorism, which is the focus of the present research. It is noteworthy that Umar Farouk Abdumuttalib, the individual who attempted the July 2009 Christmas Day bombing of United Airlines (Igboin, 2012), was originally from Nigeria, a country that does not currently have any foreign occupational force and has the biggest economy

in Africa. In addition, the Niger Delta, the area of focus of this research, is predominantly Christian, so that the problem of militancy in the Niger Delta region cannot be said to be related to hatred of other religions by Muslim fanatics.

A great number of studies were dedicated to exploring the root causes of terrorism from an international perspective. These causes are related to the increased focus that has been put on international terrorism as a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack in the United States, where terrorists posing as legitimate passengers boarded and hijacked passenger jets that destroyed the two World Trade Center Towers in New York City, after which another attack was made on the Pentagon (Everly & Mitchell, 2001).

In their study of the international terror crisis and instability, Ben-Yehuda and Levin-Banchik (2011) noted that, to address international terror, there should be global cooperation across international boundaries. Such large-scale cooperation may not be feasible or able to determine unequivocally the root causes of terrorism and proffer possible solutions that would be universal. This perspective does not take into consideration the peculiarity of root causes associated with different locations, regions, and countries of the world. What might be root causes of terrorism in the Middle East may not be such in Africa. Supporting this view, Ganor (2002) observed that what might be considered a terrorist from one perspective might be seen as a freedom fighter from another perspective. Put into context, an individual or group in one location involved in fighting for independence from an occupying country or force and hailed as heroes locally may be seen as being involved in terrorism and militancy by another country, based on a political or cultural perspective.

The disparity in the root causes of terrorism has been attributed to a number of different factors including location, culture, religion, resource control, and a host of other factors. Discussing the root causes of terrorism in Africa, Feldman (2009) noted that some of the factors that fuel extremism could be attributed to strife, disease, and competition for diminishing resources, all of which showed little or no hope of resolution. While the root causes of terrorism and militancy may be attributed to these factors, it is still important to note that they can also be viewed from a location-specific perspective because these same factors cannot be said to be the trigger for the September 11, 2001, in the United States; the July 7, 2005, bombing of the London Underground train system; and the July 2009 Christmas Day bombing attempt of a United Airlines plane by Umar Farouk Abdumuttalib (Igboin, 2012), indicating the importance of not attributing one blanket cause of terrorism across different locations.

Understanding the peculiarity of the causes of terrorism related to different locations of the world is important, so as to avoid a blanket approach to specifying the causes of terrorism and developing strategies to combat the phenomenon. Aldrich (2004) discussed the importance of understanding the peculiarity of drivers of terrorism related to different parts of the world for there to be any successful form of cooperation in dealing with the issue. Understanding the peculiar drivers of terrorism in different parts of the world will help in developing policies and solutions aimed at those drivers and enable dealing with environmental factors that cause terrorism to thrive in a particular area.

A review of relevant literature provided information related to the traditional causes of terrorism. In addition, some of the literature was focused on root causes as they relate to global impact, which increased the need to discern the exact nature of the causes of terrorism, specifically related to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## Some Traditional Causes of Terrorism

### Only Muslims Are Terrorists

Over the years, acts of terrorism have been attributed to particular, known causes, including the relationship between terrorism and Islam. The notion that only Muslims are involved in acts of terrorism has been further increased with the involvement of Muslims in a number of acts of terrorism, including the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the 2001 shoe bomber Richard Reid, the 2005 London Underground train system bombers, and the 2009 attempted bombing of a United Airlines plane by Umar Farouk Abdumuttalib (Igboin, 2012). The notion that terrorists are usually Muslims also exists in Nigeria, based on the link that has been established between Boko Haram, the terrorist group that operates in the northern states of Nigeria, and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (U.S. Department of State, 2013). This notion, however, has been proven wrong because, in a number of terrorist attacks prior to and after 9/11, the perpetrators were not Muslims. What needs to be stressed, therefore, is the importance of studying the root causes of terrorism for specific locations to avoid situations where there will be stereotyping or attributing blanket root causes to specific regions, countries, individuals, or groups where they do not apply. Also, the problem of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta cannot be said

to be the work of Muslims because the region is predominantly Christian and the individuals who participate in these acts are the locals from the region.

**Western and United States Policy**

One school of thought holds that the main reason for individuals in Middle Eastern countries to join and participate in terrorism and militant activities can be found in Western and U.S. policies that are introduced and implemented in countries in this region. In a study on the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria, Igboin (2012) reported on the belief that the Islamic faith has been corrupted by Western liberal democratic values, a factor that has been the major talking point for Boko Haram and the reason why it has engaged in terrorist activities in northern Nigeria. Specifically cited was the introduction of Western education. Igboin also reported on the standing argument that some of these Western values have been introduced through the media and Western literature. These values have also been introduced as a result of countries like the United States that have military bases in some Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, which made it possible for members of the military at these Bases to perpetrate the spreading of Western culture in their host countries.

Bapat (2011) conducted a review of U.S. policy, a policy that promotes and uses democracy as a tool to curb terrorism in countries outside of the United States. Bapat noted that promoting this policy has, in several instances, inspired the emergence of terrorist activities against the United States. Citizens of these countries were opposed to the promotion of democracy in their countries, overruling values that align with their

culture and religion. Thus, they took out their grievances in the form of acts of terrorism against the United States.

Freeman (2008) also reviewed and discussed the impact that policies have on the emergence of terrorism. The focus in his study was trained on the policy of democratization in foreign countries carried out by the United States and the influence that this policy has had on the growth of terrorism and radicalization in places like the Middle East, where it has become a motivational factor for citizens of these countries to join militant groups or participate in terrorist attacks against the United States.

Even though Boko Haram, the Nigeria-based terrorist group operating in a number of the northern states, has voiced its opposition to Western education, the same thing cannot be said to be the reason for militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, for none of the groups have mentioned their opposition to Western or U.S. policy there.

**Social Conditions**

Focusing on social conditions as a factor that spurs terrorism, Feldman (2009) paid special attention to Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan in Africa and noted that poor social conditions can be a contributing factor in the emergence of terrorism on the continent. Poor social conditions are the reason that some African countries have still not been able to establish peace. Khan and Azam (2008) studied the paths individuals have taken to become terrorists and explored whether social conditions were a factor that compelled people in Pakistan to joined terrorist groups. They also included economic, cultural, and religious factors in their study. Khan and Azam concluded that both

education and high living standards could not be named as factors that drive people to becoming terrorists; rather, in the regions studied, individuals who fell outside the categories of good education and a high standard of living were the ones likely to be found in terrorist and militant groups.

Social conditions were a likely catalyst for individuals to join terrorist organizations in Pakistan (Khan & Azam, 2008). In addition to social factors, Khan and Azam (2008) also reviewed economic, cultural, and religion factors. They concluded that education and a high living standard fell outside the group of drivers for becoming a terrorist. Even though poor social conditions were a possible cause of terrorism in Pakistan and Africa, as Feldman (2009) and Khan and Azam (2008) noted, their research was not focused on Nigeria's Niger Delta region, and the same causes cannot be attributed to this region without first conducting a study to understand the root causes in this particular region. These considerations provided the impetus for the present research.

**Lack of Development**

Lack of development has been pointed out as the cause of conflict in the Niger Delta region. Ifedi and Anyu (2011) noted in their study of the conflict in this region that serious lack of development in this area, as a result of neglect from the government of Nigeria, was a root cause of conflict. This serious lack of development resulted in a backlash from militant groups in the region, includes militancy against the Nigerian government by groups such as the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force, which have been involved in armed conflict with the government in the Niger Delta region (Ifedi & Anyu, 2011, p. 90). The authors pointed out the devastation caused to agricultural and industrial

endeavors of the people as a result of environmental challenges due to oil and gas drilling activities in the region, which have been legally sanctioned by the government. They added that agricultural activities, including fishing—which is the main occupation and livelihood of people of this region—have been adversely affected by oil exploration and the construction of oil pipelines for transporting oil. Ifedi and Anyu stated that drilling, extraction of oil, and other work associated with oil and gas mining such as construction of oil transportation pipelines have negatively impacted the region and affected the main source of livelihood and income generation of the indigenes, who rely mostly on fishing and agricultural activities.

This problem is made worse because the natural resources of the region (i.e., oil and gas) are the main income-generating source of the government of Nigeria; yet, none of the benefit of this situation have resulted in any benefits for the Niger Delta region and its people such as urgently needed infrastructure development, making indigenes of this region highly aggrieved with the Nigerian government (Ifedi & Anyu, 2011, p. 76). Using this reason as the source of conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta region without understanding it from the perspective of individuals who join these groups and participate in militant terrorism may not provide the full picture of the true root cause of the problem.

**Struggle for Natural Resources**

The control of natural resources such as oil and gas has also been discussed as a root cause of terrorism and militancy. In the Niger Delta region, where the bulk of the country's oil and gas resources is found, the desire of indigenes of this region to control

these resources may well be the major reason for militant terrorism. Bagaji et al. (2011)

argued that the natural resources found in the Niger Delta region may have a direct

connection to the conflicts in the region. It is also within this premise, as Jegede and

Joshua (2013) concluded, that domestic terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is

caused by both environmental and economic factors. In their opinion, both of these

factors can lead to deprivation experienced by inhabitants of this region due to pollution,

which negatively impacts fishing, the major occupation of people in the Niger Delta

region, and also land degradation, which affects their ability to farm. Jegede and Joshua

argued that the inability to carry out their occupations will lead to poverty and anger and,

eventually, drive indigenes to carry out acts of militant terrorism against the Nigerian

state as the responsible party for their plight.

Even with this assertion, the question still lingers what the real cause of these acts

of militant terrorism may be because they still cannot be pinned down to just one factor.

Even if the natural resources were controlled by the indigenous communities, there still

would be no guarantee in place that the results of pollution and soil degradation would be

reversed. In that case, would the individuals who joined and partook of acts of terrorism

and militancy now turn against their own?

**The Economy**

Gries, Krieger, and Meierrieks (2011) sought to determine if there were linkages

between terrorism and economic conditions. Their research was centered on determining

if poor economic performance in some counties was a causal and contributory factor to

terrorism and violence. The authors reviewed a number of previous studies, including one

by Gurr (1970) who noted that the occurrence of violence can be linked to relative deprivation, which is related to a discrepancy in the distributive process in the economy as it relates to individual expectation versus actual receipt. Frustration that arises through individuals' perceptions that their poor economic condition is the result of a discrepancy in the economy's distributive process can be a factor that will spur individuals to join terrorist groups and also make it easy for terrorist organizations to recruit people identified in this category (Gurr, 1970). This, however, does not seem to be the case with terrorism and militancy in Nigeria, as it can be argued that terrorism and militancy came to the fore during a period when the economy of the country was on a downward spiral. However, there has been an escalation of violence for a number of years, even though the country's economy and living conditions have improved, including the recent growth the economy has experienced, especially with the report that the Nigerian economy has rebased, according to an up-to-date snapshot of the country's economic activities and overall improvement of its GDP (World Bank, n.d.). Nigeria is now the largest economy in Africa (Ogunlesi, 2014). Ordinarily, a change in this condition should have translated to a corresponding decrease in acts of terrorism and militancy, but the reverse is the case.

**Poverty**

The linkage between terrorism and poverty as a root cause of terrorism was Godovicova's (2012) central theme. Godovicova reviewed a number of research studies regarding poverty as a potential determinant of the root cause of terrorism and observed that poverty features among factors that threaten global security. In noting the positions of various scholars, Godovicova cited the work of (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). The latter

noted that war and political conflicts will lead to the breakdown of economic condition, which is capable of inciting individuals to join terrorist groups. This claim led to a call for increases in both foreign investment and aid for education, as both had the potential to help eradicate terrorism, a claim that comments by both Presidents George W. Bush and Barak Obama supported. Supporting this argument, Freytag, Krüger, Meierrieks, and Schneider (2011) claimed, in their study on social, economic, and political conditions in nations with terrorism, that rich countries have a better prospect for a peaceful future than countries in which poverty persists.

Concluding that poverty is linked to terrorism may not fully answer the question of the root causes of terrorism because terrorism is not confined to countries that are doing poorly economically; it exists in both poor and rich countries (Bjørgo, 2005, p. 2). It is also important to note that, before and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, there have been a number of home-grown terrorists and terrorism groups in countries that were considered economically stable and whose economies functioned well above the poverty line (e.g., the 1996 bombing of Centennial Park in the United States and the July 7, 2005, London Underground bombing, which were all acts of terrorism carried out by locals, or citizens of countries that were economically sound and not poor by any means.

**Income Inequality**

Income inequality has also been mentioned as a root cause of terrorism. In their study on how poverty and terrorism were linked, Krieger and Meierrieks (2010) revealed the connection between inequality and terrorism. They stated that chances of terrorism

seem to grow stronger as the level of income inequality increases. Supporting this assertion on income inequality as a motivating factor for terrorism, they referred to the work of Ross (1993), who stated that inequality, or high bias in economic levels, creates an enabling environment and attraction for individuals to join and participate in terrorism. Hence, Krieger and Meierrieks concluded that economically poor countries are places with more likelihood for violence because recruitment of supporters in such situations is easier and less costly than in countries where there is a more proportionate distribution of income.

**Culture Clash**

Culture clash has also been mentioned as a possible cause of terrorism. Krieger and Meierrieks (2011), quoting Huntington's 1996 work, wrote that violence tends to occurs among groups with different religious or ethnic identities and that this violence can be either local, or inside one country, or between different countries and structured along civilizational lines (e.g., Islamic countries versus the West). The authors remarked that the existence of this kind of violence makes it easy for terrorist groups to gather support for their cause against opposing groups that do not share a common identity. While this opinion may have some validity, it can be disputed when it is viewed relative to the situation of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta because individuals in opposing groups within this particular area do in fact share the same culture. In addition, the acts of terrorism and militancy are not directed toward the people of the Niger Delta region but mostly against the government and corporations operating within this region.

**Political Instability**

Political instability has also been mentioned as a possible cause of terrorism. Political instability can be defined as a situation with a high tendency for collapse of the government (Alesina, Özler, Roubini, & Swagel, 1996). Political instability results in unstable governments, which leads to frequent changes, and as long as there is the potential for collapse, the government is weakened. Krieger and Meierrieks (2011) agreed with this notion, noting that the vacuum created as a result of political change can become an enabling environment for terrorist groups to promote their agenda because they would experience little or no challenge due to the government's weakness at that point.

Political instability may be a driver for causes of terrorism; however, instability does not appear to be the case in the Niger Delta region. While the country has had a very stable government since returning to democracy and civilian rule in 1999, terrorism and militant activities increased exponentially during this period, compared to a time when the country experienced some form of instability under military rule.

**Relative Deprivation**

Relative deprivation is noted as another reason why individuals join and participate in terrorism. Taşpinar (2009) defined relative deprivation as "the absence of opportunities relative to expectations" (p. 78). In a study on fighting radicalism rather than terrorism that redefined root causes, Taşpinar discussed the implications of relative deprivation as a causal factor for terrorism and radicalism and noted that, when a number of factors such as "social, cultural, economic, political and psychological come together,"

they become a suitable breeding ground to recruit individuals into terrorist and radical groups (p. 76). Taşpinar stated that it is in situations and communities where there is relative deprivation that terrorism and radicalism become relevant and gain grounds with people. The researcher also pointed out that it is misleading to assume that, just because there are terrorists who have a middle-class background, social and economic factors are not always causes of terrorism and radicalism. Using the Arab world as an example, Taşpinar posited that relative deprivation is the real problem in this region, for such deprivation can lead to frustration. This comparison is understandable because Taşpinar reiterated a period during which civilization in Europe was far surpassed by that of the Arab civilization. Comparing situations of relative deprivation as an enabling ground for terrorism and radicalism in the Arab world, the situation in the Niger Delta may prove to be a challenge; in the case of this region, there is no "golden age" history that the region could point to as being a time when its economic condition surpassed that of other regions of the country in particular or of parts of the world in general.

## Conclusion

As has been shown in this chapter, the root causes of terrorism can comprise a number of factors, and they vary across different locations. Much of the literature reviewed in this chapter pointed out that, even though many factors can be associated with root causes of terrorism and militancy, researchers have selected particular ones and argued for their direct relationship to this issue. Upon reviewing these mostly peer-reviewed articles, I came to the conclusion that some common themes tended to emerge in the search for root causes of terrorism, namely (a) political, (b) environmental, (c)

cultural, (d) religious, (e) resources-related, and (f) economic themes. Relative to the phenomenon of terrorism in Nigeria, specifically militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region, no simple conclusion could be drawn from the literature with respect to a particular cause of terrorism, which made it challenging to develop any solutions to the problem. Furthermore, this uncertainty made it both timely and important to conduct this research into possible root causes of terrorism in this region. Gaining a better understanding of the particular root causes associated with the acts of terrorism in this area of Nigeria can be critical to developing policies and strategies that will help avert the problem (Çinar, 2009).

Associating a blanket cause with acts of terrorism will mask the true cause, if it is not properly researched and determined. In a study on rethinking and understanding terrorism and its root causes, Franks (2009) took the focus away from previously known traditional (i.e., orthodox) ways and thinking about terrorism. Franks asserted that this way of thinking "seems inadequate for dealing with the root causes of terrorism and is failing to provide an explanation of the trends associated with 'new terrorism,' which are increasingly undermining the orthodox understanding" (p. 159).

Understanding the root causes of terrorism is very important, because using the traditionally known, or orthodox, causes of terrorism to describe all acts of terrorism is not effective in determining why individuals get involved in these acts in a particular place and will hinder the ability to develop meaningful and effective policies to curb terrorism—the true cause of a particular act of terrorism is masked behind wrong assumptions. Franks (2009) noted that not having a discourse and a proper understanding

of the root cause can lead states to use force to deal with the issue of terrorism without recourse to the debate surrounding root causes. Such a reaction would be counterproductive. It would not help curb this phenomenon because the root causes would be neither understood nor addressed. The action would temporarily quell the state's security needs, but it would not curb huge and lingering problems.

Several studies have been undertaken to explore root causes of terrorism. However, in reviewing the literature, there appeared to be a gap regarding the root causes as seen specifically from the perspective of individuals who had been a part of militant terrorism groups, but who had been granted amnesty through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program of Nigeria, as is the case in the Niger Delta region. By undertaking this research, I sought to narrow the gap in the professional literature.

## Summary

I conducted a review of related literature with special attention to root causes of terrorism with the goal of gaining a better understanding of the reasons why individuals get involved in militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. What emerged from the literature review was that there does not seem to be much agreement on the root causes of terrorism.

The literature search included utilization of a variety of databases, including ProQuest Central, SAGE, Academic Search Premier at Walden University, Google Scholar, and third-party databases provided by the Walden University library. Key words used were: *what causes terrorism, root causes of terrorism, causes of terrorism in Nigeria, causes of terrorism in Africa, causes of world terrorism, causes of militancy in*

*Nigeria, causes of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta, causes of militancy in Niger Delta, causes of terrorism and militancy in Nigeria, Niger Delta militants, Nigeria Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, traditional causes of terrorism, Niger Delta militants, Niger Delta militancy, Niger Delta amnesty, 7 July 2005 attacks, 2002 Bali bombings, Madrid bombing, Mumbai terrorist,* and *Boko Haram.*

The literature review revealed 11 traditional causes of terrorism, which were: (a) only Muslims are terrorists and involved in acts of terrorism; (b) Western and United States policy, or the introduction of Western and U.S. notions of democracy in foreign countries; (c) social conditions, or the belief that the emergence of terrorism in some countries, especially on the continent of Africa, is as a result of poor social conditions; (d) lack of development, which is the result of neglect by the government and its agencies; (e) struggle for natural resources, related to the desire of communities to control the local resources such as oil and gas, which are found in the Niger Delta region; (f) the economy, which focused on the notion that poor economic performance in some counties is a causal and contributory factor to terrorism and violence; (g) poverty linked to violence and the notion that rich countries have a better prospect for a peaceful future; (h) income inequality, which means that the chances for terrorism grows stronger as income inequality increases; (i) cultural clash, which notes the occurrence of violence among groups with different religious or ethnic identities; (j) political instability, which notes that terrorist groups use instability created by political vacuums to push their agendas; and (k) relative deprivation, which states that individual are driven to radicalism and terrorism when there is an absence of opportunities relative to their expectations. It is

important to note, however, that there was no consensus on these factors or that any or all of these causes are universal or present in every location where terrorist activities take place.

In the next chapter, I present the research method employed in this research. I outline specific steps that were taken to explore and answer the research questions by referring to the literature reviewed and analyzing the collected data. I describe the steps of the data collection process from selecting a sample of 10 individuals who met the inclusion criteria of having participated in terrorist groups or activities but had since received amnesty under the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program to data collection via face-to-face interviews and data analysis. I describe the role of the researcher in this qualitative research, which included field work to build trust with the interviewees. I also describe the data collection instruments, which included both the person of the researcher and a set of predetermined, open-ended interview questions. I present the data analysis process and discuss issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures in research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

**Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of the causal factors that spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The focus of this research was not to fight this phenomenon but to explore the conditions that induce individuals in this region to participate in militant terrorism, using the root cause approach. The previous chapters addressed information regarding the purpose of this phenomenological research, which was to understand the causal factors that spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism against the government and oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Militant terrorism in this region has become such an endemic problem and a factor that impacts the security in the entire country. In this research, I focused directly on militant terrorism and the causal factors that may have an impact on enticing individuals to join terrorist groups and participate in militant terrorism activities, while not heeding any negative or dangerous implications this may have for their lives.

A literature search concerning this topic produced several studies on the root causes of terrorism. Ben-Yehuda and Levin-Banchik (2011) discussed the international terror crisis and its relation to instability; Franks (2009) presented the root causes of terrorism from a different perspective that went beyond the traditional thinking regarding the root causes of terrorism. Muller (2011) focused on economic effects as a driver of terrorism and also considered terrorism in light of its economic effects, while Khan and Azam (2008) focused on social, religious, and cultural issues as being the motivational

factors for individuals to join and partake in terrorism. Bapat (2011) and Freeman (2008)

focused on the democratization policy of the United States, in which foreign countries are

encouraged to adopt democracy, with the hope that democracy would help curb terrorism.

It was noted that this policy had to a large extent led to the growth of terrorism in these

countries, which can be attributed to the resentment that a foreign country—in this case

the United States—was imposing its way of life and style of leadership on their country.

The reviewed literature showed diverse causes of terrorism, which further emphasized

that a blanket root cause approach cannot be used to determine which factors are

involved, especially as they apply to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## Research Design and Rationale

This research was conducted using the qualitative research method. I applied a

phenomenological method of inquiry, a method that helped me to gain a direct

understanding of human experiences. Particularly in this research, the method was

applied to the experiences of individuals who had previously been involved in militant

terrorism in the Niger Delta region but have now been granted amnesty. By using the

phenomenological research method, I gathered evidence directly from a first-hand/first-

person report derived from individuals who had personal experience related to this

phenomenon. Applying a phenomenological design and method to this research aligns

with and helps to answer the research questions (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Rudestam

and Newton (2007) noted that research design and methods should be "based on their

sensitivity and application to the research question" (p. 39). Using the phenomenological

design was also critical to ensuring that the research would capture the personal lived

experiences of people who had been involved and directly participated in this phenomenon.

This phenomenological research made use of in-depth interviews, conducted with individuals who had participated in acts of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region, but who have been granted full amnesty by the Nigerian government, based on the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, introduced by the federal government of Nigeria in 2009. The purpose of the program was to encourage people involved in militant terrorism to renounce their involvement, surrender their weapons to law enforcement agencies, and get registered in exchange for a full pardon, monthly payments, and skills training that would enable them to get employed or start a business. This exchange was intended to help integrate these individuals back into the society and provide them with occupations and skills to enable them to pick up legitimate work (Agbiboa, 2013b). The method of data collection I employed was face-to-face interviews, which involved several well-articulated, open-ended questions to get comprehensive information about the root causes of militant terrorism from the perspective of the participants.

## Research Questions

The research questions posed in this phenomenological research were as follows

1. What motivating factors spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

2. How has implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program helped to mitigate the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

**Role of the Researcher**

The researcher plays an important role in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. As noted by Maxwell (2013), in qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument, using his or her eyes and ears to "gather information and to make sense of what is going on" (p. 88). This concept connotes the role of the researcher with his or her presence in the field. The researcher must be in the field, talking with and interviewing individuals who are being studied in their natural setting for the purpose of collecting data.

Based on my understanding and insights regarding this research, I was directly responsible for selecting the appropriate site and sample required for data collection. In addition, I was actively involved by physically participating in the process of collection the data by conducting the interviews, sorting the data, and analyzing the results. The goal with respect to data collection was to find answers to the research questions posed for the research and to ensure that the data collection method and approach were properly aligned. In conducting the interviews or observation exercises, I endeavored to build trust with the interviewees, for trust supports and enhances the interview process.

I sought the required approvals from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University, IRB approval for the study number 06-01-17-0301313, and the Amnesty and Reconciliation Office. Both entities function as gate keepers to the individuals whose data were collected in this research. I made sure that all required permissions had been granted before starting the data collection. Because I used a qualitative research method, I was fully involved in the data collection process. To make

this happen and to make the participants feel comfortable, I spent time in the field while

conducting data collection, and I set time aside to spend with and interview the

participants in their natural setting in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

I built trust and rapport with the interviewees by ensuring that all the details about

the research, the interview process, and the expected outcome would be shared with the

participants up front. I also informed them that the transcripts of their interviews would

be shared with them for their review to align with and be consistent with their responses.

The respondents were made aware of their rights, including the right to withdraw from

the research at any time if the interview questions made them uncomfortable. I also

assured them that they would be informed about the outcome of the research.

**Methodology**

In qualitative research, the researcher is involved in the field process of data

collection. Creswell (2013) noted that this process includes the researcher's seeing and

talking to the individuals in their natural environment for data gathering. Because this

research was in line with the qualitative approach, a qualitative interview method was

employed, which entailed my being actively involved in field interviews and the data

collection and analysis processes. I used a phenomenological design to understand and

make meaning of the complexities lived and experienced by several individuals in order

to produce a fitting description of the phenomenon that is common among all of them

(Creswell, 2013; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Critical in the phenomenological research

approach is the use of groups of individuals who have personally experienced the

phenomenon under study. Selecting and using this method more than any other method

helped me to get insight into the first-hand experiences of the participants, who were best equipped to answer the interview questions of this research, "based on sensitivity and application" (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 39). This process was critical in selecting the methodology, and it was critically considered in my field-interview and data-collection plan.

**Participant Selection Logic**

I used the purposeful sampling method in this qualitative research, more specifically, purposeful random sampling. In discussing the importance of purposeful sampling, Patton (2002) noted that, purposeful sampling is both logical and powerful because it enables the researchers' ability to complete an in-depth study of the phenomenon under study, which in turn will enhance their ability to gain deeper insights regarding issues that are central to the study (pp. 230–231). Using purposeful random sampling in this research enabled the selection of participants who provided responses that dealt with and answered the core research questions. Participants were selected based on meeting preset characteristics that could best answer the research questions. In this case, selected participants consisted of individuals from the pool of militants who had participated in acts of militant terrorism in any of the nine states forming the Niger Delta region, but have received full government amnesty by the Nigerian government. Using this sampling method enabled me to select a sample that was best equipped to provide answers to the research questions posed for the research.

For qualitative research, researchers use their insights with respect to the research questions and the research problem. They carefully identify and select the site and the

participants for interviews and data collection. The site for the field interviews was carefully determined before commencement of data collection; the location of the interviews was selected to ensure that the individuals were sufficiently comfortable to complete the interviews.

The sample for this research was defined as individuals who had participated in acts of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, but who have been granted full amnesty by the Nigerian government. It was recorded that the number of people who have participated in the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program amounts to more than 15,000 (Agbiboa, 2013b, pp. 53-55). Criterion sampling, as described by Rudestam and Newton (2007, p. 7), was used to determine the pool of participants for data collection; thus, only individuals who have gone through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program were considered.

Because it would be impossible to interview more than 15,000 people for this research, that is, all those who have participated in the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program sponsored by the government, I purposefully selected a random sample of 10 individuals who met the inclusion criteria. Participants were chosen from the pool of people who have gone through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, thus ensuring that only qualified individuals were randomly selected from any of the nine states in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Office was responsible for actually sending out the invitation letters to potential participants who met the participation criteria, which had been preset to be in line with the research questions of the research. Determining the right sample size representing the population specific to

the phenomenon studied was to help improve both the ease of data collection and the quality of the results after the data analysis.

The sample size for this qualitative research plan was 10 individuals from the identified population of those who had previously participated in militant terrorism and militancy but had now received full amnesty from the government under the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. I conducted one-on-one interviews with the participants, using predetermined interview questions that aligned with the research questions and were approved by the IRB of Walden University.

Because it would have been unwieldy to interview the entire population that fit the criteria set for this research, a representative sample of 10 individuals was chosen. As explained by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), a sample in research is "any subset of sampling units from a population" (p. 177). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias further noted that a sample is used in research for data collection, and the results can be used to draw conclusion of the entire population (p. 163). Sampling for the interviews was completed based on certain predetermined criteria that served to selected participants had could provide the most useful information. For this purpose, the criterion sampling method was used (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 107). It was estimated at the time that the number of individuals who have participated in the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program exceeded 15,000 (Thisday Live, 2013).

**Instrumentation**

Data collection in qualitative research is done in the field by the researcher and can involve multiple data sources of as documents, interviews, and observations

(Creswell, 2013, p. 44). Upon completion of field interviews, the researcher codes and sorts the collected data, using themes, ideas, and categories, which make the data easily retrievable for future use (Gibbs & Taylor, 2005). Maxwell (2013) noted that in qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument in gathering information by using his or her eyes and ears to make sense of all collected data (p. 88). This concept connotes that, irrespective of other instruments that researchers may use for data collection, they still have to be actively involved in the process; I, therefore, actively involved myself in the process of data collection and data analysis in this research.

The data collection method used for this research was in-depth fact-to-face interviews, which is one of the protocols used extensively by qualitative researchers. Interviewing was described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Kahn & Cannel, 1957, p. 149). Further, interviews were combined with observation, for this helped in gathering information that might not have been included in the verbal responses of the interviewees. The goal of using these combined methods was to help uncover the reasons individuals chose to participate in militant terrorism directly from the people who had been involved in these activities.

Specifically, NVivo software and a self-developed data collection tool using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet captured information from the field interviews. It is important to note that instrument design, data collection, and data handling were completed in line with the guidelines and standards provided by the IRB. I also ensured that consent and permission had been granted by the Niger Delta Amnesty and Reconciliation Office, the government agency responsible for the Amnesty and

Reconciliation Program, before proceeding with the distribution of the questionnaire. I made sure that I followed the Amnesty and Reconciliation Office's guidelines regarding the handling of information about exterrorists and militants provided by this office.

## Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The research process in qualitative research is one in which the researcher takes a hands-on approach and involves him- or herself fully in the data collection and data analysis. Data collection in qualitative methodology can involve a variety of methods, including interviews, observations, audio- and video recordings, and archival material. To ensure effectiveness in data collection and analysis, I was involved in the process, and I made sure to apply techniques of good document management during the interviews by recording with a digital recorder, writing down notes during the interview and consistently doing a comparison of both during the coding process. This aligns with the assertion of Miles and Huberman (1994) that the researcher will need to have very good document management techniques to ensure that the data have easy accessibility, properly documented analysis, and retention of related data for future use (p. 45). Creswell (2013) noted that "the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process—they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project" (p. 182). Having these good document management techniques in place helped in the process of data collection and analysis and, ultimately, in getting good results from the analyzed data; the linkage between collected and analyzed data and the results of the research aligned with the process described by (Creswell, 2013).

To collect good data, it is important that researchers locate the right sites and individuals. They should establish rapport and gain the trust of the participants, complete purposeful sampling, collect required data, extrapolate and record all necessary information from the collected data, resolve all issues that may arise in the field, and store the data for safekeeping and any future requirements. Even though there are different kinds of data and several data collection methods in qualitative research, Creswell (2013) recommended that the focus not only be on the data, but also include the process of obtaining permission, ethical consideration, sampling strategies and methods, tools for data collection and analysis, and methods for storing the collected data. I conscientiously followed Creswell's recommendations during data collection to ensure validity and integrity not just of the data but also of the collection process.

Employing the qualitative research method in this research plan required my active field involvement during data collection. Based on the research plan in line with data collection activities, as outlined by Creswell (2013), data collection was performed through interviewing. The rationale behind selecting interviewing as a source of data collection for this qualitative research was based on the research questions and the identified problem, namely, to understand why individuals who have now received government amnesty had, at one point, been involved in terrorism and militancy. In employing interviews as a means of data collection, I predetermined certain criteria that participants would have to meet in the criterion sampling method (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 107). Data were collected by conducting interviews with individuals who had been involved in acts of militant terrorism, but who have now received full amnesty from

the government of Nigeria. The goal was to examine the phenomenon under study from the perspective of former terrorists and militants.

## Data Analysis Plan

While conducting field interviews for data collection in this qualitative research, I used a tape recorder to capture details of the interview, after which I transcribed this information and proceeded to member checking to ensure accuracy of the information as intended by the interviewees. In addition to using a tape recorder, I also used field notes so that salient nonverbal information that could not be captured by audio recording such as body language and cues observed during the interview were not lost.

In addition to conducting interviews, data were also gathered through observation. Body language and other nonverbal cues during the interview were some examples. This information was also coded and analyzed along with the interview notes. The process of coding is a part of data analysis; it requires that the researcher conduct a review of data collected in the field, complete transcription, and organize the data into themes in order to make meaning of the data as it relates to the research questions. Miles and Huberman (1994) characterized these steps as reviewing and synthesizing or as transcription and dissection to make meaning of the information (pp. 55, 56). To complete any form of data analysis, the researcher would need critically to review the data collected through field interviews and observations and, then, code these data. Coding can be done in a variety of ways, as described by Miles and Huberman; it can include "words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs" (p. 56) to build a theme that connects the different part of these individual pieces of information.

Creswell (2013) commented that the process of data analysis involves much more than merely analyzing the collected data; it also includes data organization, data review, coding, and putting the data into themes, thus providing an interpretation of the data (p. 179). I ensured that these steps were followed in data collection for this research. To ensure that the concept for this research was well-designed and in line with the goals specified, I used concept mapping to determine the relationships between participant responses and the research questions (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 54-59). Using concept mapping for this research involved setting up a process that enabled me to map all the input from the responses provided by participants, based on the topic of this research and the research questions. Therefore , I developed a clear concept map that could easily be interpreted when analyzed, to show any interrelationships or differences in all the provided responses.

### Data Analysis Process

In completing this research, I worked through, collected, and analyzed a large volume of data. It was critical during this process properly to organize and document the collected data. This was necessary to make data easily accessible at any time, thus rendering the process of tracking and analyzing fast and easy, while ensuring that data were accurately coded rather than miscoded, as discussed by Wolfe (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). The authors emphasized the importance of doing this because it is all too easy for data to be coded incorrectly when thorough data management plans are not put in place for easy accessibility, documentation, and retention (p. 45). Several options are available for use to ensure good data management plans, including computer-based

data-management software applications that are specifically designed for qualitative research. Creswell (2013) mentioned NVivo, ATLAS.ti, MAXQDA, and HyperRESEARCH as some of the software available in this category.

To avoid mismanagement of collected data, I put a good data management plan in place that included ensuring proper organization and filing, storage and security, documentation, and preservation for future reference and use. Based on my own experience in using software and information that I have read, I chose NVivo as the management software for data organization and transcription. NVivo was considered effective for qualitative data documenting, tracking, and analysis, as it helped researchers to organize collected video-, audio-, and text interview data properly for a proper and useful analysis. Using NVivo 10 enabled me to have good document management, as the software was utilized to store transcripts as well as audio recordings from field interviews. I was able to store data and information based on themes and key words through coding. NVivo helped with excellent organization, easy accessibility for analysis, tracking field data, categorizing data in preparation for analysis, and to store the research data for future research.

To ensure proper data organization and transcription, I entered all the interview details, which included the identifier numbers of the interviewees, date of the interview, location, and verbatim interview details into a notebook, so that I could compare the collected notes with what was completed by using my computer-based data management software. This process helped me to compare and contrast the responses from all interviews, to see if there were similarities and differences in the individual responses. In

this way, I was able to track each individual's information to determine if follow-up questions were needed. The strategies used for data analysis included the following:

After conducting the interviews and all required data had been collected, I reviewed the information and put it into a form that made it analyzable; this involved sorting, transcribing, and reviewing. After organizing and transcribing the data, I completed a review to put them into segments, based on relationships among the data, to be able to complete data coding properly. Creswell (2013) noted that a critical step in coding involves segmentation and assignment of names to the data being analyzed (p. 180). Completing the data coding helped in the development of themes.

Upon completing data segmentation and coding, I proceeded to group the emerging themes into different categories. Completing this process helped me to ponder the meaning represented by various themes within the larger scale of the topic and the goals set for this research. This step provided useful information that pointed the way for the next logical steps.

I utilized NVivo to store and analyze field interview data, including transcripts, transcribed recorded interviews, and the recorded audios. NVivo was used to keep track of all the recorded and transcribed interviews, field notes, memos, and information gathered from other sources such as archival documents. This provided easy access to the information at a later date when a certain data item was required. It also provided me with the ability to classify or gather information based on themes and key words. Upon entering the data into NVivo, I coded and classified the data into themes and categories,

which enabled me to complete the data analysis and report the research results based on the output from NVivo.

## Issues of Trustworthiness

### Credibility

Quality, trustworthiness, and credibility are important factors in any research study; these concepts must even be more critically guarded in qualitative studies because of the researcher's direct involvement in field data collection. To build credibility, Patton (2002) encouraged the researcher to be rigorously involved in completing the field work, ensure that reliability is established in the research, and have deep appreciation for the qualitative method of enquiry. These factors were taken into consideration in establishing credibility in this research. To ensure evidence of quality, trustworthiness, and credibility, I took the following steps: (a) I used triangulation in corroborating the results of this research with the results of other studies on this topic, and (b) I stated any biases that I might have had to ensure that readers understood my stand, or biases that may have had an impact on the research. Because this research was based on the phenomenological approach, I ensured that it met the required quality of this approach, using the suggested quality standards noted by Creswell (2013), which included conveying understanding of the approach, using related procedures for data analysis, and conveying the participants' overall experiences (p. 260).

To ensure quality and reduce bias in this research, I included some of the suggestions and processes provided by other authors on this topic as well. I utilized tape recording and field notes to capture information from interviews to ensure that I did not

leave out or miss any details that had been provided by the interviewees. During the interview, I also asked the interviewee for clarifications of terms, language, and information that seemed ambiguous to ensure that I did not leave any pertinent information by the wayside. I further provided the completed transcribed notes to the participants to ensure that the information was accurate, consistent, and represented details that they had provided during the interviews.

To further add credibility and quality to this research, a review of collected and analyzed data, including interview transcripts, was completed, which aligns with Creswell's (2013) suggestion regarding the importance of "peer review or debriefing," to help with data collection, analysis, and interpretation, in order to reduce any possible biases on the part of the researcher. Also suggested was the use of triangulation to compare the research with previously completed study. Further emphasized was the need to state any applicable biases up front (pp. 250–255). Peer review helped to ensure that the selected themes aligned with the purpose of the research; it critiqued the entire data collection and data analysis process of this research for any possible flaws and to enable correction. It helped with validating the quality and credibility of the research because the peer review was undertaken by an independent third party who had not been involved in the data collection and data analysis process.

**Transferability**

The essence and goal of transferability is to ensure that a process is put in place that will make it possible for a study to generate future research. The goal of this research was to study the root causes of militant terrorism, specifically in the Niger Delta region of

Nigeria. I reviewed work that had previously been completed on this topic to determine if the work was applicable to the Niger Delta region. In addition, I collected data through interviews from individuals who had been involved in acts of militant terrorism, but who have now received full amnesty from the government of Nigeria.

To ensure transferability of this work to aid future researchers, I ensured that I captured and provided a rich, thick description of the participants. Their experiences were used to produce multiple themes as they related to the root causes of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region and provide sufficient details that could help future researchers to duplicate this research.

**Dependability**

To ensure dependability of collected data, an audit trail of the records was kept, including collected raw data, analysis, and synthesis of these data, so that future researchers could use these data as desired. Rudestam and Newton (2007) emphasized the importance of this measure, noting that records of the study should be meticulously kept so that other researchers can reach the same conclusion when using the steps provided in a study (p. 114). All records relating to the current research are available upon request.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is an important part of ensuring that data collection and analysis are valid; it requires the researcher to put a process in place that will enhance this concern. Rudestam and Newton (2007) noted that researchers are responsible for showing convincingly that their findings are based on the performance of critical investigations on the issue being studied (p. 112). To enhance confirmability in data collection and data

analysis, I kept a reflexive journal in with personal notes, observations, and my reflections were noted and kept throughout the research process.

**Ethical Procedures**

Ethical concerns in this research derived from the fact that individuals who formed a part of the sample being interviewed for data collection purposes could be classified as belonging to a protected population. Although the federal government has granted amnesty to these individuals, the possibility of reprisals on the part of people who had been affected by their acts of militant terrorism still existed.

Knowing that there were ethical concerns with respect to including this population in the planned research, I worked with and sought the approval of the IRB of Walden University. After gaining IRB approval and permission to proceed with interviews and other data collection, I also sought the approval of the presidential office on Niger Delta Amnesty, which is the government agency responsible for implementing the amnesty program. This office was considered to function as a gate keeper for individuals who had been granted amnesty. The approval that I sought from the Amnesty and Reconciliation Office included (a) getting a list of individuals who met the inclusion criteria for participation in the research (i.e., individuals who had been involved in acts of terrorism and militancy but who have now received full amnesty from the government of Nigeria) and (b) approval for me as the researcher to have a free hand in selecting individuals from this list and conducting the required interviews for data collection.

**Summary**

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to understand the causal factors that spur individuals to participate in militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, a problem that has continually increased over the last decade, thus becoming of great concern to the government, public and private organizations, and citizens of the country. Gaining an understanding of the root causes of terrorism and militancy was important because this was considered of prime importance to all efforts of averting the phenomenon.

The root causes, or reasons, why individuals join militant groups are complex, multifaceted, challenging, and composed of a number of dimensions that are not easily determined. They can be gauged from different perspectives, depending on an individual's viewpoint. Several possible root causes of the phenomenon were noted in this research; among them were religion; policy; social conditions; and political, social, and cultural reasons.

In this research, I used a qualitative research method and applied the phenomenological paradigm, which utilizes means that help researchers gain a first-hand human viewpoint regarding lived experiences of the participants. This qualitative method yielded valuable themes and helped to answer the research questions posed for the research. Using the phenomenological approach was critical in capturing the alignment between the design method and the research questions, providing rich themes that helped explain the phenomenon of root causes of terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

The sample for this phenomenological research comprised 10 individuals from the identified population of more than 15,000 individuals who had previously been involved in militancy in the Niger Delta region, but who have received amnesty and participated in the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program of rehabilitation. Criterion sampling was used to determine the pool of potential participants for data collection; it included only individuals who had passed through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. I was directly involved in the process of data collection from the participant, which was done through in-depth face-to-face interviews. Upon completion of the data collection, I proceeded to sorting of the data and analyzing the results, using NVivo and a self-developed data collection tool, using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Based on a review of relevant literature, discussed in Chapter 2, this research appears to be the first scholarly investigation of root causes of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region from the perspective of individuals who had lived experiences of being involved in militant terrorism and, subsequently, receiving amnesty from the government of Nigeria through participation in the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. The implications for positive social change through this research include that the results can be used to design policies and programs that will specifically address the issue of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta and have a long-lasting effect in curbing this problem. The envisioned outcome of effective policies is a reduction in the loss of lives and property due to militancy and terrorist acts. In addition, the model and recommendations of this research can be replicated in other regions with similar problems.

Chapter 4: Results

**Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to understand the causal factors that spur individuals to participate in militancy against the government and oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research was designed to help reveal the causal factors that motivate individuals to join these groups and carry out militant terrorism activities, irrespective of the consequences of these acts for their own lives. This chapter contains the findings through interviews conducted with individuals who were involved in militancy but have been granted amnesty for their actions and have participated in the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. The work presented herein provides details of experiences from the perspective of individuals who were involved in militancy in the past.

The data collection method was face-to-face interviews that I conducted in the field. Interviews involved a series of well-articulated, open-ended questions, which enabled me to get comprehensive information about the root causes of this phenomenon from participants' point of view. It was important for me as the researcher to be directly involved in collecting data in the field, as asserted by Maxell (2013), who wrote that this would help ensure that the researcher is familiar with the data collection process and understands the collected information when completing the data analysis. The collected data from face-to-face interviews provided the information I subsequently analyzed, coded, and categorized into themes.

The research questions posed for the study, which formed the basis for other questions used in the interviews for data collection were as follows:

1. What motivating factors spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

2. How has implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program helped to mitigate the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

Before commencing the interviews, I read the contents of the consent form to the participants, covering the purpose of the research, interview procedures, the voluntary nature of the research, risks and benefits, privacy, confidential limitations, procedures for secondary or incidental findings, and both my contact information and that of the university in case there were questions or clarification required (see Appendices A and B for copies of the consent form in English and Pidgeon English, respectively).

The interviews involved face-to-face meetings that were taped using a Sony tape recorder, iPad recorder for back-up, and additional field notes that I took intermittently. Upon completion of the interviews, I personally transcribed the interviews and asked a qualified, neutral third party to review a copy of the transcriptions and audiotapes to ensure that the transcription captured the exact details of each interview. The individual who provided this review signed a peer review confidentiality agreement). After peer review, the transcriptions were shared with participants, as noted in the consent form, to ensure alignment with information provided during the interview. None of the participants requested changes or made additions to the transcribed interviews.

To ensure consistency, I used the same interview questions with each participant. The duration of the interviews was, on average, 16 minutes, with 28 minutes being the longest individual interview recorded (see Appendices E and F for the interview questions in English and Pidgeon English, respectively).

## Setting

The source of data for this research was obtained from ex-militants who had previously participated in militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region but have now received amnesty under Nigeria's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program of June 25, 2009. Ten participants were randomly selected for this purpose, all of whom met the set criteria. At the time of this research, the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program had been in existence for 8 years. Because the government that originally introduced the program had not been reelected into office in the 2015 presidential election, there have been changes in personnel at the Federal Government Amnesty Office. There was unsolicited criticism from participants during the interviews regarding how changes to the program office affected the program. Unfortunately, I could not follow up on the criticism with the Amnesty and Reconciliation Office as this was outside the purview of this research, the primary aim of which was to conduct an exploration of the direct experiences of former militants from their perspective, but not from the perspective of the administrators. Yet, this information or frustration expressed by the participants needed to be included in the findings.

**Demographics**

Data were collected from a sample of 10 participants. Selection was made using criterion sampling (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 7). Recruitment of participants was done by Quess Consulting, one of the organizations approved by the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program for the training, rehabilitation, and reorientation of militants who were granted amnesty through the program. Prior to working with Quess Consulting, a letter of cooperation was obtained from the organization (see Appendix D).

Upon confirmation from Quess Consulting that the population in the pool met the set inclusion criteria, 20 potential participants were randomly selected, from which a total of 10 participants were interviewed. The rationale behind selecting an initial 20 individuals was to ensure that I had a back-up of participants available should the need arise where one of the participants was not able to make the interview or chose not to continue during the interview. However, once 10 interviews had been conducted, saturation had been reached, and the data collection process was complete.

One of the challenges in qualitative research is identifying a saturation point (Starke, 2013). I did not employ a specific formula to get an optimal number of participants for this research; however, to reach saturation, the answers of 10 participants answering the same set of structured interview questions proved to be sufficient. The 10 in-depth interviews with qualified participants provided deep knowledge about the phenomenon, based on their prior participation in militancy (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Their answers also provided the needed information to answer the research questions posed for the research. Data saturation was reached after completing 10 interviews based on the

prestructured interview questions and the length, depth, and relevance of each interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

To ensure complete confidentiality and preserve the anonymity of the participants, each participants was assigned a unique alpha-numeric identifier in the form PMxxx or PFxxx, where P stood for *participant*, M or F for *male* or *female*, and xxx for numbers ranging from 001-010. Each participant was assigned a number based on the order in which he or she was interviewed (i.e., the first participant was assigned 001, and the 10th was assigned 010). The group of selected participants did not include minors. Based on the length of time that each individual indicated that he or she had been actively involved in militancy, all were recruited or had joined these groups as adults.

**Data Collection**

The individuals who were randomly selected for interviews had previously been involved in militancy, but had now gone through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. I discussed details of the confidentiality of any information provided and that they were under no obligation to join in the research. Upon their acceptance to participate in the research, we arranged a time and place for the interview sessions to be conducted. After contact with potential participants, they were provided with the option to meet face-to-face or by telephone; all of them chose face-to-face interviews.

The interviews were conducted in the Ogbokone Community Hall in Warri, Delta State. This venue is a public building in the vicinity of the Ogbe Ijaw main market. Participants were not required to sign the consent form, for it was important keep out any identifiers that could potentially lead back to a participant. Prior to commencing the

actual interviews, participants were reminded that they were free to stop participation in the research at any time if they felt too uncomfortable to continue. I ensured that verbal consent was received from participants that they would freely participate and that they accepted their part in the interview process, which included recording the interview on a taperecorder and an iPad, and my taking field notes.

A total of 10 interview sessions were completed. In addition to the digital recordings, field notes on a field observation note pad were taken during the interviews. Apart from the participant, I was the only individual present at each interview. A total of 167 minutes (or 2 hours and 47 minutes) of recorded time was captured and saved on a laptop, which was password protected and kept in a locked cabinet in my home office when not in my possession. After personally completing the transcription of the recorded interviews and subjecting the transcriptions to a peer review and member checking for accuracy and completeness, I transferred the information to the NVivo software for further review and analysis.

## Data Analysis

Maxwell's (2013) concept mapping was applied in conducting the analysis of interview data to show any interrelationships and differences in the responses. Prior to analyzing the collected data, verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews and details from the interview field notes were completed. These data were further reviewed in light of the recordings and notes to compare the transcription with both data sources. The strategy used for the analysis included the following: (a) data analysis and

transcription, (b) data segmentation and coding, and (c) data categorization and setting of themes.

NVivo software was utilized to code, categorize, and determine themes of the interview data and documentation. Codes were developed, added, and updated as they appeared during the data analysis. In completing the coding, several critical themes emerged as participants talked about motivational factors behind the reasons why they chose to join militant groups and participate in militant activities. These motivational factors included underdevelopment, poverty, marginalization, environmental pollution, oppression, relocation of local government headquarters, and lack of education opportunities. Similarly, to understand the reasons why they had availed themselves of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, the following themes emerged: provision of grants, financial empowerment, skills training, and militant transformation.

## Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is important, especially regarding the researcher's direct involvement in the data collection process of a phenomenological research. I invested great effort in the field study to ensure research credibility. For example, participants were constantly asked for clarification when there was the slightest ambiguity in their responses to ensure accuracy in the captured data. In addition, when participants were told that I was fluent in English, Pidgeon English, and Ijaw, which were the languages the interviewees spoke; that my parents were from the Niger Delta area of Nigeria; and that the interviews were for my university research purposes and not

commissioned by the government, it helped to build trust in the process. It made the participants feel more comfortable to participate in the interviews.

**Credibility**

For credibility to be established in this research, I endeavored to keep in mind three items that Patton (2002) considered of importance in qualitative research, namely, reliability, experience, and appreciation of the qualitative method of enquiry. To ensure that Patton's recommendation was followed in this research, the participants were drawn from a large and diverse pool to ensure that any form of bias was minimized. I also made certain that triangulation was used to establish validity by employing several perspectives regarding the collected data. I aimed at consistency by recording interviews, taking field notes, and probing further for clarity on particular questions.

**Transferability**

Transferability was a major consideration in completing this research because I wanted to ensure that data from this research was available as reference and could be used by future researchers. I also hoped that this research would generate further needed research. To ensure transferability, all interviews were digitally recorded using a Sony digital recorder. I made a second back-up copy on my iPad recorder. Transcription was carefully completed based on the recorded files. I also engaged a peer reviewer to ensure that the recordings were accurately transcribed, after this individual had signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure anonymity and safety of the participants. All audio- and electronic data, as well as paper files related to recordings and transcripts, were stored on my personal computer, home server, and in a purchased off-site cloud storage

facility. The essence of completing this process was to ensure that all necessary data are available, easily accessible, and usable, should the need for them arise in future research projects.

**Dependability**

As described in Chapter 3, I endeavored to establish dependability, for example, through leaving an audit trail that comprised records of all the data that were collected, synthesized, and analyzed during the course of this research. This was to ensure that these data would be accessible, should a future need for reference arise or if data access is required by future researchers, working on a similar phenomenon.

**Confirmability**

As noted in Chapter 3, the strategy I used for confirmability was to keep a journal throughout the interview process, in which I recorded observations and thoughts. This information was also taken into consideration in the data analysis process. This aligns with the recommendations of Rudestam and Newton (2007), who wrote that researchers should ensure critical investigation in their study. Taking notes ensured that all aspects of the interviews were critically taken into consideration. In addition, interviews took place in a public setting, which, in this case, was the Ogbokone Community Hall, Main Market Warri, Local Government Area of Delta State.

**Results**

The results presented in this section are based on a completed analysis of the participants' interview data. Content, patterns, and themes were used during the analysis of each interview question. To answer the research questions posed for the research, 15

interview questions were developed for data collection. They were designed to get comprehensive answers from the participants to answer the following two research questions:

RQ 1: What motivating factors spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

Seven interview questions were designed to answer this research question. All 10 participants responded to these questions and provided multiple reasons regarding the factors that motivate individuals to participate in militant terrorism.

RQ 2: How has implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program helped to mitigate the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

Eight interview questions were designed to answer this research question and provide a better understanding of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program that had been put in place by the Nigerian government and how well it has done with respect to militant terrorism. To answer both research questions, 15 open-ended interview questions were designed to provide insight and information to answer the research questions.

Figure 1 shows the interview question mapping chart. It depicts how each of the 15 interview questions is tied to the Research Questions.

*Figure 1*: Mapping of the interview questionnaire to the research questions posed for the research.
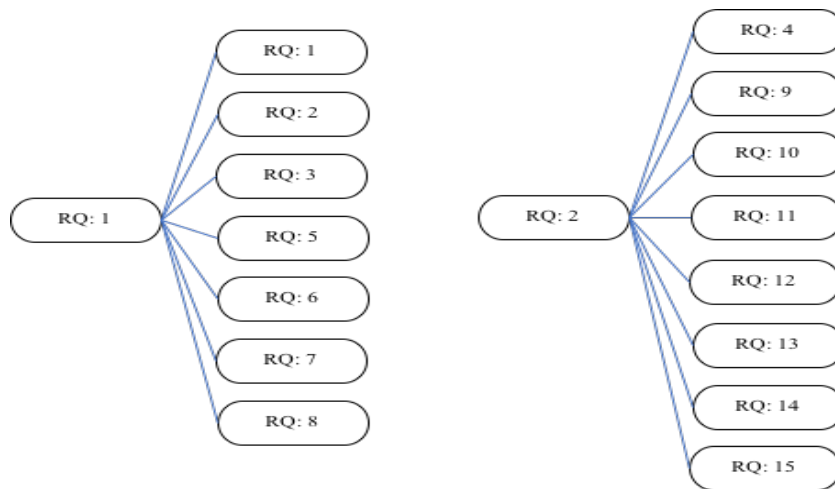
**Results for Research Question 1**

What motivating factors spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

**Introduction.** The first research question was meant to determine the root causes of militancy by identifying the rationale behind the question why individuals choose to join and participate in militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. I designed Interview Questions 1–3 and 5–8 to collect data from participants to provide answers to Research Question 1. The analysis uncovered 10 general reasons, or root causes, why individuals chose to join militant groups. However, during the coding process, the total number of themes was reduced because some of the themes fell into the same category. For example, root causes such as schools and public transportation would fall into the category of provision of social amenities. An analysis regarding each of the interview questions is outlined in the following sections.

**Findings Through Interview Questions 1-3**

Interview Questions 1–3 were intended to determine the suitability of participants, based on the inclusion criteria set to find participants best suited to provide the needed information. The selection criteria specified individuals who had participated in militancy in any of the nine states forming the Niger Delta region and who had subsequently received full government amnesty by the Nigerian government.

**Interview Question 1.** Were you involved with and participated in militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

All 10 participants indicated that they had been personally involved in militancy or militant activities in the Niger Delta region, which aligned with the category of individuals required for this research.

**Interview Question 2.** How long were you involved in militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? Their responses to Question 2 are shown in Table 1, indicating that most of the individuals interviewed had been involved in militancy for over 20 years. Only one individual had been involved in militancy for fewer than 10 years.

Table 1

*Interview Question 2: Number of Years Involved in Militancy (N = 10)*

| Number of Responses | Number of Years Engaged in Militancy |
|---|---|
| 1 of 10 | <10 Years |
| 3 of 10 | >10 Year <20 Years |
| 6 of 10 | >20 Years |

**Interview Question 3.** What militant group did you belong to? Analysis of

Interview Question 3 showed that half of the participants (five out of 10) belonged to the

John Togo/NDLF group. The individual classified as *other* worked with different militant

groups in supplying information, hence the categorization *other* (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Interview Question 3: Terrorist Groups Respondents Participated in (N = 10)*

| Number of Responses | Terrorist Groups |
|---|---|
| 2 of 10 | Tompolo |
| 1 of 10 | Boy Loaf |
| 5 of 10 | John Togo/NDLF |
| 1 of 10 | Wonama |
| 1 of 10 | Other |

*Note*. NDLF = Niger Delta Liberation Force.

**Findings Through Interview Questions 5–8**

Interview Questions 5 through 8 were specifically designed to provide clarity on

the reasons why individuals in the Niger Delta region joined militant groups and

participate in militant activities, despite the risks associated with being members of such

groups. Using these questions, I sought to identify the root causes directly from the

perspective of individuals who had previously been involved in these acts but have now

been granted amnesty.

The questions asked for Interview Question 5, 6, and 7 were as follows:

**Interview Question 5.** What, in your opinion, are some of the factors responsible

for the emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta region? The purpose of this question

was to determine the general reasons that caused militancy to start in the Niger Delta

region and to see if there were any similarities or differences in individual motivations. In responding to this question, participants provided four motivating factors for the emergence of militancy, which were (a) resource control, (b) underdevelopment, (c) relocation of local government headquarters, and (d) poverty. Of these four factors, underdevelopment received the highest number of mentions ($n = 5$ mentions).

**Interview Question 6.** What, in your opinion, are the motivating factors that spur people to join militant groups in the Niger Delta region? The purpose of this question was to determine the motivation for individuals in this region to join militant groups. The objective was to determine if there were any similarities between general and individual motivating factors. Responses to this question uncovered four motivating factors, namely, (a) resource control, (b) underdevelopment, (c) poverty, and (d) marginalization. Resource control received the highest number of mentions ($n = 6$ mentions).

**Interview Question 7.** What factor or factors are responsible for your personal decision to join a militant group in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? The rationale behind this question was to gain insight into the personal factors responsible for the decisions of the individual participants to join militant groups, which aligns with the purpose of this research. The purpose for this question was to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of the individuals who had participated in acts of militancy in the past. The results of this interviews questions showed eight factors that compelled participants to embrace militancy, namely, (a) resource control, (b) poverty in Niger Delta communities,(c) underdevelopment, (d) marginalization, (e) oppression, (f) environmental pollution, (g) education, and (h) relocation of local government

headquarters. Of the eight factors mentioned, the top two were resource control with

$n = 3$ mentions and underdevelopment with $n = 4$ mentions.

The 10 participants provided multiple reasons in answer to Questions 5–7

regarding why they and other individuals became militants. Analysis of the interview

questions uncovered the following nine reasons: (a) resource control,

(b) underdevelopment, (c) relocation of local government headquarters, (d) poverty,

(e) marginalization, (f) oppression, (g) environmental pollution, (h) education, and

(i) communal clashes. However, as shown in Figure 2, of the nine reasons provided,

resource control, underdevelopment, relocation of local government headquarters, and

poverty had received the highest number of mentions.

Figure 2 is a graphic representation of participants' responses to Questions 5, 6,

and 7 regarding the factors responsible for the emergence of militancy and motivating

factors for joining militant groups in the Niger Delta region. Figure 2 shows the top three

responses to the causes of militancy: resource control 39%, underdevelopment 25%, and

poverty 11%.

A breakdown of the number of times that each cause was mentioned in response

to each question is noted in the Table 3. It is important to mention that, in some instances,

some respondents gave more than one reasons as their motivation for joining militant

groups, hence the number of reasons is more than 10, or the total number of respondents.
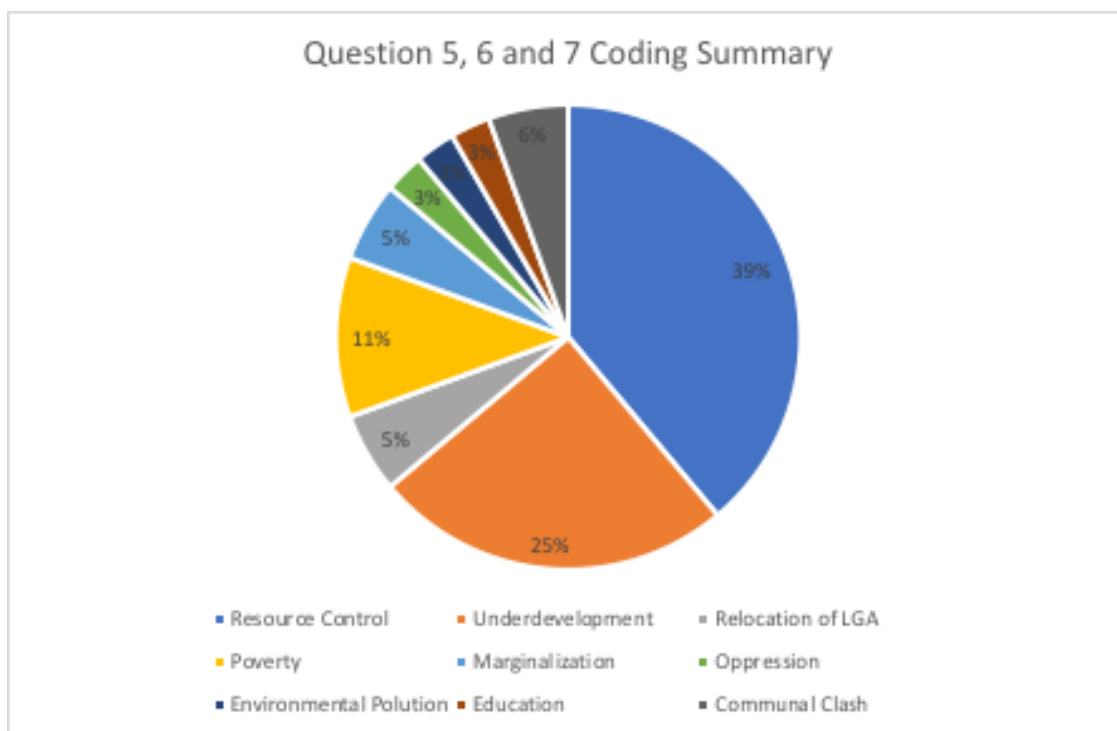
*Figure 2*: Summary of coding percentages for Questions 5, 6, and 7.

Table 3

*Breakdown of Participant Responses to Questions 5, 6, and 7*

| Motivation | Question 5 | Question 6 | Question 7 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resource Control | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Underdevelopment | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| Relocation of LGA | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Poverty | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Marginalization | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Oppression | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Environmental Pollution | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Education Opportunities | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Communal Clashes | 0 | 0 | 1 |

*Note.* LGA = Local government area.

The analyzed results were based on data collected through Interview Questions 5, 6, and 7 to provide answer to Research Question 1. The results of these questions are discussed in the following sections.

**Resource control.** Resource control was noted as one of the major drivers for militancy. This theme came up 14 times in response to Questions 5, 6, and 7, and it was the most frequently provided reason for participating in militancy among the participants. The opinion of participants was that crude oil, which is the highest national income generator for Nigeria and is extracted in the Niger Delta region, should be under the control of the people of the region—the inhabitants of the region should be allowed to control this resources, as opposed to the current situation where resources are controlled by the central government. The response from PM001 captured the sentiments regarding resource control as a motivating factor for joining militant groups when he stated:

> The crude oil in Nigeria is drilled from the Niger Delta communities and belongs to the people of that area. The way it is currently being used by the federal government can be classified as cheating the Niger Delta people.

> The same sentiment was expressed by almost all the participants. For example, PM002 stated in his response:

> The reason why I joined militancy is because of the struggle of the Ijaws. Back when cocoa and other resources were big in Nigeria, the people of the region where these resources were, residents were treated like kings by the Nigerian government and allowed to control their resources. But, since oil was found in the Ijaw area of Niger Delta, the people have not been treated with the same level of

fairness and respect. Instead, they are being treated like fools who do not know

their rights, while the resource in this area is now controlled by the federal

government and taken out of the community to develop other areas of the country.

PM003 stated, "The oil that is being used by the federal government to develop

most parts of the country is from the Niger Delta region, and this oil belongs to the Niger

Delta people and not the federal government."

Resource control was apparently a major motivation why these individuals were

driven to join militant groups; they wanted the mineral resources, which in this case is the

crude oil found in their region, to be used for development of their region. Supporting

resource control as a motivational factor to join militant groups, PM002 stated that people

join militant group for the following reason: "So that we will get back what belongs to us,

in order not to be slaves to others forever." PM003 noted that the federal government did

not listen to their request for resource control, and their thought was that resorting to

joining militant groups was a way to try to draw attention to their cause. Some of the

respondents noted that they took actions like shutting down oil flow stations in parts of

the Niger Delta region to stop the supply of oil, which would ultimately affect the income

of the government as oil is its major export.

*Underdevelopment.* Underdevelopment of the host communities (i.e., community

nine times by participants in the course of completing their interviews in response to

Questions 5, 6, and 7. In discussing this theme, participants noted that they became

militants because there was gross underdevelopment in their communities, despite the

fact that the wealth of the country comes from the natural resources found in their very

communities. The expectation expressed by participants was that, since Nigeria's economy is largely driven by proceeds from oil and gas and since these resources come from the Niger Delta region, it should follow that the government would put some focus on the development of this region. Most of the participants believed that the government was interested only in the region's resources, and after these were mined and taken away, the region was left without a basic infrastructure such as decent roads, schools, and hospitals. The concern regarding the underdevelopment of host communities was echoed by a number of participants, and it appeared nine times in the interviews. One of the respondents, PM005, summed it up by stating, "The most important thing that is responsible for the emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta region is the underdevelopment of the region. People are living in poverty, no development, no roads, no hospitals, nothing to write home about."

Respondent PM004 noted, "There is intimidation of the people of Niger Delta by the federal government, as the area does not have good amenities, no schools, no development." A third respondent, PM010, stated why he and other people decided to join militancy in these words:

It is because of underdevelopment, because we are producing the oil that feeds the nation, but we are far backward. There has been no development of any kind, and I was not happy that we were producing oil, yet we lacked every social amenity in Niger Delta.

Respondents were very passionate about the gross underdevelopment in their communities; they were of the opinion that the government was more interested in the oil

and gas resource than in developing the communities where this resource was mined. A number of respondents believed that as long as underdevelopment persists in their communities, militant activities will continue.

*Relocation of local government headquarters.* Relocation of local government headquarters came up as a factor in response to Questions 5, 6, and 7. Some participants spoke about relocation of a local government headquarters as one of the reasons for the emergence of militancy and for their joining militant groups in the Niger Delta region. It was noted that this situation occurred when a new Local Government Area was created and the headquarters were situated in Ogbe Ijaw, one of the Ijaw-speaking communities of the region. However, after the creation and announcement that the local government headquarters would be in Ogbe Ijaw, it was moved from the Ijaw community to an Itsekiri community, another tribe, a move that did not go over well with the Ijaws. They believed that the relocation was a gesture used to marginalize the Ijaws. The resultant effect of this was the emergence of some militant groups to fight against the relocation and put pressure on the government to reverse this decision. One of the respondents, PM006, stated, "The first one that sparked it up was that the local government headquarters that was to be situated in the Ogbe Ijaw community and had already been approved was requested to be moved to Ogidigben by the Itsekiri." Another respondent, explaining why the move was meant to marginalize and oppress the Ijaws, which led to the emergence of militancy to counter this oppression, stated that "the Itsekiri who had previously been oppressing the Ijaws in Warri, now requested that the local government

headquarters that was created and approved for the Ijaw community of Ogbe Ijaw Local Government be moved to Ogidigben."

It was pointed out by respondents that taking the local government headquarters away from their community would marginalize the Ijaws because representation in the federal legislature is tied to the number of local governments within a state.

*Poverty*. Poverty in Niger Delta communities was also mentioned as a reason for the emergence of and participation in militancy. However, in reviewing and analyzing this factor, as discussed by the participants, related mostly to their inability to fend for themselves. For example, one of the participant, PM007, described "the annoyance of knowing we have all the God-given resources to live a free life, a sustainable life, and yet, we are not seeing it coming to us." Even when poverty was mentioned, participants related it to what they had in comparison to what they could or should have had, if the natural resources being mined in their region were controlled by the region. A few participants believed that poverty was being used as a trap by the government, in order for the government to control them.

*Marginalization.* With respect to marginalization of Niger Delta people as a factor that spurs them to join and participate in militancy, it was noted that, even though individuals from the Niger Delta region, where oil is being drilled, were well-qualified to be employed in oil and gas organizations who operate in this region, the companies would rather hire people from other states. This causes tremendous frustration among graduates of this region because they feel that their education is devalued and not being

used. Such deep frustration can lead individuals to look for ways to air their grievances by joining a militant group. PM005 stated:

> People join militancy groups because they feel that they are marginalized. A lot of people from this region have good education; however, they find it difficult to get employment in the oil and gas company that extracts oil in their communities. Instead, they employ people from the northern and southern parts of Nigeria.

To further emphasize how individuals from the Niger Delta are being marginalized in employment, it should be pointed out that a few of these respondents, who had previously been militants, were actually university graduates who had not been able to secure employment for years after graduation. Some of the respondents mentioned that employment quotas for Niger Delta indigenes should be made mandatory in oil and gas companies that operate in the region.

*Oppression.* Oppression was mentioned as one of the reason why individuals in the Niger Delta region joined militant groups. One of the participants noted that, communities in the Niger Delta region were oppressed by the government in order to exploit the region's natural resources. The federal government will use every means at its disposal to ensure that it controls the resources, as opposed to leaving management of the resources in the hands of the regions where they are found. In fact, PM006 commented that "from my childhood and as I progressed during my secondary school days, I saw the life of oppression." To highlight oppression in the region, some respondents mentioned that the government was using every means at its disposal, including militarization of the

region with multiple military checkpoints, to exercise authority over the people of the region.

***Environmental pollution.*** Environmental pollution is chiefly related to oil spillage that results from drilling activities and continuous gas flaring on oil rigs located in the Niger Delta region. Respondents noted that pollution as a result of oil exploration has affected the ability of individuals in the regions to carry out their primary occupation, which is fishing, because the rivers have become so polluted that there has been a severe decline in the fish population of the river. PM007 noted that gas flaring in his community has been an ongoing thing ever since he was born. He commented:

> In my case, my community is hosting a Shell facility at Ojobo. Since I was a young boy, the flame from gas flaring/exploration activities have been burning for over 27 years without stopping; yet there is nothing to show for it in the community and its environs (e.g., Torugbene, Ndoro). In addition, the flared gas and exploration activities have negatively affected all spheres of our lives, health, water, and agriculture.

It is important to note that the Niger Delta people, especially the Ijaws, are heavily involved in fishing due to the proximity of rivers and the ocean. So, any kind of pollution from oil and gas rigs located in these communities has the potential to affect the rivers and, by implication, fishing activities. Some respondents noted that some individuals involved in fishing had to resort to militancy because pollution had affected the fish population in the river to such an extent that they lost their livelihood.

***Education opportunities.*** Education opportunities or rather the lack thereof was a factor that droves individuals in this region toward joining militant groups. This factor was linked to lack of opportunities for indigenes of communities within the Niger Delta region to get a formal education due to a dearth of good schools and an educational infrastructure. No opportunities were available to encourage academic pursuits even though the citizens had the desire for educational opportunities. It was mentioned that the lack of an educational infrastructure in a number of Niger Delta communities forced indigenes in some of these communities to travel to other states in the country in order to attend good schools, which could get very expensive. PM001 explained that he joined the Niger Delta militancy in order to fight for both himself and his family to get quality and affordable education.

PM008 was categorical in linking his joining militant groups to his inability to get an education:

> I am pained that I come from an oil producing community and yet, I have not benefited from the oil. I have not achieved anything. I have not gone to school to get an education. So, I decided to join a militant group to enable me to get some benefit from the oil and gas exploration that is going on in my town.

While discussing lack of educational opportunities as a factor that spurs individuals to join militant groups, the participants explained that people from the region have the desire for an education, but the enabling educational facilities such as schools and libraries and items such as laboratory equipment are lacking in the region, and where they are available, they are either dilapidated or in a state of disrepair. They noted that

their cost of getting quality education surpasses that of the average Nigerian, as they have to travel outside their own communities to realize this goal.

***Communal conflict.*** Communal conflict was identified as a direct consequence of the move by the federal government to relocate a local government headquarters from one ethnic community to another. This move resulted in mistrust of both the other community and the federal government because indigenes of the community from where the local government was moved felt that they were being oppressed and that this was an attempt to marginalize them and their state. The result of this move was the setting up of tribal-based militant groups by the youth in both communities in order to confront all aggression from the opposing community. PM009 stated:

> When the Itsekiri crisis started, it was between them and the Ogbe Ijaw community. However, instead of focusing on only on people from Ogbe Ijaw, they started to kill Ijaws from Amasoma, Ojobo, Tuomo, Ezebiri, and Ayakoromo who lived in Warri. So, in order to save my life and that of my family and also fight for the Ijaws, I decided to join one of the militant groups and fight for my rights.

Through the interviews, it became clear that communal clashes between the Ijaws and Itsekiris created distrust between two communities that had previously lived in peace for many years. Participants noted that as long as communal clashes took place, some elements of militancy would exist fed by suspicion and fear of attack in each tribe.

**Interview Question 8.** Would you say that the factors that spurred you to joining and participating in militancy in the Niger Delta region are justified? The purpose of this

question was to determine if the respondents saw their reasons justified their joining

militant groups and participating in militant activities, knowing the effect that this had on

the country. Analyzed interview data showed that all 10 respondents declared that their

actions in joining a militancy group were justified. A variety of reasons were provided,

and all of them aligned with their individual reason for engaging in militancy.

As an example, PM004 stated, "It was justified for me; it was good; I had to fight

for the cause of the people." PM005 added that "it is justified because it is not right for

anyone to deprive you of what rightfully belongs to you." It is important to note that, in

responding to this question, none of the respondent showed any form of remorse for

having been militants; some noted that they would do it all over again if faced with the

same situation.

**Results for Research Question 2**

How has implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program helped to

mitigate the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

**Introduction.** This second research question was intended to determine, from the

participants' perspective, if the implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation

Program has had any effect in mitigating the problem of militancy in Nigeria's Niger

Delta region, as it was meant to do.

Interview Questions 4 and 9–15 were designed to collect data from participants

that could provide answers for Research Question 2. Analysis of the information yielded

15 themes that were directly related to Research Question 2. This number could be

narrowed down to four succinct major categories, because items such as skills training,

grants to militants, nonviolence training (done as part of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program) all fall under the broad category of the Amnesty-and-Reconciliation-Program. Analysis of each of the interview questions is outlined in the following sections.

**Findings Through Interview Questions 4 and 9–15**

      **Interview Question 4.** Did you participate in the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program? Responding to Interview Question 4, all 10 participants indicated that they had indeed participated in the Nigerian Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. This is important for this research because participation in the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program was an inclusions criterion specified for participation in this research. Analysis of the responses showed that the level of individual participation in the program varied among individuals in the sample; for example, PM006 recalled that he was involved in assessing the program at the beginning through his own participation and sharing the information gathered with his group to determine if they should also participate, while other participants noted that they were fully participating in the program, which involved also complete disarmament.

      **Interview Question 9.** What has the government (state or federal) done to resolve the concerns of militant groups in the Niger Delta region? Responses to this question yielded seven factors, the top five of which were (a) external training, (b) orientation, (c) monthly stipends, (d) presidential pardon, and (e) amnesty. Some respondents pointed out that the government has not done anything to resolve their concerns; they were aware that the program deviated substantially from the original plan of the program. For example, several of the participants noted that they had not been paid their monthly stipend for a

few months, while others were still waiting to be sent to skills development training, after several years. When the interview question and the responses were further analyzed, the responses were classified into two themes: (a) implementation of the amnesty program and (b) no response from the government, as external training, orientation, monthly stipends, and presidential pardons were all part of the amnesty program, yet not carried out as promised.

Implementation of the amnesty program was the prevalent theme in the responses. The participants noted that the establishment of this program came as the result of militant activities in the Niger Delta region, and it was meant to address the concerns of militants with the goal of getting them to stop militancy and renounce their membership in these groups. A number of the participants pointed to particular areas where they had personally been engaged in the amnesty program, which included nonviolent orientation involving training for abstention from participation in violent acts and behavior, skills development training, payment of monthly stipends for upkeep, and receiving full amnesty for their involvement and participation in militancy. Supporting this premise, PM001stated that "the federal government has taken me in person into training." PM002 for his part commented, "We were provided with nonviolence orientation and provided with the details of the amnesty program, which we were told would be of immense future benefit to us."

While a number of respondents pointed out specific things that the government has done to resolve the concerns of militants, others noted in their interviews that the government has not really done anything to address their concerns. Some of the reasons

provided for this assertion were based on the fact that, despite the measures put in place

by the government, militant activities still persisted in some parts of the region.

Supporting the claim that militant activities still persisted, PM004 stated "They have not

done anything, zero percent. If they had done something, militant activities would have

been reduced, and it would have been clear for all to see." Some of the respondents

acknowledged the implementation of the amnesty program by the federal government but

noted that they had good reason to claim that nothing has been done to resolve the issue

of militancy because implementation of the program fell woefully short of what the

federal government had originally planned and promised.

PM006 noted that nothing has been done because what has so far been

implemented was not enough compared to what should have been achieved since the

implementation of the amnesty program. He emphasized:

Nothing. The amnesty process is a failed process. Some will tell you that they

established the Maritime University, but this still does not measure up. If we have

good road network, private schools, electricity, it will help boost the economy of

the Niger Delta, and parents will allow their children to go to school in these

communities as opposed to sending them out due to lack of these amenities.

PM009 noted that the problem resided in the inadequate implementation of the

program:

Even though the federal government had good intentions to solve the problem of

militancy, the individuals who were sent to implement the program were only

after their selfish gains, and since they were representing the government, it means that nothing has been done by the government.

**Interview Question 10.** How effective has the government response been to resolving these concerns? When analyzed, all participants had the same response to this question; they all commented that the response of the government in resolving the problem of militancy in the region has not been very effective. The major reason for the ineffectiveness, as mentioned by the respondents, was that the government has failed fully to implement the original agreement reached with militants in the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. Supporting this notion, PM001 noted, "It is supposed to work, but government has failed the people, because the government is not working based on the agreement that they had with the militants." In explaining some of the ineffectiveness of the response by government, some of the respondents noted that they have not benefited from the full package of the amnesty program. For example, some individuals were being paid the monthly stipends, but they have not been provided with skills development training that would enable them to be self-sufficient.

PM005 explained, "From my personal view, their response has not worked. Apart from providing monthly stipends, militants were promised training to enable them get jobs and integrate back into the society. But, since the death of Yar'Adua, all the plans have been hijacked by our politicians." Respondent PM003 noted, "We thought the amnesty program might help us, so we complied as requested. But at the end of the day, there is no solution. The only thing we were getting out of it was the monthly stipends." It should be noted that the measure of effectiveness of the government's response to

militancy, as judged by the participants, was based on the incomplete implementation of the agreement reached between the militants and the government.

**Interview Question 11.** What is your understanding of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program that was introduced by the federal government of Nigeria? Responses to this interview question showed varied understanding of the reasons behind the implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program among respondents. Analysis of this question produced five different themes on the understanding of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program from participants that included (a) benefits to militants, (b) to end agitation, (c) militant transformation, (d) empowerment, and (e) skills training. Some of the respondents noted that their perspective of the program was that it was used as a tool of deception to get militants to surrender, turn in their arms and ammunitions, and give up the fight for what they believed strongly in.

A percentage breakdown of responses regarding their understanding of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program is provided in Figure 3.



Question 11 Coding Summary

- Grant Benefits To The Militants
- End Agitation
- Militant Transformation
- Empowerment
- Deception
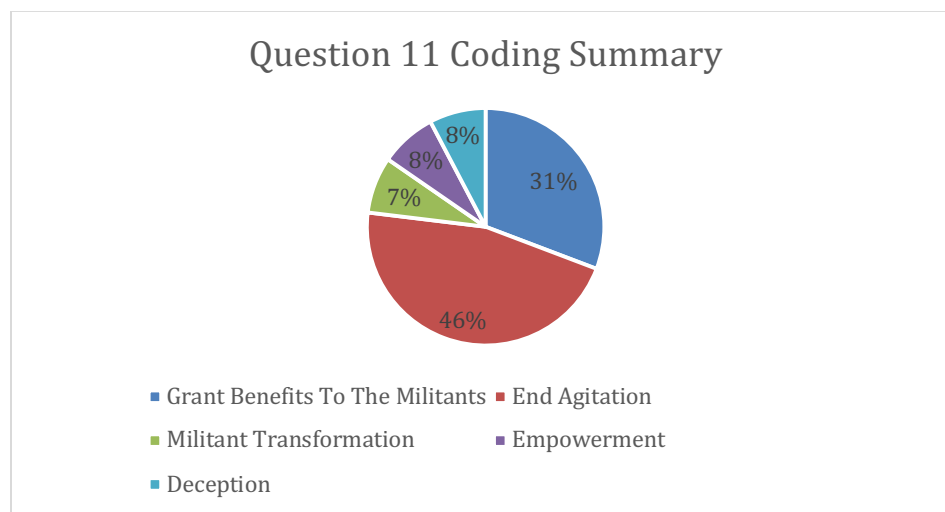
*Figure 3*: Summary of coding percentages for Question 11.

**Interview Question 12.** How specifically did you participate in the federal

government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program? The reason for this interview

question was to determine the specific ways in which each respondent had participated in

the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. This was important because one criterion for

participation in this research was that individuals must have gone through the amnesty

program to ensure that they have been granted amnesty. Table 4 shows that everyone

interviewed participated in the program but in different areas, with different levels of

involvement, and to varying degrees of completion.

Table 4

*Interview Question 12 (Ways of Personal Participation in the Amnesty Program)*

| Number of Responses | Ways of Participation |
|---|---|
| 4 of 10 | Skills Training |
| 5 of 10 | Complete Disarmament |
| 1 of 10 | Monthly Stipends |

**Interview Question 13.** How successful has the Amnesty and Reconciliation

Program been in addressing your concerns for participating in militancy in the Niger

Delta region? This question was meant to determine if the Amnesty and Reconciliation

Program has been successful in dissuading the participants from getting involved in

militancy after their initial surrender based on the program. A total of nine participants

indicated that they believed that the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program has not been

successful, while only one participant noted that it has been somewhat successful. Some

of the reasons why the program was considered less than successful included nonpayment

of monthly stipends, not meeting promises made to militants in exchange for

disarmament, and not addressing the issue of resource control. The lone participant who

noted that the program has been successful said that it has helped to train a number of

militants in areas such as aviation; maritime skills such as shipping, safety, and security;

and the creation of the Niger Delta ministry. Analysis of this interview question and the

responses showed that all respondents had participated in one way or another in the

federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. The analysis uncovered

several areas in which participants were involved in the program. The findings were

categorized into three core themes: (a) skills training, (b) completed disarmament, and (c)

provision of monthly stipends. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the responses regarding

the success of the amnesty program.

Table 5

*Interview Question 13 (Success of the Amnesty Program)*

| Number of Responses | Responses |
|---|---|
| 9 of 10 | Not very successful |
| 1 of 10 | Somewhat successful |
| 0 of 10 | Not successful |

It is important to note that the main reason participants gave as to why the

amnesty program has not been successful was that, 8 years into the program, the

government still has not fully delivered on all the promises made to the militants upon

their surrender and embracing of the amnesty program. Their frustration was eloquently

expressed in the response of PM003:

I have been waiting for the past 4 years. They have failed on all their promises.

They told me that they would train me, empower me, give me a comfortable life,

an apartment, a car, so I would not go back to my past life [of militancy]. But,

none of these things have been fulfilled, we are still living the same.

Based on participant responses regarding the success of the amnesty program, one

must conclude that program has not been very successful. It is important to note,

however, that for some participants success meant complete delivery of all the promises

made by the government regarding the program. For example, when there was an

outstanding item, even though an individual may have completed the skills training

sponsored by the program but has not yet found employment that allowed him to put the

skills to use, he may judge the program to be unsuccessful.

**Interview Question 14.** How successful would you say the Amnesty and

Reconciliation Program has been in resolving the problem of militancy in the Niger Delta

region? This question was critical in determining if the implementation of the Amnesty

and Reconciliation Program has been successful in resolving militancy in the Niger Delta

region.

In analyzing this interview question and the participants' responses, it became

evident that all of the participants were overwhelmingly convinced that the program has

not resolved the problem of militancy in the region. Uncovered and borne out by the

analysis was that the participants' position rested on their distress regarding the

program's failure to deliver on all promises made to them during the period of

disarmament.

As noted by the participants, their opinion regarding success or failure of the program was partly due to the federal government's not meeting its obligation regarding the program as discussed with militants at the onset of its implementation. PM008 said, "It has not [been successful]! I say so because the reconciliation that the government talked about has not done anything for anyone. The government has not implemented the agreement that we signed with President Musa Yar'Adua."

Success of the program was considered to be the program's ability to address the reasons why individuals had joined militant groups in the first place. PM002's comment aligns with this notion when he stated, "No! Because Niger Delta who is the owner of the oil, the real owner of the oil, has not even seen 10% of the benefit from the oil." Clearly, the participants believed that the program has not been successful because many of the reasons that prompted them to join militant groups have not yet been addressed as promised.

**Interview Question 15.** What are the factors that will make you personally completely disengage from militancy and embrace peace in the Niger Delta region? This interview question was intended to determine the factors that needed to be remedied in order to encourage participants fully to disengage themselves from militant groups and militant activities. Analysis of the responses to this interview question uncovered a total of five factors: (a) proper implementation of the amnesty program, (b) resource control, (c) infrastructure development, (d) job creation, and (e) restructuring of the country. Of these five factors, proper implementation of the amnesty program and infrastructure development had received the highest number of mentions. PM001 explained:

The only solution I have that will make militancy finally stop in the Niger Delta region, is to do the plan that was agreed to when the amnesty program was introduced. The people that took the amnesty program over 9 years ago have nothing to show for their decision. We have seen them: Nobody can build a house. Nobody can say, "This is my car." Nobody can say, "I have paid my wife through amnesty." Nobody can stand and say, "I have =N=100,000 (one hundred thousand Naira) in my account," or "That's the reason why I am benefiting from amnesty." Nothing is happening! This is why you still see people who had previously disarmed going back to militancy, and new militant groups are coming up.

A percentage breakdown of responses regarding factors that will cause people to disengage completely from militancy and embrace peace is provided in Figure 4.
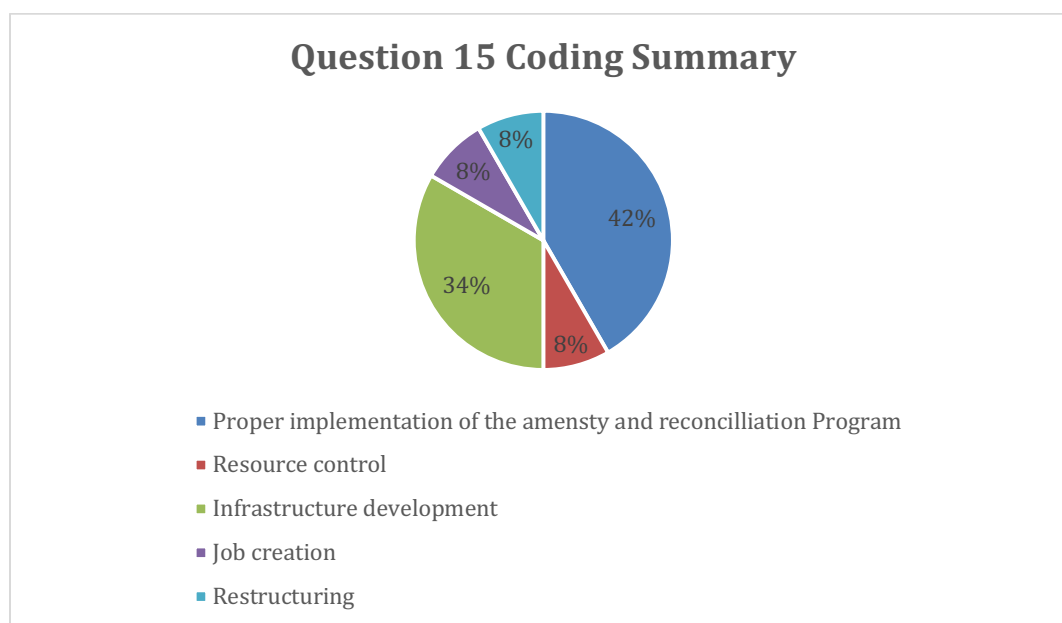


*Figure 4*: Summary of the coding percentages for Question 15.

**Summary**

This phenomenological research examined the causes of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria from the perspective of the participants, based on their lived experiences as individuals who had participated in militant activities but who had been granted full amnesty by the federal government of Nigeria under the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, introduced June 25, 2009. This research has been undertaken to determine the root causes that compel individuals to embrace militancy.

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the purpose of this research and highlighted the two research questions posed for my study. Demographic details about the sample chosen, data collection strategy, the process used for data analysis, and presentation of the results were provided. I also demonstrated how trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were established in the research.

Themes that emerged in the analysis of interview data were highlighted, and the relationship of these themes to the two research questions was established. Even though a number of themes emerged during the analysis process, it was determined that the major factors provided by the participants with respect to root causes, fell into four main categories: resource control, poverty, underdevelopment, and relocation of a local government headquarters. Overall, the data collected from a sample of 10 participants and analyzed with the use of NVivo software were sufficient to answer the two research questions posed for the research.

The four categories of major themes that emerged during interviews and the subsequent data analysis were as follows:

**Resource control.** This theme involved the desire of indigenes of the Niger Delta communities to self-manage oil and gas resource that were extracted in their communities but currently controlled by the central government.

**Poverty.** This factor, as mentioned by the participants, was mostly related to their inability to fend for themselves and adequately support their families, as well as to what they currently owned in comparison to what they could have and should have, if their communities controlled the natural resources that are being mined within their region and taken away.

**Underdevelopment**. Participants noted that, although oil and gas, which forms a large part of the nation's wealth, is mined in the Niger Delta region, communities within that region are grossly underdeveloped, compared to other parts of the country.

**Relocation of local government headquarters**. This factor concerned the relocation of a newly created and already approved local government headquarters—an important aspect because representation in the federal legislature is tied to the number of local government headquarters within a state—from Ogbe Ijaw, an Ijaw community, to Ogidigben, which is an Itsekiri community. This relocation was seen by the Ijaws as a plan to marginalize their standing within the country and to control the people.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

**Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to understand the causal factors that spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism against the government and oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. I sought information from the perspective of individuals who participated in acts of terrorism or belonged to militant groups in the past by exploring their lived experiences. The research was conducted using qualitative research methods and applying the phenomenological method of inquiry to ensure that the research incorporated the lived experiences of the phenomenon directly from the participants' recollection. In addition, this method of enquiry also identified the essence of human experience. Moustakas (1994) noted that, in the phenomenological method of inquiry, the method had to be closely linked to the research question and thus help in identifying the lived experiences of persons who were involved with the phenomenon. This allows them to provide in-depth descriptions of their particular experience (p. 13). Using the phenomenological method for this research was to capture the lived human experience of the participants interviewed for the purpose of data collection.

The following research questions were posed for the research:

1. What motivating factors spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

2. How has implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program helped to mitigate the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

The research population for this research was defined as individuals who had participated in militant terrorism but have now received full amnesty through the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, which was introduced to dissuade individuals from joining militant groups. The sample of 10 participants was drawn from the defined population and interviewed for this research.

To complete analysis of the interview data, Maxwell's (2013) concept mapping was used. This process involved mapping the responses of the participants, developing a concept map that showed any interrelationships and differences in the responses provided, completing data segmentation, coding, and categorizing the data. Collected data included details of the motivational factors that spurred individuals to join militant groups and participate in militant activities. Data were also collected and analyzed regarding the participants' understanding and impressions of the implementation and effectiveness of the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program.

## Interpretation of the Findings

Analysis of the results of this phenomenological research of causes of militant terrorism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria revealed eight core themes across the participants' answers: (a) resource control, (b) underdevelopment of the host community, (c) relocation of local government headquarters (d) poverty in Niger Delta communities, (e) marginalization, (f) environmental pollution, (g) education opportunities, and (h) poor implementation of the Amnesty Program and Reconciliation Program. Details of the themes are described in the following sections.

**Resource control.** The indigenes of the Niger Delta region have the desire for full control of the natural resources found in the region, in this case crude oil and natural gas. They want control of these resources turned over to the state government, instead of having them turned over to and controlled by the federal government, as is currently the case. Their argument is that, if allowed to control these resources, proceeds will be better managed to develop the region. However, the Nigeria Land Use Act of 1978, which is included in the current constitution, nationalized land ownership, giving control or ownership of land and water, including all associated resources, to the federal government (Udoekanem, Adoga, & Onwumere, 2014). Unless an amendment is made to the existing Land Use Act, the transfer of resource control to the region, advocated by militants, will not occur.

**Underdevelopment of the host community.** Underdevelopment was a theme that came up with most of the participants. This underdevelopment stems from the inability of the region to control its resources and use some of their wealth for their own development. As noted by Ezeocha (2016), governors in this region have argued for a revenue-sharing formula that existed in the country before the civil war, which placed control of revenue generated within a region into the hands of the region, so to speak, while they only paid taxes to the federal government. The participants pointed out that underdevelopment of communities in the Niger Delta, which host oil and gas facilities, is tied to the lack of basic required infrastructure and utilities such as good roads, health care facilities, schools, electricity, and pipe-borne water. They even complained that,

while oil and gas resource were mined in their communities, the region was backward in infrastructure compared to other parts of the country.

**Relocation of local government headquarters**. The relocation of a newly created local government headquarters from the community of Ogbe Ijaw, an Ijaw community, to Ogidigben, an Itsekiri community, was also cited as one of the factors responsible for militancy. It was noted that the relocation came as the result of pressure put on the federal government by the Itsekiri, who caused the government to move the headquarters to an Itsekiri area of Warri, instead of leaving it in the original Ijaw-speaking area, where it had already been approved. This move was said to have caused distrust between both communities, which led to a communal clash between the Ijaws and Itsekiris, orchestrated by militant groups in each of these communities.

**Poverty in Niger Delta communities**. Poverty in the Niger Delta communities, as reported by participants, was attributed to two factors: resources control and environmental pollution. As stated by Tobor (2014), even though the region had contributed over 90% of the country's wealth through its abundant oil resources, residents of the region still lived in extreme poverty. Participants echoed these sentiments in their responses, as they deplored the region's inability to control the local resources and use some of these enormous regional riches to implement, at least, some poverty-alleviation measures. In addition, they believe that most of the communities in the region were in poverty because of continued environmental pollution that has affected their means of livelihood such as fishing.

**Marginalization of Niger Delta people.** Interview participants complained that they felt that the government was marginalizing them. When asked about the main factor that led to his joining and participating in militancy, PM005 claimed that he felt the government was marginalizing him and his people. This marginalization was borne out by the deprivation experienced due to the taking away the natural resources of the region to be used in the development of other parts of the country, while nothing was done to alleviate the problems in the areas where they were taken.

**Environmental pollution.** As revealed by some participants, crude oil exploration and gas flaring have polluted and degraded the environment in the Niger Delta region, which is the part of Nigeria with the majority of oil and gas reserves in the country. This pollution has affected the livelihood of indigenes. They are no longer able to get the full benefit of fishing, which is the main occupation of people in riverine communities. It was also noted that their health is being affected because of polluted ground water. With no solution in sight to remedy this situation, a number of individuals have resorted to militancy as a means of fighting against this problem.

**Education opportunities.** The results of this research showed that quality education opportunities remained elusive for individuals in a number of Niger Delta communities. Even though there are schools in some of the communities, they are inadequate to meet the needs of the population, and they are run under very challenging conditions such as poor school buildings and lack of qualified teachers. Yet, it was part of the mandate of the amnesty program that good education and training be provided. Still, as noted by several participants, even though there is a provision for education and

training in the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program for ex-militants, many of them are yet to be sent for this training.

**Poor implementation of the amnesty program.** The results of the data analysis also showed that poor implementation of the amnesty program could be a factor that spurred people into joining a militancy group even after the 2009 Federal Government Amnesty and Reconciliation Program launch. Participants had noted that several items in the program were not implemented, thereby leaving them worse off economically than before they had gotten involved in militancy in the first place.

Another findings of this study suggested that the federal government should have a better assess system in place to vet individuals claiming to be militants and seeking to participate in the amnesty program, to ensure that they were actually involved in militancy before approving them. It was noted that there were people who had not participated in militancy but, because of poor vetting process, had nevertheless, been absolved into the program at the expense of true militants, who the program had been created for.

A number of participants mentioned that the amnesty system is hampered by poor implementation by the government; they attributed this to the death of the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, who was the brains behind the program. When he died before the program was fully implemented, the implementation was not as good as it might have been under his administration.

Analysis regarding the success of implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program in mitigating the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger

Delta indicated that the program has not been very successful in achieving this goal. Nine out of 10 participants claimed that it was not very successful, while only one participant thought that it has been somewhat successful.

## Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this research was the inability to gain access to ex-militants in some of the southeastern parts of Nigeria, for this access would have afforded me the opportunity to get their perspective. This access was hindered by the state of restiveness and insecurity in this part of the country at the time of data collection, which affected my ability to travel out to these areas. I had to take precautions to manage any security risk that might have been associated with such travel. However, this issue was compensated for by the fact that the location where the data collection did take place was also the place where ex-militants held meeting and gathered in a community center building for meetings related to the amnesty program and other matters that affected them. I was afforded the opportunity to select from a large pool consisting of individuals from different communities of the Niger Delta region.

## Recommendations for Further Study

This research revealed some issues that will require further study. First, according to several comments from the participants, it does appear that implementation of the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program was not carried out according to the original blueprint and agreement with militants who surrendered and agreed to participate in the program. Several participants noted that only a very small part of the program has actually been implemented and that even the implemented part has not been

very well run. In other words, even though ex-militants were being paid monthly stipends, the participants noted that they were owed several months' worth of unpaid monies.

Research needs to be undertaken to review the implementation of the reconciliation program to determine its effectiveness and also to determine if its implementation matches its original objective. Such a study would help the government to determine if it should continue with the program; make changes for effectiveness; or completely scrap and replace it with a different, more effective one. Second, further investigation and study are required to determine how environmental pollution is affecting the community and what impact it currently has on the livelihood of communities in the Niger Delta. A study of the effect of environmental pollution in Niger Delta communities would provide information on how the problem can be tackled, and practical remedies could be suggested. Third, it was noted by a number of participants that the region suffers from a staggering under development of the infrastructure. A study to investigate and understand this issue properly seems urgently needed; it should include a comparative analysis of the infrastructure gap that exists between the Niger Delta region and other regions of the country.

**Implications for Positive Social Change**

One of the goals of this research was to make a contribution to positive social change in the area of militancy and ensuring that the results of this research can be used to develop programs and policies specific to the issue of militancy within and outside the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This goal was intended to include programs and policies

that would better address the militancy problem and lead to long-lasting strategies with the eventual result of reducing or eradicating the militancy problem, which has cost so many lives and the loss of property. The latter involved terrorist acts directed at both the government and oil and gas companies where militants vandalized oil and gas pipelines to disrupt the supply or took over oil rigs (flow stations) to stop the drilling activities of oil and gas companies. All of this was done in a bid to impact the revenue flow from local oil reserves into government coffers, instead of benefitting the local population.

In addition, the results of the research can be used to provide a broader understanding of why individuals join militant terrorist groups and, in turn, help proactively to put measures in place to dissuade people from joining these groups, as well as measures for rehabilitation and reintegration into society of individuals who have already been involved with militancy. Lastly, this research can be replicated, or the results can be used in other regions where similar concerns of militancy may exist in order to curb the problem.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to understand causal factors that spur individuals to participate in terrorism and militancy against the government and oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research was directly related to militant terrorism and the causal factors that may have an impact on enticing individuals to join these groups and participate in militant terrorist activities, not minding the implication that joining such groups may have for their lives. The research was designed to answer the following two research questions:

1. What motivating factors spur individuals to participate in militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

2. How has implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program helped to mitigate the problem of militant terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta region?

This chapter covered the causal factors as experienced by 10 participants from whom data were collected. Respondents in the research provided opinions regarding the causal factors of the emergence of militancy, focusing on eight core areas associated with this phenomenon. These eight areas were extensively discussed; they included (a) resource control, (b) underdevelopment of the host community, (c) relocation of local government headquarters (d) poverty in Niger Delta communities, (e) marginalization, (f) environmental pollution, (g) education opportunities, and (h) poor implementation of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program. The respondents also provided areas of opportunity and suggestions for what could be done to dissuade individuals from joining militant groups and stopping militant activities within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Their suggestions included proper implementation of the amnesty program, resource control, infrastructure development, job creation, and restructuring of the country.

It is important to note that the goal of this research was not counterterrorism, but rather to understand the factors that enable the phenomenon of terrorism; thus, counterterrorism solutions have not been included as part of the recommendations. Understanding the causal factors was the main goal so that a future proactive focus can be turned toward the enabling conditions that create the problem rather than on fighting

the phenomenon once it exists. One of the goals was also to proffer plausible strategies to

curb the problem based on understanding the drivers of militancy.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions – English

Topic: Examining the Causes of Militant Terrorism in the Delta Region of Nigeria

Data collection was planned for face-to-face interviews, but interviews could also be conducted by e-mail or telephone with individuals in locations that cannot be easily accessed by the researcher. The interviews involved the use of well-articulated, open-ended questions to explore the experiences of the participants and to obtain good information from the participants' perspective on the root causes of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

Interview Questions

Interview Question 1: Were you involved with and participated in militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

Interview Question 2: How long were you involved in militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

Interview Question 3: What militant group did you belong to?

Interview Question 4: Did you participate in the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program?

Interview Question 5: What, in your opinion, are some of the factors responsible for the emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 6: What, in your opinion, are the motivating factors that will spur people to join militant groups in the Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 7: What factor or factors were responsible for your personal decision to join a militant group in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

Interview Question 8: Would you say that the factors that spurred you to join and participate in militancy in the Niger Delta region were justified?

Interview Question 9: What has the government (state or federal) done to revolve the concerns of militant groups in the Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 10: How effective has the government response to resolving these concerns been?

Interview Question 11: What is your understanding of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program that was introduced by the federal government of Nigeria?

Interview Question 12: How, specifically, did you participate in the federal government's Amnesty and Reconciliation Program?

Interview Question 13: How successful has the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program been in addressing your concerns for which you participated in militancy in the Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 14: How successful will you say that the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program has been in resolving the problem of militancy in the Niger Delta region in general?

Interview Question 15: What are the factors that will make you personally disengage completely from militancy and embrace peace in the Niger Delta region?

Appendix B: Interview Questions – Pidgeon English

Topic: Examining the Causes of Militant Terrorism in the Delta Region of Nigeria

Data collection will involve face-to-face interviews or e-mail and phone interviews for individuals in locations that cannot be easily accessed by the researcher. The interviews will involve the use of well-articulated, open-ended questions to explore the experiences of the participants and get good information from participants on the root causes of militancy in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

Interview Questions

Interview Question 1: You don ever join and do militant activity for Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

Interview Question 2: Na how long na im you been be militant for Niger Delta Region of Nigeria?

Interview Question 3: Which militant group na im you been dey with?

Interview Question 4: You join do the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program wey Federal Government been do?

Interview Question 5: Wetin you think say na im make militant begin for Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 6: Wetin you think say dey make people join militant group for Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 7: Wetin be things wey make you join militant group for Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

Interview Question 8: You think say the things wey make you join militant group for Niger Delta region dey good?

Interview Question 9: Wetin you think say government (State or Federal) don do so solve the problem wey militants get for Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 10: You think say the things wey government don do to resolve the problem wey militants dey work?

Interview Question 11: Explain wetin you understand about the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program wey the Federal Government of Nigeria introduce.

Interview Question 12: Talk exactly how you take participate for the Federal Government Amnesty and Reconciliation Program wen dem been do?

Interview Question 13: Wetin you think about the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program, e don help deal with the things wey make you join militants for Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 14: Wetin you think about weather the Amnesty and Reconciliation Program don try to solve the problem of militancy in the Niger Delta region?

Interview Question 15: Wetin you think say go make you to stop to be militant patapata and begin to dey do peaceful things for Niger Delta region?