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APPENDIX A

**Containing Violence to What End?
The Political Economy of Amnesty
in Nigeria's Oil-Rich Niger Delta (2009-2016)**

by

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Acronyms

DDR - Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration
LAO - Limited Access Order
OAO - Open Access Order
MNOCs - Multinational Oil Companies
HDI - Human Development Indicators
NDA - Niger Delta Avengers
DDR - Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration
ICT - Information Communication Technology
UNDPA - United Nations Department of Political Affairs
UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme
WB - World Bank
IMF - International Monetary Fund
SAP - Structural Adjustment Programmes
NDDC - Niger Delta Development Commission
EITI - Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
NEITI - Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
LCR - Local Content Requirements
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
MDC - Movement for Democratic Change
PDP - People's Democratic Party
APC - All Progressives Congress
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
MOSOP - Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
IYC - Ijaw Youth Congress
MORETO - Movement for Reparation to Ogbia
INYM - Isoko National Youth Movement
ENG - Egi National Congress
MEND - Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
NDV - Niger Delta Vigilante
NDPVF - Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
JTF - Joint Task Force
NNPC - Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
PANDEF - Pan Niger Delta Forum
NDCLF - Niger Delta Christian Leaders Forum
FOWA - Federation of Ogoni Women
RSM - Rondel Solidarity Movement
IPOB - Indigenous People of Biafra
NDA - Niger Delta Avengers
INC - Ijaw National Congress
IDU - Isoko Development Union
UPU - Urhobo Progress Union
INYM - Isoko National Youth Movement
UYOMO - Urhobo Youth Movement
HRW - Human Rights Watch
NDV - Niger Delta Volunteers
NDRC - Niger Delta Revolutionary Crusaders
ABA - Adaka Boro Avengers
UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme

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Abstract

In 2009, the Nigerian government introduced a new amnesty programme to help manage the Niger-Delta oil conflict. The latter has largely been between the Niger Delta militants versus multinational oil companies and the government. Unlike an earlier small-scale amnesty programme that was introduced in Bayelsa State between 2004 and 2005, which clearly failed to reduce widespread violence, the 2009 large-scale amnesty programme led to a period of relative peace in the Niger Delta. The programme initially appeared to have defied a common argument; namely, that an improvement in low human development or people's living conditions is an important step in managing resource-related conflicts, especially where resource revenues have failed to impact positively on the local population.

This dissertation argues that, instead of successfully managing the Niger Delta conflict and engaging with all the key actors in peace-building, the 2009 amnesty temporarily contained violence without institutional reforms and led to an “amnesty trap”. In so doing, the analysis disentangles the ideas of conflict management and containment, which are often used interchangeably, and offers a critique of a common understanding of a “conflict cycle” – of conflict management, containment, and resolution. More specifically, the dissertation uses the limited access order (LAO) explanatory framework of North et al. (2009) to show the extent to which institutions have helped to shape Nigerian political elites' behaviours and decision-making that affect the socio-economic realities of actors in the country and undermine peace-building in the Niger Delta. In this vein, the study explains why political elites' rush to tackle violence by settling ex-militants and their commanders through an unconditional amnesty has failed to change the dynamics of Nigeria's oil conflict. Through the amnesty, ex-militant commanders (who used to be enemies of the state) came to accumulate huge wealth and to also occupy influential political roles. This containment proved short lived, however, as violence resumed through new militant groups in 2016.

In turn, the dissertation investigates how measures applied by the Nigerian government to manage the Niger-Delta conflict have actually prepared the grounds that might further fuel the conflict trap. By drawing on a triangulation of primary and secondary sources, the analysis demonstrates why amnesties will always be insufficient to manage violence when they are implemented without significant institutional reforms notably, improving the rule of law for elites, developing perpetually lived forms of elite organisations, and consolidating political control of the military.

Introduction:

Amnesty and the Changing Landscape of the Niger Delta Conflict

In 2009, the Nigerian government introduced a new amnesty programme to help manage the country's oil conflict in the Niger Delta, which had transformed from non-violence in the 1990s to armed clashes in the 2000s (Ikelegbe, 2005; Nwankwo, 2015). This conflict is between the local population in the Niger Delta, multinational oil companies, and the government. Unlike an earlier small-scale amnesty programme that was introduced in Bayelsa State between 2004 and 2005, which clearly failed to reduce widespread violence, the 2009 large-scale amnesty programme led to a period of relative peace in the Niger Delta. This appeared to have exemplified how amnesties can be effective as part of peace-building or conflict management measures (Reppell, Rozen & de Carvalho, 2016). However, the resurgence of violence in Nigeria's oil-rich region in 2016 questioned the success of the amnesty programme. This dissertation investigates the 2009 amnesty's impact on conflict management in the Niger Delta as new waves of militants have emerged in the region since 2016.

The Niger Delta constitutes one of the world's largest oil reserves and is the bedrock of the Nigerian economy (Elum et al., 2016). Petroleum and its derivatives from the region account for as much as 98 % of Nigeria's exports; over 80 % of the federal government's annual revenue; and 70 % of national budgetary expenditure (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). Thus, the contributions of Nigeria's other exports such as cocoa and rubber are insignificant to the national economy when compared to oil profits from the country's oil-rich region.

However, despite oil wealth the Niger Delta has been wracked by violent conflict since the 1990s. Many causes have been attributed to this conflict including land control (Aghalino, 2011, p. 6), corruption (Enweremadu, 2009, p.7), federalism (Ebegbulem, 2011, p. 218), resource control (Ojekarotu, 2009, p. 2), and more frequently poverty and deprivation (Ajiboye et al., 2009, p. 224; Nwankwo, 2015, p. 385; Onibere et al., 2018). In the words of Oviasuyi and Uwadiae (2010, p. 111), "the people of the Niger Delta believe that they have no substantial benefit to show for their sacrifices, despite being the 'goose that laid the golden egg' – the economic success that underpins the

unity of the Nigerian state”. Despite various efforts to resolve the conflict including the 2009 amnesty programme, underlying issues have not been addressed, many relevant actors have largely been ignored, and tension and periodic violence continues to characterise the region. The thesis examines the 2009 amnesty programme by investigating the underlying causes of, and actors involved in, the Niger Delta conflict using North et al.’s (2009) limited access order (LAO) framework. The latter provides an overview of institutional arrangements and thus helps to explain relations and decision-making including violence in different societies (see 0.3). The introduction highlights important issues from the conflict amnesty literature; introduces key terms, research questions, and the central explanatory framework; and outlines key contributions to knowledge and the dissertation’s structure.

0.1 Amnesties in the post-Cold War Era

Broadly speaking, amnesties “are ad hoc, sanctioned to extinguish liability for specific crimes committed by particular individuals and/or groups; they are retroactive, applying to acts perpetrated before their enactment; finally, they are extraordinary measures, enacted beyond existing legislation” (Lessa and Payne, 2012, p. 4). Some of the key debates in the amnesty literature include the following: under what conditions can amnesties deliver justice and accountability without breaching domestic and international laws?; what type of amnesty design best helps to manage conflicts?; why are members of non-state armed groups the most likely to benefit from conflict-related amnesties?; and what actors must be involved in an amnesty implementation? (Mallinder, 2018; du Bois-Pedain, 2007; Braid & Roht-Arriaza, 2012; Burgess, 2012; Slye, 2012; Robinson, 2003). Since the 1990s, anti-impunity campaigners have argued against domestic amnesties that waive prosecution of individuals who commit international crimes such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. In this vein, Freeman and Pensky (2012, pp. 42-43) have underscored how the international criminal law fails to provide a “clear guidance regarding the legality of domestic amnesties for international crimes”. However, anti-impunity campaigns have not led to a decline in the number of domestic amnesties that disregard suspicions of international crimes. Instead, Mallinder’s (2012) data shows that such amnesties have increased. The weak enforcement of international laws contributes significantly to this phenomenon as state agents use amnesties as a means to guard against prosecutions under international criminal law (Freeman & Pensky, 2012; Mallinder, 2012). This

demonstrates how amnesties have strong ties with political agents inasmuch as the decision to pardon politically motivated crimes largely depends on state actors who, among other things, define the scope of amnesties.

Amnesties consist of conditional and unconditional pardons aimed at state and nonstate agents as part of conflict management strategies (Mallinder, 2018; Freeman, 2009). Unconditional amnesties are less popular than conditional amnesties as the latter have been shown to yield more positive results, especially when they are situated in political contexts where there is the capacity and willingness to prosecute offenders who fail to fully participate in the due process (Mallinder, 2018; du Bois-Pedain, 2012). Amnesties that are tied to civil conflicts – conflict amnesties – and those that are adopted in non-conflict settings have existed since antiquity (Dancy, 2018; Hesse & Post, 1999; Elster, 2004; Lessa & Payne, 2012). However, throughout history, conflict amnesties have been more common and tended to be more acceptable to scholars and policy-makers than other forms of amnesties including those that are enacted by despots or democratic regimes following a transfer of power (Dancy, 2018; Mallinder, 2012).

In terms of global distribution, sub-Saharan Africa recorded the highest number of amnesty laws from 1979 to 2010 as a result of the high incidence of internal conflicts and the large number of countries in the region (Mallinder, 2012). It follows that the increase in global amnesty laws in this ‘age of accountability’ and anti-impunity campaigns largely draws from cases on the African continent. Amnesties that emanate from dictatorial regimes have been prevalent in North Africa and the Middle East (ibid.). In countries such as Rwanda and Uganda, amnesties have emerged from mass atrocities and concerns for international crimes (Clark, 2012). These conflict amnesties have delivered mixed results as different factors including political regimes have contributed to their failures and successes. In general, the degree to which amnesties can contribute to peace-building is still a contested topic (Mallinder, 2018; Dancy, 2018). The dissertation contributes to this discussion by, for example, introducing the idea of an ‘amnesty trap’ whereby the poor implementation of an amnesty – and in this particular example, the poor implementation of a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration plan that was introduced as part of an unconditional pardon – can incite further violence (see Chapter 5).

Even though pardon is associated with most amnesties, the latter have been designed

and implemented with an emphasis not only on pardon, but on punishment and amnesia as well (Graybill, 2004; Mallinder & McEvoy, 2011). Pardon was heavily emphasised in South Africa's case where a conditional amnesty was used as a tool to address the mass atrocities committed during apartheid (du Bois-Pedain, 2007; Graybill, 2004). South Africa's amnesty, which was enacted in the mid-to-late 1990s, had an accountability process through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for politically motivated crimes. Eligible individuals were legally required to apply for pardon within a specific timeframe to report politically motivated crimes and to make full disclosure (du Bois-Pedain, 2007).

In Rwanda's case, a greater emphasis was placed on punishment of the 1994 genocide perpetrators, who among other criminal activities killed over 800,000 people between April and June 1994. In the light of the mass incarceration of the alleged genocidaires (perpetrators of the genocide), the Rwandan government in 2004 encouraged the suspected killers to confess their crimes in return for lighter sentences (The Guardian, 2004). However, individuals who were considered to have played major roles in instigating and organizing the genocide – category one defendants – were not eligible for the amnesty. The emphasis on punishment in the amnesty design overshadowed pardon as indigenous laws – 'gacaca courts' – were used to pursue peace-building (Brehm et al., 2014; Graybill, 2004). The gacaca courts entailed survivors, witnesses, and alleged perpetrators to meet "under the supervision of lay judges from local communities to determine truth and justice about the genocide" (Chakravarty, 2006, p. 132). Gacaca judges were given a brief training on gacaca laws and the ethics surrounding criminal charges including planned or organized genocide, multiple homicides, and rape. All those who were eventually released from prison under the government's amnesty could still face the gacaca justice system before being reintegrated into the communities (The Guardian, 2004).

In turn, amnesia – covering acts or encouraging silence on crimes that are committed during conflicts – was stressed in Mozambique's amnesty design. Following this Southern African nation's civil war in which the Renamo forces and the Frelimo government were involved in the killing and torturing of millions of civilians from the mid-1970s to early 1990s, the 1992 General Peace Accord did not include elements such as truth commissions, justice, punishment, pardon, or accountability (Igreja, 2015;

Graybill, 20004). Instead, the amnesty offered by the Frelimo government following the signing of the peace accord covered the deeds of the two conflict parties as amnesty laws were deployed to erase memories of war crimes (Crocker, 1998; Igreja, 2015). Mozambique's amnesia route has not led to sustainable peace given that the Frelimo government and Renamo forces have renewed their armed struggles since 2013 (Kaufmann & Borowczak, 2017). This provides an example of how amnesties that lay emphasis on amnesia and thus, downplay accountability measures, can have a limited impact on conflict management.

Unlike in South Africa, Rwanda, and Mozambique, no amnesty laws were introduced to consolidate Nigeria's 2009 amnesty programme. The abundant scholarly works on Nigeria's conflict amnesty generally agree that the government has failed in terms of using the 2009 amnesty to achieve peace-building in the Niger Delta (Newsome, 2011; Kiipoye, 2015; Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye, 2016; Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016; Ushie, 2013; Ubhenin, 2013; Chikwem & Duru, 2018; Amadi & Inyikalum, 2016; Achodo, 2015; Ebiede, 2017). The dissertation contributes to these discussions by using the LAO framework of North et al. (2009) to show the extent to which a lack of institutional reforms has undermined the 2009 amnesty, why this has contributed to an amnesty trap that has gone hand-in-hand with short-term conflict containment, and how a more robust conflict management strategy can be achieved in Nigeria's oil-rich region (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7).

0.2 Conflict and Actors in Focus

Given that conflict amnesties are relatively common, and the nature of the conflict has implications for the challenges that a conflict amnesty will face, an in-depth understanding of conflict is important for evaluating amnesty programmes. According to Wallensteen (2019, p. 18), conflict is "a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources". This actor-centered definition of conflict is important because civil clashes generally unfold according to the strategic choices of different actors over time (Shellman, Hatfield, & Mills, 2010). In discussing conflict actors, the literature has extensively focused on the government and armed opposition groups – for example, Cunningham et al., 2009; Gleditsch et al., 2014; Slantchev, 2004; Taydas and Peksen, 2012 – while paying relatively less attention to other actors such as traditional and

religious leaders who may be key to how a violent conflict unfolds, and thus, how it can be managed. Analyses of civil conflict actors have largely focused on the ‘dyadic’ interaction between the state (government) and non-state armed actors or rebels who contribute to conflict onset, duration, and outcome – including victories or losses for the government and rebel groups as well as negotiated settlements. As a result, the rights and legal duties of both state actors and non-state armed groups have been emphasised including the obligations contained in the Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions that include prohibitions from hostage taking, murder, cruel treatment, and sentences or executions without legal protections (Clapham, 2006; Bassiouni, 2008). In contrast, the dissertation analyses the varied roles of primary and secondary actors including political elites, oil companies, militants, traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and media in the Niger Delta conflict and thus – given its failure to consider most of these actors – the limitations of the 2009 amnesty (see Chapters 4, 5, and 7).

Dyadic analyses often fail to capture the complexities of conflict actors, especially the convoluted composition of non-state armed actors as has been discussed in works such as Shellman, Hatfield, and Mills (2010), Greenhill and Major (2007), Kalyvas (2008), and Weinstein (2007). Non-state armed actors consist of autonomous groups who have not been incorporated into formal state institutions – including the army, police, presidential guards, and special forces – and have the will and capacity to use violence to pursue their objectives (Hofmann & Schneckener, 2011, p. 604-605). The composition of multiple non-state armed groups in a country usually result from independent formation of these groups, the splitting up of the groups, and the formation of alliances or coalitions among them (Shellman, 2008). Non-state armed actors can potentially be integrated into the formal state institutions or the private sector through an amnesty initiative. However, rebel groups may be in a mutually beneficial arrangement with the government that can defeat the objectives of amnesties (Mallinder, 2018). In this vein, the dissertation among other things investigates why the Nigerian government used the 2009 amnesty to temporarily contain violence in the Niger Delta through secret deals with rebel leaders that needed the mediation of some traditional rulers (see Chapters 5 and 6). Generally speaking, the analyses of non-state armed actors reveal both the unitary and heterogenous compositions of rebels including those with similar and rival interests, motives, ideologies, motivations, and structures.

Thus, conflict amnesties are designed to include one or more rebel groups depending on the number of fighters who are engaged in armed struggle with the state and who political elites consider as important for managing violence. For instance, the 2009 amnesty in Niger Delta was designed for several armed groups including the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta Volunteers (NDV), and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) (Ikelegbe, 2010). In contrast, the fighters involved in Mozambique's amnesty were part of one-armed group – the Renamo forces (Igreja, 2015).

Non-state armed groups are generally more difficult to deal with in conflict management strategies such as amnesties because even though effective measures for peace-building tend to go against the vested interests of the powerful armed groups, the latter must be involved in political processes aimed at securing peace (Hofmann & Schneckener, 2011, p. 3). Alongside rebels, other non-state actors such as international institutions, profit-making and non-profit making businesses, traditional leaders, media, and civil society tend to play significant roles in armed conflicts and amnesties (Sandal, 2011; Bray, 2009; Rieth & Zimmer, 2004; Mieke & Cardozo, 2009). Given their varied roles in a country, the unarmed non-state actors can also pursue interests that undermine peace (Pearlman & Cunningham, 2012). Generally speaking, the interests of state and non-state actors can align as they form part of the larger society and can receive internal and external support during conflict (Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan, 2013). Thus, conflict settings are characterised by complex configurations of actors whose interests can contribute positively and negatively to conflict management (see Chapter 4).

Conflict management and containment have been used to refer to specific conflicts including inter-state warfare (for example, World War II) and civil conflicts (for example, the Rwandan Genocide) that do come to an end even if violence can still occur in the society through different socio-economic factors such as ethnicity and relative deprivation (Swanström and Weissman, 2005; Cunningham et al., 2009; Horowitz, 1998). This means that conflict intervention measures such as amnesties are deemed to be successful depending on the degree to which they can help resolve specific conflicts, and thus reduce violence. According to Wallensteen (2019, p. 54), a successful conflict management or conflict resolution can be defined as “a social situation where the armed

conflicting parties in a (voluntary) agreement resolve to live peacefully with – and/or dissolve – their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease to use arms against one another”. In order to address the basic underlying incompatibilities of specific conflicts, conflict management strategies usually require achieving a certain level of peace (Swanström and Weissman, 2005). This is important for creating a conducive environment for the different actors to dialogue and initiate long-term plans such as reforming institutions that can strengthen peace-building (see Chapter 7). However, achieving a certain level of peace in conflict management – instead of helping to address the basic underlying incompatibilities of conflict – can actually increase the likelihood of further violence depending on how institutions help to shape the behaviours and decisions of political elites and other actors. In this vein, Chapter 6 rethinks conflict containment along the lines of how institutional arrangements in Nigeria have helped to temporarily keep violence in the Niger Delta under control without further plans to address underlying problems that fuel violence. This has led to the amnesty trap, which requires significant institutional reforms in order to achieve sustainable peace in the oil-rich region (see Chapter 7). Thus, Nigeria’s institutional context, which is discussed in the next section, is important for understanding the Niger Delta conflict, the limited positive impact of the 2009 amnesty, and the need for further reforms to help resolve the oil conflict.

In making this argument, the dissertation differentiates between conflict management, resolution and containment, which are defined as follows:

Conflict management: reducing insecurities or the armed aspect of a conflict with the aim of implementing long-term projects that help to tackle the conflict’s root causes.

Conflict resolution: the implementation of robust measures that address the underlying incompatibilities of a conflict, and thus end the fighting.

Conflict containment: reducing insecurities or the armed aspect of a conflict without significant plans to tackle the underlying problems that fuel violence.

When an amnesty constitutes conflict containment, it can lead to an amnesty trap whereby the poor implementation of an amnesty can incite further hostilities.

0.3 Central Explanatory Framework

The dissertation deploys the Limited Access Order (LAO) of North et al. (2009) as the central explanatory framework to analyse Nigeria's political economy, and thus the context in which the amnesty was introduced. LAO is one of the 'social orders' highlighted by North et al. as the general strategy that societies have used to deal with violence over the last ten thousand years. The idea of social orders is based on a conflict management theory that presents violence – understood as physical actions and coercive threats in an organised way – as a central problem for every society (ibid., p. 13). Specifically, social orders consist of “the way societies craft institutions that support the existence of specific forms of human organization, the way societies limit or open access to those organizations, and through the incentives created by the pattern of organization” (ibid., p. 1). Institutions are “the patterns of interaction that govern and constrain the relationships of individuals”, and they include “formal rules, written laws, formal social conventions, informal norms of behaviour, and shared beliefs about the world, as well as the means of enforcement” (ibid., p. 15). Institutions that are crafted by the social orders “simultaneously give individuals control over resources and social functions, and by doing so, limit the use of violence by shaping the incentives faced by individuals and groups who have access to violence” (ibid., p. xi). It follows that institutional arrangements in the social orders help to shape private and public behaviours as well as governance structures of states through formal and informal means, and thus decision-making and socio-economic realities. The social orders, among other things, help to understand why same institutions can yield different results in different countries as, for instance, pre-election, election, and post-election violence characterise electoral processes in some countries but not in others (Goldsmith, 2015).

The three social orders, according to North et al., include the foraging order, LAO, and open access order (OAO). The foraging order alludes to institutional arrangements that guide small social groups in the hunter-gatherer societies. It receives a relatively little attention in the analysis of North et al. as the authors focused more on modern states that have generally been characterized by LAO and OAO. The latter, which is rare as compared to LAO, refers to a modern state in which there is usually an open access to all social, political and economic functions, and where competition ensures stability of the system. According to North et al. (p. 27), OAOs appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century by only a few countries including Britain and France who managed

to transform elite privileges into impersonal rights. However, the dissertation will highlight later in this section and in Chapter 7 how the OAO status of these Western countries have been undermined by some institutional problems including racism. In turn, LAO denotes those societies in which privileged individuals or elites enjoy significant power to limit access of the local population to the following: valuable political and economic functions as a way to generate rents; forms of social organisation that the larger society will support; valuable resources such as land, labour, and capital; and functions such as contract and property right enforcement. LAOs include many modern states such as Russia and Sudan, as well as ancient Rome, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Mesoamerica, the Indus River civilizations, feudal Europe, the Aztecs, and the Incas (*ibid.*, p. 41). The pivotal role of elites – persons who substantially influence political outcomes in strategic ways – in many societies including those that can be classified as LAOs has been underlined in several studies (for example, Pearce, 2018; Wedel, 2017; Higley, 2010; Keller, 1963; Mosca 1923/1939; Pareto, 1901/1968; Parry, 1969/2005).

Just as the other two social orders, LAO is not “a specific set of political, economic, or religious institutions; it is a fundamental way of organising a society” (North et al., p. 31). It is important to add that the social orders, particularly LAO and OAO, are not static as modern societies can move from one to the other depending on institutional arrangements that result from socio-economic changes such as economic gains and shocks, environmental disasters, reconstitution of elites, and extension of citizenship. For example, according to North et al. (p. 27), countries such as Britain, France, and the United States (US) transitioned from LAO to OAO by 1880. However, as will be elaborated in Chapter 7, institutional problems such as deep racism and sexism have undermined the OAO status of these countries. The transition from LAO towards OAO is particularly important for boosting conflict management, but requires an exit strategy or, in the words of North et al., the fulfillment of the ‘doorstep conditions’ that consists of the following: “rule of law for elites; perpetually lived forms of public and private elite organisations, including the state itself; and consolidated political control of the military” (North et al., 2009, p. 26). Achieving the doorstep conditions requires establishing impersonal and lasting public and private institutions that can guarantee the long-term rights of elites and other members of the society (see Chapter 7). Thus, the transition from LAO towards an OAO requires long-term plans to establish robust

institutions that can facilitate impersonal relations, which among other things can provide support for conflict management strategies such as amnesties (North et al., p. 32). By fulfilling the doorstep conditions, countries are able to rely on stronger institutions that help to ensure a relatively open access to public functions and resources.

Of all the social orders, LAOs are the most enduring, which explains why North et al. also refer to them as ‘natural states’. In all LAOs, “personal relationships, who one is and who one knows, form the basis for social organization and constitute the arena for individual interaction, particularly personal relationships among powerful individuals” (ibid., p. 2). They are underpinned by patronage networks as political elites tend to enjoy a far greater share of power in a system of resource distribution for their clients. In turn, “patronage networks do not only distribute material benefits, but also are expected to sustain an intimacy of relations between rulers and ruled” (cf. Berman, 1998, p. 337). Thus, the personality and preferences of powerful individuals, otherwise referred to as ‘big men,’ ‘strong men,’ or ‘supremos,’ in these LAOs thrive in bureaucratic institutions.

One central feature of patronage systems in LAOs relates to monetary transactions, which is captured by de Waal’s concept of the political marketplace. The latter refers to:

...a system of governance run on the basis of personal transactions in which political services and allegiances are exchanged for material reward in a competitive manner. A ruler bargains with members of the political elite over how much he needs to pay – in cash, or in access to other lucrative resources such as contracts – in return for their support (de Walle, 2016, p. 1).

The political marketplace includes a political budget, which refers to unaccountable funds that politicians use to buy political services or allegiances. In addition, there is the price of loyalty, which alludes to the prevailing price demanded by members of a political class for political allegiance or cooperation, political business plan and skill. Thus, the idea of the political marketplace highlights money as important to the success of patronage politics. As Onapajo et al. (2015), for example, have highlighted, elections

in some African countries such as Nigeria attract money given that political elites use vote-buying and intimidation of political opponents as a means to attain power. Hence, electoral institutions in some African countries are shaped by the LAO system inasmuch as election results do not always reflect a free and fair voting and counting of ballots, but a manipulation of the process by political elites. For example, the 2013 election of former Zimbabwe's President, Mr. Robert Mugabe, along with the 142 of the 210 parliamentary seats for his Zanu-PF party, was characterised by a campaign of intimidation in the rural areas and fiddling of the electoral rolls (Cendrowicz, 2013). The electoral rolls contained about one million invalid names including many deceased voters, and also excluded about one million valid voters in urban areas where the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), had the strongest support (ibid.). It follows that the winners in Zimbabwe's 2013 electoral polls were predetermined by the incumbent's manipulation of the electoral system. A link between Nigeria's problematic elections and violence in the Niger Delta is discussed in Chapter 3 to further the understanding of how political elites craft institutions in LAOs.

It is important to acknowledge that LAO is a less popular framework to discuss patronage politics as compared to more popular terms such as hybrid system (Chabal & Daloz, 1999), clientelism (Lermarchand & Legg, 1972), and neopatrimonialism (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). In the African context, the term neo-patrimonialism is particularly widely used "to denote systems in which political relationships are mediated through, and maintained by, personal connections between leaders and subjects, or patrons and clients" (Pitcher et al., 2009, p. 129). The "neo" has been added to patrimonialism by many social scientists to emphasise what they perceive as "a modern variant of Weber's ideal type – one in which a veneer of rational-legal authority has been imposed by colonialism, yet a personalistic or 'patrimonial' logic characterized by patronage, clientelism, and corruption is said to prevail – just as it is assumed to have done in the past" (ibid., p. 130). Against this backdrop, Bratton and van de Walle (1997, p. 63) have claimed that neopatrimonialism is "the foundation and superstructure of political institutions in Africa", and that "neo-patrimonial practice is the core feature of politics in Africa".

However, the term neopatrimonialism has been widely critiqued for being essentialist and failing to provide a holistic explanation of African politics (Mustapha, 2002;

Erdmann and Engel, 2007; de Grassi, 2008; Pitcher et al., 2009). While arguing that neopatrimonialism is a misreading of Weber, Pitcher et al., (2009, p. 149) have underlined how neopatrimonial theorists have misguidedly made historical, political, and economic claims about the whole of Africa by “providing a neat and consistent explanation for violence, state collapse, petty to extreme corruption, irresponsible resource allocation, and a host of other ills”. Thus, similar to other terms such as hybrid regime or clientelism, neopatrimonialism tends to highlight political, economic, and social progress without any rigorous contextual and historical analysis – often depicting patronage as a new political reality that emerged from Africa. This has contributed to why Nyaluke (2014, p. 161), for example, has mistakenly claimed that African culture is the root cause of neo-patrimonial, corrupt, and unaccountable regimes across the continent. In turn, the idea of LAOs of North et al. helps to understand the dynamics of social change that have been prevalent in many societies based on recorded human history. It complements the other prevailing patronage views by showing how different societies have historically had to contend with elite privileges in managing violence over the last ten thousand years.

According to North et al., there are three types of LAOs: fragile, basic, and mature, but no sharp borders delineate them (North et al., p. 41). A fragile LAO includes societies or countries that are highly prone to violence owing to weak institutions (ibid., pp. 42-43). In turn, a basic LAO is capable of maintaining a durable organisational structure for the state as public law institutions “structure aspects of the state, its internal relations, and its relations with members of the dominant coalition” (ibid., pp. 43-44). Finally, a mature LAO has the most durable organisational structure to protect the state against violence as it can “support elite organisations outside the framework of the state” (ibid, 2009, p. 47). This means that a mature LAO has more robust legal institutions including a constitution that largely protects elite privileges. Thus, public and private institutions in mature LAOs mostly align with the personal interests of the powerful elite coalitions usually consisting of former and current political and military leaders.

The dissertation classifies Nigeria as a mature LAO because even though this West African state possesses the institutional framework of a modern state such as a constitution and other laws that are meant to enhance impersonal socio-economic

relations, the ‘political godfathers’ or elite coalitions mostly “dictate who participates in politics and under what conditions” (Albert, 2005, p. 82). Nigerian elites or the godfathers include “the political or ruling class that comprise of both elected and non-elected officials, economic elites and traditional rulers who exercise influence on policy making and execution” (Adeosun et al., 2016, p. 303). They have crafted formal institutions – including the federal government’s revenue allocation formula and ‘security votes’ that have enhanced the sense of relative deprivation in the country – and informal institutions such as corruption and political funding of violence that have undermined the country’s socio-economic stability (see Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6). Thus, Nigeria’s mature LAO system primarily entails formal and informal institutions that tend to significantly limit socio-economic participation including political elites’ restriction of the local population’s access to oil revenues and the state’s illegal arrests, detentions, and killings of political opponents, civil right activists, and media practitioners.

In this vein, Nigerian elites have not attracted positive representations particularly in the Niger Delta given the pivotal role they have played in ensuring that oil fails to impact positively on the lives of the local population. For instance, Ibaba et al. (2012), cited by Adeosun et al. (2016, p. 309), have described Niger Delta political elites as individuals whose personified “ineptitude, arrogance, and corruption” have resulted in a lack of transparency and accountability in oil management. In turn, Orluwene (2008, p. 16) has underlined how political elites have made the Niger Delta “a hotbed of troubles” due to their contributions to environmental degradation and mismanagement of the region’s development. Just as in other LAOs, the existing institutional arrangements in Nigeria have largely contributed to organized violence and short-term containment of such violence using conflict management strategies such as amnesties in certain parts of the country including the Niger Delta, which is the focus of the dissertation.

0.4 Overview of the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta constitutes much of Southern Nigeria – the most populous African country with an estimated population of 191,355,930 (Worldometers, 2017). Nigeria ranks number seven on the global list of countries based on the size of population behind China, India, the US, Indonesia, Brazil, and Pakistan (ibid.). This West African

country prides itself as the second largest economy in Africa after South Africa, the largest oil producer (10th oil producer in the world), and the third largest military power (West Africa Gateway, 2012). Nevertheless, with an estimated GDP growth rate of -1.7 % in 2016 (CIA Factbook, 2017), Nigeria's economy has in recent times been described as disastrous, and it still remains largely dependent on oil (Giokos, 2017). With an estimated population of 70 % below the poverty line in 2010 (Index Mundi, 2016), Nigeria is faced with significant challenges – from a high unemployment rate to security concerns. Indeed, LAOs are generally characterized by slow-growing economies that are vulnerable to shocks (North et al., p. 12). Insecurities in Nigeria have largely been derived from the terror activities of Boko Haram in the country's North and the Niger Delta militant activities in the country's South. While Boko Haram can arguably be classified as a religious conflict since the group alludes to fighting to create an Islamic state, the Niger Delta conflict is usually understood to be resource related (Courson, 2009; Kiipoye, 2015; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012).

It is important to note that there have been significant improvements in Nigeria's oil output, oil exports, and oil revenues since the 1960s (see Figure 1). In addition, Figure 2 demonstrates how Europe is the largest regional destination for Nigeria's crude oil; it imported more than 800,000 barrels of crude oil and condensate per day in 2015, which accounted for 41 % of Nigeria's exports. Furthermore, Figure 2 indicates how, with 15 % of Nigeria's crude oil and condensate exports reaching African countries, the African continent is the smallest recipient of Nigeria's crude oil and condensate exports. This is reflective of the limited trade activities that take place within sub-Saharan Africa, but which the continent is trying to resolve through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (The Economist, 2018).

Like other resource-rich LAOs in sub-Saharan Africa including Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria is faced with the challenge of crafting institutions that can help to move away from running an economy that simply relies on the revenues from the export of raw materials to the processing of raw materials for added value (see Chapters 3 and 5). The need to diversify Nigeria's economy has increasingly dominated public discussions as, for example, agriculture, petroleum, retail and ICT have been highlighted as important for the country's development (PwC & LCCI, 2016). Transitioning from LAO towards OAO will help to reduce conflict and

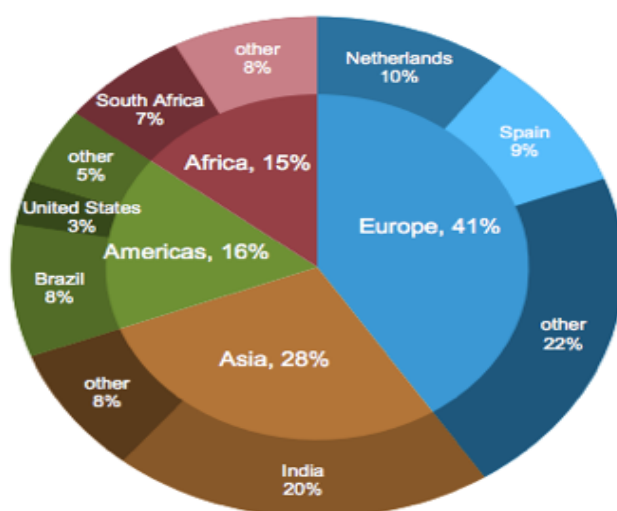
organized violence in the country (see Chapter 7), which among other things can create a conducive environment for the creation of robust institutions that help to diversify Nigeria's economy.

Figure 1: Oil Output, Oil Exports and Oil Revenues in Nigeria, 1960-2009

Year	Production (bm)	Oil Revenue	Oil/Total Revenue (%)	Oil/GDP (%)	Oil Export (₦m)	Oil Export/Total Export (%)
1961	16.80	Nil	Nil	0.9	23.1	6.65
1965	150.3	Nil	Nil	3.43	136.2	25.37
1970	395.7	166.4	26.3	9.27	509.6	57.54
1975	660.1	4271.5	77.5	19.37	4563.1	92.64
1980	760.1	12353.2	81.1	28.48	13632.1	96.09
1985	507.5	10923.7	72.6	16.75	11223.7	95.76
1990	660.6	71887.1	73.3	37.46	106623.5	97.03
1995	712.3	324547.6	70.6	39.65	927565.3	97.57
2000	797.9	1591675.8	83.5	47.72	1920900.4	98.72
2005	919.3	4762400	85.8	38.87	7140578.9	98.53
2009	759.2	3191938	78.7	37.44	8543261.2	96.73

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria and Statistical Bulletin, cited by Akinlo (2012, p. 174)

Figure 2: Nigeria's crude oil and condensate exports by destination in 2015



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration (2016, p. 9).

In general, resource-rich LAOs in Africa and elsewhere need to transition from LAO towards OAO in order to craft enduring institutions that can help to transform natural resources into significant human and physical development, especially as there are devastating consequences associated with natural resource exploitation. For instance, some studies have shown how oil spills in the Niger Delta that occur five years before conception double the neonatal mortality rate in the region from 36 deaths to 76 deaths for every 1,000 births (The Guardian, 2017a). This and other grievances have contributed to the armed struggle in this oil-rich region, which has been referred to as an economy of conflict (Ikelegbe, 2005), politics of conflict (Nwankwo, 2015), and political conflict (Kaur, 2013). The organized violence by armed groups in the Niger Delta stems from the mature LAO system that ensures both physical violence and coercive threats of violence (see Chapter 3). Coercive threats in the region occur through the militants' issuance of demands and deadlines to the government and MNOCs (Vanguard, 2018a; Gbaramatu Voice, 2018a/b; Sahara Reporters, 2018; Independent, 2017). In turn, physical violence includes the destruction of oil pipelines, killings, and the abduction of foreign oil workers to demand ransoms (International Business Times, 2017). The negative impact of natural resources on resource-rich LAOs such as Nigeria has led to the "resource curse" arguments as will be elaborated in Chapter 2. Developments in the Niger Delta have an impact on both the Nigerian and global economy as, for example, when a group of Western oil workers were kidnapped in the region in January 2006, this prompted a hike in prices at gas stations around the world (Asuni, 2009).

Given the importance of the Niger Delta region to the Nigerian and global economy, the state has pursued different intervention measures to deal with the oil conflict including militarization of the region and the introduction of the 2009 amnesty programme (Ikelegbe, 2010). The 2009 amnesty, which is the focus of this study, has attracted the attention of several scholars including Iwilade (2017), Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016), Kiipoye (2015), Ushie (2013), Newsome (2011), and Nwajiaku-Dahou (2012). The key insight from these studies is the fact that the amnesty has failed to lead to a sustainable peace in the Niger Delta. One remarkable thing that makes the 2009 amnesty worth-studying lies in the fact that it led to a noticeable decline in the scale of organized violence in the oil-rich region, even though there had not been any institutional reforms such as a transition from the mature LAO system towards an OAO

to help manage violence. As Newsome (2011, p. 2), for example, highlights: “Attacks on oil installations dropped close to zero after the 2009 amnesty was announced, and somewhat normalized economic activity resumed in the Delta”. However, this state of affairs changed dramatically in 2016 as new militants including the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) emerged to destabilise the oil region, which attests to the fact that the amnesty did not help to restore sustainable peace. The dissertation investigates why the 2009 amnesty intervention reduced violence in the Niger Delta for some time but failed to lead to conflict resolution.

0.5 Research Questions

The primary research question is as follows:

Why did the 2009 amnesty programme contribute to the dramatic change in the scale of violence from very high to very low to low intensity in the Niger Delta without institutional reforms? Is this change best understood as an example of conflict management or something else?

The secondary questions are:

- 1) What are the underlying drivers of violence in the Niger Delta and who are the relevant actors?
- 2) What kind of amnesty was introduced in 2009 and how was it implemented?
- 3) What impact did the 2009 amnesty have?
- 4) Was the conflict resolved as a result of the amnesty?
- 5) How might a more sustainable peace be achieved?

The dissertation uses both primary and secondary sources to respond to the research questions as will be elaborated in Chapter 1. While using LAO as a central explanatory framework for analysing the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty, an emphasis will be placed on the structure and maintenance of relationships among elites, the structure and maintenance of relationships among non-elites, and the structure and maintenance of relationships between elites and non-elites. In responding to the research questions, the dissertation makes a number of contributions to knowledge.

0.6 Contributions to Knowledge and Outline

The first major contribution that the dissertation makes to knowledge is using the LAO framework – rather than an idea such as neopatrimonialism (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997) – to analyse Nigerian and African politics. LAO is an important institutional framework that helps to understand why certain societies are more prone to violence than others, and why conflict management strategies including amnesties that ignore institutional challenges often fail to have any meaningful impact (North et al., 2009). Among other things, LAO provides a good avenue for evaluating why the different potent drivers of conflicts such as poverty and ethnicity mutually interact to fuel violence (see Chapter 2). In Nigeria’s context, the mature LAO framework helps the dissertation to explain why the country’s post-independent institutional arrangements have negatively affected the state’s decision-making processes and undermined sustainable peace in certain parts of the country, notably the Niger Delta. This differs from the analyses in existing works – such as Ikelegbe (2005), Asuni (2009), Obi and Rustad (2011), Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016), and Tantua and Kamruzzaman (2016) – that have largely failed to underline the extent to which Nigeria’s post-independent institutional setting has impeded peace efforts in the oil-rich region. The LAO framework helps to analyse critical issues in the Niger Delta such as land control and oil business in the light of other LAOs that have historically manifested in Europe and elsewhere. In this vein, the dissertation’s findings might be helpful to further the understanding of why elite privileges in many countries create and sustain patronage networks that lead to organized violence. The findings in this project might also further the understanding of the different causes of conflict, the shortcomings of intervention measures such as amnesties, and the institutional changes required to manage violence.

The second major contribution of the dissertation to knowledge is to demonstrate why the idea of an amnesty trap is important for explaining the extent to which an amnesty will never be sufficient for conflict management if it is introduced without the support of more substantive institutional reforms. In Nigeria, the amnesty trap results from the mature LAO system, which has undermined the capacity of public institutions to execute various projects under the 2009 amnesty programme (see Chapter 5). The amnesty trap is important for understanding many of the critical issues that scholars have raised regarding the 2009 amnesty programme such as the government’s failure

to anticipate the likelihood of the fighters to rearm and remobilise (Okonofua, 2016), the excessive authority of the ex-militant leaders that defeats the demobilisation programme (Ebiede, 2017, p. 21), and the enrichment of ex-militant leaders through the amnesty programme (Sayne, 2013; Kiipoye, 2015). In this vein, the amnesty trap contributes to why the dissertation suggests that conflict management in the Niger Delta should be approached through the implementation of the doorstep conditions and a transition from LAO towards OAO (see Chapter 7). The amnesty trap is an idea that might be useful for analysing the negative consequences of amnesties in other countries including Angola, Namibia, and Mozambique.

Another major contribution of the research project is to rethink conflict containment which, as elaborated in Chapter 6, entails a political manipulation of socio-economic conditions to reduce violence temporarily without further plans to address fundamental problems that fuel the conflict. Existing literature – including Babatunde (2012), Ikoro and Ukono (2016), Osah (2016), and Okoh (2005) – have invoked conflict management to describe the 2009 Niger Delta amnesty. The dissertation critiques this viewpoint by distinguishing conflict containment from conflict management and resolution (see Chapter 6). It highlights the prevalent understanding of containment in contemporary history such as how the US deployed it as a strategy to overcome the Soviet Union during the Cold War. As Griffiths (1999, p. 22) cited in Hamad (2005, p. 20) notes: “If the Soviet Union were geographically ‘contained’ (by preventing new countries from joining the Communist Bloc), ‘it would undergo gradual internal changes that might transform its status from revolutionary state to more moderate great power’”. Despite being popular during the Cold War, containment has been under-studied in the post-Cold War era and this has been acknowledged in the field of peacekeeping (Beardsley & Gleditsch, 2015, p. 69). In helping to fill this gap, the dissertation, in Chapter 6, uses the idea of conflict containment to explain how Nigerian elites have formed a mutually beneficial arrangement with MNOCs and the ex-militants in the Niger Delta within the mature LAO context that has helped to reduce violence in the short-term, but failed to address the conflict’s underlying incompatibilities. In this analysis, the idea of a ‘conflict containment logic’ is used to underscore the extent to which Nigerian elites and MNOCs have created conditions in which the oil conflict appears to be resolved, but there is the likelihood of further violence.

Furthermore, the dissertation, in Chapter 4, identifies and analyses the varied roles of some key actors involved in the Niger Delta conflict, which among other things helps to better appreciate why the inclusion and/or exclusion of certain actors have undermined the 2009 amnesty, and why certain actors must be included in future peace-building efforts (see Chapter 7). Even though a greater emphasis has been placed on actors in defining conflict (Wallenstein, 2019), existing works on the Niger Delta conflict and amnesty – including Kiipoye (2015), Kpolovie and Sado (2016), Enuoh and Eneh (2015), Enuoh and Inyang (2014), Iwilade (2017), and Ikelegbe (2010) – have not sufficiently examined the roles of all the key actors in the region as they have largely focused on the government, oil companies, and the (ex)fighters. While considering politicians, MNOCs, and militants as the primary actors in the Niger Delta, the dissertation also highlights the varied roles that the secondary actors including traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media have also played in the conflict and peace-building. Thus, both the primary and secondary actors contain individuals and groups who have been influential in helping to craft formal and informal institutions within Nigeria's mature LAO system that, among other things, have impacted the evolution of the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. The dissertation pays particular attention to uncovering how the vested interests and actions of the different actors complement one another to undermine conflict management in Nigeria's mature LAO system.

In turn, Mthembu (2018, p. 76) has underscored how “most conventional approaches tend to assume that causation is quite simple and straightforward, with particular variables having independent and linear causal effects on the dependent variable”. This assumption is not always true as, for example, Chapter 2 highlights the extent to which insights from different conflict theories including greed and grievance, relative deprivation, security dilemma, and elite manipulation can be brought together within the LAO framework. Furthermore, the competing interests of the primary and secondary actors in the Niger Delta do not always have a linear causal effect as the analyses in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 highlight the mutual compatibility of the different actors in the evolution of the oil conflict and 2009 amnesty. Thus, rather than pursue an investigation into what actors and factors have better explanatory power over others, the dissertation focuses more on using the LAO framework to demonstrate the complementarity of the socio-economic structures that help to explain the 2009

amnesty programme. Mthembu (2018) has adopted a similar strategy through the ‘qualitative comparative analysis’ to understand the causal variables that have led some African countries to receive high levels of development cooperation from China and India.

Finally, the dissertation makes a minor contribution to the study of the Niger Delta conflict by integrating the presidential statement that initiated the 2009 amnesty programme (see Chapter 5). While there is an abundance of literature on the 2009 amnesty – for example, Osah and Amakihe (2014), Okonofua (2016), Tobor (2016), and Ikelegbe (2010) – a critical study of the presidential statement that set the programme in motion is scarce. The dissertation helps to fill this gap by demonstrating why President Umaru Yar’Adua’s amnesty proclamation in 2009 impacted the amnesty’s implementation and outcome. Examining the presidential proclamation of amnesty is important because that is what served as the amnesty’s foundation (see Chapter 5).

0.7 Thesis Structure

The dissertation has been structured in such a way that the next chapter explains how primary and secondary sources have been triangulated to respond to the research questions. The methods used align with several other works on the Niger Delta conflict and amnesty such as Chikwem and Duru (2018), Oluwaniyi (2018), Omokhoa and Ikelegbe (2016), Ojo (2012), Omorede (2014), Tobor (2016), and Babatunde (2014). While the secondary sources on conflict amnesties have provided the grounds for formulating the research questions and choosing the central explanatory framework, a 9-month fieldwork offered an avenue for respondents to share their knowledge of the subject matter, thereby increasing the research participation. Deploying snowball and purposive sampling of respondents helped to target safe areas in the two research sites: Delta State and Ilorin. While analysing the fieldwork results, the views of respondents from the two sites are compared in order to draw more insights. Care has been taken to ensure that the research abides to high ethical standards by safeguarding data and ensuring respondents’ anonymity.

Chapter 2 investigates some important themes in the literature including the conflict cycle – conflict management, containment, and resolution – and conflict theories such

as greed and grievance, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, institutionalism, and elite manipulation that have helped to shape the understanding of civil conflicts, and thus amnesties in the post-Cold War era. The Niger Delta conflict is an example of civil conflicts that have been relatively common in modern times (Gleditsch et al., 2014; Taydas and Peksen, 2012; Blattman and Miguel, 2010; and Cunningham et al., 2009). The dissertation principally argues in Chapter 2 that conflicts are complex, that scholars have used different lenses to understand them, and that many of the conceptual insights can be brought together within the context of the LAO framework. The latter, among other things, helps to gain more holistic insights from the mutual compatibility of the different conflict theories.

Chapter 3 focuses in on explaining the political economy of the Niger Delta conflict through the lens of the mature LAO system. As has been highlighted above, this conflict largely involves the struggle between the federal government, militants, and oil companies for land and oil control that has led to deaths, destruction of properties, and kidnapping (Courson, 2009; Ahonsi, 2011; Okolie-Osemene, 2015; Adams, 2014; and Aghalino, 2012). In this chapter, the dissertation traces the genesis of the conflict from the early 1990s where non-violent protests failed to yield positive results to armed hostilities in the 2000s that led to the 2009 amnesty. The chapter primarily argues that Nigeria's mature LAO system has helped to shape the behaviour and decision-making of Nigerian elites, MNOCs, and the local population in the Niger Delta in a way that has fueled different conflict drivers including greed, grievance, relative deprivation, and security dilemma. In this vein, the analysis demonstrates the extent to which formal and informal institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system have created the grounds for violence in the oil-rich region. It also shows why conflict management strategies such as amnesties need to take into account both old and new institutional arrangements that have undermined peace-building in a country.

Chapter 4 distinguishes between the primary and secondary actors in the Niger Delta and makes two key arguments. First, it argues that political elites, MNOCs, and militants constitute the primary actors in Nigeria's oil-rich region inasmuch as they have largely crafted institutions that perpetuate violence in the region. This provides an important background to explain the 2009 amnesty's limitations and also helps to understand why several works such as Ukiwo (2011), Idemudia (2009), and Ahonsi

(2011) have limited the discussion of actors in the Niger Delta to the government, MNOCs, and the fighters. Second, the chapter argues that traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media constitute the secondary actors in the Niger Delta given that they have played supporting and intermediary roles in the oil conflict. This helps to understand among other things the extent to which certain actors have contended with elite privileges in the country.

Having explained the historical evolution of insecurities in the Niger Delta and the actors involved in the oil conflict, Chapter 5 explains the extent to which the 2009 amnesty has not been robust enough to help resolve the Niger Delta conflict. The central argument in this chapter is that Nigeria's mature LAO system has helped to shape decision-making regarding the 2009 amnesty in a way that has led to an amnesty trap, which has fueled further violence in the Niger Delta. Among other things, the analysis shows why some key actors, particularly the local population including the civil society groups were largely side-lined in the amnesty design as the mature LAO system enhanced the primary actors' capacity to form a mutually beneficial partnership with traditional leaders that has failed to end the fighting. The results from the discussion support scholarly works – such as Kiikpoye (2015) and Iwilade (2017) – that have highlighted why patronage politics has been reinforced in the wake of the Nigerian government's amnesty initiative. The chapter also demonstrates why amnesties that are implemented without institutional reforms will always be insufficient for managing violence. While integrating the presidential amnesty proclamation into the discussion, the dissertation also argues that the unconditional pardon has contributed significantly to the poor implementation of the 2009 amnesty programme and led to an amnesty trap.

In turn, Chapter 6 argues that conflict containment – understood as a political manipulation of socio-economic conditions that seek to reduce violence temporarily without further plans to address fundamental problems that fuel the conflict – best explains the 2009 amnesty intervention in Nigeria's oil-rich region. It is important to underline the fact that the dissertation deviates from the traditional understanding of containment – such as Kennan's containment policy that was meant to serve as a strategy for the US to defeat the Soviet Union (Leffler, 2006) – to containment as institutional arrangements that have kept violence temporarily under control through a political manipulative process. In turn, while highlighting Swanström and Weissmann's

(2005) ‘integral approach’ for understanding conflict prevention, management, and resolution, the thesis argues that conflict containment helps to understand how institutions have been crafted by the political elites in Nigeria’s mature LAO system to reduce violence in the Niger Delta without further plans to address local problems that fuel violence. Furthermore, the chapter underscores the extent to which the conflict containment logic or the mutually beneficial arrangement between elites, MNOCs, and the ex-fighters in the Niger Delta has contributed to the amnesty trap.

The discussion in Chapter 7 focuses in on why Nigeria needs to move from the mature LAO system towards an OAO institutional arrangement in order to resolve the Niger Delta conflict and other insecurities in the country. This entails fulfilling the doorstep conditions namely, enhancing the rule of law for elites, perpetually lived forms of public and private elite organisations, and consolidated political control of the military. The three doorstep conditions aim to provide “institutional and organisational support for increased impersonal exchange, as well as institutions consistent with the logic of the natural state [LAO] that can be used in the transition to support open access orders” (North et al., 2009, p. 26). In this vein, the chapter argues that achieving the doorstep conditions lies at the heart of sustainable peace in the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole as a movement towards an OAO provides an avenue for restoring impersonal relations among elites and the other actors in the society.

The last chapter brings together the key findings of the research project. It elaborates on the interactions between the key themes in the dissertation including the LAO framework, conflict management, containment, and resolution, and the amnesty trap. The analysis incorporates conflict containment models that help to summarise institutional arrangements that support violence and peace-building in the Niger Delta. It also suggests some areas for future research.

Chapter 1:

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights both the research methods (what was done) and methodology (the reasons for using the methods) for this research project. The research has been pursued using insights from existing literature, semi-structured interviews, and a survey, which aligns with some other works on Nigeria's 2009 amnesty such as Chikwem and Duru (2018), Oluwaniyi (2018), Omokhoa and Ikelegbe (2016), and Babatunde (2014). In addition to reviewing the secondary sources of information, the chapter discusses the 9-month fieldwork that was conducted in Nigeria including how and why two research assistants were involved in the project as well as the security and ethical challenges of collecting data in a volatile region such as the Niger Delta. It examines the snowball and purposive sampling techniques that were used to target respondents and how the data obtained has been triangulated in the dissertation including the decision to compare the views of respondents who are based in the Niger Delta with the responses of those outside of the region.

The chapter begins by reviewing the secondary sources of information consisting of macro data sources, scholarly works, and grey literature on conflicts and amnesties that have helped to shape the dissertation. It then provides an in-depth discussion on fieldwork and the extent to which respondents from Delta State and Ilorin have increased the participation in this project by providing valuable insights that have been triangulated with existing literature. Finally, the chapter elaborates on the security and ethical challenges that had to be overcome in order to accomplish the project.

1.2 Secondary Research

An analysis of the secondary sources required a literature review of conflict and amnesty from the broader literature and existing works on the Niger Delta. According to Hart (1998, p. 1), a literature review entails “the use of ideas in the literature to justify the particular approach to the topic, the selection of methods, and demonstration that this research contributes something new”. In an attempt to make new contributions to existing knowledge, the secondary materials that were reviewed included scholarly

works and grey texts such as newspapers, policy statements, and government reports that relate to the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta. Macro data from different sources such as Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, Social Conflict in Africa databases, the World Bank, and UN agencies also proved to be important in this endeavour. Overall, the secondary information helped to shape the initial research including the research questions that have been highlighted in the introductory chapter and fieldwork as will be discussed in the next section.

The wide range of scholarly works that were studied for this project largely adopted quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical methods. Each of these approaches offers important insights to the understanding of the subject matter as, for example, quantitative methods have helped to understand the broader patterns and distributions in conflict onset, duration, and termination (Themner & Wallensteen, 2013; Gleditsch et al., 2014). The use of large n-case studies and proxies to measure factors often regarded as relevant in conflict and amnesty studies is common to many quantitative methods such as that conducted by Collier and Hoeffler (2004). The data sources that proved particularly helpful in terms of understanding the global trends in conflicts and amnesties included the Amnesty Database Project, Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments, Minorities at Risk Project, Uppsala Data Conflict Program, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, and Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. The data obtained from these sources, among other things, revealed that sub-Saharan Africa has been one of the regions that is most affected by conflicts and amnesties, thereby justifying the dissertation's extensive focus on this part of the world. Even though one cannot underestimate the insights provided by quantitative methods, they have also come under intense scrutiny – including from a statistical standpoint as, for example, the relevance of some macro data and proxies to the understanding of conflict has been questioned (Bensted, 2011).

Thus, disaggregated statistical studies on conflict and amnesty were also examined. As Hallberg (2012) has also underlined, the critique of the discrepancies that exist between theoretical and empirical analysis of conflict settings in quantitative analyses has led to a shift of focus from a state level analysis to more disaggregated statistical studies owing to increased data availability. Civil conflicts and amnesties are usually phenomena that occur in some parts of a state and thus, the tendency to rely only on

state level analyses raises the problem of biased results (Buhaug and Rod, 2006). As Justino et al. (2013, p. 3) have argued:

While research at more aggregate levels has been important in advancing our understanding of global patterns that may drive or trigger violent conflict, as well as informing research and policy on the global costs of conflict, it has been less useful for uncovering mechanisms that may explain sub-national patterns of conflict (for instance, why conflict happens in some communities or regions but not others), variation in types, forms and consequences of violence (for instance, why some people are targeted by armed groups, or why some wars are very brutal while others are less so), and variation in the consequences of violent conflict (for instance, why and how some groups and regions benefit from the institutional transformation effected by violent conflict, while others lose out).

In this vein, it was important to study case studies literature on conflict and amnesty including works such as Ikelegbe (2005), Kaufmann and Borowczak (2017), du Bois-Pedain (2012), Graybill (2004), Igreja (2015), Kiipoye (2015), and Ushie (2013) that have investigated cases of conflict and amnesty in different countries including Nigeria, South Africa, Rwanda, and Mozambique. This body of work draws upon both qualitative and quantitative research. Castro and Nielsen (2003) have highlighted how case studies have helped to understand issues that emerge from conflicts in a participatory way. Case studies help researchers to closely engage with concrete contexts where different actors are (in)directly involved in a conflict and amnesty, which enhances the understanding of how people react to these events. A good application of case studies, especially where fieldwork or primary data collection is involved, helps to bridge the gap between the theoretical or intellectual discourse produced by scholars in the comfort of their research desks and the complexity of an actual conflict and amnesty setting. Thus, case studies are important for assessing the usefulness, validity, and applicability of conflict and amnesty theories or concepts. This is not to suggest that case studies do not have weaknesses as, for example, they are commonly accompanied by challenges such as questions regarding the generalisability of fieldwork results, biases in case selections and respondents, maintenance of ethical standards, and limited budget for carrying out fieldwork (Willis, 2014). It behoves on the researcher(s) to overcome such challenges by working within a specified budget, understanding and respecting ethical standards in conflict locations, avoiding excessive generalisation of results, and ensuring a careful selection of cases and respondents that

will produce valuable insights.

While focusing in on the Niger Delta, three waves of secondary literature helped to shape the research project. The first wave entailed works such as Okoh (2005) and Ikelegbe (2006, 2005) that have analysed rebellion in the Niger Delta prior to the 2009 amnesty intervention. This helped to understand the institutional context of the transition from unarmed to armed revolt, the motivations of the armed groups, and the state's responses to hostilities in Nigeria's oil-rich region before the 2009 amnesty initiative. The second wave of literature included works such as Newsome (2011), Asuni (2009), and Courson (2009) that emerged immediately after the 2009 amnesty was initiated, which among other things highlighted the amnesty's immediate impact in the Niger Delta. This helped to understand the nature of the relative peace that resulted from the amnesty and scholarly projections regarding the sustainability of this peace. The last wave of secondary literature consisted of works such as Iwilade (2017), Tantua et al. (2018), and Oyewole (2018) that have analysed the renewed violent attacks in the Niger Delta since 2016. This was significant in terms of understanding the prevailing reasons that have been attributed to the amnesty's failure to help sustain peace in the region. In addition to the Niger Delta literature, insights from the broader conflict and amnesty literature and other case studies have been useful for the project.

One limitation that emerged from the review of secondary literature was the lack of adequate access to secondary data that could have helped to consolidate the research findings. For instance, it was impossible to access reliable data on the current number of unemployed persons in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta, which could have helped to assess the 2009 amnesty's impact in the oil-rich region. It is important to highlight that obtaining data on illegal activities around the world is extremely difficult. Researchers who study cases of unlawful events, particularly those that are linked to political interests tend to face challenges related to data quality and accessibility. As Wedgwood and Hammett (2005) have highlighted, gaining access to reliable data and documents, especially on highly sensitive political issues in Africa can be particularly challenging. Jansen (2005, p.18) has also remarked: "There remains an unusual level of political sensitivity towards data of all kinds – even routine data, resulting in part from either new or unstable democracies, on the one hand, or undemocratic regimes on the other hand". Working on the 2009 amnesty proved to be a sensitive political matter

as issues that have emerged from the Niger Delta conflict divide opinions in the country and also attract a high level of interest from political elites and oil companies. Hence, the problem of limited access to some secondary data was anticipated as the data and information that were gathered from other scholarly works, media reports, government documents, and fieldwork helped to complete the project.

1.3 Primary Research

In addition to secondary information, primary data was collected. According to Hox and Boeijs (2005, p. 593), “Primary data are data that are collected for the specific research problem at hand, using procedures that fit the research problem best”. Researchers have used different procedures to collect and analyse primary data on the Niger Delta conflict and 2009 amnesty. For example, Babatunde (2014) has employed a qualitative method that incorporates in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and participant observation to analyse the Niger Delta conflict. Also, Otodo (2016) has endeavoured to analyse the resurgence of militancy in Bayelsa State using a quantitative analysis of the views of 200 respondents. In turn, Omokhoa and Ikelegbe (2016) have used both qualitative and quantitative methods that include a purposive sampling of respondents and in-depth interviews with youth leaders, community members, elders and relatives of ex-agitators to examine the 2009 amnesty’s impact at Ekeremor Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The method used to gather and analyse the primary data in this dissertation align with that of Omokhoa and Ikelegbe (2016), given that important insights can be gained from a mixed-method approach.

Thus, some scholarly works – including this thesis – have adopted mixed-methods that go beyond the rigid division between micro and macro techniques or quantitative and qualitative methods. As Christia (2012) has remarked, there is a general tendency for researchers to overlook the connections between micro and macro research on issues related to conflicts. Scholars such as Kalyvas (2012) and McLauchlin (2014) have endeavoured to adopt methodologies that demonstrate some ways to overcome the inclination to create barriers between micro and macro analyses, while Balcells and Justino (2014, p. 11) have argued:

...new research at the macro level should pay more attention to micro-level foundations and delve into micro-level implications and tests. At the same time, new

micro-level research should look more into its wider implications. Discerning on how local-level institutions operate at the meso level or on how different forms of rebellion and warfare aggregate to different outcomes are some examples of how to establish this micro–macro connection.

The means by which primary information was obtained for the dissertation was through a 9-month fieldwork, which was conducted from January to September 2017. The two Nigerian sites for the fieldwork – Ilorin and Delta State – were chosen due to their contrasting characteristics. As will be elaborated later in this section, while Ilorin represents an area with a largely peaceful history and thus represents the ‘non-conflict area’ in the analysis, the surveyed areas in Delta State represent the ‘conflict area’ due to violence that results from Nigeria’s oil exploitation. Thus, the graphs in the dissertation’s empirical chapters – Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 – are sometimes presented as conflict and non-conflict areas, simply referring to the distinction between respondents who are based in the Niger Delta (in Delta State) as opposed to those who are based outside of the region (in Ilorin).

Following other scholarly works on the Niger Delta such as Chikwem and Duru (2018), Oluwaniyi (2018), Ojo (2012), Omorede (2014), and Tobor (2016), purposive and snowball sampling of respondents were adopted. Purposive or judgment sampling entails identifying the research objective and finding the people who have the ability and will to provide the information based on experience and knowledge (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sampling was then followed by snowball sampling whereby there is an “identification, done by the researcher, based on specific reasoning, of a number of respondents to be interviewed, and which in their turn, shall indicate (recommend) other respondents which will make the object of the research” (Dragan & Isaic-Maniu, 2013, p. 163).

I began building my social networks for fieldwork at the June 2016 ‘Nigeria Research Day’ conference at the Department of International Development, University of Oxford. The conference enabled me to interact and exchange contacts with other researchers who were working on Nigeria’s 2009 amnesty including those who had already done fieldwork in the region. Even more important were networks with former colleagues with whom I had worked as a volunteer for a charity organisation between 2003 and 2005 in the Niger Delta. Familiarity with life in the Niger Delta ensured that

it was relatively easy for me, even as an outsider, to interact with people in the region during fieldwork. But for my name, many found it hard to believe that I was not Nigerian. Ghana and Nigeria have remained close neighbours and big rivals in all aspects of life, and the hospitality in both countries reserved for both sets of citizens was helpful for embarking on such a project.

Interviews and a survey were used to gather information from respondents, which aligns with some existing works on the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta such as Oluwaniyi (2018), Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016), and Ojo (2012). In general, interviews are deemed an appropriate approach to research in moments where “there is a need to collect in-depth information on people’s opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings” (Easwaramoorthy & Zarinpoush, 2006). The fieldwork began with interviews in both Nigeria and the United Kingdom, mostly focusing on how the participants understood events in the Niger Delta since the amnesty implementation. The interviews were also geared towards obtaining information about how participants understood conflict resolution, management, and containment. They were not restricted to face-to-face sessions but were also conducted via video communication technologies, notably Skype and WhatsApp. They were conducted in a semi-structured format at work, social places, and homes of respondents. Note-taking was used to record the responses from the interviewees.

Overall, there were 34 interviews conducted in Nigeria and the UK which included students, local residents, researchers, and ex-militants (see Appendix A). All the interviewees were identified and selected because of their experience and knowledge of the subject matter. Some of them were Nigerians who resided or had lived in the Niger Delta and had a personal experience of the conflict. Others were Nigerians who had keenly observe the conflict from a distance and had been indirectly affected by it. People who reside in Nigeria but outside of the Niger Delta also feel the negative impact of the oil conflict as the federal government heavily relies on oil revenues to sustain the state (see Introductory Chapter). This means that events in the Niger Delta usually attract the attention of Nigerians across the country and beyond. Broadening the range of interviewees to include those outside of the Niger Delta was helpful, especially as people residing in the region are not always open to express their thoughts on sensitive issues that are oil related for fear of being targeted by the government and fighters. For

example, an ex-militant from Delta State who had agreed to grant an interview felt uneasy to respond to some of the questions and kept insisting on the need to ask for permission from his ‘boss’ before speaking out. In contrast, the interviews that were conducted outside of the Niger Delta were more relaxed and respondents usually provided more elaborate responses. This approach of interviewing people within and outside the Niger Delta differs from other works – such as Ojo (2012) and Oluwaniyi (2010) – that have focused on interviewing only people within the oil-rich region.

In addition to the interviews, 94 questionnaires were collected (a sample of the questionnaire is found in Appendix C). The questionnaire was distributed in homes, workplaces, schools, and religious places. In line with Ojo (2012), the questionnaire included a mix of multi-choice and open-ended questions that allowed room for respondents to elaborate on some questions. The questions contained in the questionnaire were finalised after the first 18 interviews when a better sense of the key issues had already emerged from the interviews. The first 18 interviews confirmed, among other things, that the amnesty was largely behind the relative calm that the Niger Delta experienced post-2009 and the resurgence of new militant activities in 2016. This was important for framing the questions in the survey as the views expressed by the first 18 interviewees largely supported the prevailing views from the secondary literature and the general public. Those interviews also helped to appreciate the difficulties that the average person in the Niger Delta faces in terms of expressing their thoughts in written and spoken English. Some scholarly works such as Chikwem and Duru (2018) have targeted only post-graduates in order to obtain a pool of respondents who are more likely to have the ability to fill a questionnaire in English. However, this approach tends to limit the representativeness of the views gathered as, for example, those with a lower level of education who may possess relevant information are eliminated from the pool of respondents.

Mindful of this problem, a conscious attempt was made to frame the questions in the survey in simple English and to explain technical terms to people where necessary in order to include participants with a basic education. The research assistants – whose roles will be discussed later in this section – were fluent in local vernaculars, and thus helped to explain key terms to the respondents where necessary. The multi-choice questions helped to understand the pattern in responses including insights from a

perception survey. Herbert (2013) has underlined the following strengths with respect to perception surveys that are carried out in fragile and conflict-affected areas: a focus on citizen opinion as opposed to expert opinion; a fast, cost-effective, and broad data gathering method; a form of citizen-state communication; and challenging unsubstantiated stereotypes. Nevertheless, there are problems that come with perception surveys including the extent to which respondents give honest and reflective opinions; whether they can be considered as representative; and difficulties in interpreting the complexity of findings (*ibid.*). Thus, the results of the perception survey were triangulated with the information collected in the interviews and existing literature. The open-ended questions in the survey provided space for the respondents who had the capacity and time to provide more detailed comments and also helped to follow up on puzzling points raised by the respondents.

While the interviews were conducted by the researcher, there was room for research assistants to help with the distribution and collection of questionnaires. This helped to expand participation in the project as was particularly useful given tight financial constraints. The means of transportation for the researcher and assistants within Nigeria were mostly via public motorcycles and buses. For some respondents, it was okay to fill the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher and assistants while others preferred to fill and return it later. In most cases, respondents who took the questionnaire to fill and return it later had to be contacted several times before retrieving it. On some occasions, the questionnaire could not be retrieved at all and the main reason given for not returning it generally related to loss of the questionnaire. Phone calls were mostly used to follow up with respondents who spent time and energy to fill and return the questionnaire. Making good first impressions and striking good relationships were key to overcoming the hurdle of rejection and to facilitate discussions. One of the reasons for the warm reception by some respondents stemmed from the reputation of the University of Warwick. For instance, an army officer pursuing a master's programme at the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies in Ilorin became a respondent and also helped to expand the pool of respondents upon seeing the name of Warwick on the questionnaire. He quickly remarked that General Yakubu Gowon – a military head of state in Nigeria between 1966 to 1975 – was one of the famous alumni of the university. This was helpful as the challenges of conducting fieldwork in volatile areas such as the Niger Delta, as will be elaborated in the next

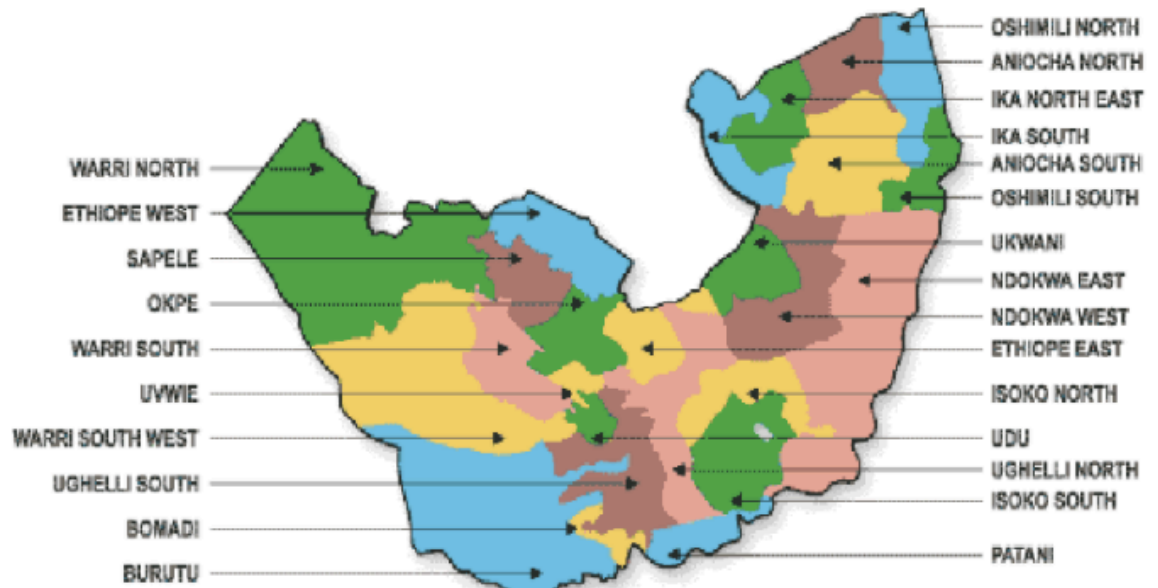
section, cannot be underestimated.

The first site for the primary data collection was Delta State, which has been used as a location for fieldwork by several authors including Chikwem and Duru (2018) and Ojo (2012). Delta State, which ranks second to Rivers State in terms of oil production, accounts for about 35 % of Nigeria's crude oil, and also possesses a significant amount of natural gas (Omoredede, 2014). It is an area where the negative impact of oil-related activities including environmental degradation and limited physical and human development is glaring. It is a state where the conflict has been active, at least, since the late 1990s and where the 2009 amnesty programme was also implemented. During Delta State's local government elections in January 2018, the State Independent Electoral Commission's office was set on fire by thugs, which highlights the region's vulnerability to violence (The Nation, 2018). Delta State was chosen as a site for fieldwork due to its significance in terms of oil extraction, the involvement of militants in the region in the 2009 amnesty, and the availability of a research assistant who was based in the area.

Within Delta State, most of the forms were distributed in Isoko North and Isoko South Local Government Areas (see Figure 3). Out of 90 questionnaires that were simultaneously distributed in homes, workplaces, schools, and religious places, 51 were retrieved. In 2016, the estimated population of Isoko North was 197,700 while Isoko South was 323,800 (City Population, 2016). It is important to note that population census exercises in Nigeria are often met with distrust and even trigger political, social, ethnic, and religious controversies (Ezeah et al., 2013). Isoko has one of the largest onshore oilfields in Nigeria and it possesses other natural resources such as palm, cassava, plantain, yam, and rubber (Ererobe, 2009). The places surveyed in Isoko including Olomoro Town in Isoko South were relatively calm during fieldwork even though problems such as land disputes that lead to violence still persisted. For instance, eight people were believed to have been killed in a renewed protracted land dispute in Isoko South local council in August 2017 (The Guardian, 2017b). Just as the other oil producing areas in the Niger Delta, the suffering of the local population in Isoko has been traced to 1957 when oil exploration began in the area and oil revenues failed to impact positively on the lives of the local people (ibid.). The challenges there include the destruction of farmlands as a result of oil exploitation, a limited access to electricity

supply, a limited access to infrastructural development including safe roads, hospitals, and schools, and a limited access to gainful employment opportunities.

Figure 3: Map of Delta State with Local Government Areas



Source: Researchgate (2017)

Ilorin – the second site for fieldwork – was founded by the Yoruba in the 18th Century (Enclopaedia Britannica, 2018). Ilorin is the capital city of Kwara State, which has been nicknamed as ‘The Place of Harmony’ (Nigerian Finder, 2017). It is the headquarters of the Nigerian Library Association and boasts of academic institutions such as the University of Ilorin (Unilorin), Al-Hikma University, Kwara State University, Kwara State Polytechnic, Kwara State College of Education, Federal Government College, and Federal Agricultural and Rural Management Institute (Enclopaedia Britannica, 2018; Finelib, 2018). Access to graduate students in Ilorin who were studying the Niger Delta conflict and 2009 amnesty enhanced the quality of data collected. Ilorin also has an Army base, which is known as the 22 Armoured Brigade Sobi Cantonment and a Police Command with various divisions spread across the city. Access to respondents from the military and police bases was significant since such individuals are part of the institutions in charge of dealing with violence in Nigeria including the police and military stationed in Ilorin.

The survey began in Ilorin with the distribution of questionnaires to army officers and

students at the department of Peace and Strategic Studies, Unilorin. Thereafter, more copies were distributed to the Niger Delta Elders Group in the city, some students at Saint Thomas Aquinas Chaplaincy – Unilorin, the Nigerian Federation of Catholic students, religious groups consisting of diverse people, Kwara State Command's police headquarters, and the Nigerian Army School of Education. Out of 70 questionnaires that were distributed in Ilorin, 43 were retrieved.

Figure 4 is a map of Nigeria with the red ovals indicating the sites for fieldwork. On average, it takes about 8 hours to travel between Ilorin and Delta State. The two research assistants – David who lived in Olomoro of Isoko South and Patrick who resided in Ilorin – were selected based on their academic qualifications, familiarity with the context of the research, and availability to assist with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Before settling for the two assistants, I had learnt about how some volunteers often engaged in inappropriate behaviours including filling the questionnaires themselves. Thus, David and Patrick were recommended by some former colleagues because they were trustworthy and capable of fulfilling their duties. While David – the younger brother of a former colleague – was a teacher who was born and raised in Isoko South, Patrick had just completed the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) – a compulsory one year service for graduates – with a former colleague during fieldwork and had moved from Lagos to Ilorin to look for a job. The main tasks of David and Patrick were to assist with the printing, distribution, and collection of questionnaires. Additionally, they proposed names of potential respondents, some of whom were contacted. They underwent an informal training facilitated by the researcher that emphasised the ethical dimensions of social science research including issues of participant and data security and data anonymity. Their familiarity with the two sites made it easier to obtain a good number of respondents who provided valuable feedback that have helped to achieve the targets of the dissertation.

Overall, it was easier to work with Patrick than David for a number of reasons. First, David was working as a part-time primary school teacher and sometimes found it difficult to fulfil his role of distributing and retrieving questionnaires due to time constraints. He particularly found the weekdays challenging, especially as I insisted on working only during day times owing to security concerns. Thus, David had more time to work as a research assistant mostly during the weekends, holidays, and vacations.

His tight schedule was compounded by the fact that it was relatively difficult to obtain respondents in Delta State due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the proximity of respondents to events in the region. Accessing the Niger Delta creeks – the stronghold of the militants – was too much of a risk for both David and me. However, through one of David’s relatives who became an ex-militant after joining the 2009 amnesty programme, I was able to meet with some other ex-militants in Isoko.

Figure 4: Map of Nigeria Indicating Ilorin and Delta



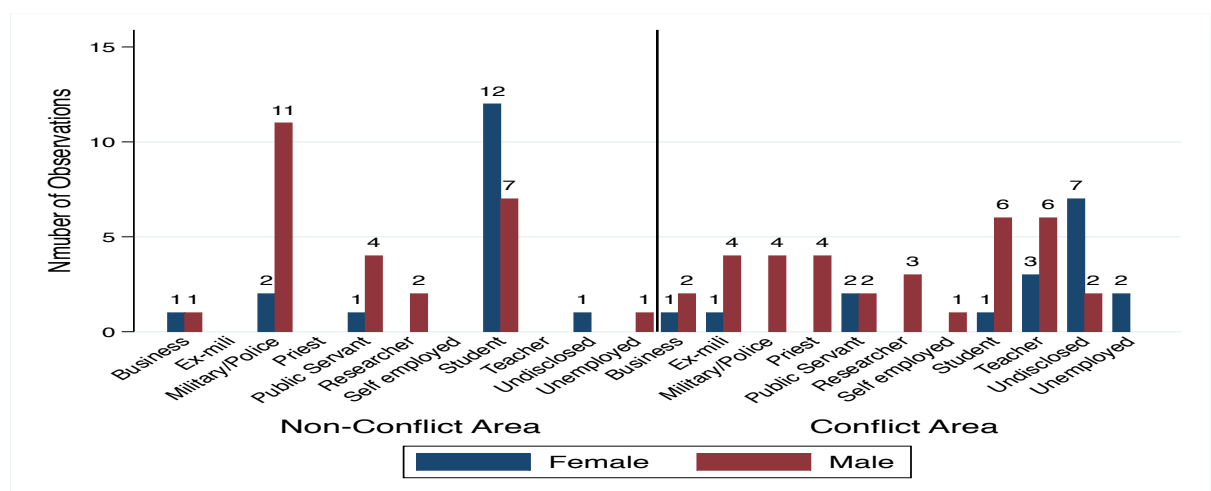
Source: Base Map from Map Library (2017)

Given the importance of Delta State for the project and the difficulty of obtaining respondents in the area, the fieldwork there took more time (9 months) than Ilorin (5 months). Patrick, who was an unemployed graduate and a more organised person than David, was easier to work with in a more secure environment. He was particularly helpful in terms of preparing a budget and rendering a good account of monies spent on printing the questionnaire and transporting himself to meet with respondents. Thus, Patrick was generally better at providing details of his endeavours than David. Consequently, I had to pay more attention to the activities in Delta State as David needed more help in order to carry out his task. This paid off in the end as the two

assistants succeeded in helping to collect 94 questionnaires and also helped to set up my meetings with some interviewees.

Out of the 94 respondents who filled the questionnaire, the views of students are the most represented, forming 28 % of respondents, while the least represented are the self-employed. 35 people did not provide their ages while 59 did so. The youngest respondent was 18 years while the oldest was 63 years, and the average was 30.5 years. It is important to also add that 10 people did not disclose their occupation, and 60 of the respondents were male while 34 were female. From Figure 5, it is clear that female students and male military and police officers in Ilorin were the most represented. This is because those respondents were relatively easy to access. The composition of student respondents in both Ilorin and Delta State consisted of 13 females and 13 males, which does not reflect the usual male dominance in the student population of Nigerian academic institutions as captured in works such as Mukoro (2013) and Adeyemi and Akpotu (2004). However, the dominant male composition of military and police respondents is reflective of the gendered nature of public security agencies in Nigeria, exemplified by the Nigerian military's exclusion of female cadets from the combatant course of the Nigerian Defence Academy prior to 2011 (Vanguard, 2017a; Punch, 2017a). While respondents from the Niger Delta region are represented across all the occupations displayed, there were no ex-militants, priests, self-employed, and teachers from Ilorin.

Figure 5: Total Number of Respondents Based on Occupation, Sex and Location



Source: Constructed by Author

The fieldwork results were analysed thematically by highlighting the recurring responses from the interviews and survey. The relevant notes that were taken from the interviews and the respondents' recurring written responses from the survey have been quoted, paraphrased, and interpreted in the empirical chapters. Additionally, the close-ended questions from the survey were helpful in terms of generating quantifiable data using Stata – an integrated statistical software package that is designed for data analysis, data management, and graphics (Stata Corp, 2018). Stata was used for creating a table that summarises the characteristics of respondents as can be seen in Figure 5, for generating graphs from the close-ended questions such as 'yes or no', and for ranking of the views of the respondents. It is important to note that the views of participants expressed in this project is not representative of the entire views of people in Delta State and Ilorin. The results from the interviews and survey have been triangulated with existing literature and interpreted based on their significance for the analysis. The dissertation has been structured in a way that follows the pattern of responses from the semi-structured interviews, the structure of the questionnaire, and the pattern of responses obtained from the questionnaire.

In short, both primary and secondary sources have helped to meet the objectives of the research project. Expanding the social network of the researcher through former colleagues was particularly important for accessing research participants. Following an in-depth analysis of conflict and amnesty related concepts in the next chapter, the remainder of the dissertation will triangulate the results from the interviews and survey to respond to the research questions. In order to do this, it is important to discuss the ethical issues and challenges that had to be overcome in the course of pursuing this project.

1.4 Ethical Considerations and Challenges

Abiding by an ethical code of conduct was important for carrying out this research project as Ndebele et al. (2014, p. 5), for example, have argued: "Research oversight capacity is critical for the protection of human research participants, as well as to prevent exploitation of African populations, communities, institutions, and countries". All the means used to obtain information for the dissertation were legal. Secondary sources were obtained through the University of Warwick library and other legal open sources such as Google. Informed consent was sought from all the respondents before

engaging them since the voluntary agreement of a subject's participation in a research is a prerequisite in the social sciences (Shahnazarian et al., 2017). A confidentiality and an anonymity agreement were verbally reached with each participant. Verbal consent helped to reduce the quantity of materials that needed to be transported from Nigeria to the United Kingdom, thereby enhancing data protection and easing anticipated suspicions from participants and public authorities. During fieldwork, there were frequent random checks by Nigerian security personnel, especially at the airports and highways. Given the sensitive nature of the Niger Delta conflict and how it divides opinions across the country, it was necessary to avoid anything that would fuel people's suspicion. Filled questionnaires from the fieldwork sites were transported in sealed opaque paper packages and transported to the United Kingdom. Apart from paper questionnaires that have been secured in the home of the researcher, all other fieldwork materials have been secured on the researcher's computer hard drive.

All participants were of legal age – 18 years and above – and their identities will remain confidential. There was a conscious effort made to always explain the project to people before seeking their consent. As part of their training, the two research assistants were taught the importance of explaining the focus and purpose of the research project, guaranteeing respondents of their confidentiality and anonymity, and safely securing questionnaires. They were also asked to only target respondents who were 18 years and above. The identities of respondents, especially their names and exact addresses will remain anonymous as their profession, interview and survey locations, dates of interviews, ages of respondents, and other features have been used as codes to help the reader appreciate the general characteristics of respondents and thus their positionality. Only the first names of the research assistants have been provided for safety reasons as well. It is important to add that for some of the respondents, it was a rare moment for them to get their opinions on the Niger Delta conflict and 2009 amnesty heard. Thus, it was sometimes necessary to lower the expectations of some of them who felt that the primary objective of the project is policy driven. Overall, the dissertation meets the ethical standards needed to carry out such a project but also had a number of challenges to contend with.

The general challenges of conducting research in conflict settings such as the Niger Delta include data accessibility, data analysis and interpretation, as well as data

presentation (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). The first challenge for this project was how to safely access respondents in the two sites, especially those in Delta State. Security of the research team and participants was the top priority. In Delta State, it was important to work during relatively calm moments, to focus on safer areas within the region, and to pay attention to the sensitivity of people. In the areas where interviews were held and the survey conducted in Delta State, people generally went about their normal day-to-day activities but appeared to be wary of unusual things happening around them. This was mostly observed in the market squares and other crowded areas. People often tuned in their radio sets aloud to listen to news and discussed public issues mostly in pidgin English. The Niger Delta, particularly Warri in Delta State, is known for good pidgin English in Nigeria even though pidgin English has been marginalised and commonly associated with the ‘unsophisticated’ people in the country (Akanke & Salami, 2010). This made it easier for me to understand and engage in discussions with the local people as pidgin English is common among former British colonies in West Africa including Ghana. Thus, apart from my past experience of living in the Niger Delta, one key reason why I felt at ease during fieldwork was because I generally understood what people were talking about. Some respondents made minor grammatical and spelling mistakes, but all of them could express themselves clearly in standard and/or pidgin English.

In Ilorin, language was also not a problem as most people there similarly spoke standard and pidgin English. Just as Delta State, there were highly securitised areas in Ilorin, which included army and police zones where interviews were conducted, and questionnaires were distributed and retrieved. Thus, it was always important to go through the appropriate authorities before contacting people. Working with local assistants helped a great deal in establishing good relationships with the local authorities and respondents. Prioritising security ensured that there was no security related incident for the research team and participants during and after the fieldwork.

As expected, there were some rejections from people who were contacted. Some of the reasons that were given by those who could not grant interviews or fill and return questionnaires largely revolved round time constraints that stemmed from household and occupational activities such as maintaining homes, work, and studies. It was difficult to find people at home mostly during the weekdays as they were engaged at their places of work and schools. The unemployed respondents were mostly found at

home and in the streets during working hours. Some students, mostly in Ilorin, referred to the need to prepare for exams as a reason for being unable to participate in the research. Some of the contacted persons were also not interested in being part of the project. For some, this was due to illiteracy, while others seemed to remain suspicious of the project's outcome, and thus concerned about their safety. This is a common problem that conflict researchers face (Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

A good number of people demanded money before agreeing to grant an interview or fill a form. Giving money as an incentive to people has been a longstanding contentious issue for researchers as it has been perceived by some as a good incentive mechanism, while others consider it as compromising the ethical standards in research (Head, 2009; Russell et al., 2000; McKeganey, 2001; Goodman et al., 2004; Paradis, 2000). The decision not to give people money during fieldwork made it impossible for some of them to participate in the project. The main reason for taking this stance was to avoid the complication of incentives, especially given the researcher's financial constraints. The link between the project and a UK-based institution naturally raised the financial expectations of people. In Delta State, for example, some traditional leaders who were denied cash quickly withdrew their pledges of becoming participants and helping to reach out to more people in their local areas. The expression in pidgin English that people often used to request for money is: "Settle us Oga", which translates as: "Give us money Sir". In order to diffuse the misconception of participants who thought of their participation in the project as a means to address their financial struggles, soft drinks were offered as a demonstration of appreciation for their willingness to participate.

There were logistical problems that were encountered during fieldwork including the problems associated with transportation in Nigeria. Onatere et al. (2014, p. 557), for example, have identified the following problems with urban transport in the country: "Poorly maintained urban road network and road complementary facilities, inefficient public transport system, poor institutional framework leading to poor coordination of urban transport services, poor land use transport planning, poor and ineffective transport management". These problems also exist in the rural areas where there are relatively few good roads. Thus, it was important to pay attention to the quality of public transportation for the research team. Safe commercial motorbikes and buses were mostly used to reach out to people during fieldwork. There was a rule set by the

researcher for those involved in the project to only commute during daytime and to avoid high risk areas to guarantee everyone's safety. Additionally, the problem of road congestion in Nigeria had to be managed well as it sometimes delayed appointments with respondents. The fundamental causes of traffic congestion in Nigeria include the poor state of roads and road networks, poor driving habits, inadequate road capacity, and a lack of parking facilities (Ukpata, 2012). The research team avoided traffic congestion by mostly commuting outside of rush hour times, using safe motorbikes, and trekking reasonable distances to meet with participants. In short, despite the challenges encountered during fieldwork such as insecurity fears and transport related problems, the project was ethically realised in a good amount of time.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explained how the information that have been ethically gathered from both primary and secondary sources have been used for this research project. The methods used align with some other works on Nigeria's 2009 amnesty such as Chikwem and Duru (2018), Oluwaniyi (2018), Omokhoa and Ikelegbe (2016), and Babatunde (2014). The secondary literature provided the grounds for formulating the research questions and laying out the research project as a whole. In turn, the 9-month fieldwork proved useful as it provided an avenue for respondents to share their knowledge of the subject matter, thereby increasing the research participation. Deploying snowball and purposive sampling of respondents as have been used by Ojo (2012), Omorede (2014), and Tobor (2016) proved to be crucial in terms of targeting safe areas in the two research sites – Delta State and Ilorin. The choice of the two locations in Nigeria for fieldwork has been worthwhile as it has enhanced the triangulation of different points of view expressed by respondents with existing literature. Despite the challenges that were encountered during fieldwork such as rejections from people, insecurity and transportation concerns, the research team was able to collect the views of a significant number of people. Before using the primary and secondary information gathered to address the research questions, the next chapter analyses some key conflict concepts that are useful for evaluating the 2009 amnesty.

Chapter 2:

Towards Understanding Conflict

2.0 Introduction

Since 1990, over 75 % of amnesties have been used to respond to conflicts and 83 % of peace agreement amnesty commitments have been executed (Mallinder, 2018, p. 1). This reiterates that conflict amnesties are relatively common, and in order to understand amnesty and its impact, there is the need to first to look at the conflict – how it evolved and the different actors involved so as to understand the context in which the amnesty was introduced, how it was implemented and received, its achievements and shortcomings, and the additional work that would need to be done to achieve a more sustainable peace. This chapter starts by looking at some conflict related themes that have shaped the understanding of conflicts in the post-Cold War era. It departs from the one-sided explanation of conflict – such as the greed explanation of Collier (2000) – and principally argues that conflicts are complex, that scholars have used different lenses to understand them, and that different theoretical approaches provide important insights, which can be brought together under the LAO framework. Broadly speaking, the social orders including LAOs and OAOs craft institutions that help to shape agency, which determines elite behaviour and policy – such as the investment of resources and response to opposition and unrest – as well as the behaviour and decision-making of other actors – such as a recourse to violence rather than other forms of opposition politics (North et al., 2009). LAOs are particularly important for understanding violence and thus the limitations of intervention measures such as amnesties largely because they reinforce “a predominance of social relationships organised along personal lines, including privileges, social hierarchies, laws that are enforced unequally, insecure property rights, and a pervasive sense that not all individuals were created or are equal” (ibid., p. 12).

The chapter begins with an analysis of the terms conflict and peace, and a common notion of a conflict cycle – conflict management, containment, and resolution. Subsequently, some conflict theories including greed and grievance, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, institutionalism, and elite manipulation will be discussed within the context of the social orders. These theories have been selected over

other theories because they provide the most important insights, which – when taken together within the LAO framework – can provide a more holistic account of the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. In essence, an LAO “manages the problem of violence by forming a dominant coalition that limits access to valuable resources – land, labour, and capital” (ibid., p. 30). In this vein, the chapter also assesses the relationship between natural resources, development, and conflict including an examination of the ‘resource curse’ and ‘conflict trap’ arguments. The analysis shows among other things that while low human development or poverty has been found by scholars to be the most robust driver of conflict (Koubi & Bohmelt, 2013, p. 19), the sense of exclusion that is generated by institutions in LAOs is important for understanding the extent to which factors such as elite manipulation and security dilemma lead to violence. Thus, the chapter demonstrates why violent conflicts are more common in fragile states such as Nigeria by highlighting how the LAO system ensures that elites and clients benefit immensely from institutional arrangements that limit access to resource revenues, which can lead to violence. The chapter concludes by summarising how the concepts reviewed will be useful for understanding the impact of the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta.

2.1 Conflict in Modern States

Mindful of the Niger Delta conflict, the dissertation adopts Esteban and Ray’s (1999, p. 380) definition of conflict “as a situation in which, in the absence of a collective decision rule, social groups with opposed interests incur losses in order to increase the likelihood of obtaining their preferred outcomes”. The absence of a collective decision rule can result from, but also foster violent confrontations of opposing political actors, fierce hostilities between social groups that are ethnic or religion-based, and disagreements regarding the control and allocation of natural resource revenues. This happens mostly in LAOs where there are “polities without generalised consent of the governed” (North et al., p. 12). Thus, LAOs tend to be highly vulnerable to violent conflicts due to their unfavourable institutional arrangements including the lack of rule of law application and an unconsolidated political control of the military that can undermine a state’s political and economic stability.

It is important to remark that the different terms in this section and the rest of the

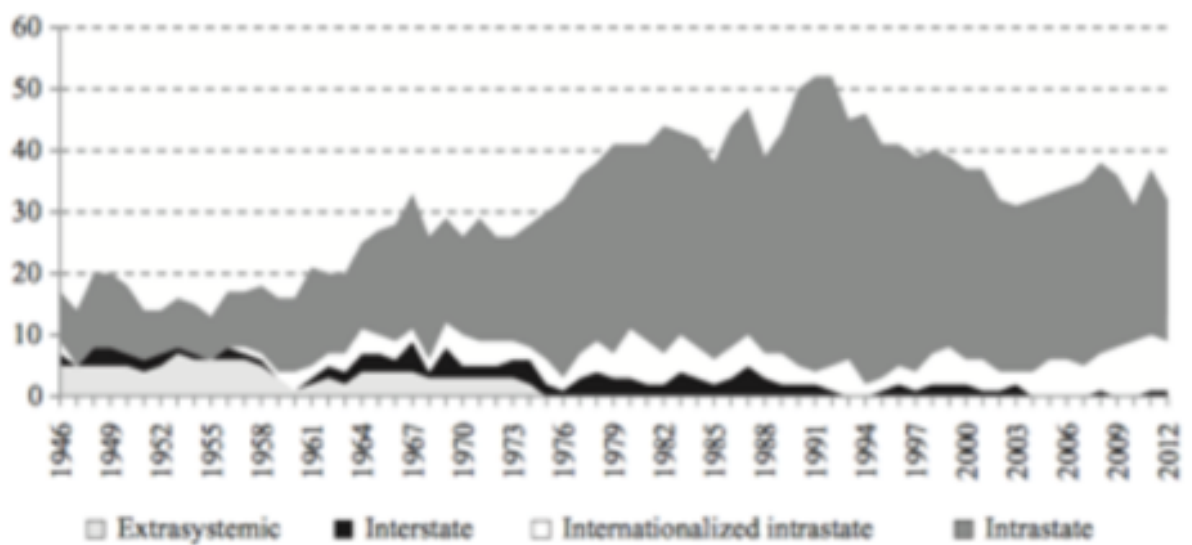
dissertation that highlight the conflict cycle – conflict management, containment, and resolution – need to be understood as strategies to limit violence occurrences in LAOs. As far as Nigeria's mature LAO context is concerned, the absence of a collective decision rule between the local population, the government, and MNOCs in the Niger Delta results from local institutions that help to shape access and thus perceptions or narratives of inclusion with respect to wealth, resource control, and compensation for environmental damage (Idemudia & Ite, 2007). The losses incurred include deaths, kidnappings, and the destruction of private and public properties such as homes and oil pipelines (Osagie et al., 2010). The preferred outcome for the masses in the Niger Delta is to obtain higher dividends from oil revenues and forestall the negative impact of oil exploitation (Ikelegbe, 2010; Courson, 2009). The analysis of the Niger Delta conflict in the next chapter demonstrates the various aspects of Esteban and Ray's definition of conflict inasmuch as it focuses in what constitutes the Niger Delta conflict, the causes of the conflict, and how the government has failed to address the conflict's underlying causes.

Conflict studies have gained the attention of scholars for some time now as UNDP (2013, p. 40) has stated that: "Conflicts in the post-Cold War era have claimed more than 5 million casualties, 95% of them civilians". Marc (2016) has also highlighted how the number of ongoing global conflicts increased from 41 in 2014 to 50 in 2015, a world record in forced displacement since World War II that stood at 59.5 % by the end of 2014, increasing concentration of poor people in countries affected by violence, and prolonged conflicts keeping countries poor. It follows that violent clashes, particularly in developing countries, have gained the attention of scholars and policy-makers owing to their devastating impact on human lives, other species, and the environment (Gleditsch et al., 2014; Taydas and Peksen, 2012; Cunningham et al., 2009). In general, conflict can lead to the destruction of financial and physical capital; damage to infrastructure, equipment and other investments; the emergence and deepening of terrorist activities and social divisions; as well as displacement and forced migration. That violent conflict can be a major obstacle to achieving human and physical development is widely recognised as will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Of all the different types of conflicts, scholarly works such as Collier et al. (2004) as well as Blattman and Miguel (2010) have emphasised how civil conflict has been

common for some decades now. This claim is supported by Figure 6 which shows that intrastate conflict is more prevalent than interstate conflict. Civil conflict usually involves local insurgents who resort to violence for various reasons including greed, grievances, and other causes that will be analysed in the subsequent sections. This is particularly common in LAOs that are marked with weak state security that largely stems from a lack of rule of law application as well as other institutional arrangements that are unable to regulate elite-driven interests.

Figure 6: Number of armed conflicts by type, 1946-2012



Source: Themner & Wallensteen (2013).

It has been established that since rebel groups usually get stronger as a civil war prolongs, longer periods of fighting reduce the chances of a government victory (Cunningham et al., 2009; Slantchev, 2004; Bapat, 2005). Reduction in the chances of a government victory does not necessarily lead to a rebel victory, but it may make a negotiated settlement relatively attractive to both sides (Clayton, 2013). But “where the balance of power favors the rebels, governments are more likely to use conciliatory strategies, such as amnesties, potentially in an attempt to signal a willingness to negotiate” (Loyle & Binningsbø 2016, p. 458). As the dissertation highlights particularly in Chapter 5, Nigeria’s 2009 amnesty demonstrated how the balance of power favoured the Niger Delta militants in the sense that they managed to cause enough problems for the elites and the latter felt compelled to act in the interest of the fighters. Civil wars have led to more amnesties than less severe conflicts as those in

power tend to waive accountability processes to end the fighting (Binningsbø, Loyle, Gates and Elster, 2012, p. 737). Amnesties are used at different phases of conflicts including during the conflict, as part of peace negotiations and agreements, and in post-conflict settings (Mallinder, 2018, p. 12).

Conceptualising the different phases of conflict – conflict cycle – has been important for researchers since it has enabled experts to understand conflict dynamics over time (Wohlfeld, 2010). However, conceptualisation of the conflict cycle can be problematic especially when it is projected as universal even though it may only illustrate a specific conflict. For instance, Figure 7 shows a conceptualisation of a conflict in India that shows stages of the conflict from individual tension to stalemate. Based on this presentation, one may be inclined to interpret the stages of every conflict as a movement from individual tension to stalemate. Nevertheless, such a description cannot reflect every conflict as, for example, the dissertation highlights in the next chapter that community tensions characterised the initial stage of the Niger Delta conflict. This means that, contrary to the first stage of individual tension in Figure 7, a conceptualisation of the Niger Delta conflict's cycle need to start with community or societal tensions. It follows that “there are no conflicts which are entirely similar, and special features always have to be kept in mind” (Wallenstein, 2019, p. 75).

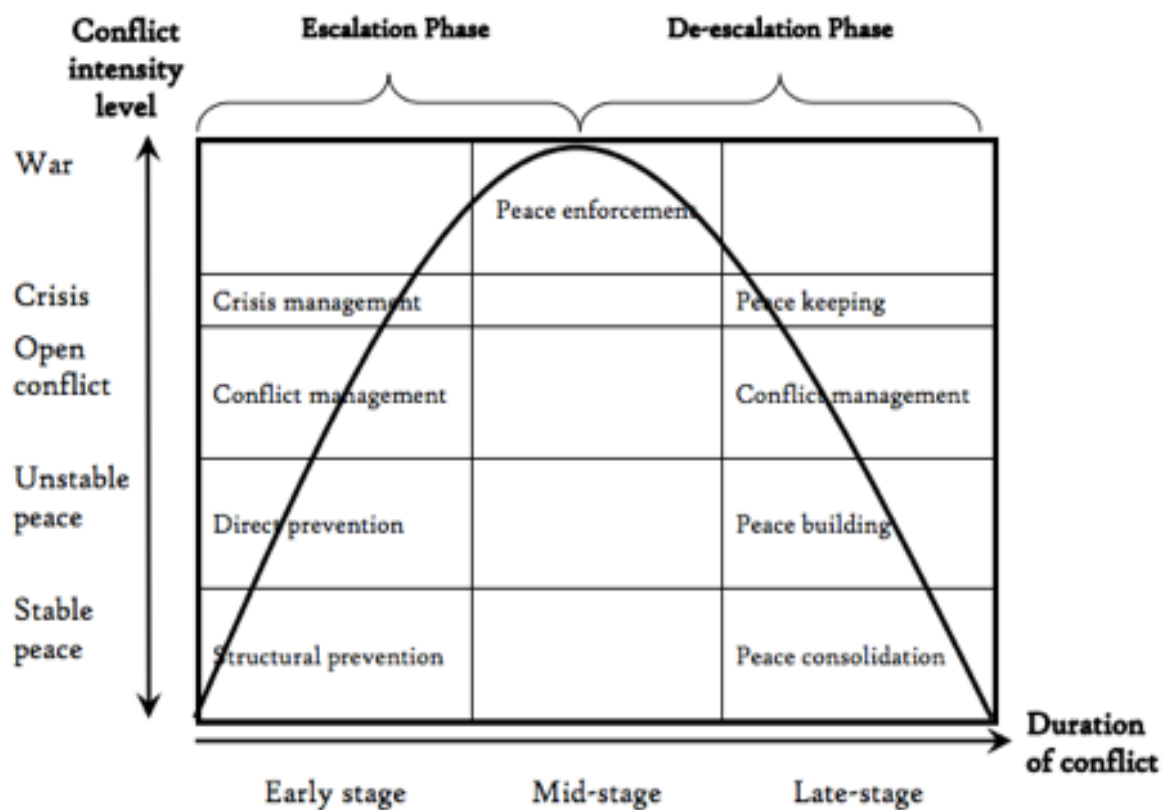
Figure 7: Stages of conflict



Source: Government of India, 2008.

In turn, some scholarly works such as Swanström and Weissmann (2005) have presented general conflict cycles that help to enhance our understanding of broader conflict contexts (see Figure 8). The latter displays five levels of conflict intensity namely stable peace, unstable peace, open conflict, crisis, and war. It also has nine phases in the duration of conflict including structural prevention, direct prevention, conflict management, crisis management, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, conflict management, peace building, and peace consolidation. Thus, the duration of conflict follows a process of low tension (stable peace) to widespread violence (war), and the pattern at the escalation phase is reversed at the de-escalation phase. The latter includes measures such as amnesties that are used to reduce violence. For example, in 2014, Russia, Ukraine, the US, and the EU sought to use amnesty to de-escalate tensions in eastern Ukraine (BBC, 2014).

Figure 8: The Conflict Cycle



Source: Swanström and Weissmann (2005, p. 11).

One might be inclined to think that every conflict follows the pattern in Figure 8, but the authors point out that in reality, not all waves of conflict look the same (Swanström

& Weissmann, 2005, p. 15). For instance, not every escalation of a conflict necessarily leads to a war, just as a conflict can move between the intensity levels of open conflict, crisis, and unstable peace without necessarily reaching either an unstable peace or a stable peace. Achieving a stable peace does not mean that a state has completely eliminated violence and the threat of violence as the latter is inevitable in LAOs. Rather, stable peace indicates that violence and the threat of violence can be significantly minimised through impersonal institutional arrangements – including the rule of law for elites and perpetually lived forms of elite organisations – such that violent conflicts (understood as widespread or mass violence) can be avoided (see Chapter 7). The dynamism of violent conflicts is such that scholars need to be open to new insights that are made manifest in LAOs including those that have introduced amnesties.

The dynamism of the conflict cycle has been demonstrated by the different scholarly interpretations of terms such as conflict prevention, management, and resolution. For example, from being viewed as synonymous with pre-emptive strikes during the Cold War by experts, the meaning of conflict prevention in the aftermath of the Cold War has changed to peaceful prevention of disputes (Swanström & Weissmann, 2005, 2005, p. 19). In this vein, Kotite (2012) has identified three phases of conflict prevention; namely, early detection and resolution of the root causes of conflict; peace-making or interim action; and post-conflict reconstruction. In turn, Tanner (2000) has distinguished between structural and short-term conflict prevention given that the structural causes of conflict usually differ from the proximate causes that give rise to violence escalation. While structural causes of conflict include political injustice, economic deprivation, and the weakness of a state's structures, conflict's proximate causes largely result from 'bad leadership'. The latter usually entails the prevalent use of violent force by leaders, especially in places where LAO systems are unable to address mutually compatible drivers of conflict (see Chapter 3). Amnesties can offer both short-term and long-term prevention of conflict depending on the context (Mallinder, 2018). Failure to prevent a conflict from occurring can lead to violent clashes that usually require measures such as conflict management, containment, and resolution.

Conflict management theorists have generally suggested that conflict resolution is unrealistic due to the ineradicable differences of values and interests in a society, but

some other theorists believe that conflicts can be resolved, terminated, or eliminated (Hamad, 2005, p. 4). The arguments in the dissertation align with the views of conflict management theorists as a certain level of violence is inevitable in all the social orders. However, the underlying incompatibilities of particular conflicts can be resolved, especially in OAOs even though violence can occur from different socio-economic realities as will be discussed in the next section. Hamad (2005) has highlighted how conflict management was interpreted as containment during the Cold War to mean *détente* or deterrence. Apart from conflict containment being interpreted as a form of conflict management, it has also been used as part of a definition of conflict management. For example, Tanner (2000, p. 541) has defined conflict management as the limitation, mitigation, and containment of a conflict. In this vein, conflict management is a provisional solution to conflict as Tanner deploys containment plus limitation and mitigation to define conflict management. Conflict containment and management have also been interpreted as the means to prevent violence as North et al. (2009, p.13), for instance, have argued that all societies can only contain and manage violence, but they cannot eliminate it. In Chapter 6, the dissertation endeavours to disentangle conflict containment from conflict management and resolution in order to explain the 2009 amnesty's impact on the Niger Delta conflict.

Conflict resolution or a successful conflict management entails settling the underlying causes of a particular conflict, which can happen after the conflict has been managed or contained. Zartman (2000), cited by Swanström and Weissmann (2005, p. 25), has underscored how conflict resolution and management are ends of the same continuum given that both are needed to end the fighting. In this light, Swanström and Weissmann (ibid.) have contended that: "The process of conflict management is the foundation for more effective conflict resolution". This makes sense as a certain level of peace is usually required for negotiations and reforms that can help to address a conflict's underlying incompatibilities. Thus, both conflict management and resolution are different but interrelated given that conflict resolution usually signifies a transformation of conflict management into sustainable or lasting peace. The latter entails creating favourable institutional arrangements, notably transitioning from an LAO towards an OAO, which will ensure that the urge for actors to resort to violence is very low (see Chapter 7). In turn, Reiter (2014, pp. 146-147) has shown a strong correlation between amnesties and lasting peace by arguing that amnesties can offer help to post-conflict

societies to maintain peace and strive towards reconciliation. However, some amnesties are known to be more helpful than others in terms of achieving sustainable peace as, for example, Dancy (2018) has highlighted how only amnesties that are passed after conflict termination help to resolve civil wars. Amnesties are also known to have less impact on sustainable peace when a government and rebel groups find it difficult to communicate their preferences, reach agreements, and trust each other (Mallinder, 2018; Dancy, 2018). In turn, the dissertation argues in Chapter 7 that amnesties will be insufficient to build a sustainable peace if they do not go hand-in-hand with other reforms that start to shift Nigeria from a mature LAO towards an OAO. This progression is important because institutions help to shape decision-making of elites and other actors in the society (see Chapter 4).

Peace-building draws on Galtung's distinction between 'negative peace' – absence of direct violence or war – and a more sustainable or 'positive peace' that includes the integration of human societies, the restoration of relationships, and the creation of institutions that serve the interests of the local population (Galtung, 1964/69/96). The peace-building literature tends to highlight the importance of and ways to build sustainable peace as can be found, for example, in Lederach's (1997) seminal work in which he analyses the 'peace-building pyramid' and the key role that mid-level actors can play in restoring sustainable peace. Specifically, the roles of the 'middle-range leadership' (such as ethnic/religious leaders, academics, and nongovernmental organisations) are vital for peace-building but must be complemented by the efforts of the 'top leadership' (including political and military leaders) and the 'grassroots leadership' (for example, local leaders and community developers) (Lederach, 1997). Lederach's emphasis on peace-building actors complements North et al.'s (2009) institutional analysis of the social orders in the sense that different actors, especially political and military elites largely influence the crafting of institutions that can contribute to peace and violence in most modern states (see Chapters 4 and 7). In contrast to peace-building, political settlements, which will come to the fore particularly in Chapters 5 and 6, focus on negotiations and agreements between different actors including political elites and rebels that do not always lead to sustainable peace.

To summarise, conflict has been a major topic for investigation in the post-Cold War

era as different countries, particularly those that operate on the basis of LAO, have been vulnerable to civil conflicts. This has contributed to the different conceptualisations of the conflict cycle as each conflict has unique characteristics. While conflict management and containment have been used complementarily and interchangeably to explain unstable peace, conflict resolution usually entails addressing a conflict's underlying incompatibilities. From the analysis, it is clear that existing understanding of conflict management, containment, and resolution is inconclusive. In particular, the distinction between conflict management and containment needs further research as the two concepts have been interpreted differently since the Cold War. To contribute to this discussion, Chapter 6 analyses conflict management, containment, and resolution by showing the extent to which the terms help to explain the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta. In addition to defining conflict, existing studies have also examined the drivers of violent conflict in different societies including those that operate the LAO system. In what follows, the chapter outlines some of the major factors and theories that have been used to explain the root causes of conflict, given that a successful strategy for ensuring sustainable peace need to address why certain actors have sought to use violence in a society in the first place.

2.2. Theories of Conflict

There are many mutually compatible theories that explain the root causes of conflict, which among other things helps to explain why intervention measures such as amnesties are adopted in some contexts. This section will discuss the key drivers of conflict that are commonly associated with the Niger Delta context, but which when considered in the context of the LAO framework provide useful insights that can help to explain conflict and the limitations of amnesties. They include greed and grievance, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, institutionalism, and elite manipulation that offer significant and important, and mutually compatible insights for understanding violence in LAOs. The latter are more vulnerable to violent conflict as their institutional arrangements often fail to deal with problems such as the greed of elites and grievances of the local population (North et al., 2009).

The debate about greed and/or grievance has been central to much discussions about conflict since Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2004) argued that greed, understood as

economic opportunities, is a fundamental cause of conflict. More specifically, they contended that – in contrast to common assumptions – grievances had little explanatory power as to when conflicts did and did not arise with no significant positive correlation, for example, between inequality and conflict (Collier, 2000, pp. 5-6). Collier also found that ethnic and religious fractionalisation actually reduced the risk of conflict. Instead, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argued that economic agendas are the main drivers of conflict with groups that benefit from a conflict economically having an interest in initiating and sustaining it. The argument, in short, is that: “some societies are much more prone to conflict than others, simply because they offer more inviting economic prospects for rebellion” (Collier, 2000, p. 5). Collier was a strong proponent for the greed camp to a point of describing grievance-oriented explanations for civil wars as ‘so seriously wrong’ (ibid., pp. 4-5). However, Keen (2012) has highlighted how Collier has revised his position over the years by laying more emphasis on the feasibility of rebellion rather than greed.

The greed rather than grievance thesis has come under intense criticism. For example, Cramer (2002; 2010) has underscored how Collier is really talking of ‘opportunity’, rather than ‘greed’: how the proxies used do not fully capture either greed or grievance, with perceptions of how inequalities have emerged, for example, constituting a better measurement of grievance than levels of inequality per se; and of the impossibility of fully disentangling greed from grievance. Additionally, McNeish (2010) critiques Collier’s deployment of arbitrary language and measurements, neglect of past experience in civil war occurrences, and misleading configuration of variables. Bensted (2011) has also pointed out how Collier’s decision to not include certain indices that are difficult to measure – such as suppliers of armaments and opportunities for bureaucratic corruption – is problematic. Indeed, to use ‘the proportion of young men in the society’ and ‘the endowment of education’ as indices, leaving out factors that are more usually closely linked to conflict such as bad governance and LAO institutions undermines the credibility of Collier’s work. In turn, McDoom (2013) has demonstrated how the decision to be part of intergroup violence is much more dependent on social interaction than from individual calculus made in isolation. This implies that it is important to look beyond economic motivation and individual rational choice to the complete social setting of a conflict in order to fully understand a conflict’s drivers (Cramer, 2002, 2010). This constructivist perspective brings to light that apart

from economic motives, there are other social realities such as ethnicity, religion, and politics, which when considered within the LAO framework also contribute significantly to violent conflict.

These criticisms do not mean that the greed and/or grievance arguments of Collier have been rendered irrelevant for the study of civil conflicts as it is clear that greed or the opportunity to loot can be an economic incentive for certain actors to initiate or engage in violence. In this vein, Chapters 3 and 4 highlight how Nigerian political elites and MNOCs have fuelled the Niger Delta conflict, at least in part, for their selfish interest. Greed also has certain ties with amnesties as, for example, Mallinder (2018, p. 31) has highlighted how offenses committed for personal enrichment and theft of public resources still fall under the category of crimes that are amnestied. Thus, what is important is to identify ways to improve the greed or grievance arguments. For example, Keen (2001), cited by Cramer (2002), has underlined how a more useful approach is to move beyond the separation of greed and grievance by understanding the interaction between the two, and paying particular attention to how the greedy can manipulate the grievances of others. Additionally, Wallensteen (2019, p. 48) has argued that: “When needs and grievances are seen by actors to coincide with ethnic, linguistics, religious, cultural or historical lines, they add elements which make a situation even more explosive”. Among other things, the subsequent chapters will analyse the extent to which the insights from greed and/or grievances as well as other theories, which are mutually compatible within Nigeria’s mature LAO system, are important for explaining the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. Thus, it is important to discuss some other theories besides greed/or grievance that have been used to analyse conflicts including modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, institutionalism, and elite manipulation.

Modernisation has been defined by Deutsch (1961, p. 493) as that which involves the introduction and acceptance of ‘advanced’ and ‘non-traditional’ practices in culture, technology, and economic life on a considerable scale. What constitutes ‘advanced’ and ‘non-traditional’ practices are highly debatable, especially with respect to culture. While technological and economic progress can be assessed objectively through universally accepted indicators such as investments in research and development, cultural progress is more subjective. This is because culture tends to be heavily

dependent on the values of a group of people, which makes it difficult to accept some universal criteria for defining advanced cultural practices. Culture plays an important role for understanding actors in a conflict setting as, for example, Mallinder (2018, p. 66) has highlighted how cultural and other social obstacles can inhibit the reintegration of former combatants into their own communities.

Most modernisation theorists contend that the key difference between modern and traditional societies lies in the fact that the modern society consists of human beings who have greater control over the natural and social environment as compared to traditional societies (Huntington, 1971, p. 286). Contentious issues such as global warming raise some concerns regarding the degree to which the modern society can claim greater control of the environment. As Patterson (2013, p. 267) has noted: “The potential for ecological crises to reshape global politics should be thought through”. All countries face threats regarding the ecological crises, but the impersonal institutional arrangements in OAOs are better at creating awareness and responding to such crises. In turn, the level of instability of a country has been linked to the rate of modernisation by some theorists. For example, Huntington (1968, p. 45) has argued that: “Not only does social and economic modernisation produce political instability, but the degree of instability is related to the rate of modernisation”. The latter is accompanied by transformations such as a rapid movement of people to urban centres and a rising cost of living. The inability of countries to cope with such rapid changes – such as transitioning from colonial to postcolonial rule – mostly create an enabling environment for political instability. This is demonstrated by the good number of African countries that experienced political instability through coup-d’états following their independence from colonial rule in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Like the greed position of Collier, classical modernisation theory has faced heavy criticisms, for example, for its tendency to devalue traditional ideals and to propose a unidirectional path to development (Reyes, 2001). It has misguidedly been interpreted to mean “Africa following the developmental footsteps of Europe” (Matunhu, 2011, p. 65). What is clear is that modern states still possess some elements of traditional values, which may be enshrined in the legal, political, economic, and other institutions of a country. For instance, there is still space for traditional leaders to function in modern African states. Consequently, new modernisation studies tend to make tradition an

additive factor of development as opposed to classical modernisation views (Reyes, 2001).

Another critique of classical modernisation theory is its tendency to over-simplify problems, especially in non-Western states. For instance, Huntington (1968, p. 46) claimed that: “Political instability was rife in twentieth-century Asia, Africa, and Latin America in large part because the rate of modernisation was so much faster there than it had been in the earlier modernising countries”. The attempt to reduce the political instability in non-Western states to rapid change – the speed of modernisation – fails to take into account complex and peculiar challenges in these countries, which Europe and North America did not have to contend with during their period of modernisation. For example, the impacts of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and colonisation on political stability in Africa are largely ignored in Huntington’s discussion. It also fails to factor in the role of institutions – both formal and informal – and of regional and global politics – including neo-colonialism and donor interventions – in the discussions. Against this backdrop, Matunhu (2011, p. 67) has criticised modernisation theory by providing other single-variable explanations that emphasise the importance of colonialism and imperialism. However, while colonialism and neo-colonialism have played a significant role in civil conflicts and are factors discussed in a wide range of theories, it is also important to consider other causes of political instability and underdevelopment such as the inefficient international trade negotiations of African leaders (Ohiorhenuan and Keeler, 2008), corruption (Awojobi, 2014), and aid politics (Moyo, 2009), as well as other causes of conflicts in LAOs. Despite the different criticisms of modernisation theory, the latter helps us to understand why greed and grievances such as poverty and relative deprivation can emerge from the rapid and unequal modernisation of states, which can become a basis for violence in the social orders. This is particularly true of modernising LAOs such as Nigeria where elites’ restriction of public access to resources has fueled insecurities in the country including the Niger Delta conflict (see next chapter).

One critical challenge that most modernising LAOs usually face is how to deal with violence that is commonly initiated or exacerbated through relative deprivation. The latter is a grievance-based explanation of conflict such as Stewart’s (2008) analysis that shows how conflict has a higher chance of manifesting in countries where a higher

percentage of the population remains poorer than the country average. Stewart's study is in line with several other grievance-based works including Murshed and Gates (2005), Koubi and Bohmelt (2013), Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch (2011), Cederman, Buhaug and Rød (2009), Østby (2008), Brown and Stewart (2015), and Alesina and Perotti (1996). These works highlight, among other things, that a higher percentage of the population in a country that is usually discriminated against in terms of wealth and opportunities consists of different social groups based on ethnicity, religion, and politics. Thus, relative deprivation refers to "actors' perceptions of discrepancy between their value expectations (the goods and conditions of the life to which they believe they are justifiably entitled) and their value capabilities (the amounts of those goods and conditions that they think they are able to get and keep)" (Gurr, 1968, p. 1104). This means that an unjustifiable decline of social, economic, and political statuses by a population – determined by the weight of perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities – has the potential of destabilising a society. Social comparison between people at an individual level (egoistic deprivation) and at a group level (fraternal deprivation) is central to the relative deprivation theory (Walker & Smith, 2002). The degree of fraternal deprivation, which can be thought of as the sum of egoistic deprivation, can be a more reliable predictor of conflict from which an amnesty can emerge. In LAOs, relative deprivation orchestrated by political elites tends to be severe, creates favourable conditions for violence, and undermines peace-building strategies such as amnesties (North et al., 2009). In turn, amnesties can enhance the social inclusion of former fighters by removing criminal liability and erasing criminal records (Mallinder, 2018, p. 65).

There are, at least, three basic patterns of relative deprivation namely, decremental, aspirational, and progressive (Korpi, 1974, p. 1575). Decremental deprivation refers to a situation where people's expectations remain stable, but they receive less and less of what they think is due to them, while aspirational deprivation occurs when people's expectations rise but their achievements remain stable (*ibid.*). Additionally, progressive deprivation captures a situation where there is an improvement in people's social, political, and economic conditions at a given point in time, but which is followed by a sudden reversal in the trend of improvement (*ibid.*). Of the three, aspirational deprivation best characterises the Niger Delta region as the next chapter highlights how Nigeria's mature LAO system has ensured that post-independent oil exploration fails

to meet the expectations of Niger Deltans. However, the aspirational deprivation in the Niger Delta differs from Korpi's definition in the sense that the achievements of Niger Deltans have not remained stable but worsened, notably through environmental degradation and violence. Therefore, aspirational deprivation is being used to support the research project inasmuch as it helps to capture the rise in expectations of Niger Deltans following the discovery of oil in the region, while their achievements or benefits have often declined. The common denominator for the three patterns of relative deprivation, nevertheless, is how the LAO system ensures a limited access to opportunities that a group of people believe are due to them in a society, which can become a basis for violence. In this vein, Koubi and Bohmelt (2013, p. 20) have contended that the outbreak of violence is highly probable when "there is a high level of economic wealth in the form of income in a society and a high proportion of the population is excluded from potentially reaping the benefits of this wealth".

In the face of relative deprivation that stems from socio-economic discrimination, ethnic division tends to be a highly potent driver of conflict. In other words, rebel movements usually succeed when their creation stems from ethnic identification, especially in LAOs such as Nigeria with ethnic-based patronage systems, which ensure that grievances such as relative deprivation persist (Denny & Walter, 2014; North et al., 2009). Not only is ethnicity powerful for starting a conflict, it can also create conditions for conflict recurrence as, for example, Gurst and Rost (2013) have underscored how a state stands a higher chance of falling back into conflict if it discriminates against ethnic groups politically and economically in the aftermath of a conflict. Former combatants can be marginalised on ethnic grounds after they disband armed groups, which among other things can undermine amnesties and lead to conflict recurrence (Malinder, 2018). Horowitz (1998, pp. 16-17) has argued that while ethnic groups possess all the qualities of other social groups: "Ethnicity is a powerful affiliation, both because similarity is valued and because genetic (or putatively genetic) origins and early socialisation are potent sources of similarity or, in any case, of cues that signal similarity: appearance, customs, gestures, language, clothing, tastes, and habits". While Horowitz emphasises the importance of status, others have shown how a sense of a shared identity and aspiration between members of an ethnic group and/or a sense that one's past or future experience is linked to one's ethnic identity in the face of actual, perceived, and feared grievances facilitates political mobilisation and

tension/conflict along ethnic lines (Lynch, 2011). This idea that ethnicity, and more specifically a sense of ethnic competition, is a potent driver of conflict runs contrary to the greed argument of Collier (2000). Furthermore, Esteban, Mayoral and Ray (2012) and Esteban and Ray (2011) have highlighted how ethnic fractionalization and polarization can be strong drivers of conflict. In LAOs, ethnic violence is more likely to occur as violence specialists grow stronger and their demands for a larger share of privileges and rents are not met by elites (North et al., 2009, p. 21). As the next chapter highlights, Nigeria's mature LAO system has ensured that ethnic division fuels the Niger Delta conflict, and Chapter 7 also underlines the need for Nigeria to overcome ethnic-based elite factions in order to boost conflict management in the oil-rich region.

Beside ethnic-based relative deprivation and fear/opportunity arguments, scholars have also highlighted how certain kinds of political institutions can create enabling conditions for violence and also impact amnesties. This includes weak accountability structures – such as elections, legislatures, and judiciaries – that fuel violence particularly in LAOs. Semi-democratic regimes tend to be more vulnerable to internal conflict than consistent autocracies or democracies (Boswell & Dixon, 1990; Muller & Weede, 1990; Hegre, 2014). Whereas consistent autocracies and democracies usually have clearly defined power or bureaucratic structures that can limit violence occurrences, semi-democracies normally lack robust mechanisms to mitigate social tensions. Political institutions also affect conflict intervention measures such as amnesties given that governing regimes influence the likelihood that an amnesty will be granted in a conflict setting. As, for example, Mallinder (2018, p. 1) has highlighted, fewer amnesties have been granted in democratic states than mixed or authoritarian regimes, which is in sharp contrast to Loyle and Binningsbø's (2016, p. 453) argument that amnesties are more often initiated in mixed regimes than democracies. Thus, further research is needed to better understand how amnesties are affected by political institutions and vice versa. However, it is important to note that irrespective of the political regime in place, LAOs are always able to create public institutions that limit political and economic participation, which can lead to violence and undermine amnesties. As Chapter 5 highlights, a mature LAO system has ensured that public institutions in a democratising state such as Nigeria have privatised amnesty funds, thereby undermining sustainable peace in the Niger Delta.

Some scholars have linked conflict to democratisation by focusing, not on the idea of modernisation per se, but on how the process of establishing democracies in different parts of the world can act as a critical juncture and initiate and/or exacerbate existing problems such as wealth or opportunity gaps between members of a society. In this vein, Mansfield and Synder (1995, p. 6) have argued that: “Promoting democracy may not promote peace because states are especially war-prone during the transition toward democracy”. Chua (2004) has also established a link between free market democracy and ethnic violence, stressing that the establishment of a market-style democracy does not necessarily eliminate the threat of ethnicity as a driver of conflict and may promote violence in contexts where an ethnic minority is seen as an economic elite. It is important to note that during democratic transitions, political leaders can use amnesty laws to protect themselves from future criminal prosecution (Dancy, 2018, p. 390). In turn, the link between democratising African states and conflict has been established as Lynch and Crawford (2011, p. 292), for example, have underscored that democratisation in African countries has been characterised by election-related violence, criminality, and physical violence. Realities and perceptions of electoral manipulation can also fuel grievances and reinforce people’s skepticism with respect to the capacity of normal politics to address their concerns (Ikelegbe, 2005; Kiipoye, 2015). Thus, democratising states usually require a significant period of time to establish robust institutions that can enable them to make the transition from LAO towards OAO in order to achieve sustainable peace. In this vein, Chapter 7 discusses how the Nigerian government needs to facilitate the process of transitioning from LAO towards OAO so as to consolidate the fragile peace that the 2009 amnesty established in the Niger Delta.

The relationship between established democracies and conflict has also been studied; most notably, through the democratic peace theory. Rawls (1999, p. 49) has asserted that liberal societies are “less likely to engage with non-liberal outlaw states, except on grounds of legitimate self-defence (or in defence of their legitimate allies), or intervention in severe cases to protect human rights”. Similarly, Hegre et al. (2001) have highlighted how democracies are more peaceful and less likely to experience conflict than autocracies or democratising countries. Sustainable peace in established democracies can result from a number of factors including applying the rule of law to protect the rights of citizens. From the theory of relative deprivation, it is clear that

political processes such as democratisation that feed into ethnic fractionalisation and weak public institutions in LAOs create favourable conditions for conflicts and lower the positive effects of intervention measures including amnesties. The subsequent chapters, among other things, build on existing literature on the Niger Delta – such as Kiipoye (2015), Obi and Rustard (2011), Ibeanu and Luckham (2007), and Okonta (2006) – that have used relative deprivation and institutional arguments to explain the conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty.

In general, violent conflict creates a security dilemma in LAOs where weak political, economic, and legal institutions fail to address problems such as relative deprivation. The security dilemma framework has been used to analyse World Wars and the Cold War as well as conflicts in Africa and elsewhere (Jervis, 1985; Snyder, 1985; Kydd, 2005; & Collins, 1998). According to Jervis (1978, p. 169), a security dilemma refers to a situation where “many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others”. This realist position implies that ‘anarchy’ – absence of world government – makes the security gain of one state an inadvertent threat to the security of other states in the international system. In the context of national politics, this implies that the measures that a state uses to increase its security can threaten the security of citizens. In LAOs, this largely results from elites’ attempt to suppress civil society and fighting groups that oppose unfavourable institutional arrangements through protests, riots, and violence. Thus, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the extent to which Nigeria’s mature LAO system has ensured that political elites, MNOCs, and militants contribute significantly to Niger Delta’s security dilemma, while other actors such as religious leaders and civil society groups have mediated and used non-violent means to challenge existing patronage structures.

In international relations, the security dilemma framework has been used to show how trust can be so low to a point where cooperation becomes impossible (Kydd, 2005; Acharya & Ramsey, 2013). Indeed, amnesties are less likely to succeed in places where the trust between the government and fighters is low (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016). Against this backdrop, Wheeler (2012) has highlighted how achieving ‘embedded trust’ – the ability of elites and local populations to develop trusting relationships – is important for overcoming the security dilemma. This notion of embedded trust is based on Karl Deutsch’s concept of security communities, which refer to “political

communities which eliminate war and the expectation of war within their boundaries” (Ditrych, 2014, p. 351). A high degree of social cohesion must facilitate intense modes of communication and impersonal transactions in order to sustain security communities. Societies can transition from security to insecurity communities and vice versa over time, which implies that there are no clear thresholds for the birth and death of a security community (ibid.). This also implies that most societies cannot pretend to live in a state of ‘perpetual peace’ without any threat of violence. It is important for politicians in LAOs to create enabling institutional arrangements that can support a transition towards OAO in which security communities can significantly lower the threat of violence (see Chapter 7). Political elites are significant in this endeavour as the pivotal role that they play in crafting both public and private institutions in LAOs often fail to ensure sustainable peace (North et al., 2009). Thus, the elite manipulation theory is important to underscore in LAOs as the political godfathers tend to limit access to public resources by manipulating socio-economic conditions including violence (see Chapter 6).

The elite manipulation theory underlines the capacity of elites, particularly those in LAOs with weak public institutions, to incite or organise violence for their own gains. In this vein, Fearon and Latin (2000) have highlighted how one of the ways by which some elites have gained political control in some modern states is by fanning the flames of ethnic violence. The potency of ethnicity as a driver of conflict has been highlighted above, but it is important to add that the quest to control economic benefits usually drive political elites to mobilize support for violence in LAOs using ethnic sentiments. In this light, rent-seeking behaviours of elites and contestations of control over vital resources have been strongly linked to conflict (Dorussen and Gizelis, 2013). Furthermore, Glaeser (2002) has underlined how hatred is generated by political entrepreneurs for the realization of their own goals. Hatred, when fueled by ethnic fractionalisation, usually results in violence in LAOs. In general, just as political elites can create socio-economic conditions to fuel violence in LAOs, they can also play a crucial role in peace-building as will be highlighted in Chapter 7.

To elaborate on the mutual compatibility of the different conflict theories within the LAO system, the next chapter analyses the extent to which Nigeria’s mature LAO has led to institutional arrangements that have fueled different conflict drivers including

ethnic-based rivalries, relative deprivation, and a security dilemma. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 also highlight how different actors have contributed to the crafting of institutions that have caused violence in the Niger Delta, and thus undermined the 2009 amnesty. It follows that the subsequent chapters of the dissertation largely demonstrate why Nigeria's mature LAO has helped to shape policy and the behaviours of different actors – including MNOCs, political elites, traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media – who have made varied contributions to the Niger Delta conflict and the execution of the 2009 amnesty. The latter, which is discussed in detail particularly in Chapter 5, was a significant effort by the state to improve upon its management of the Niger Delta conflict as previous attempts had only exacerbated the region's security dilemma (Iwilade, 2017; Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). However, the amnesty failed to ensure sustainable peace as, for example, the analysis in Chapter 6 demonstrates the extent to which formal and informal institutions in Nigeria's mature LAO have helped to shape the agency of political elites to seek short-term containment of violence in the oil-rich region. Thus, without the support of institutional reforms, notably a transition from LAO towards OAO (see Chapter 7), the 2009 amnesty temporarily contained violence in the Niger Delta in a way that is likely to lead to further violence (see Chapter 6).

In summary, the theories – greed and grievance, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, institutionalism, and elite manipulation – discussed in this section complement one another with respect to understanding violence in LAOs. The latter tends to influence elite behaviours, and thus contributes to the creation of perverse institutions that initiate and exacerbate different conflict drivers. As will be elaborated in the subsequent chapters, there are causal and correlational links that exist between the different conflict theories when they are analysed using the LAO framework. It is vital to underline the central role of political elites in conflict settings since they usually have the capacity to exploit institutional arrangements in LAOs for their own gains (North et al., 2009). In this vein, elite co-operation is an important step to make the transition from LAO towards OAO in order to achieve a sustainable peace (see Chapter 7). Before elaborating on how Nigeria's mature LAO system has fueled violence in the Niger Delta and thus undermined the 2009 amnesty, it is critical to highlight the role that natural resources also play in the phenomenon of violence in LAOs given that people in resource-rich countries with problematic institutions such as Nigeria tend to

fight over natural resources.

2.3 Natural Resources, Conflict, and Development

The role of natural resources including oil in the understanding of conflict has long been debated by scholars, and the principal question within this field of study has been: what is the relationship between conflict and natural resources? A report by the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme (2015, p.7) has revealed that: “When natural resources are poorly managed or inequitably shared, [however], or when business operations are implemented without due consideration for context and communities, they can contribute to tensions that can escalate into violent conflict, or feed into and exacerbate pre-existing conflict dynamics”. This assertion underlines the persisting problems in naturally endowed African countries where public institutions have ensured that political elites and international businesses embark on operations without considerable consultations and engagements with local communities where the resources are located. In general, political elites in LAOs usually embark on “polities without generalised consent of the governed” as institutional arrangements in this social order are based on patron-client relations that limit competition, participation, and specialization in resource governance, thereby increasing the chances of violence occurrence (North et al., 2009, p. 12). In contrast, institutional arrangements in resource-rich OAOs ensure open competition, participation, and specialization that usually lead to prudent management of resources, which in turn lowers the chances of violence breaking out. The relationship between conflict and natural resources, therefore, hinges on understanding the extent to which institutions in the social orders influence prudent and imprudent management of natural resources, which can either increase or lower the chances of violent episodes.

The views of scholars regarding conflict and natural resources, and their link to development have gone through some evolution. Prior to the late 1980s, scholars largely agreed that natural resource wealth was good for a country’s development (Rosser, 2006, p. 07). This position has been backed by some later works such as Lederman and Maloney (2012), who have provided evidence to show how natural resource exports can have a positive effect on economic growth. However, the period following the late 1980s saw a wide range of literature focusing on how natural resource

wealth, especially of specific types, increases the probability of countries to experience not just civil war, but poor economic performance and sub-standard democracies (Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 1999). In this vein, Karl (1997) has highlighted how oil booms can weaken a state's institutional capacity largely due to oil-based interests. Also, Wantchekon (2002, pp. 5-6) has argued that natural resource abundance increases competition for control of the state and can lead to violence, especially when there are low state capacities and electorates are weak in terms of monitoring and controlling government activities. The popularity of expressions such as 'resource curse' and 'paradox of plenty' as propagated by authors such as Auty (1993), Karl (1997), and Sachs and Warner (1995) in the 1990s, enhanced the move to represent natural resource wealth as the exact opposite of what it had represented prior to the late 1980s. Ross (2012, p. 1) has famously defined the resource curse as "the perverse effects of a country's natural resource wealth on its economic, social, or political well-being". Thus, natural resource wealth can create a perverse incentive structure that destabilises the development of a country – initiating or worsening conflicts and undermining intervention measures such as amnesties. This is particularly true of resource-rich LAOs including Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo where the restriction of public access to valuable resources by local elites and foreign companies has fueled different conflict drivers such as ethnic division and relative deprivation (see Chapter 3).

Despite the negative effects of natural resources in resource-rich LAOs, the importance of these resources for certain places such as Africa cannot be underestimated as the continent is heavily dependent on the export of raw materials. A 2013 report from the UN conference on trade and development has highlighted how Africa possesses 12 % of the world's oil reserves, 40 % of its gold, between 80 % and 90 % of its chromium and platinum, and 60 % of its underutilised arable land, but the continent accounts for only 1 % of global manufacturing (Obinyeluaku, 2017). The high dependence of African economies on the export of raw materials has largely contributed to their weaker position in international trade, which is captured by the world systems theory.

According to Wallerstein (1974, p. 347), a world system refers to the "multicultural territorial division of labour in which the production and exchange of basic goods and raw materials is necessary for the everyday life of its inhabitants". In this analysis,

African countries form part of the periphery countries that are exploited by the world system as they simply provide raw materials to the core and semi-periphery countries who, in turn, control wages and monopolise the world economy. Even though the world systems theory has been criticised for being a top-down framework of explaining global relations “with a little advice on the need for climbing the ladder” (Pieterse, 1988, p. 264), it highlights the different levels of power in international trade. This helps to understand the extent to which African countries need to make significant improvements in their trade competitiveness on the world stage. For example, Ivory Coast and Ghana, which account for more than 50 % of the world’s cocoa, have signed the ‘Abidjan Declaration’ with the aim of improving their bargaining position in terms of controlling global cocoa prices (Joy News, 2018). Like other African countries, there are ongoing discussions regarding ways to improve the global competitiveness of Nigeria’s economy that has largely been dependent on oil revenues (Onigbinde, 2015; Okowa, 2017). In Chapter 7, the dissertation highlights, among other things, how Nigeria’s transition from a mature LAO towards OAO can lead to enduring institutions that help to improve the country’s resource governance and conflict management strategies.

Natural resources usually impact the conflict cycle as, for example, Rustad and Binningsbø (2012, p. 543) have argued: “Peace is more likely to fail after conflicts related to natural resources because access to such resources is an especially valuable prize worth fighting for”. This implies that intervention measures such as amnesties that are implemented in the context of resource conflicts usually face monumental challenges as will be highlighted in Chapter 5. Rustad and Binningsbø’s (2012) analysis also underlines the fact that conflict resolution is difficult to achieve in resource-rich countries, particularly where public institutions are weak and largely rely on patronage politics. Given that the Niger Delta conflict is oil related, it is important to highlight how oil has featured prominently in the conflict-natural resource discussions. In this vein, Keels (2015, p. 1022) has argued that: “Oil wealth increases the salience of the first post-war elections, as these elections pose a risk to those in power”. The first post-conflict election is crucial given that oil wealth may be the only revenue generating asset for political elites, who usually use violence to consolidate their control of the revenue stream in LAOs. Additionally, peace processes and agreements including amnesties may also be subject to change or renegotiation in transitional periods

(Mallinder, 2018, p. 27), thereby making the first post-conflict elections a must-win for political actors. The fear of state actors losing out on oil revenues and being stripped of political favours including amnesty protections normally worsens illicit electioneering such as vote-buying, snatching of ballot boxes, as well as intimidation and harming of members of rival political parties. This underlines the significance of oil in conflict settings, especially as it is not a fixed asset that can be withdrawn or moved elsewhere during and after conflict (Keels, 2015). The next chapter highlights, among other things, how the first post-conflict election in the Niger Delta exacerbated armed activities in the region.

Political regimes can also impact natural resources and vice versa in resource-rich LAOs. As, for example, Wright and Geddes (2015) have underscored, an upsurge in oil wealth can help dictators to hang onto power by facilitating increases in military spending in dictatorships, thereby deterring coups that could cause regime collapse. Under autocratic regimes, dictators tend to impose their will on how the state exploits its natural resources with the help of state militia. Within the context of democracies, scholars have paid a particular attention to what needs to guide resource extraction including good governance systems (Ezirim, 2011; Newsom, 2011). Rent collection that results from natural resources plays a vital role for political elites' resource accumulation. In this vein, Wantchekon (2002, p. 7) has argued that in democratic settings: "If the ability of the state to enforce the law (state capacity) is weak, the incumbent government will tend to have some discretionary power to generate (natural resource) rents and to distribute these rents to citizens or/and voters". In turn, Paltseva (2010) has underlined how when resource rent of an autocrat is low, a country develops under stable autocracy and becomes democratic after a period of growth. This implies that a low rent collection in autocracies usually facilitates a transition to democracy. Furthermore, Paltseva (2010) has highlighted how a state with medium-sized rents becomes less autocratic earlier and grows into a democracy, while a country with high rents stagnates under an autocratic rule and suffers from a resource curse. It is important to note that the size of rents is not an automatic determinant for states to transition from autocracy to democracy. For instance, China's accelerated development implies that it has strong institutions that regulate rents, but the country has not transitioned into a democracy. Thus, rather than pay attention to only political regimes in the study of rents, it is better to understand the extent to which institutional arrangements in LAOs

regulate rents (North et al., 2009).

With respect to how resource-rich countries can manage violence and prevent political instability, OAO institutions tend to ensure that the gains from natural resources leads to human and physical development (see Chapter 7). According to Khodabakhshi (2011, p. 252), human development is: “A process of enlarging people’s freedoms and opportunities and improving their well-being, enabling them to lead long, healthy lives; to have access to knowledge; to enjoy a decent standard of living; and to participate in the decisions that affect them”. Human development entails opening up access to public participation and opportunities, which needs to be geared towards enhancing the dignity of the local population. The level of development is normally linked to people’s understanding and participation in public activities including conflict intervention measures such as amnesties. For instance, Mallinder and McEvoy (2011, p. 118) have highlighted how amnesty laws are usually subjected to public scrutiny in democracies as different sections of the society endorse amnesties for different reasons.

Lisk et al. (2015, p. 28) have underlined the fact that the 1994 UNDP human development report was significant since:

...it introduced the concept and methodology of the ‘Human Development Index’ (HDI) to measure and rank countries’ levels of development, based on broad economic and social criteria to better capture the impact of development on the attainment of basic human needs including health.

Based on the HDI, countries are broadly categorised under four groups: very high human development, high human development, medium human development, and low human development (Khodabakhshi, 2011). The focus of attention in the dissertation is on low human development or poverty as the next chapter elaborates on the link between poverty and the Niger Delta conflict. In line with the capability approach of Sen (1989), where development is perceived to be an improvement of the lives of people through an expansion of the things that they can be and do, low human development can be understood as the inability of people to realize what they can be and do. In a resource conflict area such as the Niger Delta, low human development mostly relates to the limited capacity of people to attain productive employment, high life expectancy, good health, and education (see Chapter 3).

There have been several attempts made by scholars to identify the root causes of low human development. For example, Ranis, Stewart and Ramirez (2000) have underscored how a low level of GDP can cause low human development. GDP, according to Costanza et al. (2009, p. 3), is:

An estimate of market throughput, adding together the value of all final goods and services that are produced and traded for money within a given period of time. It is typically measured by adding together a nation's personal consumption expenditures (payments by households for goods and services), government expenditures (public spending on the provision of goods and services, infrastructure, debt payments, etc.), net exports (the value of a country's exports minus the value of imports), and net capital formation (the increase in value of a nation's total stock of monetized capital goods).

This means that the failure of a country's personal consumption expenditures, government expenditures, net exports, and net capital formation to attain a threshold that impact positively on the economy can lead to low human development. There have been calls for better indicators of development and well-being since the measurement of GDP has been critiqued for being narrowly focused on marketed economic activities, and for failing to include other goals of a society such as participation, freedom, shelter, and sustainability (Costanza et al., 2009). The inclusion of such indicators risks worsening the development indices for the Niger Delta largely due to the devastating effects of oil exploitation as will be highlighted in the next chapter.

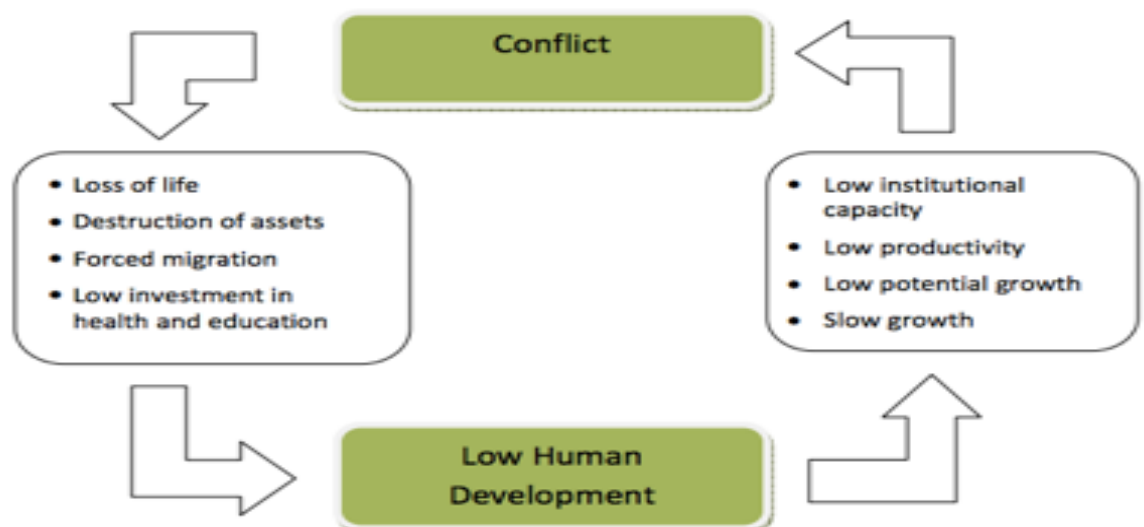
Overall, low human development or poverty has been found by scholars to be the most robust driver of conflict (Koubi and Bohmelt, 2013, p. 19). It is often cited as a grievance for people to participate in violence, especially where natural resources are at stake, while it also lowers the opportunity cost of participating in violence, and thus plays into greed. In this vein, Rodrik (1999) has highlighted how conflict is a core reason why many developing countries have experienced negative or low growth since the mid-1970s. Institutions need to be taken into consideration in the attempt to understand why low human development or poverty is the most robust driver of conflict, especially as the previous section highlighted how the different conflict drivers can be brought together within the LAO framework. LAO institutions usually fuel the sense of exclusion that is important for grievance, but which also provides opportunity for elites to make economic and political gains (see Chapter 3). The negative

relationship between low human development and conflict leads some to talk of a ‘conflict trap’ or ‘low human development-conflict trap’ (Collier et al., 2003; Kim & Conceição, 2010), which essentially argues that:

Conflict destroys accumulated physical and human capital, forces replacement of labor, and deteriorates institutional capacity. A country experiencing conflict cannot secure long term returns for investments in both physical and human capital, resulting in low investment in health and education. All of these factors lead to low levels of human development. A country with low levels of human development has more difficulty in improving institutions, and in increasing productivity and potential growth. In turn, lower growth rates heighten the risk of conflict, potentially trapping a country in the loop (Kim & Conceição, 2010, p. 31).

The conflict trap, therefore, implies that conflict can have a negative impact on low human development and vice versa. Figure 9 illustrates how a conflict can cause loss of lives, destruction of assets, forced migration, and low investment in health and education which in turn can lead to low human development. The latter can also cause low institutional capacity, low productivity, low potential growth, and slow growth that can also fuel hostilities. LAOs such as Nigeria are more vulnerable to the low human development-conflict trap largely because elites mainly rely on patronage systems or personal institutional arrangements that provide short-term containment of violence through the generation of rents (see Chapter 6).

Figure 9: Low human development-conflict trap



Source: Kim & Conceição (2009, p. 32).

Thus, the quality of institutions is positively linked not just to conflict, but to low human development as well within the context of LAOs. In this vein, Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2008) have established a positive relationship between good institutions and development – highlighting that institutions foster economic growth and development. Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2008) have also underscored how economic institutions are the products of political choices or processes, which is not to suggest that political institutions are more important than economic institutions. Rather, political and economic institutions go hand-in-hand in helping to shape human development and security. In turn, Haas and Jones (2017, p. 4) have identified two institutions that mostly affect economic outcomes; namely, property rights – referring to “the rules of society which enable people to keep the returns on their investments”, and contracting institutions – denoting “the rules which enable people to make contracts and resolve disputes”. The inability of LAOs to craft impersonal institutions tend to undermine property rights and contracting institutions, which is evident in the analysis of the Niger Delta conflict and limitations of the 2009 amnesty, as will be elaborated in the subsequent chapters.

Following Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001) who show a positive relationship between strong institutions and development, Djankov and Reynal-Querol (2007) have highlighted how weak institutions that fail to secure property rights and enforce laws fundamentally cause conflict. The latter is bound to happen in LAOs when there is an insecure property right and a lack of law enforcement (Mavrotas, 2011). This helps to understand why Chapter 7 highlights the extent to which a shift from LAO towards OAO is important to consolidate peace-building in the Niger Delta.

In discussing natural resources, it is important to also underline that the impact of human capital on low human development and conflict has been discussed by scholars. According to Kwon (2009, p. 1), human capital refers to “one of production elements which can generate added-values through inputting it”. It consists of a combination of capital understood as the creation of goods and services that are not considerably consumed in the production process, and human as the subject responsible for political and economic activities (Boldizzoni, 2008, cited in Kwon, 2009). The input of labour force, labour hours, financial capital, land, and machinery, as well as investment in education and training generate added-values. This means that a lack of investment in

education and training can prevent citizens from acquiring high earning jobs, which can lead to low human development and conflict. Additionally, Agüero and Majid (2014) have underscored how discussions that relate to the impact of wars on human capital tend to focus on children of school-age at the time of conflict. The latter affects human capital inasmuch as it can lead to child soldering, child labour, targeting of schools, teachers, students, and staff by fighters, and displacement of people (Justino, 2011). This can aggravate violence as, for example, school dropouts who voluntarily or forcefully join armed groups will reinforce rebellion. The question of whether child soldiers need to be prosecuted for war crimes, granted amnesty, or treated as victims has largely been left to the discretion of states (Bosnak, 2017). In turn, Chapter 7 highlights why human capital investments that are geared towards establishing perpetually lived educational and training centres are an important step for Nigeria to transition from LAO towards OAO in order to resolve the Niger Delta conflict.

To summarise, natural resources can become a curse inasmuch as their management fails to meet the expectations of people and also fuel the different drivers of conflict (Ross, 2012). In contrast to resource-rich OAOs where institutional arrangements can ensure open competition, participation, and specialization, resource-rich LAOs are more likely to experience the resource curse and low human development-conflict trap largely due to institutional arrangements that fail to manage resources in an impersonal way (North et al., 2009). As the subsequent chapters highlight, a failure of LAO institutions to transform natural resources into sustainable development has made resource-rich LAOs such as Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo more vulnerable to violent conflicts. Avoiding and overcoming the conflict trap requires a shift from LAO towards OAO that can enhance measures to improve the robustness of an economy, high investments in human capital, and conflict management strategies such as amnesties. This is particularly important for resource-rich LAOs where patronage institutions tend to fuel different conflict drivers such as ethnic fractionalisation and relative deprivation (see Chapter 3). An impersonal management of natural resources through OAO institutions is important for reducing violence occurrence in most modern states.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed some key themes in the broader conflict literature that

provide a foundation for investigating the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. Nigeria's oil conflict is a classic example of violent conflicts that have been relatively common in the post-Cold war era (Gleditsch et al. 2014; Taydas and Peksen, 2012; Blattman and Miguel, 2010; and Cunningham et al., 2009). Overall, the chapter argues that conflicts are complex, that scholars have used different lenses to understand them, and that many of the conceptual insights can be brought together within the context of the LAO framework. The institutional arrangements in LAOs tend to create socio-economic conditions that are more susceptible to potent drivers of conflict such as greed and/or grievance, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, institutionalism, and elite manipulation. Specifically, the LAO framework helps to understand the extent to which the different theories provide insights into the inter-connected elite motivations behind the different conflict drivers including fear, ethnic rivalry, and greed. In the context of resource wealth and problematic institutions, the LAO context helps to explain violence and the conditions under which intervention measures such as amnesties can help to manage, contain, and resolve specific conflicts (North et al., 2009). As the next chapter highlights, Nigeria's mature LAO system has ensured that different inter-connected factors including the greed of elites and MNOCs as well as local grievances that largely emanate from relative deprivation have undermined sustainable peace in the Niger Delta.

Generally speaking, the analysis in this chapter has demonstrated among other things why some existing scholarly works have extensively discussed the conflict cycle, particularly conflict management, containment, and resolution. The conflict cycle entails intervention measures for limiting violence and resolving specific conflicts by, for example, shifting from LAO towards OAO (see Chapter 7). Conflict management and resolution are usually understood to be intrinsically linked inasmuch as management provides a foundation for resolving particular conflicts (Swanström & Weissmann, 2005). In turn, conflict management and containment have been used interchangeably and complementarily as can be seen in works such as North et al. (2009), Hamad (2005), and Tanner (2000). Conflict intervention measures including amnesties can help to manage and resolve conflicts by addressing institutional factors that tend to fuel violence.

The theories discussed in the chapter are not mutually exclusive as they go hand-in-

hand in helping to explain the underlying causes of violence in LAOs. Thus, the analysis differs from the one-sided explanation of conflict such as the greed argument of Collier (2000). It has underlined how different socio-economic factors can feed into violence in modern states as, for example, the rapid modernisation of resource-rich LAOs with questionable political institutions such as Nigeria tend to fuel relative deprivation and also lead to conflict traps (see Chapter 3). It follows that there is usually no single driver of conflict within the LAO system even though some scholarships, especially those that make variables to compete, tend to focus on factors such as poverty and ethnicity. This implies that when peace-building efforts focus on tackling one cause of a particular violent conflict, other factors will most likely undermine the attempts to attain sustainable peace. As such, an integrated approach that helps to move towards transforming personal elite privileges in LAOs into impersonal elite rights in OAOs can significantly strengthen peace-building strategies (see Chapter 7). This does not mean that factors such as poverty and ethnic division are not potent drivers of conflict as has been demonstrated in several works (for example, Horowitz, 1998; Esteban, Mayoral and Ray, 2012; Gurst & Rost, 2013). Rather, the point to note is that, instead of overly focusing on one factor that fuels violence, understanding the institutional links between different conflict drivers in the context of LAOs can be more helpful in terms of designing robust conflict management measures such as amnesties.

Using the LAO framework, the next chapter analyses the different factors including the greed of elites and MNOCs, institutional failures, as well as local grievances such as environmental degradation and relative deprivation that have fueled the Niger Delta conflict. In turn, Chapter 4 focuses in on how Nigeria's mature LAO system has helped to shape the behaviours and decision-making of different actors including political and business elites, (ex)militants, traditional and religious leaders, civil society groups, and the media with respect to violence in the Niger Delta. Chapters 5 and 6 then use the LAO framework to investigate the scope and limitations of the 2009 amnesty, highlighting how violence containment has led to an amnesty trap. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses why a transition from LAO towards OAO can help to overcome Niger Delta's security dilemma and end the fighting.

Chapter 3:

From Onset to Escalation of Violence in the Niger Delta

3.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the political economy of the Niger Delta conflict using the LAO framework, underlining the historical evolution of the conflict and the different drivers of violence. It lays the foundation for investigating the roles that different actors have played in the Niger Delta, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. In general, scholarly works that focus on the 2009 amnesty – including Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016), Courson (2009), Tantua and Kamruzzaman (2016), Sayne and Hruby (2016), Ikelegbe (2010), and Akpomovie (2011) – are backed by discussions of the Niger Delta conflict as this helps to contextualize and identify the amnesty's limitations. While endeavouring to give further details of what constitutes the Niger Delta and the region's oil conflict using respondents' views and secondary sources, the chapter highlights how violence resulted from the interactions between the local population, government, and oil companies. This differs from the two-level analyses by some other scholars that have focused in on either the local population versus oil companies or the local population versus the government (Idemudia, 2011, p. 168). The chapter provides a critical evaluation of the conflict's evolution over time, highlighting the transition from non-violent protests in the early and mid-1990s to the rise of armed struggle in the Niger Delta from the late 1990s to the 2000s. In so doing, the discussion contributes to existing literature by providing an institutional explanation of events that led to the Niger Delta conflict and 2009 amnesty.

The main argument is that Nigeria's mature LAO system has helped to shape the behaviour and decision-making of political elites, MNOCs, and the local population in the Niger Delta, thereby fueling different conflict drivers including greed, grievance, ethnic rivalries, and security dilemma. Thus, the analysis demonstrates the extent to which formal and informal institutions in Nigeria's mature LAO system have reinforced each other to perpetuate violence in the oil-rich region. In most LAOs that are unable to guarantee an impersonal allocation of resources, "violence works both within and across patron-client networks" (North et al., 2009, p. 36). Public institutions

that have been crafted by Nigerian elites have largely ensured a failure of oil profits to benefit the majority of Niger Deltans, which has fueled armed rebellion and created a security dilemma that might fuel further violence. The first section analyses the historical development of the Niger Delta conflict, while the second section elaborates on the factors that have contributed to persisting hostilities in the oil-rich region.

3.1 Niger Delta and Armed Rebellion

The Niger Delta region includes nine of Nigeria's thirty-six states; namely, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers (see Figure 10). The Delta is one of the 10 largest and most important wetland and coastal marine ecosystems in the world (Okonkwo et al., 2015, pp. 451-452). Prior to the commercial production of oil in 1958, the Niger Delta was known to be a pristine environment that supported substantial resources such as medicinal herbs and barks, stable soil for farming, animals such as elephants, monkeys and hippopotamus, as well as a large percentage of Nigeria's commercial fisheries (Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009, p. 194). Thus, the significance of the Niger Delta goes beyond sustaining Nigeria's oil dependent economy given that as a wetland, it is important for assisting a wide range of ecosystem services namely, food control, fish production, maintenance of biodiversity, carbon storage, flood control, and providing habitat for many endangered species (Okonkwo et al., 2015).

Conflicts abound in the Niger Delta including communal tensions, political competition, organised criminality, and the oil conflict (PIND, 2016, p. 1). Thus, public institutions including security agencies and legal establishments have largely failed to manage violence in the Niger Delta as political elites and MNOCs have mainly focused on deriving maximum oil profits to the detriment of the local population (Wengraf, 2018). This characterizes most LAOs including ancient Rome's mature LAO system in which citizens had to contend with elite privileges that resulted in recurring violence (North et al., 2009, pp. 48-49). Reference to the Niger Delta conflict in the dissertation has been restricted to the resource-based conflict in the region, while acknowledging that all the other conflicts can feed into the oil conflict and vice versa. This resource-based conflict, simply put, entails the disagreements between Niger Deltans, the government, and oil companies that have led to deaths, destruction of property,

kidnapping, and exacerbation of criminal activities (Ikelegbe, 2010, 2006; Okolie-Osemene, 2015; Soremekun, 2011).

Figure 10: The Nine Niger Delta States



Source: International Business Times, 2015.

The genesis of violence in the Niger Delta has been traced to 1895, when it involved local resistance against the economic domination of British merchants (Nwankwo, 2015, p. 383). Following the earliest post-independence act of armed resistance, which was initiated by Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro in 1966, and which lasted for about twelve days, it is fair to trace the contemporary evolution of the Niger Delta conflict to Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the 1990s. Saro-Wiwa formed MOSOP in the early 1990s as a grass-roots movement to call for an end to poverty in Ogoni land, which constitutes the oldest settlers in the Eastern Niger Delta basin (Senewo, 2015, p. 665). MOSOP (2017) was formed as an umbrella organisation to represent the Ogoni people by campaigning for social, economic, and environmental justice using non-violent means. The group is still active and one of its recent engagements has been to condemn the government's delay to clean-up the area

(Vanguard, 2017b). MOSOP was just one of about 24 pressure groups that existed in the Niger Delta region from 1990 to 1999 (Obi, 2002, cited in Ojatorotu & Olawale, 2009, p. 9). The others included the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), the Movement for Reparation to Ogbia (MORETO), the Isoko National Youth Movement (INYM), and the Egi National Congress (ENG). Most of these groups were formed in response to social injustice, neglect, and poverty that had become the trademark of Niger Deltans (Ojatorotu & Olawale, 2009). The pressure groups made demands for justice and improvement in the living standards of their people mostly through public declarations and charters such as the Ogoni Bill of Rights, the Oron Bill of Rights, and the Kaiama Declaration.

The Ogoni Bill of Rights – adopted at Bori in Rivers State and presented to the Nigerian government, Shell, NGOs, and the Nigerian people in October 1990/1991 – was the first of several bills of rights or charters by any group in the Niger Delta (Senewo, 2015). It was highly significant because it initiated environmental and human rights into Nigeria’s political discourse, and directly engaged the government and MNOCs at the same time (ibid.). This was by and large the work of MOSOP, which aimed to achieve the following through the Ogoni Bill of Rights:

Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people, control and use of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development, adequate and direct representation as of right for Ogoni people in all Nigerian national institutions and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation (Saro-Wiwa, 1991, p. 3).

According to Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016, pp. 1-2): “The Ogoni protests internationalised the agitation and catalysed further protests which by the late 1990s, turned into a region wide youth driven militant agitation for resource control and state reforms”.

In turn, the Kaiama Declaration, which was issued after the ‘All Ijaw Youths Conference’ in 1998, is noted for pushing the resource control agenda in the Niger Delta and also marked “the commencement point of militant agitation and militia formation and engagements in the region” (Ikelegbe, 2010, p. 32). Among other things, the Kaiama Declaration made the following demands:

The immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian State to "protect" its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijaw people. Family members of military personnel stationed in Ijawland should appeal to their people to leave the Ijaw area alone (Tuodolo & Ogoriba, 1998).

Thus, the Kaiama Declaration disapproved of the government's attempts to militarise the Niger Delta as politicians were keen to suppress resistant groups and to control production of oil in the region. It also rejected the attempts of oil companies to resort to the use of armed forces to protect themselves from violence. Ever since the Kaiama Declaration was introduced, the agitation in the Niger Delta has been framed as a struggle for resource ownership and control (Ikelegbe, 2010, p. 33).

Furthermore, the Oron Bill of Rights, which came into effect in June 1999, originated at the 'Representative Conference' by about 30 different organisations in the Oron Metropolis. This included the Oron National Forum, the Oron Development Union, the Mbo Youth Movement, the Oron Women Action Group, and the Akwa Ibom Traders Association. The demands contained in the Oron Bill of Rights included the following: reclaiming of all portions of Oron land and adjoining coast, making the 'Oron Nation' a state within the Niger Delta region, restructuring the Niger Delta into six regions comprising Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta and Edo states, and 100 % control of the resources by each region (Oron National Youth Forum, 1999). The struggle for resource ownership and control is seen in the Oron Bill of Rights as the latter followed the Kaiama Declaration's trajectory. Another important point to note in the Oron Bill of Rights is the demand for a reterritorialisation of the Niger Delta region, which shows another dimension of the charters as they sought to propose broader solutions to the problems of the region.

Even though the demands contained in each charter differed, most of them centred on a demand for greater participation in oil resource management and the protection of the environment. In this vein, the motivations behind the non-violent protests in the Niger Delta in the 1990s largely resulted from local grievances that were directed at the government and MNOCs. In an OAO system, impersonal institutional arrangements including the rule of law for elites could have ensured a more peaceful resolution of the

grievances before resulting in violence. Instead, the mature LAO system ensured that the Nigerian state use oppressive tactics including heavy militarisation of the Niger Delta, harassment and intimidation of the local people, harsh laws to ban activities of the non-violent pressure groups, and the arrest and detention of activists to deal with the growing tensions in the oil-rich region (Ojakoratu & Olawale, 2009, pp. 9-10). Worse still, the government resorted to the killing of the leaders of the non-violent pressure groups including the infamous execution by hanging of Saro-Wiwa and other leaders of MOSOP in 1995 by the military regime of General Sani Abacha. This initiated and exacerbated the security dilemma in the Niger Delta as the hostile measures used by the state to protect the oil-based interest of political elites and MNOCs undermined the security of the local population.

From 1998 to 2000, violent activities had taken off in the Niger Delta as fighters disrupted oil operations in the region by attacking oil companies. However, a lull in militant undertakings, attributable to the initial hopes that a democratic governance would resolve local grievances, took place between 2001 and 2002 (Ikelegbe, 2010, pp. 35-36; Courson, 2009, p. 15). Instead, the election of Nigeria's first democratic President, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 marked another phase of the oil conflict as democratisation challenges including criminality and election-related violence arose in the oil-rich region (Ikelegbe, 2005). In the absence of substantial institutional reforms, the democratically elected government did not abandon militarisation of the Niger Delta. On the contrary, President Obasanjo deployed more military to the oil-rich region, which among other destructions led to the razing of Odi in Bayelsa State to the ground on 20 November 1999 in an attempt to arrest a youth gang that had been accused of killing nine police officers (Courson, 2009).

The 2003 elections triggered the formation of new militant groups – including the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Niger Delta Volunteers (NDV) – from youths who had been recruited and armed by politicians to intimidate political opponents and to rig elections (Ikelegbe, 2010; Courson, 2009, p. 16). This period has been highlighted by Courson (2009) as when greed began to characterise Niger Delta militancy as youth gangs were increasingly lured with funds from politicians and public office holders to pursue the interests of political elites and MNOCs. In most LAOs: “The ability to threaten and use violence is an inherent part of the relationships between

elite patrons in the dominant coalition, and between patrons and their clients” (North et al., 2009, p. 36). In this vein, the desperation of Nigerian political elites to win political power in 2003 at all cost in the light of problematic democratic institutions meant that they had to rely largely on the services of private and illegal militias, thereby lowering their support and trust in state security agencies. In other words, the mature LAO system ensured an unconsolidated political control of state security as elite-backed private militias encouraged proliferation of sophisticated weapons in the Niger Delta.

It is important to highlight that there may not have been a fully blown violence in the late 1990s, but the militant activities in the Niger Delta between 1998 and 2000 meant that the region was already an armed conflict zone with relative peace achieved between 2001 and 2002. Hence, Nigeria’s 2003 elections took the form of a first post-conflict election in the oil-rich region and in line with the argument of Keels (2015, p. 1022) on post-war elections, oil-wealth increased the salience of the 2003 elections as political elites desperately competed for political power. Without substantial institutional reforms in Nigeria, the initiation of bureaucratic structures such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) by Obasanjo failed to resolve local grievances as political elites and MNOCs continued to pursue oil profits in the region to the detriment of the local population (Ikelegbe, 2005). It is common for resource-rich LAOs such as Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo to escalate an existing tension or violence in the face of democratisation as competition for power increases and new opportunities or fears arise (cf. Chua, 2004; Bertrand, 2008; Mansfield and Synder, 2002). In this vein, there were hundreds of militant groups in the Niger Delta between 2003 and 2004 but the activities of the NDV and the NDPVF were more intense and visible (Irin News, 2010; Yang, 2010). The 2005 arrest of Asari Dokubo – the leader of the NDPVF – exacerbated the coercive threats and physical violence as the NDPVF and its allies organised themselves to demand for his release (Ikelegbe, 2010, p. 36).

Full insurgency in the Niger Delta took off in 2006 and involved broad-based militant alliances (Obi & Rustad, 2011, p. 9). The most active coalitions included the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Coalition for Militant Actions in the Niger Delta (COMA), and the Martyrs Brigade (MB), while the NDPVF, MEND, and MB also merged to form the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) (Ikelegbe, 2010, p. 37). These coalitions represented the dawn of sophisticated and tactically mobilised

militias in the oil-rich region. Many of the armed groups were “formed on university campuses, branched off into street gangs, became involved in illegal activities such as drug dealing and oil bunkering, and were hired as political thugs” (Asuni, 2009, p. 8). From 2006, MEND became the most active and infamous militant group in the Niger Delta region as the group’s abduction of nine expatriate oil workers in February of that year constituted the first high profile seizure of oil workers in the region (Reuters, 2006). The security dilemma in the region intensified as oil workers’ kidnappings and soldiers’ invasion of villages to get hold of suspected kidnappers increased between October 2006 and June 2007. The attempts made by the government forces to fight resistant groups resulted in deaths, maiming/raping of women, and destruction of villages (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010). As Wallenstein (2019, p. 48) has highlighted, in many such violent activities, “it is not the distant leaders who feel the direct impact of rage, but those who are closest to the mobs, be they shop owners, the weak, poor, women or children”. In response, oil unions embarked on a three-day strike in September 2006 over the deteriorating security situation in the Niger Delta (Irin News, 2010). But 2007 saw President Yar’Adua assume office after taking over from Nigeria’s first democratically elected President in May, which also had an impact on the conflict.

In general, it is fair to say that even though President Obasanjo made some attempts to manage the security dilemma and grievances in the Niger Delta, he left office while the region was highly insecure. This underlines the fact that institutional reforms did not accompany conflict management efforts in the Niger Delta as persisting problems such as pollution and environmental destruction by oil companies intensified. Government troops were strengthened to clamp down on militants given that the fighters stepped up oil pipeline attacks after Musa Yar’Adua had taken over as President in 2007 (BBC News, 2007; Irin News, 2010). In 2008, one prominent militant commander, Henry Okah, was arrested in Angola and extradited to Nigeria (Irin News, 2010). This arrest highlighted the international character of the Niger Delta conflict since the operations of the government and the militants went beyond the national borders. By the end of May 2008, thousands of people had been displaced in the Niger Delta region in the wake of attacks and counter-attacks by militants and the government’s Joint Task Force (JTF).

The militants went ahead to declare an ‘oil war’ in September 2008 as their intensified attacks on oil facilities and security forces led to the heaviest clashes in the region in two years (ibid.). In 2009, MEND militants attacked a civilian helicopter for the first time as a response to an allegation that oil companies were using helicopters to transport military personnel to halt protests in the Niger Delta (Reuters, 2009a; Irin News, 2010). The helicopter was operated by the Italian energy firm, Agip, and was flying between Ogbainbiri and Tebidaba oil flow stations. It was at this point that the government formed the ‘Technical Committee’ to propose ways to resolve the oil conflict. The Technical Committee was chaired by Ledum Mitee – Saro-Wiwa’s successor as MOSOP’s leader – and included local representatives from the different states in the Niger Delta region. The principal recommendations of the committee were the appointment of a mediator to facilitate discussions between the government and the militants, granting amnesty to some militant leaders, initiating a disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration campaign, and an increase in the share of national oil revenues from 13 % to 25 % for the Niger Delta region (Courson, 2009; Ikelegbe, 2010; Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010).

Yar’Adua, following the recommendations of the Technical Committee, declared his government’s intention to grant an unconditional amnesty for the militants in 2009. However, the militants were not fully satisfied with the government’s offer as they demanded the release of their leader, Henry Okah, who had been charged with treason and gun-running (Daily Trust, 2009). To force the government to grant their request, MEND declared offensive attacks against the Nigerian military and also destroyed oil pipelines (CNN, 2009; Reuters, 2009b). Chevron oil company confirmed that it had cut its oil production by 100,000 barrels per day as a result of the attacks (Irin News, 2010). However, the dropping of all charges and release of Henry Okah on 12 July 2009 led to a significant reduction of violence in the Niger Delta (BBC, 2009a). MEND, in their claim to show a goodwill gesture for the release of their leader, announced a unilateral 60-day ceasefire on 15 July 2009. The government also announced a 60-day amnesty programme in the Niger Delta, which consisted of the provision of training, employment assistance, and an unconditional pardon for militants who surrendered their weapons. After further negotiations with the government, MEND declared an indefinite ceasefire in October 2009, which raised hopes for peace-building in the oil-rich region (Irin News, 2010).

Peace was thought to be in sight, especially when between 8,000 and 15,000 gunmen decided to hand in thousands of weapons and renounce violence under the amnesty programme between August and October 2009 (ibid.). The decision by the leaders of powerful militant groups such as Tom Ateke (NDV), Tompolo (MEND), and Ebikabowei Victor Ben (MEND) to participate in the amnesty programme also boosted peace prospects (The Guardian, 2009a; BBC, 2009b). However, the extended absence of Yar'Adua, who had to travel to Saudi Arabia for treatment of a heart condition in November 2009, led the peace talks between MEND and the government to stall. At the turn of 2010, the group threatened an 'all-out onslaught' on the oil industry (Irin News, 2010). In a statement released to express their disappointment over the stalled peace talks, MEND stated: "A situation where the future of the Niger Delta is tied to the health and well-being of one man is unacceptable" (ibid.). This highlights how institutional arrangements in LAOs are tied to individual elites but not to the state per se that need to function regardless of the absence of individual state actors. Thus, the 2009 amnesty entailed an agreement between the militants and the sitting President, which undermined peace-building.

Following the death of President Yar'Adua on 5 May 2010, MEND issued the following statement: "MEND considers the late president a genuine peacemaker whose initiatives, humility and respect began to bring confidence to the peace process. His death may leave a vacuum that may not be filled" (The Guardian, 2010). However, Yar'Adua's passing did not signal an end to peace talks in the Niger Delta since the then Vice President, Mr. Goodluck Jonathan, who succeeded him as President, was from the region and received the backing of some militants (BBC, 2010). More importantly, President Goodluck endeavoured to continue with his predecessor's plans of pursuing the amnesty programme and also created the Federal Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (FMNDA) to complement the development efforts of the NDDC. After contesting and winning the national elections in 2011, Goodluck oversaw the demobilisation (Phase Two) and rehabilitation phases (Phase Three) of the amnesty programme. While some scholars such as Sayne and Hruby (2016) have highlighted how Goodluck simply bought off determined militant leaders as a means to restore relative peace in the Niger Delta, some local residents revealed in the interviews that people in their local areas genuinely had more respect and belief in Goodluck's commitment to peace-building in the region (Interview, Respondent #6, #11). Just as

his predecessors, the tenure of Goodluck was not marked by significant institutional reforms in Nigeria as violence resumed in the Niger Delta in 2016 following the 2009 amnesty implementation.

It is important to underscore that Nigeria's 2015 elections in which Goodluck lost the presidential race to Buhari was followed by a re-emergence of violence in the Niger Delta through some new militant groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA). As a matter of fact, 2016 was the year of the NDA as the group spearheaded the fight for resource control in the Niger Delta. According to the NDA, Nigeria's federal system is an imposed 'pseudo federalism' that has been created to give "all the powers to the federal Government in exploitation of mineral and water resources" (Agbinibo, 2017). This institutional arrangement, according to them, only benefits political elites and their cronies. Consequently, the NDA has called for a restructuring of Nigeria's federal system as can be seen in the following statement:

We seek to be part of a Nigeria where independent federating units will have control over the resources they produce, from which they will contribute an agreed proportion to the federation. We must restructure this country now to achieve equity and efficiency. That way, there will be a balance of opportunity to exploit what is available in all states instead of robbing Peter [The Niger Delta Region] to pay Paul [The Rest of the Country] (ibid.).

This position of the NDA regarding Nigeria's federalism coincides with some scholarly views such as Kiikpoye (2015), which will be elaborated in the next section.

After publicly announcing their existence in March of 2016, the NDA has carried out several attacks on oil producing sites such as the Chevron Oil Well RMP 24 (The Africa Report, 2016), the Escravos Gas Pipeline of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in Delta State (Premium Times, 2016a), and the Shell Petroleum Development Company's (SPDC) 48-inch crude export line at Forcados in Delta State (Premium Times, 2016b). It remains to be seen whether the approach of President Buhari's administration to deal with the Niger Delta conflict departs substantially from his predecessors even though there are some similarities that can be drawn. For instance, the centralisation of oil control, which was witnessed under the administration of Yar'Adua, was reinforced by Buhari as he named himself the Petroleum Minister in

2015 (Sayne and Hruby, 2016, p. 9). This reinforces the claim that institutional arrangements in LAOs are largely tied to individual elites, who seek power to control the vital resources of a state (North et al., 2009).

To summarise, the Niger Delta conflict evolved from non-violent protests in the early and mid-1990s to violent attacks in the late 1990s and 2000s largely due to institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system that have fueled conflict drivers such as grievances and a security dilemma. Within this mature LAO system, Nigeria's democratisation process has contributed significantly to violence as political elites have sought political power by supplying sophisticated weapons to armed groups in the Niger Delta to win elections (Ikelegbe, 2005; Courson, 2009). In particular, Nigeria's 2003 elections marked a key moment in the Niger Delta when political elites desperately engaged the services of armed groups for political gains, leading to a fully blown violent conflict in the oil-rich region that – with varied intensity – has persisted till today. The attempts by the state to address hostilities in the Niger Delta without significant institutional reforms have initiated and worsened the security dilemma over time. An in-depth analysis of the major drivers of the Niger Delta conflict is provided in the next section, which among other things helps to understand the context in which the 2009 amnesty was introduced.

3.2 Causes of the Niger Delta Conflict

Scholars have invoked several factors to explain the Niger Delta conflict including grievance, greed, marginalisation, and deprivation (Courson, 2009, p. 25). In turn, this section highlights the extent to which formal and informal institutions in Nigeria's mature LAO system have fueled different conflict drivers. Tantua and Kamruzzaman (2016, p. 2) have argued that the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in 1956 stimulated a sense of hope, expectations, and opportunities for the masses. However, in line with aspirational deprivation (Korpi, 1974), the local population has since been left disappointed by the federal government and MNOCs, which has led to the armed struggle in the region. Thus, at the heart of the conflict is the failure of oil exploration to impact positively on the lives of Niger Deltans, given that local elites and MNOCs have benefitted financially from institutional arrangements that generate oil profits to the detriment of the local population (Wengraf, 2018). Oil exploitation has also

impaired the country's non-oil sector as public institutions have largely focused on oil benefits and neglected other sectors of the economy (Nwosa & Ogunlowore, 2013; Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010; Ikelegbe, 2010). According to Akujuru (2015, p. 19), the disconnection of the oil sector from the other tiers and sectors of the economy has contributed significantly to Nigeria's inability to resolve problems such as poverty and unemployment. Oil is vital to the economy to a degree that the Niger Delta is frequently described as: "the goose that lay the golden egg for Nigeria" (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010, p. 111; Osaghae, 1995, p. 325; Akujuru, 2015, p. 26). The value of oil in OAOs usually resides in its ability to generate wealth that improves the well-being of the masses. On the contrary, "treating everyone the same" is a difficult objective in most LAOs where citizens do not have adequate access to impersonal institutions that guarantee their rights (North et al., 2009, pp. 22-25). In this vein, the section demonstrates the degree to which institutional arrangements in Nigeria have largely failed to ensure a fair distribution of oil proceeds and to address oil related concerns, thereby creating conducive conditions for rebellion in the Niger Delta.

Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta is closely tied to land issues that also fuel violent clashes between the fighters and oil companies (Courson, 2009, p. 7). As Aghalino (2011, p. 6) cited in Nwankwo (2015, p. 383) has highlighted, the occupation of land by oil companies is fundamental to the tension in the oil-rich region. In general, land control has been significant in most LAOs given that political elites seek to derive maximum profits from it. For example, the most powerful alliance in Mesoamerica's Aztec empire – an LAO system that was headed by the Tepanecs in the late fourteenth century – controlled the fertile lands around Lake Texcoco for profits (North et al., 2009, pp. 55-58). In turn, public discontentedness with oil-related activities on Niger Delta lands largely explains why militants tend to target the facilities and workers of MNOCs. As Sayne and Hruby (2016, p. 7) have argued: "For years militants angry over the region's impoverishment, environmental damage, and perceived unfair treatment by the government have attacked oil pipelines and kidnapped expatriates working for international oil companies (IOCs)". Longstanding oil pollution and environmental degradation that have had adverse effects not only on lands, but also on water bodies and the air have contributed significantly to harsh living conditions and violence in the Niger Delta (Okolie-Osemene, 2015; Adams, 2014; Aghalino, 2012). This stems from the fact that: "Oil exploration in the region is being carried out without regard to

international health and safety standards or observed minimum levels of protection of the environment from chemical pollution, in the air, land, rivers and water table” (Akpomuvie, 2011, p. 204). Examples of environmental disasters in the Niger Delta abound and include:

The killing of 180 people which occurred as a result of the extensive 1980 Texaco spill that poisoned streams serving as drinking water sources, and those that have killed children, leading to the hospitalization of about a hundred other villagers, due to the consumption of water contaminated by oil leaks (Okhumode, 2017, p. 3).

Furthermore, the government had to declare a pollution emergency in Port Harcourt after the city was covered in a “mystery cloud of soot” in 2017 (BBC, 2017). Households in the Niger Delta have been found to be consuming contaminated well water containing a known carcinogen called benzene at levels that are 900 times above the World Health Organisation’s recommended guidelines (United Nations News Centre, 2011). Ogoni land in particular, which used to be called the ‘food basket’ of the Niger Delta prior to oil exploitation, has been described as a “calamitous history of pollution from oil spills, gas flares, and oil well fires” (Okhumode, 2017, p. 4). This largely contributed to why Saro-Wiwa and MOSOP felt the need to start non-violent protests that eventually led to armed rebellion in the region as was highlighted in the previous section.

Oil spillage is common in the Niger Delta due to the numerous oil fields, flow stations, and terminals through which crude oil flows (ibid., p. 201). Around 7,000 oil spills were recorded in this oil-rich region from 1970 to 2000 and 418 oil spill cases in the first six months of 2008 (Courson, 2009, p. 9). Oviasuyi and Uwadiae (2010, p. 113) have also underlined how plants and animals’ life cycles in the region have been negatively affected by oil spillages and gas flaring, resulting in grave volumes of atmospheric pollution, poisoning of soil and ground water, abnormal salinity of pool water, and persistent heat around the flare pits. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2006), cited in Zabbey (2009, p. 5), have summarised the adverse effects of oil spills in Nigeria’s oil-rich region in the following way: high mortality of aquatic animals, impairment of human health, loss of biodiversity in breeding grounds, vegetation hazards, loss of portable and industrial water resources, reduction in fishing

and farming activities, poverty, and rural underdevelopment. Figure 11 shows the health effects of air pollution in Ogoni land, where food quality, waste disposals, and water have been of low quality.

Figure 11: Health Effects of Gas Flare Pollutants in the Niger Delta

Serial No.	Chemical Name	Human Health Effect
1.	Alkanes: methane, ethane, propane	Low levels: Can result in swelling, itching and inflammation [39]. High levels: May cause skin infections such as eczema and acute lung swelling [40].
2.	Alkenes: ethylene, propylene	May result in weakness, nausea and vomiting [39].
3.	BTEX	They are toxic and are either carcinogenic or probable carcinogens [39,40]. Targets on exposure are usually the nervous system and blood forming organs [40].
4.	Carbon monoxide	Low levels: Can cause permanent damage to the heart and brain [40]. May harm the mental development of fetus and children [40]. High levels: Can lead to miscarriage and death [40].
5.	Hydrogen sulphide	Low levels: Nausea, headaches, delirium, disturbed equilibrium, tremors, convulsions, and skin and eye irritation [40]. High levels: Respiratory tract and mucous membrane irritation; may cause immediate or delayed pulmonary edema [40]. May result in extremely rapid unconsciousness and death [40].
6.	Nitrogen dioxides (NO, NO ₂)	Low levels: Cause irritation of eyes, nose, throat, and lungs. Cough, shortness of breath, tiredness, and nausea may also occur. Build-up of fluid in the lungs 1 or 2 day(s) after exposure is also possible [40]. High levels: May result in rapid burning, spasms, and swelling of the upper respiratory tract and throat tissues. Reduced oxygenation of body tissues, a build-up of fluid in lungs. Death [40].
7.	Sulphur dioxide	Low levels: Asthmatics are very sensitive to respiratory effects [40]. High levels: Burning sensation of the nose and throat, breathing difficulties, and severe airway obstructions were observed in miners exposed to a copper mine explosion [41]. A 100 ppm in 100 parts of air has been demonstrated to be immediately dangerous to human health and life [40]

Source: Okhumode, 2017, p. 6.

The deplorable state of Niger Delta's environment drew several reactions from respondents as, for example, a school teacher remarked: "Many youths are still washing their hands with spittle whereas they live by the riverside, looking and seeing the source of their joy being drained away" (Questionnaire, Respondent #11). Or as another stated:

“You see a situation when you go to [the] stream you get no clean water, go to the river, fishes and other aquatic lines are destroyed, you have no fertile land to cultivate, no drinking water... the national wealth is from here, yet our people are not taken care of; it’s annoying!” (Questionnaire, Respondent #41). These remarks support a common theme in the literature regarding the centrality of grievances in the factors that cause the Niger Delta conflict (Courson, 2009; Zabbey, 2009; Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010; Okolie-Osemene, 2015; and Aghalino, 2012). In turn, the analysis in this section highlights how institutional arrangements in Nigeria’s mature LAO system fuel these grievances and other drivers of the resource-based conflict.

There are several existing laws that are meant to regulate oil activities in Nigeria including:

The Petroleum Act, Cap 350, LFN 1990 and its attendant regulations.

The Oil in Navigable Waters Act Cap 331, LFN 1990 and its attendant regulations.

The Oil Terminal Dues Act Cap 339, LFN 1990.

The Associated Gas Re-Injection Act Cap 26 LFN 1990 and its attendant regulations.

The Federal Environment Protection Agency Act Cap. 131 LFN 1990 (Akpomuvie, 2011, pp. 205-206).

However, these laws have not been applied to significantly reduce oil related disasters in the Niger Delta as public laws usually protect the privileges of political elites in most LAOs. During the Middle Ages, for example, the public law in Europe’s LAO systems “developed support for elite organizations within, but not beyond, the framework of the state” (North et al., 2009, p. 46). In the Niger Delta, oil companies are legally bound to take ‘prompt’ steps to embark on clean-up operations within 24 hours of an oil spill (Steiner, 2010, p.4). However, the LAO system in place undermines the capacity of public institutions to impersonally enforce existing laws beyond the interest of political elites, thereby making it easy for MNOCs to cause environmental damage with impunity. Steiner (2010, p. 13) has highlighted how there has been a deliberate attempt by oil companies and the government to under-report oil-spill cases, which is generally geared towards limiting legal liability for commensurate claims and compensations. Other factors that have accounted for under-reporting of oil spills include the difficulty in accessing some oil sites due to swamp conditions and the high volatility of oil that makes about 50 % of spilled oil to evaporate within 24 to 48 hours (ibid., pp. 12-13).

The failure of public institutions and laws to protect lives and the environment in the Niger Delta largely contributed to armed rebellion as the youth fighters, in the absence of trusted institutions, took matters into their own hands (Ikelegbe, 2005). Greed is important to highlight in these discussions as a substantial amount of the oil proceeds have not been used to address local grievances. This underlines the selfishness of political elites and MNOCs who only think about their personal gains mindless of the damages that oil exploitation cause to Niger Deltans (Wengraf, 2018). It follows that public institutions in Nigeria's mature LAO system have fueled different drivers of conflict in the Niger Delta including greed and grievances as will be elaborated further below.

In addition to environmental degradation and pollution, another major source of grievance that fuels violence in the Niger Delta is poverty. The latter is a key driver of conflicts as was highlighted in the previous chapter, but it needs to be understood within an institutional context given that the sense of exclusion is enhanced in LAOs. Even though poverty is widespread and severe in Nigeria (Ucha, 2010, p. 47), a 2006 Human Development Index (HDI) report showed a steeper decline in HDI for the Niger Delta than the rest of Nigeria (UNDP, 2006, cited in Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010, pp. 118-119). According to this report, there are more poor people in the local government areas with oil facilities than those without oil facilities (*ibid.*). This means that poverty in oil locations is worse than that of nonoil locations and justifies why relative deprivation genuinely contributes to the oil conflict. Poverty indicators in the region include a limited access to food, employment, education, clothing and shelter, electric power supply, potable water, healthcare, good road networks, and other infrastructural deficits (Chukwuemeka et al., 2011, p. 339; Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010, p. 115; Ucha, 2010, p. 47; Ikelegbe, 2010). In turn, one of the frequent quotes from respondents to explain the causes of the Niger Delta conflict is that: "A hungry man is an angry man" (Questionnaire, Respondents #6, #10, #17, #57). In other words, it is impossible for Niger Deltans to remain indifferent to the paradox of living in abject poverty while at the same time sustaining the country's economy. Or as Akpomuvie (2011, p. 203) puts it: "The Niger Delta has been described as a pathetic paradox; so rich and yet so poor; so endowed and yet so mismanaged; so much potentials and yet so prodigal".

The previous chapter highlighted among other things how macro-economic indicators

such as GDP have been linked to conflicts, which is evident in Nigeria. There is a correlation between violence in the Niger Delta and Nigeria's macro-economic development. For example, Figure 12 helps to understand how Nigeria records relatively low GDP during moments of high hostilities in the Niger Delta. It displays a steady GDP growth from 2010 (369.1 USD Billion) to 2014 (568.5 USD Billion), which, at least in part, is attributable to the relative calm that the 2009 amnesty restored in the oil-rich region. Figure 12 also shows how between 2006 and 2010, when violence in the Niger Delta was particularly intense, the country's GDP was very low. A decline in GDP is also seen in 2015, which was an election year that was marked by significant violence in the oil-rich region, and a further decline is seen in 2016 when oil-related activities were interrupted by the NDA. It follows that while the instability of oil prices in the international market affects Nigeria's oil economy (Akujuru, 2015, p. 25), violent clashes in the Niger Delta have a high negative effect on the country's GDP.

Figure 12: Nigeria Historical GDP



Source: Trading Economics, 2017.

One key source of poverty that fuels violence in the Niger Delta is the diversion of oil revenues from the oil-rich region to the federal government, individual pockets, and other parts of the country. The first step for understanding this phenomenon is through the controversial revenue allocation formula, which is meant to ensure equitable distribution of oil revenues in Nigeria. As Nwankwo (2015, p. 384) notes: "The revenue allocation formula being adopted by the Nigerian Government has been particularly criticized and rejected by scholars for not reflecting the interests of the people in the

Niger Delta region, where over 80 % of the national resource is generated”. The widespread criticism of the revenue allocation formula is explained by Figure 13, which shows how Niger Delta’s oil revenues declined from 50 % between 1960 and 1970 to just 13 % between 2000 and 2010. The fruitlessness of non-violent protests in the 1990s is demonstrated by the 3 % of oil revenues that were allocated to the Niger Delta between 1992 and 2000. The current 13 % oil revenue allocation for the Niger Delta, which is enshrined in the country’s constitution, still falls far below the 50 % share of derivation in the 1960s, even though pollution and environmental degradation have increasingly caused damage in the region.

Figure 13: Derivation Component of Revenue Allocation

S/N	PERIOD	PERCENTAGE SHARE OF DERIVATION
1	1960-1970	50%
2	1970-1975	45%
3	1975-1980	20%
4	1980-1983	2%
5	1984-1992	1.5%
6	1992-2000	3%
7	2000-2010	13%

Source: Ibaba & Ikelegbe, 2010 cited in Ikelegbe (2010, p. 33)

Furthermore, Figure 14 displays how between 2004 and 2008, close to 54 % of oil revenues went to the Federal Government, while the remaining chunk went to the rest of the states and local governments. Thus, Nigeria’s LAO system has ensured that the Niger Delta’s loss of oil revenues largely becomes the gain of political elites at the different levels of the state structure, particularly those at the federal level. As Ahonsi (2011, p. 29) has highlighted, the Niger Delta generated oil revenues of over \$45 billion from 1970 to 2005 for the federal government, but the large percentage of the local population remain poor and unemployed. In essence, Nigeria’s mature LAO system fuels a flawed distributive federalism in which Nigerian elites – politicians, former military personnel, and top businessmen – who constitute about 1 % of the country’s

population have total control of the oil sector (Akujuru, 2015, p. 19; Tantua and Kamruzzaman, 2016, p. 2). According to Kiipoye (2015, p. 175), the relations between the different regions in Nigeria were characterised by a healthy economic competition that generated wealth and also retained substantial portions of the wealth generated within the regions during the pre- and immediate post-independent Nigeria. Whereas the country's North was noted for the production of groundnuts and cotton and the West for cocoa and rubber production, the East specialised in palm oil and coal production. Centralisation of resource governance – which “dispossessed the rights of recognition, participation and ownership of local people [Niger Deltans] in the oil governance” – resulted from the discovery and dominance of oil as the backbone of the Nigerian economy (Tantua & Kamruzzaman, 2016, p. 10; Kiipoye, 2015).

Figure 14: Share of Revenues by Governments of the Federation

PERIOD	FEDERAL %	STATES %	LGA's %	SPECIAL FUNDS %
1958	40	60	-	-
1968	80	20	-	-
1982	55	32.5	10	-
1984-1988	55	30	12	3
1989	47	30	15	8
1990	50	30	15	5
1991	47.5	28.5	14	10
January 1992	50	25	20	5
June 1992-2001	48.5	24	20	7.5
January 2002	54.68	24.7	20.6	-
December 2002	53.69	31.1	15.21	-
2004-2008	53.69	31.1	15.21	-

Source: Ajayi, 2010 cited by Ikelegbe, 2010, p. 34.

The power of the federal government has augmented tremendously over time since it has appropriated oil resource rights and subsequently weakened the capacity of other sub-national units in the engagement of wealth-generation activities. As Ukiwo (2009,

p. 2) elaborates:

The clamour for greater share of oil revenues has its roots in Nigeria's competitive federalism. Between 1953 and 1960, that is the period of self-government and independence, regions retained 100 per cent of revenues, based on the principle of derivation. At independence, the proportion of revenue allocated on the basis of derivation was slashed to 50 per cent. The impetus for the change was the expanding role of the federal government and the commencement of commercial exploitation of oil. All dominant political stakeholders preferred this arrangement because it guaranteed autonomous development and encouraged healthy competition among the federating units as each unit was blessed with a cash crop. However, from 1970 to 1999, derivation was gradually slashed from 45 per cent to 3 per cent, with the federal government pocketing most of the revenues. The 30-year period coincided with the era when oil became the major source of revenue for the country. Since oil resources were mostly found in the Niger Delta, which is occupied by minority ethnic groups, the change in the revenue allocation formula was perceived by the Delta ethnic minorities as a ploy orchestrated by three major Nigerian ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo) to exploit them (Niger Delta people).

Political elites from the North – Hausa-Fulani elites – have particularly benefitted from Nigeria's oil revenues as they have been dominant in terms of occupying high political offices in the country (see Chapter 7). A good indicator for understanding the extent to which Hausa-Fulani elites benefit the most from oil revenues is seen in the disparity regarding the ownership of oil blocks – land areas awarded by the government for oil drilling and exploration. Overall, the Northern elites own at least 80 % of oil blocks in the country even though the oil-rich region is in the South (Sahara Reporters, 2013). In 1988, the federal government infamously decided to site a petroleum refinery in Kaduna, which lies several thousand kilometres away from the Niger Delta. This political decision was ill-thought-out as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation has in recent times contemplated shutting down the Kaduna refinery due to non-availability of crude oil (The Guardian, 2018). Against this backdrop, Akujuru (2015) p. 26) has argued, there has been a “deliberate and criminal transfer of the oil wealth of the Niger Delta to develop other regions”. The LAO system of unfair resource distribution has ensured that oil profits that the federal government collects from the Niger Delta are largely diverted to the pockets of political elites, particularly those from the North to the detriment of Niger Deltans. This is a major source of grievance and

helps to understand why Niger Delta militants tend to order Northerners to leave the region in order to avoid being attacked (The Guardian, 2017c; Daily Post, 2017a).

While discussing the causes of the Niger Delta conflict, respondents were keen to highlight problems that relate to the diversion of oil revenues from the oil-rich region to the North. For example, a civil servant stated: “The ownership of oil blocks in this country [Nigeria] needs a total review. How would you feel when somebody from the North will own one or more oil blocks in the Niger Delta region while the people of the region have none?” (Questionnaire, Respondent #21). Also, a businesswoman wrote: “The politicians, especially those from the North contribute to the violence because they are the ones who own majority of the oil wells in the Niger Delta not because they are the richest but because of policies they formulate to serve their selfishness” (Questionnaire, Respondent #58). In order to address this problem, there have been calls from prominent politicians in the Niger Delta including Senator Ita Enang of Akwa Ibom State for the government to revoke oil blocks that have been awarded to Nigerians in the past (Sahara Reporters, 2013).

In the light of Niger Delta’s relative deprivation that results from the diversion of oil profits from the region to elsewhere, Kiipoye (2015, p. 177) has argued: “A renegotiation of the terms of the Nigerian union and, more importantly, a return to the federal practice of yore which created a weak centre and strong regions may well be the solution to Nigeria’s incessant insurgencies”. This position aligns with one respondent’s view that the Niger Delta conflict cannot stop unless Nigeria becomes ‘a complete federal’ – by allowing each state to harness its resources and then pay taxes to the federal government (Interview, Respondent #2). The weakness of Kiipoye’s argument lies in his underestimation of relative deprivation as a major cause of the oil conflict. According to him, relative deprivation is either “an inadequate justification to explain the Niger Delta insurgency” or a ‘misdiagnosis’ of the conflict that can even undermine attempts to resolve the problem of insurgencies in Nigeria (Kiikpoye, 2015, p. 175). However, it is clear that relative deprivation is a major driver of violence in the Niger Delta as has been highlighted above. Moreover, a renegotiation of the terms of Nigeria’s federalism can only make a meaningful impact on violence in the country when it is accompanied by significant institutional reforms as will be highlighted in Chapter 7. The movement from LAO towards OAO is particularly important for

improving socio-economic relations, and thus management of violence in this West African state because apart from the formal institutions, the mature LAO system also supports informal institutions including corruption and oil theft that also contribute significantly to the diversion of oil revenues from the Niger Delta to individuals elsewhere.

According to Courson (2009, p. 16), “corruption has been institutionalised by the ruling elites in Nigeria; hence political leaders embezzle most of the money accruing from the sale of oil”. Also, Ukiwo (2011, p. 25) has underscored how a high-level corruption in Nigeria’s public sector largely accounts for the declining opportunities of gainful employment for the youths including those in the Niger Delta. President Obasanjo has described Nigeria’s National Assembly as “a den of corruption by a gang of unarmed robbers” (Channels Television, 2016). According to him, the National Assembly – “the worst cabal in Nigeria’s governance system” – co-opts its members who pay themselves allowances for staffs and offices that they do not have or maintain, and also withdraw full funds that are meant for constituency projects only to execute the projects partially or not at all. In turn, Obasanjo has been branded by his critics and political opponents as the ‘Father of corruption’ in this West African country (Daily Post, 2017b; Vanguard, 2017c). In essence, the country’s mature LAO system has failed to support impersonal institutions that can significantly limit the capacity of public officials to privatise public funds. In 2006, for example, a former chairman of Nigeria’s petroleum revenue task force and a government anti-corruption official, Mr. Nuhu Ribadu, claimed that records from the Nigerian central bank and the ministry of finance have revealed how Nigerian leaders had either stolen or wasted more than \$380bn since the country’s independence (BBC, 2006). It is impossible to authenticate Mr. Ribadu’s figure as the researcher does not have access to those records. What is important to note, however, is that corruption allegations abound in Nigeria as the head of Nigeria’s anti-corruption court has also been charged with bribery (Daily Mail, 2018).

Other significant corruption allegations include a 2016 report by the information minister, which claimed that about 55 individuals including former governors, cabinet ministers, and other government workers had stolen close to \$6.8bn from Nigeria’s public funds over the space of seven years (The Guardian, 2016a). Furthermore, a former oil minister, Mrs. Diezani Alison-Madueke, was reportedly arrested in London

in 2015 following an allegation that about \$20bn of oil money had gone missing while she was in office (BBC, 2015). It has subsequently been reported that this former minister has had to temporarily forfeit \$153 million to the federal government as a sequel to an order by a federal high court in Lagos (The Cable, 2017). The seized money was allegedly taken from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and stashed in three Nigerian banks.

While discussing the causes of the Niger Delta conflict, a number of respondents also highlighted the problem of corruption in Nigeria as, for example, a soldier remarked: “The source of income and expenses for now is too difficult due to the so-called ambassadors of poverty (the political masters) who loot the country’s economy for their selfish interest to satisfy brothers and sisters at home” (Questionnaire, Respondent #81). A researcher also argued that corruption is rampant from the state to the federal level, and that the Goodluck Jonathan administration was too corrupt in the way that it awarded contracts to ex-militants (Interview, Respondent #4). Indeed, the Nigerian House of Representatives have launched an inquiry into questionable contracts that are worth over 450 billion Naira, which were awarded between 2010 and 2015 by Goodluck’s government (Punch, 2017b). This inquiry is based on a suspicion of collusion between many companies and the Presidential Amnesty Office in the execution of contracts. The extent to which corruption in public institutions has undermined the 2009 amnesty is discussed in Chapter 5.

In addition to corruption, ‘oil bunkering’ – extra institutional oil trade or oil theft – is another informal means by which oil profits from the Niger Delta are diverted for private gains in Nigeria’s mature LAO system. This has enriched some Nigerian elites and their clients including leading militias and armed gangs (Ikelegbe, 2005, p. 228; Odalonu, 2015, p. 566). Vandalisation of oil pipelines enhances crude oil theft ranging from “small smuggling syndicates who break into the distribution pipelines of the Nigeria National Petroleum Company [NNPC]” to siphon fuel and “the diversion of purchased and allocated refined petroleum products to the black market” by authorised marketers and smuggling syndicates (Ikelegbe, 2005, p. 221). It has been estimated that Nigeria sometimes loses over 300,000 barrels of crude oil per day due to oil theft, pipeline vandalism, and other criminal activities (Odalonu, 2015, p. 563). These illegal activities are well-coordinated, with international partners and clients in West Africa,

Europe, Australia, and Lebanon who finance and transport stolen oil and who also help to launder stolen money (ibid.). Oil bunkering contributes to pollution and environmental destruction in the Niger Delta, deepens relative deprivation of the region, and underlines elites' greed in Nigeria's mature LAO system.

In addition to the formal and informal ways of channeling oil profits, the institutional arrangements in Nigeria have also encouraged ethnic rivalries and competition over resources that have also fueled violence in the Niger Delta. In particular, conflicts have emerged from the Urhobos, Itsekiris, and Ijaws as they compete to win contracts and gain employment from oil companies (Asuni, 2009, p. 11). Militant groups also tend to follow ethnic or tribal lines as the Ijaws – the largest ethnic minority group in the Niger Delta – have produced the most powerful militant groups in the region including the Ijaw Youth Council, the Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality, the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities, and the Niger Delta Resistance Movement (Ikelegbe, 2011).

In the light of the formal and informal institutional arrangements as well as ethnic rivalries that have undermined peace-building in the Niger Delta, the attempts by the federal government to use a military approach to manage hostilities have also exacerbated a security dilemma. Since the late 1990s, there has been a heavy military presence in the oil-rich region as Ukeje (2011, p. 89) has argued:

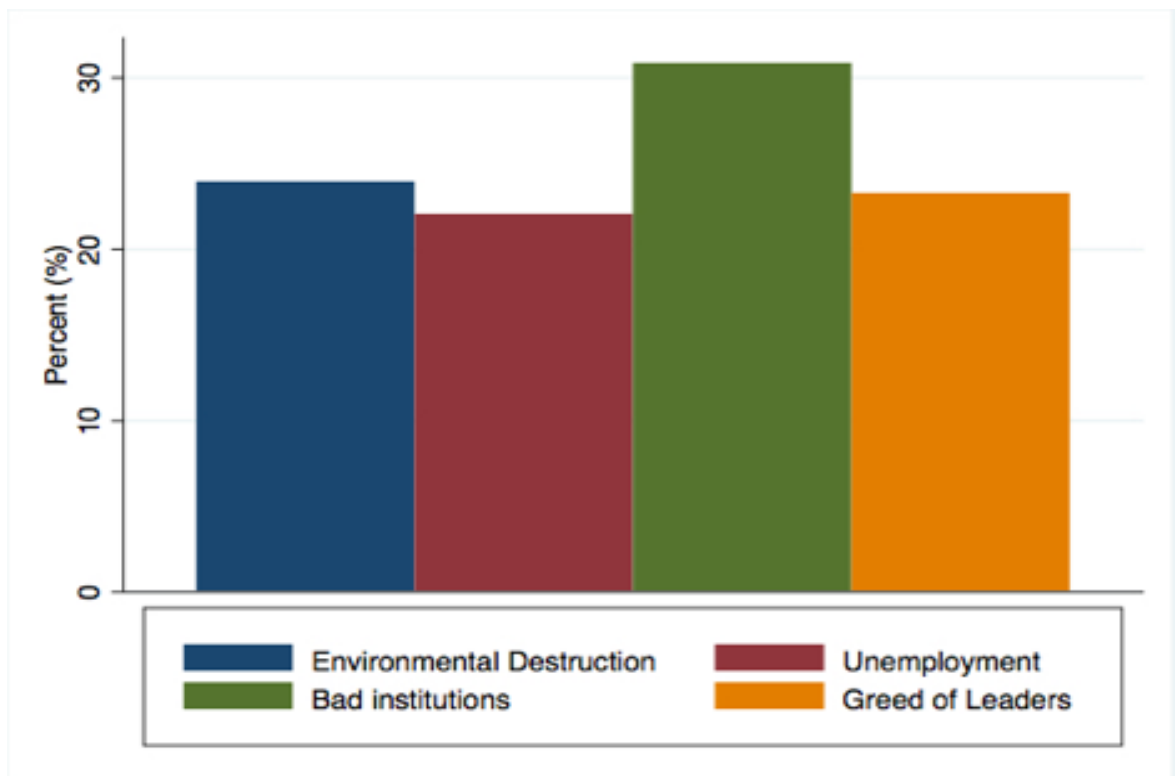
A pervasive but ill-conceived notion is that every threat to law and order in the contemporary Niger Delta is viewed as another attempt to undermine oil production and state security. This mindset – which permeates and drives government's response – continues to raise the threat level attached to even the most routine, daily disagreement across the Delta region. Principally owing to its obsession with oil, and the persistent threat arising from violent threats to security and stability, the Nigerian state is increasingly and readily disposed to the most unusual securitisation of virtually every aspect of society and politics in the oil region.

Insurgencies and counter-insurgencies have led to the deaths of many civilians, the displacements of a good number of people, and the destruction of properties in the Niger Delta as was highlighted in the previous section. In most LAOs, "The ability to threaten and use violence is an inherent part of the relationships between elite patrons

in the dominant coalition, and between patrons and their clients” (North et al., 2009, p. 36). In this vein, elite-led militias or vigilante arming have worsened the security dilemma in the Niger Delta as Nyiayaana (2015, pp. 137), for example, has highlighted: “Vigilante arming involving multiple actors such as local communities, political elites and MNOCs with diverse goals, motivations and agendas does constitute an enduring source of weapons diffusion and availability in the region”. It is important to underscore the fact that vigilante arming is a common phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa where pockets of societies lack adequate state protection. In neighbouring Ghana, for instance, a vigilante group – Delta Force – which works for the incumbent government stormed a circuit court to free its members who were facing charges for acts of vandalism at the Ashanti Regional Coordinating Council in April 2017 (Gadugah, 2017). The protection of elites’ oil-based interests in the Niger Delta has required sophisticated weapons by vigilante groups, contributing to the heavy military presence in the region, and worsening the region’s security dilemma.

In line with the existing literature, respondents ranked the following factors that are commonly attributed to the oil conflict: greed of elites, unemployment, environmental destruction, and bad institutions. Overall, bad institutions were adjudged by respondents to be the main cause of Nigeria’s oil conflict (see Figure 15). This further supports the dissertation’s claim that institutions in Nigeria have been crafted based on the mature LAO system, which has helped to shape elite behaviours and decision-making thereby fueling different drivers of conflict including relative deprivation and a security dilemma. As Nwankwo (2015, p. 384) has also argued: “The absence of workable institutional and financial mechanisms to deal with the cases of ecological damage, and compensate the people of the region over the environmental damage caused by oil exploitation tend to have provided a basis for militancy and activism in the region over the years”. This means that conflict management or peace-building strategies need to strive towards addressing the institutional arrangements in Nigeria’s mature LAO system that have fueled violence in the Niger Delta and other parts of the country (see Chapter 7).

Figure 15: Rank of Causes of Conflict (Overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

To summarise, the failure of Nigerian public institutions to ensure that oil exploration impact positively on the local population is at the heart of the Niger Delta conflict. This restates the resource curse arguments as the socio-economic conditions of many Niger Deltans have deteriorated in the wake of oil discovery and commercialisation in Nigeria (Akpomuvie, 2011). The analysis has demonstrated the extent to which Nigeria's mature LAO system has ensured that the pursuit of oil wealth by Nigerian elites and MNOCs in the Niger Delta fuels different drivers of violence. This includes pollution related grievances and relative deprivation that stem from formal institutions such as the federal government's controversial resource allocation formula. The latter has ensured that oil profits from the Niger Delta largely benefit a few Nigerian elites and oil companies to the detriment of the local population (Wengraf, 2018). Also, legal institutions in the country have failed to enforce oil exploration laws to protect lives and properties in the Niger Delta. Thus, local elites and MNOCs have largely benefitted from oil revenues within Nigeria's mature LAO system while neglecting problems such as poverty, environmental degradation, and pollution. Additionally, informal institutions including corruption and oil bunkering have worsened the living conditions

of the local population in Nigeria's oil-rich region, which together with ethnic rivalries and vigilante arming have fueled violence in the Niger Delta. In turn, the state's attempts to use the military to clamp down on non-violent protests and insurgencies led to a security dilemma, which the 2009 amnesty tried to tackle as will be elaborated in Chapter 5.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the degree to which the mature LAO framework helps to explain the political economy of the Niger Delta conflict. As a wetland, the Niger Delta region supports ecosystem services such as food control and safeguarding of many endangered species. However, Nigeria's commercialisation of oil without institutional reforms has negatively affected socio-economic relations and also led to a protracted resource-based conflict in the Niger Delta thanks to the mature LAO system. The conflict has essentially been about the struggle for oil control between the federal government, Niger Deltans, and oil companies, which has led to coercive threats and physical violence (Courson, 2009; Ahonsi, 2011; Okolie-Osemene, 2015; Adams, 2014; and Aghalino, 2012). The contemporary evolution of the Niger Delta conflict began in the 1990s when public institutions failed to meaningfully manage non-violent protests including those that were initiated by Ken Saro-Wiwa and MOSOP in Ogoni land. Even though the non-violent protestors that emerged in the 1990s highlighted diverse problems in different parts of the Niger Delta, they commonly expressed their demands through bills or charters such as the Ogoni Bill of Rights, the Kaiama Declaration, and the Oron Bill of Rights. Saro-Wiwa's huge influence in this non-violent approach was acknowledged internationally by winning the United Nations Environment Award in 1996 for his defence of Niger Delta's environment (UN, 1996).

Youth militias in the Niger Delta began to gain momentum in the late 1990s in the wake of the government's brutal response to non-violent protests including illegal arrests and killings of influential leaders such as Saro-Wiwa. Without any significant institutional reforms, Nigeria's transition from autocracy to democracy in the late 1990s helped to fuel violence in the Niger Delta, especially as political elites intensified the supply of sophisticated weapons to armed groups in an attempt to win elections. The formation

of coalitions by the armed groups led to a full insurgency in the Niger Delta by 2006, which worsened insecurities over time and eventually led to the 2009 amnesty.

The mature LAO system has fueled a wide range of conflict drivers including formal and informal institutional arrangements that have supported poverty, ethnic rivalries, corruption, relative deprivation, and vigilante arming. Specifically, political elites have pursued oil profits by limiting economic opportunities for the masses and failing to ensure that legal institutions regulate the activities of oil companies (Courson, 2009; Ikelegbe, 2011). The devastating effects of oil spills have been significantly felt by the local population, some of whom have died, and several others hospitalised including children. Thus, oil mismanagement has worsened socio-economic conditions in the Niger Delta, thereby corroborating the resource curse arguments. The analysis shows that Nigeria's problematic institutions have largely been behind the persistent failure of oil exploration to make a positive impact on people's lives and why violence has persisted in the Niger Delta. It is important to elaborate on the roles that different actors have played within these questionable institutional arrangements in order to fully understand the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty.

Chapter 4:

Who is to blame? A Critical Analysis of Key Actors in the Niger Delta

4.0 Introduction

The Niger Delta conflict and 2009 amnesty are frequently discussed with reference to the main protagonists; the government, MNOCs, and militants (Nwankwo, 2015; Kiipoye, 2015; Ikelegbe, 2005). In turn, this chapter elaborates on the extent to which institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system have helped to shape the behaviours and decision-making of certain key actors in the Niger Delta, given that amnesties are mostly designed with a focus on the people that are directly or indirectly involved in a conflict. As Mallinder (2018, p. 41), for example, has highlighted, non-state armed parties have benefitted the most from conflict amnesties since the 1990s. In most LAOs, "Rulers are just one of many relevant actors in the dominant coalition" (North et al., 2009, p. 31). Thus, from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, for instance, Europe's mature LAOs including Rome, France, and England placed a greater emphasis on coalitions of actors that largely included kings and religious leaders who controlled personal relationships and exchanges (ibid., pp. 62-72). Investigating the roles that state and non-state actors have played in a conflict provides an important background for understanding their involvement in or exclusion from amnesties, why some actors tend to benefit more from amnesties than others, and thus the amnesty's broader impact (Dancy, 2018; Mallinder, 2018). In this vein, the chapter underlines the degree to which Nigeria's mature LAO system has enhanced the involvement of certain key actors in conflict and peace-building in the Niger Delta, and thus the varied participation exacerbated by the limitations of the 2009 amnesty.

This chapter distinguishes between the primary and secondary actors in Nigeria's oil-rich region and makes two key arguments. First, it argues that political elites, MNOCs, and militants constitute the primary actors in the Niger Delta inasmuch as they have contributed largely to the crafting of institutions that perpetuate violence in Nigeria's mature LAO system. This provides an important background to the 2009 amnesty's limitations and helps to understand why several works such as Ukiwo (2011), Idemudia

(2009), and Ahonsi (2011) have limited the discussion of actors in the Niger Delta to the government, MNOCs, and the fighters. The analysis of the primary actors also provides an important background to appreciating the influence of the (ex)fighters in the 2009 amnesty design and the transformation of patronage politics or the conflict containment logic in the Niger Delta (see Chapters 5 and 6). Second, the chapter argues that traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media constitute the secondary actors in the Niger Delta given that they have played supporting and intermediary roles in the oil conflict. The discussion helps to understand among other things the extent to which the secondary actors have collaborated and contended with elite privileges in the country. The analysis of the secondary actors also demonstrates that just as other African societies, the Niger Delta consists of people who are affiliated to socio-economic groups that impact local politics. As, for example, Eifert, Miguel and Posner (2010) and Beyers (2015) have highlighted how the ethnic and religious identities in Africa have been useful for instrumental reasons including the competition for political power. The analysis of the secondary actors provides an important background regarding why the involvement of certain actors (for example, the traditional leaders) in and the exclusion of others (for example, the civil society) from the 2009 amnesty negotiation process has contributed to the amnesty trap as will be elaborated in the next chapter. The argument is that, while amnesties tend to target those directly involved in a conflict, both the primary and secondary actors need to participate in the design and implementation of amnesties as well as in broader peace-building plans (see Chapters 7). The chapter integrates respondents' perceptions and views to illustrate the degree to which the primary and secondary actors have helped to shape public opinions about the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the 2009 amnesty's limitations. It draws upon respondents' perceptions and views and triangulates them with secondary sources to evaluate the degree to which the primary and secondary actors have helped to shape public opinions about the Niger Delta conflict. It begins by discussing the primary actors and then moves on to examine the secondary actors.

4.1 Primary Actors

From the historical analysis of the Niger Delta conflict in the previous chapter, it is clear that the institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system have enhanced the capacity of political elites and MNOCs to reap oil benefits to the detriment

of the local population, which has led to armed opposition in the oil-rich region. Thus, political elites, MNOCs, and militants constitute the primary actors inasmuch as they have been the main architects of the Niger Delta conflict and have largely contributed to the 2009 amnesty's outcome as will be highlighted in Chapters 5 and 6. These political and business elites together with the violence specialists (militant leaders) have played a major role in the crafting of institutions that have led to a wide range of problems including poverty, environmental destruction, and security dilemma in the Niger Delta. The analysis in this section demonstrates the extent to which the primary actors have largely been behind institutional arrangements that have dictated the course of Nigeria's oil conflict, which eventually led to the 2009 amnesty.

4.1a Political Elites in the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta conflict is often described as a political conflict due to the fundamental role that politicians including those in elected and appointed positions have played in institutional arrangements that have undermined peace-building in the oil-rich region (Paki & Edoumiekumo, 2011; Newsome, 2011). The power structure of Nigeria's public sector includes: the President and a Cabinet that incorporates representatives from all the 36 States, the National Assembly which is made up of a 109-member Senate and a 360-member House of Representatives, Governors and Houses of Assembly in the 36 states, and the Judiciary (Government of Nigeria, 2018). In general, public functions that affect Nigerians including Niger Deltans are carried out by persons who have been mandated to do so through elections and appointments (Adeosun et al., 2016).

Given that African political elites including those in Nigeria have played a central role in political events on the continent since independence, some scholars have highlighted how these elites have evolved over time. For example, Bassey (2009, p. 30) has demonstrated how: "The rise to political power of the early political elites in Africa was due in part to Western education but to a large extent due to higher education; thanks to the activities of the Christian missions in Africa". While higher education still characterises modern African political elites and is important for climbing higher in society, education alone is not enough to be a political elite in many African countries. This is exemplified by the existence of educated persons in the Niger Delta who are

unemployed and incapable of influencing decisions in their communities (Tambari & Imoh, 2016; Oromareghake et al., 2013; Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). In turn, with the exception of a few, most of the respondents who were contacted in the Niger Delta region were educated but unhappy with their living standards and did not consider themselves as elites in the society.

More important than education in climbing the political, economic, and social ladder in many African countries and LAOs in particular is patronage politics. In Nigeria, for example, godfatherism – the need for political actors to depend on political elites or the godfathers – is vital for assuming public positions and climbing the social ladder (Aderonke & Awosika, 2013). Godfatherism flourishes in an atmosphere where there are profit-motivated political patrons, public institutions and a political process that serve the interests of a few in the country, desperate public office seekers, and a media that serves elites' interests (Albert, 2005, p. 91). The godfathers in Nigeria's mature LAO system include current and retired military generals as well as existing and past presidents. In the run-up to Nigeria's 2019 general elections, the current President Muhammadu Buhari, former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, former Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu, and Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso were often referred to as the godfathers who helped to determine the election results (Shakirudeen, 2017).

The high regards accrued by individuals from godfatherism in Nigeria's politics lies in the reality that politics offers a leeway for people to access state resources for their private gains, and that political leadership is usually contested between the highest bidders (Aderonke & Awosika, 2013, p. 70). Corruption, which was highlighted in the previous chapter as an informal institutional arrangement in Nigeria's mature LAO system that has undermined stability in the Niger Delta, features prominently in discussing Nigeria's godfatherism (Adeosun et al., 2016; Martini, 2014; Aderonke & Awosika, 2013). As, for example, Global Witness (2012), cited in Martini (2014, p. 5), has estimated that Nigeria has lost between US\$300 billion and US\$400 billion to corruption since independence. This reiterates the degree to which political elites have crafted institutions that are highly capable of privatizing public resources and enhancing inequalities in the country. Within the mature LAO system, multinational companies have also made illegal payments to politicians and public officials to gain

contracts. For instance, Kellogg, Brown and Root – a US construction company – pleaded guilty to the payment of about US\$180 million bribe to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, the petroleum ministry, and other government officials to secure US\$6 billion worth of contracts (Martini, 2014, p. 7). It follows that Nigeria's politics is a lucrative business as the godfathers have created formal and informal institutions that largely limit access to public goods and functions. The running of bureaucratic institutions in the country heavily relies on a rent collection system that dictates electoral processes, whereby rent refers to “an economic asset that exceeds the return the asset can receive in its best alternative use” (North et al., 2009, p. 19). In particular, elections in Nigeria's mature LAO system have been characterised by various problems including violence, vote-buying, multiple voting, hijacking of ballot boxes, stuffing of ballot boxes, and intimidation of voters (Martini, 2014; Idada & Uhunmwangho, 2012). As was highlighted in the previous chapter, political elites have orchestrated such activities in the country to attain political power and to maintain control of the oil sector.

Of the different political elites in Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan is particularly important for the 2009 amnesty discussions as he largely oversaw the implementation of this plan from Yar'Adua (see Chapters 3 and 5). Goodluck's ability to occupy the country's highest office – Presidency – attests to his nation-wide political influence. Nevertheless, his one term in office as President demonstrates how unpopular he became in the country as several corruption allegations characterized his administration. One of his infamous responses to mass corruption within his administration was to describe corruption as ‘common stealing’, ‘mere perception’, and unreal. This happened in 2014 during his 7th Presidential Media Chat where in an attempt to rebuff public claims of corruption and abuse of office by key members of his administration, Goodluck stated: “Over 70 percent of what are called corruption, even by EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission) and other anti-corruption agencies is not corruption, but common stealing. Corruption is perception, not reality” (Premium Times, 2014). Since leaving office, Nigeria's anti-graft agency tends to announce new arrests and investigations of prominent politicians who served under the leadership of Goodluck on a regular basis. For instance, Mr. Olisa Metuh – a lawyer and politician – has been facing money laundering charges, while Mr. Sambo Dasuki – a retired Nigerian Army Colonel and former national security adviser to the president – is accused of diverting weapons

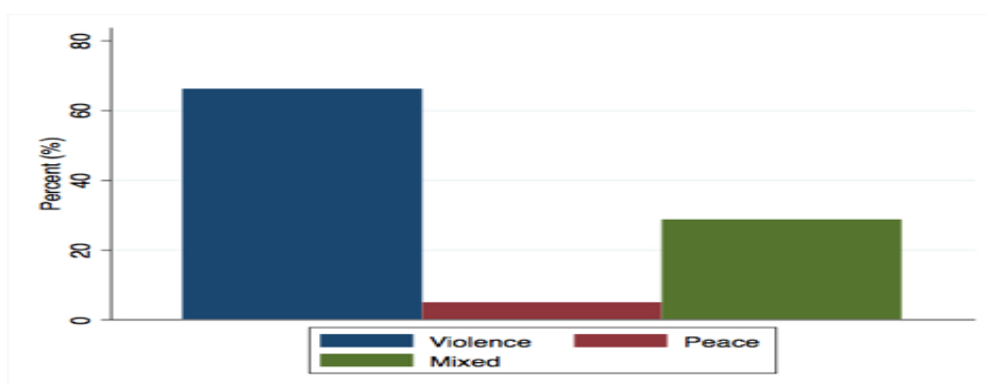
procurement monies through fake contracts, and both men name the former President as a key witness (Daily Mail, 2016).

One formal institution that has been key to the siphoning of oil funds by Nigeria's political godfathers is 'security vote', which does not have a clear definition as it is shrouded in secrecy (Adeosun et al. 2016, p. 310). The security vote has been defined as 'an opaque fund' that is allocated to state governors to safeguard the security of their states (This Day, 2017a; Adeosun et al. 2016). The secrecy that surrounds it is such that the amount of monies that are allocated for the governors in the name of safeguarding the security of their states remains a mystery. According to Egbo et al. (2012, p. 6), "The foundations of the secrecy in the allocation and abuse of security votes increased over time as a result of the long reign and dominance of the military in Nigeria's political life". But the persistence of security votes following Nigeria's transition to democracy demonstrates how public institutions are not supported by robust measures to adequately hold politicians accountable for public monies that they collect on behalf of the citizens. In the Niger Delta, Adeosun et al. (2016) have highlighted how states such as Akwa-Ibom and Bayelsa have devoted huge chunks of their budgets to security vote and general administration. Meanwhile, with an external debt of \$59.9 million in 2013 and a domestic debt of 81.7 million Naira in 2014, Akwa-Ibom State has been the most indebted State in Nigeria (Debt Management Office, cited by Adeosun et al., 2016). This brings the credibility and competence of public officials in places such as Akwa-Ibom under scrutiny, especially as Godswill Akpabio – a past governor of Akwa-Ibom State – is alleged to have given members of his political party 1 million Naira each for a lunch (Niger Delta citizens and budget platform, 2013, cited by Adeosun et al., 2016). The legal and illegal channels for privatising state funds have several implications for the 2009 amnesty implementation as will be highlighted in the subsequent chapters.

It is important to underline that misappropriation of public funds in Nigeria's mature LAO system contributes to why politicians have largely not been trusted to deal with problems in the Niger Delta. As, for example, a civil servant argued: "Politicians do not care and lack love for the Niger Delta region just because their loved ones are not affected by events in the region" (Questionnaire, Respondent #70). This exemplifies the views expressed by a majority of respondents who among other things agreed that

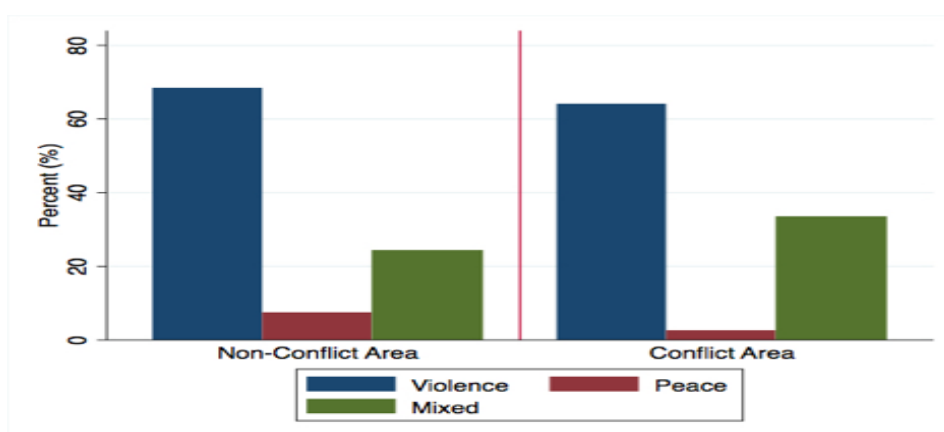
politicians generally contribute to violence in the Niger Delta (see Figure 16). The fact that political elites have backed militant groups such as the NDPVF and NDV with state resources is well documented (Human Rights Watch, 2003a/b). The supply of weapons to armed groups in the Niger Delta for political gains implies that funds that can help to craft impersonal institutions that are capable of addressing the oil-related problems have instead been used to perpetuate the oil conflict. When questionnaire respondents are divided between those that are based in the Niger Delta and those that are not based in the region, the perception of politicians is largely identical as can be seen in Figure 17. This attests to the fact that the negative perception of Nigerian politicians, which has been highlighted in different scholarly works such as Aderonke and Awosika (2013) and Adeosun et al. (2016), extends beyond people living in the Niger Delta region.

Figure 16: Perception of Politicians in the Niger Delta Conflict (Overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Figure 17: Perception of the Role of Politicians in the Niger Delta Conflict (by Location)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Some few respondents from the non-conflict area shared the view that politicians are actually contributing to peace, but their efforts are not yielding good results. According to them, this is because the local representatives in the Niger Delta and those who are in charge of development institutions such as the NDDC have undermined the goodwill of politicians by diverting public funds to their personal accounts. However, this view is untenable as local representatives and public institutions are widely known to be accountable to the political elites (Adeosun et al. 2016; Kiipoye, 2015; Iwilade, 2017; Aderonke & Awosika, 2013). Just as other parts of the country, politicians are unpopular in the Niger Delta, which explains why government representatives are often scared to visit the villages and other remote areas in the region. A classic demonstration of this fear was seen in how President Buhari abruptly cancelled his first visit to the Niger Delta region in 2016 without any official reason, even though he was due to inaugurate a \$1bn initiative to clean-up areas affected by oil spills in Ogoni land (Newsweek, 2016). The NDA were actively launching attacks during that period, which proved that security concerns were largely responsible for the President's cancelled visit.

To summarise, Nigeria's mature LAO system entails the political godfathers who have largely helped to craft institutions that limit access to public goods and services, thereby contributing to the Niger Delta conflict. The institutional arrangements in Nigeria have helped to shape decision-making of the state in a way that enhances privatization of public funds and patronage networks. Instead of helping to manage the oil conflict, public resources have among other things been used to perpetuate violence in the Niger Delta as politicians have funded fighters in the region (see Chapter 3). The degree to which public institutions, that are largely accountable to the political godfathers in Nigeria's mature LAO system, have undermined the 2009 amnesty will be central to the analysis in the subsequent chapters. In addition to political elites, top business people have also played a crucial role in the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty.

4.1b Business Elites

Nigeria's mature LAO also involves business elites who are part of the primary actors in the Niger Delta inasmuch as their oil related interests and activities have largely

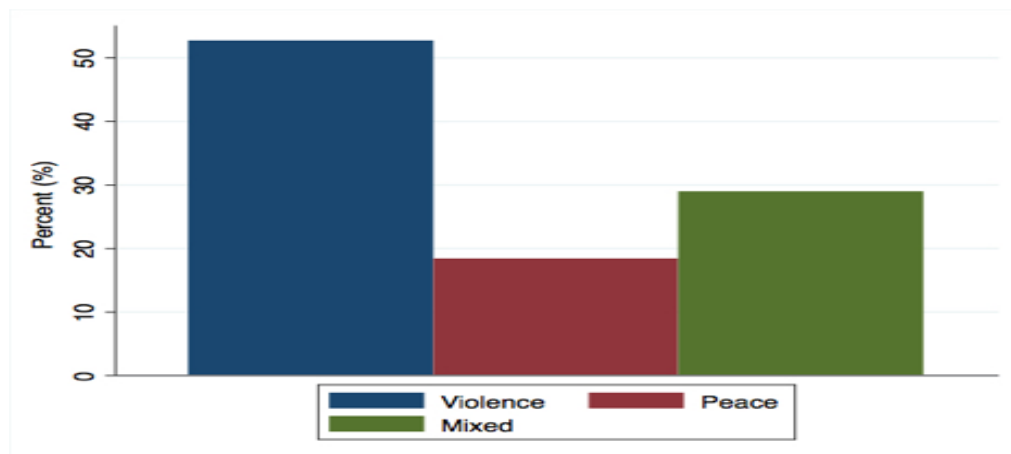
contributed to the resource-based conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. Business corporations in LAOs have been historically led by powerful friends and relations of the government who usually form a key part of the patronage network (North et al., 2009, p. 168). Thus, LAO business corporations are usually established in relation to economic opportunities that enhance exchanges of favours such as financial and military support between business elites and the state. In turn, Idemudia (2017, p. 43) has highlighted how the literature on business and conflict has progressed “from an effort to make normative arguments for business involvement in conflict prevention and resolution through to what roles business can be expected to play in conflict zones”. Through business corporations, business elites in LAOs are key to institutional arrangements that among other things can initiate or exacerbate conflicts and/or be influential in managing, containing, and resolving underlying incompatibilities. In the Niger Delta, two categories of business entities are significant: MNOCs and top local businessmen.

MNOCs in the Niger Delta have mostly benefitted from the federal government’s support including their demands for the military dictator, Sanni Abacha, to deploy troops to quell protests in the oil-rich region in the early 1990s (Schultze-Kraft, 2013, p. 11). In the wake of multi-party politics, Nigeria’s mature LAO system has enabled oil companies to negotiate a new deal in the form of offering ‘protection contracts’ to militant groups in exchange for an unofficial license to operate in the Niger Delta without disturbance (ibid.). However, MNOCs have also been punished for their contributions to the Niger Delta conflict as, for example, Shell agreed to pay \$15.5m in settlement of a legal action after it was implicated in the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 2009 (The Guardian, 2009b). Shell, which has also been involved in a huge unexplained ‘security spending’ in Nigeria, is known to have awarded routine contracts and payments to some Niger Delta fighters that have fueled a number of conflicts in the oil-rich region including one that led to the complete destruction of Rumuekpe town (Amunwa, 2012, pp. 5-6). Additionally, Chevron developed a close working relationship with MEND’s leader – Government Tompolo – at the time when MEND was becoming stronger in 2006 (ibid., p. 9). Ever since scandals that link MNOCs to the Niger Delta conflict became public, increased attention has been given to corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Ogula, 2012; Ijaiya, 2014; Ndu & Agbonifoh, 2014; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). This means that oil companies are expected to make provision in the

areas of employment, infrastructure, health, and education for the local population. Even though there is no law backing the implementation of CSR in Nigeria, MNOCs and the government have committed to prioritise the improvement of security and the general well-being of the local population (Ijaiya, 2014, p. 67).

Oil companies have generally not had positive reviews with respect to their presence in the Niger Delta largely due to the questionable institutional arrangements that have enabled them to cause pollution, environmental destruction, poverty, and violence in the Niger Delta. This was reflected in survey responses. Figure 18 shows that over 50 % of respondents perceived oil companies to be contributing to violence in the Niger Delta, while less than 20 % perceived them to be contributing to peace in the region. This perception survey is insightful as it supports the claim that the 2009 amnesty also paved a way for oil companies to offer lucrative business contracts to some former fighters in order to protect oil related businesses (Kiipoye, 2015; Iwilade, 2017).

Figure 18: Perception of the Role of Oil Companies in the Niger Delta Conflict (Overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Apart from MNOCs who have acquired huge oil wealth from the Niger Delta, Nigeria's mature LAO system has also enhanced the creation of local business elites who have accumulated immense wealth with the help of political elites. For example, President Obasanjo has claimed to have made 25 people billionaires in Nigeria during his time in office (Vanguard, 2016). Aliko Dangote – widely touted as the richest African – has discussed how Obasanjo made him and a few others rich because the president wanted

Nigerians to gain more control of the economy (RR TV, 2018). This underlines how Nigerian political elites have used their positions to generate wealth for a few Nigerians to the detriment of the masses. Top business persons from the Niger Delta region, largely consisting of people who have oil-related businesses, have also profited from this patronage system.

It is important to note that the transition from military rule to multi-party politics played a significant role in the rise of top local businessmen in the Niger Delta, as there was a shift of patronage networks for recruiting local contractors and consultants from military governors operating under the orders of the federal powers in the country's capital – Abuja – to civilian governors who began to run the states more independently (Vanguard, 2015). In this state of affairs, Niger Deltans such as Kola Aluko – Nigerian energy and aviation tycoon and founder of oil trading firm Fossil Resources – and Jide Omokore – chairman and founder of Energy Resources Group – are known to be amongst the Nigerian multi-millionaires (Nsehe, 2012). Just as there are highly successful businessmen of Niger Delta origin who are based in the oil-rich region, a significant number of them are also based in Nigeria's big cities of Lagos and Abuja. Notable persons such as Chief Morrison Obaseki Olori, Evangelist J. O. C. Mosheshe, and Chief W. T. Odibo are amongst the home-based super rich Niger Deltans, while Okotie-Eboh and Ibru brothers are extremely wealthy Niger Deltans who are based in Lagos (Vanguard, 2015). In the wake of the 2009 amnesty programme, former militant commanders such as Government Tompolo have profited from the patronage system and are now described as businessmen (Financial Times, 2017). This underlines how Nigeria's mature LAO system has ensured that access to violence tends to create business opportunities for some local fighters (see Chapters 5 & 6).

The top Nigerian businessmen have largely been ignored in CSR discussions (for example, Ogula, 2012; Ijaiya, 2014; Ndu & Agbonifoh, 2014; and Ijaiya, 2014), but the dissertation argues for the need to include them in such discussions as they have also benefitted immensely from the resource distribution system in the country. However, there are some top Nigerian businessmen who have voluntarily pursued projects to help address grievances in the Niger Delta as, for instance, Alhaji Muhammadu Indimi has embarked on philanthropic activities in the areas of housing, education, health and social welfare, and critical aid provision (Vanguard, 2018b). The immense wealth of

the top Nigerian businessmen, especially those whose wealth was generated directly and indirectly from oil revenues, suggests that they need to do more to alleviate the numerous problems in the oil-rich region. While it is clear that MNOCs have largely contributed to the Niger Delta conflict and the limitations of the 2009 amnesty (see Chapters 3, 5, and 6), the link between top Nigerian businessmen and the conflict has been under-explored. Therefore, there is the need for further research to adequately understand the role of local businessmen, the Niger Delta conflict, and the 2009 amnesty. One thing that is clear, however, is that political and business elites have had to contend with local youth fighters who also form part of the primary actors in the Niger Delta.

4.1c Youths and the Niger Delta Conflict

Historically, youths have been key to the sustainability of LAOs as, for example, the youths in the Mesoamerican Aztec Empire (1428-1519) received education in religion and politics as well as training in combat in order to join the dominant elite coalition (North et al., 2009, p. 57). In most modern states, youth is understood to be a transitional period from childhood's dependence to adulthood's independence, and for statistical purposes, 15-24 years have been used to define the age range of youths (UN, 2007, p. XV). Thus, youth usually characterises people who fall in the age-bracket of leaving compulsory education and finding their first job. Since the period of leaving compulsory education and finding a first job differs from country to country, the term youth is a fluid concept that transcends a strict age range. In turn, the Nigerian Youth Policy – the government's framework to support youths in the country – defines Nigerian youths as citizens between the ages of 18 and 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2009, p. 6). This definition highlights how young people's attainment of socio-economic stability in the country can extend into late twenties and mid-thirties. Nigeria's youths constitute about 60 % of the country's population, with more than 50 % of them thought to be unemployed (Oduwole, 2015, p. 25). Thus, the limited access to opportunities for the country's young people extends beyond those living in the Niger Delta region.

In the discussion of the Niger Delta conflict, the term youth tends to refer to fighters who have been at the heart of violent confrontations with the government and MNOCs

(Oluwaniyi, 2010, p. 309). Even though youth militants form a tiny fraction of the local population in the Niger Delta, they define the region's conflict by determining "the very essence of its momentum, vitality, vocalisation and diction" (Osaghae et al., 2008, p. 5). Their violent actions are rational and understandable inasmuch as they result from perverse institutional arrangements that favour political and business elites but enhances marginalisation of the Niger Delta region (Oluwaniyi, 2010, p. 313). The mature LAO system has ensured that the devastating impact of oil production on people's health and the inability of the government to find credible solutions to the local population's deteriorating living standards prepared the grounds for the youths to take matters into their hands. The armed activities of the youths have been potent enough to side-line, subdue, and drive some former traditional leaders in some Niger Delta communities into exile as they took over community leadership in order to deal directly with oil companies and the government (Ikelegbe, 2005, p. 217).

Asked to identify who the most influential people in the Niger Delta are, a student at Ilorin pointed to the Niger Delta youths who have the means to vandalise oil pipelines and to make money out of it (Questionnaire, Respondent #63). The names of powerful (ex)militant commanders were mostly cited by respondents as the most influential youths in the Niger Delta, which helps to understand why many scholarly works including Oluwaniyi (2010), Iwilade (2017), and Kiipoye (2015) have been particularly interested in analysing the roles that the ex-fighters have played in the conflict and 2009 amnesty. The top ex-militant commanders include Mujahid Dokubo-Asari – IYC and NDPVF former leader, Henry Okah – presumed MEND's leader, Tom Ateke – NDV former leader, and Government Ekpemupolo (Tompolo) – MEND's militant commander. It is important to underline that the ability of the youth militants to cause significant destructions to oil facilities and to make money from MNOCs and the government as will be discussed in the next chapter have made them highly influential in the Niger Delta. Youth groups or gangs have made demands and blackmailed MNOCs to grant their requests because of their capacity to vandalise oil facilities and take hostages (Ikelegbe, 2005). While some respondents named the militants as the most influential youths in the Niger Delta, some others pointed to the ex-militants who have benefitted immensely from the 2009 amnesty programme as the region's most influential youths. Other respondents also agreed that both the militants and ex-militants are equally influential youths in the region. In turn, the next chapter will

highlight how the influence of the ex-militant commanders, particularly Tompolo, contributed significantly to the 2009 amnesty's limitations.

The extent to which the youth fighters are autonomous is still a contested topic as, for example, Ikelegbe (2011, p. 131) has argued that manipulation of the militants by elite patronage tends to fuel violence. This view depicts the fighters as possessing a limited or no agency since they are perceived to act solely under elites' orders. Political elites' provision of sophisticated weapons to armed groups during the 2003 elections that escalated militancy and violence in the Niger Delta, which was highlighted in the previous chapter, illustrates this position. However, other scholars such as Iwilade (2017) and Kiipoye (2015) have highlighted how militants in the Niger Delta have exhibited autonomy and astuteness in their relationships with political elites. In turn, the dissertation underlines the extent to which the (ex)militants have contributed to the amnesty trap and conflict containment logic (see Chapters 5 and 6).

To summarise, the mature LAO system has ensured that the youth militants have become highly influential in the Niger Delta as they have posed the most significant threat to the exploitative structures of the political and business elites. The youth fighters have contributed substantially to the security dilemma in the Niger Delta given that they have carried out violent activities such as the destruction of oil pipelines and kidnapping of oil workers to undermine oil exploitation in the region. The former militant commanders in particular have used violence to make significant socio-economic gains, notably through the 2009 amnesty programme (see Chapters 5 and 6). Overall, political and business elites and the (ex)militants have largely contributed to the institutional arrangements that have undermined peace-building in the Niger Delta. However, their huge influence as primary actors in the oil-rich region have been supported by the varied roles of other important actors including traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media.

4.2 Secondary Actors

The secondary actors have largely played supporting and intermediary roles in the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. They include the traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media who undertake varied roles

in the society. In particular, traditional leaders and the media have been significant in the 2009 amnesty implementation as the next two chapters highlight how they have been involved in the 2009 amnesty negotiations and the dissemination of information regarding the amnesty's progress. The analysis in this section helps to understand the extent to which the secondary actors, who have played different roles in mature LAOs, have been involved in the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty.

4.2a Traditional/Community Leaders and the Niger Delta Conflict

Historically, traditional authorities have fulfilled different functions in LAOs to sustain the system as, for example, voting was done under the guidance of French 'traditional social authorities' in the mid-nineteenth century (North et al., 2009, pp. 220-227). Traditional or community leaders include kings and chiefs who occupy a throne or stool in line with the customs and traditions of an area, and who are recognised by the state to exercise authority over the people of the area (Mthandeni, 2012, p. 1). They are meant to serve as intermediaries between the local people and the government, deal with land issues, promote peace and cultural values, and perform judicial or intermediary roles for people living in their traditional areas (Mawere, 2014, p. 3).

The significance of traditional authorities in post-colonial Africa has come under intense scrutiny, and such discussions tend to focus on the compatibility of democratic principles and traditional leadership. For example, the 'modernist approach' has described traditional African leadership as undemocratic and thus called for "a transformation of the institution of traditional leaders to meet the requirements of a modern, non sexist and non racial democracy" (Mthandeni, 2012, p. 2). In contrast, van Kessel and Oomen (1997, p. 585) have highlighted the extent to which traditional African authorities have proven to be adaptable to changing times. The fact that the traditional leaders are still recognised and respected in post-independent African countries that have experienced different political regimes including dictatorships and democracies demonstrates that they can adapt to societal transformations. As Logan (2008, p. 23) has argued, the "positive attitudes toward chiefs are not incompatible with democracy – and vice versa". In general, traditional leaders in present-day Africa continue to enjoy public support in African countries because of their easy access to

the local people and the roles they play in managing and resolving conflicts (Logan, 2013).

In the Niger Delta, the traditional leaders have played different roles in the resource-based conflict including mediating between the government and the fighters (Asuni, 2009; Ikelegbe, 2005). In particular, the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) – a reputable body of community leaders – has endeavoured to champion concerns in the region. The key members of PANDEF include Mr. Obong Victor Attah – Chairman of the group – and Chief Edwin Clark who has served as the group’s spokesperson in its negotiations with the government. Since 2016, PANDEF has actively been engaged in a series of discussions with the federal government in an attempt to negotiate a deal to restore sustainable peace in the Niger Delta. In this vein, the group presented 16 demands to the federal government in the late 2016 as a means for the Niger Delta to attain sustainable peace. PANDEF’s 16 demands included: the withdrawal of the country’s military from the oil producing communities in the region, the provision of development aid to the impoverished regions, cleaning up of polluted areas, and the provision of youth employment (Nigerian Tribune, 2016). However, PANDEF tends to struggle in terms of significantly influencing local politics as, for instance, the group threatened to pull out of peace talks with the government if their 16 demands were not met by 1 November 2017 (Reuters, 2017a; Vanguard, 2017d).

Some works such as van Kessel and Oomen (1997) have highlighted how traditional leaders are easily manipulated by political and business elites when they align themselves with patronage networks. In the Niger Delta, certain traditional leaders have largely contributed to the oil conflict inasmuch as they have fraternized with political elites and oil company executives for private interests (Iwilade, 2017; Kiipoye, 2015; Asuni, 2009; Ikelegbe, 2005). In this vein, the Human Rights Watch (1999) has reported how corruption related monies do not only flow at the federal and state levels in Nigeria, but also to traditional leaders who are often the local contractors. The fact that some traditional leaders have contributed to the Niger Delta conflict through patronage politics was recognised by respondents as, for example, Figure 19 shows how 31 % and 19 % of respondents perceived the elders and chiefs to have contributed to violence and peace respectively, while more than 50 % of them perceived the elders and chiefs to be playing a mixed role. This demonstrates how the local population is

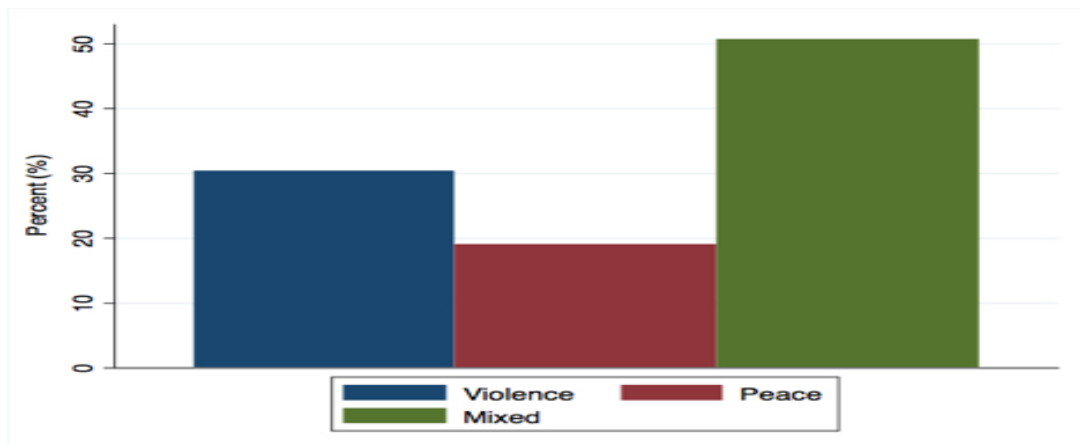
aware of the role that traditional authorities play in the local communities given that people often go to the chiefs with concerns such as land disputes as well as other local problems. It also shows how citizen's engagements in local politics ensure that they are aware of the fact that traditional leaders can play both positive and negative roles in conflict settings.

When respondents are separated between those that are based in the Niger Delta and those that are not based in the region, it is striking that as high as 61 % of those from Delta State perceived the role of traditional leaders to be mixed as opposed to the 42 % of respondents from Ilorin (see Figure 20). This demonstrates that respondents in the Niger Delta region were more suspicious of the conduct of their traditional authorities as they mostly perceived them to be pursuing their selfish interests instead of prioritising the concerns in the region. As Muri Effiong Mbukpa – the traditional ruler of the Efuts in Calabar of Cross River State – has described some of the traditional leaders in the Niger Delta as ‘militants in traditional attire’ (The Guardian, 2016b). While elaborating on why he believed that some traditional leaders support and are even part of the militants, this Calabar ruler stated:

I don't think there is any traditional ruler that is worth his salt that does not know who the bad boys or guys are in his domain; there is no traditional ruler except the traditional ruler in Diaspora. But any traditional ruler who dwell within his domain knows who the bad guys are (ibid.).

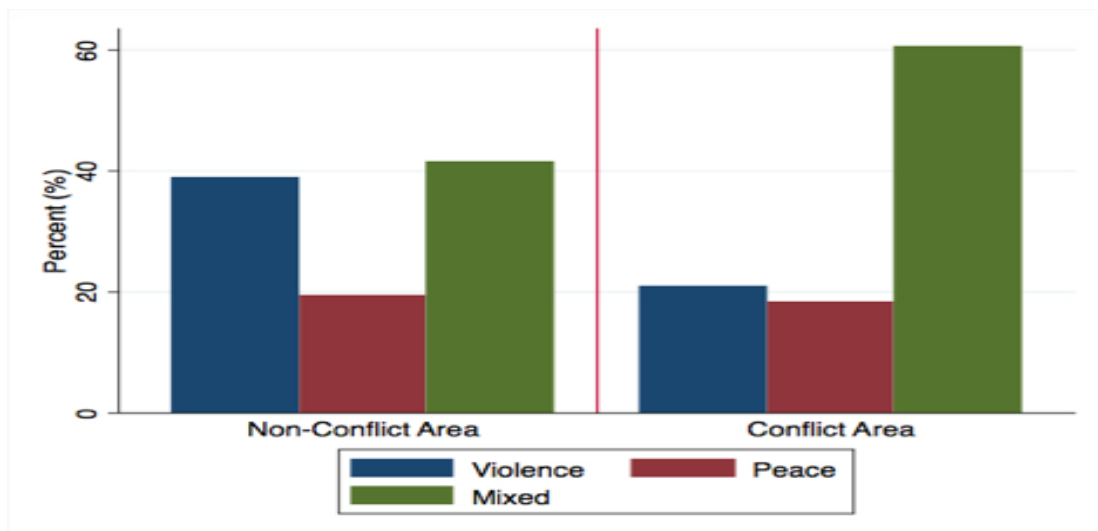
In summary, Nigeria's mature LAO system has largely accommodated certain traditional leaders as part of the patronage system, which has contributed to the Niger Delta conflict and the 2009 amnesty's limitations as will be elaborated in the next chapter. The mutually beneficial relationship between the traditional leaders and the primary actors has among other things overshadowed PANDEF's official work in the region. To be able to help address local concerns, traditional leaders need to distance themselves from patronage politics and also work closely with the other actors in the Niger Delta including religious leaders and the civil society.

Figure 19: Perception of the Role of Elders/Chiefs in the Niger Delta Conflict (Overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Figure 20: Perception of the Role of Elders/Chiefs in the Niger Delta Conflict (by Location)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

4.2b Religious Leaders and the Niger Delta Conflict

The dominant elite coalitions in LAOs have usually contained members who specialise not only in politics, economics, and military, but in religious activities as well. As North et al. (2009, p. 54) have highlighted: “All of the pristine ancient civilizations were societies with strong theocratic hierarchies in which limited access to economic, political, military, and religious functions played a key role in identifying the social persona of elites”. In the Middle Ages, the appointments of bishops were at the heart of

religious-political coalitions that governed Europe (*ibid.*, p. 46). In modern times, religion has played a prominent role not just in Nigeria, but in many African countries and elsewhere (Agbiji & Swart, 2015, p. 1). But the myth that contemporary Africa is ‘incurably’ or ‘notoriously religious’ as propagated by Mbiti (1969/75) has been challenged (Platvoet, 2003). As p’Bitek (1970/71a,b), for example, has highlighted, there is also religious indifference and irreligion in Africa.

The dominant religions in Nigeria’s mature LAO system are Traditional, Christian and Islamic. While it is difficult to validate the accuracy of the composition of religious groups in the country, the number of Muslims and Christians are usually perceived to be equal while a significantly lesser number of the population is considered to be Traditional. The country’s North is predominantly Muslim while the South – which includes the Niger Delta – is mainly Christian. There are, at least, five blocks of churches in the Christian Association of Nigeria that are present in the Niger Delta, including the Roman Catholics, the Christian Council of Nigeria, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, the Evangelical Church of West Africa, and the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (Osuigwe, 2014, p. 5). Religious leaders enjoy a great deal of influence not just in the Niger Delta, but in the country as a whole. This has to do with the fact that majority of Nigerians are religious, and religion is intertwined with politics and power (Afolabi, 2015, p. 42). Religious leaders also enjoy considerable moral authority. One fundamental claim of the three dominant religions in Nigeria is that “power and the use of it rest with God who will dispense it according to His wish” (Oguntola-Laguda, 2015, p. 224).

Yet, the financial gains of some religious leaders in the country is glaring given that they have accumulated enormous wealth through offerings, tithes, gifts, and the sale of literature and other spiritual products to millions of people. Many of such persons usually desire divine favours and miracles to deal with issues such as poverty, violence, road accidents, unemployment, and childlessness. Nigerian religious leaders such as Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, Bishop David Oyedepo, Pastor T. B. Joshua, and Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo are known millionaires with worldwide audiences (Nsehe, 2011). In turn, some religious leaders such as Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor and Bishop Mike Okonkwo have campaigned for religious leaders to be included in every effort that is aimed at resolving conflicts in the oil-rich region (Vanguard, 2009).

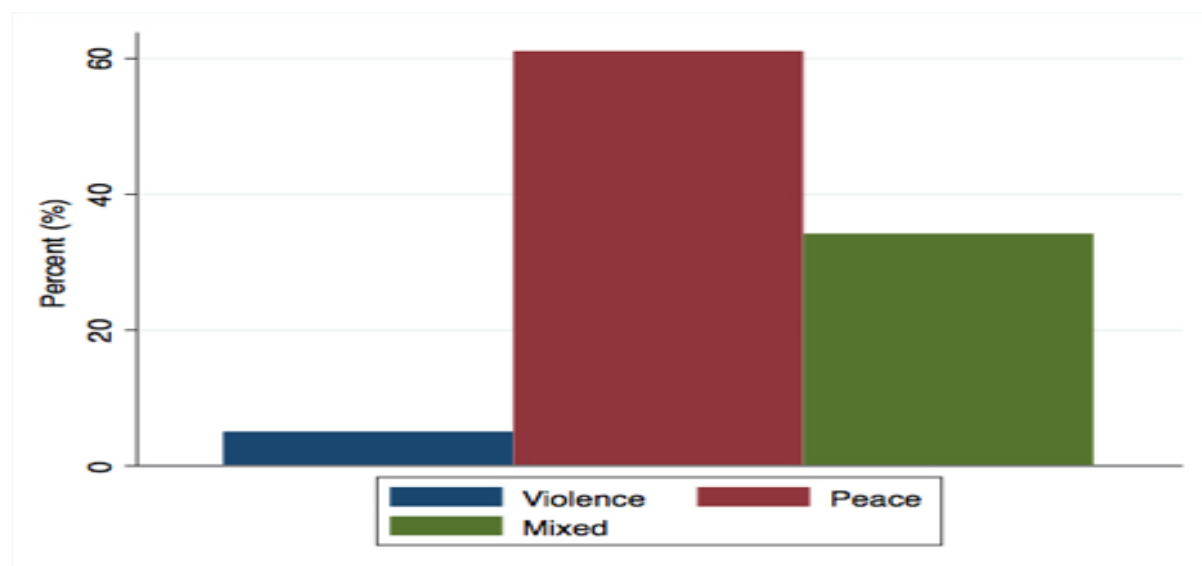
The influential role of Christian leaders in the Niger Delta was seen during the ‘Evwreni Crisis’ when irate youths of Evwreni – located in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State – reportedly killed the traditional leader of the area, Ovie Owin Kumani, partly due to disputes over oil royalties in 2000 (The News, 2000; Vanguard, 2000; This Day, 2000, cited by Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2001). Prior to this traditional leader’s killing, the Evwreni Youths Association had, in January 2000, given Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) 21 days to provide basic social amenities to the area including borehole water supply systems, drainage channels, cottage hospital, civic centre, and roads (The News, 2000). In response, SPDC decided to offer royalties to the Ovie in cash and kind as well as jobs and scholarships to some of the youths. At the Ovie’s palace, the peaceful protests of the youths who felt aggrieved that they had been kept in the dark by the Ovie with respect to the offers from SPDC were met with hostile reactions from the armed palace guards, resulting in the death of, at least, one youth and injuries to some others (The News, 2000).

In reaction, the angry youths killed the Ovie at his place of refuge to atone for his hostilities towards them, but peace was restored to the community after an Evangelist Abel Umukoro-led committee engaged with the youths (Vanguard, 2000). During the peace process, the youths surrendered guns, pickaxes, and gun powder after heeding to Evangelist J. O. C. Mosheshe’s sermon in which he admonished them to surrender their war weapons to Christ (Imobighe, 2002 cited by Oseremen & Majekodunmi, 2017). This demonstrates how religious leaders tend to contribute positively to peace efforts including ‘naming-and-praying’ for sponsors of violence in the Niger Delta (Asuni, 2009, p. 13). The positive view of religious leaders was evident in the survey as 61 % of the respondents perceived religious leaders to have contributed to peace in the Niger Delta region (see Figure 21).

The Niger Delta Christian Leaders Forum (NDCLF) – which consists of leaders from the mainstream churches including the Catholic Church, Anglican Church, and Methodist Church – has endeavoured to exert its influence on oil governance in the region. For example, in 2016, the NDCLF joined other stakeholders to petition President Buhari to withdraw the nomination of Mr. Tokun Ajasin as the Ondo State nominee on the Board of the NDDC, since the group considered his nomination as a

breach of the NDDEC Act 2000 (The Nation, 2016). Apart from the NDCLF, the Christian denominations also have sub-groups who seek to influence decisions in the region such as the Niger Delta Catholic Bishops Forum.

Figure 21: Perception of the Role of Religious Leaders in the Niger Delta Conflict (Overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

However, religious leaders in the Niger Delta have been accused of being partisan and biased, which undermines their role as peace-builders. For example, the Niger Delta Indigenous Movement for Radical Change (NDIMRC) publicly petitioned the general overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, to stay out of Nigerian politics in the run-up to the 2015 general elections (Pulse, 2015). According to the NDIMRC, the pastor had ordered his church members to vote for Buhari, which the group felt was wrong because Buhari is a Muslim from the North. The NDIMRC stated that it was in the interest of the pastor to stay out of politics “in order to continue to enjoy the trust, respect and confidence of the people” (Pulse, 2015). In general, the influence of religious leaders on the Niger Delta conflict has been limited as compared to the primary actors and the traditional leaders as, for example, the religious leaders were largely side-lined in the 2009 amnesty implementation (see Chapter 5; Vanguard, 2009).

To summarise, religious functions have been part of most LAOs across history. Even

though Nigerian religious leaders have been accused of pursuing self-interest, they have largely played mediation roles in the institutional arrangements that have perpetuated the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the limitations of the 2009 amnesty. However, religious institutions have not been robust enough to help address local problems as they have been accused of being partisan and were largely side-lined in the 2009 amnesty design. Given their influence in society, the religious leaders need to be adequately involved in peace-building efforts in Nigeria (see Chapter 7). In the light of the limited involvement of the religious leaders in peace-building, the resource-based conflict in the Niger Delta has persisted with varying degrees of violence that affect the local population, especially the civil society.

4.2c Civil Society and the Niger Delta Conflict

Civil society has been defined as “the space for collective action around shared interests, purposes and values, generally distinct from government and commercial for-profit actors” (WHO, 2018). It is the ‘third sector’ of society, alongside government and business (UN, 2018). According to Hunter and Longlands (2016), civil society is characterised by peoples’ shared interests, goals, space, time, and values. LAOs usually have limited civil society engagements as political elites nurture personal relationships and coordinate socio-economic activities in a way that forestalls civil society opposition (North et al., 2009, pp. 6-7). Thus, the suppression of civil society activities is a means by which political elites craft institutions in LAOs to reduce the threats that civil society groups may pose to patron-client relations and the perverse system of revenue generation. In turn, OAOs have more vibrant civil society groups that become politically active whenever their objectives are threatened (North et al., 2009, pp. 11-25). Peace-building measures such as amnesties require the state to sufficiently engage with the civil society and the local population as a whole as, for example, the ability of fighters to successfully return to civilian life after they give up rebellion depends largely on how the needs of the masses including victims of violence have been addressed (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016; Mallinder, 2018). This underlines the fact that sustainable peace is more likely to be achieved in OAOs than LAOs.

There are various kinds of civic civil society groups in the Niger Delta who are connected with a contestation with the state and MNOCs over issues that pertain to the

costs and benefits of oil exploitation (Ikelegbe, 2001). They include the Ijaw National Congress (INC), the Isoko Development Union (IDU), the Urhobo Progress Union (UPU), the Isoko National Youth Movement (INYM), and the Urhobo Youth Movement (UYOMO) who are usually united by a common grievance with respect to oil mismanagement in the region. While discussing the important role that such groups have played in the Niger Delta conflict, Ikelegbe (2001, p. 465) remarks:

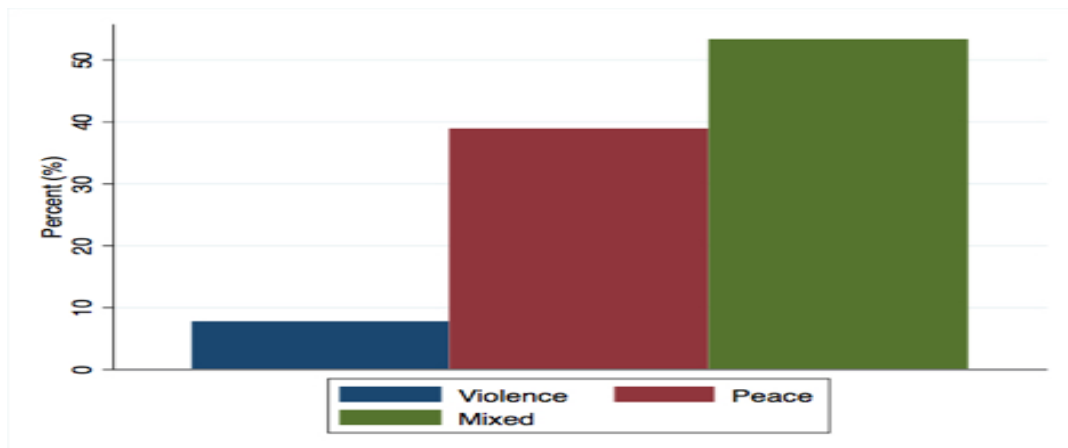
Civil groups in the Niger Delta have performed the central roles of mobilising the local people, articulating substantive grievances and demands, strengthening participation among the people, forging commonality of objectives and demands among various peoples and groups, and building solid ethnic and region-wide platforms and alliances for a unified struggle. The civil group activities have heightened awareness and consciousness, enhanced education, information and interest about the Niger Delta problem and compelled the entrance of the problem into the national agenda, such that more urgent resolutions are being warranted.

There are civil forums in and outside the Niger Delta that have continued to deliberate on the region's problems. For instance, the Niger Delta Development Forum (2018) has been organised annually in different countries including Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States to discuss how to achieve sustainable peace and development in the oil-rich region. Nevertheless, the existing institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system have not allowed the civil society groups and activities to mount an opposition that is capable of undermining the interests of political elites and MNOCs when compared to the militants. The latter, as will be highlighted in the next chapter, have been able to use violence to force political elites to include them in wealth generating activities in the Niger Delta. In turn, political elites have managed to suppress and largely eliminate the threats of civil society groups including the infamous killing of Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders in the 1990s (see Chapter 3). Thus, the persistence of violence in the Niger Delta is an indication that the youth militancy has largely overshadowed civil society activities including those of development groups, human rights organisations, and trade unions. The analysis of the 2009 amnesty in the subsequent chapters demonstrates among other things the extent to which the exclusion of the civil society and the local population from the peace-building process has contributed to the limitations of the 2009 amnesty.

Figure 22 shows that 39 % of respondents perceived the civil society to be contributing to peace in the Niger Delta as opposed to only 8 % who perceived it to be contributing to violence. This fits with the fact that the civil society is not usually linked to violence but plays an important role in peace-building (Barnes, 2006). Furthermore, one notable observation from Figure 23 is that no female respondent from the Niger Delta thought that the civil society causes violence in the region. Female or women inspired groups and activities have been particularly important in the Niger Delta even though the prevalent discussions of the conflict tend to focus on the male militant activities (Anugwom & Anugwom, 2009). The pivotal mediatory role of women in the Liberian conflict underscores the relevance of women groups in conflict zones (Amedzrator, 2014).

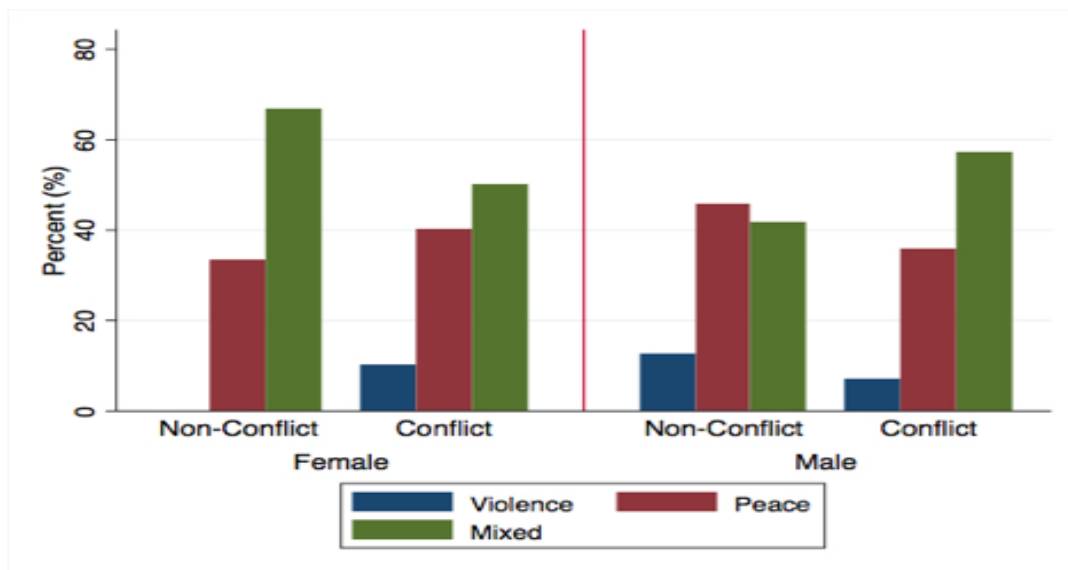
Niger Delta women are generally required to be food producers, procurers, preparers, caregivers, and income-earners as wives and mothers (Oluwaniyi, 2011). Like elsewhere, this demonstrates how social relations in the region are gendered. The activities of MNOCs have negatively affected the basic sources of income, especially for the rural women. Historically, women's groups have had direct and indirect confrontations with MNOCs. For example, the Federation of Ogoni Women (FOWA) is known to have played a significant role in preventing Shell from returning to Ogoni land after the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight other activists in 1995 (Ekine, 2011). Community women associations include Waritelemo Ogbo in Kokodiagbene and Okoroba Awar Ogbo and Ilaye Ila in Okoroba community who have endeavoured to make their views on oil mismanagement heard. In particular, women from Niger Delta States such as Bayelsa and Rivers have organised protests against MNOCs including Mobil, Chevron, Shell, Elf and Agip. One event that demonstrated the influence of women groups was the 2002 protest against Chevron by about 600 women at the company's Escravos facility near Warri (ibid.). During the protest, the women made several important demands such as cleaning up of the environment and creating jobs for their sons and husbands. This attracted a nation-wide attention to the problems in the area, but such grievances have persisted in the Niger Delta till today.

Figure 22: Perception of the Role of Civil Society in the Niger Delta Conflict (Overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Figure 23: Perception of the Role of Civil Society in the Niger Delta Conflict (by Sex and Location)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

The need to have vibrant women groups in the Niger Delta does not have to do with simply ensuring gender balance in the society, but the fact that women are usually more targeted and vulnerable to attacks from both the Nigerian army's Joint Task Force (JTF) and the local militias. For example, a good number of women had to flee to the mangrove swamps with their children and the elderly in 2009 when the JTF attacked and destroyed the Ijaw communities of Gbaramatu with helicopters and tanks (ibid.). This led to the sheltering of about 2,000 women in a refugee camp for about six months

before they could return home. Additionally, one of the reasons behind PANDEF's petition for the government to withdraw its army from the Niger Delta in 2016 included an allegation that army officers rape local residents (Nigerian Tribune, 2016). In 2009, the militants also hijacked and took at least five women, including two who were pregnant, from two passenger boats to a militant camp in the creeks and raped them (BBC, 2009c). Thus, it is important to have civil society groups that help to protect the vulnerable people in the society. The transition from LAO towards OAO is important for ensuring that civil society groups become more involved in crafting impersonal institutions that help to reduce violence against women and other members of the society (see Chapter 7).

In summary, (in)formal civic civil society organisations have largely been suppressed in the Niger Delta as a result of the institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system that seek to protect elite privileges in the oil-rich region. In this vein, militant activities have largely overshadowed civil society movements as the analysis of the 2009 amnesty in the next chapter highlights among other things why access to violence is what usually undermines the coalitions between political elites and oil companies in the Niger Delta. Female civil society groups have been relatively well organised in the Niger Delta because apart from mobilising people for protests, they tend to meet regularly to discuss matters of common interest (Oluwaniyi, 2011). They are important in the region given that they help to protect the rights of women and children who are often targeted by the fighters and the Nigerian army as has been reported in media outlets.

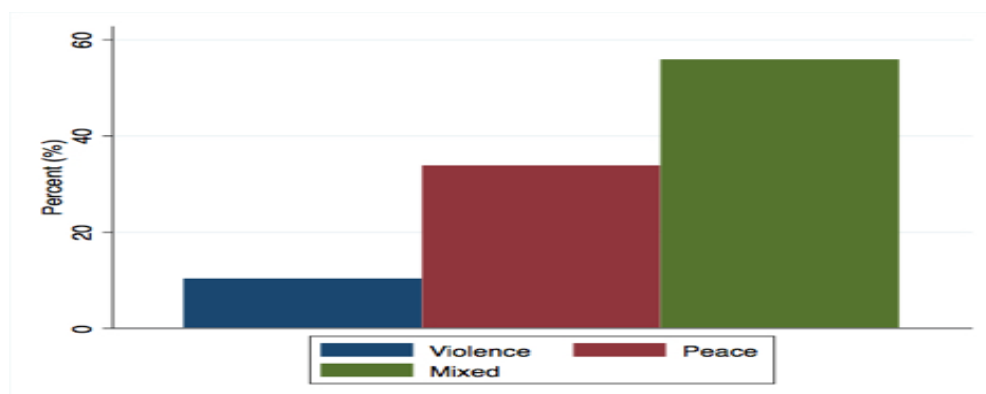
4.2d The Media

The media has been an important tool for political elites in all the social orders, especially in LAOs where elites endeavour to strongly control the circulation of information for their private gains (North et al., 2009). Ali (2015) has highlighted the extent to which mass media has been particularly important for the development of African countries. In Nigeria, the rights of the media are legally embedded in the country's 1999 constitution which guarantees freedoms of expression and of the press. However, the Nigerian media generally faces challenges regarding how to operate freely and impartially as existing institutional arrangements largely support news items

that are favourable to political elites (Apuke, 2016; Usigbe & Ilo, 2019). In this vein, Apuke (2016) has underscored how Nigeria's private media flourishes but their existence heavily relies on being subservient to the government.

The media reportage of the Niger Delta conflict has been carried out through traditional media such as television stations, newspapers, and radio stations, while social media forums are also becoming popular. The traditional media tends to show biases in the coverage of the conflict as Chilwa (2011), for example, has highlighted how the Nigerian press has been sympathetic to condemnable actions such as the JTF's attacks on civilians and the avoidable killing of insurgents. This was supported by both the 9 % of respondents who thought that the media was contributing to violence in the Niger Delta and the 57 % of respondents who perceived the media to be playing a mixed role in the conflict (see Figure 24). Furthermore, Chilwa (2011) has underlined how the media tends to concentrate exclusively on the attacks on oil pipelines and the kidnapping of oil workers while neglecting other important causes of the conflict such as poverty and environmental destruction. Following the 2009 amnesty introduction, the media paid a far more attention to post-amnesty programmes while neglecting emerging militants who were unhappy with the persisting problems of the region (Akpan et. al., 2013).

Figure 24: Perception of the Media in the Niger Delta Conflict (Overall)



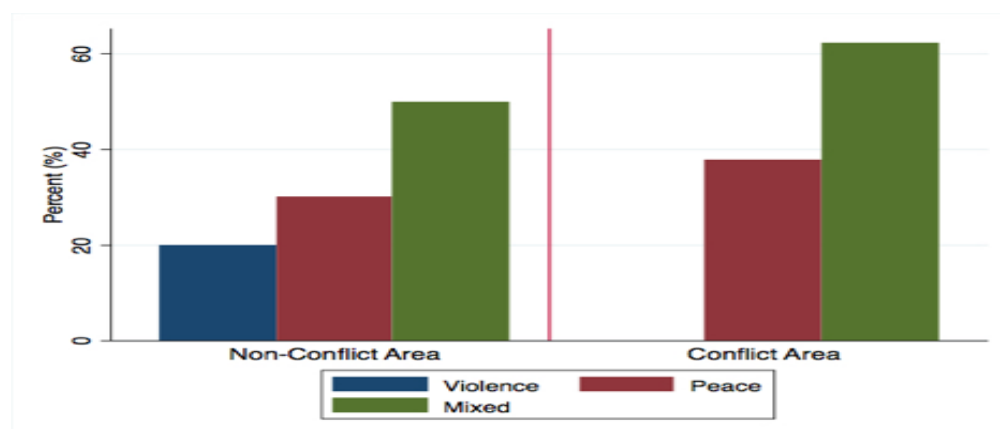
Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Overall, the Nigerian media has not been a neutral entity in terms of presenting events related to the Niger Delta conflict as it operates with caution, especially when disseminating information that can cast political elites in a negative light. Freedom

House (2016) has pointed out that self-censorship, physical assaults, intimidation, and impunity for crimes against journalists are major problems associated with the Nigerian media. This helps to understand why media autonomy in Nigeria has been hampered as journalists and media houses often face physical and coercive threats of violence.

When respondents are divided between those in the Niger Delta and those that are outside the region, it is striking to note that those in the region had a relatively good impression of the media as compared to those outside (see Figure 25). No one from the conflict area actually thought that the media is contributing to the conflict as opposed to the 20 % of respondents in the non-conflict area who believed that the media contributes to violence in the region. This demonstrates how respondents in the Niger Delta were generally less concerned about the role of the media in the Niger Delta conflict as many of them highlighted that the media was not involved in local decision-making, and thus does not play any significant role in the conflict. In turn, some of the respondents at Ilorin attached a certain level of importance to the media as they argued that media channels largely shape their understanding of violence in the Niger Delta. Thus, any bias media reportage indirectly fuels the conflict inasmuch as they can only hold people accountable based on what they learn from media sources. Newspapers in particular have been shown to depend mostly on government sources and their own correspondents for reporting the Niger Delta conflict (Amenaghawon, 2017). Relying heavily on government sources means that the traditional media tends to present favourable images about the government when covering the resource-based conflict.

Figure 25: Perception of the Media in the Niger Delta Conflict (by Location)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

While complementing the work of the traditional media, social media has become a good source of information for many people in Nigeria and elsewhere as, for example, social media platforms are the most visited websites across Africa (Africa Practice, 2014). This means that social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram are important for promoting peace just as they can also play a role in stimulating violence. During Nigeria's 2019 elections, WhatsApp promoted the spread of 'fake news' around the elections and also helped to strengthen accountability and inclusion in other areas of the electoral process (Fisher et al., 2019). Given the popularity of social media, the internet user penetration in Nigeria has steadily improved over the years. From 30 % share of the population in 2013, Nigeria's internet user penetration was projected to reach 46.5 % in 2019 (Statista, 2018). This means that new institutional arrangements are being crafted by local communities and social groups through social media on popular applications such as WhatsApp in order to articulate local grievances and to find solutions to problems. In the same vein, armed groups can use social media platforms to recruit new members and plan violent attacks. However, it is important to note that persisting problems in Nigeria and some other African countries such as infrequent electricity supply and poor internet connectivity restrict social media usage. Future research can focus in on analysing the extent to which social media has impacted the Niger Delta conflict, and thus the 2009 amnesty's limitations.

To summarise, the media in Nigeria's mature LAO system has played an important role in terms of helping to understand the events in the Niger Delta. However, it needs a higher degree of autonomy and protection in order to give fair accounts of events in the country including the Niger Delta conflict and the 2009 amnesty. The physical attacks of Nigerian journalists and media houses underline the fact that media practitioners face huge risks in terms of neutrally reporting the Niger Delta conflict. But as the next chapter will show, the media has been important in terms of the general public's access to information regarding the 2009 amnesty's outcome. Social media platforms have become popular sources of information that complement information obtained from the traditional media.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the extent to which different actors in the Niger Delta

have contributed to the shaping of institutions that have largely determined the course of events in the Niger Delta. Nigeria's oil conflict has generally been discussed with a focus on the government, MNOCs, and the militants as can be seen in works such as Ukiwo (2011), Idemudia (2009), and Ahonsi (2011). In turn, the chapter has distinguished between the primary actors – consisting of political elites, MNOCs, and youth fighters – and the secondary actors – entailing traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media. It has argued that even though the primary actors have been the main architects of the Niger Delta conflict, the secondary actors have also played varied roles in supporting the conflict's evolution including the introduction of the 2009 amnesty as will be elaborated in the next chapter.

The government is the primary duty-bearer in terms of impersonally safeguarding peace and security in the country even though Niger-Delta's insecurities are linked to patronage politics and godfatherism (Aderonke and Awosika, 2013). Nigeria's mature LAO has ensured that the country's public institutions fail to deter politicians and public officials from privatising public funds. It follows that stronger and impersonal institutions are required to control political and business elites' interests in the Niger Delta (see Chapter 7). Business people with oil related interests are primary actors in the Niger Delta given that the resource-based conflict revolves around oil exploitation by MNOCs and local elites. Existing discussions on oil business in the Niger Delta have largely focused on MNOCs including CSR discussions that have narrowly paid attention to foreign oil companies and the government (for example Ogula, 2012; Ijaiya, 2014; Enuoh & Eneh, 2015). In turn, the chapter has highlighted why it is imperative to include top local business actors in the country, especially those who have made huge profits from the oil industry in such discussions. Furthermore, the youth fighters are primary actors in the Niger Delta inasmuch as they have challenged the authority of political and business elites by disrupting oil activities and deepening Niger Delta's security dilemma. As the analysis of the 2009 amnesty in the next chapter demonstrates the power of the youth militants to disrupt and reorganize the institutional arrangements of political and business elites in the oil-rich region.

As far as the secondary actors in the Niger Delta are concerned, the authority of traditional or community leaders has largely been undermined by militant activities in the region. Restoring the dignity of traditional leadership in Africa and elsewhere,

however, is important given that some traditional leaders have been susceptible to patronage politics (van Kessel and Oomen, 1997). The limitations of the 2009 amnesty as will be discussed in the next chapter largely resulted from the mediation role that certain traditional leaders played in the amnesty negotiations. In addition to the community leaders, the religious leaders have also played intermediary roles to calm tensions in the Niger Delta. Religious leaders need to be encouraged to undertake more CSR responsibilities in the Niger Delta as many of them have enriched themselves through the spiritual roles they play in the society. In turn, civic civil society groups such as the INC, the UDU, and the UYOMO have challenged the costs and benefits of oil exploitation in Nigeria's oil-rich region (Ikelegbe, 2001). But just as the other secondary actors, the civil society including women's groups has faced huge challenges in terms of using non-violent means to undermine the prevailing patronage system in Nigeria's mature LAO. Militant activities have largely overshadowed civic civil society activities, which is evident in the analysis of the 2009 amnesty in the subsequent chapters. Also, Nigeria's media has struggled to remain free and neutral in reporting the Niger Delta conflict and 2009 amnesty largely due to the strong control of political elites and the frequent physical assaults on journalists. Thus, while Nigerian media houses and practitioners need better institutional protection to do their jobs well, the ownership and alignment of media companies – notably newspapers, radio, and television stations – to prominent politicians tend to affect the quality and neutrality of media reportage (Ali, 2015). Social media platforms have begun to offer additional avenues for accessing information on the Niger Delta conflict and other events in the country.

It is important to highlight that some of the insights from the conflict theories discussed in Chapter 2 help to understand the primary and secondary actors in the Niger Delta. For example, greed has manifested through the actions of political and business elites who have pursued oil related interests to the detriment of the local population (see Chapter 3). This has contributed significantly to local grievances that have encouraged the youth militants to contribute to Niger Delta's security dilemma. In order to address this security dilemma, the government implemented the 2009 amnesty programme as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5:

2009 Amnesty in the Niger Delta

5.0 Introduction

Having analysed the Niger Delta conflict and the primary and secondary actors involved, this chapter focuses primarily on the amnesty that was declared on 25 June 2009 by President Umaru Yar'Adua. In general, pacts such as amnesties have less of a chance to succeed in LAOs owing to the lack of credible commitments to policy solutions in such states (North et al., 2009, p. 135). But the different designs of conflict amnesties usually take into consideration their legality, legitimacy, and capacity to contribute towards sustainable peace (Mallinder, 2018). While the 2009 Niger Delta amnesty has received a great deal of attention from scholars since its implementation (for example, Ikelegbe and Umukoro 2016; Ushie 2013; Nwajiaku-Dahou 2012; and Ikelegbe 2010), what the programme's outcome adds to existing knowledge of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) is under-explored. In turn, the chapter pays a particular attention to the grounds that informed the 2009 presidential declaration of amnesty, the implementation of the amnesty/DDR programme, and the outcome of the programme with respect to the Niger Delta conflict. This helps to understand the extent to which the amnesty was tied to the vested interests of political elites, MNOCs, traditional leaders, and the ex-militants in Nigeria's oil-rich region.

One distinctive feature of the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta is that it followed an executive proclamation which initially was not gazette but was later published by some media outlets (Ikelegbe, 2010). Thus, unlike countries such as South Africa and Rwanda where amnesties have been backed by amnesty laws, the 2009 Niger Delta amnesty was only based on an executive order. In contrast to existing literature that largely ignores the content of the executive proclamation of amnesty (for example, Ikelegbe, 2010; Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016), the dissertation integrates the presidential statement into the analysis. This is important because the executive order served as the foundation of the amnesty programme inasmuch as it explained why the amnesty was being introduced, how the amnesty programme was to be pursued, and what the government expected the programme to achieve.

The central argument is that Nigeria's mature LAO system has shaped decision-making regarding the 2009 amnesty in a way that has led to an amnesty trap, which might fuel further violence in the Niger Delta. The amnesty trap results from Nigeria's mature LAO system within which patronage politics has led to a flawed amnesty design, notably a bad implementation of a DDR scheme, privatisation of amnesty funds by state institutions, a disingenuous unconditional presidential pardon for the fighters, lucrative financial rewards for the militants and mediators, and longstanding problems such as uncontrolled arms importation and the funding of youth violence by political elites and MNOCs. In particular, the unconditional pardon of militants that accompanied the amnesty has contributed significantly to the programme's failures, thereby justifying why "conditional amnesties are most often used to ensure that rebels end their insurgency" (Mallinder, 2018, p. 3). The analysis underlines how the civil society and the local population as a whole were largely side-lined in the amnesty design as the mature LAO system enhanced the primary actors' capacity to form a mutually beneficial partnership with the help of traditional leaders that failed to address local concerns. This significantly reduced the amnesty's chances of yielding positive results as the chapter highlights some credible reports from independent auditors and media outlets that show why the 2009 amnesty has failed to achieve a number of targets. The discussion strengthens the view that amnesties that are initiated during conflict have no significant impact on peace as opposed to those that are granted as part of peace agreements (Melander, 2009; Reiter, 2014; Dancy, 2018). It also reinforces prevalent claims that the institutionalisation of power-sharing agreements can make rebellion appealing (Tull and Mehler, 2005). In what follows, the thesis analyses the context, implementation, and outcome of the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta.

5.1 Foundation of the 2009 Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta

Prior to the Nigerian government's 2009 amnesty programme, the state's initial response to opposition in the Niger Delta consisted largely of violent military crackdowns (Iwilade, 2017, p. 272). This explains why Nigeria's military and police have received equipment and training for fighting in the Niger Delta since the 1990s (Ikelegbe, 2010, p. 55). It is important to underline that state militias are an integral element of LAOs as they help to limit violence and protect political elites' interests in the patronage system. However, they are not as consolidated as security institutions in

OAOs which centrally regulate elites' interests in an impersonal way (North et al., 2009). Given the failure of Nigerian security forces to deal with extreme violence in the Niger Delta, the 2009 amnesty programme was an attempt at a non-military approach to address the resource-based conflict. The amnesty underlined the fact that the government's use of brute force had done little to stop insurgency in the oil-rich region (Iwilade, 2017, p. 272). Thus, the institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system help to explain why an amnesty was required, the type of amnesty that was adopted, and the amnesty's impact on the Niger Delta conflict.

In his amnesty proclamation speech, Yar'Adua remarked: "Certain elements of the Niger Delta populace have resorted to unlawful means of agitation for the development of the region including militancy thereby threatening peace, security, order and good governance and jeopardising the economy of the nation" (Yar'Adua, 2009). The President's reference to the insurgents' threat to peace, security, and the economy was a fair observation since the government had not found a way to amicably resolve the growing problem of insecurity in the Niger Delta. As, for example, Oviasuyi and Uwadiae (2010) have highlighted, the attempts of the government forces to pacify protests, to be hostile to communities, and to fight resistant groups resulted in deaths, the maiming/raping of women, and the destruction of villages. Figure 26 demonstrates that a significant number of militant groups were active in the Niger Delta as of June 2009. Consequently, the country was incurring huge losses at the peak of intense violence.

The International Crisis Group (2015, p. ii) has highlighted how: "At its peak in 2009, the insurgency in the Niger Delta was claiming an estimated 1,000 lives a year, had cut Nigeria's oil output by over 50 per cent and was costing the government close to four billion Naira (nearly \$19 million) per day in counterinsurgency operations". Earlier projections also showed how about 500,000 barrels of oil were out of production per day, equivalent to around \$9.1 billion per year in a low-intensity violence (a relatively small number of militias attacking trunk pipelines); about 1 million barrels of oil were out of production per day or \$18 billion loss per year in a medium-level conflict; and about 1.4 million barrels per day or \$34 billion loss per year in a high-cost violence (Newsome, 2011, p. 5).

Figure 26: Militia Camps in the Niger Delta in June 2009

NUMBER	CAMP	LOCATION	STATUS	LEADER(S)
1	Olugbobiri	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Major	Joshua Mckiver
2	Korokorosei	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Major	Africa Owei
3	Okiegbene/Ebrighbene (Ikebiri 1 & 11))	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Major	Gibson Kala (Prince Igodo)
4	Robert Creek	Nembe, Bayelsa	Major	Government Ekpemukpolo/ Henry Okah
5	Cawthorne Channel	Nembe, Bayelsa	Major	Government Ekpemukpolo/ Henry Okah
6	Camp 5	Warri South, Delta	Major	Government Ekpemukpolo/ Henry Okah
7	Okerenkoko	Warri South, Delta	Major	Government Ekpemukpolo/ Henry Okah
8	Opuraza	Warri South, Delta	Major	Government Ekpemukpolo/ Henry Okah
9	Azuzuama	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Major	Jackson
10	Gbekenegbene	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Minor	-
11	Ezetu	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Minor	Victor Ben Ebikabowei (Boyloaf)
12	Agge	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Minor	Boyloaf
13	Kurutiye, Forupa & Okubie	Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa	Minor	--
14	Ken Camp	Odi, Bayelsa	Minor	Ken
15	Egbema Camp	Warri, Delta	Minor	Kem Agbakara
16	Ubefan	Warri, Delta	Minor	John Togo
17	Berger Camp	Warri, Delta	Minor	Inilo Sinite
18	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force	Akuku-Tori, Rivers	Major	Asari Dokubo
19	Niger Delta Vigilante	Okirika, Rivers	Major	Tom Ateke
20	Icelanders/Outlaw	Borokiri, Port Harcourt, Okirika, Rivers	Minor	Soboma George
21	Yeghe	Bori, Ogoni, Rivers	Minor	Solomon Ndigbara

Source: The Week, June 1-2, 2009, Etekpe, 2009:17, as cited by Ikelegbe, 2010, p. 38.

Given the increasing hostilities in the Niger Delta and their high cost to the country's economy in 2009, the government had to calm down tensions, instead of worsening the situation with the usual military crackdowns. Therefore, the 2009 amnesty was an important strategy for the political and business elites in Nigeria's mature LAO system to de-militarise and de-escalate violence in the Niger Delta (Ikelegbe, 2010). Furthermore, Yar'Adua acknowledged in the amnesty proclamation that the youth militants were the dominant force behind hostilities in the Niger Delta as he stated: "The Government realises that many of the militants are able-bodied youths whose energies could be harnessed for the development of the Niger Delta and the nation at large". This reiterates the point made in the previous chapter that militancy is generally associated with the youths in the Niger Delta. The 2009 amnesty was borne out of the violent pressure from the youth fighters, which aligns with how the Revolution Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) forced the Columbian government to embark on an amnesty law to protect the fighters from prosecution after the country's 52-year war (Reuters, 2016). In turn, the focus of the youth fighters in the Niger Delta was to force the government to address local grievances (Ikelegbe, 2010).

The hostilities of the Niger Delta militants underlined their lack of trust and respect for the country's leadership and MNOCs. For example, the spokesperson of the Niger Delta Revolutionary Crusaders (NDRC), Izon Ebi, stated:

Our grievance is borne out of the insincerity of Nigeria's past and current leaders who after using our wealth and resources to build both Lagos and Abuja and even stealing for themselves and their unborn children, decided to bequeath a degraded environment to us and our children...Our elders and distinguished personalities of PANDEF have tried in their advocacy. We realize that the balancing act of being elder statesmen and resource control advocates can be a very touchy act. That is why our goal is in consonance with the vision of Niger Delta's emerging youth leaders in the clamour for resource control. The Nigerian nation should be grateful to PANDEF and most especially the acting President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, who was so sincere in trying to do things in line with the best global practices of this 21st century, but the Nigerian elite and state, who feed fat on the resources of the Niger Delta do not care about the plight of the Niger Delta people (The Will, 2017).

The 2009 amnesty programme aimed to reverse this negative perception of Nigerian political leadership and restore citizens' respect for public authorities in the political

space. In this vein, Yar'Adua highlighted in the amnesty proclamation how: "The Government desires that all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in militancy in the Niger Delta should return to respect constituted authority". The degree of respect for a constituted authority is usually determined by the citizens' trust in public institutions and representatives (Ramesh, 2017, p. 126). It follows that the efficiency of most public authorities is usually undermined by a failure to apply basic democratic principles such as impartiality, fairness, inclusiveness, accountability, and transparency (ibid.). In the wake of the widespread hostilities that undermined the power of local authorities, rebuilding the relationship between the militants and elements in the Nigerian government was at the heart of the 2009 amnesty (Iwilade, 2017, p. 273).

Yar'Adua also admitted in the proclamation that the attempts to deal with problems in the Niger Delta prior to 2009 had been inadequate as he added:

The Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria acknowledges that the challenges of the Niger Delta arose mainly from the inadequacies of previous attempts at meeting the yearnings and aspiration of the people, and have set in motion machinery for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta States (Yar'Adua, 2009).

The "yearnings and aspiration of the people" is in reference to Niger Delta's persisting problems including environmental degradation, poverty, and relative deprivation. As Chapter 3 highlighted, MNOCs have contributed significantly to these problems considering the amount of deprivations and damages that they have caused through oil explorations since 1956 (Omofonmwan and Odia, 2009, p. 25). However, Yar'Adua added that the government was putting in place a "machinery for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta States". Even though the executive proclamation did not specify the machinery that the government had set in motion to develop the Niger Delta, the creation of the Federal Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (FMNDA) in September 2008 to tackle local problems was significant for the amnesty programme (ANE EJ, 2014, p. 4).

It is important to underline the fact that the setting up of state institutions such as the FMNDA to deal with local grievances in the Niger Delta was not a new phenomenon.

The focus on Niger Delta's development began with the creation of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) in 1960 by Nigeria's immediate post-independent government. This was in accordance with some recommendations made by the Willink's Commission of Inquiry of the British colonial administration in 1957 (Izuagie, 2015). Since then, other state institutions have been set up to respond to the incremental needs in the region including the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority in 1976, the Presidential Task Force in 1980, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission in 1992, and the Niger Delta Development Commission in 1999. The main objective of all these bodies have largely been the same, which is to rehabilitate and develop the oil producing region. The 2009 hostilities emphasised how institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system had ensured repeated failures of short-lived public institutions to address local problems. Thus, the government's decision to implement the 2009 amnesty programme with the support of the FMNDA was an attempt at a more effective means of addressing local grievances (Iwilade, 2017).

In summary, Nigeria's mature LAO system ensured a heightening of militant activities in the Niger Delta by 2009, which destabilised the country's oil-based economy and forced the government to consider a non-military approach in the form of an amnesty. This is typical of amnesties that result from longstanding violent conflicts such as the 2016 amnesty for FARC rebels following their decades of fighting against the Columbian government. In the Niger Delta, youth militants have used the violent attacks on oil facilities and workers as a means to force political elites and MNOCs to pay attention to their concerns (see Chapter 3). Having acknowledged that violence escalation in the Niger Delta had emerged out of the government's repeated failures to resolve the conflict's underlying incompatibilities, Yar'Adua proceeded to implement the 2009 amnesty programme to help manage widespread violence.

5.2 Amnesty Implementation in the Niger Delta

The first amnesty programme in the Niger Delta was implemented in 2004 in Rivers State (Ikelegbe, 2010, pp. 57-58). This emanated from the 'inter-cult wars' between militant groups such as the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), and their affiliates. It also resulted from the regular

hostilities between the militant groups, the federal government, and MNOCs in the quest to control Rivers State's oil. After retrieving about 3,000 weapons and training about 2,000 youths in technical skills as a consequence of a DDR programme, administrative deficits and an unsustainable strategy were largely blamed for the programme's collapse in 2005 (ibid.). Problems such as a lack of monitoring, controlling, and reintegrating ex-militants in the society, a lack of employment or economic empowerment programmes, and former fighters surrendering a few and old arms made it possible for them to return to the creeks, regroup and plunge the region into full-scale violence by 2006 (ibid.). Since the collapse of the Rivers State's amnesty programme, some state governments in the region have unsuccessfully sought peace accords with the fighters, such as that of the Bayelsa State government in 2007 (ibid.).

In turn, the 2009 amnesty programme constitutes the biggest non-militarised effort of the Nigerian government to deal with the Niger Delta conflict since the conflict began in the 1990s. As Ushie (2013, p. 31) has highlighted, the programme is an unprecedented attempt by the government to restore stability in the oil-rich region in response to the recommendations of the Technical Committee. The latter was established on 8 September 2008 to study previous reports and memorandums on the Niger Delta conflict and to propose solutions to the government (ibid.). The 2009 amnesty programme, upon receiving an approval by Nigeria's Council of State, consisted in granting pardon to militants who accepted to disarm, to register, to be documented, to undergo training, and to be reintegrated into the life of the society. It was intended to end in December 2015 but was extended to December 2017 by President Buhari (Onuoha, 2016, p. 4). Ending the programme within Nigeria's mature LAO system is still a big challenge as the government continues to deal with new militant groups – such as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) – who have emerged since 2016.

A DDR scheme, which usually forms part of an amnesty intervention, accompanied the 2009 amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. It has been used in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo as part of peace-building measures (Omokhoa & Ikelegbe, 2016, pp. 20-25). Drawing from the work of Pugel (2009) as cited by Okonofua (2016), DDR has to do with post-conflict interventions that include collecting arms, neutralising combatants, and reintegrating legitimate ex-

combatants into the armed forces or civilian life in order to forestall a return to violence. It normally takes place in a volatile environment where attaining a sustainable peace is not guaranteed as Ikelegbe (2010, p. 18) has elaborated:

DDR usually occurs in an environment of immense challenges such as insecurity, conflicts and economic disruptions. It is often within an unstable, insecure and volatile environment, in which there may be tensions, mistrust, competitions and strategic manipulations. Even though DDR occurs within a framework of some understanding, there is usually animosity between factions and fighting groups. There are certain threats in DDR that emanates from dissatisfactions with terms of peace, the struggles for better returns and benefits from the peace process including use of violence and persisting incentives for further violence.

Each of the three phases of a DDR plan is equally important for the scheme to achieve the desired results. For example, at the disarmament and demobilisation phases, the need for the state to retrieve and secure all weapons that fighters possess cannot be underestimated (Ikelegbe, 2010). This is particularly challenging in LAOs where state military is usually dispersed and weak (North et al., 2009, p. 20). In a DDR setting, it is incumbent on the government to pursue strategic arrangements that guarantee a safe collection and documentation of all arms in the fighters' possession. This requires a great deal of transparency, trust, and honesty from both the government and militants (Ikelegbe, 2010). While fighters generally need to be assured that the government will not turn around to hunt them down after turning in weapons, the government also needs to ensure that militants do not renege on their commitment to abandon violence by hiding weapons that they can fall back on in future.

Due to the delicate nature of the disarmament and demobilisation phases, Knight (2008) has underlined how an external neutral body or team of peace-keepers and negotiators can facilitate the process to ensure that both the government and armed groups respect their ends of the bargain. As far as the Niger Delta's DDR scheme is concerned, there was no such external body. In turn, the reintegration phase is crucial as Oyewo (2016, pp. 58-59) has argued, it is "a way in which fighters change their identity from 'combatant' to 'civilian' and alter their behaviour by abolishing the use of violent means and increasing activities that are approved by the mainstream community". At the reintegration stage, ex-combatants are meant to re-establish and reinforce their

status as civilians and to partake in the social, political, and economic life of the society. Overall, a successful DDR scheme should achieve all the targets that each stage typically demands, and its failure can lead to tragic consequences as, for example, poor designs and implementation of DDR schemes have been linked to the renewal of hostilities in Angola, the widespread insecurity in Namibia, and the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and high crime rates in Mozambique (Kimba, 1999, p. 43; Keen, 2006, p. 16; Gwinyayi 2007, p. 75; cited in Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016, p. 35). The relative success of DDR in Liberia has been attributed to the fact that it guarded against the tendency to narrowly focus on fighters by incorporating the needs of the civil society and all the people that had been affected by the war (Sanz, 2009 cited in Ikelegbe and Umukoro, 2016, p. 27). Thus, it is important to involve all the key state and non-state actors of a conflict area in this peace-building scheme.

The DDR plan in the Niger Delta included, at least, 30,000 ex-militants of which 822 were females who handed in weapons and signed up for the programme (Abazie-Humphrey, 2014). While the disarmament stage focused on the immediate surrender of the thousands of militants and their weapons, the demobilization phase dealt with the identification, registration, and documentation of fighters who could give up militancy in camps before 4 October 2009. Furthermore, the reintegration phase included reorientation programmes, training and capacity building in technical/vocational skills, entrepreneurial development, employment placements, and the provision of employment opportunities (Ikelegbe, 2010). Figure 27 provides an overview of the DDR scheme.

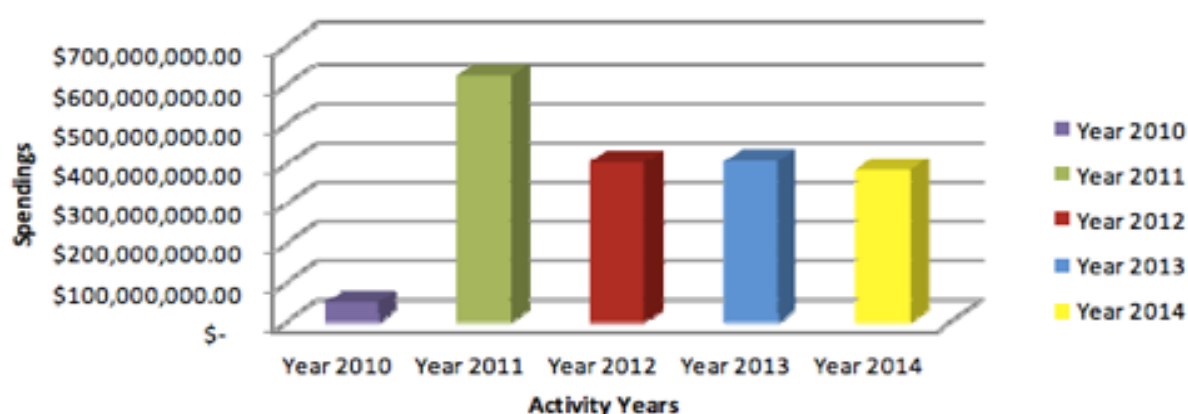
Following the 2009 amnesty implementation in the Niger Delta, reports vary on how much it has cost. The programme was set up with an initial budget of 50 billion Naira (about \$145 million) in July 2009 and some reports have claimed that US\$1 billion had been spent by 2012 (NSRP, 2014). According to the Chairman of the Amnesty Committee, a total of 234, 133,917,560 Naira (USD\$14, 233, 064, 89.72) budgetary allocation had been spent on the DDR scheme by 2014 since its implementation (Kuku, 2014a/b). The general trend of the government's budgetary allocation for the amnesty programme has been summarised in Figure 28, while Figure 29 provides a summary of the high costs of the DDR scheme.

Figure 27: Structure of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme

Disarmament	Demobilisation/Rehabilitation	Reintegration
Duration: 6 August to 4 October 2009	Duration: 6 to 12 months	Duration: Up to 5 years
Collection of arms, ammunition, explosives	Ex-militants report to camp	Knowledge and skills acquisition
Biometrics	Verification and documentation	Financial empowerment
		Placement programmes
		Microcredit
	Transformational training	Education
	Peace-building and conflict resolution	Reconciliation with local community
	Counselling	Conflict resolution Framework/ mechanism
	Career guidance	Monitoring and evaluation
	Wellness assessment	Exit from amnesty
	Reintegration classification	
	Education and vocational placement	
	Graduation and demobilisation	
Key enablers		
Disarmament camps	Transformational training centres	Partnering government agencies, NGOs and private organisations
	Rehabilitation camps	Oil and gas institutions (OGIs)
		Tracking and support system

Source: Federal Government of Nigeria as cited by Ushie (2013, p. 32)

Figure 28: Nigeria Presidential Amnesty Budgetary Allocation, 2010-2014



Source: Abazie-Humphrey (2014)

Figure 29: Nigeria DDR Budget Description

Amnesty 2014 Budget proposal with Description			
S/N	Project Description	Naira	USD\$
1	Stipends & Allowances of 30,000 Ex-agitators	23,625,000,000	144,098,813.25
2	Operational Cost	3,699,933,814	22,567,452.77
3	Reintegration of Transformed Ex-agitators	35,409,859,972	215,979,631.72
4	Reinsertion/Transition Safety Allowances for 3,642 Ex-agitators (3rd phase)	546,300,000	3,332,113.51
	Total	63,281,093,786	385,978,011.25

Source: Abazie-Humphrey (2014)

It is important to note that the 2014 key sectoral budget allocation of the Nigerian government for the whole country included 493.5 billion Naira on education and 62.45 billion Naira on energy (PwC, 2014). Thus, the government invested heavily in the amnesty programme considering that it was designed for ex-militants who formed a tiny fraction of the Niger Delta population. In terms of monies spent on the former fighters, the reception of 65,000 Naira (US\$420) per month and the formal and vocational education, skills acquisition and entrepreneurial development, including a 3,000 Naira (US\$20) stipend to which they are entitled during the reintegration phase, have received much attention from the programme's critics. For example, it has been argued that the US\$420 stipend given to the former fighters is above Nigeria's minimum wage of US\$60 (The Conversation, 2017).

In addition to the monies spent on the DDR scheme, the government and MNOCs have given big business contracts and rewards to some ex-militant leaders. For example, Kiipoye (2015) has highlighted how the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) offered a mammoth ₦5.6 billion contract to the following ex-militant leaders: Government Ekpumopulo (Tompolo), Asari Dokubo, Ateke Tom, and Ebikabowei Victor Ben (Boyloaf) for the surveillance and protection of oil pipelines. The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency has also awarded a \$103.4 million (over

₦15 billion) contract to Tompolo's firm – Global West Vessel Specialist Limited – to provide 20 vessels for Nigeria's military in policing the waterways (ibid.). Tompolo's firm has also received a weekly ₦49 million that the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency pays him for the hire of the vessels (ibid.). From his initial violent opposition to state security agencies notably the military, Tompolo ended up receiving a mobile police force escort for 24-hour protection (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012). The extensive wealth accumulated by the ex-militant leaders is reflected in Tompolo's purchase of a private jet, while Asari Dokubo owns a university in Nigeria's neighbouring country of Benin Republic (Kiikpoye, 2015).

There have been claims that the 2009 amnesty programme was a demonstration of the government's commitment to resolving the Niger Delta conflict (Amadi & Inyikalum, 2016, p. 49; Egwim, 2015; The Economist, 2009). Indeed, the programme's implementation led to 2.7 million barrels per day increment in oil production in 2015 after it had dropped from 2.2 million to 700,00 barrels per day in 2009 (Omokhoa & Ikelegbe, 2016; Amaize, 2016). With the diverse training of the ex-militants, Nigeria is thought to have boosted its low human capital to some extent, arguably reducing the crime rate in the Niger Delta region (Omokhoa & Ikelegbe, 2016). By 2012, about 12,000 former fighters had received training in various disciplines such as pipeline welding and crane operations of which 113 had gained employment in maritime, welding, and fabrication companies in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates (Ushie, 2013).

However, the training of ex-militants at home and abroad has not been smooth. On the contrary, some former fighters are known to have abandoned some amnesty training camps to engage in violent riots and crimes in places such as Benin, Yenagoa, Aluu, and Port Harcourt after complaining of poor living conditions, delayed payments of allowances, and a lack of quality training facilities (Obi & Rustad, 2011). Besides, 28 of 100 former fighters who had been sent to Trinidad and Tobago by the government were deported in 2012 on the grounds of bad behaviour, while 8 were deported from Sri Lanka in 2011 for indiscipline (Oyewo, 2016; Press Reader, 2012; Nairaland, 2011). In 2011, the Chief Executive Officer of the Presidential Amnesty Programme had to travel to Ghana to negotiate the release of 27 ex-militants from detention who had been sent there for training (Oyewo, 2016; NBF, 2011). These former fighters were accused

by the Ghanaian authorities of ‘unacceptable conducts’ after protesting against the feeding arrangement in one of the training centres.

Thus, despite the few successes, the 2009 amnesty’s outcome has largely been characterised by expressions such as ‘expensive failure’ (Achodo, 2015), ‘negative peace’ (Mohammed et al., 2014), ‘temporal salvation’ (Jegede et al., 2015), and ‘gilded pacification campaign’ (Ubhenin, 2013) since it has not done much in terms of helping to manage violence in the Niger Delta. The programme has been criticised for being too expensive and bureaucratic in a way that is susceptible to the control of the powerful ex-militant commanders, and the contractors, consultants or mediators of peace – consisting largely of traditional leaders and government representatives – have benefitted financially to the neglect of the local population (Ushie, 2013). In 2010, for example, about 80 % of the rehabilitation programme budget went to the mediators or consultants, while only 20 % was available for the rehabilitation of the ex-militants (Oluwanniya, 2011; Ushie, 2013). As will be elaborated in the next chapter, the traditional leaders in particular were important intermediaries for the political elites to access the fighters and to negotiate the amnesty deal, which explains why the local leaders were more involved in the amnesty process as opposed to the other secondary actors including the civil society and religious leaders.

The expectations of government institutions such as the FMNDA and the NDDC to consolidate the amnesty programme through various developmental projects have failed. As, for example, the International Crisis Group (2015, p. i) has revealed:

Two agencies established to drive development, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA), have floundered. Two others mandated to restore the oil-polluted environment (particularly in Ogoni Land) and curb or manage hundreds of oil spills yearly, the Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP) and the National Oil Spills Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA), have been largely ineffective. The PIB [Petroleum Industry Bill], intended to improve oil and gas industry governance and possibly also create special funds for communities in petroleum-producing areas, has been stuck in the National Assembly (federal parliament) since 2009. In sum, seven years after the technical committee’s report, the conditions that sparked the insurgency could easily trigger a new phase of violent conflict.

The traditional media's access to a 2016 ministerial technical audit committee's report on contracts was significant in revealing to the general public details of the extent to which a good number of business contracts that have been awarded by the FMNDA to improve lives in the Niger Delta made no such impact. Among other things, the committee's report disclosed that about 60 % of contracts that the ministry awarded between 2009 and 2015 were paid even though 40 % of work was achieved (Owete, 2016). It also added that:

...very insignificant numbers of projects have reached practical completion to provide the sense of belonging expected by Niger Deltans across board. About 80% of the projects are either on-going, abandoned after payments, total abdication or refusal to deliver as in the case of Youth Capacity Building Programmes. The federal government well-intended intervention programme in the Niger Delta Region was poorly implemented six years after flag-off with serious consequences (ibid.).

Corruption, misplacement of priorities, and mismanagement of funds have been highlighted as the major reasons behind why more than 700 billion Naira that the government spent on 427 contracts could only achieve 8 % impact (AllAfrica, 2016). Corrupt and misleading practices included the duplication of projects in the Niger Delta by public officials and institutions. For instance, the provision of an electricity transformer at Eleme of Rivers State was replicated by both the FMNDA and the NDDC (Owete, 2016). Besides, the costs of projects that the FMNDA awarded were much more expensive than similar projects that were awarded by the other arms of government operating in the same area (ibid.). This underscores how the mature LAO system has ensured that state institutions function for private interests as a researcher argued:

The NDDC has been there for a long time but it is like one of those schemes that allow people to embezzle funds. If the NDDC works, you don't need the Ministry of Niger Delta. There are a lot of government related agencies and all those guys do nothing...they simply create a project to make people become rich (Interview, Respondent #7).

Furthermore, the deficiencies of the demobilisation and disarmament phases of the DDR exercise included the fact that many ex-militants still possessed weapons and

ammunitions after they had been integrated into the amnesty programme (Ubhenin, 2013). This is typical of amnesties as, for example, many guerrilla fighters have rearmed after striking a peace deal with the Colombian government in 2016 (Casey & Escobar, 2018). The big concern in the Niger Delta is that the weapons that were not turned in were the serviceable and sophisticated arms which the Nigerian Army claimed they had previously been confronted with on the battlefield (Achobo, 2015). Ushie (2013) has highlighted how the fighters' mistrust of the government's intentions behind the amnesty contributed to why they opted not to surrender all their weapons. Thus, it was largely a question of when and not whether Nigeria's mature LAO system would lead to the resumption of violence and criminal activities in the Niger Delta after the 2009 amnesty had been introduced.

The reintegration phase of the DDR scheme was also poorly managed. For instance, there was a low female participation as the different categories of women such as porters, spies, cooks, and sex workers who formed part of ex-militants were overlooked in the reintegration process given that the emphasis was placed on the male fighters (Owete, 2016). Ubhenin (2013) has also underlined how there was no provision in the amnesty initiative to improve the relationship between the MNOCs who had been accused of destroying the environment and the local population. Thus, apart from the traditional leaders, the local population including the civil society and other unarmed local actors were largely excluded from the amnesty design. In turn, the ex-militant leaders in the Niger Delta secured various forms of lucrative contracts from MNOCs and political elites while the concrete measures by the government to tackle the root causes of the conflict were non-existent (Oyewo, 2016). Or as Obi and Rustad (2011, p. 205) have argued:

The amnesty programme failed to address either the roots of the conflict or non-armed groups, who were victims of the violence in the region. Rather it moved hastily from conflict to a DDR process without a clear road map. This was perhaps based on the view that the greatest threats to petro-business were the armed militias and the proliferation of weapons in the region, and that once militias were taken out of the equation, stability would return. Thus, issues of transitional justice, abuses and acts of impunity committed by all sides to the violent conflict – government security forces and militias – were conveniently swept under the carpet, setting up a template for co-opting the most powerful militants and spoilers who could obstruct petro-business in

the Niger Delta. It also sidetracked the issue of calling them and the military to account. The state-owned and –directed amnesty project was considered necessary to define/control the space of engagement, and reassert state power in the face of limited military victories, which had failed to stem the escalating insurgency threatening petro-business, the security of the country’s maritime neighbours and international shipping.

Respondents also discussed how the amnesty programme’s creation of wealth for the former fighters poses a significant danger to the Niger Delta since a ‘pampering’ of those ex-militants would lure other individuals to join militancy. Here are some highlights of the views shared by respondents:

The government only suppressed the militants with money not necessarily solving the problems they were militanting [violently protesting] against (Questionnaire, Respondent #72); The initial idea and motive behind militancy was to protest against the abuses that the people were facing. So, the monies given did not address the problems correctly and the violence can’t end yet (Questionnaire, Respondent #32). Our struggle is not about contract, but development and the government failed on those areas (Questionnaire, Respondent #10); Ex-militants were paid simply to put down arms, but the Niger Delta is far from being safe (Interview, Respondent #7).

In short, Nigeria’s mature LAO system has ensured that the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta provides financial favours for the former fighters and local mediators including traditional leaders, while failing to address persisting problems in the region (cf. Oyewo, 2016; Obi & Rustad, 2011). This is because a great deal of emphasis was placed on the mutually beneficial arrangements between the primary actors and the chiefs in the amnesty design, thereby excluding the local population including civil society groups in the peace-building process (see 5.4 and Chapter 6). In this vein, government institutions have been unable to accomplish projects that needed to consolidate the amnesty programme, which underlines the fact that institutions in LAOs tend to be unfavourable for achieving sustainable developmental targets that can benefit the masses. The DDR scheme has been undermined by several flaws including the retrieval of fewer weapons at the demobilisation and disarmament phases. Given the widespread failure of government institutions to accomplish various projects in the Niger Delta, it is clear that the state was not adequately prepared to roll out an amnesty programme of this magnitude without substantial institutional reforms (see Chapter 7). The initiative was a strategy of the Nigerian government to stabilise the Niger Delta region in order

to pursue oil and gas business (Ushie, 2013). Given the several flaws of the 2009 amnesty programme, it is important to analyse the extent to which the programme has impacted violence in the Niger Delta as well as other structural issues that have undermined this initiative.

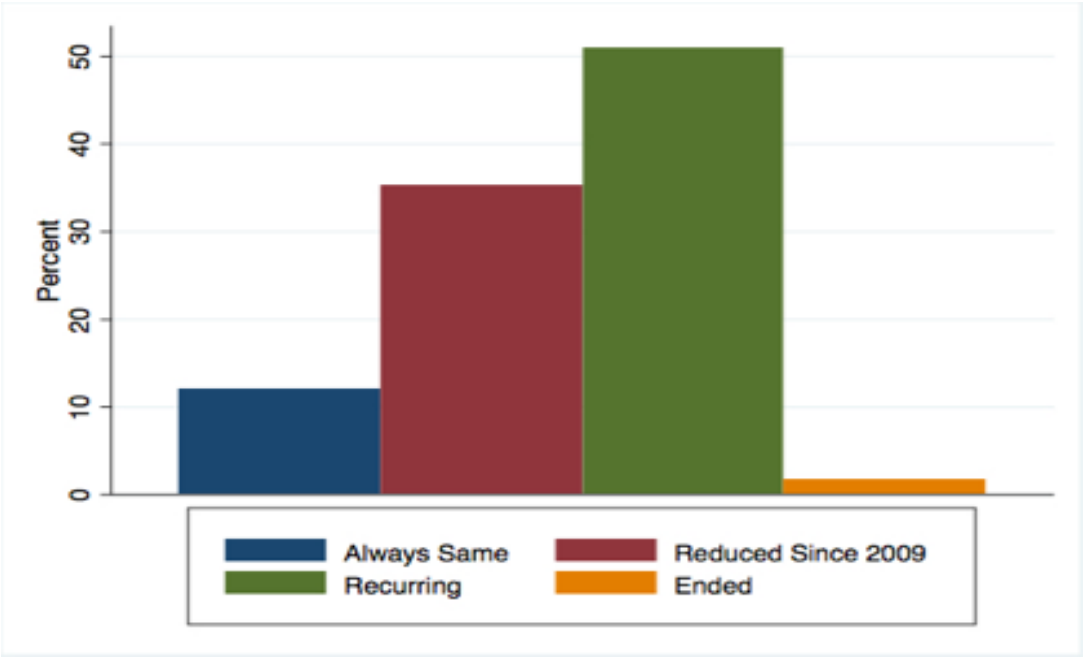
5.3 2009 Amnesty and the Persistence of the Niger Delta Conflict

The 2009 amnesty has been followed by new waves of hostilities, particularly in 2016, by the NDA and other new militant groups such as the Niger Delta Revolutionary Crusaders (NDRC) and the Adaka Boro Avengers (ABA). It has been estimated that the resurgence of Niger Delta's militancy in 2016 reduced Nigeria's oil production to a 22-year low (Onuoha, 2016; Reuters, 2017b). Figures 30 and 31 show how more than 50 % of respondents thought of violence to be recurring in the Niger Delta and 60 % of them were also of the view that the NDA's emergence demonstrates that the 2009 amnesty contained the conflict provisionally. This corroborates the views expressed in several scholarly works including Ubhenin (2013), Achodo (2015), and Jegede et al. (2015) that have highlighted how the 2009 amnesty provided a short-term solution to problems in the oil-rich region. Violence in the Niger Delta, which reduces from time-to-time but has always come back, is fluid and dynamic and involves changing configurations of actors and interests over time (Schultze-Kraft, 2013, p. 20). This is demonstrated by how new militant groups such as the NDA have joined the struggle for oil control since 2016 while former fighting groups such as MEND have put a stop to the hostilities due to the financial gains from the 2009 amnesty programme. The long-term positive impact of the amnesty lies in wider structural reforms including cleaning-up the oil-rich region (Ushie, 2013, p. 32) and most importantly, moving from LAO towards OAO (see Chapter 7).

In addition to the longstanding causes of the Niger Delta conflict including perverse institutional arrangements that have caused relative deprivations as have been discussed in Chapter 3, the 2009 amnesty, which was not accompanied by institutional reforms has also undermined sustainable peace in the Niger Delta. This is worsened by other persisting problems in Nigeria's mature LAO system such as the uncontrolled arms importation and the funding of youth violence by political elites and MNOCs as will be elaborated below. The poor amnesty design also included an unconditional pardon for

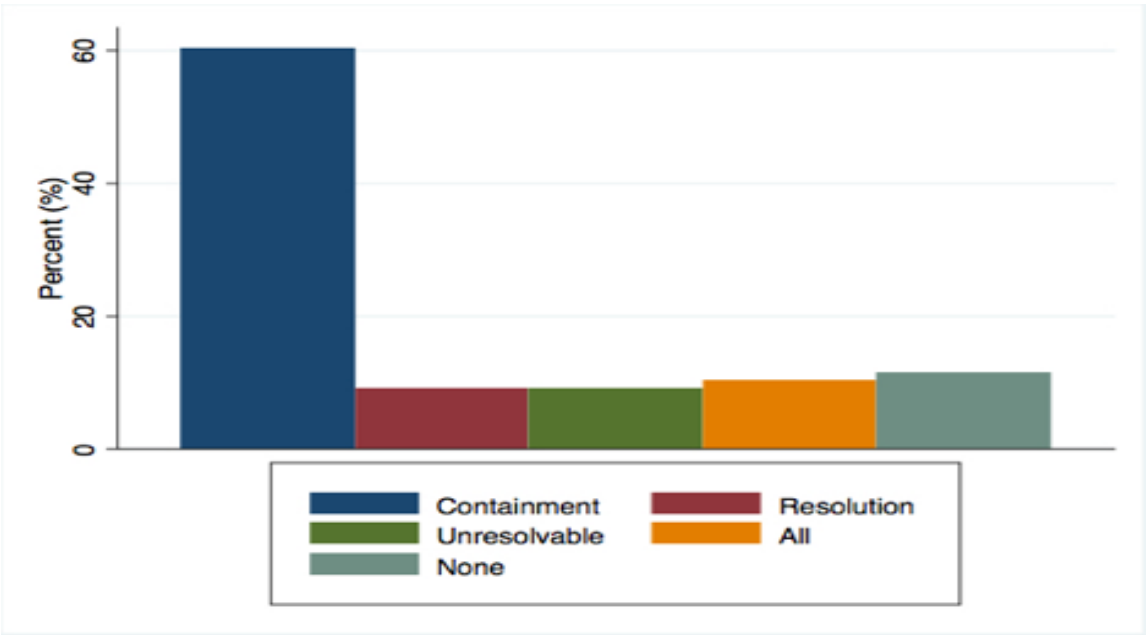
the fighters – largely ignored in several of the 2009 amnesty studies such as Abazie-Humphrey (2014) and Ikelegbe and Umokoro (2016) – that has contributed significantly to the many failures of the programme and also incentivised violence.

Figure 30: State of Niger Delta Conflict (overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Figure 31: Significance of the Formation of the Niger Delta Avengers (overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

The unconditional pardon was contained in the last section of the presidential proclamation, which states:

Now therefore, I, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, after due consultation with the council of States and in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by the provisions of Section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, make the following proclamation: I hereby grant amnesty and unconditional pardon to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta. The pardon shall take effect upon the surrender and handing over of all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition and execution of the renunciation of militancy forms [...]

It is important to reiterate that Nigeria did not implement amnesty laws as has been done in countries such as South Africa, Algeria, Uganda, Algeria, and Uruguay (Mallinder & McEvoy, 2011, pp. 117-119). Instead, Yar'Adua relied on Section 175(1a) of the country's constitution that states: "The President may – (a) grant any person concerned with or convicted of any offence created by an Act of the National Assembly a pardon, either free or subject to lawful conditions". It is unclear why the President alluded to an unconditional pardon since the militants were obliged to adhere to lawful conditions – such as the surrendering and handing over of all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition – that needed time to ascertain. In this vein, Iwilade (2017, p. 278) has highlighted how some ex-militants who are beneficiaries of the amnesty programme still participate in oil theft. The dissertation posits that the institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system encouraged the unconditional pardon inasmuch as political elites and MNOCs were more focused on aligning their interests with the ex-fighters than resolving local concerns for all the actors in the Niger Delta. This is a major flaw that has negatively impacted the amnesty's outcome as militants involved in the oil conflict who did not adhere to all of the amnesty conditions still received an unconditional pardon.

In general, the exercise of Nigeria's presidential pardon has faced credibility challenges over the years as it has been criticised for being abusive and inaccessible to ordinary people, which is also true of some pardons elsewhere (Udofa, 2018, p. 130). Goodluck Jonathan's pardon of Chief D. S. P. Alamiye-singha, former Governor of Bayelsa State, who had been convicted of several corruption charges has been branded by some

scholars as the most controversial exercise of presidential pardon in Nigeria's contemporary history (ibid., p. 114). The unconditional pardon of fighters in 2009 further undermines the credibility of the presidential pardon as a conditional pardon, which was needed to limit the options of the former fighters, would have annulled the pardon of those who failed to adhere to all the terms and conditions. As Mallinder (2018, p. 44) has argued: "Conditionality can shape the ability of an amnesty to contribute to reducing security threats and consolidating sustainable peace".

Conditional amnesties are important for ensuring that rebels end their insurgency by disarming, renouncing violence, and refraining from recidivism (Mallinder, 2018). Other less common amnesty conditions include "requirements that combatants disclose the truth about their actions, contribute to reparations, or participate in alternative justice mechanisms" (ibid., p. 3). An instance of a conditional pardon is seen in the Philippines where the country's president, Rodrigo Duterte, pardoned 10 'political prisoners' at the New Bilibid Prison in 2017 (Rappler, 2018). The prisoners were released on a number of conditions such as reporting to their chief parole and probation officer once a month and availing themselves to visits from the Philippines national police and provincial director of their area of residence (ibid.). Other cases of conditional pardons include "South Africa's conditional amnesty (1995) process that attached legal immunity to the truth-telling process outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" as well as "Uganda's amnesty (2000) that offered rebel soldiers amnesty in exchange for their participation in local ceremonies of social reintegration" (Dancy, 2018, p. 392).

The dissertation argues that similar conditional strategies should have been implemented and reinforced in the Niger Delta as the unconditional pardon contributed to the ease with which some former fighters failed to fully comply with all the amnesty obligations including the hiding of sophisticated weapons and ammunitions. In this vein, Dancy (2018, p. 400) has highlighted how amnesties need to be considered as an aspect of "longer and iterated process of postconflict interactions, rather than a one-shot, unilateral offer extended during fighting". A conditional pardon that includes long-term commitments – such as implementing amnesty laws (Dancy, 2018), good governance (Ezirim, 2011), corporate social responsibility (Idemudia and Osayande, 2016), and dialogue (Chikwem and Duru, 2018) – would have contributed a great deal

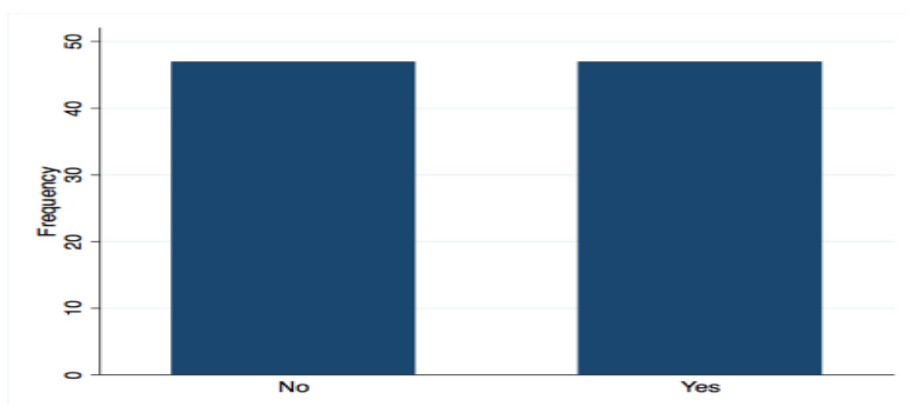
to the 2009 amnesty's chances of helping to achieve sustainable peace in the Niger Delta. Furthermore, Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016) have underlined how DDR challenges such as the tendency to retrieve fewer weapons and ammunitions are common, which implies that the Nigerian government had to adopt stricter and longer-term measures to monitor the behaviours of the former fighters. The unconditional pardon, which has not helped with the long-term observation of the ex-militants, reinforces prevalent views that the amnesty was a strategic approach of the government to stabilise the Niger Delta in order to pursue its interest in the oil and gas business.

In addition to the unconditional pardon, Nigeria's mature LAO has enhanced the capacity of political elites and MNOCs to provide high financial rewards to the ex-militants through business contracts and stipends. This has worsened a perverse incentive structure that fuels the Niger Delta conflict as violence has become more lucrative in the region (Golden-Timsar, 2018). This falls in line with prevalent studies, such as Tull and Mehler (2005), that have underscored how the institutionalisation of power-sharing agreements can create incentive structures that make rebellion appealing. Prominent civil society groups in Nigeria that were largely side-lined in the amnesty process including the United South-South Council have attributed the resurgence of violence in the Niger Delta to the high financial rewards for the ex-militants, which have not been extended to the general population (The Tide, 2016). Thus, violence in the oil-rich region remains a lucrative option for the minority of youths who decide to pursue that route. This aligns with Elizabeth Cooper's argument that the consciousness of students to the efficacy of destructive collective actions in the Kenyan society has led to the use of arson as an effective tactic in protest politics by students across Kenya (Cooper, 2014).

The danger that the high financial rewards for the ex-fighters poses to insecurities in the Niger Delta needs to be understood within a wider context as Chapters 3 and 4 as well as other scholarly works such as Schultze-Kraft (2013) and Smith (2011) have discussed how political elites and MNOCs have a tendency to fund youth violence in the region. In the wake of the 2009 amnesty, Nigeria's mature LAO system has continued to support the funding of youth violence as Shell, for example, was accused in 2011 of fueling violence in the Niger Delta by paying huge sums of monies to rival militant groups (Smith, 2011). In that year, the British-Dutch company paid oil monies

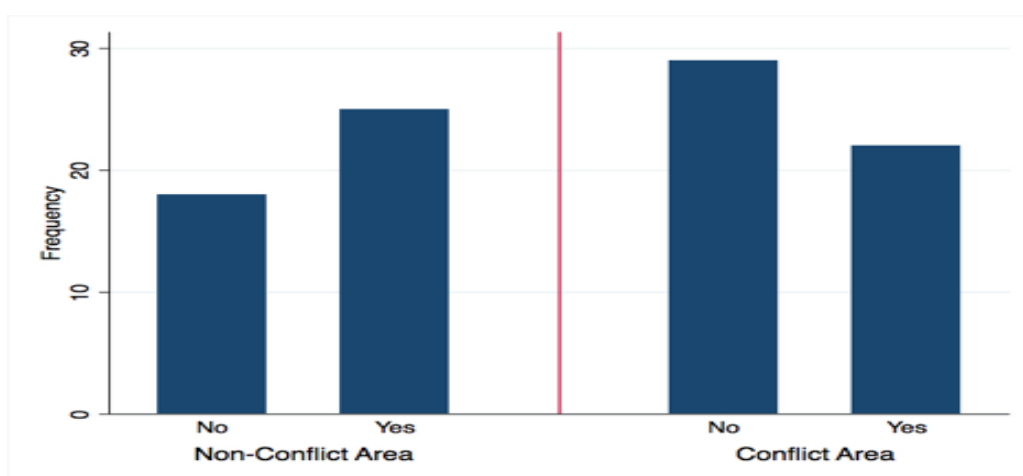
to the strongest militant groups who had control of areas that led to the company's infrastructure. This resulted in fierce battles between the militant groups that led to the deaths of 60 people and the destruction of an entire town (ibid.). The funding of youth violence by political elites and MNOCs is a very sensitive and divisive topic in the Niger Delta that also received mixed reactions from respondents. For example, Figure 32 shows how the number of respondents who perceived the youths to be taking money and gifts from political elites to cause violence and those that did not think so are identical. Additionally, Figure 33, which gives a breakdown of the responses based on the location of the respondents, shows that while 25 % of respondents in Ilorin thought that some youths in the Niger Delta take money to cause violence, 28 % of those in Delta State did not think so.

Figure 32: Youths Take Money/Gifts from Elites to Cause Violence (Overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Figure 33: Youths Take Money/Gifts from Elites to Cause Violence (by location)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

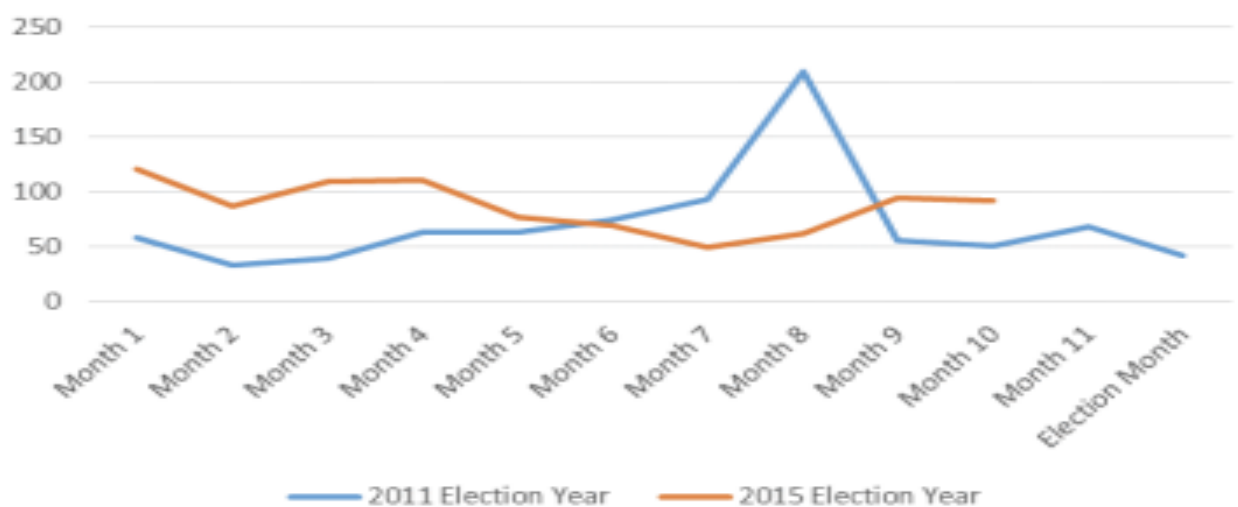
As expected, some respondents openly showed biases in these responses since they considered themselves as part of the Niger Delta youths who have not taken money from elites and MNOCs to cause violence. Some of the highlights of respondents' reactions to the phenomenon of youths taking money from elites to cause violence include a teacher who admitted that some youths take monies from elites to cause violence because of the lack of opportunities in the society (Questionnaire, Respondent #14). Similarly, an unemployed person argued that the youths are entitled to collect money from elites to cause violence due to the limited access to gainful employment in the region (Questionnaire, Respondent #71). In turn, a trader/student debunked the claim that the youths accept money and other gifts to cause violence by arguing that the youths know what is right from what is wrong and will not allow themselves to be used by anyone (Questionnaire, Respondent #86). Similarly, a businessman discussed how the youths know what they need, what they want, and how to get them, and that they are not motivated by money and other gifts (Questionnaire, Respondent #58). Finally, a private school teacher discussed how politicians use the youths as political thugs during elections but still deny them of their entitlements (Questionnaire, Respondent #11). Thus, the responses from respondents regarding the phenomenon of youths taking money from elites to cause violence were mixed but as will be shown below, other sources have revealed that this does occur.

It is important to highlight that the funding of youth violence by political elites is a common problem across Africa and elsewhere (Ojok and Acol, 2017). Political elites in LAOs generally rely on private militias given that public resources are gained by military conquest in such contexts (North et al., 2009, p. 42). The political funding of youth violence in the Niger Delta was infamously revealed in the Human Rights Watch's (HRW) interviews with more than a dozen people in 2005. This included gang leaders and low-key thugs who claimed to have perpetrated paid acts of violence that was aimed at ballot-rigging on behalf of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2003 elections in Rivers State (Human Rights Watch, 2005a/b). Those interviews allowed the participants to discuss how some politicians paid them \$70 to participate in attacks and intimidation of political opponents during Nigeria's 2003 elections. Among other things, this helped to understand why some government officials had sponsored the NDPVF and NDV to be at the forefront of violent crimes and militant activities in Rivers State. One of the notable persons to be interviewed by the HRW

was Tom Ateke who narrated how the then governor of Rivers State, Odili, promised to give him and his boys cash and jobs for their services (ibid.).

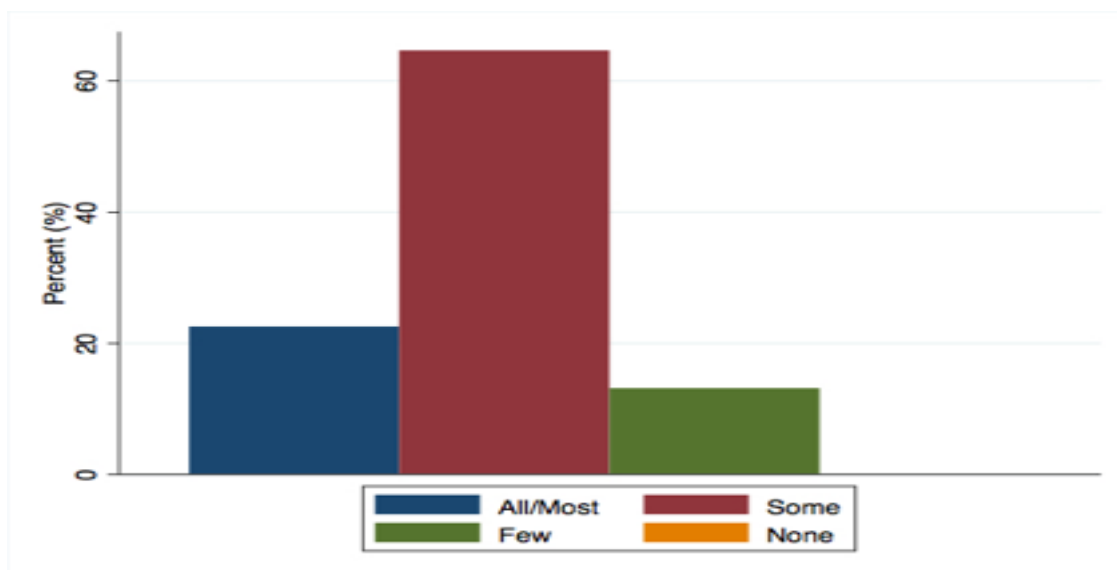
Figure 34 displays the high monthly fatalities that occurred in the Niger Delta in the months leading to the April 2011 and March 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The sharp rise in the total number of lives that were lost in November/December of 2011 resulted from the insurgency and counter-insurgency in the region (Fund for Peace, 2015). It is important to also note that the fatalities in the 2015 elections was higher than that of 2011, which buttresses the prevalent claims that violence in the Niger Delta has persisted with varying degrees of intensity following the introduction of the 2009 amnesty. The high fatalities associated with the period of elections underline the fact that financial rewards from political elites to fighters usually increase during national elections. This also means that there is generally a higher demand for the services of armed groups by political elites during the period of elections. In the light of the widespread evidence that politicians and MNOCs fund youth violence, none of the respondents was convinced that no local elite has been bribed or corrupted to incite violence in the Niger Delta, while 64 % of them believed that some local elites have been bribed or corrupted to incite violence in the region (see Figure 35). While it is clear that problems such as the unconditional pardon and the misappropriation of funds have undermined the 2009 amnesty programme, the funding of violence by politicians and MNOCs likewise defeats the purpose of the amnesty programme.

Figure 34: Monthly Niger Delta Fatalities in Election Year



Source: Fund for Peace (2015, p. 1)

Figure 35: Perception of elites believed to be bribed/corrupted to incite violence in the Niger Delta (overall)



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

One of the major reasons why violence is easily accessible in the Niger Delta and some other parts of the country is uncontrolled arms importation, which is a major longstanding problem in Nigeria. For example, in early 2017, the country's news outlets reported the customs service's seizure of 49 boxes containing 661 pump action rifles, which had been concealed in a container of steel products and other merchandise and illegally imported into the country (This Day, 2017b). According to the country's Comptroller General of Customs (CGC), those arms originated from Turkey and went through China before being smuggled into Nigeria and declared as steel doors (ibid.). Two custom officers have been arrested and are under investigation for aiding to clear the weapons at Apapa Port, while three others have also been arrested and are under investigation for the illegal importation of the weapons.

Nigeria's mature LAO system that undermines impersonal functioning of public institutions has enhanced two fundamental problems associated with arms smuggling into the country. This includes the ease with which weapons are smuggled into the country largely due to weak intelligence and the difficulty of knowing the key persons behind the arms importation. This is seen in the example of the state's interception of the 49 boxes containing 661 pump action rifles as the CGC confirmed that the

interception was done by a “roving team of the NCS’ [National Customs Service’s] federal operations unit, while on intelligence patrol” (ibid.). Thus, while some would argue that the custom officers fulfilled their duties in this case, it was just by accident that they retrieved the weapons. There was no intelligence as far as the smuggling of those weapons into the country is concerned, which largely explains the impunity with which arms are smuggled into the country. Moreover, even though two custom officers and three other individuals are being investigated, Anthony Cardinal Okogie – former Catholic Archbishop of Lagos – has highlighted how those arrested are likely to be the ‘errand boys’ (messengers) as it is difficult to find the main culprits (The Guardian, 2017d). In a context where illegal arms importation is a major problem, it is relatively easy for politicians and MNOCs to fund youth violence, thereby contributing to Niger Delta’s instability.

To summarise, the Niger Delta conflict continues in the wake of the 2009 amnesty programme, which underlines the difficulty of achieving durable stability in LAOs. The side-lining of important actors such as the civil society from the amnesty design, while focusing on political settlement of the former fighters, has contributed to a perverse incentive structure in the Niger Delta inasmuch as other youths have been inadvertently encouraged to also fight for financial rewards. As the following section will show, this perverse incentive structure has contributed to an amnesty trap. The persistence of illegal arms importation into Nigeria demonstrates how the mature LAO system has weakened the capacity of state institutions to function impersonally, thereby enhancing the ability of politicians and MNOCs to fund youth violence in the oil-rich region. The high incidence of casualties in the Niger Delta, especially during elections, shows how political elites have been desperate to attain and maintain political power in order to advance their vested interests in oil.

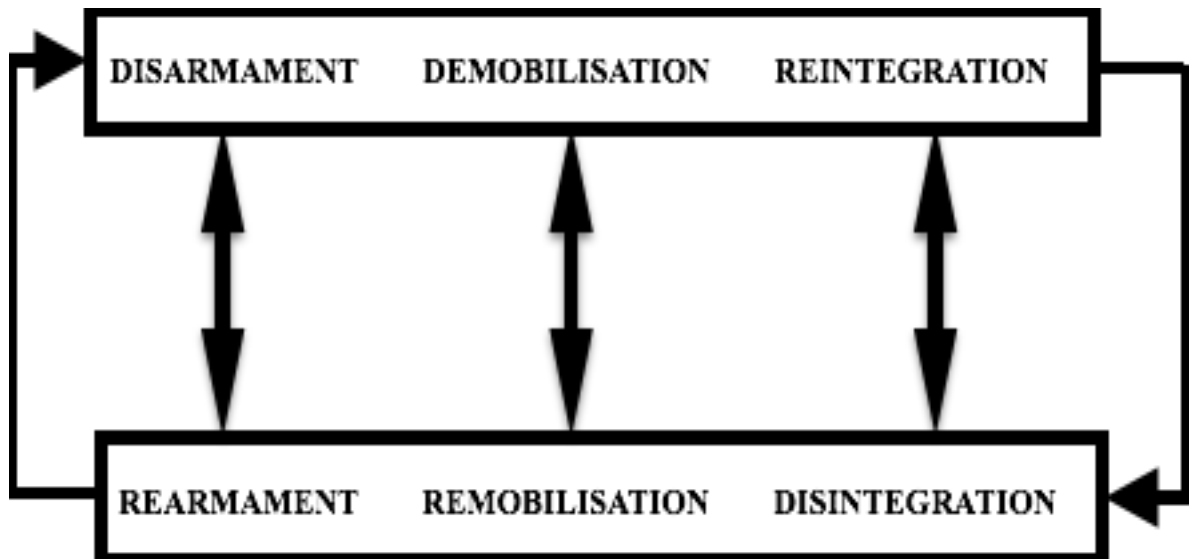
One critical point to note from the analysis is the significance of the unconditional pardon, which among other things demonstrates the government’s lack of credible commitment towards resolving Nigeria’s oil conflict. Mallinder and McEvoy (2011, pp. 112-113) have underlined how “new amnesties laws are increasingly imposing conditions on offenders that enhance their accountability and enable the amnesties to coexist and complement diverse efforts to promote truth, justice and reparations for victims and transitional societies”. The Nigerian state failed to implement amnesty laws

and simply relied on a provision in the constitution that grants the president powers to forgive offenders. The thesis argues that a conditional pardon that is backed by other long-term commitments, especially a transition from LAO towards OAO could have boosted the 2009 amnesty's chances of helping to restore sustainable peace in the Niger Delta (see Chapter 7). This is important for overcoming the LAO's patronage design that has enhanced the mutually beneficial arrangement between the primary actors and traditional leaders, which has so far provided short-term peace. Public institutions need to improve their capacity to execute development plans in the Niger Delta including projects that have been initiated under the 2009 amnesty programme, as the poor amnesty design and implementation has led to an amnesty trap.

5.4 The Amnesty Trap and Patronage Dynamics in the Niger Delta

Despite the high investments in the 2009 amnesty programme, the problem of abject poverty or low human development is prevalent in the Niger Delta. For example, Omokhoa and Ikelegbe (2016) have highlighted how unemployment is still a major problem in the region and that some victims of the conflict have remained uncompensated. It is clear that the 2009 amnesty implementation has not led to durable peace in Nigeria's oil-rich region given that new fighters have emerged since 2016. As has been highlighted, the DDR scheme has largely failed to achieve its targets and the high financial rewards for the ex-militants and mediators, which have not been extended to the general population, have contributed to a perverse incentive structure that makes violence appealing in the Niger Delta. Consequently, the dissertation argues that this has led to an amnesty trap in Nigeria's mature LAO system. The amnesty trap highlights the relapse of each stage of the DDR scheme as can be seen in Figure 36. It emphasises that the process of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-militants has reverted to a rearmament and remobilisation of fighters, as well as a further disintegration of the Niger Delta communities since 2016. It also designates how difficult it has become for the Nigerian government to exit the amnesty programme, which is demonstrated by the government's tendency to extend the programme.

Figure 36: Amnesty Trap



Source: Designed by author.

Furthermore, the amnesty trap highlights the transformation of relations between political elites and their clients in Nigeria's mature LAO system. In this vein, Iwilade (2017) has analysed how the 'real goal' of the amnesty programme was to reconstitute the broken relationship between patrons and clients. This is to say that the youth-led militancy in the Niger Delta that steadily gained momentum from the early 2000s to 2009 largely resulted from a fall-out between Nigerian political elites and their followers. In particular, Niger Delta elites began to lose their clients in the region because youth militias asserted agency following President Obasanjo's attempts to clamp down on the influence of those elites in the early 2000s (Iwilade, 2017, p. 270). The federal government's obsession to maintain oil control led to the side-lining of influential local elites who opposed the government's agenda. Notable among the Niger Delta elites who were targeted by President Obasanjo is the late Chief Diepeye Alamaseiegha – former Governor of Bayelsa State – who was championing the resource control agenda for Niger Deltans in the early 2000s.

Thus, the rise of Niger Delta insurgencies in the 2000s coincided with a decline of local elites' influence on their clients, which led to youth-headed armed groups who mobilised themselves to oppose the government and MNOCs. However, the 2009

amnesty's outcome has done more than restoring the previous relationship that existed between local elites and their clients in Nigeria's mature LAO system. Instead, it has elevated the political, economic, and social significance of the leaders of the former fighters to new heights. As Kiipoye (2015, p. 9) has noted:

Ex-militant commanders who were once enemies of the Nigerian State now hobnob with managers of the state. The state and oil TNCs [transnational corporations], once seen as symbols of exploitation and oppression to be subverted whenever possible, are now the allies of ex-militants. Militants, once seen as energy infrastructure attackers, are paid heavily to protect it; whether actual protection takes place or not is a different matter altogether.

This high elevation of the ex-militant commanders was demonstrated in Nigeria's 2015 elections during which Tompolo – an ex-militant leader – was highly influential in picking the running mate of PDP's governorship candidate in Delta State (PM News, 2014). It follows that in the wake of the 2009 amnesty programme, access to violence has been enhanced as the basis for patronage politics in the Niger Delta and the degree of access to violence determines the rewards for the fighters. Ex-militant commanders such as Tompolo and Asari-Dokubo have made huge gains from the 2009 amnesty because of the significant threats that they posed to the MNOCs and political elites. In turn, the leaders of non-violent civil movements in the Niger Delta – including Legborsi Saro Pyagbara and Fegalo Nsuke of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) – have not been motivated to become militants as a result of the 2009 amnesty. While maintaining the vision of its founder Saro-Wiwa, MOSOP has continued to call for social and environmental justice in Nigeria using non-violent means (UNPO, 2019). The amnesty trap captures the fact that while the masses in the Niger Delta are yet to satisfactorily benefit from oil revenues, Nigeria's mature LAO system has ensured that the ex-militants transition from clients to position themselves as partners of political elites and MNOCs.

At present, the ex-militant leaders and their followers who have become huge beneficiaries of the 2009 amnesty programme even denounce those who claim to continue with the struggle of 'liberating' the region from the hands of the government and MNOCs. For example, Tompolo wrote a letter on 29 May 2016 to condemn the NDA's violent activities (Pulse, 2016). Similarly, 9 ex-militant leaders met in 2016 to

publicly condemn the NDA's hostilities and to commend the 2009 amnesty programme's implementation (Sahara Reporters, 2016). The ability of the ex-militant leaders to side with the government and MNOCs that they fought against in the past and to condemn existing fighters who still engage in violence in the Niger Delta demonstrates that the combatants largely fight for their own interests even if they use the region's problems as a motive to start a rebellion.

The high elevation of the status of the ex-militants through the 2009 amnesty implies that the idea of co-optation or co-optation which existing literature – for example, Iwilade (2017) and Kiipoye (2015) – tends to use to characterise patron-client relations in the Niger Delta fails to adequately capture the current institutional arrangement between political elites, MNOCs, and the former fighters. Co-optation or co-optation usually connotes a one-sided affair in which political and business elites dominate and control the relationship with their clients in patronage networks. As, for example, Cheng et al. (2018, p. 2) have highlighted, elites mostly exercise control of their followers through formal and informal structures. In place of co-optation or co-optation, a mutual symbiosis best describes the current relationship between political/business elites and some of the ex-militant leaders in the Niger Delta as politicians and MNOCs do not necessarily hold the upper hand in the present order. Both patrons and clients gain from a mutually beneficial relationship given that it is in the interest of elites and former fighters to keep each other happy while the problems of the Niger Delta region persist. Just as the elites have to make the ex-militants happy through lucrative financial deals in order to gain their support, it is in the interest of ex-militants to keep elites happy by publicly backing elites' endeavours such as the 2009 amnesty programme.

In this mutual symbiosis affair, the former fighters tend to gain more as they are not as constrained as political and business elites in Nigeria's mature LAO system. For example, the politicians form part of public officials who are generally required to render account to citizens and risk losing their positions in multi-party settings if they fail to convince constituents that they are acting in their interests and are better placed to do that than their competitors (Risteska 2014, p. 4). Also, MNOCs have been obliged to carry out CSR duties in the Niger Delta as a result of their complicity in scandals such as the killing of Saro-Wiwa and funding fighters. In contrast, ex-militants do not have such obligations as their business contracts remain intact even if they fail to fulfil

the services that they are obliged to render (Kiipoye, 2015). This explains why a problem such as oil theft is still prevalent in the Niger Delta even though former fighters have been put in charge of coastal waterways and crude oil pipeline surveillance (ibid.). The shocks that can undermine this privileged position of the ex-militants include the emergence of stronger insurgent groups, the rival interests of ex-combatants, a government that has the courage to place the local population's needs above ex-militants' personal demands, and most important of all, a movement from LAO towards OAO.

The amnesty trap results from the mutual symbiosis of the ex-militants and elites in the sense that the ex-militants' current influence makes it difficult for the government to exit the 2009 amnesty programme. The extension of the amnesty programme from 2015 to now by Buhari is a proof that the programme will continue unless the power of former and existing fighters is curtailed. The amnesty trap also underscores that the former combatants' high financial rewards from the amnesty make militancy appealing in the Niger Delta, and that militants' demands from political elites and oil companies are bound to increase over time. As a young public servant remarked: "The militants are too selfish as they keep wanting more and more" (Questionnaire, Respondent #72). This is apparent in the present ambitions of militant groups such as the NDRC and NDA who have moved on from demanding just rewards of oil revenues from the federal government to a complete separation of the Niger Delta from the rest of Nigeria. For example, in 2017, the NDRC made the following statement: "We have resolved that resource control, fiscal federalism and devolution of powers are the only panacea. Anything short of that will not be acceptable to NDRC and the 21st century agitators of the Niger Delta" (The Will, 2017).

The amnesty trap results largely from a poor 2009 amnesty implementation that has shown that the high financial gains of former fighters without a significant consideration of institutional reforms can impede a conflict management process. In this vein, most of the respondents were highly sceptical of the 2009 amnesty as can be seen in the following views that were expressed: a student argued, "the government contained the conflict in a dangerous way by focusing on the few that were front fighters/fore burners and neglecting the large population" (Questionnaire, Respondent #37); a local resident in Delta State asserted, the amnesty only contained violence in

the Niger Delta as “the government only addresses local grievances if people become violent” (Questionnaire, Respondent #9); and another student stated, “The government’s money only makes them [ex-militants] seem quiet, but as with all humans, when the money is exhausted, they might start demanding more money and incite violence when their demands are not met” (Questionnaire, Respondent #32).

To summarise, the poor execution of the 2009 amnesty programme including the DDR scheme has led to an amnesty trap and transformed Nigeria’s patronage politics as the high financial benefits for the ex-militants and mediators have incentivised rebellion in the Niger Delta. The 2009 amnesty’s implementation has generally been a misguided intervention within a mature LAO system that has substituted the problems of the region with a mutually beneficial arrangements between the political elites, the ex-militants, the MNOCs, and the traditional leaders. Public institutions of mature LAOs “are capable, in normal circumstances, of lasting through changes in the makeup of the dominant coalition” (North et al., 2009, p. 47). This has been demonstrated in Nigeria in the wake of the 2009 amnesty as ex-militants who used to be enemies of the state have become influential members of society through their reception of special financial favours from state institutions and MNOCs. In addition to the longstanding problems such as the funding of youth violence by politicians and MNOCs, the lucrative deals for the former fighters have contributed to violence exhortation in the Niger Delta inasmuch as militancy has been enhanced as a viable means of entering into partnerships with political elites and oil companies (Kiipoye, 2015). While the masses are yet to benefit significantly from the 2009 amnesty programme and oil revenues in the Niger Delta, ex-militant commanders and their followers have formed a mutually beneficial partnership with political elites and oil companies. How to overcome this mutually beneficial arrangement will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has principally demonstrated the extent to which Nigeria’s mature LAO system has helped to shape the 2009 amnesty in a way that has led to an amnesty trap, which might fuel further violence in the Niger Delta. The LAO system has influenced decision-making in the peace-building exercise as, for example, it helps to understand the prioritisation of certain actors over others. In particular, the local population

including the civil society was largely side-lined in the amnesty design because the LAO system ensured that political elites and MNOCs focused more on political settlement of the fighters using the help of traditional leaders as will be elaborated further in the next chapter. Thus, more attention has been given to short-term solutions rather than long-term management of violence in the Niger Delta. The institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system have contributed to the amnesty trap by enhancing several flaws in the amnesty design including a bad implementation of the DDR scheme, privatisation of amnesty funds by state institutions, a disingenuous unconditional presidential pardon for the fighters, and the lucrative financial rewards for the militants and mediators. Additionally, the longstanding problems in Nigeria's mature LAO system such as uncontrolled arms importation and the funding of youth violence in the Niger Delta by political elites and MNOCs have contributed significantly to the amnesty trap.

The analysis has departed from existing literature – such as Ikelegbe (2010) and Kiipoye (2015) – that tends to ignore the contents of the 2009 presidential amnesty proclamation. The latter is important for evaluating the programme's outcome as, for example, the unconditional presidential pardon has been highlighted as a major contradiction that has negatively impacted the programme's execution. Unconditional amnesties are generally rare given that only 37 % of amnesties are unconditional in the new Amnesties, Conflict, and Peace Agreement dataset (Mallinder, 2018). They are commonly used in partly free and unfree regimes than democracies and tend to benefit state actors more than non-state armed groups (*ibid.*). The dissertation argues that a conditional pardon that is underpinned by institutional reforms, notably a movement from LAO towards OAO – would boost the chances of a sustainable peace in the Niger Delta (see Chapter 7).

Thus, the chapter has exposed the fact that the 2009 amnesty has not been enough to deal with the Niger Delta conflict, and has instead created a perverse incentive structure that might fuel further violence. It supports scholarly views – such as Obi and Rustad (2011) – that have argued that there was no clear road-map to pursue the amnesty programme. The findings also support existing works – such as Kiikpoye (2015) and Iwilade (2017) – that have highlighted how there has been a transformation of patronage politics in the wake of the Nigerian government's amnesty initiative. In turn,

the chapter has argued for the need to move away from the idea of co-optation or co-option for explaining patronage politics in the Niger Delta to a mutual symbiosis as the ex-fighters who spearheaded the amnesty negotiations including Tompolo have exhibited greater agency in the wake of the 2009 amnesty intervention. This implies that political elites and MNOCs do not necessarily have the upper hand in their relationship with the leaders of the ex-militants. The latter have evolved to a level where they are in a more balanced relationship with the powerful people in the society.

The amnesty trap also demonstrates among other things that each of the phases of a DDR scheme can actually lead to the opposite of its intended targets, making it difficult to exit an amnesty programme. A successful application of DDR is yet to be witnessed in some other resource-rich countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Liberia, however, the success of DDR lays in the fact that it went beyond satisfying the private requests of the ex-combatants and largely included the needs of the war affected populations (Sanz, 2009 cited in Ikelegbe and Umokoro, 2016, p. 27). DDR needs a careful planning and implementation because inasmuch as it is geared towards restoring security and order in a society, it also has the potential of undermining peace-building. Against this backdrop, the next chapter evaluates the extent to which the 2009 amnesty has impacted the Niger Delta's conflict cycle – conflict management, containment and resolution.

Chapter 6:

2009 Niger Delta Amnesty:

A Case of Conflict Containment, Management or Resolution?

6.0 Introduction

This chapter assesses the 2009 Niger Delta amnesty in the light of conflict management, containment, and resolution. According to Wallensteen (2019, p. 3), there have been more peace agreements since the Cold War than in any period after the termination of World War II. Amnesties have formed an integral part of the measures that have helped to respond to peace negotiations during that period (Mallinder, 2018). However, while many of the peace agreements have managed to transform conflicts into more constructive relations among some people, others have simply remained signatures on paper as they have not succeeded in sustaining peace (Wallensteen, 2019, p. 3). The peace agreements that have simply remained signatures on paper have contributed significantly to conflicts that have alternated between active and inactive as have been witnessed in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Burundi. Such conflicts, which tend to resume with greater intensity after the signing of peace cease-fires and the conclusion of peace agreements, have been prevalent since the late 1980s and early 1990s (Smith, 2004). The ambiguous status of these conflicts has led to some important insights in conflict cycle research including the need to differentiate between conflicts that have ‘ended’ and those that have been ‘suspended’ (ibid.).

Existing studies that have analysed the 2009 amnesty’s impact on the Niger Delta conflict and on Nigeria’s patronage politics such as Iwilade (2017), Kiipoye (2015), Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016), and Ushie (2013) have not sufficiently explored the amnesty’s link to the conflict’s cycle. In turn, the chapter investigates the degree to which the 2009 amnesty’s outcome enhances our understanding of conflict management, containment, and resolution. This is important because in the wake of the 2009 amnesty intervention, the Niger Delta conflict has fallen into the category of conflicts that have alternated between active and inactive as there have been lull times such as the immediate aftermath of the 2009 amnesty agreement and periods of intense

violence including 2016 when new fighters such as the NDA appeared in the Niger Delta (Newsome, 2011; Onuoha, 2016; Reuters, 2017b).

The central argument is that conflict containment – understood as institutional arrangements that have kept violence temporarily under control through the manipulation of socio-economic conditions including the 2009 amnesty process by politicians (hereon referred to as a political manipulative process) – best explains intervention measures in the Niger Delta. While keeping violence temporarily under control through a political manipulative process can be intentional as will be highlighted in section 1 of this chapter, it is difficult to unearth elite intentions in their quest for political and economic power (Jervis, 2017; Collins, 2000; Glaser, 1997). It follows that instead of overly focusing on the examination of elite intentions in the containment of the Niger Delta conflict, the chapter places a greater focus on the institutional impediments that have undermined the management and resolution of Nigeria's oil conflict. Conflict containment is distinguished from conflict management and resolution in the sense that containment entails institutional structures that help to reduce violence without further plans to address underlying incompatibilities and end the conflict. In contrast, management and resolution consist of institutions that help to reduce violence with the aim of addressing underlying problems, and the ending of violence, respectively. Thus, the chapter contests the common understanding of the 2009 amnesty programme as a conflict management strategy as has been argued in works such as Amadi and Inyikalum (2016), Osah (2016), and Egwim (2015). It also departs from the traditional understanding of containment including the US containment policy against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In turn, while highlighting Swanström and Weissmann's (2005) 'integral approach' for understanding conflict prevention, management, and resolution, the chapter argues that conflict containment is important for explaining the decision-making in Nigeria's mature LAO system that has led to short-term peace in the Niger Delta.

The LAO framework informs the analysis inasmuch as "personal relationships and rent-creation provide the incentive systems that contain violence and allow cooperation" in mature LAOs such as Nigeria (North et al., 2009, p. 37). It is important to reiterate that even though all LAOs are more prone to violence than OAOs, a certain level of violence is inevitable in all the social orders as most societies experience different forms of

violence including domestic violence and cyberbullying. In this vein, a successful conflict management strategy and conflict resolution require institutional reforms that can help to significantly reduce violence occurrence as will be elaborated in the next chapter. Since Niger Delta's 2009 amnesty has led to an amnesty trap as was argued in the previous chapter, this chapter highlights the extent to which violence has been contained temporarily in the oil-rich region inasmuch as state intervention measures including the 2009 amnesty have not been accompanied by the institutional changes required to resolve the conflict. The chapter entails a scrutiny of the conflict cycle in the Niger Delta and a demonstration of why conflict containment has contributed to the amnesty trap in this oil-rich region.

6.1 Conflict Cycle in the Niger Delta

Following the Cold War, civil or intra-state conflicts have largely been discussed in the light of conflict prevention, management/containment, and resolution (for example, Wallensteen, 2019; Swanström & Weissmann, 2005). Conflict prevention entails identifying non-violent means of resolving tensions to forestall the emergence of violence, stopping ongoing conflicts from spreading, and deterring the re-emergence of violence (Anderlini & Stanski, 2004, p. 1). Most countries have pursued different conflict prevention strategies towards different ends. LAOs usually have greater difficulties to prevent conflicts as the fluid and unstable coalition of elites is less able to withstand internal and external shocks such as environmental disasters and international price changes in goods that impede the generation of rents. Apart from conflict, the internal and external shocks in LAOs also lead to rearrangements within existing elite coalitions and the creation of new political alliances (North et al., 2009, p. 42).

Once LAOs have been unable to prevent violence from occurring or re-emerging, they ought to find ways to contain, manage, and/or resolve it. Containment, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2017), is "the act of keeping something under control so that it cannot spread in a harmful way". Conflict management and resolution tend to be intimately connected as, for example, Swanström and Weissman (2005, p. 25) have argued: "The process of conflict management is the foundation for more effective conflict resolution". In this vein, conflict management tends "to reduce the

dangers of crisis, creating some confidence and lessening (potential or actual) suffering” while “conflict resolution is more ambitious as it tries to affect the basic issues, the incompatibilities that direct the conflicting parties” (Wallensteen, 2019, p. 5). In general, conflict management and resolution are different ends of the same continuum (Zartman, 2000 cited in Swanström & Weissman, 2005). This implies that a conflict needs to be managed in order to embark on robust strategies to resolve the underlying incompatibilities that led to that particular conflict, and thus end the fighting.

In turn, the 2009 amnesty in the Niger Delta aligns with a truce agreement, which Wallensteen (2019) has highlighted as a means of freezing a conflict’s military status quo that does not necessarily lead to peace efforts. The previous chapter has elaborated on a number of shortcomings that have undermined peace-building in the Niger Delta including institutional arrangements that have led to a flawed amnesty design, the funding of youth violence by political elites and MNOCs, and the illegal arms importation that threatens peace in Nigeria. Other persisting problems such as pollution and poverty that fuel the conflict trap have also been discussed in Chapter 3. Given that the primary actors, particularly political elites and MNOCs, who appear to facilitate peace efforts in the Niger Delta at the same time contribute significantly to the problems that undermine peace in the region, it is difficult to achieve a successful conflict management and resolution in this context. As Aduloju and Okwechime (2016, p. 524) have underscored, the fruitless efforts to resolve the Niger Delta conflict partly lie in the insincerity and hypocrisy of the government and MNOCs. In other words, political and business elites have lacked transparency and honesty in dealing with the Niger Delta conflict as their actions usually contradict the peace efforts that they preach. This is evident in how the amnesty implementation has led to the privatization of public funds by individuals working for state institutions as was highlighted in the previous chapter, and the covert agreements between elites and the militants that led to the amnesty as will be elaborated below. It is important to underline that the lack of transparency and honesty is symptomatic of elites’ undertakings in LAOs as the patron-client relations in this system tend to be fundamentally corrupt and shady (North et al., 2009, p. 37).

Against this backdrop, scholars such as Iwilade (2017) have alluded to the importance

of finding the ‘real reason’ behind the 2009 amnesty programme even though the presidential declaration highlighted that it was meant to help resolve the hostilities in Nigeria’s oil-rich region. Respondents were generally suspicious of the amnesty programme as, for example, a student argued: “The [Nigerian] government tried to reduce the fire of agitation by focusing on those who were highly violent between 2009 and 2015. However, the government never attempted to entirely quench the fire by attending to the concerns of the general population in the region” (Interview, Respondent #31). This feeds into the common narrative that the 2009 amnesty did not address the underlying structures and associated grievances, and was instead the government’s means of ‘buying off’ the militants that has triggered ‘new violence’ (Campbell, 2017; Golden-Timsar, 2018; Ebiede & Langer, 2017). Therefore, the thesis argues that the 2009 amnesty and other intervention measures in the Niger Delta have generally been motivated by institutional arrangements that favour short-term containment of violence as opposed to long-term plans to manage and resolve the conflict.

Scholars such as Swanström and Weissman (2005) have proposed an ‘integral approach’ to explain conflict prevention, management, and resolution. This implies that: “A theory that differentiates between conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution [also] risks being counterproductive when applied to a reality in which these concepts in fact are indistinguishable” (ibid., p. 28). Thus, there is a thin line that separates conflict prevention, management, and resolution as these measures are intertwined in terms of dealing with a particular conflict. As has been highlighted above, conflict resolution entails conflict management as both need to help resolve a particular conflict’s underlying incompatibilities and also end hostilities (Wallenstein, 2019, p. 10). Thus, there is an intrinsic link between conflict management and resolution since conflict management generally implies a provisional peace – reducing the armed aspect of a conflict – that aims to achieve a sustainable peace through conflict resolution – addressing the underlying drivers of a conflict and ending violence. The measures that help to transform conflict management into conflict resolution include mediation, arms control, socio-economic planning, and educational planning that target the conflict region (Lund, 2009, p. 289; Kotite, 2012, p. 12). More importantly, the movement from LAO towards OAO is key to building a sustainable peace (see Chapter 7). The intrinsic link between conflict management and resolution has been practically

demonstrated in countries such as Liberia where the needs of both combatants and non-combatants were sufficiently integrated into peace-building efforts (Ikelegbe & Umokoro, 2016).

Given the intrinsic link between conflict management and resolution, it is difficult to situate peace efforts such as the 2009 Niger Delta amnesty within Swanström and Weissman's (2005) integral approach. This is because, instead of reducing violence by addressing the local grievances such as pollution and relative deprivation, the 2009 amnesty reduced violence – not by bringing about institutional change or addressing underlying grievances and other causes of violence – but rather by incentivising militants to suspend violent activities through lucrative financial deals with political elites and MNOCs (see Chapter 5). This demonstrates how an LAO contains violence and permits cooperation between elites and violence specialists that actually increases the likelihood of further violence. Violence and economics in LAOs are “politics by other means” as the distribution of economic privileges is central to the stability of relations within the dominant coalition and the entire system (North et al., 2009, p. 42). The focus of the government and MNOCs to create financial opportunities for the ex-militants while largely disregarding institutional arrangements that helped to shape the different conflict drivers and subsequent responses, makes it problematic to conceptualise the 2009 amnesty along the integral trajectory of conflict management and resolution. Consequently, in place of conflict management and resolution, this chapter argues that conflict containment is a better explanatory framework for the 2009 amnesty intervention in the Niger Delta (see below).

First, it is important to clarify how this dissertation understands ‘containment’, and how this differs from some existing analyses. In modern times, the advocacy for containment of Soviet expansion by George Frost Kennan – American diplomat, historian and ‘the father of the containment policy’ – has been highlighted as the strategy that guided US diplomacy the most throughout the Cold War (Leffler, 2006, p. 2). The thrust of Kennan's advocacy was for the US to pursue a policy aimed at the Soviet Union which: “must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies” (Kennan, 1947, p. 6). Thus, the US government needed to “remain cool and collected and that its demands on Russian policy should be put forward in such a manner as to leave the way open for a compliance not too detrimental

to Russian prestige” (Ibid., p. 7). The essence of containment here was to prevent further expansion of Soviet power, to promote seeds of destruction within the Soviet Union, and to force it to modify its behaviour in order to align with ‘generally accepted international standards’ (Luhr et al., 2005, p. 19). The Marshall Plan – an American-funded project to help with the recovery of Western Europe following World War II – was important in this endeavour as it contributed to the isolation of the Soviet Union by forestalling the possibility of Europe to turn to the Soviet Union for economic help (Gaddis, 2011). The influence of Kennan’s containment strategy goes beyond the Cold War as there have been calls for the US to revisit Kennan’s ideas (Rojansky, 2016).

In the post-Cold War era, conflict containment has generally been understudied, which has been acknowledged in peacekeeping studies (Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015, p. 69). Conflict containment has also been interpreted differently in the aftermath of the Cold War as, for example, some economists have defined containment from the perspective of “spending as economic activity that is related to the consequences or prevention of violence where the violence is directed against people or property” (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2015, p. 4). From this angle, conflict containment has to do with the overall investments that states make to prevent violence, which includes military expenditure and internal security (ibid., p. 11). This understanding of containment can be classified under structural prevention of conflict in other circles since it “focusses on more long term measures that address the underlying causes of a potential conflict along with potentially escalating and triggering factors” (Swanstöm & Weissman, 2005, p. 19). In peacekeeping studies, containment is desirable in the short-run, but robust peacekeeping missions are important for containing violence and protecting those under the control of armed actors – the government military forces and rebels (Beardsley and Gleditsch, 2015, p. 84-85). Long-run containment in peacekeeping can allow intrastate conflicts to fester as rebels can receive protection from peace-keepers and infiltrate the local population in the process while mapping out ways to attack the government (ibid.). Thus, containment in peacekeeping can have both negative and positive results depending on how it is deployed.

The dissertation contends that the 2009 Niger Delta amnesty intervention, rather than helping to reform institutions for better management and resolution of the oil conflict, provided a short-term containment of violence without further credible plans for

ensuring sustainable peace. Violence containment without further plans for sustaining peace in the Niger Delta largely entails a failed attempt at political settlement. Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016, p. 71) have underscored how the political settlement efforts that the government pursued in support of the 2009 amnesty programme largely targeted political leaders of the Niger Delta oil producing states and prominent traditional leaders who were respected by the youths of the region and who had access to the fighters. This restates the point expressed in the previous chapter that the amnesty design mainly included the primary actors and the traditional leaders, but largely excluded the local population and civil society groups. It is important to note that details of the agreements and arrangements between the presidency, national leaders, Niger Delta traditional leaders, and the militant commanders that led to the 2009 amnesty were informal and kept secret (Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye, 2016). In the wake of the programme's implementation, details have emerged regarding how the top militant commanders were promised contracts that relate to oil blocks and surveillance of oil pipelines (ibid.). This failed attempt at political settlement largely explains why the amnesty trap resulted from the short-term containment of violence. As Chikwem and Duru (2018, p. 50) have argued, the Niger Delta will return to a full-blown hostility when the 2009 amnesty, which has opted to offer cash hand-outs and contracts to ex-militants, is scrapped.

Thus, conflict containment in the Niger Delta underlines institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system that have enhanced political manipulation of socio-economic conditions to contain violence inasmuch as political and business elites, through secret and informal arrangements, convinced militants to lay down their arms, which has led to an amnesty trap. It helps to explain why the relative calm that the Niger Delta experienced in the immediate aftermath of the 2009 amnesty intervention was visibly shaky as a number of reports including Sayne (2013) had predicted the likelihood of further violence in the region. The hidden consultations and negotiations that included key militant commanders, traditional leaders, and political elites led to a favourable amnesty deal for the former fighters and lucrative contracts for their leaders, but not to a socio-economic and infrastructure development for the local population (Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye, 2016, p. 80). While politicians have been at the forefront of conflict containment in the Niger Delta, they have done so together with MNOCs and the ex-militant commanders. As Wengraf (2018, p. 160) has highlighted, oil

companies have been happy to collaborate with Nigerian regimes to facilitate oil extraction and profit accumulation despite the human rights abuses in the Niger Delta. The 2009 amnesty led to a provisional halt of violence that made it possible for MNOCs to continue with their oil exploitation in the Niger Delta region.

During fieldwork, respondents shared some views and perceptions regarding the dissertation's definition of containment as a short-term measure of reducing violence without further plans to address the underlying incompatibilities of the Niger Delta conflict. For example, while distinguishing between conflict containment and resolution, a Niger Deltan post-doctoral researcher on conflict and bioethics argued:

To resolve the conflict, you need to address the root cause. To contain the conflict, you can simply send the army to go to the Niger Delta to contain the activities of the rebels. In order to resolve it, you need to go to the Niger Delta to fix the problem like the environmental problems causing diseases, and unemployment (Interview, Respondent #7).

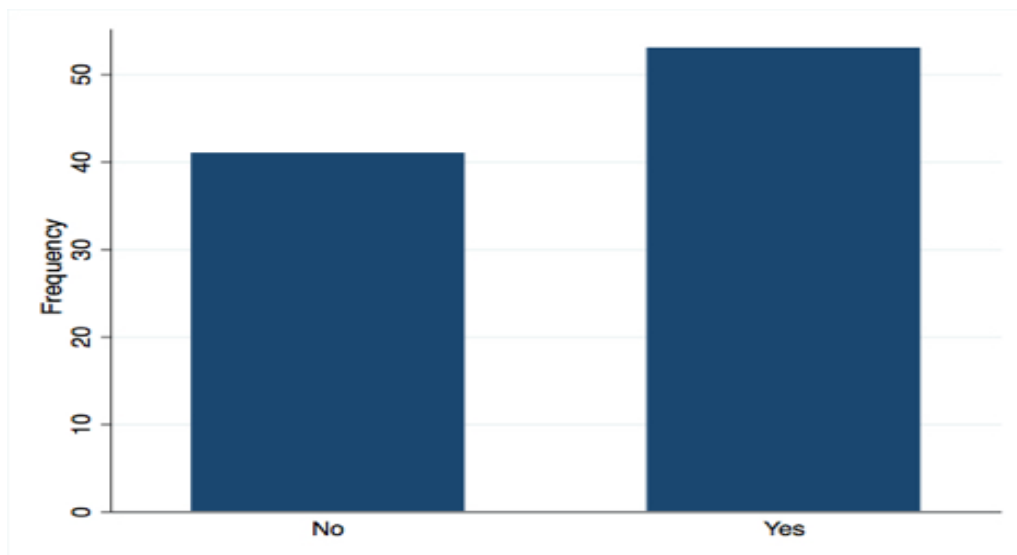
Figure 37 also shows the distribution of responses to question 9 on the questionnaire, which has to do with whether the amnesty programme was meant to contain or resolve the Niger Delta conflict. 54 % of the respondents were of the view that the amnesty was simply meant to contain the conflict, while 42 % disagreed. This means that respondents were generally divided regarding the elite intentions behind the amnesty as a very small majority of them thought that it was not aimed at addressing the Niger Delta's underlying problems and ending the conflict. The split in opinions to question 9 demonstrates the difficulty of knowing elite intentions in their quest for political and economic power (Jervis, 2017; Collins, 2000; Glaser, 1997). Some of the 42 % of respondents that opposed the view that the government's intention behind the amnesty was to contain the conflict shared the following opinions:

The late President Yar'Adua initiated the amnesty programme to aid the militants to turn over a new leaf and be responsible citizens to the country and the world at large, not to contain the conflict but to put a stop to it (Questionnaire, Respondent #70). The Amnesty was not meant to contain the conflict. It was actually meant to stop it, but it wasn't properly carried out, so they ended up prolonging the conflict (Questionnaire, Respondent #32); The people in government at the time were ready to resolve the problem in the Niger Delta not to contain the conflict. That is why the amnesty

programme was initiated (Questionnaire, Respondent #67); The amnesty was not meant to contain the conflict because several promises of cleaning the environment was made which eventually wasn't done (Questionnaire, Respondent #72); The initiation of the amnesty programme was meant to serve as a first step for Yar'Adua to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment (Questionnaire, Respondent #67).

These views align with some scholarly arguments that the amnesty programme was geared towards helping to promote peace and taking Nigeria out of the resource curse (Osah, 2016; Egwim, 2015). However, one thing that can be observed particularly from the views expressed by the respondents is their focus on what the amnesty was 'meant' or 'intended' to achieve, but not on the amnesty's outcome. Given the difficulty of verifying elite intentions in this context, it is important to understand both the political discourse that initiated the amnesty and the latter's outcome as was elaborated in the previous chapter before considering whether to draw a meaningful conclusion regarding containment and resolution of the conflict.

Figure 37: Amnesty Intended to Contain Conflict



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Of the 54 % of respondents who perceived the government's intention behind the amnesty as a containment package, some made the following remarks:

The amnesty has simply made the militants rich, meaning that it ended up containing

violence for oil exploitation in the Niger Delta (Questionnaire, Respondent #82); Only the bad boys are benefiting from the programme and the good ones are hungry and angry and this is even making them to change from good to bad just to benefit from it (Questionnaire, Respondent #18); The amnesty programme that simply pays ex-militants does not fix the problem in communities that these same ex-militants were fighting for (Questionnaire, Respondent #26); The amnesty programme was simply a show to make the world believe that they had the interests of the people at heart and it was only of benefit to a few (Questionnaire, Respondent #32); The Nigerian government has only contained the conflict of the Niger Delta by creating amnesty programme to the militants which means without causing violence the government will not provide and by so doing it will increase the rate of corruption in the region (Questionnaire, Respondent #76).

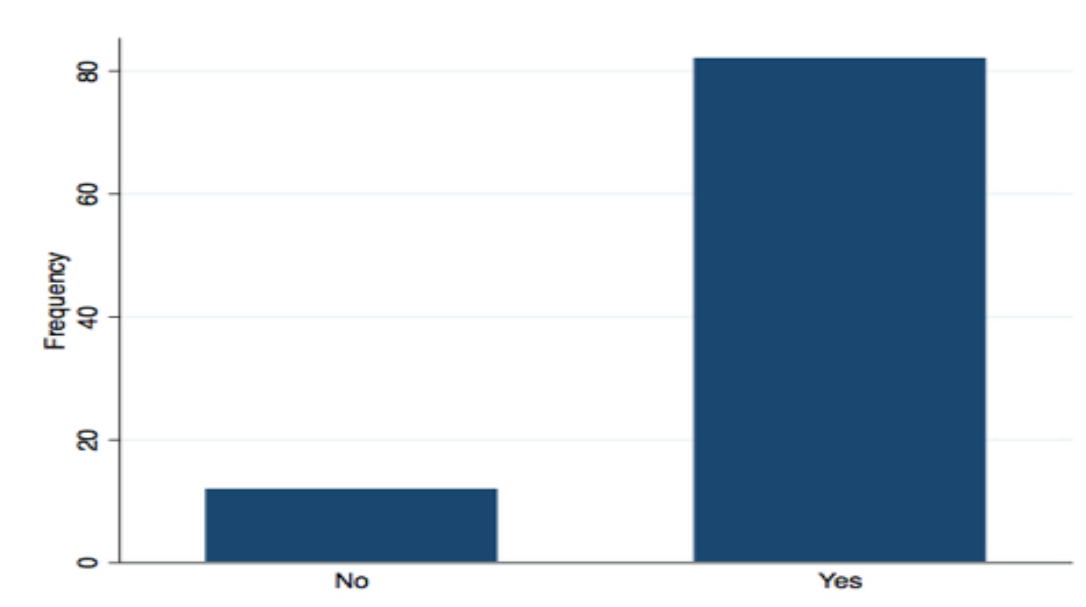
In contrast to the views expressed by the 42 % of respondents, this group endeavoured to take the amnesty's outcome into consideration before concluding that this political initiative, rather than help to resolve the Niger Delta conflict, aimed at containing violence.

In turn, question 8 was more straightforward than question 9 as it focused solely on knowing what respondents thought about the amnesty's outcome and not the elite intentions behind the amnesty. Specifically, question 8 of the questionnaire states: "Some analysts think that, instead of resolving the Niger Delta conflict, the Nigerian Government has only contained the conflict. Do you agree? If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response". In response to this question, more than 80 % of respondents agreed that the Nigerian government has contained the conflict (see Figure 38). It follows that a very high percentage of respondents believed that the state actors and representatives in Nigeria had largely failed to complement the amnesty with credible long-term measures to help address the problems that fuel violence in the Niger Delta.

Thus, despite the split in opinions regarding the government's intentions behind the amnesty, one thing that a high majority of respondents agreed on is the fact that the initiative temporarily contained violence without further efforts to address the longstanding problems in the oil-rich region. For a good number of respondents, the longevity of the oil conflict demonstrates the government's lack of commitment to long-term measures that can help to resolve the underlying incompatibilities and end

the fighting. They argued that the government's failure to adequately dialogue with the local population and the persisting problems of unemployment and pollution in the Niger Delta region are good indicators of the short-term containment of violence. In turn, Chapter 5 highlighted among other things the extent to which the 2009 amnesty implementation has led to an amnesty trap and how longstanding problems such as uncontrolled arms importation and the funding of youth violence by elites and MNOCs continue to undermine resolution of the oil conflict. As Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016, p. 83) have argued, a credible government intervention in the Niger Delta crisis needs to be comprehensive enough to include effective social and economic programmes for the local population.

Figure 38: Containment of Niger Delta Conflict



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Conflict containment in the Niger Delta has largely consisted of formal and informal institutional arrangements that have provisionally kept violence under control through a political manipulative process inasmuch as long-term measures for attaining conflict resolution have been missing. As can be deduced from the analysis in the previous chapter, the 2009 amnesty suffered from several flaws including the disingenuous unconditional pardon and privatization of public funds by state institutions, which help to demonstrate the extent to which political elites can manipulate socio-economic conditions to achieve a short-term containment of violence. The latter can also be

manipulated in certain contexts as, for example, Baliga and Sjöström (2012) have highlighted how extremists or agents with extreme agendas can manipulate and inflame conflicts through provocative actions. Furthermore, Smith (2006) has underlined how elites can use fear as a tool to manipulate internal conflicts. LAOs have historically limited violence through political manipulation of the economy to create and sustain elites' privileged interests. In eighteenth century Britain, for example, the creation of privileged corporations and the manipulative selections of members of parliament to offices in the army, navy, and government institutions formed part of the economic privileges that ensured the stability of the LAO system (North et al., 2009, p. 200). Thus, for most LAOs to be stable, powerful individuals including rebels need to be given credible incentives in order to abandon the use of violence and to cooperate instead (ibid., p. 258). In the Niger Delta, the offer of lucrative stipends and business contracts constituted the major economic incentives that encouraged the fighters to abandon violence in 2009 and subscribe to the amnesty programme (see Chapter 5).

It is important to add that reducing violence through political manipulation of the economy tends to be unsustainable in most LAOs as, for example, North et al. (2009, p. 190) have highlighted: "The specific idea that political manipulation of economic privileges posed the greatest threat to a republic was the central hypothesis of Whig or Commonwealth thinking in the eighteenth century in Britain, France, and the United States". Accordingly, the political manipulation of socio-economic conditions – such as lucrative business contracts for the militant commanders as well as over-priced and abandoned infrastructural projects – to contain violence was short-lived in the Niger Delta as, for example, militant activities resumed in 2016 (see Chapter 5). This implies that political violence is more likely to reappear – sometimes with greater intensity – after a conflict has been contained through a political manipulation of socio-economic conditions to contain violence. This has contributed significantly to the amnesty trap, which requires robust institutional reforms that can help to shift the state from LAO towards OAO in order to achieve sustainable peace in the Niger Delta (see Chapter 7).

To summarise, the Nigerian government's 2009 amnesty intervention largely fails to align with the integral approach of understanding conflict management and resolution. As Swanström and Weissman (2005) have demonstrated, conflict prevention, management, and resolution are intrinsically linked and practically indistinguishable.

In turn, the Nigerian government failed to adequately show how the amnesty intervention was meant to lead to conflict resolution in the Niger Delta as there was a limited effort from state agents and institutions to pursue long-term plans that would help to address the different problems that fuel violence in Nigeria's oil-rich region (see Chapter 5). The accumulation of wealth by the ex-militant commanders as a result of their secret and informal agreements with the political and business elites, which were facilitated by some traditional leaders, and which were not accompanied by substantial institutional changes, help to explain why the amnesty temporarily contained violence. Conflict containment or the political manipulation of socio-economic conditions to contain violence in the Niger Delta has led to an amnesty trap. Before discussing how to foster a more sustainable peace in the region (Chapter 7), it is important to elaborate on the foundation of this type of containment.

6.2 The Conflict Containment Logic

The chapter discusses the conflict containment logic through the lens of the LAO logic. The latter primarily underscores how political elites in LAOs deal with violence by coordinating personal relationships that limit access to rights and privileges such as access to public resources and property rights (North et al., 2009, p. 18). For example, the LAO logic in sixteenth century England consisted of using crown lands to stabilize the dominant coalition beyond revenue accumulation (*ibid.*, pp. 91-104). In this case, the court – including the Court of Wards and Livery under Henry VIII and Elizabeth – gave an incentive to the major players (usually friends and allies of the king) through its rent creation to maintain the regime that generated rents. Generally speaking, dispersed military power – stemming from elite factions and autonomous rebel groups – is a key part of the LAO logic that creates conditions for the dominant coalition to contain violence (*ibid.*, p. 20).

As far as the Niger Delta is concerned, the conflict containment logic stems largely from oil revenues that Nigerian political elites and MNOCs have used to entice the militants. It is grounded in the LAO logic inasmuch as the secret deals between the primary actors in the Niger Delta have largely helped to maintain the regime that generates rents, which has been important for containing violence. It is important to note that the militants and MNOCs play an important role alongside political elites in

this conflict containment logic as each actor seeks to maintain the current system of oil exploitation through a mutually beneficial arrangement. However, this conflict containment logic has demonstrated that the (former) fighters have over time become more significant in their relations with political elites and MNOCs, which has contributed a great deal to the amnesty trap. As, for example, Iwilade (2017, p. 267) has argued, the 2009 amnesty has demonstrated how clients (ex-militants) can sometimes manipulate patrons (political elites). This is seen in how after receiving an unconditional presidential pardon for their past crimes, the ex-militants have benefitted from the high financial rewards from the MNOCs and state institutions and are also involved in high levels of oil theft and sea piracy (Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye, 2016, p. 83).

Furthermore, the conflict containment logic underscores the political manipulation of socio-economic conditions to contain violence as Nigerian political elites and MNOCs, through a secret bargaining with Niger Delta militants, create conditions in which the oil conflict appears to be resolved but there is the likelihood of further violence. This explains why the 2009 amnesty intervention initially boosted the expectations of some people that the government had resolved to address the underlying incompatibilities in the Niger Delta and end the fighting (see Chapter 5). However, the narrow focus on satisfying the secret demands of fighters without substantial institutional reforms that can address longstanding problems was bound to lead to further hostilities in the oil-rich region as was seen in 2016. Since 2016, violence resurgence has led to a strong military presence in the Niger Delta, which has been condemned by some civil society groups and individuals such as the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and the leader of Seimbiri Kingdom, His Royal Majesty Ayemi Botu (The Guardian, 2016c). Thus, militant hostilities in the region were simply suspended through the 2009 amnesty, which has created a perverse incentive structure that contributes to the amnesty trap. This reinforces prevailing claims that the containment of youth restiveness through amnesty payments, trainings, and empowerment is not a lasting solution to militancy and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta (Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye, 2016, p. 82).

The conflict containment logic aligns with the understanding of conflict containment in psychiatry. Conflict in psychiatry usually refers to “a patient behaviour that threatens the safety of themselves and others”, while containment mostly consists of “the

measures that staff take to maintain safety...” including manual restraint, seclusion, and special observation (Bowers et al., 2007. p 7). In the Niger Delta context, the ‘patients’ signify militants whose violent activities pose significant threats to political elites and MNOCs’ interests and the ‘staffs’ denote political elites and MNOCs who contain violence by rewarding fighters. It follows that the longevity of peace in Nigeria’s oil-rich region is contingent on the extent to which political elites and MNOCs can satisfy militants’ self-seeking requests. This can only deepen Niger Delta’s security dilemma as the financial rewards from MNOCs and political elites to the fighters is a motivation for other youths in the region.

It is important to highlight that the conflict containment logic predates the 2009 amnesty intervention given that the suppression of protests and armed activities through state militias prior to 2009 also suspended the conflict, but institutional reforms were not addressed (see Chapter 3). This is seen in the example of Obasanjo’s deployment of military troops to raze Odi in Bayelsa State to the ground on 20 November 1999 and subsequently left local concerns unattended (Courson, 2009). Thus, the conflict containment logic has been embedded in the lack of plans to reform institutions in order to address the different conflict drivers after suspending violence diplomatically through the political settlement of combatants or militarily through state security. From this angle, the conflict containment logic has been in place, at least, since the 1990s inasmuch as institutional arrangements have largely entailed a lack of structural reforms in Nigeria’s governance system that is capable of addressing the root causes of the Niger Delta conflict. As, for example, the previous chapter highlighted how the introduction of new state institutions such as the FMNDA in 2008 to help address the developmental needs in the Niger Delta have instead contributed to corruption and the privatisation of public funds. In turn, a youth activist in Delta State argued that the best indicator for assessing the Niger Delta conflict lies in the extent to which the government and oil companies can address the persisting problems of pollution, unclean water, and the destruction of farmlands (Interview, Respondent #9). Against this backdrop, the overthrow of political regimes by Western powers without concrete institutional plans to rebuild those countries also fall within the scope of the conflict containment logic. Particularly, the US has been noted for toppling regimes in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya that has resulted in high numbers of deaths and injuries but with no plans on how to rebuild those countries thereafter (The Atlantic 2016). In

the Niger Delta, military and non-military interventions have thus far simply suspended violence as the primary actors collaborate in order to make room for oil production and accumulation of profit (Wengraf, 2018, p. 160).

The conflict containment logic in the Niger Delta underscores the lack of institutional arrangements that favour the secondary actors including religious leaders, the media, and civil society groups who oppose the current system of exploitation in the region and bad governance in Nigeria. In particular, LAOs such as Nigeria function in a way that weakens the capacity of the civil society to police the government (North et al., 2009, p. 138). Elites in such societies are able to offer benefits such as above-market wages to their clients including public workers, which tends to limit civil society's opposition to bad government policies. In Nigeria, civil society has been unable to police inconsistent government programmes that contribute to policy failures in areas such as banking (Iganiga & Asemota, 2013), education (Asaaju, 2015), and agriculture (Oluwafemi, 2017). Olaoye (2010, p. 81) has highlighted how policy failures predate Nigeria's current democratic dispensation as it used to be facilitated by military generals with poor policy-making skills, particularly from the 1970s to the 1980s. Inconsistent policies have also resulted from incumbent governments discontinuing policies of previous administrations; a reality that predates the country's current multi-party system (*ibid.*, p. 84). This phenomenon has been reiterated by Ngozi Okonju-Iweala – a former World Bank managing director and Nigeria's minister of finance – who has argued that the tendency of new managers in public offices to discontinue existing policies contributes to Nigeria's policy inconsistencies (Ships and Ports, 2017).

There is a link between corruption and policy inconsistencies in Nigeria as can be seen in Olaoye's (2010) analysis of how policy-making has been a platform for Nigerian politicians to get rich. In line with LAOs, the politicians pursue policies that tend to limit access to public resources and provide financial benefits to their clients. In this vein, policy inconsistencies have largely contributed to the vast number of incomplete projects in the country (Ihemeje, 2014). Odeigah (2017) has highlighted how several abandoned government projects such as road construction, health, refineries, water project, and incomplete government buildings in the Niger Delta are due to corruption by government officials. The previous chapter also underlined how many of the projects that were introduced under the 2009 amnesty programme in the Niger Delta have been

overpriced and abandoned by state institutions, which also demonstrates that public projects are usually linked to state agents' personal interests. There were about 500 abandoned Federal Government projects in Akwa Ibom alone in 2017, and about 56,000 abandoned projects in Nigeria as a whole in 2015 (Punch, 2017c). Public officials tend to initiate and continue projects based on what they can get in return, thereby undermining the state's capacity to complete public projects. Thus, policy inconsistencies and failures result from the conflict containment logic in the Niger Delta as policy-makers have pursued projects that favour the system of oil exploitation at every point in time.

To summarise, the conflict containment logic in the Niger Delta stems from the LAO logic of maintaining institutions that sustain the selfish interests of political elites, traditional leaders, MNOCs, and the (former) fighters to the detriment of the local population. Thus, it underscores the extent to which the primary actors in the Niger Delta have maintained a mutually beneficial relationship that has contained violence in the region since 2009. However, the conflict containment logic predates the 2009 amnesty intervention since the use of state security agencies to suppress community protests and armed resistance simply allowed political elites and MNOCs to carry on with oil exploitation, which did not lead to a resolution of the oil conflict. It has contributed significantly to the lack of consistent and integrated institutional reforms for addressing the different conflict drivers in the oil-rich region.

It is important to stress that even though the manner in which the 2009 amnesty has contained the Niger Delta conflict is not ideal, it does not suggest that the government's military solution is a preferred choice. As Amadi and Inyikalum (2016, p. 60) have argued: "Amnesty is a better option for the resolution of Niger Delta conflict than force and litigation". Nevertheless, it is important to reverse the conflict containment logic through public institutions that function impersonally as will be discussed in the next chapter. Among other things, this can help to improve the state's capacity to accomplish projects and disincentivise armed resistance as well as the civil society's ability to police government's projects in the Niger Delta. The proper implementation of policies and programmes such as the 2009 amnesty needs to go hand-in-hand with institutional arrangements that are capable of addressing persisting problems such as poverty, environmental degradation, and dearth of infrastructural facilities (Aduloju and

Okwechime, 2016, pp. 524-525). In turn, the conflict containment logic creates conducive conditions that fuel further violence.

6.3 Conclusion

The chapter has distinguished conflict containment from conflict management and resolution in the analysis of the 2009 Niger Delta amnesty. The integrated understanding of conflict prevention, management, and resolution does not align with the 2009 amnesty's outcome given that the normal trajectory of reducing violence in order to resolve the underlying causes of the conflict and ending fighting was not followed (cf. Swanstöm & Weissman, 2005). Conflict management usually deals with the armed aspect of a conflict with the aim of resolving the underlying problems and ending the fighting. It is evident, for example, in how the civil conflict in Liberia was resolved as the state responded to the needs of the fighters and the general population including civil society groups (Ikelegbe & Umokoro, 2016). In turn, the narrow focus of political elites and MNOCs to temporarily contain violence by offering lucrative financial incentives to the ex-militant commanders and their followers in the Niger Delta, which has longstanding problems such as poverty and unemployment, has led to an amnesty trap. More specifically, the amnesty's containment of violence has incentivised militancy in the Niger Delta and reinforced the prevailing claims that recurring hostilities are dominant in many places that have experienced armed conflicts (Walter, 2010, p. 1).

Against this backdrop, the chapter has argued that intervention measures in the Niger Delta, including the 2009 amnesty, have been characterized by a political manipulation of socio-economic conditions to provisionally contain violence without sufficient evidence to demonstrate how to address the factors that fuel hostilities in Nigeria's oil-rich region. Unlike the military containment of protests and hostilities in the Niger Delta prior to 2009, the amnesty contained violence through the provision of financial incentives from political elites and MNOCs to the ex-militants through the mediation of traditional leaders. Some scholars including Loyle and Appel's (2017, p. 693) have claimed that amnesties tend to demonstrate a government's commitment to post-conflict peace and reconciliation as they reduce the desire of ex-combatants to pick up arms. However, the 2009 amnesty has rather raised questions regarding Nigerian

government's sincerity and commitment to conflict resolution in the Niger Delta (Osah, 2016; Iwilade, 2017; Osah & Amakihe, 2014). This is because the key message from the amnesty intervention to the youths and other actors in the region is that militancy pays well (Didymus, 2012). The amnesty has contributed to measures that have made this oil-rich region vulnerable to violence as dispersed armed groups rise at different times to make demands from the government and MNOCs.

Among other things, conflict containment underlines the fact that the amnesty suspended violence in the Niger Delta, but left longstanding institutional problems unaddressed. It corroborates the claim that natural resources play a role in conflict resumption when they are worth fighting for (Rustad & Binningsbo, 2012, p. 543). Oil has been worth fighting for in the Niger Delta since it has created business opportunities for the ex-militants and the other primary actors as well as certain traditional leaders in the region. Conflict containment also highlights a manipulation of socio-economic conditions to contain political violence by elites and MNOCs as the secret deals between the primary actors and traditional leaders have not helped to achieve conflict resolution. This is a deviation from the prevailing understanding of conflict containment such as the US containment policy for the Soviet Union during the Cold War (Leffler, 2006; Rojansky, 2016). However, the understanding of conflict containment in this project is applicable to other contexts such as Western military interventions that have toppled regimes in countries such as Libya and Iraq but have failed to show any concrete plans to reconstruct those countries. In particular, NATO's ousting of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 typified this understanding of conflict containment as the insecurities in Libya have worsened in the post-Gaddafi era (News24, 2018).

Furthermore, the conflict containment logic has been reinforced in the light of the 2009 amnesty as Nigerian political elites and MNOCs have used oil rents to entice the militants. It is grounded in the LAO logic inasmuch as the secret deals between the primary actors in the Niger Delta have helped to maintain the rent generation regime that has been important for containing violence. The conflict containment logic reinforces the political manipulation of violence in the Niger Delta in the sense that the conflict sometimes appears to have been resolved owing to the short-term containment of violence, but institutional arrangements have not changed, and local problems have

remained at large. In particular, youth unemployment has been a persisting problem that has deepened poverty in the Niger Delta, created conducive grounds for militancy, and also contributed to criminal activities such as robberies, child trafficking, and drug trafficking (Tambari & Imoh-Ita, 2016, p. 7-10). In general, conflict containment highlights violence suspension without genuine plans to achieve conflict resolution. The latter entails long-term measures to transform formal and informal institutional arrangements in LAOs into impersonal institutions in OAOs as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7:

Whither Resolution?

7.0 Introduction

The thesis has shown how containment and amnesty trap are linked to Nigeria's status as a mature LAO. The implication is that this West African country would have to shift towards being an OAO in order to move away from conflict containment to resolution, but what would this actually involve? And what are the implications for conflict resolution and peace-building efforts? In responding to these questions, this chapter underscores the extent to which conflict management in the Niger Delta needs to be accompanied by broader institutional reforms that go beyond the limited scope of the 2009 amnesty. Even though amnesties are widely used to respond to armed conflicts, Mallinder (2018, p. 76) has highlighted, "as of yet, we know very little about what makes an amnesty work and the circumstances under which an amnesty can contribute positively to sustainable peace". Thus, it is important to examine wider factors that can lead to the resolution of the Niger Delta conflict, especially as amnesties only form part of wider conflict resolution processes (Dancy, 2018). In general, a wide range of recommendations have been proposed by scholars and policy-makers with respect to resolving the Niger Delta conflict including corporate social responsibility for oil companies (Kpolovie and Sado, 2016), the reconstitution of Nigeria's federalism (Kiipoye, 2015), and a greater autonomy to Niger Deltans to manage the oil fields (Eze, 2011, p. 157). In turn, this chapter emphasises a transition from LAO towards OAO through an exit strategy that North et al. (2009) refer to as the doorstep conditions. These conditions involve, among other things, the enhancement of "institutional and organisational support for increased impersonal exchange, as well as institutions consistent with the logic of the natural state [LAO] that can be used in the transition to support open access orders" (North et al., 2009, p. 26). The three doorstep conditions are the rule of law for elites, perpetually lived forms of private and public elite organisations, and a consolidated political control of the military.

The chapter argues that achieving the doorstep conditions lies at the heart of sustainable peace in the Niger Delta as they are important for tackling the longstanding LAO

institutional arrangements that have undermined Nigeria's stability. The analysis demonstrates the extent to which conflict management in the Niger Delta needs to be tied to the restoration of impersonal relations among elites and the other major actors in the country. This is important for reversing the conflict containment logic in the oil-rich region as the mature LAO system has largely shaped the decisions of both state and non-state actors – including political elites, MNOCs, ex-militants, and traditional leaders – in a way that has undermined the 2009 amnesty (see Chapters 5 and 6). Amnesty and other conflict intervention measures will always be insufficient without the support of impersonal institutional arrangements that can help to address the different drivers of violence in the Niger Delta and other parts of the country. Contrary to the literature that overly focuses on external mediation in the Niger Delta (for example, Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2017), the dissertation argues that sustainable peace in the oil-rich region ultimately hinges on institutions that can enhance a locally driven reparation of the broken relationship between Nigerian elites, the local population, and all the other key actors in the Niger Delta including MNOCs and the civil society. Furthermore, in contrast to political settlements that tend to focus on negotiations and agreements based on patronage networks, the analysis aligns with the peace-building literature – such as Lederach (1997) – and argues that the attempts to achieve sustainable peace in the Niger Delta cannot only be left in the hands of those at the top of the society. Instead, peace-building in Nigeria's oil-rich region needs to focus on the participation of all the different actors in helping to reform institutions, and thus improving the environment in which people make decisions in order to achieve a real rather than a cosmetic institutional change.

As Wallensteen (2019, p. 47) has highlighted, the need to involve all the key actors in a peace-building process lies in the fact that when solutions that are proposed frustrates one actor, they can frustrate the other actors thereby lowering the chances of achieving a positive outcome from a conflict management strategy. Both the primary and secondary actors in the Niger Delta are important for a successful conflict management as all of them bear some responsibility for the conflict and also for the conflict's resolution (see Chapter 4). In turn, this chapter underscores how the rule of law for elites and perpetually lived elite organisations are important for establishing impersonal courts and other enduring public and private institutions that are necessary for conflict resolution. Additionally, a consolidated political control of the military is vital for

asserting the state's authority as the official institution that can legitimise the use of violence within its jurisdiction through the police and military as well as other legally recognised security agencies. The first section analyses the three doorstep conditions in the context of the Niger Delta, and the second section suggests some ways by which Nigeria can begin the proper transition towards an OAO.

7.1 Conflict Management in the Niger Delta

Like other intractable conflicts, what makes conflict resolution in the Niger Delta paradoxical lies in the fact that the conflict's proximate causes are clear, but it seems practically impossible to arrive at a lasting solution. According to Wallensteen (2019, pp. 58-61), conflict actors can generally resolve their incompatibilities in seven distinct ways. This includes leadership changes, finding a point to divide resources, meeting all the demands and goals of actors at different times, power-sharing, leaving control to a third party, deploying conflict resolution mechanisms such as arbitration, and postponing issues to a later date. In turn, this chapter lays emphasis on institutional arrangements that can help to ensure that different actors contribute to the long-term resolution of the Niger Delta conflict. It is important to underscore how actors are of primary importance for conflict management as conflict mainly consists of one actor "reacting to what another actor is doing, which leads to further action" (ibid., p. 39). Also, North et al. (2009, p. 31) have argued: "Throughout recorded history, the cessation of violence (peace) is not achieved when violence specialists put down their arms, but rather peace occurs when the violent devise arrangements (explicit or implicit) that reduce the level of violence". The short-term peace that the 2009 amnesty brought to the Niger Delta is a demonstration of how violence specialists (ex-militants) alongside political elites and MNOCs have devised explicit arrangements to reduce violence in the oil-rich region, but which requires further institutional reforms to address underlying incompatibilities and end the fighting.

Furthermore, scholarly works such as Hegre and Nygard (2014) have underlined the fact that there has been a gradual decline in the number and severity of internal armed conflicts worldwide due to the general improvements in areas such as education levels, economic diversification, and demographic characteristics. In spite of the general decline in civil conflicts, not all conflict-prone countries have been forecast to

overcome the conflict trap by 2050 as, for example, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo have been named as two future conflict hotspots (ibid.). Amnesties for political offenses such as rebellion and treason have been used in such countries, but they need to improve institutional measures and general strategies for overcoming armed conflicts if they are to reap good benefits from amnesties (UN Mediation Support Unit, 2012, p. 17). Given that the LAO system makes these countries more prone to violence, fulfilling the three doorstep conditions – the rule of law for elites, perpetually lived forms of private and public elite organisations, and consolidated political control of the military – is an important step towards sustainable peace (North et al., 2009, p. 26).

Before delving into the analysis of each of the doorstep conditions, it is important to underline that there are two stages that are required for LAOs to achieve the doorstep conditions and to make the transition towards OAOs. This includes developing “institutional arrangements that enable elites to create the possibility of impersonal intra-elite relationships” and, “when the dominant coalition finds it in the interest of elites to expand impersonal exchange within the elite and institutionalize open elite access to organizations, effectively creating open access for elites” (ibid.). Thus, the transition from LAO towards OAO can only be initiated “when elites find a common interest in transforming some elite privileges into impersonal elite rights shared by all members of the elite” (ibid., p. 190). This implies that the state needs to create conducive conditions to enhance impersonal elite relations in order for the political godfathers to support the transition from LAO towards OAO. In turn, the three doorstep conditions go hand-in-hand and generally help to create institutions that can support impersonal elite relations. They are important for transforming elite privileges into impersonal elite rights, especially when elite factions – who will support the transition from LAO towards OAO if it is in their interest to do so – can make more gains from an open access (ibid.). For example, political elites are more likely to accept the rule of law if they know that the laws will not compromise or damage their vested interests.

OAOs are generally characterised by a widely held set of beliefs about the inclusion of and equality for all citizens; entry into economic, political, religious, and educational activities without restraint; support for organisational forms in each activity including contract enforcement that is open to all; rule of law enforced impartially for all citizens;

and impersonal exchange (ibid., p. 114). Open access consolidates elites' trust in independent state institutions that among other things need to regulate relations between elites and the state. According to North et al. (2009, p. 27), countries such as Britain, France, and the United States were at the doorstep conditions in the late eighteenth century and transitioned to OAO by 1880. However, despite this claim of a transition from LAO to OAO, some longstanding institutional problems such as deep racism and sexism have undermined the OAO status of these Western countries, particularly over the last century. Relatively new activist movements such as "Black Lives Matter" and "Rhodes Must Fall" have helped to expose profound institutional racism and gender inequality in Europe, the US and other places in the last decade (Dantzler & Nickels, 2018; Jenkins-Robinson, 2017). It follows that the social orders are not static but dynamic as states can move from LAO towards OAO and vice versa due to factors such as economic shocks, emergence of new elites, demographic changes, and extension of citizenship that can lead to new civil movements. As North et al. (2009, p. 12) assert: "All societies are subject to random and unpredictable changes in the world around and within them".

As a modern state, Nigeria has the institutional framework such as the constitution and other laws that can support the movement towards an OAO. The challenge is how to apply the institutional framework in place to concrete problems as, for example, several petroleum laws have not been used to regulate oil activities in the Niger Delta (see Chapter 3). Among other things, the open access system enhances the capacity of the state to impersonally include all the key actors who need to be part of conflict management strategies including amnesties. Indeed, the actors who know a conflict most intimately are the ones that can legitimately determine when the conflict is over (Wallensteen, 2019, p. 55). As such, peace-building scholars have emphasised, among other things, the need to incorporate the different layers of society to attain peace. For example, Lederach's (1997) three levels of "top leadership", "middle-range leadership", and "grassroots leadership" explain why the different actors in each society including politicians, military, non-governmental organisations, academics, and local leaders need to contribute to peace. In order for the different actors to contribute positively towards resolving the different drivers of conflict in the Niger Delta, the rule of law for elites – the first doorstep condition – needs to be achieved.

7.1a Rule of Law for Elites

The rule of law for elites – an important indicator for determining whether a country is at the doorstep conditions – fundamentally helps to address the problem of elite coalitions that are generally bound by mutual interests and threats in LAOs. In this vein, “the establishment of laws and courts is the means by which the dominant coalition regularises relations among elites” (North et al., p. 153). A fair application of the rule of law in courts is important for ensuring trust among elites, which helps to weaken and break-up elite factions in a patronage system. In the early seventeenth century, for example, the development of the rule of law for elites in England included an extensive set of institutions that governed, regulated, and enforced property rights to support impersonal exchange among elites (ibid., pp. 86-87). Thus, the rule of law for elites is important for progressing from personal to impersonal relationships as elite privileges are transformed into elite rights by formal rules. Consolidation of the judicial system to apply rules and procedures fairly is key to institutionalising impersonal elite relationships (ibid., p. 153). This has proven important for achieving conflict management in many countries as, for instance, Brehm et al., (2014) have highlighted how the national and gacaca courts demonstrated Rwanda’s resolve to use the rule of law to deal with the genocide crimes. Amnesties, if properly executed, signify the return of law to a previously lawless society (McEvoy & Mallinder, 2012).

Nigeria has not performed well in rule of law surveys as, for example, it ranked 106 out of 126 countries in the 2019 Rule of Law index (World Justice Project, 2019). Other conflict-prone countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon performed worse than Nigeria by ranking 124 and 120 respectively in the same survey. Relatively stable countries such as Botswana and Ghana performed better than Nigeria by placing 44 and 48 respectively. Like most modern states, Nigeria’s rule of law is enshrined in the country’s constitution. The transfer of political power from Goodluck Jonathan – an incumbent president – to Muhammadu Buhari – an opposition leader – in 2015 was a good demonstration of Nigeria’s rule of law. However, the blatant disregard for the rule of law by elites and their clients in this West African state as exemplified by unfair trials, electoral violence, unjustifiable arrests, illegal oil exploitation, and the suppression of freedom of speech has largely rendered Nigeria’s rule of law a myth, rather than a reality (Anuye et al., 2017; Akanbi & Shehu, 2012;

John, 2011). The 2009 amnesty implementation that was not accompanied by amnesty laws demonstrated the state's apathy with respect to the rule of law. Arnould (2019) has highlighted how amnesties can undermine the rule of law in weak states when they are not properly executed. This is seen in how the 2009 amnesty, which was not backed by amnesty laws, has temporarily contained violence and led to an amnesty trap in the Niger Delta (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Among other things, the lack of rule of law application undermines Nigeria's oil governance system given that bad leadership is at the heart of the oil conflict (Newsom, 2011; Akpabio & Akpan, 2010; Ezirim, 2011). As Richard Akinaka – co-ordinator of the Pan-Niger Delta Youth Leadership Forum – has remarked:

Our leaders have failed us and this is not just a Niger Delta problem, this could be a Nigerian problem, it could be the problem of the north east, north central or the problem of the South-west but we are trying to take direct responsibility for our own problem, confronting every leadership that has failed us and making sure that we put up structures that will prevent such from happening in the future (This Day, 2017c).

Nigeria's oil governance has generally been grounded in weak and outdated laws and policies that have generally failed to address contemporary issues in the global oil and gas sector. As Oyewunmi and Olujobi (2016, p. 635), for example, have underscored, Nigeria's petroleum act "reckons only with crude oil and not with gas and it did not anticipate Production Sharing Contract as a form of agreement which Department of Petroleum Resources favours as well as competitive bidding concessions". This means that the oil and gas industry is currently unable to deal with discretionary award of licenses and concessions and the importation process that consists of tendering, contracting, and procurement (ibid.). In the face of weak rule of law application, Nigeria faces significant governance deficits in the oil sector that needed to be factored into the 2009 amnesty design as the latter largely failed to address broader issues that lie outside the selfish demands of the fighters.

Many of the robust strategies used for resolving underlying incompatibilities of particular conflicts usually include positive governance changes and conflict management mechanisms such as arbitration (Newsom, 2011; Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye, 2016; The International Crisis Group, 2015; Kiipoye, 2015). The

importance of constructive institutional or governance changes – such as enhancing transparency and accountability – cannot be downplayed as they provide a significant boost to conflict management strategies that are capable of addressing different drivers of violence including grievances of actors in a conflict setting (Wallenstein, 2019). Transparency and accountability are particularly important for deriving positive results from Nigeria's public institutions as Acemoglu and Robinson (2008, p. 26) have argued: "In the case of Africa, promoting democracy and accountability and checks and balances will almost certainly lead to better economic policies and institutions". While the suitability of a Western-style democracy for African states can be questioned as scholars including Ayittey (2010) have done, the need for those countries that have embraced democratic systems of government to promote the principles of good governance such as accountability, checks, and balances cannot be questioned. This can help to significantly reduce the privatisation of public funds in Nigeria's state institutions including the NDDC and the FMNDA who have been mandated to carry out developmental projects in the Niger Delta under the 2009 amnesty scheme. As Chapter 5 highlighted, misappropriation of public funds has contributed significantly to the amnesty trap given that state agents have privatised monies that are meant to alleviate longstanding problems such as poverty and pollution.

Thus, the rule of law for elites is an important doorstep condition to achieve in Nigeria inasmuch as it can help to reduce the lack of transparency and accountability in public institutions, which has undermined the 2009 amnesty. Scholarly works including Oyewunmi and Olujobi (2016) and Muller (2010) have highlighted how transparency and accountability are important for harnessing the full potential of Nigeria's oil and gas sector and also overcoming Niger Delta's resource curse. Transparency is particularly important in areas such as the oil and gas revenues and expenditures, the public procurement in the oil and gas industry, the corporate participation and ownership interests of public officials, the awarding of contracts, licenses, positions, and promotions in the oil and gas sector, and the supervision of private sector activities (Oyewunmi & Olujobi, 2016). Transparency is important for improving the quality of contractual institutions in the Niger Delta because such institutions tend to enhance the capacity of elites to generate rents in LAOs (North et al., 2009, p. 17-20). For example, the shady oil pipeline protection contracts that have been awarded to the ex-militants through the 2009 amnesty programme have reinforced patron-client relations and

worsened Niger Delta's security dilemma as Kiipoye (2015, p.10) has highlighted:

In spite of the failure of the ex-militants to successfully police the pipelines and waterways, the government has not had the courage to terminate the contract due largely to a perceived fear of upsetting the balance in ex-militants–state relations, which might see the resumption of hostilities against the state and oil TNCs [transnational companies] by the ex-militants.

The state's inability to regulate oil related contracts has led to numerous fake contractors in the Niger Delta whose pursuit of private interests also fuel conflict drivers such as relative deprivation (Premium Times, 2016c). Enhancing transparency in Nigeria's contractual institutions through the rule of law is important for the public to scrutinise contracts and hold public officials accountable. An impersonal rule of law application through the promotion of transparency and accountability is significant for addressing the problems of Nigeria's contractual institutions. This is seen in OAOs where citizens have the right to write contracts and to use the courts and bureaucratic institutions to access public goods and services (North et al., 2009, p. 112).

In addition to boosting the capacity of contractual institutions, the rule of law for elites is also important for ensuring that the government commits to the execution of long-term plans that can help to address persisting grievances in the Niger Delta including the cleaning-up of the oil-rich region. For example, the Ogoni clean-up campaign, which became the current government's slogan in 2016, requires an impersonal rule of law application in order to succeed. This clean-up initiative follows a 2011 incriminatory report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which was based on a 14-month independent scientific assessment of more than 200 locations in the Niger Delta. After reviewing about 5,000 medical records of people, the research team concluded that:

It could take 25 to 30 years, with an initial investment of \$1 billion just for the first five years, to clean up pollution from more than 50 years of oil operations in the Niger Delta, ranging from the "disastrous" impact on mangrove vegetation to the contamination of wells with potentially cancer-causing chemicals in a region that is home to some 1 million people (United Nations News Centre, 2011).

UNEP's report highlighted how the government's commitment to the Ogoni land clean-

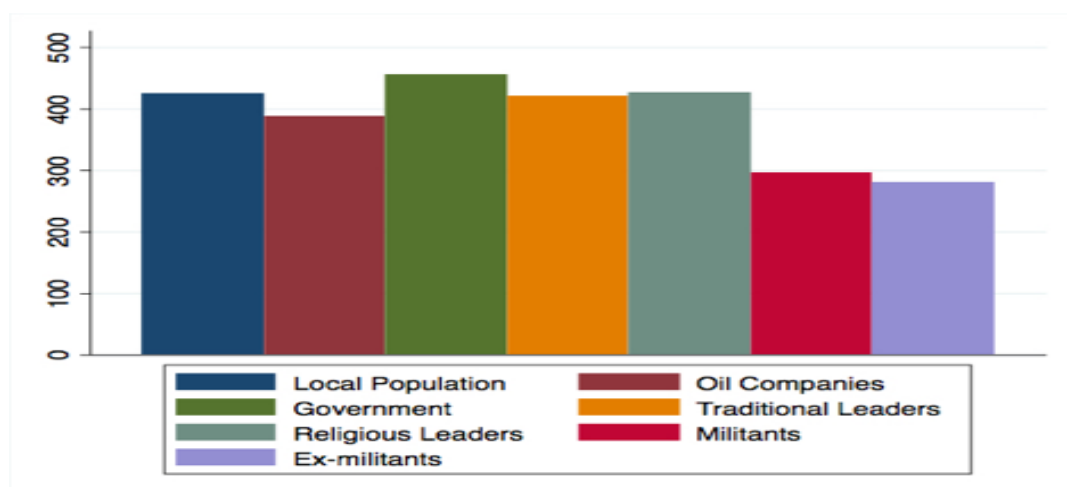
up exercise needs to be robust since, if successfully executed, it will become the world's most wide-ranging and long-term clean-up exercise ever (ibid.). A credible effort by the government to put the clean-up plans into motion would be appreciated by Niger Deltans, and thus help to boost conflict management strategies in the region. However, this is largely dependent on the commitment of the state to impersonally apply the rule of law as, for example, a failure to legally punish the careless oil exploitation by oil companies will undermine the Ogoni clean-up exercise. Furthermore, given that the country carries out elections every four years to vote for a new government, it is not certain that each successive government that comes into office for the next 30 years or so will be committed to the clean-up campaign without being compelled to do so by the law. Indeed, the current government has not shown enough commitment to pursue the Ogoni clean-up exercise as, for example, it released only 1 % of the promised funds to begin the exercise in 2017 (The Guardian, 2017e). Thus, the depth of the government's commitment to the clean-up project as well as other solutions to Niger Delta's relative deprivations including channeling a greater percentage of oil revenues to develop the oil-rich region need a firm legal backing. The rule of law needs to be applied independently of the personal interest of individual elites and MNOCs who have failed to respect national and international rules that guide oil and gas exploration (Renouard & Lado, 2012; Ijaiya, 2014; Idemudia & Osayande, 2016).

It is important to add that the rule of law needs to entail robust democratic decision-making processes and structures for the different conflict actors in the Niger Delta (Okolo & Inokoba, 2014). This means that the rule of law needs to work in equal measure particularly for the political godfathers as well as all the primary and secondary actors in the Niger Delta including MNOCs, (ex)fighters, traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media. It is important for the public and private sectors that contain the different actors to develop together in order to achieve the doorstep conditions (North et al., 2009, p. 49). This helps to boost the state's capacity in various ways such as specialisation and division of labour among state and nonstate actors as well as monitoring and evaluation of institutional activities. Consequently, the significance of patronage politics will be significantly reduced as elites tend to augment their interest in open competitive trade and market specialisation when both public and private actors work together to enforce the rule of law (ibid.). Applying the rule of law impersonally for both the primary and secondary actors is important for restoring

sustainable peace in the Niger Delta as the mutually beneficial arrangement between Nigerian elites, MNOCs and ex-militants temporarily contained violence and led to an amnesty trap (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Figure 39 – which ranks the order of importance that respondents attached to the conflict actors – shows how both the primary and secondary actors were deemed by respondents to be important for resolving Nigeria’s oil conflict as they all received relatively high scores. This supports the chapter’s argument that the law needs to ensure an inclusion of all the key actors including the local population in conflict management strategies in the Niger Delta. However, the government – the highest ranked actor in Figure 39 – is the principal duty bearer for brokering peace in the oil-rich region. As Wallenstein (2019, p. 69) has argued, “the state is the sole legitimate authority within its territory, and is expected by other actors, notably neighbouring states, to maintain that authority”. In this vein, Nigeria’s political elites need to trust the state’s commitment to the rule of law in order to support the transition towards an OAO that allows public institutions to function impersonally. As has been highlighted, elites are more likely to accept the rule of law if the latter will not compromise or damage their vested interests and the law will be applied to them in the same way as the other elites. Thus, sustainable peace is more likely to be achieved in the Niger Delta if the state can create conducive conditions for the godfathers to accept an impersonal rule of law application that protects their rights.

Figure 39: Ranking Order of Actors Who Matter for Conflict Resolution



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Another important observation from Figure 39 is that the ex-militants and militants received the lowest scores, meaning that they were considered by respondents as the least important actors for resolving the oil conflict. It is possible that respondents may have ranked militants higher at the height of hostilities in 2009 as their high level of destructions posed a significant threat to the state's survival (see Chapter 5). In turn, the state's narrow focus on satisfying the selfish demands of the ex-militants contained violence temporarily and undermined conflict management. Thus, legal institutions that support the inclusion of all the key actors in conflict management are vital for achieving sustainable peace in the oil-rich region. In particular, the local population needs to be in a better position to hold government representatives and oil companies accountable (Malden, 2017). Given that the 2009 amnesty reinforced the patronage bond between the government, MNOCs, and the ex-militants, the rule of law is important for forging a renewed state-local population-MNOC bond with the help of civil society groups as well as traditional and religious leaders. This implies that a successful conflict management strategy largely lies in the extent to which the law obliges all the key actors to work closely to address local concerns. This position opposes some other views that tend to overstate the relevance of international and (sub)regional mediators in the resolution of the Niger Delta conflict. For example, Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2017) has proposed the "collective non-violent conflict management" (CNCM) framework, which largely highlights how external mediators and negotiators need to be involved if the Niger Delta conflict is to be resolved. However, not all externally mediated arrangements have produced positive results in conflict settings, which is exemplified by how the Tamil Tigers engaged in more atrocious fighting in Sri Lanka following international mediation in the country in the early 2000s (Jeong, 2008, p. 227). Thus, while external mediators can help, the law needs to ensure that all the relevant local actors are at the forefront of conflict management in the Niger Delta.

To summarise, Nigeria's capacity to normalise impersonal application of the rule of law is an important step towards a successful conflict management strategy in the Niger Delta, given that the lack of application of the country's laws has largely undermined the success of the 2009 amnesty. For example, state institutions such as the FMNDA have embezzled funds that was meant for the amnesty programme largely due to the lack of rule of law application that limits such tendencies (see Chapter 5). In this vein, transparency and accountability are important elements that need to help improve

Nigeria's governance system in order for the country to reap the full rewards from the oil and gas industry (Oyewunmi & Olujobi, 2016; & Muller, 2010). Nigeria's rule of law can be significantly improved when the political godfathers are assured by the state that their vested interests will not be compromised or damaged by the law and their rights will be protected in same measure as other elites. As the custodian of the country's laws, the government is particularly important in terms of achieving a fair judicial system that can transform personal elite privileges into impersonal elite rights. All the key actors in the Niger Delta need to be obliged by the law to work together in order to tackle the longstanding problems in the region. This is important for consolidating the fragile peace that the 2009 amnesty produced in the Niger Delta and for dealing with other insecurities that threaten the survival of institutions in the country.

7.1b Perpetually Lived Forms of Elite Organisations

Achieving the second doorstep condition – perpetually lived forms of elite organisations – is also important for conflict management given that it is required for LAOs to make the transition towards OAOs. Perpetually lived organisations include corporations that outlive individual members as separate participants cannot dissolve them at will (North et al., 2009, p. 152). They include the state, political parties, religious organisations, and civil corporations who have an impersonal identity given that their “existence is independent of the lives of their members” (ibid., p. 23). Perpetual life here does not mean eternal life, but one that is defined by an organisation's identity. The rise of perpetually lived organisations in the United States following the American Revolution (1765-1783) included the establishment of treasuries that continued to survive after the death of the states' treasurers (ibid., pp. 166-167). Of all perpetually lived organisations, the state is primarily important given that a mortal state cannot credibly create and/or support perpetually lived organisations within its boundaries. The creation of a perpetually lived state usually “involves the creation of multiple, perpetually lived organizations connected in a dynamic relationship with one another” (ibid., p. 163).

In Nigeria, the Biafran war – fought from 1967 to 1970 in which about 3 million people died – posed one of the most significant threats to the survival of the state (Akresh et

al., 2017; Chidiebere, 2016). Since then, the armed activities and threats of Boko Haram and the Niger Delta militants have contributed to Nigeria's ranking as the 14th most fragile state in the world (Fund for Peace, 2019). This West African country has been regarded as a failing state due to problems such as violent conflicts, poor leadership, extreme poverty, corruption, and unemployment (Agbor, 2012). The establishment of many public institutions – such as the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) in 1960, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority in 1976, the Presidential Task Force in 1980, and the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission in 1992 – to carry out the same task of developing the Niger Delta underscores how public institutions have been short-lived and generally lack a perpetual character as political elites tend to create such institutions to pursue private interests (see Chapter 5). In general, Nigeria possesses state institutions that require the support of the rule of law in order to become perpetually lived organisations that can help to improve the country's oil governance, which in turn can reduce the state's fragility. This includes resource regulatory bodies – such as the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) and the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB) – that are responsible for improving oil governance and overseeing that state institutions such as the NDDC put oil revenues to good use.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is one of the significant regulatory bodies whose perpetuity can provide Nigeria and other resource-rich countries the room to strengthen contractual institutions and resource governance (Muller, 2010). EITI legally tasks governments and extractive oil and mineral companies to provide accurate accounts of their endeavours such as the beneficial owners of oil and the disclosure of contracts (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016). In Tanzania, for example, TEITI reports (2016) have shown how there are more companies paying more taxes and the fact that corporate tax is the main driver of the country's increased government revenues. The significance of such reports lies in the fact that it helps resource-rich countries such as Nigeria to track their progress in terms of mobilising funds locally. As Ross (2016) has highlighted, governments who receive external rents usually fail to mobilise internal revenues through taxes, which renders them less accountable to the citizens and also makes them less committed to addressing local development needs. Thus, EITI among other things increases the chances of resource-dependent countries to escape the resource curse (Muller, 2010). In particular, the

emphasis on local content requirements (LCRs) required by EITI serves as “a stimulus to combine the use of locally extracted raw materials with domestically available factors of production (such as labour, locally sourced goods and services, and so on) to create more value in the economy” (Ramdoo, 2015, p. 1). LCRs can increase the level of local participation in resource governance as they cover a wide range of issues such as boosting locally based and locally owned companies, strengthening local supply chains, and expanding opportunities for the local people in the extractive industries.

The Nigerian chapter of EITI, NEITI, receives its seal of authorisation from the NEITI Act of 2007 to promote transparency and accountability in the management of revenues from the oil, gas, and solid mineral sectors (NEITI, 2016). Oyewunmi and Olujobi (2016, p. 631) have argued that Nigeria’s oil and gas sector can harness its full potential when every law, policy, code, or initiative that is linked to the industry guarantees that all vital disclosures are undertaken when they are due. While some scholars such as Abutudu and Garuba (2011) have claimed that NEITI has enhanced auditing of the oil industry in Nigeria, some others including Barr.Okeke and Aniche (2013) have revealed how NEITI has not had any significant impact on the culture of impunity and corruption in the oil sector. For example, a considerable delay in providing NEITI reports has undermined the usefulness of such reports in terms of holding oil companies and the government accountable with respect to the facilitation of projects and making public payments (Malden, 2017). Indeed, the persistence of violence in the Niger Delta underscores how oil governance in Nigeria faces major challenges in spite of NEITI. The latter needs to be supported by the rule of law in order to become a perpetually lived organisation that can improve Nigeria’s oil governance as NEITI and the other oil regulatory bodies have largely failed to oblige political elites and MNOCs to be transparent and accountable in their undertakings in the Niger Delta.

In particular, NEITI needs to be a perpetually lived organisation that promotes Nigeria’s local content law, which is meant “to increase the participation of indigenous oil firms in the supply chain of the sector, to improve backward linkage development (a means by which procurement of locally produced inputs and services is increased), and also to create more employment opportunities for the local workforce” (Adedeji et al., 2016, p. 61). Projects such as the multi-billion-dollar Escravos Gas-to-Liquids Projects of which Chevron Nigerian Limited and the Nigerian National Petroleum

Company (NNPC) own 75 % and 25 % shares respectively, the fuel depots for independent marketers, and the construction of gas projects are helping to create young and educated entrepreneurial elites who are ‘local content contractors’ in the Niger Delta (Vanguard, 2015). The success of Nigeria’s LCRs largely depends on the extent to which NEITI and the other regulatory bodies can become perpetually lived organisations that are capable of enhancing transparent, accountable, and participatory oil governance in which relations among elites and all the major actors can create more economic opportunities for the local population.

In addition to NEITI, the PIGB is an important institution that, if a perpetually lived organisation, would help to improve Nigeria’s oil governance. Signed into law as a new state regulatory body in 2017 after 17 years of parliamentary deliberation, the PIGB aims to administer and enforce policies, laws and regulations for petroleum operations in Nigeria (Umoru et al., 2017). Among other things, the PIGB aims to enhance transparency and accountability in Nigeria’s oil governance by reducing the powers of the president and the minister of petroleum resources in the exercise of control over the oil/gas sector and transferring those powers to the commission. Like NEITI, the establishment of the perpetual character of the PIGB largely depends on the impersonal rule of law application, which can help to reduce the tendency of Nigerian state institutions to pursue selfish interests (Olaoye, 2010). Overall, boosting the capacity of the PIGB, NEITI, and other resource regulatory institutions to become perpetually lived organisations in Nigeria can help to reduce insecurities in the country by providing an oversight for public institutions such as the NDDC that has largely been responsible for development related issues in the Niger Delta since 2000. In turn, the NDDC and other institutions in the Niger Delta as well as national institutions that tend to be relatively weak and personalized such as political parties (Carothers, 2007; Adeniran, 2018) need to also become perpetually live organisations that can enhance impersonal relations among elites and the rest of the society.

Educational institutions are highly relevant in the discussion of perpetually lived organisations as they help to resolve the following puzzle: how do people come to believe in perpetually lived organisations when there is no way of knowing that such organisations will continue to exist after their death, and that people yet to be born will honour the agreement? In responding to this critical question, North et al. (2009, p. 159)

have argued: “Establishing the belief that commitments will be honoured requires a long and incremental process of development”. At the heart of this long-term process are perpetually lived educational and training institutions that safeguard, improve, and pass on knowledge and beliefs from one generation to another. The prominent perpetually lived educational institutions in the world include universities such as Al-Azhar, Coimbra, Siena, Cambridge, Salamanca, and Oxford that have imparted knowledge for hundreds of years. A high investment in education and training is important for obtaining perpetually lived educational institutions and for improving human capital as it helps to reduce ignorance, isolation, and division (Sadan, 1997). Mass education usually boosts the intellectual capacity of the local population and can also enhance impersonal exchanges in OAOs especially as people become more conscious of their rights in the society, and thus helps to achieve perpetually lived organisations that are equipped to manage violence (North et al., 2009, p. 30-129). In this vein, a state’s investment in formal and informal education and training is crucial for peace-building (Dupuy, 2008; UNESCO, 2010/2011). Kotite (2012, p. 22) has stressed the high degree to which educational planners in conflict-affected places need to recognise how the political context affects education and the state’s commitment to do the following: “(a) address the educational issues affecting the country, (b) address the conflict-related issues that impact on education or are impacted by education, (c) address basic social, economic and political challenges, and (d) prepare flexible contingency plans in view of an unpredictable future”.

The Nigerian government deserves to be condemned for its apathy regarding investments in education as, for example, the country was ranked last in a 151-country survey by the World Economic Forum with respect to investments in primary education and public health (World Bank, 2017, p. 38). It is difficult to establish perpetually lived educational institutions in this context as high investments are required to safeguard the perpetuity of educational centres. Figure 40 also shows how the Nigerian government allocated just 9.5 % of its total budget to education in 2015, which falls way below UNESCO’s recommendation that developing countries need to allocate, at least, 26 % of their total annual budgets to education. Additionally, Figure 41 displays how Nigeria spent only 8.4 % of its GNP on education in 2012 as compared to the 31 % that its neighbouring country, Ghana, spent in the same period. The implementation of free secondary education in African countries such as Ghana and Kenya in 2017 is a

benchmark that Nigeria is yet to attain. The government's commitment to the education and training of ex-militants implies that Nigeria can invest more in mass education and training, which when supported by the rule of law for elites, can go a long way to help create perpetually lived educational institutions and also improve public participation in such institutions.

Figure 40: Nigeria Federal Government Budgetary Allocation to Education, 1960-2015

Year	Allocation as % of Total Budget	Year	Allocation as % of Total Budget
1960	6.02	1987	1.93
1961	6.15	1988	2.40
1962	5.19	1989	3.55
1963	3.45	1990	2.83
1964	3.65	1991	1.09
1965	3.57	1992	3.86
1966	4.23	1993	5.62
1967	4.88	1994	7.13
1968	2.84	1995	7.20
1969	2.20	1996	12.23
1970	0.69	1997	17.59
1971	0.53	1998	10.27
1972	0.62	1999	11.12
1973	0.88	2000	8.36
1974	2.96	2001	7.00
1975	4.57	2002	5.9
1976	8.71	2003	1.83
1977	3.12	2004	10.5
1978	11.44	2005	9.3
1979	3.70	2006	11.00
1980	4.95	2007	8.09
1981	6.45	2008	13.0
1982	8.09	2009	6.54
1983	4.04	2010	6.40
1984	4.49	2011	1.69
1985	3.79	2012	10.0
1986	2.69	2013	8.70
		2014	10.6
		2015	9.5

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria (2015) as cited by Ige (2016, p. 233)

Figure 41: Allocation to Education as % of GNP of Selected Countries in 2012

S/N	Country	% Budget Allocated Education	Rank
1	Ghana	31.0	1 st
2	Cote d'Ivoire	30.0	2 nd
3	Uganda	27.0	3 rd
4	Morocco	26.4	4 th
5	South Africa	25.8	5 th
6	Swaziland	24.6	6 th
7	Mexico	24.3	7 th
8	Kenya	23.0	8 th
9	United Arab Emirates	22.5	9 th
10	Botswana	19.0	10 th
11	Iran	17.7	11 th
12	USA	17.1	12 th
13	Tunisia	17.0	13 th
14	Lesotho	17.0	14 th
15	Burkina Faso	16.8	15 th
16	Norway	16.2	16 th
17	Colombia	15.6	17 th
18	Nicaragua	15.0	18 th
19	India	12.7	19 th
20	Nigeria	3.4	20 th

Source: World Bank (2012) as cited by Ige (2016, p. 235)

In summary, achieving perpetually lived organisations is an important doorstep condition for transitioning from LAO towards OAO, which among other things can help to manage violence in the Niger Delta and elsewhere. This is because such organisations, when supported by the rule of law for elites, tend to provide a long-term avenue for resolving the different drivers of particular conflicts. Perpetually lived organisations are important for addressing the Nigerian state's tendency to favour piecemeal reforms and acts of tokenism in the oil-rich region, which was demonstrated by the 2009 cash-for-peace amnesty (Eke, 2014; Emeseh, 2011). Also, perpetually lived organisations can significantly boost conflict management strategies such as amnesties given that they usually have long-term impersonal institutional arrangements that can guide the present and future actions of different actors including those in conflict areas

(North et al., 2009).

In Nigeria, NEITI and the PIGB need to become perpetually lived institutions that are transparent and accountable if they are to help improve Nigeria's long-term oil governance. Public institutions in the Niger Delta, especially the NDDC need to be strengthened through the rule of law to also become perpetually lived organisations that can help to address underdevelopment in the oil-rich region. In turn, perpetually lived educational institutions are necessary for safeguarding, improving, and transferring knowledge and beliefs that can advance the long-term impersonal relations among the different actors in the Niger Delta and in the country as a whole. An impersonal rule of law application for elites is important in this endeavour as elites tend to create and also influence the creation of perpetually lived organisations in OAOs (ibid.). The rule of law and perpetually lived organisations need to be backed by a consolidated political control of the military in order to achieve the doorstep conditions and to move towards an OAO.

7.1c Consolidated Political Control of the Military

A consolidated political control of the military is the final important doorstep condition as North et al. (2009, p. 153) have argued: "societies experiencing a civil war, by definition, do not have consolidated control of the military". In feudal Europe or the Ottoman Middle East, for example, societies did not have a consolidated control of the military as dangerously armed groups were scattered throughout the dominant coalition (ibid.). LAOs generally operate through "patron-client networks in which groups of non-military elite members – traders, producers, priests, educators, and others – are allied with militarily potent members of their network" (ibid.). This helps to explain why state security institutions including the military and police force in LAOs are mostly weak and unconsolidated given that elites largely seek protection from illegal private militias rather than the state (see Chapter 3). In turn, a consolidated political control of the military in OAOs helps to eliminate "the need for elites to maintain alliances among elite groups tied to military factions, which are activated in situations where violence breaks out" (North et al., p. 26). It enhances formal institutions and agreements regarding how and when political control of the specialised military and police force of a state can legitimately use violence. This requires an overarching

political body such as the US Defence Department or the UK's National Security Council that controls the military resources of the state.

In Nigeria's mature LAO, it is clear that the Ministry of Defence, which is in charge of controlling all the military resources of the country has been unconsolidated in the face of armed activities in the country. This is seen, for example, in the state's inability to deal with militant activities in the Niger Delta, especially between 2005 and 2010 when insurgencies and counterinsurgencies exacerbated the security dilemma in the oil-rich region (see Chapters 3). The unconsolidated political control of the military is also evident in the frequent attacks and killings of Nigerian soldiers in their Northern army bases by Boko Haram (The Defense Post, 2019; Gulf News, 2019). In addition to elite factions, the lack of military professionalism that is demonstrated by intimidation, coercion, corruption, and extortion undermines the work of Nigerian soldiers (Musa, 2019). For example, Boko Haram's creation has been heavily linked to the Hausa-Fulani elites who have sought political control since the 1914 amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria (Okonofua, 2013). The British colonial administration played a crucial role in the creation of the Hausa-Fulani political elites by centralising the country's administration under the Hausa-Fulani aristocracy. The latter has been a key part of the patronage system in which Nigerian elites have amassed oil wealth to the detriment of the Niger Delta region (*ibid.*).

It is important to highlight the relationship between politics and the military in order to understand elite factions in Nigeria, and thus why a consolidated political control of the military is important for managing violence in the Niger Delta. According to Amundsen (2012), the military has dominated the fusion of Nigerian elites given that they have largely been involved in political leadership. This has generally contributed negatively to Nigeria's development as, for example, the analysis of Majeed and MacDonald (2010) has highlighted how the presence of the military in politics has contributed significantly to corruption in the country. In other words, Nigeria's former military generals have largely controlled the country's resources for their own benefits, which have undermined socio-economic development. The direct link between Nigeria's political leadership and the military is demonstrated by the seven successful military coups that led to dictatorial regimes under which the country has been ruled for thirty-eight years since independence (Okonofua, 2013). The military coups underline the

unconsolidated nature of Nigeria's military, which has largely been tied to elite factions. In addition to the dictatorial regimes, the heavy involvement of military generals in Nigeria's political leadership is seen in how former military generals including Buhari and Obasanjo have managed to transform themselves from military rulers into civilian presidents and are still part of the political godfathers.

It is vital to highlight the dominance of Northern military elites in the country's politics, especially the Hausa-Fulani aristocracy given that seven of the nine military dictators that have ruled Nigeria were from the North. Generals Aguiyi Ironsi and Olusegun Obasanjo – the only two military heads of state from the South – largely benefitted from circumstances beyond their control to become military heads of state. For example, General Ironsi became a military head of state only because he was the highest senior officer in the army after a failed Major Kaduna Nzeogu-led coup attempt in 1965 killed the then Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa (ibid.). Similarly, General Obasanjo became a military head of state in 1976 because his boss, General Murtala Mohammed, was killed in a failed Colonel Buka Suka Dimka-led coup plot (ibid.). In the wake of multi-party politics, the Southern elites have become more prominent in the country's politics as was demonstrated by Obasanjo's release from prison to become the country's first democratically elected President in 1999. However, the influence of the retired military generals from the North is still significant in the country's politics as, for example, the endorsement by seventy-one of them helped Buhari to secure a second term in office in the 2019 general elections (The Premium Times, 2019).

Against this backdrop, Nigerian elites, particularly those in the North, need to be adequately engaged by the state for Nigeria to move towards achieving a consolidated political control of the military as the security concerns of the dominant coalition is important to address in order to achieve this doorstep condition (North et al., 2009). Also, elites are more likely to rely on legally recognised security institutions rather than their own secret militias when the state asserts its power as the ultimate reference point for safeguarding the security of citizens. Nigeria can truly achieve political control of the military if all the former military generals, particularly those in the North, backs the effort of the government to dissolve all the militia groups across the country and, if possible, integrate them into the military and police force. Just as with the other doorstep conditions, Nigerian elites are more likely to cooperate in this endeavor when

the movement towards supporting a consolidated political control of the military will not damage their vested interests. A consolidated political control of the military eventually “creates a monopoly on violence that reduces the frequency of violence in a state” given that this helps the government to assert itself as the sole body that can legitimise the use of violence within its jurisdiction through the police, military, and other legally recognised security agencies (ibid., p. 154). Achieving this doorstep condition also requires a great deal of resource mobilization as, for instance, consolidating political control of the military in Western Europe in the seventeenth century included bigger armies and navies, larger public treasuries to finance them, and bigger bureaucracies to collect revenues and run the armies and navies (ibid., p. 169).

To summarise, the degree to which conflict management can be successful in the Niger Delta extends beyond the limited scope of the 2009 amnesty given that, in addition to the rule of law for elites and perpetually lived forms of elite organisations, a consolidated political control of the military is required to limit violence in Nigeria. Elite-led military factions usually undermine the stability in LAOs (North et al., 2009), which is evident in how Nigeria’s military commanders have destabilized the country in the past through coups. A consolidated political control of Nigeria’s military can be achieved if the state can demonstrate to both the Northern and Southern elites that the need to give up illegal private militias and to rely solely on legitimate public and private security institutions will not be detrimental to their vested interests. Achieving a consolidated political control of the military as well as the other two doorstep conditions varies from one context to another as will be elaborated in the next section.

7. 2 What Path can Nigeria Follow to Initiate the Transition from LAO towards OAO in Order to Resolve the Niger Delta Conflict?

The socio-economic conditions that enhance the movement from LAO towards OAO differ from one country to another as, for example, the divergent paths for Britain, France, and the US to move towards OAO entailed specific institutions that helped to shape the transition. This included the following:

Britain moved toward a congenial parliamentary sovereignty with few explicit checks or balances. France went through eighty years of constitutional instability ranging from

republics with universal male suffrage to monarchies, but also legislative tyranny. The United States developed an election-intensive federal system with a stable national constitution and state governments that continued to experiment with their institutions (North et al., 2009, p. 103).

According to North et al., “many of the specific contingent historical paths taken by the three countries will not be duplicated in subsequent transitions, not the least because the experience of the first transitions changed the way we think about the world” (ibid.). It follows that Nigeria’s transition from LAO towards OAO, which is highly unlikely to follow the transitional paths of France, the US, and Britain, will largely be dependent on the nature of institutional arrangements that will be acceptable to the political godfathers. Thus, one can only speculate in terms of proposing ways by which Nigeria can move towards achieving the doorstep conditions, which is important for resolving the Niger Delta conflict and building sustainable peace in the region. The analysis in this section posits that a good starting point for Nigeria to achieve the doorstep conditions would be to have a reconciliation plan for the political elites and the state as well as meaningful dialogues between the different key actors. This is to ensure the co-operation of all the elites and the participation of all the influential members of the society including civil society groups, traditional and religious leaders, and the media.

Given that elites play a fundamental role in the transition from LAO towards OAO as has been highlighted above, the first thing that could enhance Nigeria’s achievement of the doorstep conditions is for the Northern and Southern elites to overcome their tribal and religious differences in order to cooperate with the state in crafting institutions that can transform elite privileges into impersonal rights. This may require a reconciliation process between the state, the retired and current Northern and Southern military generals, as well as the different key actors in the Niger Delta and other conflict areas in the country including the North-East. This is because historical events such as the seven coups, the Biafran war, the Niger Delta oil struggle, as well as the competitive nature of the ethnic-centred politics have deepened the elite-led military factions in Nigeria, which may require the country to go through a political healing process. The latter, if accepted by elites, could be in the form of South Africa’s mid-to-late 1990s accountability process through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (cf. du Bois-Pedain, 2012; Graybill, 2004). The emphasis of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was on reconciling a nation and different communities,

while in Nigeria, the emphasis needs to be placed on reconciling both the Northern and Southern elites as well as the different groups in the Niger Delta and other conflict areas in the country. It follows that the reconciliation plan needed in Nigeria is likely to be a slightly different process that requires a good coordination by the federal government. This implies that the 2009 amnesty is more likely to have a better outcome when socio-economic differences including ethnicity that tend to fuel elite factions in the country are tackled head-on. As Mallinder (2018, p. 61) has highlighted, both elites and broader social and marginalised groups need to be included in pacts such as amnesties. This 'inclusion norm' ought to be supported by an 'accountability norm', which suggests that conflict management strategies in Nigeria need to regulate peace negotiations and also impose obligations on elites and all the actors involved in the conflict. It is important to underscore that the Amnesty Committee of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission had to rely greatly on dialogue and respect to achieve conflict management (Mallinder & McEvoy, 2011, p. 115-116). In the same vein, meaningful dialogues between the state, political elites, the local population, and MNOCs are important for political healing in Nigeria. Traditional and religious leaders and civil society groups can help to facilitate meaningful dialogues in order to restore impersonal relations among elites and other members of the society. In the Niger Delta, meaningful dialogues between the government, MNOCs, and the local population are also key for understanding the local problems and concerted efforts to address them.

In this vein, the Nigerian elites' commitment to an impersonal rule of law application, perpetually lived organisations, and a consolidated political control of the military that can limit entry and generation of rents could be enhanced through bridging the gap between the Northern and Southern elites. It is important to reiterate that elites in LAOs need the law's protection, perpetually lived organisations, and a consolidated political control of the military that do not undermine their vested interests in order to agree to give up their privileges and accept the transition towards an OAO (North et al., 2009). All the key local actors including the government, traditional and religious leaders, and civil society groups need to be part of Nigeria's political attempt to reconcile elites and the state as the inclusion and accountable norms usually require the effort of different actors (Mallinder, 2018). The traditional and religious leaders as well as other civil society groups can play mediation roles in the political process of reconciling the Nigerian elites and the state.

While a political reconciliation process may or may not be required for Nigeria to transition from LAO towards OAO, dialogue cannot be underestimated in terms of achieving the doorstep conditions and ending the Niger Delta conflict. As Mallinder and McEvoy (2011, p. 119) have argued, in order to boost the chances of obtaining positive outcomes, amnesties need to be enacted as a consultation process whereby a government enters into dialogue with the civil society and the general public on the scope of the peace-building process. The lack of meaningful dialogue is a big problem that undermines conflict management in the Niger Delta as Adetula (2016), for example, has underlined how the government even dialogues with the wrong representatives of the militants in the attempts to initiate conversations with them. The amnesty's high financial benefits for the former fighters, contractors, and mediators, which have contributed to the amnesty trap also highlight the inefficiencies of the state to obtain good results from dialogues. Among other things, a lack of trust contributes to the lack of meaningful dialogue in the Niger Delta as De Juan and Pierskalla (2014, p. 85) have highlighted:

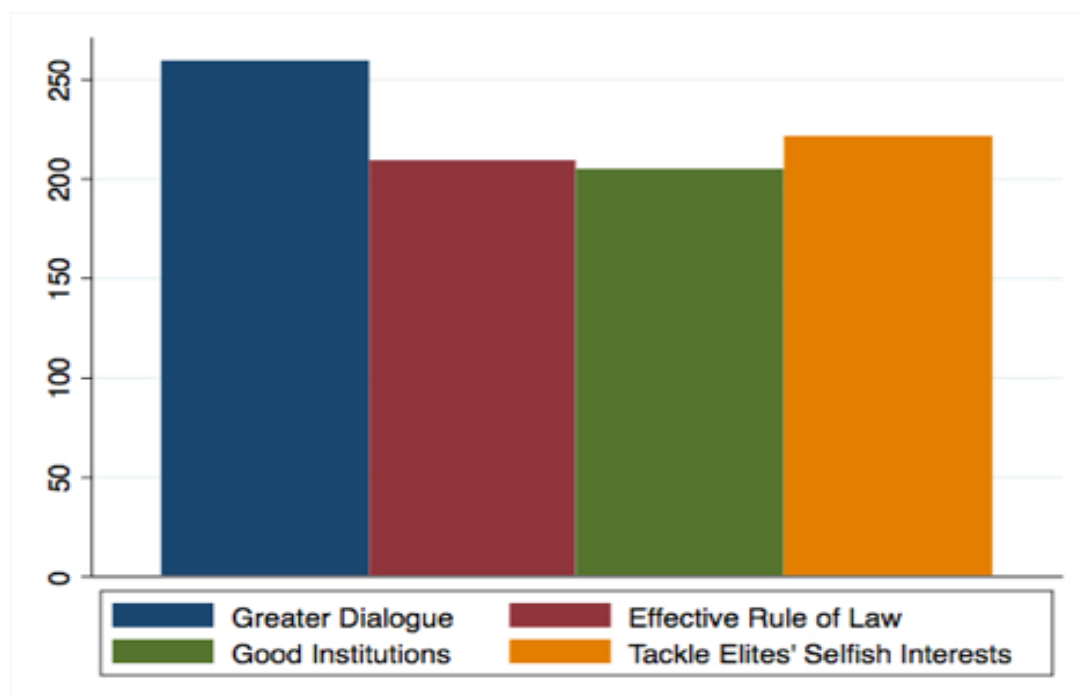
The more people are exposed to violence, the more probable are lower levels of trust in the government when the war ends. The more people experience the material and human costs of violence, the more negatively they will evaluate the government's failure to curb rebellion, as well as the consequences of violent government action itself.

This means that the longevity of hostilities in the Niger Delta and other parts of the country is bound to reduce people's trust in the peace-building efforts of the state.

In turn, Mallinder (2018, p. 63) has highlighted the extent to which amnesties and other immunity measures can be used to facilitate inclusive dialogue as was seen in how South Africa used Indemnity Acts in 1990 and 1992 to extend dialogue between the government and non-state armed groups within and outside the country. Thus, the 2009 amnesty can serve as a platform for achieving meaningful dialogues in Nigeria, which in turn can help to initiate the transition towards OAO, and thus end the fighting in the Niger Delta. The credibility of the state's commitment to the resolution of the Niger Delta conflict and other insecurities in the country can be boosted through meaningful dialogues as Delta State governor, Mr. Arthur Okowa Ifeanyi, has affirmed: "The oil

companies, the federal government and all stakeholders should sit down and create the environment that will engender lasting peace in the Niger Delta” (Government of Delta State Nigeria, 2016). Respondents also underlined the importance of dialogue as, for example, they ranked greater dialogue as the most important element for resolving Nigeria’s oil conflict (see Figure 42).

Figure 42: Ranking Order of Importance of What Matters for Conflict Management



Source: Constructed by author based on Questionnaire Response

Through meaningful dialogues that are facilitated by the state and other local actors, Nigeria can move towards achieving the doorstep conditions, which can help to resolve the Niger Delta conflict and other insecurities in the country. Without meaningful dialogues leading to these institutional reforms, it is difficult to be optimistic about conflict resolution in the Niger Delta. In this vein, a high majority of respondents expressed their pessimism when asked whether they could foresee an imminent resolution of the resource-based conflict. The views expressed in this regard include the following:

I don't think the conflict can come to end before the tenure of Buhari comes to an end. Buhari cannot deal with the conflict and people do not like him. If the federal government wants to end the conflict, they have to come to the people one-on-one and

understand what is causing the conflict in the region (Interview, Respondent #6); The federal government and the oil companies are only playing politics with the local population and deceiving the world that they are putting things in place to resolve the conflict in the region (Questionnaire, Respondent #18); Pollution is on the rise while the government is still not doing enough to initiate dialogues with the local communities (Questionnaire, Respondent #8); The federal government is not helping matters in the sense that we the Niger Deltans who are owners of these oils are not the beneficiaries but the northerners. So, until we become the major beneficiaries the conflict cannot be resolved (Questionnaire, Respondent #20); The conflict will take a long time to be fixed because there are no quick fixes to the people's grievances, but the government appears to only favour quick fixes (Questionnaire, Respondents #26); The conflict will be resolved when corruption in Nigeria is resolved and I can't see that happening any time soon (Questionnaire, Respondent #32)

The reactions of the respondents align with the views of some prominent people including Igo Weli, Shell's general manager of external relations, who has stressed that the interests of investors in the Niger Delta was diminishing due to the unpredictable nature of the business environment, agitation, and damage of facilities (Energy Mix Report, 2017). Additionally, Moody (2016) has underscored how even though the Nigerian government is eager to reach an agreement with militants, it is highly unlikely that violence in the oil-rich region will soon be brought to a sustainable end.

To summarise, the transition from LAO towards OAO is largely dependent on the local context, and thus the nature of institutions that are crafted by elites in the process of achieving this goal. This section has speculated that Nigeria may have to initiate a political reconciliation plan through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to initiate the movement towards OAO. This would require co-operation from the state, retired and current military commanders, and various actors in the Niger Delta and other conflict areas in the country such as the North-East. Reconciling elites and all the key actors in the Niger Delta could be vital for dealing with the other insecurities in the country as the region's oil revenues are an important source of funding for the government. While a political reconciliation of elites may not be needed for Nigeria to achieve the doorstep conditions, dialogue is fundamentally important for crafting institutions that can support the transition towards an OAO. Thus, meaningful dialogues between elites, the state, and all the other key actors can help to initiate the transition towards an OAO.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the extent to which achieving the doorstep conditions – the rule of law for elites, perpetually lived forms of elite organisations, and a consolidated political control of the military – is important for resolving the Niger Delta conflict and other insecurities in Nigeria. The rule of law for elites is an important starting point in this conflict management process as North et al. (2009, p. 73) have argued: “Sustaining some amount of rule of law for elite organisations appears to be incredibly complicated to pull off and is the beginning of the doorstep conditions”. The 2009 amnesty will always be insufficient without an impersonal application of the rule of law given that amnesties tend to deal with legal issues related to political crimes, economic crimes, international crimes, crimes against individuals, and sexual violence (Dancy, 2018). Among other things, the rule of law in Nigeria needs to enforce property rights as Haas and Jones (2017) have highlighted how weak property rights in African countries have led to reduced investments, ineffective labour allocations, and lower tax revenues, which contribute to lower levels of living standards and productivity for the inhabitants. In general, conflict intervention measures such as amnesties will only produce the desired results when the political, economic, legal, educational, and other public and private institutions function impersonally.

The rule of law needs to go hand-in-hand with the other doorstep conditions as, for example, it needs to be tied to perpetually lived forms of elite organisations including the state and political parties (North et al., 2009). In Nigeria, NEITI, PIGB, and other resource regulatory bodies together with other state institutions in the Niger Delta, particularly the NDDC, need to become perpetually lived organisations that can help to improve long-term oil governance and peace-building efforts across the country. Backed by the rule of law, these public institutions can help elites, the state, MNOCs, and the local population to form a stronger and lasting cooperative bond in order to curtail the problem of armed resistance. Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) have highlighted how economic institutions, which are the results of political processes, are the key determinant of differences in prosperity among countries. In the Niger Delta, the NDDC has been one key enduring institutional determinant of differences in the region’s economic opportunities following the country’s transition to multi-party politics (see Chapter 3). However, the NDDC needs to be backed by the rule of law in

order to duly carry out its mandate. Thus, it is important to dissolve the FMNDA and other superfluous state institutions in Nigeria, and ensure that the NDDC serves as a perpetually lived organisation that adheres to strict public service rules and procedures to curb fraud and improve accountability in the Niger Delta (The International Crisis Group, 2015). A well-functioning NDDC would help to increase the long-term local participation in income generating activities and also ensure the long-term provision of physical or infrastructure development such as adequate health care centres, schools, water, electricity, and internet.

In addition to the perpetually lived forms of organisations in the general governance system, there is the need for Nigeria to have lasting educational and training institutions that can assist with the long-term transfer of knowledge and beliefs. It follows that there needs to be a significant improvement in education and training investments that can enhance the local population's long-term capacity to participate in oil governance and to access gainful employment (Kotite, 2012; Dupuy, 2008; Ikoro & Ukonu, 2016). Long-term mass educational investments require funds and so the consolidation of Nigeria's economic institutions is important for sustaining peace in the country. With the backing of the rule of law, Nigerian elites can engage in fair and open economic engagements that can consolidate the country's economic strength. In turn, impersonal perpetual institutions that can facilitate human and infrastructure development are important for creating a robust system of checks and balances that are necessary for curbing corruption and patronage networks (World Bank, 2017). A vigorous human and physical capital investments will help strengthen perpetually lived institutions and resource governance in this West African state as the local population will be more equipped to demand accountability from the local representatives and MNOCs.

The rule of law for elites and perpetually lived organisations cannot lead to a successful conflict management in the Niger Delta without a consolidated political control of the military. This is because the third doorstep condition is important for asserting the state's authority as the sole institution that can legitimise the use of violence within its jurisdiction through legally backed security institutions (North et al., 2009). Elite factions have particularly undermined Nigeria's political and economic stability since independence as they have led to seven coups, the Biafran war, the Niger Delta oil struggle, corruption, and ethnic-centred politics (Okonofua, 2013; Majeed &

MacDonald, 2010). Corruption from elite factions has led to the deterioration of public services in the country and constitutes a major impediment to conflict management in the Niger Delta (Ejimabo, 2013). Nigeria's socio-economic problems including corruption and violence are more likely to be tackled when the country's attempt to consolidate political control of the military and to also achieve the other doorstep conditions do not undermine elites' vested interests. In this vein, Nigeria may need to reconcile the retired and current Northern and Southern military generals, as well as other local elites in order to minimise elite factions that have undermined the country's political stability, and to ensure that the state is able to carry out initiatives that can support the transition towards OAO. Meaningful dialogues are particularly important for achieving all the doorstep conditions and making the proper transition from LAO towards OAO.

Nigeria has made some attempts to improve oil governance and contain violence in the Niger Delta as can be seen, for example, in the 2009 amnesty, the Ogoni land clean-up campaign, and the passing of the PIGB. Nevertheless, these initiatives will always be insufficient without the backing of institutional arrangements that set out to achieve impersonal elite relations. This is evident in how the 2009 amnesty reinforced Nigeria's patron-client relations and also led to an amnesty trap in the Niger Delta (see Chapter 5). Thus, the governance system including resource regulatory bodies such as the PIGB and NEITI as well as other state institutions such as the NDDC are likely to continue enriching individuals at the expense of the local population if they fail to become perpetually lived organisations that can operate largely on the basis of the rule of law and receive the protection of a consolidated police and military force. Achieving conflict management through the doorstep conditions restates the argument that peace-building is a process that does not require rapid action and political manoeuvring, but a comprehensive long-term effort (Wallenstein, 2019, p. 52). In the attempt to transition from LAO towards OAO, Nigeria would develop strong and resilient institutions to overcome the resource curse, which has resulted from different conflict drivers such as greed and grievance, institutionalism, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, and elite manipulation (Kiipoye, 2015; Oyewunmi & Olujobi, 2016; Ikoro & Ukonu, 2016; Iwilade, 2017).

Conclusion

Violence and Social Equilibrium in the Niger Delta

This final chapter summarises and elaborates on the project's central arguments. The fundamental puzzle that the dissertation has sought to unravel is to understand why the 2009 amnesty contributed to the dramatic change in the scale of violence in the Niger Delta without institutional reforms. Thus far, the key findings in the amnesty literature have included the following: amnesties are usually used to respond to conflict and peace negotiations; amnesties that form part of negotiated peace settlements have more positive effect on sustainable peace; political regimes determine the likelihood of amnesties being introduced; amnesty designs affect amnesties' legality, legitimacy, and capacity to contribute to peace; conditional amnesties increase the probability of armed groups to end insurgency; and unconditional amnesties are scarce compared to conditional amnesties (Dancy, 2018; Slye, 2012; du Bois-Pedain, 2007). In turn, the dissertation has highlighted the extent to which institutional arrangements in LAOs often undermine peace-building measures including amnesties and can contribute to a conflict containment logic that leads to an amnesty trap. The analysis has shown why part of the problem in Nigeria is a problematic amnesty and also that amnesty will always be insufficient to resolve the Niger Delta conflict without profound institutional reforms. Thus, while relying on both primary and secondary data, the dissertation has shown how amnesties will always be insufficient for achieving conflict resolution without institutional reforms. Specifically, the transition from LAO towards OAO is required for resource-rich countries such as Nigeria to resolve particular conflicts and ensure sustainable peace in places such as the Niger Delta where precious natural resources such oil abound, and violence is experienced more often.

Using the LAO framework of North et al. (2009), Nigeria's 2009 amnesty has been investigated in this dissertation by drawing insights from the Niger Delta conflict and the key actors involved in the conflict (see Chapters 3 and 4). The dissertation has defined the Niger Delta conflict based on Esteban and Ray's (1999, p. 380) explanation of conflict "as a situation in which, in the absence of a collective decision rule, social groups with opposed interests incur losses in order to increase the likelihood of obtaining their preferred outcomes". Specifically, it has highlighted the extent to which

institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system have contributed to physical violence and coercive threats by fueling different conflict drivers including greed and grievance, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, and elite manipulation. Formal and informal institutions in Nigeria's mature LAO system – including the federal government's revenue formula, security vote, and corruption – have largely contributed to violence in the oil-rich region. The concurrence of violence eruption in the Niger Delta and Nigeria's transition to multi-party politics in the late 1990s support the claim that existing tension is likely to escalate in the face of democratisation (Chua, 2004; Mansfield & Synder, 2002). The lack of institutional reforms contributed largely to why the different conflict drivers destabilised the Niger Delta in the wake of Nigeria's transition to multi-party politics. The persisting LAO arrangement has enhanced the capacity of greedy individuals including political elites and MNOCs to accumulate enormous oil wealth to the detriment of Niger Deltans. Aspirational deprivation characterises the Niger Delta inasmuch as the achievements of the local population have reduced despite the expectations that initially accompanied oil exploitation (Courson, 2009). This has resulted from the destruction of people's livelihoods and the environment through oil exploitation as well as the persisting problems of poverty and unemployment that have formed part of the key challenges facing the country. Institutions have largely helped to shape the behaviour and decision-making of state and non-state actors in ways that have led to the human development-conflict trap given that poverty has contributed to violence and vice versa in the Niger Delta (see Chapter 3).

Thus, state and non-state actors have largely been involved in the crafting of institutions that have perpetuated the Niger Delta conflict and short-term containment of violence. This includes the primary actors – politicians, MNOCs, and fighters – who have been the main architects of the resource-based conflict and the secondary actors – traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and the media – who have played supporting and intermediary roles. The militants' violent responses to the deprivations that have been caused by politicians and MNOCs have largely overshadowed the non-violent means by which civil society groups have sought to express their concerns (see Chapter 3). The longevity of militant activities in the Niger Delta implies that it is difficult for the government to attain a decisive victory over militants through combat. This phenomenon is in line with prevalent scholarly views including Cunningham et al.

(2009), Slantchev (2004), and Bapat (2005) that have underscored how longer periods of fighting in civil conflicts tend to reduce the chances of a government victory. This largely explains the government's need to initiate the 2009 amnesty programme, given that the militants had attained a significant capacity to disrupt oil related activities in the Niger Delta, thereby depriving MNOCs and the government of oil revenues.

The 2009 amnesty intervention, which was underpinned by patronage politics, was characterised by secret deals between the government and militants who had significant access to violence. The deal was brokered by the traditional leaders who had access to the fighters and who formed part of the patronage networks. Thus, LAOs such as Nigeria are characterised by the following: "Personal relationships, who one is and who one knows, form the basis for social organization and constitute the arena for individual interaction, particularly personal relationships among powerful individuals" (North et al., 2009, p. 2). Within this context, the amnesty could not achieve sustainable peace as the DDR plan, for example, has failed to achieve the desired targets (Ikelegbe and Umukoro, 2016). In general, DDR schemes have yielded mixed results across the world as they have helped to mitigate armed conflicts and sustained peace in countries such as Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, and Liberia and at the same time contributed to armed groups that have transformed into state forces, US-allied militias, guards, criminals and Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan (Okonofua, 2016; Clark, 2018). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, after at least three DDR programmes, remobilisation of ex-combatants in the country is still frequent (Carayannis and Pangburn, 2018). Hence, a DDR scheme that accompanies an amnesty programme does not guarantee conflict resolution, especially when institutional reforms are excluded from the peace-building process. In LAOs, DDR schemes tend to reinforce patron-client relations as political elites find protection under dispersed armed groups that are loyal to them and also pay off non-state fighters who pose a significant threat to the elite revenue generating stream. In general, most DDR schemes tend not to have robust projects of durable peace-building and sustainable development (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2016, p. 36), given that they have generally not been accompanied by significant institutional reforms that would facilitate a transition from LAOs towards OAOs (see Chapter 7).

That the amnesty contained violence temporarily in the Niger Delta between 2009 and 2016 is evident, but it has also led to an amnesty trap owing to a lack of institutional

reforms. A resurgence of violence in 2016 and the fears for further violence have resulted from the fact that the amnesty deal was not backed by robust measures that could have enhanced the capacity of public institutions to address the different conflict drivers including environmental degradation, unemployment, and poverty (Okonofua, 2016). Nevertheless, the 2009 amnesty has been described by certain people as a conflict management strategy that was intended to take Nigeria out of the resource curse (Amadi and Inyikalum, 2016; Osah, 2016; and Egwim, 2015). In turn, the dissertation has argued that amnesty provided a short-lived containment of violence that fails to align with the intrinsic link between conflict management and resolution (Swanström & Weissman, 2005). Conflict management generally ensures that a certain level of peace has been achieved with the aim of resolving the underlying incompatibilities of a particular conflict and ending the fighting (Wallensteen, 2019). The shady deals between politicians and the fighters, the failure of public institutions including the FMNDA to execute projects to consolidate the amnesty programme, the poor outcome of the DDR scheme, the unconditional pardon of fighters, and the funding of youth violence by politicians and MNOCs underline the lack of commitment to institutional reforms needed to depict the 2009 amnesty and other intervention measures in the Niger Delta along the lines of conflict management and resolution (see Chapters 5 and 6). Providing educational training and stipends for ex-militants is good, but the failure to expand similar opportunities to the entire population exposes the hypocrisy of the amnesty intervention. The allocation of funds and contracts for the former fighters by the Nigerian government and oil companies has created a perverse incentive structure that largely supports violence in the Niger Delta. In short, the amnesty programme has incentivised militancy in the Niger Delta as it has mainly encouraged others to pursue violence.

Based on an analysis of the 2009 amnesty's outcome, this dissertation has understood conflict containment as the institutional arrangements in Nigeria that have kept violence in the Niger Delta under short-term control through a political manipulation of socio-economic conditions (see Chapter 6). Violence in the Niger Delta tends to be temporarily contained without further efforts to address the underlying problems that have fueled the conflict. Institutions have enhanced the capacity of local elites to contain violence temporarily in order to create room for MNOCs to exploit oil in the Niger Delta. Therefore, conflict containment has largely been pursued to serve the

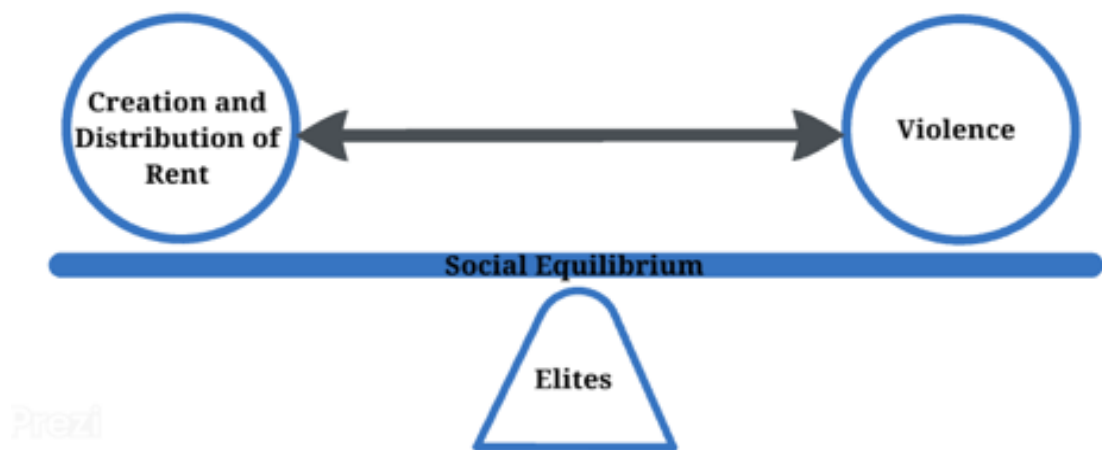
interests of local elites and oil companies operating in the Niger Delta as the two actors have largely benefitted from oil wealth to the detriment of the local population (Wengraf, 2018, p. 159). Also, the logic of containment entails institutional arrangements that make the Niger Delta conflict appear to have been resolved even though the underlying incompatibilities remain at large (see Chapter 6). In this vein, the logic of conflict containment also applies to Western countries' military interventions that have plunged certain states into deeper security dilemma such as NATO's 2011 intervention in Libya.

The Niger Delta's conflict containment model, which is captured in Figure 43, depicts how a short-term or temporary peace is achieved in LAOs through institutional arrangements that support the creation and distribution of rent. In this vein, the extent to which political elites and oil companies are able to form mutually beneficial arrangements with fighters helps to determine the duration of peace in the oil-rich region as the primary actors need each other to derive maximum oil profits. In other words, fewer hostilities in the region lead to higher oil revenues (Punch, 2018). This implies that political elites and oil companies need to make peace with militants at all cost, even if it entails paying off militants with huge sums of monies and contracts to restore temporary order in the oil-rich region (Kiipoye, 2015). The dominant fighters' access to high financial rewards and business contracts lowers violence intensity as the so-called 'liberators' of the region mostly care about their private gains, and not necessarily the problems in the Niger Delta. This institutional arrangement is captured in the idea of a mutual symbiosis as the violence specialists become business partners with political elites and MNOCs. Not only did the 2009 amnesty create massive financial wealth for the ex-militant commanders, some leaders of the former fighters have also become politically influential as was seen in Tompolo's heavy involvement in picking the running mate of PDP's governorship candidate in Delta State in the 2015 elections (Ukwu, 2015).

In essence, the primary actors – political elites, the MNOCs, and the ex-militants – with the support of the traditional leaders need one another to maintain the status quo of reaping oil benefits while the oil related problems remain unaddressed. The 2009 amnesty did little in terms of reforming this institutional arrangement as it led to an amnesty trap (see Chapter 5). This underscores LAOs' vulnerability to violence as both

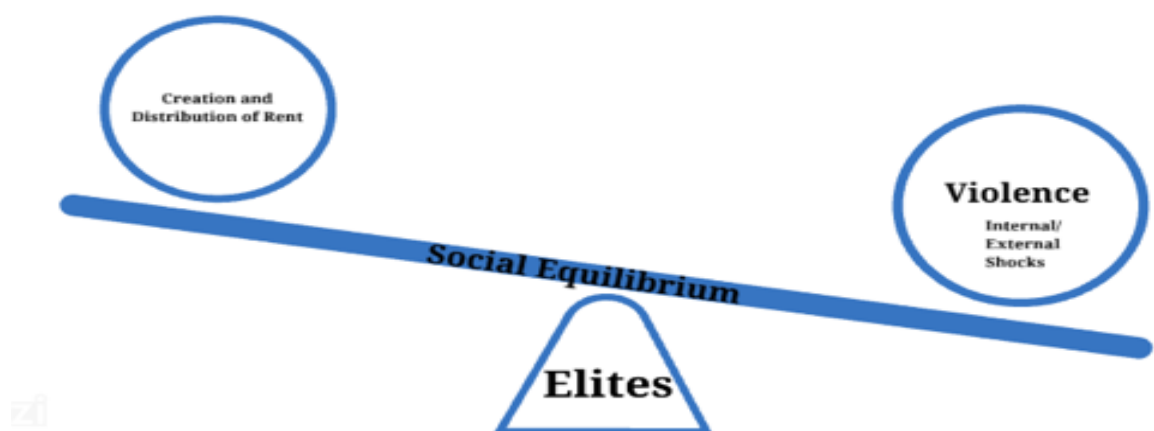
internal and external shocks including the emergence of new rebel groups, price changes in the international market, and natural disasters can easily undermine the existing institutional arrangements (see Figure 44). For example, since 2016, new militant groups such as the NDA have posed significant threats to oil exploitation in the Niger Delta as some estimates have shown how the resurgence of Niger Delta's militancy in 2016 reduced Nigeria's oil production to a 22-year low (Onuoha, 2016). It follows that the emerging militant groups are potent enough to upset the dominant coalitions, which explains why the ex-militant leaders such as Tompolo have been quick to condemn the hostilities of the new militant groups (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Figure 43: Niger Delta Conflict Containment Model 1



Source: Constructed by author

Figure 44: Niger Delta Conflict Containment Model 2



Source: Constructed by author

Overcoming this conflict trap entails achieving the three doorstep conditions namely, the rule of law for elites, perpetually lived forms of public and private elite organisations, and a consolidated political control of the military (North et al., 2009). An impersonal application of the rule of law for elites is an important step to begin the transition towards an OAO as it provides an avenue for elites to ensure that their vested interests are not undermined in the new institutional arrangements. In turn, institutions with a perpetual character needs to be created to execute long-term plans of regularizing impersonal intra- and inter-elite relations as well as impersonal communal relations among members of the society. Finally, a consolidated political control of the military will help to reduce militia groups that are sponsored by elites, and thus enable the state to assume its position as the official authority that can legitimize the use of violence. In achieving the doorstep conditions in the Niger Delta, the rule of law for elites is important for enforcing mining laws to protect lives, properties, and the environment; public institutions such as NEITI, PIGB, and NDDC need to have a perpetual character in order to enhance long-term economic opportunities in the society; and a consolidated political control of the military is important for the state to overcome the security dilemma in the Niger Delta and the country at large. The amnesty trap will be difficult to overcome without these institutional reforms.

In summary, the dissertation has centrally argued that the institutional arrangements in Nigeria's mature LAO system have helped to shape the behaviour and decision-making of state and non-state actors to seek short-term containment of violence, which has led to an amnesty trap. Reforming institutions entail achieving the doorstep conditions, which can help to resolve the different conflict drivers including greed and grievance, institutionalism, modernisation, relative deprivation, security dilemma, and elite manipulation. Thus, amnesties will always be insufficient for attaining sustainable peace without institutional reforms.

Future research can apply the LAO framework to other cases of conflict in order to draw further insights. Also, the amnesty trap and conflict containment logic can be applied to other contexts to validate, refine or refute the claims in this dissertation.

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Appendix A (Interviews)

N o.	RESPONDENT	DATE	GENDER	AGE	OCCUPATION	INTERVIEW MODE	INTERVIEWER
#1	Richard	10/1/17	male	30s	student	face-to-face (Greenwich , London)	Nana
#2	Chuks	8/1/17	male	60s	banker	face-to-face (02 Arena, London)	Nana
#3	Joyce	7/3/17	female	20s	unemployed	face-to-face (Port Harcourt)	Nana
#4	Postdoctoral fellow	30/1/17	male	30s	Expert of Nigerian Politics	face-to-face (London Bridge, London)	Nana
#5	Okoro	20/1/17	male	29yrs	unemployed graduate	WhatsApp video call	Nana
#6	Graduate	21/1/17	male	30yrs	unemployed	WhatsApp video call	Nana
#7	Researcher	30/1/17	male	32yrs	Post-doc on conflict and bioethics, University of Pretoria	WhatsApp video call	Nana
#8	Idy	25/2/17	female	29yrs	Doctoral Student	face-to-face (Lewisham, London)	Nana
#9	Youth Activist	25/06/17	Female	-	Unemployed	Face-to-face (Niger-Delta)	Nana
#10	Youth Activist	25/06/17	Male	31yrs	Private School Teacher	Face-to-face (Niger-Delta)	Nana

#1 1	Ex- militant	26/06/17	Male	-	Businessman (Ex-militant)	Face-to-face (Niger-Delta)	Nana
#1 2	Trader	26/06/17	Female	-	Trader	Face-to-face (Ughelli)	Nana
#1 3	Young Politician	27/07/17	Male	27yrs	Politics	Face-to-face (Port Harcourt)	Nana
#1 4	Student	30/06/17	Female	-	Student	Ilorin	Nana
#1 5	Military	30/06/17	Male	-	Army Officer	Ilorin	Nana
#1 6	Trader	06/09/17	Female	-	Trader	Face-to-face (Peckham, London)	Nana
#1 7	Trader	06/09/17	Male	41yrs	Trader	Face-to-face (Peckham, London)	Nana
#1 8	Civil servant	07/09/17	Male	-	Civil servant	Skype	Nana
#1 9	Graduate	08/09/17	Male	25yrs	Unemployed	Skype	Nana
#2 0	Student (London South Bank University)	08/09/17	Male	30yrs	Retail (Part-time)	Face-to-face (London Bridge)	Nana
#2 1	Pastor	09/09/17	Male	45yrs	Pastor	Face-to-face (Peckham)	Nana
#2 2	Postgraduate Student	09/09/17	Female	-	Student	Face-to-face (Bermonds ey, London)	Nana
#2 3	Teacher	10/09/17	Female	33yrs	Secondary Teacher	Skype	Nana

#2 4	Nurse	12/09/17	Female	-	Nurse at Guy's hospital	Face-to-face (London Bridge)	Nana
#2 5	Receptionist	12/09/17	Female	38yrs	Hotel receptionist	Face-to-face (Peckham, London)	Nana
#2 6	Unemployed	12/09/17	Male	25yrs	Unemployed	WhatsApp	Nana
#2 7	Businessman	13/09/17	Male	-	Businessman	Face-to-face (Peckham, London)	Nana
#2 8	Businessman	13/09/17	Male	-	Businessman	Face-to-face (London Bridge, London)	Nana
#2 9	Unemployed	15/09/17	Female	27yrs	Job seeker	Skype	Nana
#3 0	Trader	15/09/17	Female	-	Food seller	Face-to-face (Peckham, London)	Nana
#3 1	Student (Greenwich University)	20/09/17	Male	30yrs	Postgraduate student	Face-to-face (North Greenwich)	Nana
#3 2	Unemployed	21/09/17	Female	-	Unemployed	WhatsApp	Nana
#3 3	Business Consultant	21/09/17	Male	-	Business	Face-to-face (London Bridge)	Nana
#3 4	IT expert	22/07/17	Male	-	IT	Skype	Nana

Appendix B (Questionnaire Respondents)

No .	DATE	GENDE R	AGE	OCCUPATION	RESEAR CH ASSISTANT	LOCATION
#1	5/7/2017	MALE	-	STUDENT	DAVID	OLOMORO COMMUNITY
#2	6/7/2017	MALE	34yrs	STAFF	DAVID	NO. 74 EZUDE, OLOMORO COMMUNITY
#3	6/7/2017	FEMAL E	-	UNEMPLOYED	DAVID	OLOMORO COMMUNITY
#4	6/7/2017	FEMAL E	28yrs	TEACHER	DAVID	ODOR IYEDE
#5	13/6/17	FEMAL E	-	TEACHER	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#6	4/6/2017	MALE	-	APPRENTICE	DAVID	OLOMORO
#7	4/6/2017	MALE	46 yrs	TEACHER	DAVID	OLOMORO
#8	20/4/2017	MALE	35yrs	TEACHER	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#9	4/7/2017	MALE	-	UNEMPLOYED	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#10	23/4/2017	MALE	49yrs	BUSINESS	DAVID	OLOMORO
#11	29/4/2017	MALE	36yrs	PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHER	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#12	5/5/2017	FEMAL E	-	UNEMPLOYED	DAVID	OLOMORO
#13	25/4/2017	MALE	29yrs	UNEMPLOYED	DAVID	NO. 9 OLOMORO, IYEDE ROAD, ISOKO SOUTH
#14	24/4/17	FEMAL E	41yrs	TEACHER	DAVID	OLOMORO
#15	25/4/17	FEMAL E	-	UNEMPLOYED	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#16	20/5/2017	FEMAL E	ADUL T	CIVIL SERVANT	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH

#17	5/5/2017	MALE	39yrs	CLERGY	DAVID	OLOMORO
#18	5/6/2017	MALE	32yrs	TEACHER	DAVID	NO. 88, OLEH ROAD, ISOKO SOUTH
#19	3/5/2017	MALE	30yrs	TEACHER	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#20	28/5/2017	MALE	29yrs	STUDENT	DAVID	GBARAMATU, BOMADI LOCAL GOVERNMENT
#21	29/5/2017	FEMALE	-	CIVIL SERVANT	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#22	10/5/2017	FEMALE	ADULT	UNEMPLOYED	DAVID	OLOMORO
#23	26/6/2017	MALE	63yrs	PRIEST	DAVID	OTOR-IYEDE
#24	14/4/2017	FEMALE	27yrs	CIVIL SERVANT	DAVID	OLOMORO
#25	20/5/2017	MALE	YOUTH	BUSINESSMAN	DAVID	ISOKO NORTH
#26	18/5/2017	MALE	34yrs	RESEARCHER	-	DELTA STATE
#27	20/6/2017	MALE		LECTURER	-	ILORIN
#28	2/3/2017	MALE	-	EX-MILITANT	-	DELTA STATE
#29	4/4/2017	FEMALE	-	CIVIL SERVANT	-	ISOKO
#30	5/7/2017	MALE	-	BUSINESS	-	ISOKO
#31	7/5/2017	MALE	-	RESEARCHER	-	DELTA STATE
#32	22/05/2017	MALE	21yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	DELTA STATE
#33	6/7/2017	FEMALE	-	STUDENT	PATRICK	DELTA STATE
#34	7/6/2017	FEMALE	24yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	SOBI, ILORIN
#35	8/6/2017	MALE	30yrs	RESEARCHER	PATRICK	ILORIN

#3 6	22/5/2017	MALE	49yrs	PUBLIC SERVANT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#3 7	25/5/2017	MALE	22yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#3 8	22/5/2017	MALE	23yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#3 9	6/6/2017	MALE	34yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	ILORIN
#4 0	26/7/2017	MALE	49yrs	SELF-EMPLOYED	DAVID	OLOMORO
#4 1	27/7/2017	FEMALE	-	-	DAVID	NIGER DELTA
#4 2	24/5/2017	FEMALE	-	UNEMPLOYED	PATRICK	NIGER DELTA
#4 3	21/05/2017	MALE	23yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	NIGER DELTA/ASABA
#4 4	22/5/2017	FEMALE	48yrs	CIVIL SERVANT	PATRICK	CENTRE FOR PEACE/STRATEGIC STUDIES, ILORIN
#4 5	7/6/2017	MALE	22yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	SOBI, ILORIN
#4 6	6/6/2017	FEMALE	22yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	SOBI BARRACKS, ILORIN
#4 7	6/6/2017	MALE	20yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#4 8	11/7/2017	FEMALE	22yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	MALETE
#4 9	12/7/2017	MALE	38yrs	DRIVER	-	NIGER DELTA
#5 0	11/06/2017	FEMALE	18yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	KWARA STATE
#5 1	6/6/2017	MALE	24yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#5 2	19/06/2017	MALE	27yrs	JOB APPLICANT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#5 3	26/6/2017	MALE	34yrs	RESEARCHER	-	PORT HARCOURT
#5 4	8/06/2017	MALE	24yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	ILORIN

#55	1/7/2017	MALE	-	STUDENT	PATRICK	KWARA STATE
#56	2/5/2017	MALE	40yrs	EX-MILITANT	-	ISOKO SOUTH
#57	7/7/2017	FEMALE	-	STUDENT	PATRICK	SABOLINE ISALE, ILORIN
#58	5/7/2017	FEMALE	-	BUSINESS	PATRICK	NIGER DELTA
#59	2/6/2017	FEMALE	18yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	OKE-ODO FOCUS HOSTEL, ILORIN
#60	5/7/2017	MALE	30yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#61	7/7/2017	FEMALE	23yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	IBAJO, OGUN STATE
#62	7/7/2017	MALE	36yrs	CIVIL SERVANT	PATRICK	KWARA STATE
#63	5/7/2017	FEMALE	26yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	SAPATI VILLA
#64	6/6/2017	FEMALE	-	STUDENT	PATRICK	UNILORIN
#65	7/7/2017	FEMALE	-	STUDENT	PATRICK	DELTA STATE
#66	30/5/2017	FEMALE	18	STUDENT	PATRICK	PIPLINE ROAD, ILORIN
#67	8/7/2017	MALE	33yrs	POLICE	PATRICK	STATE CID, ILORIN
#68	6/2/2017	MALE	50yrs	POLICE	PATRICK	STATE CID, ILORIN
#69	5/7/2017	FEMALE	YOUTH	UNDISCLOSED	PATRICK	DELTA STATE
#70	3/7/2017	MALE	-	CIVIL SERVANT	PATRICK	DELTA STATE
#71	6/7/2017	FEMALE	-	UNEMPLOYED	PATRICK	PORT HARCOURT
#72	1/7/2017	MALE	20yrs	PUBLIC SERVANT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#73	1/7/17	MALE	32yrs	PUBLIC SERVANT	PATRICK	ILORIN

#74	1/6/2017	FEMALE	-	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#75	1/7/2017	FEMALE	-	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN
#76	8/6/2017	MALE	27yrs	MILITARY PERSONNEL	PATRICK	DELTA STATE
#77	8/6/2017	MALE	22yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	NIGER DELTA
#78	8/6/2017	MALE	25yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	SOBI BARRACKS, ILORIN
#79	6/6/2017	MALE	-	SOLDIER	PATRICK	SOBI BARRACKS, ILORIN
#80	7/6/2017	MALE	22yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	SOBI, ILORIN
#81	7/6/2017	MALE	25yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	NIGER DELTA
#82	7/6/2017	MALE	24yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	NIGER DELTA
#83	6/6/2017	MALE	24yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	NIGER DELTA
#84	7/7/2017	MALE	-	SOLDIER	PATRICK	SOBI CANTONMENT
#85	6/6/2017	MALE	28yrs	TRADER/STUDENT	PATRICK	MALETE, ILORIN
#86	7/6/2017	FEMALE	26yrs	TRADER/STUDENT	PATRICK	MALETE, ILORIN
#87	7/6/2017	MALE	37yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	ILORIN
#88	20/6/2017	MALE	32yrs	PRIEST	-	PORT HARCOURT
#89	23/5/2017	MALE	39yrs	HEAD TEACHER	-	PORT HARCOURT
#90	25/5/2017	MALE	36yrs	SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER	-	PORT HARCOURT
#91	20/6/2017	MALE	37yrs	PRIEST	-	PORT HARCOURT
#92	6/6/2017	MALE	30yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	ILORIN

#9 3	6/6/2017	MALE	24yrs	SOLDIER	PATRICK	SOBI CANTONMENT
#9 4	11/6/2017	FEMALE	23yrs	STUDENT	PATRICK	ILORIN

Appendix C (Sample of Questionnaire)

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, UNITED KINGDOM

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT FOR THE PHD DISSERTATION OF ELVIS NANA AMOATENG

15 APRIL 2017

The information gathered will help to complete a PhD on The Niger Delta Conflict at the University of Warwick, UK. All information given will be treated in confidence. All respondents will be anonymised and the data will be saved securely. Anyone asked to complete this questionnaire is free to refuse. Respondents are also free to skip any answers therein, and do not have to complete the questionnaire if they do not want. If anyone has any questions about the questionnaire or project please contact Elvis Nana Amoateng ([REDACTED]).

Name of respondent:

Date:

Gender: MALE OR FEMALE

Occupation:

Address/Area of residence:

Age:

Place of Survey:

- 1) Which of the following statements is/are true about violent conflict in the Niger Delta? The conflict is:
- a. Largely due to differences of opinions
 - b. Largely due to disagreement between two or more parties, which include the government, and which leads to destruction of public/private properties, deaths, kidnappings, etc.
 - c. The result of a normal situation that is happening everywhere
 - d. Helps to make progress in the society

How else would you describe the conflict?

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- 2) Which of the following statements is/are true? Please choose one or multiple answers. The Niger Delta conflict is mainly a:

- a. Disagreement between all the tribes
- b. Disagreement between the local people and the chiefs
- c. Disagreement between oil companies and the Federal Government
- d. Disagreement between the local people and the Federal Government

Are there other factors that you think are important?

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3) Kindly rank (I) to (IV) in order of importance with ‘a’ being the most important and ‘d’ being the least important.

The tensions of the Niger Delta are as a result of (I) environmental destruction; (II) unemployment; (III) bad institutions; (IV) greed of leaders

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Are there other factors that you think are particularly important?

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4) Which of the statements is/are correct? Feel free to choose one or multiple answers.

The Niger Delta violence:

- a. Has always been the same
- b. Has reduced since 2009 when the Federal Government pardoned the ex-militants
- c. Reduces from time to time but always comes back
- d. Has ended permanently

5) Some people think that the conflict in the Niger Delta has lasted for a long time because of the following reasons: there is still an abundance of oil; the government has failed to dialogue with the local population; unemployment; and pollution. Do you agree and are there other factors that you think help explain why the conflict has lasted for such a long time?

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6) What do you think about the government's amnesty programme that was initiated in 2009 to pardon the ex-militants? Feel free to choose one or multiple answers.

- a. Very good because everyone is happy now and there is no more conflict in the Niger Delta
- b. Very bad because the government simply pardoned and shared money to the ex-militants but failed to address the real concerns of people
- c. Somehow good because it helped to reduce violence
- d. Somehow bad because the conflict is not completely gone

How else would you describe the amnesty programme?

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7) Some people think that the conflict in the Niger Delta became less violent between 2009 and 2015 because the government was giving money and contracts to the ex-militants. Do you agree? If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response.

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8) Some analysts think that, instead of resolving the Niger Delta conflict, the Nigerian government has only contained the conflict. Do you agree? If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response.

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9) Some people believe that the amnesty programme that was initiated in 2009 was only meant to contain the conflict and not to resolve it. Do you agree? If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response.

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10) Have you been involved in or affected by violence or do you know people who have either been involved or affected by violence in any way?

- a. Yes
- b. No

11) Have you heard of the Niger Delta Avengers?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If so, do you think that their formation shows that:

- a. The conflict was only contained by the amnesty programme
- b. The conflict was resolved by the amnesty programme
- c. That the conflict can never be resolved
- d. All the above

e. None of the above

In your view, why do you think that the Niger Delta Avengers was formed?

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12) Are you happy with your present standard of living?

a. Yes

b. No

How would you describe yourself in terms of income and expenses?

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13) Some people think that low human development (understood as limited access to the necessities of life like food, shelter, health and safe environment for the majority of people) is a major cause of the Niger Delta conflict. Do you agree? If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response.

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14) Do you think that violence in the Niger Delta can stop without an improvement in human development?

a. Yes, because the violence in the Niger Delta has nothing to do with development of the region

b. No, because the local people are tired of low human development in the Niger Delta

c. Yes, because development cannot resolve violence

d. No, because no one needs development in the Niger Delta to resolve conflict

Do you think that there is a relationship between low human development and conflict in the Niger Delta?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response.

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15) What role do politicians play in the violence in the Niger Delta? Feel free to choose one or multiple answers

- a. They contribute to the violence because of their selfish interests
- b. They do not play any role in the violence
- c. They have done a good job to deal with the conflict
- d. They have gone missing in the Niger Delta

What other roles, if any, do you think that politicians have played in the conflict?

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16) There are many influential people in the communities of the Niger Delta besides elected leaders. What other people do you think enjoy significant influence in the communities?

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17) Community leaders and other powerful people in the society can help to incite/organise violence, but they can also help to contain or resolve violence. Overall,

what role do you think the following leaders and categories of people have played in the Niger Delta conflict?

Religious leaders:

- a. Overall contributed to violence
- b. Overall contributed to peace-building
- c. Overall their role has been mixed

Elders/chiefs:

- a. Overall contributed to violence
- b. Overall contributed to peace-building
- c. Overall their role has been mixed

Politicians:

- a. Overall contributed to violence
- b. Overall contributed to peace-building
- c. Overall their role has been mixed

The media:

- a. Overall contributed to violence
- b. Overall contributed to peace-building
- c. Overall their role has been mixed

Civil Society:

- a. Overall contributed to violence
- b. Overall contributed to peace-building
- c. Overall their role has been mixed

Businessmen/businesswomen:

- a. Overall contributed to violence
- b. Overall contributed to peace-building
- c. Overall their role has been mixed

Oil Companies:

- a. Overall contributed to violence
- b. Overall contributed to peace-building
- c. Overall their role has been mixed

18) Please rank the following people in order of importance when it comes to resolving the Niger Delta conflict? local population, oil companies, government, traditional leaders, religious leaders, militants, ex-militants

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- g.

Are there any other important groups that are not included in the list above? If you have time, please explain why you think this group also plays an important role in finding a resolution to the conflict.

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19) For you, who are the elites in the Niger Delta? This can include leaders already discussed or others.

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20) In the Niger Delta do you think that:

- a. All/most elites have been corrupted/bribed to incite violence
- b. Some elites have been corrupted/bribed to incite violence
- c. Few elites have been corrupted/bribed to incite violence
- d. No elite has ever been bribed to incite violence

21) Some say that the youths take money and other gifts from the elites to cause violence in the Niger Delta. Do you agree? If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response.

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22) Who do you think are the most influential youths in the Niger Delta?

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23) Rank the following in order of importance regarding how to deal with the conflict in the Niger Delta, with 'a' being the most important and 'd' being the least important: (I) greater dialogue between the government and the local population; (II) effective rule of law; (III) good institutions; (IV) tackling selfish interests of elites

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Are there other factors that are as, or more, important than those listed?

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24) Are there signs that suggest that the conflict is coming to an end?

- a. No sign
- b. Few signs
- c. Big signs

d. There will never be any sign

If you have time, please provide a reason for picking a, b, c or d above.

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25) If you were appointed to help deal with the Niger Delta conflict, how would you try to resolve the conflict?

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26) When do you foresee the Niger Delta conflict being resolved?

- a. Within few months
- b. Within few weeks
- c. Within few years
- d. Cannot tell

If you have time, please also provide a reason for your response

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Thank you!