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Amnesty without Peace Building: Exploring Trends in Post Amnesty Violence in the Niger Delta

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Abstract

Modern amnesty programme has consistently underestimated the depth of the problem of post conflict peace building particularly in fragile states. Contemporary theories of peace building bring this into perspective. From this perspective, the complexity of resolving intractable conflicts with multidimensional implications involving local, national and international actors remains ever daunting. In the context of an exponential rise in post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta, Nigeria in recent times, this article builds on multi-stakeholder theory and explores when and how peace building might be harnessed to improve social harmony, human rights and good governance. A cross sectoral survey was conducted involving 594 respondents drawn from human rights groups(144), Non-combatants (160) and ex-combatants(290)across the Niger Delta. Further, a review of empirical and theoretical studies was conducted to examine features of the recent amnesty programme of the federal government of Nigeria and in particular, to provide evidence of post amnesty violence. Key findings show that amnesty has not fostered the much expected peace, on the contrary, there is post amnesty violence. The study raises the question of why amnesty failed to broker sustainable peace, which is a missing research agenda. It transcends the notion of amnesty to a more substantial argument on sustainable peace; the idea that, demobilization, disarmament and reintegration is not enough. We argue that amnesty alone is insufficient. To be impactful, amnesty must be deemed relevant, in the sense of being salient and having the capacity to institutionalize sustainable peace among ex-combatants and incentivize post conflict livelihood as a sustainable drive in the peace process. We conclude that the inability of the amnesty programme to find effective strategies to institutionalize sustainable peace will result in persistent post amnesty violence. This interpretation is broadly supported by a number of literatures on post amnesty violence. We recommend broader lessons for policy and amnesty research, including multi stakeholders' involvement in sustainable peace building processes.

Keywords: Sustainable peace; Amnesty; Ex-militants; Development; Niger delta.

1. Introduction

In June 2009, the Federal Government of Nigeria proclaimed amnesty for armed militant groups in the Niger Delta and implemented a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme. The presidential amnesty programme (PAP) gave rise to relative peace and stability in the region. However, in the late 2015, the Niger Delta experienced return to violent attacks by the ex-militants as complex hostilities targeted at oil infrastructure re-emerged. This took an alarming proportion from January 2016 as the violent attacks were carried out by new militant groups notably the Niger Delta Avengers (NDAs), the Ugbesu Sea Lions and the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Movement (NDGJM).

Following the recent PAP of the federal government to the ex-combatants alongside the broader rise in post conflict violence across the region, it appears that some of the core foundations of Amnesty are less transformative. Specifically, the evidence of resurgence of post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta has several implications one of which is that the PAP has been unsuccessful to achieve sustainable peace in the region.

There is increasing need to explore why the PAP was not able to broker sustainable peace in the Niger Delta. Such developments have led to an outpouring of scholarly debates at post amnesty Niger Delta (Amadi *et al.*, 2016; Ebiede, 2018; Joab-Peterside, 2011; McNamee, 2012).

Many of these studies, however, have tended to overlook the longer-term implications of post amnesty conflict on sustainable peace ——a lacuna that broadens the complex challenges of the resurgent violence and further emphasizes the basis for critical exploration of "post-amnesty" violent dimensions based on the failure of the amnesty programme to foster sustainable peace.

This study seeks to challenge the prevailing dynamics of PAP by highlighting its failures in the core sustainable peace building approaches in the post amnesty era. In particular, it draws specific attention to the superficiality of the DDR and similar apparatus in the construction and maintenance of sustainable peace. This emphasis on the post amnesty sustainable peace building not only underscores some neglected aspects of PAP debate but also better accounts for the specific contexts the PAP failed by identifying

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how DDR a key PAP strategy overlooked sustainable peace building. Put differently the assumption that sustainable peace was a major factor driving the amnesty programme will be fundamentally challenged.

Our argument follows on the heels of a number of post amnesty violent attacks, which emphasized the failure of the PAP to achieve sustainable peace. Some of the recent arguments on the post conflict peace building debate highlight the complex challenges of post amnesty violence (Amaize, 2016; Ebiede and Langer, 2017; Ojione, 2010), which reflect the increasing tension and volatility in exploring patterns and dynamics of the violence.

Further, many post amnesty debates of the Niger Delta violence have been criticized for shortcomings in their analysis of dynamics of post amnesty sustainable peace building, as well as their failure to identify the specific contexts and patterns of failures of the DDR that have undermined post amnesty peace building in the Niger Delta (Isumonal, 2012).

We draw on some of these arguments and, in many respects, share their perspectives on the centrality of post amnesty sustainable peace building debate. In a distinct manner, the study focuses on the DDR transformation failures in post conflict contexts to make a distinct contribution to this wider literature that is essential to understand the specific instances of the post amnesty peace building failures and the construction of alternative strategies for post amnesty peace building —one that meets the existential needs of the ex-combatants and non -combatants also addresses the contemporary context of non -transformed DDR. In so doing, the study provides a theorization of how and why the post amnesty sustainable peace building is essential, thereby addressing an important research gap in the Niger delta post amnesty studies.

Specifically, the study transcends mere exploration of the PAP or various patterns of the intervention evident in ongoing studies. While these existing accounts are instructive as the advance knowledge on the PAP the are less strategic to provide sufficient details needed to overcome the challenges of post amnesty violence.

As such, dominant studies tend to understate the volatility of the Niger delta and the possibility of the ex-combatants to return to violence. In contrast, we theorize that ex-militants as an *organic* and *constitutive* element of the Niger Delta are produced from *within* the contradictory workings of exploitation in an oil rich and exploited economy and which are particularly evident within the social dynamic of capitalist resource extraction and inequality within the capitalist hegemony of Nigerian state. The ongoing organic tensions within the Nigeria state as an apparatus of plunder, coercion and exploitation, reflect the state capture and rentier inclinations of its normative foundations. Ake (1985), aptly captured this scenario in his argument on State in Africa as an instrument of capitalist appropriation. This limits the scope and depth of post amnesty peace building, thereby creating significant gaps for inevitable post amnesty violence.

Our account therefore stresses the critical importance of the active role of multiple actors in post amnesty peace building. Thus, an alternative theoretical framework for understanding the persistence of post amnesty violence and peace-building is developed, building on the linkages between post amnesty violence and multiple stakeholders. The forces of post amnesty transformation are not only reproduced within the state ambit —and especially in intractable conflicts as this—but also realized within a broader social realm of varying stakeholders as a sustainable and legitimate component of peace building. And whilst the PAP is contradictory to the social realities of the region in as much as it has failed to usher in a transformed polity and, in some respects, antagonistic to the core aspirations of the combatants (Amaize, 2016), its drive towards sustainable peace becomes questionable as Joab-Peterside (2011) interrogated the honesty of the programme in its first phase. The PAP in the present circumstance has also historically demonstrated a penchant for failure in its preference to selfish accumulation by the coordinators —a defining feature that suggests corruption. It is this "contradictory embrace" emanating from the PAP that makes it more disavowed by activists and scholars in the political contexts, which suggests a non-radicalizing or transformative dynamic that offers little or nothing to the much expected panacea to the underdevelopment malaise of the Niger Delta-a fundamental trigger of violent agitation by the ex- combatants.

This study is structured as follows; research methodology, PAP and peace building in the Niger Delta, review of the literature, which examines some of the most prominent explanations of the PAP, focusing particularly on DDR, the section teases out how the existing PAP literature both defines sustainable peace and connects this to the construction of the Niger Delta realities the social, ideological, and institutional arrangements within the domestic politics of post amnesty violence. Essentially, conclusion follows as the study identifies some of the prospects as well as limitations of the PAP approaches, which are further developed in the recommendation where the study discussed the structured relations between PAP and the ex-combatants in the construction of post amnesty peace building.

2. Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative research, which adopts a cross sectoral survey. Our survey involved 594 respondents drawn randomly from human rights activist groups (144), Non-combatants (160) and ex-combatants (290).

Further, content analysis technique was adopted. The documents considered most important are the PAP policy documents, periodic reports, amnesty bulletins and existing scholarly publications such as journal articles,the UNEP report, the UNDP report on the Niger Delta, Transparency International, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International(AI) reports and similar documents that explore the broad fields of Amnesty, ex-combatants and post conflict peace building. This multiple set of documents was critically evaluated.

The theoretical context of this study links the dynamics of post amnesty violence and sustainable peace to the question of strategic transformation of the ex-combatants. Thus, the frameworks to analyze the relationship between ex-combatants, post amnesty violence and federal government from the standpoint of sustainable peace building are the stakeholder theory and the Marxian Political Economy theory.

The stakeholder theory emerged as a critique of the shareholder theory, which largely took account of the welfare of the shareholders of a company leaving out the stakeholders (Friedman, 1970). The stakeholders theory was popularized in the works of St Edward Freeman, in his book, "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach." Freeman argued that shareholders are only a component of the wider structure of a company. He maintained that beyond those who invested money in a company, there are other relevant components such as employees, the environment where the company is situated, vendors, governmental agencies etc. Stakeholder theory contends that a company's real success lies in satisfying the needs of all relevant stakeholders, beyond profit the company makes.

This study draws from this theoretical argument and explores post amnesty violence to understand the prevailing violence and the neglect of the stakeholders leading to non-transformation of the violence, hence persistent post amnesty violence. Ebiede and Langer (2017), argued that there are different stakeholders pursuing different interests in the Niger Delta that all of these stakeholders have interest in oil production and stability in the Niger Delta. Ebiede (2017), identified the key stakeholders as (1) the Nigerian Government, (2) Oil Producing Communities in the Niger Delta, (3) International Oil Companies.

While there are various stakeholders that have interest in oil, the position they occupy in the relations of production differs. For instance, the federal government and the multinational oil companies hold higher stakes than the host communities on whose land the oil is produced such positions in Marxian analysis defines the mode of exploitation, resource access and accumulation, while the stakeholder theory recognizes the basis for "level playing ground" among the stakeholders, the Marxian political economy explores patterns and dynamics of inequality and exploitation inherent in capitalist oil resource extraction which leads to violence. Thus when the social dissonance in oil extraction necessitated by the inevitable contradictions of class and exploitation is ameliorated or addressed post conflict violence could reduce (Ariweriokuma, 2008) made similar observation with a strong argument regarding equality in oil resource extraction.

Thus, both theories will help explain whether the interests of the ex-combatants or that of the federal government and the multinational oil companies have been more centrally linked to the amnesty programme. In particular, it will identify the extent amnesty programme and its DDR strategies have been institutionalized as a transformative mechanism to meet the needs of the ex-combatants leading to sustainable peace or otherwise.

Further, the study will examine in sufficient details how post amnesty violence has substantially mitigated sustainable peace in the Niger Delta and in particular contributes to the general body of knowledge surrounding post amnesty and sustainable peace building challenges in the Niger Delta, including issues of economic empowerment and overall transformation of the region. Above all, it will help to provide strategies to address post amnesty violence and hostility in the Niger Delta.

3. PAP and Peace Building in the Niger Delta: Review of the Literature

Amnesty has been variously described both as a paraphernalia for peace and reconciliation and instrument of post conflict peace building (Alli, 2013; Ebiede, 2018; Ikelegbe, 2010; Imobighe, 2004; Ushie, 2013),'apparatus of collective social action' for effective conflict resolution among various dissident actors able and willing to make 'credible commitments' for peace (Ikelegbe and Umukoro, 2016). This notion has led, in particular, to what has been termed critical levels of analysis of the amnesty programme. In such analysis the features, success and failures of amnesty is explored within the context of the role of the government understood as central in such peace process.

The study of amnesty in the Niger Delta has attracted a substantial body of literature (Ajibola, 2015; Joab-Peterside, 2011; Nwanjiokwu-Dahou, 2012; Obi, 2014; Ogege, 2011). An image of amnesty in which violence is doused remains ideal but contestable and informs the preference for amnesty in violent conflict situations (Ushie, 2013). Fischer (2004), argued that the processes of recovering from violent conflict situation remains daunting and involves several process of 'regeneration and re-integration, which he identified as key elements of peace building.

The literature on contemporary amnesty is supposed to bring together four fundamental features that lie at the heart of post conflict peace building, more generally: post conflict empowerment through demobilization, bonds of non-arms deal through disarmament, social re-engineering through re-integration (Apah, 2014), where the state is seen as an institutional apparatus for transitional justice and equity with the legitimate authority to dispense social justice (Ekpimah, 2012; Hamre and Sullivan, 2002; Zalik, 2004) and, importantly with the capacity for multi-functionality. These combine to fuel divergent arguments on linkages between post amnesty violence and peace building.

The PAP was built around three strategies namely DDR. However the substantial evidence pointing out post amnesty sustainable peace remains contestable. With increasing evidence of post amnesty violence, the challenge of sustainable peace building remains germane. Moody (2016), identified the new turn amnesty had taken following the rise of the Niger Delta Avengers, which he termed "a new threat to oil producers in Nigeria". The distinct character of the political dynamics that informed the re-emergence of ex-combatants across the region centered on non- transformation of the region (Francis *et al.*, 2011).

A number of perspectives have sought to theorize the connections between militancy and poverty in the Niger delta as partly responsible for the re-emergence of violence (Amadi *et al.*, 2016; Ebiede and Langer, 2017; Ikelegbe and Umukoro, 2016; Joab-Perterise, 2010). Our primary focus centres on the failure of the federal government's amnesty programme to foster sustainable peace, distinctively we seek to provide useful explanations that could offer some insights on the distinct political character of the post amnesty violence and its relation to sustainable peace building.

Some empirical literature provide further insights on the complex strands of the growing violence and peace building challenges (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007; Ikelegbe, 2014). A heightened concern in the literature is the understanding of some core tasks that confront peace building such as exclusion (Ikelegbe and Umukoro, 2014),transitional justice, understanding and resolving the cause of the conflict and peace building capacity (Boyce, 2004).

It has further been argued that absolute priority should be given to the cause of the conflict and the rehabilitation process in order to forestall future re-occurrence and restore some of the basic services that meet the subsistence needs of the affected communities and most vulnerable groups of the society (Ikelegbe, 2014).Post conflict reconstruction involves repairing the overall physical and human infrastructure (World Bank, 1999). In the context of economic development post conflict peace building pays particular attention to economic reintegration in the society. This involves certain group of people such as internally displaced persons and in our case demobilized ex- combatants (del Castillo, 2008; Kreimer *et al.*, 1998). The aim is to reintegrate and empower them economically for subsistence and sustainable livelihoods, contrarily the PAP has no formal long term post conflict reintegration strategy.

Another essential strand of post-conflict peace building in the literature is the attenuation of the dissention factors that originally triggered the conflict. For instance; has the issues that caused militancy in the Niger Delta been addressed in the post amnesty era?If they have, what factors account for such transformation and how has such resolution translated to post amnesty sustainable peace? Some scholars put up the argument that the imperative of reducing 'horizontal inequalities' such as inequality on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion or class through peace and reconstruction programmes will promote sustainable peace and development (Addison *et al.*, 2002; Humphreys, 2003; Stewart, 2009). This has been aspect of the roles the federal government has not adequately played in the PAP project.

This role of the government has been seen as fundamentally essential in the specific sense of building sustainable peace - a central structure above and beyond the state and the dissident or combatant groups. As a result, amnesty initiatives lies between, on the one hand, order, and the other peace including, ability to contain various forms of fragility that may often emerge either in the cause of the amnesty or thereafter. This conceptualization leads to a fundamental 'post conflict dilemma' in which the attempt of a government not to strengthen post amnesty peace building can lead to a vicious circle in which other dissident groups or the ex-combatants can take up arms , leading to the breakdown of the amnesty deal and suboptimal outcomes (Juma, 2002).

Against the background of the reviewed literature, amnesty programme has consistently underestimated the problems of post amnesty violence in fragile states. Contemporary post conflict theories reinforce the essence of sustainable peace. The contention is that the complexity of conflicts requires long term multidimensional restructuring including wide ranging stakeholders. This does not remove the problem of resurgence of post amnesty conflict but rather deepens the peace building process , involving multidimensional approaches to douse intractable tensions and contradictions variously described as ' complex violence'', 'fragility', 'volatile landscapes' etc.

Approaching post amnesty peace building from the perspective of multi stakeholder reinforces new thinking regarding the patterns and causes of such conflicts, the various parties involved and the modalities to douse such conflicts. This study, challenges the view of poor state response to post amnesty deal by drawing on a range of debates emanating from the study of amnesty that question the nature of the PAP,the role of the state to create new meanings regarding post amnesty violence and gaps in peace building in the federal government's amnesty to the Niger Delta militants. The paper aims to explore and expand the contours of the amnesty and to highlight the implications of seeing amnesty as central to peace building without creating institutional apparatus that could enable such peace to flourish.

Essentially peace building theories focus not merely on the actors involved in the crisis *per se* but rather on institutional restructuring of the triggers of such conflicts (Galtung, 1995). Thus there is a missing link between amnesty and the causes of the violence by the militants. Further, within more critical and complex multilayered and overlapping perspectives, the complex problems of amnesty and its failures could be unraveled; multiple stakeholders, institutions and processes that challenge and increasingly critique the sincerity and capacity of the federal government to successfully conduct amnesty to mitigate and control, violent attacks by dissident youths of the Niger Delta or shape what could be termed belligerency remains increasingly contestable. These skepticism often lead to disenchantment and criminalization of the state (Slaughter, 2004), as incapable of providing a model to effectively transform the ex-combatants.

We develop an account of post amnesty violence that makes three important contributions to the amnesty studies: the post conflict state fragility debate, the critique of post conflict peace building in the developing societies, the third world security predicament in Ayoob (1996) analysis of developing societies, and new wars and resurgence of local c0nflicts in Marry Kaldor (1997) representation of post- Cold War conflict of the global South. These debates are linked to the understanding of the generative force of state failure in peace process leading to uneven and uncoordinated peace building exemplified in post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta.

This study moves towards a new line of inquiry on peace and security dilemma in the Niger Delta providing intersecting and interwoven contexts of such resurgent serial violence that are linked to broader illumination of the failure of the federal government's amnesty programme. suggesting in the alternative, evidence of a fundamentally violent social order, one which tends to be increasingly anarchic and fuelled by long term neglect and marginalization of the Niger Delta by the federal government And in particular rapidly and systemically ushering anomie and disparaging motives within and among the contending stakeholders whose scales and claims are increasingly undermined and emasculated. This study goes further to argue that the processes of amnesty, in essence, represents the ongoing appropriation of resources by an elite and for an elite. This is evidence within corruption

dynamics associated with PAP leading to its internal decay and failure as leading actors act to generate patterns of economic appropriation not simply within the intuition of transformation of the combatants but more often informed by diversionary choices, drawing the Niger delta and the combatants into wide ranging processes of 'complex underdevelopment'

The paper argues in essence, that amnesty becomes the latitude for politicians, and 'without peace building'. The underlying consequence is the palpable failure of the programme, much of the failure suggest a new look at post amnesty violence, and the implications.

4. Evidence of Post Amnesty Violence

By the 4th of October, 2009 the federal government officially ended the amnesty offer with several militant groups surrendering their arms and embracing peace. However some militant groups did not embrace the scheme mostly of the MEND (Ojione, 2010). It is equally instructive that leader of the defunct Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force(NDPVF) Mujahid Asari Dokubo did not recognize the amnesty nor surrender arms insisting that he is a freedom fighter.

Post-amnesty militant activities continued with bombings in some parts of the Niger Delta leading to deaths and loss of property. The first of these and which and which increasingly undermined post-amnesty dialogue within Warri axis took place on 15th March 2010. The incident included two explosions which occurred a few meters way from the Delta state Government House Annex, Warri, during a government summit (Ojione, 2010).

Guests ignored the initial blast focusing on their meeting. However the second bomb which was massive broke the glass of the hall and shook the building (Amaize, 2010).This brought the summit to an abrupt end as participants who were drawn from various sectors of the society including top government official from across the state ,captains of industry and leaders of thought ran for their dear lives. The attack recorded one death MEND claimed responsibility for the bombing (Amaize, 2010).

The next incident occurred on Independence Day (1 October 2010), in this context, two bomb blasts took place and claimed the lives of 20 persons, which, included eight security agents. The blast occurred a few meters away from Eagle Square, Abuja, venue of the Independence Day celebrations almost marred Nigeria's Golden Jubilee celebration, which had top government officials including Heads of States, Members of the diplomatic corps, international community and national dignitaries in attendance. MEND also claimed responsibility for the bomb blasts. They further claimed that the government has been neglecting the Niger Delta, this was at the instance of the amnesty programme in the region (Amaize, 2010; Ojione, 2010).

Renewed threats involving new armed groups in the Niger Delta further intensified. In early 2016 despite the continuation of PAP beyond its estimated end year, new attacks were carried out by armed groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) (Ebiede and Langer, 2017). The NDA, like previous armed groups in the region, claimed to be representing and expressing the grievances of oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region.

The NDA has repeatedly targeted oil industry infrastructures. This has negatively impacted oil production in the Niger Delta. The emergence of the NDA and its persistent attacks on the oil infrastructure evokes curiosity regarding the effectiveness of the PAP both as a peace building policy and strategy of reintegration of the ex-combatants.

This concern is ever more critical as PAP has trained some of the ex-combatants and provided some with empowerment tools nd alternative sources of livelihood. In particular it has trained over fifteen thousand ex-combatants with the aim of ending violence. The resurgence of post amnesty violence becomes increasingly challenging at the aftermath of the NDA. On several counts the NDA attacked and vandalized oil infrastructure in communities in the Niger Delta such as Gbaramatu in Delta state.

Similarly, there was resurgence of the scourge of local criminality in parts of the Niger delta associated with vandalization of oil facilities, oil bunkering, sea pirates and local cultism. All fuelled disgust, tension and panic in post amnesty the Niger Delta.

In Rivers State the state government granted amnesty to the local cult leaders where several arms were surrendered to the state. Ironically, this did not end local violence in the state as local cultism persisted in places like Khana and Gokana, Omoku and Ahoada as well as Emohua all in Rivers State. In the particular case of Omuku local cult leader Don Wana unleashed terror on a group of worshippers on the 31st December night in 2018 leaving several persons wounded and over thirty dead.

In Emohua, Local Government Area of Rivers State, two rival local cult groups namely Dee Bam (be strong)and Dee Well (be well) intermittently take up arms against each other accounting for increasing deaths and insecurity of lives. There has been a return to kidnapping and abduction of commuters in buses on transit from Port Harcourt in Rivers State to Warri in Delta State along the East West road, this experience persisted and public commuters stopped plying the road.

In Khana and Gokana there was increasing attacks by rival local cult groups displacing several households. This indicates that the Post Amnesty Programme (PAP) has not been able to address the underlying causes of instability in the region. The persistence of post amnesty militancy, local cultism and criminality raises concerns for both the local communities, the federal government and the international community. Essentially, post amnesty militancy continues to derail oil production, leading to deepening economic crisis of underdevelopment, which undermines Nigeria's economic growth. Post amnesty violence has also accounted for volatility of the Niger Delta environment as oil theft, and related criminality increasingly thrive in the region leading to insecurity of lives and property.

Essentially, post amnesty violence creates alternative economic opportunities and survival for the ex-combatants it also creates avenue for a broader rise in criminal networks across the Niger Delta leading to sea piracy,

proliferation of small arm and light weapons(SALWs).These   pose threats to post amnesty sustainable peace building.

5. Data Presentation

Our survey involved 594 respondents drawn   randomly from   human rights activist groups(144), Non-combatants (160),ex-combatants(290).The analysis and discussion aim to determine   whether the amnesty programme was able to foster sustainable peace and end post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta or not

The questions and responses are provided in a tabular form as follows;

Table-1. To determine the various contexts post amnesty violence exist in the Niger Delta

Q1	Respondents	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Are there evidence of various contexts in which post amnesty violence exist in the Niger Delta	Human Rights Activist Groups	120	7	17	144
	Non-combatants	140	3	17	160
	Ex-combatants	200	60	30	290
	Total	460 (97%)	70(11.795)	64(10.77%)	594(100%)

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table-2. To identify the ways in which amnesty failed to reintegrate the ex-combatants

Q2	Respondents	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Are there ways in which the federal government's amnesty programme failed to reintegrate the ex-combatants in the Niger Delta?	Human Rights Groups	102	6	36	144
	Non-Combatants	144	4	12	160
	Ex-combatants	210	40	40	290
	Total	456(76.77%)	50(8.42)	88(14.87)	594(1005)

Source: Field Survey, (2019)

Table-3. To ascertain the contexts in which demobilization negates post amnesty empowerment

Q3	Respondents	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Are there contexts in which demobilization negates post amnesty empowerment of the ex-combatants?	Human Rights Groups	99	15	30	144
	Non -combatants	151	3	6	160
	Ex-combatants	220	30	40	290
	Total	470(79.12%)	48(8.08%)	76(12.80%)	594(100%)

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table-4. To determine whether effective peace building measures were put in place to check post amnesty violence

Q4	Respondents	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Effective peace building measures and regulatory instruments have not been put in place to mitigate post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta?	Human Rights Groups	70	40		144
	Non –combatants	135	10		160
	Ex-combatants	225	20	45	290
	Total	430(72.40%)	70(11.78%)	94(15.82%)	594(100%)

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table-5. To examine how disarmament as a strategy of Peace building in the Amnesty Programme has curtailed post amnesty proliferation of small arms and light weapon and violent crimes in the Niger Delta

Q5	Respondents	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
The disarmament strategy of Peace building in the Amnesty Programme has not curtailed post amnesty proliferation of small arms and light weapon and violent crimes in the Niger Delta.	Human Rights Group	65	45	34	144
	Non -combatants	139	10	13	160
	Ex-combatants	227	15	48	290
	Total	429(72.22%)	70(11.79%)	95(15.99%)	594(100%)

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table-6. Chi Square statistical analysis

Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	$(fo-fe)^2$	$(fo-fe)^2$ fe
65	104	-39	1,521	14.62
45	16.96	28.04	786.24	46.35
34	23.03	10.97	120.34	5.22
137	115.55	21.45	460.10	3.98
10	18.85	-8.85	78.32	4.15
13	25.58	-12.58	158.25	6.18
227	209.44	17.56	308.35	1.47
15	34.17	-19.17	367.48	10.75
48	46.38	1.62	2.62	0.05
				X^2 92.77

Source: Field, 2019

Interpretation of formular

Formula: $\chi 2 = \Sigma \frac{(fo - fe)2}{fe}$

Where: fo = observed frequency

Fe = expected frequency

Σ = summation

Df = 4

Significance level = 0.05

Table value = 9.488

Decision Rule: when chi square calculated is greater than the table value, reject null hypothesis.

6. Discussion

From table 1 the responses on the various contexts in which post amnesty exist in the Niger Delta, show that 77.44% affirm that there are various contexts in which post amnesty violence exists; 11.79% had a negative view while 10.77% were not sure.

Table 2 above shows that 76.77% of the respondents affirmed that there are ways in which the federal government amnesty programme failed to re-integrate the ex-combatants in the Niger Delta.,8.42% had a negative view while 14.81% were not sure.

Table 3 shows that 79.12% of the respondents accepted that there are contexts in which demobilization strategy of the federal governments amnesty programme negates post amnesty empowerment, while 8.08%had a contrary opinion and 12.80% were not sure.

The result from table 4 reveals that 72.40% of the respondents agree that, effective peace building measures and regulatory instruments have not been put in place to mitigate post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta, 11.78% had a negative view while 15.82% were not sure.

The responses from table 5 show that 72.22% of the respondents are of the opinion that the disarmament as a strategy of peace building in the amnesty programme has not curtailed post amnesty proliferation of small arms and light weapon and violent crimes in the Niger Delta, 11.79% of the respondents hold a contrary view while 15.99% were not sure.

Following the result of the chi square calculation, 92.77 is greater than the table value of 9.488. This implies that the hypothesis that the federal government amnesty programme has significantly affected post amnesty peace building is hereby rejected. In the alternative the study draws a conclusion that post amnesty violence has been on the increase ranging from resurgence of abduction and kidnapping of expatriate oil workers, local cultism, sea pirates. The result is consistent with a number of recent studies which suggest the resurgence of post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta (Utebor, 2014).

The aim of sustainable peace is to check intractable violence this leads to the issue of best practices (Sriram *et al.*, 2002). The essence of sustainable peace among others is to promote mutuality in divided societies (Lederach, 1997). Checking post amnesty political violence is important in a number of ways. First, it will help to end the long held notion of volatility associated with the Niger Delta.It will foster a sense of rehabilitation among the ex-combatants and encourage effective re-integration of the ex-combatants. Anuradha Joshi (2009) found that accountability is central to post conflct transformation among fragile states. This complex challenge leads to possible return to violence at slightest provocation or sense of neglect by the ex-combatants. In the Niger Delta post amnesty violence has taken several dimensions in recent times, which calls for urgent policy attention.

At the community level, Ebiede (2017) provided evidence of the impact of post amnesty violence including rape and similar local crimes. His study draws from the experience in the post Nepal conflict. Post amnesty violence as documented in an empirical study undermines the attainment of sustainable peace, which led Malan (2008) to suggest the need to understanding transitional justice in Africa as conflict is described as a persistent and inevitable occurrence, and constitutes threat to peace.

The increasing challenge of post amnesty violence pose complex development problem to the Niger Delta. Ushie (2013), examined the consequences of post amnesty violence to sustainable development with evidence from post amnesty vandalization of oil facilities in the Niger Delta and further identified the complex problems associated with such political violence. There are debates on "fallacy of the state". This strand of argument maintain that there

is absence of honesty in the federal governments amnesty programme (Joab-Peterside, 2011).The central thesis of this school of though is that the amnesty is more of a grand package by the federal government to douse the agitation of the aggrieved Niger Delta youths without any genuine commitment to the empowerment of the youths or transformation for the Niger Delta. This study is in line with this argument. Following our findings, we provide a number of empirical evidence to justify the fact that there is lack of commitment by the federal government to the amnesty programme and economic transformation of the Niger Delta. This calls for institutional overhaul and transformation of the Niger Delta. As our results show, there is need for policy response to post amnesty violence which is remains a major challenge facing sustainable peace building the Niger Delta. This generally undermines the overall strategic focus of the federal government amnesty programme.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Post amnesty violence exacerbates the difficulties in sustainable peace building and transformation of the ex-combatants. It further accounts for the increasing difficulties faced in the Niger Delta communities by poor and marginalized women and the girl child, particularly in the context of armed violence in which several women and their livelihoods are impacted with such violence as they do not go to the farm or river to fend for their livelihood. Policy choices that could transform both their lives and that of the ex-combatants remain in the margins of contemporary discourses.

Exploring the various contexts post amnesty violence exists, this study has highlighted a number of strategies that could help restore sustainable peace in the Niger Delta. It emphasizes the importance of distinguishing amnesty as a rhetoric and amnesty as a tool for transformation and peace building including issues of youth empowerment, and re-integration to douse the complex and intractable post amnesty violence in the Niger Delta.

The paper highlighted how the dynamic resurgence and contexts of the violence has resulted in persistent volatility of the region which poses constraints to normal economic activities including oil exploration and normal subsistence of the local people and simultaneously offer opportunities for new policy response by the federal government as it is evident that the amnesty did not effectively broker the much expected peace. The evidence from this study underscores the importance of not viewing amnesty as a completely peace building strategy rather to look at specific contexts the programme succeeded and where it failed, with the opinion of multiple stakeholders, which is open to future research. This raises new policy concern regarding how to bring post amnesty violence to an end and how to understand the specific plights of the ex-combatants and in particular how to build sustainable peace .

The intractable trajectory of the post amnesty violence, illustrates the core importance of new strategies and framings that could create avenues for sustainable peace and collective action aimed at meeting the legitimate claims of the ex-combatants. The field analysis highlight that progress towards sustainable peace in post conflict societies is often transitory and requires consistent peace strategies , but essentially foreground collective issues that are essential for understanding post amnesty peace building and sustainable peace processes namely transitional justice.

Recommendations

There are a number of factors that should be put in place to institutionalize post amnesty peace building in the Niger Delta.in our analysis we have attempted to identify some of the causes of post amnesty violence.to build sustainable peace some of these identified triggers of violence should be addressed. This sttudy made some recommendations as follows;

(i) A highly strategic and people based transitional justice in which new dialogue should be resumed to substantially engage the ex-combatants in a round table discussion for a frank dialogue to resolve post amnesty violence is needed

(ii) As shown, the presidential amnesty programme through the DDR was to a large extent constituted by non-transformative strategies beyond the programme span. Thus, sustainable peace building remained a missing component. There is nothing contradictory about the PAP as a peace building approach other than its poor implementation and non-strategic focus in the constitution and reproduction of peace building. It lacked strong political will and was not premised on the primacy of economic transformation of the Niger Delta. Rather growing sentiments on "keeping the region" on check against obstruction to capitalist oil resource extraction informed the PAP.

(iii) The PAP lacked formally documented strategy of post conflict peace building such plans are outlined and formally documented. PAP operated largely on informal basis.

(iv) Environmental and civil rights of the people and strict political-legal compliance regarding the scope and workings of amnesty programme in the context of guarantee from human rights was elusive or inadequately implemented. As such, the varied and important roles that the DDR could have played in the peace process —combined with the corruption of the coordinators of the programe undermined efforts at reintegration of the ex-combatants thereby undermining sustainable peace.

(iv) In many cases, encouragement of ex-combatants to adjust and get fully re-integrated became a daunting challenge and in essence constituted an element, which eroded sustainable peace. Reintegration strategy—is seriously put into question in dominant theorizations and debates on PAP(see…..). Thus, while acknowledging the laudable policies and initiatives adopted in the PAP,the several contradictions between principle and practice suggest that there are more challenges than has often been recognized by most post amnesty policy initiatives , particularly in the Niger Delta

(v) In the early amnesty years, there was a particular form of passive peace building, wherein post amnesty violent agitations from the ex-combatants were fairly non-existent or substantially absorbed from above in

ways which may have suggested an end to militancy and related agitations. However in the late 2015,a historically active post amnesty agitation ensued and became violent following the emergence of post amnesty violent groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers and the Green Landers Movement. These instilled a new social and moral logic to post amnesty agitation in which a distinct post amnesty agitation and violence re-emerged.

This registered a general sense of post amnesty failure and the outcome of a passive PAP becomes discernible. Thus, the elemental neglect of the "organic movements within the structures of post amnesty rehabilitation "ultimately resulted in post amnesty violent agitation.

(vi) Our findings suggest that there is need to reconceptualize the PAP from a state to a community driven perspective, which is the basis of the multiple stakeholder approach this study advocates. In a way that is not only more open to the various agitating groups in the Niger Delta but to understand the existential realities of the people, which goes beyond the dominant narrowly framed understanding of amnesty adopted by PAP.

Thus, intervention should be institutionalized and owned by the people beyond the amnesty span thus, the structure and patterns of Niger Delta agitation and composition of socio-political forces must be more inclusive in ways that must be directly linked to the people—paradoxically the existing PAP is insulated from the people to a large extent particularly the non-combatants and women who remained marginalized. These should be—revisited as integral to sustainable peace and inclusive development of the Niger Delta. In this sense, it makes more sense to conceptualize post amnesty peace building as representing a broader social conundrum including the ex-combatants, non-combatants, women and community leaders who are increasingly vulnerable and marginalized. The focus should be on the labor force and economically active but disempowered and how best to sustainable empower them agaist growing poverty in the oil rich Niger Delta.

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