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Received 30 Dec 2015 | Accepted 1 Nov 2016 | Published 6 Dec 2016

DOI: 10.1057/palcomms.2016.83

OPEN

# The gendered construction of reparations: an exploration of women's exclusion from the Niger Delta reintegration processes

Olakunle Michael Folami<sup>1,2</sup>

**ABSTRACT** The Niger Delta is located in the South-south region of Nigeria. Oil exploration and exploitation by the multinational oil companies led to environmental degradation. The agitations among the inhabitants for environmental protection led to a protracted conflict between the Nigerian security forces and the militant groups in the region. Amnesty, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) were adopted in the region to resolve the conflict by the government. The Niger Delta post-conflict DDR processes were gendered: exclusion of women from the peace processes was a major concern for peacebuilding actors and academics in the region. Men were significantly favoured in the DDR peacebuilding processes because they belonged to militant groups. The roles played by women in the conflict were not however recognised; these included roles in demonstrations, strikes, campaigns, lobbies, and as carers, nurses and cooks. Women have therefore sought redress in the peacebuilding processes. This study aims to identify roles played by men and women in the Niger Delta conflict. It examines methods of conflict resolution adopted in the region and also investigates the reason why women were largely excluded from the DDR processes. Recognition Theory is used in this study to examine the institutionalised norms that make gender inclusion in the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes problematic. Recognition theory considers equal treatment to be an important part of a just society, while distributive justice theorists believe that economic goods and wealth must be shared equally. This study was carried out in the Gbaramatu Kingdom, Niger Delta region, Nigeria, in three selected communities: Okerenkoko; Egwa; and Oporoza. A qualitative method involving in-depth interviews was used to collect data from 24 participants. I report that many men and women participated in the conflict but a small number of women (0.6%) were included in the DDR peacebuilding processes. I find that men and women demand that reparations should be considered in addition to the reintegration process that has been adopted in the Niger Delta. Furthermore, I find that apart from patriarchal culture, DDR operational norms only focus on security and not on human rights. I conclude that men's and women's rights could be recognized through the combination of DDR and reparations rights in the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes. This article is published as part of a collection on gender studies.

<sup>1</sup> Transitional Justice Institute, Ulster University, Londonderry, UK <sup>2</sup> Department of Sociology, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria Correspondence: (email: xtianfayol@yahoo.com)

## Introduction

**D**isarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) was adopted by the government of Nigeria to resolve the protracted Niger Delta conflict over oil exploration and exploitation. The DDR processes were nationally owned without international actors' collaboration such as United Nations, World Bank, NGOs, UNDP and others. The Niger Delta DDR peacebuilding processes aimed at security and peace. Justice for victims was not considered in the peacebuilding processes. The roles played by women in the conflict were not recognised such as in demonstrations, lobbies, strikes and campaigns and as carers and nurses. Apart from a patriarchal culture, it should be noted that the DDR mandate was limited to ex-militants. As a result, the Niger Delta DDR could not accommodate the majority of women. Women were categorised with others victims whose human rights have been grossly abused. UNDDR 2.10 (2006) states that the DDR alone cannot resolve conflict or prevent violence: it can, however, help to establish a secure environment so that other elements of a peacebuilding strategy, including weapon management, security sector reform, elections and rule of law reform, can proceed (2). It should be noted that gender exclusion is neither government policy nor included in the proclamation that created DDR in the Niger Delta. UNDDR 2.10 (2006) further states that DDR must ensure that the human rights of all persons are respected at all times; mechanism must be established to minimize reprisal, stigmatization or discrimination (9).

Amnesty and DDR simultaneously implemented in the Niger Delta. Both processes brought relative peace and security to the region while human right abuses as affected women were left unattended. This study therefore, uses Recognition Theory to explain the combination of reintegration and reparations to guaranty women's rights the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes. I aim to demonstrate that the combination of DDR and reparations would strengthen peacebuilding processes in the Niger Delta. The process is referred to as "construction of gender reparations in the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes". There are numerous articles and publications by scholars and nongovernmental organisations on the impacts of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta such as women's sources of livelihood, climate change, agriculture, health and on overall development of the region (see for example Ojakorotu, 2009) but none have written on gender aspect of DDR in the Niger Delta. This article is therefore divided into five sections: (1) recognition, reparations and gender; (2) Niger Delta conflict; (3) peacebuilding methods in the Niger Delta; (4) methods of researching gender in a post-conflict society; (5), findings and conclusions.

## Recognition, reparations and gender

Recognition Theory examines how equality can be achieved through intersubjection of rights. Taylor (1992) provides legitimate and illegitimate ontology to explain distributive justice. Taylor (1992) says that equal recognition is achievable through *intersubjective* recognition; it is plausible if two individuals have legitimate claims. Two forms of recognition were identified by Taylor (1992): (1) generative (objective); and, (2) responsive (subjective). Generative recognition focuses on the way in which recognition produces or generates reasons for actions or self-understandings (Laitinen, 2002: 6). Responsive recognition focuses on the ways in which a person is acknowledged due to pre-existing features (Markell, 2007). The former is a case of a person "knowing" while the latter is a case of a person "making" (Laitinen, 2002; Markell, 2007; McQueen, 2011). Recognition Theory can be used to explain the cultural injustice, which serves as a root of distributive injustice (Honneth, 1992). It is important to note that, where distributive injustice is a key factor in a

conflict, it must also be a key issue to be addressed by the mechanisms that will ensure equal recognition (Honneth, 2007). The combination of cultural justice with distributive justice can address the concerns of nonrecognised groups in the society, such as women, ethnic minority, refugees and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender community (McQueen, 2011). In many post conflict situations, recognition plays a crucial role in women's involvement in the post conflict distributive processes. The broader notion of distributive justice in transition examined in this study encompasses recognition of structural inequality and exclusion, and their inter-sectional impact on the potential of women to participate as equals in a transitional region. The politics of recognition and of redistribution analysis are discussed below in order to understand DDR and its implications for men and women. As mentioned by Honneth (1995), distributive injustice focuses on structural inequality, which can simply be addressed by appropriate government economic policies.

Fraser (2007) criticized intersubjective recognition on the basis that it can only explain exclusion suffered by individual. Fraser (2001) claims that dichotomy between legitimate and illegitimate recognition could lead to non-recognition of vulnerable groups in the society such as women. Group exclusion can be addressed through participatory parity. However, Recognition Theory is a theory of identity, respect, equality and justice. It is a social justice theory that looks beyond the principle of ethical self-actualisation and self-realisation (Fraser, 2007). It accommodates distributive justice based on participatory gender relations in society. Distributive justice, on the other hand, is a theory of equality (Lamont and Favor, 2013). Recognition theory considers equal treatment to be an important part of a just society, while distributive justice theorists believe that economic goods and wealth must be shared equally (Young, 1990).

Gender discrimination is rooted in culture and it has been institutionalized as a norm in the society (Hamber and Palmarty, 2009). To discuss the relationship between cultural justice and economic justice, between the politics of recognition and the politics of distribution, or, at its most basic, between symbolic and financial reparations, we need to understand institutional norms that bring about the inequality (Zurn, 2005: 89). Fraser (2010) submits that cultural discrimination against women can be uprooted through status parity. Women can be recognised through participatory parity. The distributive theorists argue that if a society recognises gender equality as frame of human interaction, then both men and women deserve a proportionate amount of resources (Mayer, 2009: 2).

The discussion of structural issues which create inequality goes beyond economic redistribution; it includes socio-cultural issues. A gender focus draws attention to socio-cultural injustice that forms an integral part of economic distribution (Bell, 1997). According to Young (1990), a sole focus on redistribution means that attention has remained primarily focused on ending State patterns of inequality (comparing and hopefully changing the distribution), rather than the social structures, the institutional contexts and the cultural underpinnings that help create those unjust results in the first place. According to recognition theorists the identity of women and recognition of whom they are and their value as individuals can be formed through recognition accorded to them by men and others in society. The theory is close to Charles Cooley's "self-looking glass", which is an identity formulation theory that sees society as a mirror that forms our behaviour. Society helps us to determine who we are and how others see us (Cooley, 1907).

**Recognition and reparations.** Like generations-model, reparations are recognition (Özerdem, 2012). Reparations are forms of

indemnity, restitution, acts of correcting an error or a fault such as remediation, satisfaction for wrong or injury, correction or reformation (Redress, 2012). Reparative injustice can be properly understood by placing social and cultural injustice alongside distributive justice. Morrison (2010) argues that to address socio-economic injustice, we must understand the social and cultural processes that create it, and to create social and cultural justice, we must accept and recognise equal gender rights. Reparation can take different types and forms including individual reparation, collective, monetary and symbolic reparations (MintValley Legal Division, 1998). Individual reparation is the recognition of individual victim for harms suffered during the conflict. Individual reparation confers rights on individuals or family of the dead to be compensated (MintValley Legal Division, 1998). Collective reparations recognize the group or community affected by abuses during the conflict. Collective reparations see group as a bearer of rights. Collective reparations are capable of addressing the interests of women and young girls that were victims of sexual abuses during the conflict (MintValley Legal Division, 1998). Monetary reparation refers to a payment award to the victims of gross violations of human rights abuses, either as a sum of money paid in compensation for loss or injury. Symbolic reparations are the use of objects such as memorials, apology, acknowledgement and memorialisation to compensate victims of conflict (Hamber, 1998).

Reparations can be awarded by the national court, administrative panel or international court. Rome status recognized State and perpetrators to pay both individual and collective reparations (Contreras-Garduño, 2012). In case the State is not capable to compensate the victims, it can apply for Victim Trust Fund. Reparations are recognition themselves. It is a form of recognition that given to the victims as bearers of rights (Contreras-Garduño and Rombouts, 2011). Providing recognition for victims is a way of saying that they have equal rights in the society with others in peace-building processes (Özdem, 2012). Recognitions of men and women can be achieved in the peacebuilding processes through the distribution of individual, collective, monetary and symbolic reparations. Reparations are expected to achieve its objectives by ensuring restitution, compensation, satisfaction and guarantee of non-repetition. Reparations are not immune from criticisms. Waldorf (2009) says the criteria for selecting participants and eligibility for reparations is not always clear. According to Waldorf (2009), reparations if awarded, its execution usually delayed and at times, not executed at all because of a large number of victims to be considered and financial commitment involved.

### Context

This section of the article discusses the significant of the studies and the need to examine gender aspect of DDR in the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes. The study examines the causes of the conflict in holism and situates women's roles before, during and after the conflict. The conflict in the Niger Delta, Nigeria dates back to 1957 and primarily concerns the exploration and exploitation of oil in the region by the multinational oil companies such as Shell, Chevron, Total Fina Elf, Mobil and a host of others. Environmental degradation is the major factors that led to the Niger Delta conflict. Other extraneous factors including political and economic marginalisation, lack/shortage of socio-economic facilities and divide and rule.

**Environmental degradation.** The activities of the multinational oil companies are linked with exploitation and consequent agitations among inhabitants of the Niger Delta (Ite *et al.*, 2013). Today, inhabitants of the region have been left with damaged

farmlands and polluted rivers. It is claimed that the advent of oil in Nigeria has not brought any tangible benefits; instead it ushered in high degradation of the Niger Delta environment, with unbridled poverty and much strife (Onduku, 2001). The activities of the multinational oil companies in the region led to environmental concerns. The activities of oil and gas companies are highly technical. The understanding of the socio-technological nature of these activities is necessary to fully understand the impact of the activities of oil and gas companies on the Niger Delta environment, and how this is related to the human rights abuses. The highly technological oil processing activities have untold effects on the inhabitants, as well as the environment. Oil exploration can destroy farmlands, kill aquatic animals and fish, destroy farm products, causes disease and contribute to climate change (Ite *et al.*, 2013).

The inability of the oil companies to follow regulations that attempt to manage the impact of oil production on the environment also contributes to environmental abuses in the Niger Delta. Offu (2013) notes, for example, that the Shell oil company failed to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment and did not seek the opinion of members of the community before proceeding on environmentally hostile construction of oil pipelines in Opolo and other areas in Gbaran clan. In a study carried out by Dadoiwe, the inhabitants of the region lamented the operation of multinational oil companies in the region.

If Shell had consulted us, we would have educated them on the nature of our land. They call us illiterate even on matters over our environment. We would have told them where and how to put bridges or culverts and thus avoid this catastrophe... they have destroyed the habitat of our land, water and air. Our fish, our animals, our forests and our farmlands have all destroyed. Does it mean that oil and gas companies do not know what is right or wrong? (2002: 11).

**Lack / shortage of socio-economic facilities.** The description given by Thomas Hobbes about life fits adequately to live experiences in the Niger Delta region. Life in the region is indeed short, brutish and nasty (Lloyd and Sreedhar, 2008). Inhumane treatment experienced by the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region has led to agitations and attacks on the multinational oil companies (Fubara, 2000). The Niger Delta region has been with no electricity, potable drinking water and other basic social and public health amenities. The people in many of the oil-bearing communities live in desperate conditions often alongside the high-tech and modern facilities of the multinational companies.

**Divide and rule.** The conflict in the Niger Delta can also be traced to the historical antecedent of the three major ethnic groups in the region (Imobighe *et al.*, 2002). The divide and rule method used by the multinational oil companies and the federal government led to the ethnic conflict. The ethnic group with oil deposits receives royalty and patronage from the multinational oil companies and the federal government. According to Ayomike (1988), there are some undisputed assertions in the literature on the rightful owner of Warri in Western Niger Delta. First, there are three ethnic nationalities in Warri that is Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ijaw. Second, the ethnic groups have lived in Warri for over a hundred years. Third, the three ethnic nationalities have no other place that can be called "home" and lastly, all the three ethnic groups claim to be the original settlers, that is, the indigenous. The divide and rule method of the multinational oil companies and the federal government are also reflected in political and economic marginalisation suffered by the inhabitants of the Niger Delta.

**Political and economic marginalization.** There is a shared belief among Niger Delta inhabitants that the Federal Government of Nigeria and multinational oil companies have systematically marginalised the region from getting access to the proceeds of oil exploration. The Niger Delta inhabitants allege that the proceeds from exploited oil are used for the growth and development of other regions in the country, leaving the Niger Delta impoverished (Ikine, 1990). Moreover, the Niger Delta inhabitants also believe the government has enslaved them to the multinational oil companies (O'Sullivan, 1995). The Niger Delta inhabitants felt that the government was only interested in oil and gas revenue coming from the region. As mentioned above, various reasons have been given for the resurgence among different groups in the Niger Delta. One is that the Niger Delta indigenes have been systematically excluded from power sharing. Under the 1999 constitution, the Federal Government holds mineral rights in Nigeria. Legislation was passed by the National Assembly to confer ownership of natural resources of Nigerian land to the Government. This has aggravated the inhabitants' grievances in the region (Akinjide-Balogun, 2001).

### Resistance

The inhabitants of the Niger Delta embarked on various judiciary and non-judiciary forms of resistance, as well as violent and non violent methods to seek redress from the Federal Government of Nigeria and the multinational oil companies. These included, among others, demonstrations, legal actions, civil disobedience, petitions, consultations and in the extreme case armed struggle (Obi, 2007). The Niger Delta inhabitants' fundamental human rights as recognised by international human rights law were flagrantly abused. Nwajiaku-Dahou (2009) notes that in 1966 for the first time, human rights activists demanded equity in the distribution of oil wealth in Nigeria. The movement was led by Isaac Adaka Boro and the Delta Volunteer Service against the Federal Government of Nigeria. Isaac Boro's movement brought to the consciousness of Nigerian the suffering, impunity, iniquity, and deprivation of the people of the Niger Delta. After the civil war in the 1970s, the crisis in the region lessened when Isaac Boro was killed. Ijaw national identity as the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria was recognised. The agitation for the protection of environmental rights dominated the Niger Delta struggle in the 1980s. This was championed by the Ogoni people (Atofarati, 1992; Boele *et al.*, 2001). In 1997, River State was created and Ijaw ceased to be part of the Eastern Nigeria. Ken Saro Wiwa started the renewed struggle for environmental and human rights protection in the Niger Delta in the 1990s (Osaghae, 1998). According to McLuckie and McPhail (2000), in the mid-nineties, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) emerged to create more international awareness, demands for environmental rights, and the fair and equitable sharing of oil wealth. Ken Saro-Wiwa led the movement. The continuous agitation along with the involvement of leaders like Saro Wiwa and others, succeeded in creating international awareness about human rights abuses in the Niger Delta region. The approach of the movement was non-confrontational. MOSOP organised a series of seminars, public campaigns, public lectures, meetings, conferences, and peaceful rallies both home and abroad. One of the rallies organized by Saro-Wiwa and MOSOP resulted in an internal crises among the Ogoni people. The crisis led to the massacre of some traditional chiefs who were alleged by the youth to be collecting bribes from multinational oil companies and the Federal Government (Birnbaum, 1995). On 10 November 1995, Saro Wiwa was executed by the Military Government of Nigeria headed by late general Sani Abacha along with eight other Ogoni men who were leaders of the MOSOP (Ojatorotu, 2009: 70).

But there have been many other examples of human rights violations such as killing of protesters, destruction of means of livelihood and rape of young girls and women by the Joint Task Force (JTF) (combination of various government security agencies including soldiers, airforce, navy, police, State security and other intelligent apparatus) and the militant groups. This was evident in the attacks and destruction of many villages and towns, the Federal Government of Nigeria and the multinational oil companies' reactions to the agitations of the Niger Delta inhabitants over oil exploration and exploitation (Kadafa, 2012). Ojatorotu (2009) note that the JTF nicknamed "Operation Restore Hope" was created by the Federal Government of Nigeria to secure oil installations, curb oil smuggling, and protect oil companies and oil workers in the region in 2008. According to Oyejade (2002), Chevron invited about a hundred heavily armed soldiers to raze Opia and Ikeyan, the two Ijaw villages in Delta State, with about 500 people each. In the same year, the Odi community was attacked by the Federal Government of Nigeria Joint Military Task Force and about 2,483 persons, mainly women, children and elderly, were killed.

The subsequent reactions of the JTF to the agitations of the inhabitants of the region led to the gross violations of human rights. In the late 1990s several militant groups were formed by the inhabitants of the region. The response of the inhabitants of the region to the Federal Government of Nigeria militarization of the Niger Delta led to the formation of ethnic based militant groups (Ojatorotu, 2009: 10). The militant groups included the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force, Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), MOSOP, Niger Delta Liberation Front, Joint Revolutionary Council, The Ijaw Youth Council, The Niger Delta Vigilante and others.

A strong response by the multinational oil companies and the Federal Government of Nigeria to the plights of the Niger Delta inhabitants hardened people's mind resulting in the continuation of the conflict in the region. The formation of the militant groups led to the kidnapping of nine oil workers to use as human shields and attacks of oil fields that were belonged to the multinational oil companies, such as Forcados terminal (Atofarati, 1992). For example, the struggle between militant groups and the military led to the destruction of Okerenkoko in 2003. The attack killed twenty young people and three military personnel (Environmental Rights Action, 2002). In 2009, the Federal Government negotiated amnesty with the militant groups, who were mainly men and they subsequently offered, reintegration.

### Gender and the Niger Delta conflict

In this section, the article examines combination of reintegration and reparations in order to guarantee women recognition in the Niger Delta peace processes was examined. This was explained by looking at the roles played by women in the Niger Delta conflict. In the literature women roles in conflict situation have been categorized into: (1) combatants; (2) survivors; (3) protectors; (4) demonstrators/campaigners; (5) community leaders; (6) peacebuilders; and, (7) heads of household. It is ironic that women do continue in the community leadership role and as heads of household; they went back to their traditional roles after conflict such as home makers, cooks, caregivers and so on. A plethora of environmental and human rights abuses triggered the Niger Delta conflict. In the Niger Delta, as a result of conflict many people were killed, cities and communities were destroyed, women and young girls were raped (Ekine, 2008). Many women in the Niger Delta are farmers and fishers. Niger Delta women are particularly affected by land degradation and deforestation. Ikelegbe (2006) notes before the arrival of the oil companies, Niger Delta land and water were safe for

farming and fishing. This included fishing festivals, closely tied to tradition and belief. The pipelines laid by the oil companies during the dry season have cut off the rivers from seasonal flow. The forest where the inhabitants harvest “Ogono”, an agricultural product that is in high demand by women all over the country, has been destroyed. Women are therefore deprived of their traditional economic activities. Walker (2011) catalogues a range of other effects of the degraded Niger Delta environment on the inhabitants. These include a high level of poverty, lack of access to good antenatal care, spread of diseases, cooking with fossil fuel capable of causing respiratory problems, wastage of hours in search of clean water, spread of HIV/AIDS, reduction in economic activities, scarcity of medicinal plants to cure diseases and blockades of creeks, lakes, and swamps (Jereoma, 2001). Women were not only largely excluded but also were not satisfied with the resolution of the conflict. The gender imbalance in post conflict peace negotiation reflects wider dynamics, for example, the sharing of political office and reintegration processes (Akinwale, 2010). The Niger Delta Development Commission was created in 2000 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Since its creation, men have been the chairpersons, and managing directors/CEOs. The Ministry of Niger Delta, which was created to provide socio-economic facilities in the region is also gender blind in the appointment of key office holders. Since its creation, men have been the Ministers. It is necessary to situate the roles played by women in the Niger Delta conflict to advance the reason why women needs and concerns should be considered in the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes.

**Women as Demonstrators/Campaigners.** Women have been involved in campaigns and demonstrations against the multinational oil companies and the Federal Government Military Task Force (Nzeshi, 2003). According to Turner (2001) women’s participation in demonstrations is a result of frustration that oil exploration and exploitation have generated. For example, as Ekine (2008) points out peaceful protest organised by the Itsekiri women involved the taking over of a Chevron-Texaco airstrip at Escravos export terminal in Delta State. The women occupied the terminal for ten days. Courson (2007) notes that around the same period in 2002, Ijaw women in Gbaramatu and Egbema Kingdom in Delta State also occupied the Chevron Abiteye flow station, and in August 2002, several women from the Ijaw ethnic groups, Urohobo and Itsekiri in Delta State marched on the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and Chevron Nigeria Limited in Warri, Delta State to demand improved socio-economic conditions, social support and services, from the oil companies (Ukeje *et al.*, 2009). Another example is that of the women of the Ijaw and the Itsekiri communities who protested against their poor living conditions and demanded jobs for their children as well as electricity, schools and medical facilities. In a demonstration against multinational oil companies, in 2009, women from Gbaramatu declared that:

We don’t want Shell, Chevron, Texaco or any other oil company again. They should leave us. Since they have treated us like animals. We have prepared to create human siege and disrupt the oil companies operations in the region (Ekine, 2008: 5).

In the last decade, oil-bearing communities in the western flank of the Niger Delta have been witnessing a rising tide of resistance to the environmental degradation and inhuman activities of the multinational oil and gas companies. Turner and Ferguson (1994) note that the frustration experienced by women made them call for a rejection of multinational oil companies in the region.

**Women as Protectors.** A peaceful protest organised by the Itsekiri women involved the taking over of a Chevron-Texaco airstrip at Escravos export terminal in Delta State (Ekine, 2008). The women occupied the terminal for ten days. Courson (2007) says that around the same period in 2002, Ijaw women in Gbaramatu and Egbema Kingdom in Delta State also occupied the Chevron Abiteye flow station, and in August, 2002 several women from the Ijaw ethnic groups, Urohobo and Itsekiri in Delta State marched on the SPDC and Chevron Nigeria Limited in Warri, Delta State to demand for improved socio-economic conditions, social support and services, from the oil companies. Courson (2007) claims that the protesting women were forcefully ejected from the platform by the military who were invited by Chevron-Texaco to intervene. Many of the women were attacked, maimed and sexually abused by the Joint Military Task Force (Ekine, 2008: 9).

**Women as Combatants.** Women’s support for the Niger Delta conflict contributed significantly to the willingness of militant groups to attack oil installations and oil workers. Often the militants hijacked peaceful demonstrations organized by women to attack the multinational oil companies in the region (Ukiwo, 2010). According to Ekine (2008) between 1990 and 2007 about sixty-seven protests were organized by women in the Niger Delta region to fight environmental and human rights abuses. The recorded protests by women in the Niger Delta against the multinational oil companies and the Federal Government of Nigeria includes: Women Watch, 2003, 2005; Umuechem, 1991; London 1999; and, many others (Ojakorotu, 2009).

**Women as Community Leaders.** Women’s mass protests at the community level against multinational oil companies began in the Ogharefe, Edo State in 1984 (Akubor, 2011). The Ogharefe protest was staged against the US Pan Ocean Oil Company. The demands in this struggle were clear. Women demanded that multinational oil companies and the Nigerian government make a concrete effort to improve the economic, environmental, and social conditions of the rural communities in the Niger Delta. The women also demanded that their husbands and children be given employment by the oil companies (Ekeh, 2007). The Pan Ocean Oil Company ignored these demands (Akubor, 2011). The women then converged on the Pan Ocean Oil Company platform for two days. They danced, sang and threatened to strip off their clothes (Turner and Ferguson, 1994).

There was a similar protest against the Chevron Oil Company in 2002 (Adebayo, 2002). Women gathered early in the morning in Warri south oil flowing station to express their grievances. The protest could be considered to be one of the most organised by women in the region because of the amount of international media attention it received (Ihayere *et al.*, 2014). For a period of 10 days, women occupied the Chevron oil platforms. The women protested naked. In Africa, “nudity” is an extreme traditional and ritual way of protesting. Women have used “nudity protests” to make urgent demands; the “nudity protest” was led by elderly Ijaw women. The women were angry at the unemployment of their children and husbands, and the deficit in social infrastructural provision in the region (Omoigui, 2002).

**Women as peacebuilders.** The coming together of women to fight multinational oil companies is also reflected by Jike (2010). Jike (2010) writes that on 10 August 2002, Itsekiri, Ijaw, and Ilaje ethnic women’s groups united to march on the western operational headquarters of two major oil and gas producing companies (Shell and Chevron/ Texaco) in the region. The protesting women were armed with placards and green leaves, and sang

solidarity songs to protest environmental and human rights abuses by the multinational oil companies. The protesters aimed to barricade the gates of the oil-companies and to compel the companies to stop dangerous gas flaring (Zalik, 2004). Other women from the Gbaramatu, Egbema, and Urhobo communities blocked Chevron flow-stations in the Niger Delta. Around the same time, according to Environmental Rights Action (ERA) (2002) women from Ilaje in Ondo State and many other women from Ijaw and Itsekiri paralysed activities at the operational headquarters of SPDC. Women left the Chevron oil exploration platform only after Chevron signed an agreement. Chevron pledged to improve sanitation, electricity, schools, clinics and town halls. Women returned to the site the following year when the promises were broken (Turner, 2001).

At times, international protests by women have been held simultaneously in the Niger Delta, United States of America and the United Kingdom. Emeseh (2011) reported how women all over the Niger Delta region adopted similar methods of protest against multinational oil companies. In 1999, the Niger Delta women and their allies staged simultaneous protests in Nigeria and London against the burning of natural gas by the oil companies. In the Niger Delta men and women blocked the Shell oil platforms, at the same time 13 human rights activist occupied Shell headquarters in London. They barricaded themselves in the managing director's office and broadcast to the outside world via digital cameras and mobile phones.

### Resolution of the Niger Delta Conflict

It is important to note that various methods of conflict resolution have been employed in the region. Transitional justice mechanisms, such as amnesty and DDR have been adopted to resolve the conflict, but these have not provided adequate justice to the people of the region, most especially, women who lost their means of subsistence, suffer health and economic consequences of environmental damage, gender violence and loss of husbands, children and other family members (*Southworld Web Magazine*, 2013). In 2006, President Olusegun Obasajo called for dialogue with the Niger Delta people (Hanson, 2007). The President acknowledged the deplorable condition of the Niger Delta region and established the Council of Social, Economic and Development of the Coastal States to oversee the development of the coastal oil producing region. The government also created the Presidential Committee on Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Niger Delta in 2007 to address the conflict in the region. The inhabitants of the region were not satisfied because the approaches lacked formalized dialogue, legal bidding and adequate consultation.

**Amnesty.** In 2009, an amnesty was introduced by the former President of Nigeria late, President Sheu-Yar-Adua (Ibiba and Naagbantun, 1999). The implementation of DDR component of the programme was carried out by his successor, President Goodluck Johathan. The amnesty programme was created for peace and security in the region. To give presidential pardon to the militants groups hitherto wagging against the federal government and multinational oil companies' interests. Watts (2007) argues that amnesty was an outcome peace negotiations with militant groups leaders in the region. The amnesty was not gendered but the problem is that the implementation of DDR that complement the process was skewed toward men. Amnesty was created under presidency and coordinated by the Presidential Amnesty Committee, headed by Kingsly Kuku. The programme was criticised for lack of proper implementation and direction. Corruption, nepotism, mal-administration and oversight of the real militants characterised the operation of the committee. Many

militants also turned themselves in as well, albeit major militant groups like MEND viewed the amnesty with suspicion since it made less room for dialogue and it does not address the root causes that gave rise to the conflict in the first place (Refworld, 2004).

The Niger Delta Technical Committee which comprises professionals and academics from the region was established by the Nigerian government to fashion out appropriate peace processes. The committee was working on this when government announced amnesty and DDR simultaneously (Ibaba, 2011). Unlike DDR in most other countries, the major difference in the Niger Delta DDR was that it was insulated from the international organizations coordination such as United Nation, UNDP, WorldBank, international donors and NGOs.

**DDR.** The Niger Delta DDR programme was fashioned after the DDR programme in most other parts of the World. Twenty-eight countries have adopted DDR since its introduction (Waldorf, 2009). It a major instrument of stability in many post conflict societies (Soderstrom and McCabe, 2011). For example, DDR has recorded success in countries like Angola, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Guatamela, India, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique, Paupa New Guinea, Russia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tajikistian, Uganda and others. The lesson learned from the DDR processes in these countries including lack of political will, inclement political environment, corruption and duplication of peace efforts. DDR is usually owned by the national government but implemented in conjunction of international organisation such as UNDP, World Bank, UNICEF, international NGOs and donors. DDR is a process; its success depends on linearity in its implementation.

**Disarmament.** After negotiation, peace processes start with disarmament. Disarmament is the "collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population" (UN, 2005). The submission of weapon by the militants taken place within 60 days. DDR in the Niger Delta enjoyed overwhelming support as over 15,000 militants gave-up their weapons and submitted to the Presidential Amnesty Committee under the monitoring of security agents (Ezegbe *et al.*, 2012). The weapons surrendered by the militants include 2, 760 assorted guns, 287,445 ammunitions of different calibre, 18 gun-boats, 763 dynamite sticks, 1,090 dynamite caps, 3, 155 magazines and several other military accessories, such as dynamite cables, bulletproof jackets and jack-knives (Agbiboa, 2011).

**Demobilization.** Disarmament is followed by demobilization, which is described as a planned process by which the armed forces of the government/or opposition or fractional forces either downsized or disband completely; it is the 'formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces and other armed group (UN, 2005). Demobilization includes moving the combatants to designated after their registration and finger prints have been taken. The first phase of demobilization processes took a period of six months between June 2010–December, 2011, which 23,358 militants (Peterside *et al.*, 2014). Wakili (2013) notes that 133 females involved in the demobilisation. This represent 0.6% of the total participants. The militants were put in the camps at temporary centres with support packages which include training. Between June and December, 2009 an estimated 20,000 ex-militants had completed training programme in non-violence, in a camp in Obubra, Cross River State. This was followed by

reinsertion, which covers basic needs and those of their families such as food, cloths, shelter and medical services.

*Reintegration.* Insertion is in between demobilisation and reintegration. It is a short-term process of resettlement of ex-combatant and their family. Supports, care, jobs, allowance, health facilities are made available to ex-combatants and their families (Özderem, 2012). Reintegration is a long-term process of socio-economic development. Özderem (2012) divided the reintegration in two: (1) community-based reintegration and (2) community-centred reintegration. The basic philosophy is to reintegrate ex-combatants and develop the resettlement community.

The reintegration process in the Niger Delta involved government donation of ₦52 billion (US\$ 145 million) to cover resettlement, allowance and rehabilitation of registered ex-militants (Umejesi, 2014). Rehabilitation of ex-militants took place in the government-designated centres. Each participating ex-militant was placed on ₦65,000 (US\$ 413) monthly. Government also announced the creation of Ministry of Niger Delta to accelerate the development of the region (Umejesi, 2014). Government also invested heavily on education, created Federal University of Petroleum in Warri, Maritime College in Gbaramatu Kingdom, training of ex-militants in various vocations in the country and foreign countries. Scholarship was awarded to ex-militants to study aeronautical engineering, petroleum engineering and other disciplines in countries like United States, Russia, South Africa and others. Jobs were created for the ex-militants in government and oil companies (Umejesi, 2014). The Niger Delta DDR processes were criticised for the reasons. First, there was a lack of clarity about how the budget was to be spent, and the proportion that was to be allocated and the proportion allocated to a broader reintegration and rehabilitation package.

### **Gender and the Niger Delta DDR**

There is also gender discrimination and a lack of recognition for women in the amnesty and reintegration given to militant groups in the region. Ekine (2008) points out that men have been the main beneficiaries of the memorialization, amnesty and reintegration in the Niger Delta.

Amnesty and DDR in the Niger Delta for the militant groups that were majorly men could be described as responsive recognition. It can be said that women in the region, as shown in the finding chapter, shared an understanding of why reparations should be rooted in generative recognition. Women participated in strikes, demonstrations, campaigns and lobbying. They lost their husbands, children and means of livelihood. Women were raped and sexually abused in the Niger Delta. Their involvement should generate “recognition” for them, but the problem is the gendered institutionalized inequality, which pervades social relations in the region and runs counter to social recognition.

Culturally institutionalized attitudes, such as male dominated household heads, private spheres for women, bride price, silence of women’s voice, invisibility of women’s income, chores, and other forms of cultural repression dominate ways of life in the Niger Delta. It portrays women as less than full members of society and prevents them from participating as equals (Fraser, 2010). Non-inclusion of women in the negotiation affected their involvement in the entire DDR processes. Women did not benefit from allowances and reintegration processes. Most women were not part of the militants that submitted weapons. Submission of weapon is a criterion for participation in DDR. As noted above, the roles played by women were not recognised such as cooks, care givers, arms carriers, nurses, demonstrators, campaigners,

lobbyists, activities and peacebuilders. In the Niger Delta, during the demobilisation process the names of few women 133 (0.6%) out of 23,000 appeared on the lists of beneficiaries (Agbibo, 2011). Women who were either victims of conflict or environmental damage did not come out during the disarmament. Umejesi (2014) says most women could not participate in DDR because cultural factors that sees men as combatants.

Gender marginalization is clear in the social roles performed by women during and after the conflict. During the conflict, there were usually similarities between men and women’s roles but after the conflict, women were often expected to perform traditional roles when returned to their community. According to Takeuchi and Marara (2009), DDR processes in Africa operate in accordance with structural constraints such as male land tenure, and traditional inheritance rights; these are often disadvantageous to women. Restrictive traditional roles for women relegate them to the domestic and reproductive role rather than empowering them to engage in public defined roles (Ortega, 2009). The challenges facing women often starts with peace negotiations (as discussed earlier), where criteria for political processes leading to DDR are often set. The marginalisation of women in DDR relates to the narrow definition of “combatants and criteria for inclusion of combatants in DDR”, often restricting women’s participation in DDR programme (Özderem, 2012). The exclusion of women from disarmament processes can also be linked to unexpected number of participants. Women have found to be officially excluded from disarmament because, at times, when the ex-combatants in cantonment areas usually number above the expected number of participants. For example, in Sierra Leone, the number of female ex-combatants was grossly underestimated, informed by conventional views of gender roles, which tend to regard armed conflict as a male field of operation (Ortega, 2009:162). In Rwanda, for example, the donors asked for a reduction in the number of ex-combatants from 58,000 to between 27,000 or 25,000 because of the unexpected number of ex-combatants reporting for disarmament. The reduction was necessary because of a dwindling budget from 3.16% to 2.1%. The reduction affected women’s participation in DDR as they were first to be excluded. About 1% of those that were mobilized were women; they represented a small number of ex-combatants (Survey, 2007). The demobilisation is designed generally to suit men’s needs. Encampment, distribution of benefits and the initiation of reinsertion are focused on men. Women are often favoured in administrative tasks (Ortega, 2009). Challenges facing female ex-combatants continue at the reinsertion level (De Watterville, 2002). In Sierra Leone, for example, male commandants were saddled with the responsibility of determining the beneficiaries of reinsertion programmes (Solomon and Ginifer, 2008).

Women’s marginalisation in reintegration largely continues at the social, political and economic reintegration level. The United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (2009) highlights reasons why women fail to reveal their war experience to gain recognition for reintegration. First, women are often found not to reveal their past experience as ex-combatants for fear of alienation in their communities. An example is the challenges experienced by female ex-combatants in Uganda who chose to remain with a RUF “husband” because they were stigmatised and rejected by the communities. In traditional societies, communities and families of female ex-combatants may experience shame because they failed to protect their children during the war. Second, female ex-combatants are often rejected by their communities as impure and therefore cannot get married (Ortega, 2009:163). Third, it is common among male ex-combatants to leave the partner they had during the conflict for local women.

It has been argued above that gender discrimination in the post conflict peace processes are based on the socio-cultural differences between men and women, and differences in gendered roles (Akinwale, 2010). Apart from this, the institutional norm that created DDR in the Niger Delta focused on peace and security. It extended amnesty and subsequently, DDR to ex-militants (men and women) (Agbiboa, 2011). The DDR programme failed to include families of the ex-militants. De Watteville (2002) explains that inclusion of ex-militants' families in DDR will provide women with the opportunity to participate in the processes. Rubio-Marin (2012) supported the inclusion of ex-combatants' families in reintegration processes but she suggested the benefits should be distributed to women directly. Leatherman (2007), Harsch (2005) and Munro (2000) have all argued that men's demands are different from women's demands in the post conflict peace processes in the Niger Delta. Men in the Niger Delta talk about resource control, location of oil installations, equal sharing of oil revenue with the oil companies and the Federal Government of Nigeria, delineation of local government and location of local government headquarters, and self-determination. The reconstruction of destroyed markets, hospitals, roads, harbours, schools, houses and other socio-economic facilities that would have had direct impacts on the life of the inhabitants in general, and women in particular, were left unattended by the government. Niger Delta women therefore, seek redress and protection of their rights in the entire peace-building processes (Courson, 2007; Osaghae, 1998; Watts, 2007; Ojokorotu, 2009; Zdunnek, 2010). The nexus between reintegration and reparations could annex different gender wants. Since recognition can accommodate distribution through participatory parity, in a similar vein reintegration can accommodate gender rights through reparations.

### Challenges facing DDR

DDR concentrates on ex-combatants and often neglects those in support roles, such as women and children. There are also problems with how to define a sensible packet of benefits. The selection of ex-combatants is a major shortcoming of DDR. Waldorf (2013) says that DDR faces the problem of selecting *bonafide* combatants, especially in the context of civil wars where many combatants are irregulars, part-time, or coerced. Waldorf (2013) highlights challenges facing DDR including lack of expertise, poor funding, weak political commitment, and severe coordination problems among the DDR actors. Westing (2013) points out that disparity between the rapid precision of DDR training and packages, and delayed reparations can create resentment amongst victims. For example, in Uganda, bountiful settlement packages awarded to the ex-combatants were included in the Amnesty Act peace agreement. The offer presents a visible display of resources for returning combatants and impoverished community members not considered (Shekhawat, 2015). Community resentment to DDR processes are also identified by Muggah and O'Donnell (2015), for example, in Sierra Leone, radio phone-ins received comments full of anger, such as "those who ruined us are being given the chance to become better persons financially, academically, and skills-wise" (121).

### Nexus between DDR and Reparations

There is a symbiotic relationship between DDR and transitional justice (De Greiff, 2010). Following, the UN recommendation for DDR to be human rights and development compliant, many actors and researchers have argued for or against having them together in post conflict peace reconstruction because their aims seem different. Putting them together as a process could create confusion and usurpation of roles. As noted above, DDR focuses

on ex-combatants and the aims of transitional justice are directed at victims. They should stand alone in theory and practice. The basic understanding behind making DDR human rights compliant in recent times is centred on UN and human rights organisations' request for making justice and development complement DDR efforts in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. To achieve this, the UN has agreed to make DDR programmes align with international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international humanitarian law (De Greiff, 2010). International law supports victims' rights in three ways: (1) rights to truth (2) rights to justice and (3) rights to reparations.

1. Truth-telling plays a direct role in reintegrating former combatants and promoting reconciliation. The reports created by truth commissions may provide recommendations for reform and reparation as well as, in a few cases, recommendations for judicial proceeding. The provision of reparations for victims may contribute to the reintegration dimension of a DDR programme by reducing the resentment and comparative grievance that victims and communities may feel in the aftermath of violent conflict.
2. Transitional justice mechanisms may assist the reintegration of former combatants. In other words, reparation mechanisms can relieve demands on DDR programmes to provide assistance and, most important, redress to other war affected groups, something that is beyond their mandate and their expertise.
3. Transitional justice mechanisms, particularly reparations, may help ease the resentment and envy that victims and communities sometimes feel towards returning ex-combatants who receive reintegration assistance.
4. Transitional justice mechanisms may help individualise responsibility so that victims and communities do not perceive all ex-combatants as having committed international crimes.

### Methods

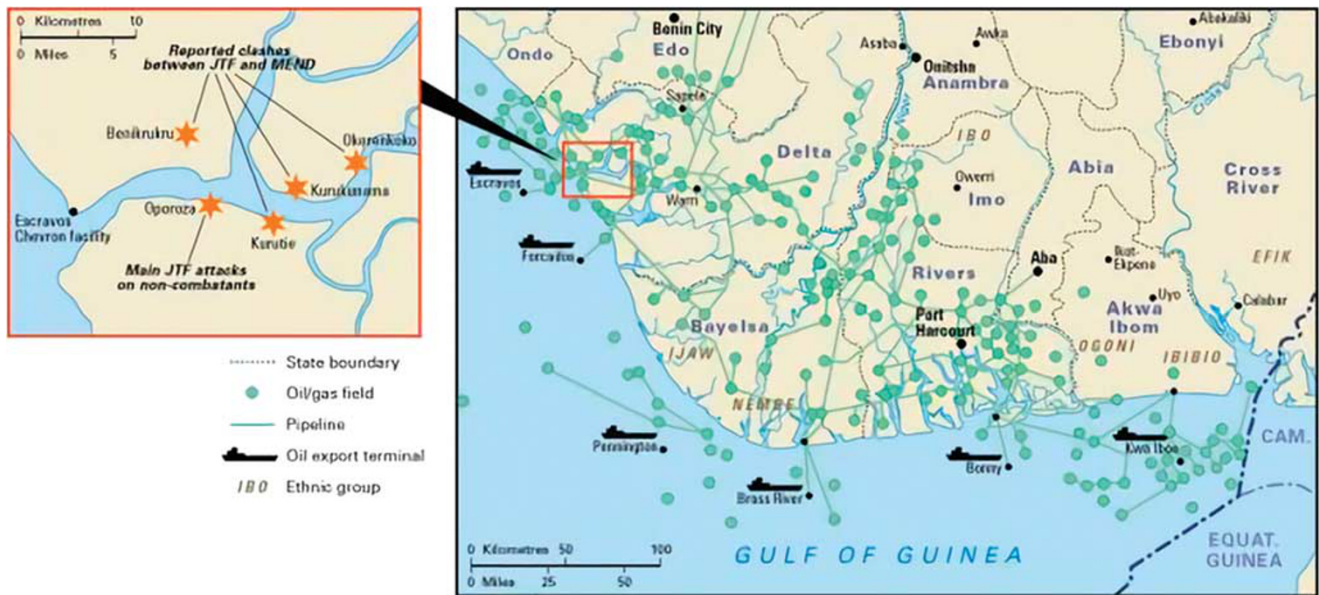
This section examines the study location, selection of participants, collection of data and data analysis.

**Study location.** The study was carried out in Gbaramatu Kingdom, the Ijaw clan in the western delta fringe of Nigeria with a population of over 23,000 (Population.gov.ng, 2006). The clan is made up of more than 16 communities with Oporoza as the traditional political headquarters and ancestral home. Gbaramatu Kingdom is bordered by the Itsekiri in the west, the Ogulagha-Ijaw in the east, the Urhobos of Effurun in the North. Many of the Gbaramatu communities, villages and hamlets are distributed along the Escravos Rivers and the adjoining western delta. Other communities that constitute Gbaramatu Kingdom include but are not limited to the following towns and villages: Kunukunuma; Kokodiagbene; Binikururu; Aja-ama; Goba; Inikorogha; Opuede; Okerenkoko; Kurutie; Kautu; Okpele-ama, Makaroba; Biopre-Izon, Jones Creek; Egwa; Seitor-ubebe; Pepe-ama; Olukperebu; Abifeye; Ekupemu; Adakagbene; Otungbo; Oburukirengan; Dabriye; Dounimighan; and Malagbene (Gbaramatukingdom.com, 2013). Fig. 1

A purposeful sampling method was used to select three communities. The critical case, a purposive sampling method was necessary because the researcher had pre-field information from the literature that the features of the conflict were similar across the Niger Delta. Whatever happened in Gbaramatu Kingdom, happened in other parts of the Niger Delta in terms of killings, kidnapping, destruction and environmental degradation. Though, generalization is often difficult in qualitative research as a result of bias and unpredictability of human behaviours. The researcher reduced bias through contents check and critical comparison of theory and empirical data. Therefore, the study was carried out selected in the following selected communities in Garamatu Kingdom: Okerenkoko; Egwa; and, Oporoza. The criteria for selecting the community included:

1. Presence of oil/ oil installation
2. Military/militant groups attack
3. Presence of war actors /opinion leaders
4. participation in DDR/peace processes





**Figure 1 | Niger Delta (Gbaramatu inserted).**This figure is not covered by the CC-BY licence. Reproduced with permission of the copyright holder, which is [www.gbaramatukingdom.com](http://www.gbaramatukingdom.com). Note: *Palgrave Communications* remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

**Table 1 | Gendered Distribution of In-depth Interviews by respondents.**

Participants	Men	Women	Total
	No.	No.	
Political Office Holders	2	2	4
Delta State Oil Producing Area Development Corporations (DESPODEC)	2	2	4
Police Officers	2	2	4
Oil Company Workers	2	2	4
Non-Governmental Organisation Staffers	2	2	4
Ex-militants	2	2	4
Total	12	12	24

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

**Selection of participants.** Purposive method was used to select 24 participants. Participants were selected because they had particular features or characteristics which represented a cross-section of the community irrespective of profession, gender, class, religion and ethnicity. The selected participants were the leaders and spokespersons of their respective groups in the selected community. The grouping then of the participants based on gender, education, status and profession was to avoid hierarchies of power for example, focus group and to adopt a flexible research method of inclusion and exclusion. The participants cut across socio-economic and political strata of the Kingdom. The distribution of participants was based on equal representation between men and women: 12 women and 12 men. Table 1

**Data collection.** Data was collected from 24 participants through the in-depth interviews. The collection method was flexible. The researcher obtained confidence of the participants through a series of visits to the communities. The researcher acted like outsider throughout in the field. This helped the researcher to obtain a rich data that an insider researcher would assume to have had a previous knowledge. Consent of participants was obtained by given them a consent form. The researcher took his time to read information sheet that contained information about the study and the benefits of the study to the region and researcher. Two participants were excused themselves because of their inability to provide adequate information about the conflict and post-amnesty peacebuilding processes. Following their withdrawal, the consent forms given to them were destroyed. Women participants were allowed to take procession of the study; to see the study as their own. Women participants advised the researcher to allow them to select a female interviewer. The researcher expressly approved the request. It is interesting to note that the researcher was allowed to be around and record the interview. Some information provided by many women participants which connected to women needs in the resolution of the Niger Delta conflict that were revealed to the female interviewer in Ijaw dialect. The data collected in Ijaw dialect immediately translated to English by the research assistant after the interviews before the researcher left the region.

**Data analysis.** The data collected was coded and inputted into NVIVO. This enabled the research to analyse the data based on categories and sub-categories. Narratives were developed from constant comparison of categories and sub-categories. The following categories and subcategories were obtained:

**Consequences.** Environmental degradation  
Lack of social and economic facilities  
Divide and rule  
Marginalization

**Gender roles.** Activities/demonstrators  
Militants  
Peacebuilders

**Gender involvement.** Negotiation  
Amnesty  
DDR

**Gender demands.** Reintegration  
Reparations

**Payment of demands.** Multinational oil companies  
Federal government of Nigeria  
Militants

**Findings.** The findings of the study were divided into sections based on categorisation of themes obtained from literature and fieldwork. The themes included the following: consequences; gender roles; gender involvement; gender demands; and payment of reparations.

**Consequences.** As noted in the literature as well as data collected from the field. The inhabitants of the Niger Delta faced with the consequences of environmental degradation as a result of oil exploration and exploitation by the multinational oil companies. The reviewed that exploration and exploitation of oil resulted into environmental abuses like gas flaring, pollution and land degradation. The participants in the in-depth interviews said that the activities of multinational oil companies affected inhabitants of the region in different ways including health, farm, drinking water and land degradation. A male NGO participant said:

Exploration and exploitation of oil in this region is almost 59 years on. Since 1957, the inhabitants of this region have been facing with environmental consequences of oil exploration and exploitation. Our waters are affected, farms are destroyed, and health of our people is deteriorating. Land sliding is a common occurrence.

A female political office holder explained how environmental degradation affected women's health and means of livelihood including farm, water, food and income. She claimed:

Environmental degradation knows no gender. Men and women affected by the activities of multinational oil companies but women and their children were affected with strange diseases. Our waters are polluted with exploration and exploitation. This affected our source of drinking water, water for chores and fishes have disappeared from the waters. Women income have been affected, my farm land is destroyed. Oil pipelines criss-cross the land and oil spill damage makes the land infertile. These have grossly affected women income.

There is infrastructural decay or absence of socio-economic facilities in most communities in the region. The multinational oil companies and government have neglected the region in terms of development. The data from the literature show how the inhabitants of the region live without electricity, portable water, means of transportation, modern market and communication facilities. The participants in the in-depth interviews said that money taken from the region is not spending in the region. It was used to develop other region. The multinational oil companies have reneged on the corporate responsibilities. At least, 13 of the 24 participants said that the multinational oil companies were only interested in exploration and exploitation of oil; they are not interested in the development of the region, said the male NGO. A male political office holder collaborated:

Electricity has become a scarce commodity in this region. There is always absence of electricity. Water taps are not ruining. Our people are drinking from oil-polluted water. We don't have communication facilities. No bridges on water. The water ways are full of weeds. The inhabitants are using rickety canoes while the oil workers are using modern canoes and ships. Our people are living in mud house. The oil workers enjoyed luxury living. Government and oil companies should work together to support the provision of facilities in this region.

Marginalization of inhabitants of the Niger Delta from economic and political arrangements had consequences for the development of the region. The participants said that gains from oil exploration and exploitation were not used for the development of the region. Only 13% derivation from the sale of oil has been invested back to the oil producing States in the Niger Delta. Most of the monies from the federal government to the oil producing States end in the pocket of some politicians, crook businessmen and bad contractors. Most participants claimed that they have been participated adequately in the national politics since the emergent of Dr Ebele Jonathan Goodluck as the President of the county. A male political office holder said:

Our sons and daughters have now occupied sensitive posts at the national level. We have people in ministerial posts, head of ministries and parastatals, foreign diplomats and political office holders at the State level.

As noted, exploration and exploitation of oil in the region led to environmental degradation. The reactions of the inhabitants of the region to environmental degradation by the multinational oil companies led to destruction of oil installations, attacked on oil workers and foreigners, kidnapping and killing of oil workers by the militant groups. The reactions of the government and multinational oil companies to unrest in the region led to the formation of JTF, as noted in the literature, to protect oil installations and oil workers. The male and female participants in the in-depth interviews identified two actors who were fighting in the region, that is, militant groups and JTF. A male NGO staffer explained why the military and security personnel were drafted to the region:

Our people involved in peaceful demonstrations to register their displeasure towards environmental degradation. They marched on oil platforms. At times, peaceful demonstrations were hijacked by youth, which often resulted to violent confrontation and destruction of life and property.

The participants explained how reactions of the inhabitants of the region led to the formation of militant groups by the youth wings of different socio-cultural organisations in the region. A male ex-militant said:

We formed Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta when the military was drafted to our region to repress agitations for environmental protection and better life for our people.

The effects of confrontation between militants groups and JTF affected the inhabitants of the region differently. Almost all the participants, at least 20 out of 24 participants said that confrontation between JTF and militant groups led to human rights abuses including destruction of means of livelihood, killing of innocent civilians and destruction of property. A female ex-militant claimed:

...many people were killed. Soldiers and security officers were killed. Militants were killed. Women and children were killed. We could not locate many people till now.

A woman NGO staffer elaborated how the confrontation between militant groups and JTF affected women generally. She claimed:

Women were terribly affected. Women were affected as mothers, wives and daughters of militant members that were killed. Women became widows. They lost their husbands, children and relations.

To have unlimited access to oil exploration and exploitation, the multinational oil companies and the Federal Government employed divide and rule among the inhabitants of the region. The participants revealed that the locations with oil deposit were favoured in the distribution of oil benefits while those without were left out. The policy of divide and rule led to ethnic conflict and division among various groups in the region. A male political office holder said:

Itsekiri people were favoured by Chevron in contract distribution and employment provision because of the availability of oil in the area. Other inhabitants were left out such as Urhobo and Igbo

The second male political office holder provided a link between divide and rule system of the government and multinational oil companies, ethnic conflict between Itsekiri and Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo, and Ijaw and Ilaje.

Before the government and oil companies sow the seed of discord among the ethnic groups, we were living like brothers and sisters. Government policy has created ethnic rivalry and tension. The ethnic hatred reflected in everything we do in this region socially, politically, culturally and economically.

A female DESPODEC worker observed how women were affected by the ethnic conflict in the region. She stated:

Women in this region attended different markets based on ethnic relations. We could not attend women's meetings together. Inter-marriage has become problematic. Our children cannot attend the same school.

In the literature as well as field work, causes of the conflict identified included environmental degradation, lack of socio-economic facilities, divide and rule' There are still many others identified in the literature. Three levels of consequences were examined in this section: (1) the consequences of oil exploration and exploitation; (2) conflict between militant groups and JTF; and (3) ethnic conflict. The effects of the conflict on inhabitants of the Niger Delta were identified in the inhabitants' means of livelihood, health, property and ethnic relations.

### Gender role—Inclusion and exclusion

Both men and women took part in the Niger Delta conflict. They involved in the followings: activism; militancy; care and support; and, peacebuilding. Women involved in activism and peacebuilding but men largely involved in militancy. A female ex-militant revealed that women among the ex-militants were those that provided care and support for the wounds, ferry weapons for the militants and cook for the militants. She said further:

We all involved in the conflict both men and women. Many women followed us to camps to cook for the militants.

They treat the wounded militants. Many of them champion the peace accord brokered with the government that led to amnesty.

It was not that there were no women who fought along with the militant groups. The data from the field work revealed that the numbers were few. The number of women that participated in DDR was 133 (0.6%) compared with 26,000 (99.4%). The literature showed how institutionalised norm that established DDR limited beneficiaries to ex-combatants. Apart from culture, the finding shows DDR institutionalised norm as a key driver of the exclusion of the majority of women from the reintegration process. Participants in the DDR in the Niger Delta were men and women that had weapons to submit. A woman DESPODEC worker revealed that most women that fought alongside men in the region back out from DDR because of stigma associated with being identified with militants. A woman ex-militant said:

To be honest, I refused to come out when the amnesty was announced. I was afraid because my parents and partner would disown me.

Women in the Niger Delta involved in the conflict as demonstrators and campaigners against environmental degradation. Women always involved in peaceful demonstration but at times, they disrupted oil exploration. A police female participant said that it was men that involved in the destruction of oil installations. A female political office holder asserted:

Women participations were limited to peaceful demonstration. Women clapped, sing and hue at the oil companies gate. We did not have hands in destruction and stealing of oil. This was the level of support that women gave to men.

When the killing of people and destruction of property became unbearable, it was women that first came out to demonstrate to the King's Place, said a male participant in DESPODEC. A female police officer confirmed:

Women started to demonstrate and complaint about the killing of their husbands, children and rape of women and young girls. They called the government to stop fighting between militant groups and JTF.

Women also served as peacebuilders. A male NGO staffer said that amnesty and DDR were suggested by a women's group. A female participant while making clarification said that the women's group represented government interests. They were not appointed to negotiate with women. They were appointed to negotiate peace and security with militant groups.

It has been identified in this subsection the role played by women in the Niger Delta conflict. Few women played violent role, fought the war alongside the militant groups. Majority of women involved in the conflict as activists, demonstrators / campaigners and peacebuilders. The roles identified with the majority of women in the Niger Delta conflict did not qualify them for reintegration, apart from being ex-combatants.

### **Gender involvement—recognition**

As revealed above, both women and men involved in the conflict. Women involvement in the conflict was limited to the support given to the militant groups as demonstrators / campaigners and fighters, which included a few number of women. After the conflict, the involvement of women was not recognised. The

participants said that women did not involve in negotiation that led to amnesty and post amnesty reintegration in the region. The participants revealed that both amnesty and post-amnesty reintegration were awarded to the militants. Women that participated as cooks, care givers and peacebuilders were majorly excluded. A female ex-militant revealed.

I want you to know that women were not engaged in the peace negotiation. At the same time, we were not consulted when decision concerning DDR was negotiated. Though, we later saw names of few women on the post-amnesty beneficiary lists. I think, those names were smuggled onto the lists. They were the names of politicians' girlfriends, wives and relation. I am an ex-militant; my name was missed on the list.

A male NGO staffer added:

Not everyone was included in the DDR. Few women that included were those that fought alongside with the militant groups.

The participants gave the reason why women were not involved in DDR negotiation. They said that it was due to the fact that the operators of the programme did not follow international minimum benchmarks in the arrangement of the programme. A female ex-militant said that there were a lot of under cutting in the entire DDR programme. She said:

Women names were included at the beginning but our names were later dropped because women were said to be victims not militants. We know, let them give amnesty to militants and reintegration to everybody. Women want bursary, free education, scholarship, monthly allowance. I am surprised that women were excluded this way.

A male NGO staffer explained that non-inclusion of international actors such as UN, UNDP, World Bank, international NGOs and others account for sordidness in the entire programme. He stated:

How did you expect women to be adequately involved in the programme? Women cannot be involved because the organisers of the programme only interested in peace and security that will allow them to continue business as usual. The organisers did not involve any foreign actors, even those volunteer to assist.

The major concern of the study was the exclusion of women from the reintegration in comparison to the involvement of male militant groups. It was found in this study that women were not involved in negotiation and this affected their involvement in reintegration processes. Patriarchy coupled with other factors could explain the reason why majority of women were excluded from reintegration, as identified in the literature and analysis of data collected from field such as culture, corruption, and non-involvement of international actors like UN, international NGOs, World Bank, UNDP and others.

### **Gender demands—reintegration and reparations**

Forms of demand by both men and women in this study were broadly defined including reintegration and reparations. Different types and forms of demands have been identified by the participants in the in-depth interviews include compensation, apology, accountability, institutional reforms, vetting, memorialisation, socio-political and economic institutions, dialogue and

storytelling; transitional justice literature described these as reparations. Other forms of demand by the participants such as rebuilding of ruined houses, canoes, market and building of hospital, creation of job, contract award could be described as community-centred and community-based reintegration in the DDR literature (Özerdem, 2012). The grouping of gender demands into two important categories provided ontological context for the combination of reintegration and reparations by women in the Niger Delta.

Participants said that the forms of reparations demanded by men and women were largely monetary, while women demanded symbolic punishment for the perpetrators of sexual offences. Women however also demanded individual reparations in terms of monthly allowance. Broadly speaking, the participants identified forms of women demand in the resolution of the conflict. Gender demand for reparations included those that will benefit individual and community in general. Women prefer collective reparations that will benefit everybody in the region irrespective of gender, ethnicity and age. A female political office holder said:

Typically, the collective demands included hospitals, clinics, direct consultations, loans, scholarships and jobs, the renovation of destroyed houses and markets, road networks, compensation, electricity, communication networks and peace.

There are gender differences in demands in post-conflict society such as in the Gbaramatu Kingdom. In terms of demands, as was noted, women wanted the military and militants that involved in sexual abuses to be prosecuted.

Imagine, government gave a blanket amnesty to militants that raped our girls and women. Security officers that committed crime against humanity were not punished. I want the perpetrators of international crimes to be brought to book.

There were also some similarities in gender forms and types of demands. The participants in this study identified reintegration and reparatory justice such as dialogues, compensations, monthly allowance, markets, hospitals, clinics, road networks, equal office sharing, and peace, while men asked for creation of more local government authorities, political power, increase in oil derivation, control of resource, and employment. The participants want both reparations and reintegration to be combined. This will guarantee rights of women and men in the entire peacebuilding processes.

The gender analysis of data collected came up with the forms of demands that are reparatory for both women and men such as a monthly allowance, direct consultation, as well as compensation and employment for the inhabitants of the region as well as types and forms of redress that are distributive to both men and women. The study also demonstrated the complementary nature of justice requested by men and women in the region. The following gender demands were identified as the primary types and forms of demands that would satisfy men and women in the region: collective reparations, individual reparations, community-based and community-centred reintegration. Reparatory forms and types of justice are the immediate and first identified step in transitional theory towards redressing environmental and human rights abuses in the region. Both men and women proclaimed the rights to socio-economic provision. The provision of such could be described as the starting point for the community-centred reintegration in the region. Reintegration such as socio-economic rights could be provided simultaneously with reparatory justice, because of the inability of the government to provide community-based reintegration to support socio-economic facilities in

the region. Identification of gender forms of demand supported epistemology for the combination of reparations and reintegration to guarantee gender inclusion in the Niger Delta post-amnesty peacebuilding processes.

### Payment of reparations

The participants were asked the question: *who should pay the reparations?* They revealed that they wanted the multinational oil companies to support the government to provide reparations to victims. The participants were of the opinion that money generated by government should be shared with the region. Government can provide both monetary and symbolic reparations. Monetary reparation can be paid to individual and communities affected by the conflict. Symbolic reparations should include apology and acknowledgement. Symbolic reparations are described by Hamber and Palmary (2009), as the cheapest form of reparation. Multinational oil companies should also apologise for the degradation of the Niger Delta environment. A political office holder said:

Let the government and multinational oil companies remember the victims. Let them give women, children and other vulnerable people monetary reparation. Let the militants apologise for the conflict

Ex-militants suggested symbolic reparations for those that were killed in the conflict in the region. He said:

I am not saying everybody should be compensated. I want our heroes and heroines to be immortalised. A remembrance day should be created for the struggle. National institutions should be named after our leaders like Ken Saro Wiwa and other eight Ogoni activists.

Throughout the reintegration processes, women and other victims were not recognised. The non-recognition of women created resentment and jealous to the militants that were awarded post-amnesty reintegration. The participants demanded reparations for victims, women inclusive in the region. The participants opined that reparations for victims would guarantee gender rights. It is a potent remembrance that, at least, victims are not forgotten.

### Conclusion

This study was carried out to examine DDR, its achievement and weaknesses in the Niger Delta post-amnesty reintegration programme. The study notes that the entire Niger Delta peacebuilding processes were not gender-sensitive. DDR for example, was not delivered in a gender-sensitive way. The study found that DDR failed to address the concerns of women and other victims in the resolution of the Niger Delta conflict. The study concluded that a successful DDR must be on the same page with the UNDDR 2.10 (2006) which stated that “DDR must ensure that the human rights of all persons are respected at all times; mechanism must be established to minimize reprisal, stigmatization or discrimination” (9).

The study concluded that the Niger Delta conflict was about environmental degradation and human rights abuses. Multinational oil companies committed environmental degradation and human rights abuses by destroying people’s source of livelihood, drinking water, farmland and vegetation. It was found that Joint Military Task Force committed human rights abuses by killing peaceful demonstrators. The militant groups also committed human rights abuses in the region by attacking and kidnapping people. Environmental degradation affected women’s

means of livelihoods, health and drinking water. Women lost husbands, children, relations to conflict between JMTF and militants groups

The study used Recognition Theory to explain the reasons why women were not involved in reintegration processes. It was concluded that institutionalised norms that created DDR did not allow for victims consideration. Activities of women in the Niger Delta cannot be categorised together with that of ex-militants who were largely men. Amnesty was awarded to militant groups who were largely men. DDR that followed amnesty award in the region was also allocated to men that surrendered weapons and embraced peace. The basic aim behind DDR in the region is security. DDR was not created for justice. The non-consideration of justice in the post conflict peace processes accounted for reason why victims, most especially women were not recognised in the Niger Delta post-amnesty peacebuilding processes. Women were generally considered as victims. The reparations which would have allowed for victims' recognition was not approved in the region. For both men and women to be recognised in the Niger Delta conflict reparations should be considered with reintegration in the region.

The demands of inhabitants of the regions are clearly numerous. The gender nature of requests and demands far beyond what the government considered. These demands included communication networks, renovation of destroyed houses, building of more houses, roads, provision of water, jobs, clinics, hospitals, sharing of oil revenue, market, means of transportation, resource control, contracts, acknowledgement, memorialization of the dead, commemoration, political power, creation of additional local government authority, compensation, apology, scholarships, monthly allowances, dialogue and equal participation. These demands were categorised as reintegration and reparations in this study. The study concluded that while most of the demands can be covered under reintegration processes. The consideration of reparation in DDR processes will provide for women's interests and reduce resentment.

There are differences in gender forms of redress in the region as requested by men and women. The article concluded that differences in the types of redress reflect the forms of human rights abuses suffered by women, level of education, attachment to the family and community. Sexually violated women, for example, acted under traditional and cultural restriction not to discuss their experiences. Many participants in the study concluded that sexually violated victims could only benefit from collective reparations and socio-economic justice because the culture does not permit women to come out and discuss the issue of rape. It is difficult for a raped woman to claim individual reparations within cultural confines of the community. Men largely want individualistic forms of redress, while women tend to assert largely collective ideas about redress. Differences in the types and forms of redress in the region reflect differences in gendered social realities and experiences. When men were engaging in militancy, women were largely at home, taking care of the injured, children and elderly left behind by men. Again, patriarchy gendered roles, duties and expectations accounted for the differences in gender wants in the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes, as found in this study. A civil servant male participant put it in this way, "Women are the people that could talk about what they want from the government and the oil companies. They have their own experiences, feelings and opinions".

Constructive gender peacebuilding processes is different from other forms of DDR processes, which excluded women. Constructive gender peacebuilding processes identify and accommodate different gender concerns in a post-conflict situation such as sexual violence against women and young girls, and women recognition in post conflict peacebuilding processes. The

weakness of this approach therefore is the inability to go beyond the explanations of gender wants in post-conflict situation. Constructive gender future concern would be its application for the analysis of gender inclusion and equality in a stable society. The study finally concluded that effective redress mechanisms need to be constructed differently to include reparations and reflect gender rights in the Niger Delta peacebuilding processes. To achieve gender equality in the region, the rights of women and men must be attended to and recognised. The rights such as dialogue and reparations should be treated simultaneously with reintegration. It is through this that women and other victim's rights will be guaranteed.

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### Data availability

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available because the Research Ethics Governance Committee of Ulster University, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, has not given permission for the release of any part of the data collected for public consumption. These data are however available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### Additional information

**Competing interests:** The author(s) declare no competing financial interests.

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**How to cite this article:** Michael Folami O (2016) The gendered construction of reparations: An Exploration of women's exclusion from the Niger Delta reintegration processes. *Palgrave Communications*. 2:16083 doi: 10.1057/palcomms.2016.83.



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