

**BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE AND CORRUPTION IN GOVERNANCE ON
PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES IN OGONI, RIVERS STATE**

AMAKIRI, CHIZIKE

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt

Email: chizike.amakiri@rsu.edu.ng

Phone number: +234803 477 9932

&

Collins Okechukwu Amadi

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Email: otukiri63@gmail.com

Phone number: +234803 549 4593

Abstract

The study investigates the impact of corruption in the governance and bureaucracy on peace building process in Ogoni Land. Over the years, the Ogoni Land has experienced conflicts, environmental degradation and social unrest, which have been blamed on lack of good governance and experiences of marginalisation. Despite several government and development efforts towards peace, there remain challenges for lasting peace in the region. It considers how administrative delay and systemic corruption, and the inefficiency of bureaucracy have affected the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts. It is based on the Weberian Bureaucratic Theory. Data were collected from secondary sources such as policy documents, scholarly publications and reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations. The results suggest that the politicisation of administration, the institutional rigidity, and misuse of public funds has resulted in mistrust in the institutions, lack of ability to implement policies and has affected the participation of the community in the peacebuilding processes. According to the study, the failure in governance plays a role in the further escalation of conflict and mistrust of Ogoni. It suggests structural reforms that foster accountability, transparency and merit in the bureaucracy and better anti-corruption measures and inclusive governance processes. These are essential for achieving long-term peace and stability in areas of Nigeria that are prone to conflict as Ogoni.

Keywords: ***Bureaucratic structure, corruption, governance, peacebuilding initiatives***

Introduction

Peacebuilding is essential for achieving long-term stability, social justice and human development in post-conflict communities. Peacebuilding efforts have frequently arisen in Nigeria, and especially in the Niger Delta region, in reaction to long-lasting conflicts brought on by problems with environmental degradation, political marginalization, and economic exclusion (Osaghae, 2019; Ibeanu, 2016). After years of environmental mismanagement and neglect of the lands by the authorities, Ogoni Land is a land of agitation and violent conflict that has a history of years. There is still high fluctuation and low trust between the state and local people in the area in spite of some efforts by government and non-governmental organisations (Agbiboa, 2015).

These ongoing challenges have highlighted the structural and administrative barriers to effective peacebuilding, including the issues of corruption in governance and lack of efficiency in bureaucracy. The bureaucracy features a structured and rule-based approach to the goal of promoting rational, efficient, and impartial public administration, Max Weber theorized (1947). The Nigerian bureaucracy often fails to adhere to these principles. The system's rigidity, politicisation and lack of innovation have resulted in inefficient performance and slow implementation of policy for academics. This rigidity in bureaucracy makes it challenging to coordinate and implement peacebuilding projects in Ogoni Land because decisions are made based on patronage system and administrative bottlenecks, not necessarily based on community needs or merit (Ejiofor, 2018).

The picture of peacebuilding is further complicated by corruption in governance. It undermines public trust, leads to institutional distrust and undermines funding for development (Transparency International, 2023). In Ogoni Land, corruption has not just undermined state-led interventions, but it has also sullied community-based interventions as elites often use peacebuilding for political or personal gain (Adebayo & Omolayo, 2021). The systemic corruption serves to further fuel grievances at a local level and erode trust in peace processes and deepen imbalances in society (Agbibo, 2015). Peacebuilding efforts lack openness and grassroots legitimacy, making them incapable of sustaining peace.

Therefore, the challenge of achieving enduring peace in Ogoni Land is a combination of incompetence and corruption in the government. To ensure effective peace building, there is a need for transparent institutions, responsive governance, and participatory decision-making that is community owned and places justice at the heart of the process (Ibeanu, 2016; Osaghae, 2019). It is important, therefore, to understand the influence of these governance failures on the results of peacebuilding, to create policies that can turn structural barriers into opportunities for sustainable development and reconciliation. In this context, the following research examines the impact of the bureaucratic structure and governance corruption on peace building in Ogoni to identify the problems and suggest solutions for better peace building in the area.

Theoretical Framework

The paper was based on Weberian Bureaucratic Theory. Based on the Bureaucratic Theory of Max Weber (1947), one can gain insights into the impact of administrative institutions on governance and policy implementation. The most rational and efficient form of government, according to Weber, is bureaucracy, which has hierarchy, specialization, merit selection, and adherence to written rules and regulations (Gerth & Mills, 1958). But when it diverges from these it often leads to corruption, inefficiency and rigidity which are harmful to peacebuilding particularly in such vulnerable communities as Ogoni.

Appointments are also sometimes based on political affiliation or ethnicity in Nigeria, instead of merit, and bureaucracy has been politicised and is tied-up in patronage networks (Nwizu, 2020; Okoli & Agada, 2022). This challenges the institutional responsibility and renders development and reconciliation efforts more challenging to be successful. In consequence, efforts to promote social and environmental stability have been stymied as a result of administrative delay, poor coordination and lack of openness. The inefficiencies are a typical illustration of Weber's term "iron cage": the hierarchical control and strict regulation of the environment and resources substituted for the logical efficiency (Weber, 1947).

In addition, public mistrust and mismanagement of resources are caused by corruption, which is yet another factor that weakens bureaucratic organisations. Adebayo and Omolayo (2021) note that corruption creates social unrest and funds projects that are not geared towards community development. This shows itself in Ogoni Land as the misappropriation of monies

meant for environmental restoration and empowerment, which exacerbates alienation and hinders peace initiatives (Agbibo, 2015).

To sum up, the Weberian Bureaucratic Theory points out the impact of the bureaucratic inadequacies of Nigeria on peacebuilding in Ogoni Land, where the inefficiencies, corruption and lack of accountability have been major challenges. If this trend is to be halted, rationality, meritocracy and legality need to be restored to government.

Interrelationship between Bureaucracy, Corruption, and Peacebuilding

In fact, the dynamics of bureaucracy, corruption and peacebuilding are complex and multifaceted, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. Max Weber's conceptualisation of 1947 deems bureaucracy as a tool designed to ensure administrative effectiveness, accountability and logical governance. It is an essential institution for attaining national stability and peace since it acts as the machinery through which government policies are developed and carried out. But more than that, when the bureaucratic institutions become corrupted and inefficient, they become instruments of dis-socialization rather than of socialization, and therefore hindrances to sustainable development and peace building (Agbibo, 2015; Okoli & Agada, 2022).

A well-organised bureaucracy, ideally, allows for equitable service delivery, efficient allocation of resources and fair resolution of conflicts. By being impartial, respecting due process, the bureaucracy maintains public confidence and institutional legitimacy (Weber, 1947). In practice, however, Nigeria's bureaucratic system is often undermined by partisan, nepotistic, and favouritistic practices that lead to corruption and affect the integrity of institutions (Adebayo & Omolayo, 2021). Resources are diverted from crucial peacebuilding projects like community development, conflict resolution, and infrastructure rehabilitation when bureaucrats tamper with administrative processes for their own or political benefit (Osaghae, 2019).

The institutional and moral underpinnings of peace are undermined by bureaucratic corruption. According to Transparency International (2023), corruption is systemic in Nigeria and affects institutions, undermining the rule of law and perpetuating socioeconomic inequality. All these conditions exacerbate the complaints, especially in the disadvantaged regions such as Niger Delta where residents feel their government is indifferent and oppressive (Ibeanu, 2016). In these regions, lack of efficiency in the execution of the bureaucracy and diversion of funds used for development and for reconciliation is often responsible for the failure of peacebuilding programs (Agbibo, 2015).

Moreover, interaction between corruption and bureaucracy forms a vicious circle that poses a threat to peace. Rising corruption levels are associated with weak bureaucratic systems due to their inability to enforce responsibility. The result is that the overall level of corruption exacerbates bureaucratic inefficiency further, leading to institutional rigidity and public disillusionment with the institutions (Nwizu, 2020). The institutional decay also undermines the potential for post-conflict reconstruction because peacebuilding requires open and transparent organisations to manage resources and negotiate competing interests. These roles are undermined and mistrust and violence persist, leaving peace unfeasible.

Bureaucratic Structure and Governance Effectiveness in Nigeria

The effectiveness of any political system heavily depends on the bureaucracy. According to Weber (1947), bureaucracy is designed to be a logical and effective organization that is characterized by division of labor, hierarchy, meritocracy, and formalism. It should foster efficiency, accountability and transparency in public management, ideally. But in Nigeria, the traditional Weberian conception of bureaucracy has been significantly deviated from, resulting

in corruption, inefficiency and weak institutional performance of the bureaucratic system in Nigeria (Nwizu, 2020).

The colonial government had left Nigeria a bureaucratic system designed to be the engine of development planning and policy implementation. But in time it has been beset by nepotism, too much partisanship, and inadequate administrative abilities (Adebayo & Omolayo, 2021). There is a high level of political orientation, ethnic or favouritism-based selection and promotion of staff in the Civil Service (Okoli & Agada, 2022). This has stunted the effectiveness of government and service delivery, by creating a culture of bureaucracy that is not accountable, or innovative.

Governance is efficient only if the bureaucratic system works in an honest, technically competent and populist way. Unfortunately, the Nigerian bureaucracy is characterised by several undesirable traits, including duplication of processes, overlapping roles, and poor monitoring systems (Ejiofor, 2018). These inefficiencies contribute to the failures in development program implementation, public funds' misappropriation, and policy delays. Project delays have often hindered the timely implementation of projects, especially in sectors such as infrastructure, health and education (Osaghae, 2019).

Another problem is corruption in the administration, which affects the effectiveness of government. Nigeria is regularly listed as one of the nations with high levels of public sector corruption by Transparency International (2023). This corruption involves bribery, embezzlement, contract inflation and misappropriation of public funds, and affects public confidence in the government and the institutions, as noted by Agbibo (2015). Bureaucrats often engage in rent-seeking activities in which they seek private gain over the public good.

In addition, inefficiency in the bureaucracy is crucial to socio-economic development and can affect peacebuilding. The social discontent that has plagued Niger Delta, especially Ogoni Land, has been worsened by the weak bureaucratic structures and bad governance that have failed to effectively resolve political, economic and environmental grievances (Ibeanu, 2016). The bureaucracy is unable to offer equitable service to the public and manage public funds openly, hampering peacebuilding efforts.

Nigeria's bureaucratic structures need to be completely reformed in order to improve governance effectiveness. They should include the promotion of merit in hiring and promotion policies, strengthen accountability mechanisms to the institutions and depoliticise the public service. To lessen corruption and human meddling in public sector operations, administrative transparency and digital governance should also be given top priority. A reform in Nigeria's bureaucracy, based on professionalism, ethics and service orientation, would enhance the implementation of policies and the development of good governance in the country.

Corruption and Institutional Failure in Nigeria

Corruption is one of the most pervasive and debilitating problems affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions and governance in Nigeria. It is widely recognised as a structural impediment to peacebuilding, democratic consolidation and national development (Agbibo, 2015). Corruption is broadly defined as the abuse of public office for personal gain, such as nepotism, bribery, embezzlement, and misappropriation of public funds (Transparency International, 2023). In Nigeria, the level of public trust, accountability and institutional performance has been on the decline over time due to the deep-rooted corruption in political, economic and bureaucratic institutions (Okoli & Agada, 2022).

In Nigeria, corruption is so much entrenched in every facet of governance that it has been closely linked to institutional failure. Weak institutions are a root cause and a consequence of corruption. Nwizu 2020 reported that in the Nigerian public sector, corruption is allowed to thrive unhindered, due to weak monitoring, insufficient transparency, and political interference.

When governmental institutions are compromised, they cannot perform key functions such as enforcement of laws, implementation of policies or provision of services to a high level (Adebayo & Omolayo, 2021). The results are inefficiency, poor service and general public disaffection with government processes.

The Nigerian civil service, which is meant to drive policy implementation is being sorely undermined, for instance, through corrupt practices like recruitment of civil servants based on patronage, instead of merit and mismanagement of public funds (Ejiofor, 2018). A bureaucratic culture of mediocrity and rent-seeking has resulted from these wrongdoings, where devotion to administrative ethics and professionalism is subordinated to loyalty to political elites (Weber, 1947). This consequently leads to low credibility and legitimacy of state institutions, thereby increasing social unrest and grievances particularly in areas that are not adequately served such as the Niger Delta (Ibeanu, 2016).

Corruption undermines the rule of law, which in turn plays its part in the failure of institutions. Law enforcement, courts and anti-corruption groups are often marred by political manipulation and bias (Osaghae, 2019). This fosters impunity culture and reduces the overall deterrence to corruption. The establishment of agencies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) did not help matters, as the agencies were selectively used by the law enforcement bodies in the arrest of political opponents while their members and supporters of the ruling class remain free (Aiyede, 2019). This selective justice further erodes public confidence and trust in the government.

Bureaucracy, Corruption, and Peacebuilding in Nigeria.

Particularly in nations struggling with post-conflict rebuilding and peacebuilding, bureaucracy continues to be an essential part of governance and state-building. In theory, bureaucracy is meant to provide a neutral administration, which ensures effectiveness, responsibility, and uniformity of policy implementation (Weber, 1947). Bureaucracy, however, has often been associated with politics, corruption and inefficiency, which has hindered the effectiveness of development and peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria (Adebayo & Omolayo, 2021). One of the most significant challenges to long-term peace in the country is the link between the two, corruption and bureaucratic maladministration.

Bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria is characterized by bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, and manipulating administrative procedures for personal or political gain (Okoli & Agada, 2022). These acts are threatening public trust in governance in terms of institutional integrity and openness. Systematic corruption is rife in Nigeria, as evidenced by its poor ranking on international corruption perception indexes by Transparency International (2023). This type of corruption undermines peacebuilding by diverting resources from development projects, hindering people's ability to undertake their own development, and intensifying their public hostility towards governmental actors. The failure of peace and development initiatives, for instance, in the Niger Delta, particularly Ogoni Land, due to corruption in the administration of such funds have regularly renewed conflicts and mistrust in the region (Agbibo, 2015).

The Nigerian bureaucracy often contributes to social exclusion and structural inequality, rather than promoting peace. Administrative impediments, conflicting mandates, and too much centralization of power pose challenges to effective coordination between federal, state and municipal government (Nwizu, 2020). Because of this, peacebuilding initiatives, including those pertaining to conflict resolution, youth empowerment, and environmental restoration, are often postponed, inadequately carried out, or politicized. These defects illustrate Weber's concept of the "iron cage," in which the motives of self-interest and the rigid procedures of bureaucracy overcome reason and public service (Weber, 1947).

The subversion of state institutions by political elites who utilize security and bureaucratic structures to consolidate their power and not social justice in Nigeria further endangers

peacebuilding (Osaghae, 2019). This elite dominance has a negative effect on sustainable peace due to the two concerns of inclusive government and marginalisation of local voices (Ibeanu, 2016). Bureaucratic institutions' inability to operate fairly or transparently contributes to grievances and perpetuates inequality and undermines state legitimacy in areas of conflict.

Influence of Bureaucratic Structure on Peacebuilding

Bureaucratic systems have a significant impact on the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding efforts, especially in post-conflict and fragile countries such as Nigeria. Max Weber's Bureaucratic theory suggests that an ideal bureaucracy would be characterized by formal rules, a merit-based selection, impersonal decision making, and the hierarchy of authority, all of which would be designed to increase the efficiency and fairness of administration (Weber, 1947). When correctly established and managed, Bureaucratic institutions should be able to deliver equitable resource allocation, clear and transparent governance and efficient conflict management – all necessary elements for peacebuilding. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, however, these bureaucratic systems often fail to adhere to Weberian principles as they become avenues for corruption, inefficiency, and favoritism, thereby undermining peace processes (Adebayo & Omolayo, 2021).

Perhaps the most apparent impact of a bureaucratic structure on peacebuilding comes in the way it is involved in the management of post-conflict programs and the implementation of government policies. When a bureaucracy is effective, peace accords, restoration or development projects are implemented consistently and with accountability. (Nwizu, 2020). Bureaucratic neutrality encourages legitimacy and trust in government bodies, because it enables the settlement of conflicts between conflicting factions by arbitrary decision (Osaghae, 2019). On the other hand, by postponing implementation, misallocating resources, and excluding important stakeholders from the decision-making process, bureaucratic dysfunction which manifests as administrative bottlenecks, political meddling, and a lack of coordination can sabotage peacebuilding initiatives (Agbibo, 2015).

Nigeria is not an exception as its bureaucratic structure has been accused of being politicized and rigid, making it hard to resolve conflicts and foster peace (Okoli & Agada, 2022). Bureaucratic elites often distort institutional objectives to achieve their own and/or their political interests. Poor coordination among the various government agencies and misappropriation of funds for environmental clean-up and community rehabilitation have also undermined peacebuilding initiatives in the Niger Delta – specifically in Ogoni Land (Ibeanu, 2016). These inefficiencies extend citizens' mistrust of the government and its institutions, and delay citizens' trust in the government.

Impact of Corruption in Governance on Peacebuilding

One of the biggest obstacles to peacebuilding and sustainable development in Nigeria is corruption. It undermines institutional integrity and strengthens governance institutions; it also takes funds that would otherwise be used for social welfare, reconstruction and reconciliation, and supports structural violence (Agbibo, 2015). Peacebuilding is a complex endeavor that requires transparent, accountable and fair governance institutions to address its root causes of conflict. Yet, corruption has proved to be an impediment to lasting peace in Nigeria as it has created distrust of state institutions, stifled socioeconomic projects, and deepened the divide between people (Okoli & Agada, 2022).

Embezzlement, nepotism, contract inflation and siphoning money earmarked for peace and development are all forms of abuse of public office. Nigeria is among the countries with poor index of corruption that is perceived over the years, according to the report by Transparency International (2023) which indicates that the country's government systems are not functioning

properly. This continuing corruption leads to unequal development and marginalisation of certain areas especially the Niger Delta region where the lack of socio-economic justice has resulted in persistent conflicts (Osaghae, 2019). The mismanagement of funds allocated to peacebuilding project, which should have been spent on environmental restoration, youth empowerment and conflict resolution, has eroded the trust of the communities, and made it appear that the interests of the elites are being taken more seriously than those of the communities affected (Ibeanu, 2016).

Even more important, corruption undermines the legitimacy of the institutions of governance that is essential for peacebuilding. In situations where citizens feel that state actors are dishonest and self serving, they may resort to violence or back non-state actors in their reaction (Nwizu, 2020). This situation affects the capacities of mediation by government authorities to become impartial and to further sustain insecurity. In addition, corruption undermines social cohesion and contributes to an institutional culture of impunity, where public officials or political elites can escape punishment for their corrupt actions (Adebayo & Omolayo, 2021).

One of the other factors affecting socioeconomic stability and peacebuilding is ineffective governance, which has a negative effect on peacebuilding. Besides ineffective governance, corruption has an effect on socioeconomic stability and peacebuilding. Corruption in the government reduces spending on healthcare, education, and infrastructure, leading to financial difficulties and consequently social tensions and grievances (Aiyede, 2019). Funding diversion and politicization of development programs negatively affect recovery efforts and deepen community grievances in post conflict situations, where reconstruction and reconciliation are primarily based on state-led programs. Fostering trust between the state and its people, so vital to lasting peace, is difficult in these conditions.

The Politics of the UNEP Report

The UNEP report has been in Ogoniland for over three years, for which President Muhammadu Buhari's approval of its execution was greeted with a smile. But making it happen and ensuring that the key recommendations of the UNEP report are followed are two different matters. Therefore, there are some concerns over the implementation from the residents of Ogoniland and some groups. As observers suspected, deep divisions within Ogoniland and other areas of the Niger Delta where oil activities have wrought suffering could prompt equally deep mistrust. The other Niger Delta areas are interested because the process of cleaning up Ogoniland will provide a model for potential future cleanups.

Due to this, it was challenging for the then UNEP representative in Nigeria, Mike Cowing, to access some of the impacted Ogoniland districts. Others may have been worried about the use of the money that had been allocated to the exercise, and wanted a share of that, but others may have really wanted him to do the exercise, and monitored his progress throughout so he could do it in line with best international practice. During the period 2009-2010, there were two factional leaders in Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) namely: Ledum Mitee and Goodluck Diigbo.

Although both men had made it very evident that they were motivated by the Ogoni people's interests and their surroundings, disagreements over who should speak for the people led to the formation of groups and supporters. Also during this period, the Federal Government reached an amnesty agreement with the insurgents of the Niger Delta. But it was ill-advised and unsafe for the experts hired to undertake the exercise to be allowed to go to the affected areas without a good security system. Like elsewhere in the Niger Delta, kidnapping in ransom was the norm. The amnesty program eliminated security issues in the area, but some independent contractors, who'd made millions of dollars from kidnapping, were not about to turn in their profits.

In fact, the UNEP team's determination to finish their work despite great challenges made the document what we now know as the UNEP Report possible. It is important to note that the exercise was not conducted from Port Harcourt (which is no longer in existence) but from Ogoniland, and some Ogoni were involved in the exercise due to pressure on the team. As a consequence some Ogoni youths were given employment, giving weight to the exercise.

They also called on Buhari to "ensure that the UNEP report is being put into effect" and "establish Bori State for the Ogoni and their neighbours" as well as "to review the Ogoni Bill of Rights, which clearly presents the need to guarantee their right to protection of the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation. The Ogoni People requested appropriate and direct representation of their rights in all Nigerian national institutions in the Ogoni Bill of Rights. This was done in view of the fact that the Nigerian government has a high index of unethical underrepresentation and political marginalisation of the Ogoni people.

The Ogoni experience was instrumental in the birth of the modern democratic system, but there was no representation for Ogoni. Buhari was also sacked for the cleanup by the Ogoni Central Indigenous Authority, which says it "violates the technical demands on Ogoniland. Dr. Goodluck Diigbo, the group's president, criticized Buhari for being silent on the Environmental Restoration Fund for Ogoniland and a Center of Excellence for Environmental Restoration. The \$1 billion was, he added, "grossly inadequate for take-off. The recommendations are confidential, and it is not only wrong to have non-experts making recommendations, it's an unacceptable recommendation, Diigbo said. One of the major issues that has been raised on the heels of Buhari's decision on the implementation of the UNEP Report in Ogoniland is that the community is not in the group of organisations that are charged with clean up of the area, the Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP). Former President Goodluck Jonathan advised the HYPREP governing council to have someone from the Rivers community.

The ex-president also proposed that the figure of \$50 million be used as a starting point instead of some analysts' estimate of \$10 million, which is part of Buhari's plan. One organisation has said that "environmental hazards don't know PDP or APC. Everyone is impacted—whether young, old, of any ethnicity or political persuasion. The clean-up of Ogoniland is all Nigerians are concerned about because all persons living and working in Ogoniland and the neighboring areas are concerned about this. According to the summary of the UNEP Report, financial resources should not be an obstacle to implementation and it is suggested that an initial capital injection of USD 1 billion be provided by the oil industry and the government.

It has also clearly stated that the program must be maintained for about 25-30 years to achieve the desired results. UNEP project team held 264 official community meetings in Ogoniland attended by more than 23,000, as well as surveyed 122 km of pipeline rights of way and audited more than 5,000 medical records. The report recommends that the government should collaborate with the oil corporations and local authorities to stop the illegal oil-related activities in Ogoniland.

It should include an awareness component that explains the disproportionate impacts of artisanal refining on the environment that are suffered by everyone in the community, in addition to the content on training, job, and economic incentives to prevent people from engaging in this illegal activity. Also, it recommends that the "Government of Nigeria create an Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of this study. The Authority would have a distinct budget that will come from an Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Fund, and its employees will mostly be seconded from pertinent national and state agencies. The Authority will have a set initial lifespan of ten years. This means that the cleanup will ensure that people in Ogoniland benefit from their God-given wealth and also bring a load of jobs if the recommendations are adhered to.

Environmental Degradation and its effect in Ogoni

Over the years, Ogoni has been a source of concern to the international community because of the significant environmental impacts of oil exploration and production activities. Recurrent oil spills, flaring of gas, poor waste management practices and weak enforcement of regulations have all contributed to the transformation of ecosystems, the threat to livelihoods and the impact on the public health and society is quite devastating. The case of Ogoni, Nigeria is cited as a case in point of the human and environmental challenges of inadequate business practices, community protection and governance (UNEP, 2011; Obi, 2010).

In the Niger Delta, commercial oil production started in the late 1950s and quickly grew. As in many villages of the Delta, Ogoni suffered from early environmental impacts, and endured long-term consequences. In the 1990s Ken Saro-Wiwa led the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) that mobilized local and international opinion on issues of resource control, corporate responsibility and environmental justice (Saro-Wiwa, 1992). Many people around the world were outraged when Saro-Wiwa was murdered and the violence against MOSOP activists in the 1990s led to the subsequent scientific evaluation of Ogoniland and the demand for reparations, including the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) assessment of Ogoniland (UNEP, 2011).

Oil spills are the number one source of soil and water contamination and are caused by operational error, decaying infrastructure, sabotage and pipeline theft. Spills enter into soil and spread over vegetation, and hydrocarbons remain in poorly-ventilated soils in the deltas for years (Nwilo & Badejo, 2006). Decades of continuous gas flaring have resulted in the discharge of heat, particulate particles and hazardous gasses to the environment. There are also effects related to localized climate stress, acid deposition that damages crops and air pollution (Udo & Enang, 2023).

Occasionally, drilling related cuttings and waste water as well as other debris have been disposed of improperly or informally, resulting in surface and groundwater contamination. High pollutant levels have been allowed to build-up and pollution control measures have been slow to be implemented because of inadequate regulatory surveillance, slow enforcement of regulations, and, in some cases, lack of response or avoidance by businesses to pollution incidents (Ite et al., 2023). Hydrocarbon contamination affects the flora and fauna (microbiology) and chemical composition of the soil, reducing harvests and soil fertility. Farmers complain of loss of productive land, poor crop growth and poor take up. The traditional farming methods and practices have broken down in many regions, threatening food security and rural livelihoods (Okonkwo & Agbo, 2023).

Oil contamination of drinking water, household water, reducing oxygen levels in streams and affecting fish and other aquatic organisms. The fish population has been reduced significantly in many villages along the rivers depending on fishing for catches and earnings. Groundwater contamination is also a threat to long term potable water supplies (UNEP, 2011; Ebegbulem & Nwankwo, 2023). Oiling and habitat modification have resulted in degradation or loss of mangroves and wetlands, vital for fish production, coastal protection, and carbon storage. Fish stocks, ecological services, and coastal erosion are all impacted by mangrove loss. If carcinogenic materials are left in the environment, then any spill releasing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and gas flaring can lead to respiratory issues such as headaches, eye irritation, and long-term health risks such as an increased risk of certain cancers (World Health Organization, 2023).

Figure 1. Pictures showing divers' effect of environmental degradation



Research Methodology

This study employs the main method of analysis known as content analysis which examines the impact of corruption in government and bureaucratic systems on peacebuilding processes in Ogoni, Rivers State. Secondary sources are documents such as government policy, peacebuilding agency reports, scholarly publications and credible news articles. The materials were closely studied to find relevant issues of bureaucracy, corruption, and peace building in Ogoni territory.

Findings

The study shows that bureaucratic organization, corrupt practices of government officials, and the success of peacebuilding in Ogoni Land are all interrelated. Systemic corruption, partisanship and administrative inefficiency have been a barrier to sustainable peace and community development in the area.

Nigeria's rigid and centralized bureaucracy has a considerable impact on delaying decision making and policy implementation particularly in Rivers State. Federal, state and local governments have poorly integrated mandates and agencies, which hinder peace building and reduce the responsiveness of the institutions to the post-conflict needs of Ogoni.

Public suspicion and animosity have been exacerbated by political and bureaucratic elites' misappropriation and diversion of funds intended for environmental rehabilitation and community development. The corruption has worsened social cleavages, diminished citizens' engagement, and eroded the trust and confidence in institutions within Ogoni villages.

The peacebuilding efforts of Ogoni remain largely top-down, leaving out the valuable local actors, such as women, youth and traditional institutions. Peace programs are not owned by the community and do not involve the community, thereby reducing their viability and validity. As a result, the long-term stability and reconciliation cannot be achieved without inclusive engagement.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the situation of widespread corruption and a dysfunctional bureaucracy severely affects the peacebuilding process in Ogoni Land and Nigeria. The bureaucracy has turned political and dysfunctional instead of efficient and accountable, resulting in lag time and project failure in the implementation of development and reconciliation projects. Partially, because of corruption, the governance institutions have become weak, public confidence has been undermined, and the cycles of war and underdevelopment have been extended due to financial misappropriation, partiality and lack of openness.

The paper underscores the need for strengthening anti-corruption efforts, promoting participatory and inclusive governance, and improving public service delivery institutions to ensure accountability, transparency, and effective governance as key mechanisms for ensuring sustained peace and socio-economic stability.

Recommendations

1. The Nigerian government should make radical changes for better administration and depoliticization of the civil service. To reinstate professionalism and accountability in public institutions, hiring and promotion must be based on merit and competence, not party connections.
2. To pursue cases without political interference, anti-corruption organizations like the EFCC and ICPC should be given more authority, sufficient funding, and legal support. The public reporting systems and regular audits should ensure transparency in development and peacebuilding funds administration.
3. Local ownership should be given top priority in peacebuilding projects by include women, youth organizations, and community leaders in program development and execution. In the Ogoni land, there is a need to trust and cultural sensitivity in inclusive government which will make peace initiatives sustainable.
4. Public officials should undergo frequent training and ethical reorientation to inculcate the ideals of honesty, responsible attitude and service delivery. To achieve effective governance and sustain peace, the culture among the bureaucracy must be changed to one of accountability and transparency.

Contributions to Knowledge

1. The failure of peacebuilding efforts in Ogoni land, the corruption in the government and the bureaucratic inefficiency are convincingly connected in this paper, both empirically and theoretically. It contributes to the literature by providing an example of how the combination of corrupt practices and 'flaws' of the bureaucracy can undermine the trust in institutions and sustainable peace in post-conflict states.
2. The study gives a local perspective of peace building within a particular sociopolitical and environmental context of Ogoni Land. The placement of the topic in the Niger Delta region contributes to the spread of scholarly knowledge of how governance systems can impact on the community level peace and development initiatives in resource-rich but conflict-prone regions.
3. The study adds to the use of Max Weber's bureaucratic theory in Nigeria because it explains how the deviation from the rational-legal administrative principles promotes corruption and hampers peacebuilding. It provides a theoretical lens for exploring governance failures in other developing countries facing administrative challenges.
4. The study contributes to useful policy debate through providing feasible solutions that work for participatory government, the fight against corruption, and bureaucratic reform. These recommendations provide a roadmap for policy makers, peace practitioners and development actors who want to contribute to the development of durable peace and institutional stability in Nigeria.

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