

CULTURE AND THE AMNESTY PROGRAM IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to examine cultural values, practices, traditions, and beliefs and explore whether they may or may not contribute towards the successful implementation of the amnesty program in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The goal of this study is to offer evaluative assessment and interpretation of the findings of the research study as indicated by the responses of the participants and observations made. This informed the decision to utilize the qualitative research methods embedded in the ethnographic tradition, which included field notes of observations, in-depth interviews, and review of available documents associated with the amnesty program. The findings of this study have also led to possible solutions and conclusions drawn from the research study. The discussion concludes by offering recommendations for further studies and on related topics or concepts that this study failed to address. Implications for social change include informing policy makers of the importance the culture which may contribute towards the successful implementation of any developmental initiative such as the amnesty program. The conceptual framework which guided the study in providing answers to the research questions was based on Oakley's (1989) concepts of community participation, while Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy provided the theoretical framework for examining the political economy struggle for power and determining if the Urhobo culture offers ways to peacefully resolve that struggle.

Keywords: Amnesty program, community, community participation, community development, culture, development initiative, ex-militants, Niger Delta region, sustainable development.