Building Peace Economies? The Politics of ‘Patronage Peacebuilding’ in the Illicit Informal Economies of Bayelsa State and Rivers State, Nigeria

Ramya Nanpon Sheni

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds
School of Politics and International Studies (POLIS)

September 2021
The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Ramya Nanpon Sheni to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
Acknowledgements

I give all the glory to God for the successful completion of this study.

I owe a special thanks to my supervisors, Prof. Anna Mdee and Prof. Edward Newman. Anna provided sound advice not just on all matters PhD, but also about the importance of taking time out to relax and “enjoy the process”; I would like to thank her for her extreme patience in reading over my long and over-chunky chapters, which I thought were the best. She taught me to remember the bigger picture and to always “look at how the branches made up the trees”, a vital lesson I will carry throughout life. I remain grateful for her unwavering support. I have also benefited enormously from Edward’s input, and his constant reminder to keep my work theme focused, a truly challenging concept for me. He also encouraged me to think outside the box, guided me on where I needed more theory, and on which areas I should focus more of my time. They are a truly remarkable and hardworking duo and I am blessed to have been moulded by two such minds, who are so influential in academia.

Numerous organisations were also responsible for facilitating my PhD fieldwork. During this PhD, I spent six months between Abuja, Rivers and Bayelsa with various peacebuilding agencies. I would like to thank the staff at the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation programme (NSRP), the Ministry of Defence, the War College, the University of Port Harcourt and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution. They opened their doors, willingly answered all my questions, and assisted in providing more contacts for interview, which helped in enriching this thesis. They also kept an eye on me after my fieldwork, checking up on how the writing stage was going. I would also like to thank Dr Tarila M. Ebiede, who went out of his way to ensure that I was able to access recent literature on Bayelsa State and Rivers State by posting vital materials to me during the COVID pandemic. His generous gift contributed greatly to my background analysis.

I would also like to thank my aunty Becky, who opened her home to me during my time in Rivers State. Not only did she worry about my safety with calls and texts during my interviews, but she always had encouraging words for me when I got home – as well as the best remedy to a long day of interviews: an Indian series on Zee World.

Furthermore, I would like to mention my ‘interesting’ experience in the Leeds POLIS PhD Suite, albeit that it was cut short by the COVID pandemic. This experience was shaped by the long and excessive lunch breaks enjoyed by Nicole, Ruth, Nabaa and I, discussing everything but our PhDs. It also served
as a haven for rants, sports and occasionally chaotic discussions that seemed to calm me down and remind me that I was stronger than my challenges.

Many friends served as a pillar of strength and encouragement and sometimes provided great feedback. Hamza Idris gave much needed advice on how to power through, and suggested great daily memes to distract me. Anna Munetsi’s stimulating conversations on political matters kept me on my toes and her prayers kept me grounded. Linda Nwora called and gave advice, as did Naomi Gibson, who saw the value in a good walk and made sure I wasn’t ‘PhD’d out’. Nabaa, who served as a good friend, wore many hats: cook, editor, friend, meme supplier, always ready to listen to my confused theories and to lend a supportive ear. I am also grateful to my church in Leeds, Gateway Church, for the constant encouragement, prayers and support that they provided me with during my PhD.

And finally, my marvellous and amazing family. To my wonderful, handsome, loving, caring and sweet dad (the only way I could ever describe you), who not only provided financially but who engaged with my work from beginning to end. He constantly gave me ideas and wanted me to ask the ‘expert’ on all things, and would go out of his way to make sure he helped, or point me to someone else who could help. To my beautiful mother, who not only listened patiently but encouraged me and prayed for me every day and was there to wipe away the frustrated and confused tears. To my loving grandmother, who called me every day and couldn’t wait for me to become a doctor, so I could prescribe her medication (– sorry to disappoint you grandma). To my two amazing brothers, Nanbol and Timnan, who remained true friends, who laughed at me, encouraged me and always had funny stories to cheer me on, and gave advice that ALWAYS steered me wrong.

Two very dear family members passed away during this PhD study: my uncle, Air Vice Marshal Paul Dimfuna, who always had a kind word and encouraged me during my fieldwork; and my aunt, Princess Zainab Sheni, who was an impeccable force to be reckoned with. I also want to mention Mrs Baah, my incredible Year 6 English teacher, who shaped my mind and made me believe I could do anything in the world.
Abstract

Although there seems to be a consensus on the importance of the informal economy in the context of conflict, the role of the informal economy remains ambiguous with regard to the political economy of peacebuilding. There are, therefore, important questions to be asked concerning the informal economy, in terms of its role in establishing or undermining sustainable peace, which is the focus of this thesis. This thesis draws on an extensive range of literature on the informal economy and peacebuilding and presents original empirical data. Six months of fieldwork research – which involved in-depth interviews and document analysis – was carried out in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. The analysis focuses on the peacebuilding activities of three main stakeholders, namely: the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) and the Nigerian government. The thesis argues that peacebuilding initiatives are not only failing to build peace, but are also potentially perpetuating the cycle of neopatrimonialism that is closely linked to the ongoing illicit informal economy. It highlights three contrasting perspectives on the peacebuilding agenda. Firstly, donor-based initiatives are donor centric, leading to a reliance on foreign aid and donor regulations that are not regulated by the state. It also observed that state-led peacebuilding has reproduced the socio-economic hierarchical systems that existed during the conflict, creating an environment conductive to ‘patronage peacebuilding’. Secondly, state-led peacebuilding initiatives have resulted in the marginalisation of various local stakeholders, providing incentives for joining parallel and sometimes illicit power structures and activities within the informal economy, and leading to “positioning” for aid in the informal economy and the “performance of militancy”. Thus, the relationship between donor-based and state-led peacebuilding and the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State rather functions as a vehicle that keeps the wheel of neopatrimonial bargaining and power-sharing spinning. These findings raise important conceptual challenges not just for the political economy of peacebuilding but also for the evolution of the informal economy.
# Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS...........................................................................................................2

ABSTRACT.................................................................................................................................4

TABLE OF CONTENTS ...............................................................................................................5

LIST OF TABLES .....................................................................................................................8

LIST OF FIGURES ...................................................................................................................9

LIST OF MAPS .......................................................................................................................10

CASES ......................................................................................................................................11

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................13

  RESEARCH QUESTIONS .............................................................................................................16

  CONTRIBUTIONS ......................................................................................................................17

  SIGNIFICANCE ........................................................................................................................19

  BACKGROUND TO RIVERS STATE AND BAYELSA STATE ..................................................19

  METHODOLOGY ....................................................................................................................21

  CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ................................................................................................22

  POSITIONALITY OF RESEARCHER .........................................................................................23

  CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD ...............................................................................................25

  CASE SELECTION ..................................................................................................................25

  DATA COLLECTION ...............................................................................................................26

  INTERVIEWS ..........................................................................................................................27

  SAMPLING .............................................................................................................................29

  POSITIONALITY OF THE RESPONDENTS .............................................................................31

  DONOR-BASED ORGANISATIONS ..........................................................................................31

  STATE-LED ORGANISATIONS ...............................................................................................31

  DATA ANALYSIS ..................................................................................................................32

  INITIAL TEMPLATE (BEFORE FIELDWORK) .........................................................................33

  FINALISED TEMPLATE (AFTER FIELDWORK) .....................................................................35

  ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .................................................................................................35

  CHAPTER STRUCTURE ..........................................................................................................37

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW: ASSESSING AND CONTEXTUALISING THE INFORMAL ECONOMY, PEACEBUILDING AND NEOPATRIMONIALISM .....................................................................................................................40
### INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the topic and its significance. This section sets the stage for the subsequent discussion, providing an overview of the key concepts and the importance of the informal economy in the context of conflict and peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 3 – CONFLICT, PEACEBUILDING AND THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN BAYELSA STATE AND RIVERS STATE

This chapter delves into the complex interplay between conflict, peacebuilding, and the informal economy in the context of Bayelsa and Rivers States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CONFLICT IN BAYELSA AND RIVERS STATES</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE-BASED RESPONSES TO THE NIGER DELTA OIL CONFLICT</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ‘CARROT’ APPROACH</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE COERCIVE ‘STICK’ APPROACH</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN BAYELSA STATE AND RIVERS STATE</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES (NSRP AND PIND)</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGERIA STABILITY AND RECONCILIATION PROGRAMME (NSRP)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA (PIND)</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Integrated Peace and Development Unit (IPDU)</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Partners for Peace (P4P)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 4 – PEACEBUILDING: THROUGH THE LENS OF CLIENTELISM AND POWER IN BAYELSA STATE AND RIVERS STATE

Focusing on peacebuilding strategies and their effectiveness in the lens of clientelism and power dynamics in the informal economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTANDING AND FOCUS OF PEACEBUILDING IN BAYELSA STATE AND RIVERS STATE</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONOR-BASED PEACEBUILDING CONDUCTED BY THE NSRP AND PIND</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THEORY OF PEACEBUILDING VS THE REALITY OF STATE-LED PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES IN BAYELSA AND RIVERS STATES........ 161
PATRONAGE PEACEBUILDING .................................................................................................................. 163
THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER .................................................................................................................. 167
PATRONAGE PEACEBUILDING AND THE ‘DESTRUCTION’ OF TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES ..................... 177
THE OVERLAP BETWEEN PATRONAGE PEACEBUILDING AND THE NSRP AND PIND .................................... 189
   Tolerance of Patronage Peacebuilding ................................................................................................. 194
   Reliance on Donor-Based Organisations on the Part of the Population .............................................. 196
   The Blame Game .................................................................................................................................. 199
CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................................................... 202

CHAPTER 5 – SHAPING THE INFORMAL ECONOMY? THE NEXUS BETWEEN PATRONAGE PEACEBUILDING AND THE INFORMAL ECONOMY ........................................................... 205
INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................................... 205
THE NSRP, PIND AND THE INFORMAL ECONOMY .............................................................................. 206
PATRONAGE PEACEBUILDING AND THE INFORMAL ECONOMY – THE CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE OF PEACE .......................................................................................................................... 209
CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................................................... 222

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION ....................................................................................................................... 223
METHODOLOGY ....................................................................................................................................... 223
RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS ....................................................................................................................... 224
RESEARCH FINDINGS ............................................................................................................................ 226
CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEMIC RESEARCH .................................................................................... 232
FUTURE RESEARCH .............................................................................................................................. 236

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................................................................... 238

APPENDIX A (INTERVIEWS) .................................................................................................................... 264

APPENDIX B SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .................................................................................. 268
List of Tables

Table 1 Number and Types of Respondents Interviewed .............................................................. 30
Table 2 Identity Markers of Respondents ...................................................................................... 36
Table 3 Old and New Views of the Informal Economy ................................................................. 55
Table 4 Main Stakeholders in Bayelsa State and Rivers State ...................................................... 107
Table 5 Factors Influencing Instability in the Niger Delta............................................................ 111
Table 6 Overview of Resistance Groups Discussed in Empirical Chapters ............................... 116
Table 7 Periodisation of State Policy Responses in the Niger Delta (1960–2009) ....................... 122
Table 8 Key Activities Delivered Through NSRP’s Platforms and Initiatives ............................ 132
Table 9 NSRP Work Areas and Target Groups ........................................................................... 134
List of Figures

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework ........................................................................................................... 22
Figure 2 Formal and Informal Economy (adapted from Pedersen, 2003) ............................................. 45
Figure 3 Taxonomy of Types of Illegal Informal Activities ................................................................. 46
Figure 5 Perceptions of Causes of Conflict in the Niger Delta ............................................................ 110
Figure 6 Unemployment Rates in Nigeria by Geopolitical Zones (2018) .............................................. 128
Figure 7 Unemployment and Underemployment in Southern States of Nigeria .................................. 128
Figure 8 Unemployment Rate in Nigeria in 2020 ................................................................................. 129
Figure 9 Partners for Peace Framework ............................................................................................... 141
Figure 10 Focus of Peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State ............................................... 151
Figure 11 Percentage of People within Institutions who Believe the Focus of Peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State has Changed ................................................................................ 151
Figure 12 Percentage of People within Institutions who Believe the Focus of Peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State has not Changed ................................................................. 152
Figure 13 Amnesty Trap ...................................................................................................................... 170
Figure 14 Power Pyramid in Bayelsa and Rivers States ....................................................................... 184
Figure 15 Level of Corruption in Nigeria by Institutions in 2019 ...................................................... 186
Figure 16 Patronage Peacebuilding Cycle in the Informal Economy ................................................... 220
List of Maps

Map 1 Map of the Niger Delta showing Bayelsa and Rivers States ............................................. 101
Cases

(FCDO): Foreign and Commonwealth Office became the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ........................................................................................................... 73

(IA): international Aid ........................................................................................................... 130

(ILO): International Labour Organisation ........................................................................ 39, 40, 219

(NDPVF): Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force .................................................................. 99

(NRSP): Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation programme .................................................. 4

(OECD): Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ......................... passim

(PIND): Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta passim

CLP: Community Life Project .................................................................................................. 140

CSN: Community Stakeholders Network ............................................................................... 140

DFID: Department for International Development ....................................................... 73, 130, 132, 133

EFCC: Economic and Financial Crimes Commission ....................................................... 181

ESSPIN: Education Sector Support Program in Nigeria ...................................................... 130

GEP: Girls’ Education Program .......................................................................................... 130

HDI: Human Development Index ......................................................................................... 73

HRW: Human Rights Watch .............................................................................................. 90, 91, 108, 122

IOCs: International Oil Companies .................................................................................... 138

MEND: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta ................................................ 99

MNDA: Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs .............................................................................. 118, 120

NDDB: Niger Delta Development Board ........................................................................ 116, 120

NDPI: the Niger Delta Development Initiative .................................................................. 135

NDRBDA: Delta River Basin Development Authority ..................................................... 116, 120

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations ......................................................................... passim

OMP DE: Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission ............................. 116, 120

PTFNDD: Presidential Task Force on Niger Delta Development ........................................ 116, 120

SDD: Social Development Direct .......................................................................................... 130

SMS: Short Message Service ............................................................................................... 138, 140

SPDC: Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria ........................................... 117

UNDP: United Nations Development Program ................................................................. 73

VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls .................................................................... 156, 238
WIEGO: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing..............................passim
Chapter 1: Introduction

The term ‘informal economy’ does not have a precise definition in existing scholarship and some aspects of its nature and significance are debated (ILO, 2013; Chen, 2015; Meagher, 2016). Nevertheless, several themes are closely associated with the concept, and there is sufficient agreement of its meaning within academic and policy debates (Dreher and Schneider, 2009; Karunakaran and Balasubrama, 2012; Chen et al., 2018) for it to be used as a key concept in this research. The informal economy refers to activities undertaken outside state control, and beyond the reach of tax authorities, at various levels and by different actors, aimed at generating profit, meeting personal or household welfare needs, circumventing state control and taxation, or facilitating advantages in business and politics (ILO, 2013). It includes a wide range of practices from small-scale, local practices – such as casual labour – to organised criminal activities which generate very significant revenues (ILO, 2013). In neopatrimonial regimes, the informal economy facilitates corruption, and clientelist relationships – especially at the interface between politics and business – can in many contexts be a source of violence, as exemplified in the cases of Afghanistan and Kosovo among many others. Some argue that this is a form of ‘neopatrimonialism’ and this thesis will engage with this concept within this framework.

The informal economy is present in every society; however, it differs greatly in size and scope. There are several factors that shape its nature, such as recession, drought, famine, history, culture, governance, institutions and development, as well as many other factors, including those most closely related to this thesis – conflict and peacebuilding (Meagher, 2016; Young, 2020). Extensive previous research has shown that low-level conflict in developing countries that have weak state institutions is no longer about one side winning; rather, it has taken a more self-financing dimension (Wells, 1989; Goodhand, 1999; International Peace Academy, 2002; Goodhand, 2003; Wennmann, 2005; Spear, 2006; Newman and Keller, 2007; Goodhand, 2008; Le Billon, 2008; Newman, 2010; Distler, Stavrevska and Vogel, 2018). Thus, in these types of conflicts, the parties involved are often more concerned with economic gain than with achieving victory (Keen, 2012). Therefore, the self-financing nature of conflict – alongside socio-economic factors, economic inequalities and the presence of natural resources – provides further space for illicit activities to occur within the informal economy (Keen, 2012; Danielsson, 2015). With activities in the informal economy ranging from trade and the hawking of goods to more acute expressions such as organised crime, the ‘informal economy’ can provide a space for illicit and illegal economic activities that are not captured by the state. Such activities may be associated with situations of armed conflict and be a part of the ‘legacy’ of conflict, within post-conflict environments, but they are also a phenomenon that is inherent, in varying degrees, in most countries,
and especially in those with weak institutional capacity in the Global South. This thesis focuses on the more acute expressions of the informal economy, namely the illicit informal economy – including organised crime, large-scale corruption, and activities at the interface between criminality and insurgency – as something that has a close relationship with instability and conflict, including fragile ‘post-conflict’ settings. The intensity of these types of activities in the informal economy depends on interactions with the factors stated above, within a post-conflict society, and can be influenced by interventions such as peacebuilding initiatives.

Whether as a response to survival or welfare needs, or as a demonstration of illicit aggrandisement, the illicit informal economy can be a key dynamic – or even a driver – of conflict, which continues to operate and have consequences once open conflict has ended. With the problem not only of prolonging and intensifying conflict, but, further, of posing a barrier to the consolidation of peace, especially in post-conflict societies, the illicit informal economy is often viewed as a significant problem in many societies. This is because it not only disrupts the other dimensions of the informal economy – those that provide welfare and security to the population, thus serving as a way of life – but also because the illicit economy becomes an incubator of conflict that thrives during the peace process and may hinder peacebuilding. Furthermore, as ordinary people are forced to work within the illicit informal economy as a coping mechanism, formal state institutions are ultimately weakened, thus crippling the state’s revenue. Likewise, the illicit informal economy opens the door for actors to operate outside the law, which further hampers the establishment of public institutions that produce development and establish positive peace. Thus, there is the need to fully understand the scope, nature and dynamics of the illicit informal economy not only empirically, but also the ways in which the illicit informal economy is shaped by various factors in society.

Beyond the challenge of the illicit informal economy the relationship between the formal and informal economy is far more dynamic than is generally understood (Meagher, 2010; Valodia and Devey, 2011; Guha-Khasnobis, Ostrom and Kanbur, 2012). The formal economy continues to be used by ruling elites as part of the structuring and legitimization of power in the region being analysed in this thesis. At the surface informal patronage networks, corruption and personal leadership seem to supersede and pervade formal institutions; however, the relationship between the two is one of dependence. Thus, interactivity between the formal and informal economy complicates the assumed simplified dichotomy, as the distinction between the two is not always clear (Meagher, 2010; Valodia and Devey, 2011; Guha-Khasnobis, Ostrom and Kanbur, 2012). Clan politics, informal networks and personalist leadership become barriers to the consolidation of formal institutions that provide the basis of democracy and
peacebuilding (Meagher, 2010). It is, therefore, analytically challenging to recognise where the informal begins and the formal ends. The extent to which the formal and informal economies pervade one another has therefore obscured our understanding of the importance of the informal economy and the ways in which it supports neopatrimonial authority beyond conflict. Therefore, much can be achieved by utilising insights and scholar approaches that examine the nexus between the informal economy and neopatrimonial authority within a development trajectory.

In understanding this trajectory, research suggests that rather than breaking the clientele networks that exist during conflict, peacebuilding initiatives in post-conflict economies have sometimes reinforced these relationships, especially those between political competitors and their economic supporters (Goodhand, 2003; Spear, 2006; Newman and Keller, 2007; Raeymaekers, 2013; Iwilade, 2017; Distler, Stavrevska and Vogel, 2018). Hence, the political economy of post-conflict society offers lucrative dividends to various globalised elite networks operating in different ways, such as participating in government decisions, security sector reforms, ‘Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration’ (DDR) programmes and election rigging, securing political favours and so on. Thus, paradoxically, peacebuilding initiatives seem to lead to the accumulation (in post-conflict society) of networks that thrived within the conflict (Chandler, 2013). These networks touch upon links to administrative corruption such as aid bunkering and organised crime, which can fuel the self-financing dynamics of conflict and undermine state reconstruction and development. This implies a paradoxical nexus between peacebuilding initiatives and the illicit informal economy, a nexus which is rooted in a tight association of political protection, clientele networks and economic capital between the various networks and agents within the state (Chandler, 2013; Iwilade, 2017). Although it is assumed that peacebuilding initiatives are based on liberal-democratic conceptions, at the interface between the informal economy and peacebuilding the informal economy becomes anti-democratic. Paul Jackson, although referring to security reforms and aid, has raised important questions in this regard, recognising the need to examine what and who development is really serving (Jackson, 2012). Thus, working within this logic, this thesis aims to examine who peacebuilding really serves in Bayelsa and Rivers states – whether, as Jackson asks, it is intended to maintain the status quo of the existing governance, or, rather, it is aimed at the people (Jackson, 2012). It becomes important, therefore, to explore how peacebuilding initiatives shape the informal economy and what this means for the overall peacebuilding agenda. Thus, this thesis suggests that the illicit informal economy should take a central, rather than a peripheral, role within the peacebuilding agenda and in the analysis of this topic.
Drawing upon the perspectives of political economy and peacebuilding studies, this thesis examines two crucial points. Firstly, it explores the type of peacebuilding being promoted in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, focusing on the two main stakeholders – the state-led, and donor-based organisations. Secondly, it analyses how the peacebuilding agenda shapes the illicit informal economy through these stakeholders. Hence, this thesis aims to consider how and to what extent state-led and donor-based peacebuilding activities potentially perpetuate the neopatrimonial cycle that existed during the conflict, and to explore the effect of this on the peacebuilding agenda. It also aims to deepen our understanding of the way donor-based and state-led peacebuilding initiatives shape the informal economy, focusing on the illicit informal economy. Consequently, this thesis will contribute to debates on the political economy of peacebuilding, recognising that there is an incomplete understanding of the socio-economic aspects of peacebuilding and how they relate to the informal economy. The current gap creates a vacuum in our understanding not only of peace, and especially sustainable peacebuilding, but also of the formation of constructive post-conflict economies. To this end, this thesis engages with debates about the informal economy, the illicit informal economy, how they are formed and the practices which shape them. It also engages with the way different networks shape, adapt and alter such economies, as well as with the relationship between the informal economy, the illicit informal economy and the realities and experiences of peacebuilding. Consequently, the thesis finds that focusing on peacebuilding initiatives, informal institutional structures and discourses of power aids our comprehension of peacebuilding and development in Bayelsa state and Rivers state and contributes to a broader understanding.

Research Questions

This thesis examines various interconnected themes (and, by extension, underlying conceptualisations) to fully understand the peacebuilding dynamics in Bayelsa and Rivers states. It follows a case-study design, with in-depth analysis of both the informal economy and donor-based and state-led peacebuilding in these states. High levels of unemployment, environmental degradation and political marginalisation coupled with years of intensive conflict and militarisation have resulted in a thriving informal economy of illicit activities within Bayelsa and Rivers states, such as illegal oil exploitation, election rigging and thuggery. Examples of thuggery can range from the use of thugs by various politicians to intimidate members of opposing parties, to evading the National Senate (Vanguard, 2018). The various peacebuilding initiatives implemented by the government have been seen, rather as in the words of Idemudia (2012 p. 190), to have “become a tool of patronage to the determent of oil communities”. The peacebuilding initiatives implemented over the last ten years have incorporated many new elites into the neopatrimonialism system, expanded the destructive political culture of elites
and their supporters, and led to a contentious, tenuous economic base and flawed political systems (Iwilade, 2017). This raises concerns as to how such factors shape the informal economy and the illicit informal economy. How do peacebuilding initiatives influence the dynamics of the informal economy and what does this mean for the broader peacebuilding agenda? To explore this question, this thesis uses a template thematic analysis, a tool which analyses the data into a coding structure called a template, as a theoretical framework. This allows for the data to be analysed in various hierarchies, thus painting an interactive picture of how different elements shape the overall narrative. The fieldwork for this approach encompasses in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. The fieldwork and analysis will be undertaken in accordance with the following research questions:

1. How and to what extent are state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives shaped by neopatrimonialism?
   a. How has the influence of neopatrimonialism on state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives challenged the construction of peace in post-conflict Bayelsa and Rivers?

2. How have state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives shaped the informal economy?
   a. Does this influence the illicit informal economy? If so, in what way(s)?
   b. How does this challenge the construction of peace and the peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict Bayelsa State and Rivers State?

Contributions

This thesis contributes to political economy and peacebuilding scholarship by exploring how peacebuilding initiatives interact with the informal economy and what this means for the overall peacebuilding agenda (Jones et al., 2006; Meagher, 2010, 2014, 2016, 2017; Danielson, 2016). It will build on three notable contributions to political economy literature. Firstly, it contributes to scholarship about the neopatrimonial relationships which underpin states and legitimise regimes, examining the forms of authority and political relations that previous studies on Bayelsa State and Rivers State have focused on. This scholarship emerged as the central conceptual context in which scholars understood politics and conflict within the Niger Delta region. Earlier study of post-conflict Bayelsa State and Rivers State has been underpinned by the social-scientific dichotomy of greed and grievances. Specifically, this dichotomy has been operationalised mostly through the concept of neopatrimonialism, thus, studies on the region have come to be ubiquitously about neopatrimonialism – a concept used to describe the complex interplay between the regime and various elites, specifically with regard to conflict. Recent studies have begun to expand on neopatrimonialism as a theme within studies of governance and
development issues beyond conflict, thus this thesis aims to expand on this area. It shifts the analytical focus from neopatrimonial authority in the context of conflict to neopatrimonial authority in the context of peace, and explores how peacebuilding is shaped by neopatrimonial authority. It expands on neopatrimonial authority by focusing on discourses of power, taking into consideration the reception and audiences of power, and thus this thesis unpacks the symbolic and discursive mechanisms which aid the legitimation of neopatrimonial authority within the peacebuilding agenda.

Secondly, the peacebuilding strategies implemented over the last ten years in the Rivers and Bayelsa states have incorporated many new elites – such as the heads of numerous militant organisations – into the neopatrimonial system; the strategies have fallen short by failing to address not only the conflict in the region but also the dynamics of the illicit informal economy, which can reproduce conflict. Placing patron–client relations at the centre of its analysis the thesis explores the existence of a fluid relation to the informal economy to further understand how the informal economy is shaped in post-conflict societies. Rather than utilising the usual conceptualisation of these relationships – that the clients are being exploited by the patrons – as previous studies on Nigeria have done (BISINA, 2001; Eberlein, 2006; Omeje, 2006; Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2008; Bagia, 2009; Mähler, 2010; Obi, 2010; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012; Iwilade, 2014; Ebiede, 2016), or focusing on the boundaries between the informal, formal and illicit informal economy, this thesis explores how these patronage networks have led to the criminalisation of peace, further leading to ‘positioning’ in the informal economy and the ‘performance of militancy’ in the illicit informal economy, consequently leading to the marginalisation of the general population.

Thirdly, the focus on the neopatrimonial nature of peacebuilding contributes to the thematic analysis of the political economy of peacebuilding and how the political economy of conflict can be detrimental to the overall peacebuilding agenda. This focus brings into question the transformation from conflict economies to peace economies as well as the reality vs theory of liberal peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. It does so by exploring various dimensions of donor-based and state-led narratives of the peacebuilding agenda and how this brings about the establishment of peace, which allows for a better understanding of the formation of the informal and formal economy. This focus builds on previous studies that conceptualised the transformation of war/conflict economies (Carbonnier, 2003; Festic and Rausche, 2004; Nitzschke and Studdard, 2005; Brown, 2006; Pugh, 2006; Spear, 2006; Turner and Pugh, 2006; Newman and Keller, 2007; Broodryk and Solomon, 2011; Distler et al., 2018; Bhatia, 2021; Wennmann, 2021).
Significance

This thesis is significant in three major ways. Firstly, it brings the integrated strategies of post-conflict peacebuilding by both state-led and donor-based initiatives into focus, and places attention on neopatrimonial relations and power structures. Secondly, it provides a reminder of the multifaceted, heterogeneous and simultaneously stubborn and deeply rooted nature of the illicit informal economy specifically in post-conflict societies. This illicit informal economy shapes the rules and institutions of the formal economy, further incentivising corruption, reconstructing neopatrimonial power dynamics and marginalising agency, which also undermines the informal economy and peacebuilding initiatives as well. Thus, understanding the nexus between the informal economy, the illicit informal economy and peacebuilding will ensure that peacebuilding responses take into consideration the reality of power dynamics especially at economic and social levels. Thirdly, this study highlights the importance of understanding and having a clear perspective on the reality and theory of liberal peacebuilding especially in Africa. This, therefore, calls into question the narrative of liberal peacebuilding.

Background to Rivers State and Bayelsa State

Bayelsa and Rivers are two of the nine states that make up the Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria. The Niger Delta is an oil-rich and environmentally fragile region that is home to approximately 30 million people hailing from 20 different ethnic groups (Ekeh, 2007). Within the area of the longest rivers emptying into the Atlantic Ocean between Benin and Biafra, occupations within the region are mainly those of farmers and fishermen; however, the oil industry over the last decade has not only threatened the livelihoods and survival of the inhabitants but has, further, led to the expansion of the informal economy.

Since becoming the heart of the Nigerian economy in the 1970s, oil has contributed about 80 per cent of all federal revenue (Ekeh, 2007). Despite the existence of oil, both Rivers State and Bayelsa State remain among some of the poorest and most underdeveloped states within Nigeria. This is due to mismanagement of the oil refineries, the stunted growth of core institutions and poor governance. Rising participation in the informal structures of power and the informal economy has placed these states at the centre of many studies and analysis. Oil has ultimately led to political competition, which has been centred around obtaining power to control the massive revenue (Wapmuk, 2012; Oyewo, 2016; Iwilade, 2017). With little or no trickle-down effect from the billions of dollars generated from oil exploration, and the influence of a number of other factors, including aid bunkering, the emergence or
growth of theft, corruption by political elites, environmental degradation, political exclusion, ethnic divides, youth mobilisation and unemployment, the conflict in the Niger Delta remains complex. Hence the dynamics of conflict in this region have been complex and cannot be painted on the canvas of a single cause (Wapmuk, 2012; Oyewo, 2016; Iwilade, 2017).

Furthermore, extensive research has shown that political, social, environmental and economic marginalisation has created a situation in which violent movements thrive, and, consequently, lead to militarisation (Wapmuk, 2012; Oyewo, 2016; Iwilade, 2017). From the Ogoni crisis of 1995 to the large-scale conflict in 2003–2006 and then in 2009, various responses by the Nigerian government failed to pave the way for the only initiative that could work – an amnesty programme. In 2009 the late president Umaru Yar’adua announced a 60-day amnesty programme within the whole Niger Delta. The amnesty programme formally addressed the conflict by de-militarising the militant groups; it failed, however, to resolve many underlying sources of conflict that are once again taking centre stage, such as the sharing of oil resources, political and ethnic marginalisation, poverty, environmental degradation and so on. Generally, post-conflict Bayelsa State and Rivers State are marked by intermeshing crimes committed during and since the conflict that overlap with the peacebuilding process, informal economy and the illicit informal economy (Ugor, 2013). The post-conflict Bayelsa and Rivers region is a case that exemplifies the importance of power dynamics, the resilience of the illicit informal economy and the ways in which both it and the informal economy intertwine, feeding into each other.

Beyond the militarisation of these states over the last decade history has interwoven a complex story of social mobilisation, violence and marginalisation that has been inextricably sewn into the very fabric of these states. At its very heart is the thriving informal economy that has been dominated by the oil economy, youth violence and the existence of economic elites, aid bunkering and criminality, and which has over the years been incentivised by marginalisation, injustice, disempowerment and environmental degradation (Obi, 2014; Oyewo, 2016; Obi and Oriola, 2018). The informal economy is further shaped by overlapping territorial claims made by various ethnic groups. This phenomenon is especially fuelled by oil multinationals and state officials, who generate disputes and foment ethnic divides based on historical memory, land disputes, and even disputes over oil wells (Oyewo, 2016; Obi and Oriola, 2018).

Thus, Bayelsa and Rivers states serve as an interesting case study, adding to the literature on the informal economy and post-conflict building initiatives. Previous literature on the Niger Delta has created a critical space in which the politics of the rentier states, in particular, have been studied (Omeje, 2006; Sandbakken, 2006; Orogun, 2009; Asumah, 2010; Fragiskatos, 2010; Idemudia, 2010;
Losman, 2010; Nzeadibe et al., 2015; Osunmuyiwa et al., 2017). This theme has, however, limited our understanding by failing to integrate a broader debate about neopatrimonialism and the political economy in Nigeria; it ignores the links that connect the region with the rest of the country, overlooks the role of elites, and limits understanding of the overall impact for peacebuilding. Furthermore, the literature has focused on the notion of actors operating from a fixed point that is framed in the context of conflict and ignores the role of ‘peace’ within the post-conflict society. What kind of peace is established? How has the establishment of peace been shaped by the interconnection of the formal and informal structures of power? What does this then mean for peace? These are the questions that examining the case study of Rivers State and Bayelsa State allows us to explore, thereby contributing to the scholarship of peacebuilding and political economy.

Methodology

This thesis uses qualitative methods to provide a more locally grounded perspective. All the components and foundational elements within the qualitative research design contribute to contextualising and understanding the research questions within this study. A qualitative approach will help to foster a better understanding of peacebuilding within Bayelsa and Rivers, the ways in which it is shaped by neopatrimonialism, and, overall, how it influences or is influenced by the informal economy. The use of rich and critical descriptive interviews provided in-depth accounts of participants’ experiences which feeds into this research. The sheer complexity of the informal economy entails that there can be no single approach to understanding the phenomenon’s articulations. Thus, the qualitative research methods proposed for use in this study include case study and semi-structured interviews through snowball sampling to ensure systemic and concurrent data collection and data analysis.

This research is aligned to ‘critical’ approaches, used by Frankfurt School theoreticians such as Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm and Max Horkheimer (Jay, 1973; Hughes, 1975; Agger, 1979; Habermas, 1970, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1981a, b, 1984, 1987a, b; Connerton, 1980; Kellner, 1989b). Critical theory moves beyond the obvious to uncover the effects of political structures and power relations. It questions the conceptual and theoretical bases of knowledge, and acknowledges the role of social positions of power in various phenomena (Griffiths, 2009). Current discourses in society are laid bare and analysed in terms of the systems in which they operate, focusing on disclosing the power relationships within these systems (iNtgrty, 2021), as well as how they are structured, in order to reveal the oppressive nature of the structures. Critical theory assumes that reality is attainable and shaped by political, cultural, economic, social and gender-based forces (Griffiths, 2009). Thus, this philosophy fits the dynamic of this thesis as it questions the power relations that sustain dominant realities (Calás
and Smircich, 1997). Critical theory perspectives strive to bring to light what has been excluded by power relations through the deconstruction of what counts as reality, as one would dismantle the bricks and mortar that make up an old building (Calás and Smircich, 1997). Thus, critical theory challenges existing ways of thinking and knowledge, and is relevant to the challenges this research raises to current modes of thinking about peacebuilding initiatives, the informal economy and the formation of peace economies. Figure 1, below, illustrates the conceptual framework for this thesis.

**Conceptual Framework**

![Conceptual Framework Diagram](image-url)
Positionality of Researcher

As in all research, it is helpful to understand one’s positionality and, therefore, our lens on the data; as such this section captures my positionality as a researcher while undertaking the research as part of my PhD candidature. Predominantly, this section depicts the milieu that influenced the choices and decisions made and how I mitigated any issues that arose. It starts by, firstly, locating myself in relation to the subject, in other words, acknowledging personal positions that have the potential to influence the research, and proceeds, secondly, by locating myself in relation to the participants, in other words, as a researcher individually considering how I view myself, as well as how others view me.

In terms of personal positions that had the potential to influence this research various familial connections – those to the former Permanent Secretary of Defence and a former Naval Air Vice Marshall – opened some doors. Due to these familial connections, I was able to gain quick access to staff in the Ministry of Defence and the College of War. However, while the existence of these familial connections brought benefits, they also carried disadvantages. While engaging in an interview with a member of a state-led initiative my positionality was questioned. During the conversation, the participant asked where my father’s political loyalties lay. These statements made by participant highlight issues to be addressed in considering my positionality. This situation was mitigated by listening to the participants, ensuring that they felt heard, but also highlighting the fact that this was a question not for me but for my father, and steering the participant back to the interview question. As a result, issues of positionality remained active throughout the data collection process.

It is key to note that for this research I was both insider and outsider. As a Nigerian concerned with issues of peace, I became an insider with both state and donor-based organisations, as my research interest is their lived experience. On the other hand, indigenes from the Niger Delta with whom I interacted and shared strong ethnic ties were unable to relate to me. As I sought to engage participants in frank conversations about their understanding and perception of state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa State and Rivers State I expected that my position as a Nigerian woman would aid me in connecting especially well with researchers in peacebuilding organisations. At first, the similarity in national identity created a sense of belonging, building a spontaneous relationship with the participants I was interviewing. To further foster this, in conversations with members of both state-led and donor-based organisations from the Niger Delta, as I introduced myself, I drew on my insider status more so than when I interacted with people who were not from the Niger Delta region. It might have been that I was seeking to compensate for my outsider status of being a woman ‘from the North’ collecting data from people from the Niger Delta region, many of whom were men.
In reflecting on the research experience, I noticed that my position as an insider – a Nigerian – was not always enough to convince participants to engage in the research. Participants, especially those from the Niger Delta region, perceived me as an outsider. They assumed that as an outsider I did not have a detailed awareness of Deltans’ struggles. I was able to mitigate this by showing that I have a vested interest in the Niger Delta region, as I was posted to Rivers State in 2014 for my National Youth Service. In addition to this my background in peace and conflict, as well as having experienced first-hand the various conflicts in Jos, allowed me to identify and sympathise with the effects and impacts of the conflict within the region in a way that was beyond a that of a layman.

Furthermore, it crucial to note that while interacting with middle- to low-level security forces, I made special efforts to connect with them. As studies by Cabrera and Nora (1994), Chang (2002), Fries-Britt and Turner (2002) suggest, people tend to gravitate towards those with whom they share some level of commonality. My efforts to create some level of commonality included speaking ‘pidgin English’, and conducting interviews at participants’ duty posts, which were mostly outside, rather than in offices. Also, rather than disclosing familial relationship to higher rank officers, I mostly used mid-level officers to gain access to foot soldiers in Bayelsa State as intermediaries. I found that mid- and low-level security forces were much more open to discussing issues with me.

As with any research project, as I moved through the research process, I continually thought about issues pertaining to positionality, and I realised that my positionality is not a limitation. My positionality meets the positionality of participants, and they do not rest in juxtaposition to each other. The research in which I engage is shaped by who I am, and if I remain reflective throughout the process, I will be shaped by it, and by those with whom I interact. I wish to highlight two points to consider when carrying out research of this nature: firstly, the need to address positionality with all participants of qualitative studies, beyond physical attributes. As I noted previously, I engaged differently with people from the Niger Delta than I did with people who were not from the Niger Delta, even though they all shared similar physical attributes with me; secondly, when collecting data in the field it is important to be clear not only with the participants but also with myself concerning the motivations for the study and the collecting of data. Are there motives (either true or assumed) that relate to my positionality? Addressing questions of motivation with participants has the potential to foster greater openness between participants and myself.
Challenges in the Field

I faced several challenges during my fieldwork. Firstly, due to the security challenges in Bayelsa State and Rivers State I was concerned about my general safety in the field. This was especially true in Bayelsa due to the political atmosphere, as the gubernatorial elections were just about to take place during my research. In addition, there was the ever-present risk associated with being in proximity of the constant crimes, robberies, kidnappings, human trafficking and piracy that are endemic to the region. As a result of this environment I was only able to visit Bayelsa once, while in Port Harcourt my movement was restricted to the major offices in the city centre and I was unable to visit any villages. Secondly, another interesting and unexpected challenge was the lack of trust and high level of suspicion from both state-led and donor-based agencies. Some agencies suspected that I was a spy from the Nigerian government and insisted that I sign a declaration with their legal department, which I did after getting permission from both my supervisors.

Case Selection

To examine how and to what extent peacebuilding is shaped by neopatrimonialism I chose two states in southern Nigeria: Bayelsa and Rivers states. I used a case-study design because it is an intensive study and it is important to get as complete a picture as possible in order to fully answer the questions and to realise the purpose of the study; case-study design also offers fine detail, and allows for appreciation of the importance of local context, nuance and dynamics (Tellis, 1997; Meyer, 2001; Corcoran et al., 2004; Held, 2009; Widdowson, 2011; Njie and Asimran, 2014; Snyder, 2015; Yin, 2018). is also a means of examining the roleplay between parties, and in that way, of gaining understanding and describing their actions (Sedgwick, 2014). Rivers State and Bayelsa State were purposively selected based on their economic status, existing peacebuilding initiatives and the Nigerian government’s current interest in the informal economy in that region. In addition, the collection of data in these states was facilitated by the region’s current relative political stability and safety.

Furthermore, the selection of Bayelsa State and Rivers State as a case study for this research provides an opportunity to understand different manifestations of the link between the informal economy and peacebuilding initiatives within the region. The Nigerian government proposes to legalise some of the informal oil refineries with the aim of using the market as a means by which resources will be allocated, in order to provide jobs. Thus, the informal economy is an agenda in which the Nigerian government is already interested; this study functions as one step in the direction of economic recovery and growth by concentrating on the understanding of the informal economy through peacebuilding, an aspect that is not included in the recovery plan of the Nigerian government. In addition to this, in 2011 the UNEP
report on Ogoniland recognised the importance of cleaning up the Delta as well as of sustainable
development within the region (United Nations, 2011). That report led to the creation of the Clean Up
Project, which commenced work in 2019. Additionally, President Buhari’s Strategic Implementation
Plan for Budget Change and its 2017–2020 Economic Recovery and Growth Plan highlight the existence
of the informal economy within the Niger Delta and recognise its continuation due to “leaks of public
resources, corruption and inefficient spending” (The State House, Abuja, 2020; Ministry of Budget and
National Planning, 2017, p. 21; UNEP, 2017). Hence, these parts of the informal economy, in particular
in the Niger Delta region, are a current focus for the Nigerian government.

Likewise, the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), in conjunction with the British
Council, in its 2017 Economic and Natural Resources report recognises the role of the patronage system
in continuing economic grievances: “Nigeria’s system of patrimonial politics where political affiliations,
etnicity and religious identities are primary factors determining the allocation of resources, including
state benefit” (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, 2017, p. 2). The NSRP report further
emphasised the role of the socio-economic and political marginalisation of youth as major conflict
drivers which feed into the informal economy. Thus, the importance of the informal economy cannot
be overemphasised, and the focus on Rivers and Bayelsa not only falls in line with current efforts
towards development and peacebuilding within the region, but also offers a means by which to
understand the informal economy and peacebuilding initiatives in general.

Data Collection

The methodology used for this study involved the integration of primary data and secondary data. Interviews formed the primary data and further data was obtained using secondary sources. Official reports and statements were also gathered. Secondary data was drawn from extensive research of sources on databases such as Web of Science, Research Channel Africa, Sage Premier Online, Africa Portal, EBSCO host Research Platform and World Newspaper Archive, and also from collation of newspapers, Nigerian government publications, peacebuilding reports, conference material and presentations. The use of both primary and secondary data provided a pool of relevant sources that enabled the description and classification of themes within the data and the structure of various hierarchies to summarise the findings.

All the primary data gathered during this research was recorded using a recording device that enabled me to store the date, time and ‘name’ of participants. This also made transferring the interviews onto my computer easier. Furthermore, I made use of an interview protocol for the interviews, which was
useful as it ensured that key themes consistently guided the interviews. It also allowed me to record emerging questions – those raised by participants that were not initially included in the questions I constructed.

**Interviews**

This research makes use of in-depth interviews for the collection of data in Rivers State, Bayelsa State and Abuja. In-depth interviews were essential as they allow for the identification of the participant’s opinions, emotions and feelings, and their perceptions around a particular subject. The inclusion criteria for this study were individuals who had relevant knowledge and/or experience in peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, either through work, association or otherwise, for a minimum of three years. Interviews were semi-structured as this allowed for flexibility in terms of how the interview was conducted, which in turn created room for the generation of conclusions that would have not been foreseen if the research had been restricted, using closed-ended questions (Gubrium, 2012; Silverman, 2017). Furthermore, written consent was received from all participants, and they were all informed of the voluntary nature of involvement with this thesis and were given the option to withdraw from the study before the start of data analysis.

The empirical material underpinning this thesis is based upon six months’ fieldwork in Bayelsa, Rivers and Abuja from June 2019 to November 2019. A total of 29 interviews were conducted cutting across Abuja, Rivers and Bayelsa, with key informants as mentioned below. The interview venues were chosen according to participants’ convenience and willingness. Each interview lasted between 40 and 80 minutes, with the aim of going through eight open-ended questions, with the aid of an interview guide. Due to the nature of this research, a field journal was also kept to document observations as well as any additional remarks that may have occurred during the fieldwork.

Furthermore, with the range of data being used, it was imperative to converge data sources, a process known as data triangulation. Data triangulation is a method of ensuring comprehensive results in the research which not only reflect the participants’ knowledge accurately, but also have foundations within the other sources used (Yin, 2017). Yin and Stake (2009, 2010, 2017) both concurred that data triangulation is a crucial element in case-study research. As such, with the intended scope of understanding how peacebuilding initiatives interact and shape the informal economy as well as how this is shaped by clientelism, this research used data triangulation.
Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this research. Purposive sampling refers to “a selection strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 88). In addition to purposive sampling, a snowball sampling method was used. In this method participants or informants:

- with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit hidden populations, that is, groups not easily accessible to researchers. (Heckathorn, 2002, p. 12)

Thus, the sample group grows like a rolling snowball. As the sample builds up, enough data is gathered for the researcher’s needs. Snowball sampling is a useful tool for building networks and increasing the number of participants. The snowball sampling method was applied to prevent the data from being skewed; as such, participants were not only from the NSRP and PIND but also included some of their partners and government agencies. This helped to further ensure that participants were best situated to meet the purpose of the study (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2017).

As stated above, participants were firstly selected from the peacebuilding initiatives examined, the NSRP and PIND. Secondly, using the snowball sampling technique participants were selected based on their work with both initiatives. Finally, the snowball sampling method ensured that participants with knowledge and experience of peacebuilding initiatives and an understanding of the informal economy in the Bayelsa and Rivers states were included. Thus, participants were selected from the following:

1. Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) (in Abuja – in conjunction with the British Council)
2. Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) (located in Abuja and Port Harcourt)
3. Institute of Peace (Abuja)
4. Ministry of Defence (Abuja)
5. Local police offices (Rivers)
6. College of War (Abuja)
7. University lecturers (experts in peace studies in the Niger Delta)
8. Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondents</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Staff from the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Staff from the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND, located in Abuja and Port Harcourt)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Staff from the Institute of Peace</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Staff from the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nigerian military/security forces</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Staff from the Ministry of Defence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Staff from the College of War</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Academics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1 Number and Types of Respondents Interviewed*

It is crucial to note that the method of purposive sampling allows for valuable outcomes to be reached by making the most of a small population size, thus, leading to better insights. It is also an affordable way to gather data and provides a wealth of qualitative information; however, purposive sampling does have some limitations, as seen in this project: these include that it does not provide a representative result and there are issues of under-representation. The issue of under-representation can be seen in the inability to talk directly to people within the informal economy. This was due to security concerns in both Bayelsa and Rivers states as well as to lack of access to members of clientelist networks. As such, the data in the research represents the perspectives of state-led and donor-based organisations alone.
Positionality of the Respondents

**Donor-based Organisations**

As in all research, it is helpful to understand one’s positionality and, therefore, one’s lens on the data. For this research it was also critical to reflect on the positionality of various participants who were interviewed as well as mine. The participants in the donor-based organisations were mainly middle-class men who were originally from states within the Niger Delta and had lived in that area for a long time. They often referred to themselves as “sons of the soil”. This identification showed their deep-rooted ethnic ties and led them to question the motivations behind my research. Most of them perceived me to be an outsider, “from the north”, and they referred to me as such. As discussed above, I mitigated this by trying to appeal to their sense of nationality, which worked with most participants but not all. In addition to this, the strong bond to ethnicity shaped their stance on issues in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, with many of them identifying and speaking from places of anger, grief and pain. This allowed me to truly understand the lie of the land in terms of depicting the importance of ethnicity and traditions in the Niger Delta – an element not previously considered. Furthermore, the participants had various educational qualifications ranging from bachelor’s degrees to doctorate degrees. This impacted how they responded to questions, as they were highly informed about the theory of peacebuilding in an academic context.

**State-led Organisations**

Again, most of the participants I interviewed were men; however, their ethnicity cut across the Niger Delta, the north and a middle belt of Nigeria. Participants from the middle and the north were mostly middle- to low-level men within security forces, who were not concerned with my motivation for the study. However, they were more concerned with my gender, although this did not impact their willingness to speak to me. Furthermore, I am unsure if it is due to a sense of national identity, but participants from the north and from the middle belt of Nigeria also identified with grievances in the Niger Delta, and spoke from a place of pain and anger. In addition, their educational background ranged from being school leavers to holding bachelor’s degrees. In general, the school leavers preferred to speak pidgin (broken English).

It is crucial to note that across both state-led and donor-based organisations there was a consensus concerning the multi-layered nature of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states.
Data Analysis

Thematic template analysis, as developed by King, was used as the means of analysing the data gathered (2004b; King and Brooks, 2016; Walters, 2016; Nowell et al., 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2019; Lochmiller, 2021). This is a method of analysis in which data is framed within a template which serves as the coding structure, and data is categorised into themes and subthemes in order to be comparable. The main advantage in using thematic template analysis is that the data collected becomes refined and simplified (King and Brooks, 2016), which ensures that the end results can be measured using qualitative techniques. In addition, content analysis permits structure of the data in a manner that will ensure the research objectives are accomplished (Krippendorff and Bock, 2009). Within thematic analysis, major themes emerging from the participants’ responses will be integrated within the arguments of this research in verbatim format. The template is updated from time to time until the full picture of the research has been captured and the research questions answered (King and Horrocks, 2010).

The codes within this initial template of the research were based on topics derived from both the literature review and previous knowledge. However, as the interviews progressed and the data analysis was completed the codes fell within three main categories:

1. topics based on the literature review and previous knowledge
2. codes that address a larger theoretical perspective in the research
3. codes that were surprising and were not anticipated at the start of the research

The organisation of codes in a hierarchical manner is a prominent feature of template thematic analysis and is done by grouping similar codes together to allow the researcher to properly analyse the data at different levels of specificity (King, 2004b). The ‘highest-order’ codes – or the highest category of codes – represent the initial themes to be analysed, and are usually broader themes, frequently forming the basis of the discussion. The codes are then subdivided into one, two or three lower-level codes, depending on the depth of analysis of the research. Thus, for this research the levels are labelled as: level one, which are the broader themes and the highest level of hierarchy; level two, which are subcategories of level one; and level three, which are subcategories of level two, and so on, thus, forming a hierarchy, as described by King.
The first stage of the data analysis involved creating the initial template or code, which was a representation of the undefined data. This occurred because some of the themes were a priori – that is, themes identified in advance. However, these themes changed and were reshaped as I engaged with interviews and more texts, as displayed below. The relationship between the themes showed how themes were revised because of the way data was organised within the template. It is key to note that a prominent feature is the arrangement of the template in a hierarchical manner (King, 2004b). This is achieved by grouping similar themes together to form ‘higher-order codes’ (King, 2004b, p. 258), thus enabling the researcher to analyse the data at various levels of specificity. Thus, within this research, to determine the initial template, interview guide questions and previous literature were used. This enabled me to analyse the most important content, and data was sorted into categories. Firstly, the data was organised based on the date and time that interviews were conducted; this eased the transcribing of the interviews and ensured that no interview was missed. Secondly, I adopted an immersion approach which entailed listening to the recordings numerous times. This process allowed me to gain a better insight into the research questions and allowed me to adapt subsequent interviews in the light of emerging themes that I otherwise had not considered, for example, the role of traditional leaders in peacebuilding. Thirdly, I was able to generate emerging themes which enabled the next stage of the process, that of coding the data into different themes based on the perception of participants; these related to the state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives, the informal economy, and various incentives and institutions associated with peacebuilding, for example, partners of the peacebuilding initiatives and so on. After the data was categorised into various themes I then analysed and interpreted it by structuring it into a template for better analysis. This enabled me to analyse how the various themes differed and what the interplay between them was, providing a broad interpretation of the coded data. Furthermore, after deducing the data, I then triangulated the data with multiple sources and perceptions in order to draw conclusions about peacebuilding and the informal economy. The final stage was writing up the report of the case study, which contributes to understanding the interest, incentives and institutions within peacebuilding and the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

**Initial Template (Before Fieldwork)**

**Level 1** – Peacebuilding initiatives and neopatrimonialism

**Level 2** – Separate reality (theory and language of the NSRP and PIND)

**Level 3** – Clientelism

**Level 4** – Corruption
Level 1 – Initiatives and the informal economy

Level 2 – Limitations of initiatives

(i) – Lack of suitability of programmes
(ii) – Lack of measurement of success

Level 3 – Loss of livelihoods

Level 4 – Alternative sources of livelihoods

Level 5 – Crime

Level 6 – Ungoverned and government spaces

Level 1 – Peacebuilding, informal economy and development

Level 2 – Community development

Level 3 – Lack of development

(ii) – Lack of basic infrastructure

The themes for discussion were identified after the construction of the initial template, and as the research progressed the template was revised on numerous occasions. This included adding new codes at various levels, deleting some codes as they no longer reflected the aim of the thesis, and redefining some of the codes. Furthermore, some of the codes were also re-ordered within the hierarchy structure in order to reflect their importance within this thesis. All this resulted in a final template being constructed after the interviews had been transcribed, thereby ensuring that none of the data was left out. Additionally, the thematic analysis successfully answered the research questions, because it showed the development from the initial themes to the finalised themes. Also, as suggested by King and Horrocks (King, 2004), to prevent the data becoming descriptive it is important to interpret and link the coded template to the research questions. Thus, within this research the themes were analysed according to their level of prominence within the transcripts, and were then linked to the research questions. In order to execute this properly the themes were firstly linked back to the literature, then expanded on using quotes and the perspectives of participants. The template below represents the moving themes within the research that have been examined in the analysis chapters – themes such as neopatrimonialism, ‘patronage peacebuilding’ and ‘performing militancy’, for example, through which we aim to identify and analyse: firstly, how and to what extent peacebuilding initiatives are being shaped by neopatrimonialism; secondly, how peacebuilding initiatives shape the informal economy. The restructured themes based on the analysed data are detailed below (compare Initial Template (Before Fieldwork)):
Finalised Template (After Fieldwork)

Level 1 – Definition vs reality of peacebuilding in Rivers and Bayelsa

Level 2 – Separate reality (theory and language of the NSRP and PIND)

Level 3 – Patronage peacebuilding

Level 4 – Clientelism

(i) – Struggle for power

(ii) – Corruption

Level 5 – Effect of patronage peacebuilding on the peacebuilding agenda

(i) Tolerance of patronage peacebuilding

(ii) Blame game

(iii) Reliance on NGOs by the population

Level 1 – Donor-based Initiatives (PIND and the NSRP) and the informal economy

Level 2 – State-led initiatives and the informal economy

Level 3 – Criminalisation of peace

(i) Positioning

(ii) Performing militancy

(iii) Marginalisation of population

Ethical Considerations

I am aware of the various ethical considerations relevant to conducting this research. To ensure that this research was carried out in line with the University of Leeds ethics and data safeguarding guidelines, approval was sought from the university’s ethics committee, and from the relevant agencies in Abuja, Rivers and Bayelsa. I was also aware of the university’s resources on ethics for further consultation.

In line with the University of Leeds’ guidelines, I made particular effort to guarantee the participants’ anonymity. This was carried out through the process of pseudonymisation, where artificial identifiers were ascribed to each participant. These artificial identifiers created the opportunity to carry out follow-up interviews, when necessary, while still protecting the identities of the participants. In addition, in the context of this research it was necessary to understand the perspectives that were representative of the stakeholders in order to understand the overall narratives and views of how state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and how this shapes...
the informal economy and post-conflict setting. The artificial identifiers used in this research were based on the name of the organisation the interviewee belonged to, with donor-based interviewees identified respectively as DB1, DB2 and so on, depending on the number of interviewees. Representatives from state-based organisations were identified as SB1, SB2 and so on, and academics were represented by AD1, AD2 and so on. The table below depicts the identification markers used in this research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondents</th>
<th>Identity Marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff from the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP)</td>
<td>DB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff from the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND, located in Abuja and Port Harcourt)</td>
<td>DB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff from the Institute of Peace</td>
<td>SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff from the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)</td>
<td>SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigerian military/security forces</td>
<td>SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff of the Ministry of Défense</td>
<td>SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff from the College of War</td>
<td>SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>AD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2 Identity Markers of Respondents*
Chapter Structure

This thesis is structured in two main parts. The first part consists of a literature review and the background to the case study. The literature review (Chapter 2) contextualises the thesis within existing theories and studies, in order to provide a fundamental understanding of the key concepts of peacebuilding, the informal economy and neopatrimonialism. This chapter is divided into four subsections, which provide analysis of each concept respectively, while the fourth section links these key conceptual terms together. The first subsection focuses on explaining and understanding the concept of the informal economy, and analyses the main theories which explain the origin of the informal economy, namely: dualist, structuralist, legalist, voluntarist, illegalist and realist theories. This subsection also brings out the various meanings and understandings of the informal economy through the lens of peacebuilding, highlighting the informal economy as a social source of welfare, security and resistance, as discussed in the literature. It expands on previous work to explore the acute dimension of the informal economy – that is, the illicit informal economy, including corruption, organised crime and criminality, and links this to peacebuilding, thereby establishing the problems explored by this research. The second subsection discusses the existing literature on liberal peacebuilding and highlights the political economy of peacebuilding. It assesses a wide range of perspectives and theories which attempt to explain the causes and motivations of liberal peacebuilding initiatives. It also focuses on key themes developed around peacebuilding studies, highlighting the gaps within the literature. The third subsection analyses neopatrimonialism, taking into consideration the neopatrimonial paradigm and highlighting the distinctions between the various ‘big’ men (political patrons, godfathers and political entrepreneurs). The fourth subsection links the three conceptual terms – the informal economy, peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism – together to highlight the niche for this study. Most importantly, this chapter contributes to the overall structure of this thesis by framing and reviewing the relevant theoretical and empirical debates in the literature on political economy related to peacebuilding, the informal economy and neopatrimonialism. This review and analysis exposes the gaps in the currently available research.

The background to the case study (Chapter 3) builds on these key concepts, introducing the case study of Bayelsa and Rivers states. This chapter explores the origins and dynamics of the conflict in these states. The first subsection provides a brief history of the conflict, integrating a large body of writings and laying out a historical timeline, concentrating on different key dimensions of various overlapping causes and motivations arising from the political, ideological, economic and strategic interests at the heart of the conflict. This section touches on factors such as the discovery of oil, the role of both nationalism and ethnicity, the emergence of insurgent groups, and the ways in which these have
influenced and escalated the conflict from political violence to militarisation, as well as the role that traditional leaders have played in shaping and responding to the conflict. The second section also explores the transition to peace and discusses the different government responses used to manage the conflict. The empirical literature indicates that in conceptualising the peacebuilding the Nigerian government adopted a minimalist approach that focused on addressing insecurity and instability, instead of taking a maximalist approach, which, while encompassing the latter, also enhances development opportunities in order to address the root causes of the conflict. Backed by the literature, the second section reveals that peacebuilding efforts in Bayelsa State and Rivers State have been a mix of neoliberal and neopatrimonial peacebuilding approaches. The third subsection of this chapter analyses the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states, analysing it not just as a way of life but also exploring its acute dimension with regard to corruption, organised crime and criminality, which then paves the way for this thesis to focus on peacebuilding and the informal economy. The size of the informal economy and, additionally, the relationship between the informal economy and macroeconomic variables in Bayelsa and Rivers is also analysed. The fourth subsection provides an overview of peacebuilding initiatives: the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) and Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) are examined. This chapter aims to contribute to the thesis by providing background knowledge of the case studies to be examined, highlighting the road from conflict to peace, and setting the scene in order to understand the elements of the informal economy and peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers.

The second part of the thesis presents the empirical findings and the outcome of the qualitative analysis. Chapter 4 focuses on answering the first research question: how and to what extent are state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives shaped by neopatrimonialism? The first section takes a critical look at donor-based peacebuilding (the NSRP and PIND), while the second section examines state-led peacebuilding initiatives. This section then goes on to explore the understanding of the concept of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers and the difference between the theory of peacebuilding and the reality of peacebuilding on the ground. This analysis gives rise to development of the concept of ‘patronage peacebuilding’. The section then moves to focus on examining the neopatrimonial nature of peacebuilding and its relationship with power. This leads to a discussion of how the actors that control these states, the state-led initiatives and donor-based initiatives tend to manipulate the institutions that are available to reinforce, support, safeguard or protect their interests. This section captures the contested interests of actors and various groups (the government, elites, traditional leaders, ex-militant leaders, ex-militants and communities), and how they come together to form networks of patronage and tactical alliances, as well as to defect or break alliances in order to pursue
their agendas. This exploration leads to discussion of how the competition of interests over resources has incentivised decisions and strategies within the peacebuilding agenda, examining the patronage pyramid that exists in both Bayelsa and Rivers states. Thus, in examining the interaction of these various actors, the chapter gives a vivid portrayal of the character of these institutions and the ways in which this has affected the outcome of peacebuilding efforts in Bayelsa and Rivers. It also examines the overlap between patronage peacebuilding and the NSRP and PIND, focusing on three consequences: the tolerance of patronage peacebuilding; the reliance on NGOs by the general population; and the ‘blame game’.

Chapter 5 focuses on answering the second research question, which centres on examining the nexus between peacebuilding initiatives and the informal economy. It explores how and to what extent the informal economy has shaped peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Specifically, the chapter investigates how both state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives have created ways in which opportunities and resources are manipulated, leading to the criminalisation of peace, ‘positioning’ for aid in the informal economy and the ‘performance of militancy’ in the illicit informal economy, all of which consequently lead to the marginalisation of the general population.

Chapter 6 concludes this research and demonstrates how it has been able to answer the main research questions. Providing a summary of the research, the Conclusion brings together the discussion of the previous chapters. In addition to exploring the research findings and their implications, the limitations and areas for future research, the chapter also describes the theoretical contributions of the research as well as exposing the gaps in the research and pointing out possible areas for further study on the Niger Delta.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review: Assessing and Contextualising the Informal Economy, Peacebuilding and Neopatrimonialism

Introduction

To analyse how peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and how this shapes the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, this chapter focuses on providing an extensive literature review concerning the key concepts. An overview of key academic definitions of the informal economy, peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism are provided, examining the understanding (or lack of understanding) of the informal economy through the lens of peacebuilding. Due to the complex and interrelated nature of these concepts this chapter emphasises the importance of a clear and coherent understanding of the key terminology, especially in the case of the informal economy since there is no universally accepted definition of the term.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section examines the informal economy, providing a foundational understanding of the informal economy and its relationship with peacebuilding activities. This section is divided into four subsections. The first subsection engages with debates surrounding the contested conceptualisation of the informal economy, particularly focusing on definitions by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This is essential as it gives a better understanding of what is referred to as the informal economy. Having determined what the informal economy is, the second subsection turns to a discussion of relevant theories, specifically geared to understanding the interaction between the informal and the formal economy. This is important as it serves to provide an extensive analysis of the formal–informal dimension, measuring the informal economy and its interaction with the state’s institutions, as well as providing information on previous empirical studies of the informal economy; this illustrates the gaps in the existing literature and highlights the significance of this research. The third subsection discusses the nature of the informal economy, cutting across various dimensions of welfare, security and survival, and focusing specifically on ‘inclusion’, within the state framework.

The second section of this chapter examines liberal peace theory, highlighting its definition and understanding, and also explores the gaps within the literature of peacebuilding and how these fit within the narrative of the informal economy. This section also links the political economy of conflict to the political economy of peacebuilding, and highlights the gaps and failure of liberal peace theory, especially within Africa, in order to show how this study fits within the political economy.
The third section examines neopatrimonialism; it briefly sheds some light on the general knowledge of neopatrimonialism, discussing its links to patronage, clientelism and corruption, and explores how the literature treats the possible links between the three. Within clientelism, notions of the ‘big man’ and of godfatherism are discussed in order to understand the relationship between neopatrimonialism and the power structures of conflict and how they feed into each other, as well as the cycle of conflict. The main objective of this section is to assess how previous literature on neopatrimonialism has accounted for the obstacles surrounding conflict economies and their overall influence on the peacebuilding agenda.

The final section links these key terms together, examining how these concepts are connected to form the conceptual framework of this thesis, with the aim of highlighting the niche for this study.

**Definition of the Informal Economy**

The usefulness of the informal economy as a concept has been called into question, with various researchers as well as policymakers employing different definitions, some of which are quite divergent (Moser, 1978; Crow, 1989, Scott 1991; Rakowski, 1994; Roberts, 1994). Various terms, such as the clandestine economy, hidden economy, subterranean economy, unreported economy, black economy, second economy, shadow economy, irregular economy and/or cash economy, are used interchangeably to describe it (Ferman and Ferman, 1973; Gutmann, 1977, 1980; Cassel and Cichy, 1986; Feige, 1989; OECD, 2002; Gerxhani, 2004; Henry and Stillls, 2006; Vuletin, 2008). For the purpose of this literature review and thesis, the term ‘informal economy’ is used. The concept of the informal economy was introduced by the ILO in its 1972 report on Kenya, and later in 1973 by Keith Hart’s research on the urban populace in Ghana (Hart, 1973). The idea has, over time, been refined and amended to include an array of terms within various fields (Hart, 1973). Over the years no universally accepted definition has been agreed; however, two semi-official definitions have been formulated, based on the literature on the informal economy, one by the OECD and the other by the ILO. Each will be explored below.

**The International Labour Organization Definition**

One of the most widely used and recognised definitions of the informal economy was made by the ILO, traced back to the Decent Work initiative (ILO, 1972). This report recognised the concept of the ‘informal sector’ from the 1970s, referring mainly to the economic enterprises and employment that occurred outside the regulatory structure of a state; rather than focusing on the characterisation of
people involved in these jobs (ILO, 1972), it denoted the survival activities engaged in by the peripheral or marginal populations of the economy (ILO, 1972). The ILO characterised the informal sector as being characterised by: “ease of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership, small-scale operations, labour intensive and technology, skills acquired outside of the formal sector and unregulated and competitive markets” (ILO, 1972, p. 2).

This definition was furthered reshaped by the International Labour Conference fifteenth report, in 1993, which adopted an enterprise approach; thus, the informal sector was:

all jobs in informal sector enterprise or all persons who, during a given reference period, were employed in at least one informal sector enterprise, irrespective of their status in employment and whether it was their main or a secondary job. (ILO, 1993)

This definition recognised that the informal economy comprised small-scale units of distribution and the production of goods and services by independent, self-employed producers in the urban settings of developing countries (ILO, 1993), mostly operating with no or very little capital, thus resulting in a low level of productivity (ILO, 1993). As such, this resulted in low and irregular incomes as well as unstable employment for those who worked in the informal sector. This definition was criticised for its inability to capture different aspects of the increasing informalisation of employment, such as households that employed domestic workers within the informal sector.

In 2002 the ILO proposed to broaden the term ‘informal sector’ to ‘informal economy’, identifying the need to include a diversity of enterprises and workers to ensure the concept was not confined to a particular sector of economic activity. As such, it adopted the term ‘informal economy’, to cut across various sectors (ILO, 2002, p. 53). This resulted in the following description of the informal economy:

activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law; or they are not covered in practice, which means that although they are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs. (ILO, 2002, p. 53)

This definition was further harmonised by the seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, which defined informal employment, relating it to different aspects of the ‘informalisation’
of employment as well as different targets for policymaking (ILO, 2002). It saw the concept of the informal economy expanding to include not just the informal sector, which referred to the observation units as the production units, but also informal employment, which saw jobs as the observation units. Samson (2004) identified that the concept of the informal economy amplified the notion of informality to include enterprises as well as employment relations, which resulted in capturing the heterogeneity and the totality of the informal economy. This is important, as the informal economy is made up of different economic activities. However, the definition of the informal economy was expanded by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Definition (OECD).

**The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Definition**

Noticing the absence of a strict definition of the informal economy as well as the various approaches to defining its subject matter, the OECD proposed a more integrated definition. This definition would address the way the two terms ‘undeclared work’ and the ‘informal economy’ coexisted (OECD, 2002). Apart from these observations the OECD further acknowledged the need to broaden the definition of the informal economy to include more activities – such as VAT fraud, pilfering, extortion, social security fraud and illegal production – that were not covered in the national accounts (OECD, 2002). This resulted in the convergence of two spheres of interest for the informal economy. The first description, recognised as the ‘core’ definition (OECD, 2002) consisted of:

1. Undeclared work (these included employment statutes that were concealed).
2. Under-declared work – these involved employee’s statutes that were declared; however, part of the earnings were concealed with collusion from the employer.
3. Black-market work – this referred to secondary jobs earnings that were concealed in collusion with the purchaser.
4. Informal employment – this referred to a situation where there was no concealment because there was no requirement to declare earnings or even employment.

Expanding the ‘core’ definition of the informal economy, the second and broader definition included the following within its scope (OECD, 2002):

1. Tax evasion – ranging from activities where earnings are concealed from the authorities, to self-employment – but without collusion with the purchaser.
2. Employment within illegal production – this refers to concealed production, sales as well as consumption, whether by the self-employed or an employee.
3. Employment within the production of goods and services for self-use that are not included in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
4. VAT fraud, theft, social security fraud and extortion.

Therefore, because of this amended definition of the informal economy, Chen (2012) was able to provide a more precise terminology. The amendment included informal workers and firms of unregistered or unprotected labour working within the formal sector, which was not originally covered within the definition of the previously used term ‘informal sector’. Thus, within this terminology the ILO and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) (Chen, 2013, 2016; ILO, 2013; International Labour Office, 2018) view the informal economy through three central concepts, namely:

- The informal sector – this refers to production and employment within unregistered enterprises.
- Informal employment – this focuses on employment that is outside labour protection regulations of a given state, whether that falls within formal or informal enterprises.
- The informal economy – this refers to all workers and firms that operate outside the legal regulatory framework of a given state, as well as the output being generated.

In the same vein, the OECD handbook offered three categories of the non-observed economy. The first category is the underground economy, which refers to all activities that are productive and legal that can be concealed deliberately to avoid paying tax, meeting the legal standards set by the state, as well as complying with administrative producers (OECD, 2002). The second category refers to the illegal economy, which encompasses economic production that is prohibited by law. The third category refers to the informal sector, which involves the production of goods and services at a low level where actors finance their own risk, such as in the household or the employment of family, which is not declared to the government (OECD, 2002). A variety of activities within this third category can be legal and not deliberately kept secret or undeclared to the government because of factors such as weak tax laws, the state being practically absent, and so on. Consequently, production in the informal economy can be legal but it can also be illegal. Pedersen (2003) in his study on Germany, The Shadow Economy in Germany, Great Britain and Scandinavia, identified the link between the two as the OECD handbook does not recognise this. He acknowledges that the informal economy does consist of activities outside the state’s regulatory framework, known as the ‘shadow economy’. Within this shadow economy is a ‘black economy’, which involves undeclared productions that are illegal. Pedersen further notes that the categories might overlap in practice (Pedersen, 2003). Thus, within the scope of Pedersen’s work, the informal economy not only refers to non-observed activities but also to the shadow and black economy, which are illegal, as shown by the image below.
Pavlovskaya (2004) expanded the OECD definition to include ‘spheres of dichotomies’, which refer to components of the informal economy that are divided into four sectors, namely: the state, private, monetised and non-monetised sectors. Here the state referred to the second economy, price subsidies in various stores, bribes, wages and profits engaged in, while the non-monetised sector included activities such as various privileges and perks afforded to the state, barter exchange between various companies, networks of political and economic elites, and so on. The private monetised sector referred to help with money, rent, profits or investments, and buying goods and services. The private non-monetised sector referred to a network of family and friends and help with various forms of labour. This expansion offered by Pavlovskaya allowed for the distinguishing of favours, taking into account the non-monetary exchange that occurs within the informal economy based on interpersonal connections.

Schneider further attempted to define the informal economy (1997, 2002, 2005), and his work was complemented by Sepulveda and Syrett’s definition, which recognises both legal and illegal activities based on monetary and non-monetary activities within the scope of the informal economy (Sepulveda and Syrett, 2007). This sought to further expand both on the broad definition offered by the OECD and on Lippert and Walker’s work in 1997 (Lippert and Walker, 1997). This definition of the informal economy recognises the need to distinguish between goods and services, illegal employment, social fraud and illicit work such as moonlighting, as well as criminal economic activities (Sepulveda and Syrett,
The legal activities include salaries and assets that were unreported, unreported legal services and goods, wages and neighbour help. The illegal activities include drug-dealing, prostitution, gambling, smuggling, trade in stolen goods, and the production of drugs and theft, as shown in Figure 3. The illicit informal economy as referred to in this thesis refers to some of the activities listed in Figure 3.

Similarly, Williams and Renooy (2009) adopted the OECD definition, defining the informal economy as the production of legal activities that are deliberately concealed from the authorities to avoid payment of taxes, complying to various administrative procedures such as forms or statistical questionnaires, and meeting legal requirements such as minimum wage, safety and health standards.

Thus far, this work has highlighted the changing nature not just of the term ‘informal economy’ but also of its definitions over time. However, despite these continuous debates surrounding the definition of the ‘informal economy’, this thesis is aware of similar characteristics by which the informal economy is understood:

a) It refers to economic activities that are not recorded (Schneider, 2002).
b) These activities are not captured by the state's national or statistics accounts (Castells and Portes, 1989; De Soto, 1989; Harding and Jenkins, 1989; Fiege, 1990; ILO, 2013).

c) These activities are invisible to policy formulation (ILO, 2013).

d) Actors employed within the informal economy are excluded from labour standards such as safety, health, minimum wage, working hours (ILO, 2013).

Nature of the Informal Economy

Having provided an overview of the contested definition of the informal economy, this section discusses its nature. The informal economy is an increasing phenomenon that some claimed would be formalised: that is to say, become integrated with the formal economy, because of economic growth or democracy (Tokeman, 1978). However, as noted by Chen (2007, p. 7), “the informal economy is here to stay”. It exists in all countries and varies in size, sometimes even exceeding the formal global economy. The presence of the informal economy means that activities, industries and employment are outside the framework of the state, thus implying the lack of a proper conceptualisation and understanding of it (Castells and Portes, 1989; De Soto, 1989; Harding and Jenkins, 1989; Fiege, 1990; ILO, 2013). This can lead governments to overlook relevant data concerning their citizens – which could influence the level of taxes levied, the state budget and so on – hampering good governance as well as state building.

Often the informal economy is perceived as a marginal economy that enables survival and is only capable of catering to subsistence levels of economic activity and income (Bluncj et al., 2001; Meagher, 1995). This view promoted the early theorising of the informal economy as a transient economic phenomenon that occurs in less developed economies. The ILO (2013) recognised that the informal economy creates an environment in which poverty, discrimination, low productivity, exclusion, poor quality jobs, vulnerability and insecurity thrive in the labour market. It further acknowledges that its effects go beyond the dimension of the actors involved and further affects state revenues, the development of adequate policies, and institutions and enterprises (ILO, 2013). This has resulted in a problematic understanding of the informal economy that focused on a macro-level perspective, thus limiting recognition of other significant drivers and decisions that impact the size of and participation in the informal economy (ILO, 2013). However, the informal economy is not just a marginal economy; rather, it is recognised as a means of economic development, as discussed below.

The first element to be examined within the nature of the informal economy is the question of whether it is taxed, as this is a highly contested issue within the literature. Previous studies on the informal economy have centred on taxation within the informal economy, ranging from communal levies and
extortion by public officials (Prud’homme, 1992; Olken and Singhal, 2011; Meagher, 2013; Pimhibzai and Fox, 2013). Although the informal economy is viewed as being untaxed, there is a wider range of literature, especially focused on Africa, that supports the notion that actors within the informal economy contribute to the revenue of both formal and informal taxes (Meagher, 2016). This challenges the view that the informal economy is not taxed. In many countries, such as Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda, the informal economy is more about being unregistered, lacking the essential licences, or otherwise falling below the fiscal threshold required by the government, than about taxation (Meagher, 1990).

Firms that operate within the informal economy contribute to revenue through local government level licences, fees and market dues, as well as other gazetted levies (Caroll, 2011; Meagher, 2013; Pimhizai and Foz, 2013). For example, Kate Meagher found that firms operating within the informal economy in Uganda paid a formal tax of 7 per cent of their income, and a segment of poorer actors contributed up to 23 per cent of their income to revenue (Meagher, 1990, 2016). Further continuing this school of thought, Prud’homme argued that within the continent of Africa informal taxes exceed the amount of formal taxes, which resulted in further burdening the poor (Prud’homme, 1992; Guyer, 1994; Juul, 2006, Olken and Sighal, 2011). Olken and Singhal note that “estimates of formal taxes may underestimate the true tax burden faced by households. In particular, the conventional wisdom that poor households and households in rural areas do not generally pay taxes other than VAT may be misleading” (Olken and Singhal, 2011, p. 27). Based on these ideas, Lough et al. (2013) suggested dividing the category of informal taxes into two: informal communal self-help; and corrupt payments to officials. Thus, the notion of whether the informal economy is taxed is also contested; however, from whichever side one looks at it, these considerations help us to understand the nature of the informal economy (Meagher, 2016).

Taxation in the informal economy focuses on the bribery and ‘taxes’ paid to corrupt officials, further highlighting the significant role these levies play on the taxes applied within the informal economy. For example, in an analysis of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Titeca and Kimanuka (2012) recognised the “moral economy” of corruption, where illicit payments were more accommodating than formal taxation. Oxfam (2012) further recognises that these illicit taxes have been implemented by various actors such as soldiers, militias and local chiefs, and constitute a threat to the livelihoods of those that work in the informal sector. Consequently, it can be argued that whether viewed as formal taxes or informal taxes, the informal economy is indeed taxed. Another interesting element of the nature of the informal economy within the literature is that it has been recognised as a social valve, exemplified by three somewhat interrelated factors (Danielsson,
2015). The first factor identifies the informal economy as a welfare provider. The informal economy emerges as a result of weak institutions, a lack of state control, administrative barriers, high taxes and porous borders within the state (Danielsson, 2015). These issues illustrate the inability of the state to provide sufficient welfare for its population, thus stimulating the increase in activity within the informal economy in post-conflict societies, as people provide a parallel system by which to survive (Keen, 2012). As noted by Wennmann (2005, 2010), the informal economy functions by “sustaining welfare in the post-conflict situation when the state is so dysfunctional that our citizens must rely on the parallel economy to survive”. The informal economy has widely become a pillar of survival among the general population, who do not view their activities as informal but, rather, a way of life. Examples of the informal economy acting as a welfare provider were seen in the economic crisis in Latin America in the 1980s, as it grew through the implementation of structural adjustment policies (Tokman 1992). Another example can be seen in Asia in the 1990s, when the informal economy was the haven in which people created jobs after losing their formal positions (Lee 1998). Furthermore, according to the ILO, between 2007 and 2009, 27 million people across the world lost their jobs in the formal economy, thus leading them to seek safety in the informal economy (ILO, 2012c; Benson et al., 2014). Consequently, the informal economy offers inclusion to various vulnerable groups; without the presence of the informal economy, circumstances may very well be worse for members of the general population. Thus, identifying the informal economy as a welfare provider depicts it as enhancing development for marginalised populations.

However, Graner (2005) recognised that although the informal economy hampers state building and development, there exists a caveat in countries where justice, policies and the monopoly of violence are controlled by both political and economic elites, where the informal economy is a haven in which the poor and weak operate. Thus, the ‘informal’ might be the result of political connotation rather than deliberating hiding one’s economic activities. Furthermore, participating within the informal economy has been for some groups a response to the inefficacies of the formal institutions, institutional ambiguity and institutional inconvenience (Gifici et al., 2013; Webb et al. 2013). In 2004 a study conducted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency showed that members of the informal economy make cost–benefit analysis decisions regarding formalisation and choose to remain or operate within the informal economy (Becker, 2004). Furthermore, a business survey conducted in South Africa reported that “[w]hen asked whether they were thinking about the possibility of registration, the responses were evenly balanced with 45 percent saying they were and 43 percent saying they were not” (USAID, 2005, p. 4). This brings to light the relevance of the informal economy (Benson et al., 2014). Similarly, De Catro, Khavual and Burton’s (2014) work on the Dominican
Republic found that street vendors would rather operate within the informal economy, not in order to avoid regulations, but because they did not see any tangible benefit in the formal economy. There has been the development of evidence which suggests that many technologically advanced and organised economic activities take place within the informal economy, which are far from marginal (Jones et al., 2006; Kar and Markit, 2009).

Additionally, the informal economy is seen to present a dilemma for policymakers, as on the one hand it is largely associated with the violation of human rights and poverty of an unknown number of people, while on the other hand it is seen as serving as a thriving, resilient and innovative system that provides services, jobs and opportunities for marginalised people (Benson et al., 2014). For example, the events that led to the Arab Spring bring to light the links between economic inclusion, social cohesion and the informal economy. The outrage of a street vendor in Tunisia setting himself on fire because his fruit cart was seized and he was unable to provide for his family highlighted the weakness in socio-economic structures; this built on an already fragile system of political exclusion, abuse of human rights, and much more, resulting in full-scale violence and destruction (Benson et al., 2014). Thus, the importance of understanding the informal economy can never be over-emphasised (Benson et al., 2014). It is crucial not to downplay the role the informal economy plays in any given situation, and in order to promote sustainable development within developing countries, governments need to commit to improving and understanding the informal economy – an objective this thesis wishes to fulfil.

It is key to note that the informal economy has its own way of organising capital and its own system of distribution, which makes it a ‘community economy’. As Kinyanjui (2010) notes, it is not just an economy; rather, it includes a sociocultural dynamic involving the production and transfer of cultural products such as foodstuffs and creative industries; this is often disregarded when solely economic and entrepreneurial models are used for analysis. Some groups have developed national and even regional networks based on culture and kinship and have succeeded through a series of economic and social organisational arrangements to control big shares of markets (Kinyanjui, 2010). The informal economy thus serves as the unifying umbrella under which ethnic, class and other lines of marginalisation are blurred, thus becoming the expression of marginalised groups (del Pozo-Vergnes, 2013; Benson et al., 2014). According to Tandon, the informal economy tends to be “more alert to the opportunities and threats posed by environmental or political change than their formal counterparts” (Tandon, 2012, p. 4). It is crucial to note that the informal economy is not shielded from various factors such as, for example, the political economy and climate conflict; rather, it is shaped by it and sometimes seeks alternative means to cope, survive, thrive and deal with these factors (Benson et al., 2014).
A different light has been cast more recently on the notion of the informal economy; although it remains crucial to understand the dangers and, perhaps, drawbacks of the informal economy, it also remains imperative to note how it serves as a source of livelihood, opportunity and even income, not just for marginalised groups such as the poor and vulnerable, but also for well-educated individuals as well who recognise its benefit. It has been found that the informal economy is more innovative in generating wealth and scarcity solutions than the formal economy in most parts of the globe (Tandon, 2012). This indicates the power that the informal economy possesses, and shows the need to understand and explore in more detail the influence of this (Benson et al., 2014). However, to ensure this, it is crucial to understand how the informal economy is shaped and influenced by numerous factors, one of which is peacebuilding and the political economy.

The second factor, which is especially prominent within the literature, is that the informal economy emerges as a force of resistance against both the state and the neoliberal governance pushed by the international community (Danielsson, 2015). Exemplified by analysis of post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pugh identified that the informal economy resulted from factors lacking in the social contract on which the Yugoslav welfare system relied (Danielsson, 2015). This resulted in an increase in reliance on the informal economy and meant that the informal economy functioned as a measure of social cohesion, enabling resistance and allowing for the possibility of obtaining goods and welfare outside the formal structure (Pugh, 2004; Danielsson, 2015). A strong example of resistance was seen in the Arab Spring, where it emerged because of the “politics of disappointment” experienced within the informal economy (Allam, 2017). As Greenberg (2014) notes, this resulted in resistance, triggering a “survival strategy” and engagement in the informal economy.

The third dominant factor within the literature on the informal economy views the informal economy as a security maker (Danielsson, 2015). This notion relates to the state’s capacity to provide security within post-conflict societies. Kostovicova and Glasius (2012) state that the informal economy thrives because of the multidirectional security market, which restricts people’s security while also being able to support circumstances in which everyday insecurities are managed. However, the informal economy undermines the ability of the state and the public to provide welfare and services, thereby reducing the security of the local population in the long run (Danielsson, 2015). On the other hand, the informal economy may enhance the security of the local population, by allowing unemployed individuals to work within a weak state.
Taken together, it is crucial to note that the informal economy is no longer seen simply as an indicator of underdevelopment; rather, the informal economy is viewed as an asset or even a solution to poverty and as contributing significant economic activities (Rakowski, 1994). Neoliberal theories recognise the informal economy as an incubator of entrepreneurship, possessing the potential to contribute to long-term economic development. This occurs because small indigenous enterprises are able to cut the cost of over-regulation in the form of corporate tax, business registrations, social security contributions and so on (De Seto, 1989, 2001; Packard, 2007; Biles, 2009). Indeed, there are elements of the informal economy that are taxed, and it does serve as a welfare provider, security maker and as a means of resistance. The next section examines the theories that link the informal economy and the formal economy, which will provide an understanding of the theories that shape the conceptual framework of this thesis.

**Theorisation of the Informal Economy**

Moving beyond the sphere of defining the informal economy and its nature, is the question of the informal economy’s interactions or links with the formal economy, which this section examines. Studies have suggested that the formal and informal economy represent a continuum, with no clear boundaries or definitional consensus of where one ends and the other starts (Leonard, 2000; Valodia and Devey, 2011). Understanding the informal economy as a continuum, where actors do not all act the same way or comply with the same rules, further contributes to its contested nature (Leonard, 2000; Valodia and Devey, 2011). This, therefore, has led to the development of various classifications of the interaction between the formal and informal economy, which are discussed below. Williams and Round (2008) distinguish four different theories of the informal economy’s interaction with the formal economy: the dualistic approach, the structuralist approach, complementary theory and alternative to the formal economy, while Chen (2007) collates corresponding schools: dualism, structuralism and legalism. Williams further identifies two generally opposing perspectives: the modernisation and globalisation theories. These theories are discussed below, starting with dualist theory, which was mostly popular in the 1900s. The objective of this section is to deepen our conceptual and theoretical understanding of the informal economy and its relationship with the formal economy, and how these two elements coexist within a nation. Understanding the relationship between the formal economy and the informal economy creates an avenue to understanding the competition between official and unofficial firms as well as economic competition within economies. This will provide a framework for understanding factors that influence the informal economy, such as the growth of employment,
income, poverty and inequality, which, in turn, will provide a better overview of the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers and how this is shaped by the peacebuilding agenda.

The dualist approach sees the informal economy as being distinct from the formal (Chen et al., 2004), arguing that within the informal economy economic activities are carried out by small firms that are based on family labour as well as low levels of productivity (Chen, 2004), while, in contrast, the formal economy is capital intensive and has high levels of productivity. The major criticism of this school is the use of the informal versus formal conceptualisation. As noted by Weber:

*The concept of a second economy is a metaphor that should not be taken literally to mean that there are two geographically separated economies. Instead, the notion of a second economy is best seen as a form of shorthand to describe the deeply segmented nature of an extremely unequal economy.* (Weber, Benya et al., 2008, p. 7)

The dualist approach assumes that the informal economy will disappear when economic advancement occurs, and views the informal economy as a leftover by-product of previous production and consumption (Chen et al., 2004). Corresponding with Derrida’s theory of binary opposition (1970), which views two elements as being in a hierarchical relationship with one another, within this relationship, one is considered superordinate while the other is subordinate. The informal economy is considered to be subordinate and negative (Chen et al., 2004). The dualist approach sees the informal economy as being related to underdevelopment, while the formal superordinate economy is related to progress.

Although once accepted, this theory has received heavy criticism since, as noted by Williams and Round (2008), the informal economy is neither weak nor disappearing. Rather, the informal economy is growing and has remained persistent within the global economy. Chen et al. (2012) further criticised the dualist approach on the basis that the informal economy emerged and grew in unexpected places and was not a residue, and they summarised the main differences between the old and new concepts of the informal economy, as shown in Table 3, highlighting the weakness of the dualist approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Old View</th>
<th>The New View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The informal sector is the traditional economy that will wither away and die with modern, industrial growth.</td>
<td>The informal economy is ‘here to stay’ and expanding with modern, industrial growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is only marginally productive.</td>
<td>It is a major provider of employment, goods and services for lower-income groups. It contributes a significant share of GDP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It exists separately from the formal economy.</td>
<td>It is linked to the formal economy—it produces for, trades with, distributes for and provides services to the formal economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It represents a reserve pool of surplus labour.</td>
<td>Much of the recent rise in informal employment is due to the decline in formal employment or to the informalisation of previously formal employment relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is comprised mostly of street traders and very small-scale producers.</td>
<td>It is made up of a wide range of informal occupations—both ‘resilient old forms’ such as casual day labour in construction and agriculture as well as ‘emerging new ones’ such as temporary and part-time jobs plus homework for high tech industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of those in the sector are entrepreneurs who run illegal and unregistered enterprises in order to avoid regulation and taxation.</td>
<td>It is made up of non-standard wage workers as well as entrepreneurs and self-employed persons producing legal goods and services, albeit through irregular or unregulated means. Most entrepreneurs and the self-employed are amenable to, and would welcome, efforts to reduce barriers to registration and related transaction costs and to increase benefits from regulation; and most informal wage workers would welcome more stable jobs and workers’ rights.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work in the informal economy is comprised mostly of survival activities and thus is not a subject for economic policy.

Informal enterprises include not only survival activities but also stable enterprises and dynamic growing businesses, and informal employment includes not only self-employment but also wage employment. All forms of informal employment are affected by most (if not all) economic policies.

Table 3 Old and New Views of the Informal Economy

Source: (Chen, 2007)

The second approach is the structuralist approach, according to which the formal and informal economy are linked internally. The structuralist approach sought to rectify the disconnect found in the dualist approach. This theory, like the dualist, viewed the informal economy negatively (Moser, 1978; Henry, 1987; Castells and Portes, 1989). Within the structuralist school, the informal economy is seen as comprising economic units subordinated by larger firms seeking ways to cut the cost of labour and input. The structuralist approach acknowledges that the formal and informal economy coexist, but in contrast to the dualist theory sees the informal economy as being an integral part of the formal economy, and, further, notes that the relationship is one of interdependence among different forms of production (Moser, 1978; Henry, 1987; Castells and Portes, 1989). The informal economy is seen as emerging from an increasingly deregulated global economy and late capitalism that results in labour standards being low, thereby leading to the population accepting exploitative work as a ‘survival strategy’ (Moser, 1978; Henry, 1987; Castells and Portes, 1989). This could range from workers working without benefits, to employees of informal enterprises and so on. Within this theory Smith and Stenning (2006) considered the informal economy as being “constitutive outside” of neoliberalism (Smith and Stenning, 2006). They noted that the informal economy was a response to social benefits being reduced, as well as being the way that marginalised households sustain their livelihoods. Thus, recourse to the informal economy was seen as an attempt at providing an additional source of income (Smith and Stenning, 2006).

Third is the legalist approach, in which there exist relationships between informal enterprises and the bureaucratic formal economy. The legalist approach, spearheaded by De Seto, argued that the expensive nature of operating within the formal economy was the main reason why enterprise engaged
with the informal economy. Through her study on Peru, De Seto (1987) focused on the process of registering formally within various operations, such as public transport and trading. Despite considering the bureaucratic relationship between formal and informal enterprises, this school has been criticised for not fully recognising the complex nature of the informal property regime (De Seto, 1987). In addition to this, it did not take into consideration how formalising the informal economy could be a disadvantage to informal traders, especially the poor and marginalised groups (Cousin et al., 2005), as informal actors could potentially have more to lose when formalised or included into the formal economy.

The fourth approach, which is somewhat related to the legalist approach, is the microenterprise development approach. This approach has mostly been promoted by non-governmental agencies, development agencies, international donors and private businesses whose aim is to work in poverty alleviation (Williams et al., 2016). This approach recognises “microenterprises as synonymous with informality, poverty, and entrepreneurship” (Williams et al., 2016). Also, like the legalist approach, it sees the procedures for formal registering as being cumbersome. This approach believes in levelling the playing field in order to expand jobs and productivity. This can be achieved through unveiling credit facilities, as well as by providing training for the poor in management and accounting (Williams et al., 2016).

The fifth approach, which was popularised by neoliberal and neo-classical theorists, is the ‘illegal’ theory. This theory is based upon the argument that within the informal economy there is a conscious and intentional motive among actors to avoid regulations and taxes, as well as to engage in criminal activities (Maloney, 2004). This school invokes the notion that there is a vibrant and operational illegal underground economy (Maloney, 2004). The sixth approach is termed complementary theory. According to this view, both the formal and informal economy are growing and declining in tandem rather than as a by-product (Williams and Rounds, 2008). Both economies are seen as being intertwined, where economic development involves the development of both the informal and formal economy (Williams and Rounds, 2008). The informal economy, through mutual aid and reciprocity, ensures social cohesion, the provision of goods and services to those in need, the development of social networks of material support, as well as the extension of various opportunities to individuals and families in order to enable them to cope in situations of deprivation.

Williams (2010) recognises a seventh theory: the “globalisation thesis”, which emphasises that the informal economy is growing universally. Further advocating this point of view, Schneider and Enste analysed the size of the informal economy, finding that over the past two decades the size of the
informal economy has risen dramatically; they linked the causes of the increase to the tax burden, social welfare systems and labour costs.

Furthermore, an eighth theory concerning understanding of the formal–informal relationship was proposed by Williams and Round (2008), who noted that all theories of the informal economy talk about different forms of informal employment, and, although evidence does exist to support each of them, no one theory depicts the informal economy. They formulated a theory that could be described as a post-structuralist approach to understanding the formal–informal relationship, which recognises the economic plurality and diversity within the economy as well as acknowledging that the informal economy seeks plurality.

Furthermore, it is crucial to understand that over the last two decades the formal–informal relationship has evolved and become more complex. Empirical realities such as globalisation and market reforms, the growing informal economy (due to production and consumption), and the global crisis of the formal economy are all factors altering the development and relationship between the formal and informal economy (ILO, 2013). In the context of globalisation, the formal economy depends on the informal economy through trade, distribution and services that are provided in the formal economy. Globalisation has led to an expansion of the geographical scope of the link, new actors being involved as well as an altering of the power balances between both economies. New theoretical approaches have appeared in terms of analysing formal–informal economy relations, such as network analysis, legal pluralism, new intentional economics and global commodity/value chains (Chen, 2012; ILO, 2013). These developments have resulted in new questions, which focus not just on the relationship between the two and the patterns that emerge, but also on whether this relationship is beneficial, for whom, and how this impacts the regulatory formal structures, as well as the informal economy. However, evidence also suggests that the informal economy can develop and thrive on its own without contact with the formal economy (Benson et al., 2014). This makes it more difficult to decipher the links and effects between the formal and informal economy, and there are various qualitative and quantitative studies on the size and increased role of the informal economy within global production and reproduction (ILO, 2013). This leads to a blurred, rather than a clarified, distinction between the formal and informal economy, resulting in normalisation rather than an analysis of the two.

As seen in the discussion above, there are several theories explaining the formal–informal relationship, and there has been a call for the integration of the different schools in order to allow full understanding of the informal economy (WIEGO, 2006). The aim would be to show how different approaches – dualist,
structuralist, legalist and illegal, for example – provide an understanding of the different sectors of activity and employment (WIEGO, 2006). Modernisation theories primarily attribute the existence of the informal economy to the need for survival and marginal activities, while neoliberal and legalist schools are based upon state regulation as an explanation. Meanwhile, structuralist theories attribute the informal economy to the nature of modern capitalism (WIEGO, 2006). Although these schools are usually studied in isolation, the reality is that the complex nature of the informal economy is best understood by drawing from and interacting with all these theories in a complementary fashion, as this thesis does (ILO, 2013).

Therefore, to examine how and to what extent peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and how this shapes the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers, this thesis integrates the work of three different schools to fully capture the dynamics of the informal economy. As suggested by WIEGO (2006), the integration of different theories of the informal economy allows full consideration of the varying elements, activities, types of employment and actors involved. Hence, this thesis integrates the globalisation thesis, complementary theory and the ‘illegal’ school. The integration of these three schools enables us to see that the informal economy is growing universally, and that it is intertwined with the formal economy, rather than being a separate entity. This view recognises that because of the growing nature of the informal economy, social networks within it are formed which provide goods and services to those in need. Economic development affects both the informal and formal economy as both are integrated. Finally, within the scope of the illegal school, this integrated view notes that there is indeed an underground economy that thrives and interacts with both the formal economy and the illegal informal economy. Understanding the informal economy and the formal–informal relationship through this lens allows us to fully capture and explore the multi-layered nature of the informal economy (i.e., the informal economy and the illegal informal economy) in Bayelsa and Rivers states, and to explore how it is shaped and influenced by peacebuilding initiatives.

**Gaps in the Literature on the Informal Economy**

So far, this chapter has focused on the definition of the informal economy, its nature, the theories explaining the formal–informal relation and the theories this thesis embraces. This section will discuss previous empirical studies on the informal economy, highlighting the gaps within the literature that have shaped the conceptual framework of this thesis. Subscribing to even the narrowest definition of the informal economy the evidence nevertheless shows that the informal economy plays a vital role in the national economy of a state; taking a closer look at the informal economy in sub-Saharan Africa, it contributes 92 per cent of the labour force (Medina et al., 2017; WIEGO, 2017).
Studies of the informal economy have altered in perspective over the years. Between the 1970s and 1980s the focus was on poverty and marginality; this then shifted, in the 1990s, to consideration of the informal economy as a seedbed for entrepreneurship. There has been a renewed interest in both developed and developing countries resulting in an increased number of empirical studies, in which the heterogeneous nature of the informal economy has been revealed (Jones et al., 2006; Devey et al., 2008). However, the lack of a clear definition of what the informal economy consists of has led to the determination of its size being somewhat difficult (Schneider, 2004, 2012), thus, making a full understanding of the informal economy challenging.

As the informal economy develops and is understood in different ways, within some contexts it is viewed as a locally embedded, dynamic system that promotes constructive development. Within another context it is viewed as fostering development as well as intensifying economic exclusion, poverty and vulnerability (Meagher, 2014). Kate Meagher (2014) argues that a gap existed in understanding the differing nature of the informal economy because of the shift from a blanket representation of the informal economy to other narrower representations. Focusing on the informal economy in Africa, she has highlighted how previous work on the informal economy has focused on the conventional differences between north and sub-Saharan Africa, rather than on understanding the differences in specific states and/or cities (Meagher, 2014). Meagher has, further, identified a blind spot within the studies, particularly pertaining to areas such as class, gender, ethnicity, region, age and occupation. Significantly emphasising the need to shift from a monolithic view of the informal economy, in order to improve the theoretical understanding of the informal economy, as well as perspectives on governance with regards to taxing, she carried out a study on the informal economy and explored the potential problems and limitations of taxation in connection with building a social contract, particularly focusing on Northern Nigeria (Meagher, 2016). Her work centred on how gender, history, wealth and ethnic-religious identities influenced how the informal economy was taxed and shaped governance (Meagher, 2016). She found that an adverse relationship existed between political voice and the informal economy, revealing that imposing taxes on the informal economy results in exaggerated social divisions rather than building up the social contract. These findings have been influential in shaping this thesis.

This thesis is shaped by Meagher’s (2014) work on the informal economy in Northern Nigeria in two ways. Firstly, expanding on her identification of the need to shift from a blanket representation of the informal economy to focusing on specific states and cities, this work focuses on the informal economy
in the states of Bayelsa and Rivers as a gateway to understanding the broader picture in the Niger Delta. Thus, this will provide an understanding of these states’ informal economy while also expanding on a regional understanding of the informal economy. Secondly, Meagher (2014) identified the need to explore how the informal economy is shaped by governance with regard to history, gender and so on. While this analysis shows evidence that is closely related to the proximate causes of the informal economy, there is a lack of information on underlying factors that influence how state institutions and the economic development agenda interact and influence the development (and size) of the informal economy. As such, this work expands on this notion by exploring how the informal economy is shaped by peacebuilding initiatives. Although this research is not focused on gender, wealth and ethnic-religious identities and how these influence the informal economy, it is, however, concerned with the notions of neopatrimonialism and power, as these are key elements within peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states and influence the conflict within these states.

Meagher further argues that although studies of the informal economy analyse the determinants of its size, there seems to be a gap when it comes to evaluating various local informal institutions and how they create additional variations, not just in the size of the informal economy but within the informal economy itself (Meagher, 2014). Furthermore, Danielsson (2015) found that very little existed within the literature that questioned the size of the informal economy, as formed through internal conditions marked by various inequalities, hierarchies, neopatrimonialism and commonsensical understandings. Both Danielsson and Meagher recognised the need to better understand the informal economy beyond its scope and size, to include the implications it holds for economic change, especially within local institutions in Africa (Meagher, 2014; Danielsson, 2015). They recognised the need to shift the focus of study to inclusion of economic change in local institutions, in order to question whose interests were being met and who was being included. According to Meagher (2014) previous attempts at being inclusive were rather disguised as a more interventionist goal, in which the pool of workers, as well as institutions within the informal economy, were regarded as useful for reducing cost and facilitating access to the informal market. She noted that this resulted in an inclusive engagement that was highly selective (Meagher, 2016). The outcome was that a part of the informal economy became marginalised, while other actors within the informal economy were ‘included’ (Meagher, 2014, 2016). Thus, inclusive engagement with the informal economy became an exercise that fell in line with the agendas of governance. Techniques of governance became more involved with working, classifying, managing and restructuring the informal economy in order to build inclusive markets that were synonymous with global businesses (Meagher, 2016). The outcome was a lowering of the cost of operations for the formal economy through the advantage of low cost employment (Meagher, 2016). Hence, the informal
The informal economy is viewed more as a workforce to be harnessed than as a system that needs to be transformed; especially within the continent of Africa, the view of the informal economy is based upon those who are useful to global capital and those who are not. Meagher acknowledged the need for questions to be raised towards informal economic inclusion, with regard to the actors and their interests (Meagher, 2016). She recognised the need for the states’ roles in the development agendas of informal economic inclusion to be examined closely. As Meagher states:

It matters whether informal economies of entrepreneurship, vulnerable employment or unfree labour are being embedded in the formal economy and whether these informal arrangements are being harnessed in the interest of global, political expediency or local economic transformation. (Meagher, 2015, p. 5–6)

Meagher’s (2016) work on inclusion and the interests of actors is instrumental to this research analysis. Building on the work of Meagher (2014), Johnson et al. (1998) and Danielsson (2015), mentioned earlier, this research examines the interests of actors within peacebuilding initiatives that shape the informal economy, and explores whom these interests serve, thus, filling the gap identified by Meagher. In analysing how and to what extent peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and how this shapes the informal economy (see Research Questions), this thesis examines the roles of actors in both state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives. Likewise, as observed by Keith Hart: “We need to know...what social forms have emerged to organise the informal economy as well as examine the institutional particulars sustaining whatever takes place beyond the law.” (2006, p. 33). As such, this research sits within the niche of examining the informal economy and the political economy, as previously stated, while focusing not on the size of the informal economy, but rather on the characteristics of various factors (such as neopatrimonialism, power hierarchies and corruption, for example), which, as Hart points out, sustain the informal economy, and specifically the illicit informal economy (Hart, 2006).

Although some studies on the informal economy pay particular attention to the interconnections between the informal economy and crime within the political economy of conflict, they fall short of exploring this within the political economy of peacebuilding, a gap this research aims to fill. Previously, work on the informal economy has examined the political culture of elites and their supporters, a contentious area, noting a tenuous economic base and flawed political systems, which possess the potential to produce and reproduce the link between the informal economy and crime (Jayasundara-Smits, 2018). Mostly explained through a rational-choice approach to conflict, these studies focus on
highlighting the role of greed and grievance, the resource curse, the productivity of illicit goods, and
the emergence of warlords, as well as the challenges posed, by the monopoly of power through
violence, by various drivers of conflict (Freedman et al., 2006; Peterson, 2010; Valodia and Devey, 2011;
Elbahnasawy et al., 2016; van der Molen, 2018; Young, 2020). These studies note that individuals that
enjoy various privileged positions and access to resources operate within the informal economy in such
a manner that unfair competition is created, making the less privileged also begin to feel the need to
operate within the informal economy (Peterson, 2010; Valodia and Devey, 2011; Elbahnasawy et al.,
2016; van der Molen, 2018; Young, 2020). Thus, the relationship between the informal economy and
crime is characterised by inequalities, hierarchies, privilege differences, neopatrimonialism and
clientelism, which encourage activities within the informal economy to survive while promoting the
informal economy. Consequently, Abdixhiku (2011, p. 119) notes that the informal economy be
comes a “parallel system built into the grey economy”, in which the lines are blurred with regard to how these
different power relations shape the interaction of actors within the informal economy. Although
Abdixhiku’s research is influential, especially with relevance to the political economy of conflict, it has,
however, created the need to examine the same notions – such as the influence of these power
relations, access to resources, and operations within the informal economy – within the political
economy of peace. Exploring this is crucial because it will examine whether the narrative that occurs in
conflict settings is also found within the dimension of peacebuilding, and, if so, what this means not
only for the promotion of peace but also for the peacebuilding agenda and power structures. If, indeed,
the relationship between peacebuilding and the informal economy re-institutionalises inequalities,
hierarchies, privilege differences and neopatrimonialism, it becomes essential to examine the
implications of this for the state, cities and population in which it occurs. Sookram (Sookram and
Watson, 2008) suggests that the characteristics, role, scope and size of the informal economy are
empirical questions that should be explored within a particular economy as well as within various cities.

Most studies that focus on the Niger Delta are centred on oil production and the amnesty programme.
Although this research does touch on both dimensions, as it is impossible to talk about the Niger Delta
without their inclusion, this thesis aims to move away from the narrative of oil. It seeks to explore and
provide an alternative understanding of the informal economy within the region by examining the
relationship between peacebuilding and the informal economy. Thus, this current empirical study seeks
to close a gap that exists in the literature, and an exploration of these very issues is the aim of this
research.

Moreover, evidence suggests a strong relationship between poverty and informality: in countries where
informality is decreasing, the number of working poor is also decreasing, and vice versa (AfDB, 2012).
This relationship creates a persistent cycle that depends on various factors. Many activities within the informal economy are dependent upon natural resources – as such, impacts on climate and the environment in turn affect these activities, therefore exacerbating the poverty cycle. This was acknowledged by the OECD when it stated: “growing informal employment might substantially increase poverty levels, making it impossible for many countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015” (OECD, 2009). The diffuse and unorganised nature of the informal economy makes it hard and expensive for governments to track and enforce regulations, thus reinforcing the poverty cycle (Benson et al., 2014). At the heart of the poverty cycle is the absence of social protection and rights; those within the informal economy operate without secure benefits, and this serves as a gateway through which they are taken advantage of, and the poverty cycle continues (ILO, 2012). This highlights the link between the informal economy and poverty, and shows a gap that needs to be filled with research, on a case-by-case basis.

Additionally, in a study to examine the relationship between the informal economy, regulation, the tax burden and the rule of law and corruption, Johnson et al. (1998) carried out an analysis of 49 countries within three regions of the world. The study involved measuring regulatory discretion, the tax burden, bureaucratic quality and corruption, based on a proposition that the tax burden, regulatory system and corruption were all positively correlated with the informal economy. One of the key findings of their study was the role of the political environment in determining the size of the informal economy. Further analysis found that political instability and polarisation are directly related to the informal economy (Johnson et al. 1998). Their results supported the proposition, noting that bureaucratic discretion and regulatory discretion were key determinants for the informal economy. Their analysis further revealed that due to the weak rule of law, tax regulation officials were able to view individual cases without effective supervision, thus giving rise to conditions that were ripe for corruption (Johnson et al.1998). Consequently, under such circumstances many firms chose to operate underground. Elements of this study also provided insights which fed into the conceptual framework and structure of this research. Expanding from Meagher’s study on specific cities and the role of governance on the informal economy, my research also adopts Johnson et al.’s (1998) analysis of corruption and the influence of the political economy. While this thesis does not focus on the size of the informal economy, Johnson et al.’s (1998) analysis opens the way to examining the role of the political economy in shaping the informal economy. As such, this thesis combines elements of Meagher’s (2014) and Johnson et al.’s (1998) analysis in order to examine how the informal economy is shaped by the politics of the economy of peacebuilding and how this influences the overall peacebuilding agenda.
Much of the available literature on the informal economy deals with the question of its determinants (Krakoski, 2005; Sepulveda and Syrett, 2007; Vuletin, 2008). A study based upon two suggested determinants of the informal economy – high tax rates and corruption, and a weak legal system – identified a positive correlation between the informal economy and poor institutions (Krakoski, 2005; Sepulveda and Syrett, 2007; Vuletin, 2008). However, it fell short of answering the question of which came first: do poor institutions result in high levels of activity in the informal economy; or, rather, do high levels of activity in the informal economy undermine basic institutions? To address this dilemma, Freidman et al., (2000) employed instrumental variables, developed by La Porat et al. (2008), in order to measure linguistic fractionalisation, the religious composition of the population and geographic location. Their findings noted a correlated relationship between the informal economy and institutions, suggesting a causal link between a large informal economy and weak institutions. This finding advances our understanding of the informal economy and opens doors for more crucial questions on what this relationship means, not just for the informal economy but also for weak institutions.

Thandika Mkandawire (2010) drew attention not only to the size but also to the role the state plays in influencing the informal economy in Africa. Mkandawire’s analysis used history to explain why countries such as Kenya, South Africa, and other East African countries possess smaller informal economies compared with those found in West African countries. He traced these differences to the economic objectives of the colonial state (Mkandawire, 2010). Hence, his analysis recognised that the informal economy is not a phenomenon that only occurs outside the operation of the state; rather, the state is linked to the informal economy, and plays a role in shaping it. Consequently, the role, scope and relationship between the informal economy and the state became of interest to organisations, governments and decision-makers who wanted to better understand it (Mkandawire, 2010). For example, in 2012 the Indian government recognised the urgent need to assess the informal population in order to improve its policy design; in 2017 Nigeria finally acknowledged the informal economy in the Niger Delta and the ‘need’ to formalise illegal oil refineries, although this process has been slow and is yet to begin. However, such moves serve as a starting point for the inclusion of the informal economy in the agenda of the government (Benson et al., 2014).

Likewise, as interest in the informal economy grew so did studies on the regulatory framework of institutions within it. As such, political scientists and economists, such as Kate Meagher, took a closer look at the regulatory framework of the informal economy, which revived the notion that the informal economy is not ‘unorganised’ or just criminal; rather, it involves a cornucopia of trade networks, institutions and credit systems, and is even a way of life that operates outside the regulatory framework
of the state (Meagher, 2016). This led to research grounded in the ‘bottom of the pyramid’ approach, which was focused on penetrating the institutional organisation of the informal economy. Meagher’s study yielded the need for making the informal space and activities ‘legible’ to the state by deciphering their inner working, rather than rationalising or even formalising it. Thus, international development thinking shifted to a more “inclusive turn”, where economic growth was promoted by engaging with informal actors (Meagher, 2016). This analysis shapes the understanding of the informal economy within this thesis. Although this thesis does examine how the illicit informal economy is shaped by peacebuilding, it does not, however, state that the informal economy itself is criminal. Indeed, the informal economy is a way of life (sometimes people’s only way of life) that has existed for decades, not just in Bayelsa and Rivers states but also in other parts of Africa and the Western world too. In addition to this, Meagher’s analysis is useful to this thesis because it recognises that the informal economy comprises a network of relationships, some of which overlap with neopatrimonialism and peacebuilding; thus, this thesis examines these relationships from within the lens of peacebuilding initiatives and how they shape the informal economy. The reason for this is that the actors operating in the informal economy and in peacebuilding are the same; thus, rather than focusing on formalising the informal economy or elements of it, this research examines these relationships and creates the potential for further research.

The emerging body of literature on the political economy of peacebuilding makes few, if any, references to informal economies, although they are dominant in every society. According to the ILO, in developing countries the informal economy makes up from half to three-quarters of non-agricultural employment (ILO, 2013). In the case of examples such as South Africa and India that have experienced rapid economic growth, the informal economy seems to still be increasing. As has been already stated, numerous factors affect the growth and development of the informal economy, for example, the 2008 and Eurozone crises served to rapidly expand the informal economy in developing countries (Benson et al., 2014). From waste networks in India to food-sellers on the streets of Ghana, and miners in Peru and Kenya, the informal economy functions as a network where poor people live, produce, trade and work (Benson et al., 2014).

Certain governments have recognised the importance of the informal economy through the establishment of various policies. An example of this is the Kenyan government, which, since 2000, has adopted a new approach by working directly with local enterprises and informal economies to produce sustainable charcoal (Benson et al., 2014). The government recognised the need for flexibility in dealing with the informal economy; they also began to include it in budgeting, planning and governance in
order to bring about social and environmental benefits (Benson et al., 2014). It is, however, imperative to understand that the informal economy is not a phase of underdevelopment; rather, it is an economy that responds to the fluctuations of various conditions and in times of recession can be a “cushion” (Benson et al., 2014). Thus, previous peacebuilding policies have made little if any reference to informal economies, which, as research shows, have been expanding in all parts of the world because of changes occurring in the formal economies (Benson et al., 2014). Critical questions are raised relating to the peripheral rather than central role the informal economy plays in policy approaches, analysis and modelling, which include: do policy approaches necessitate the formalisation of the informal economy? Do informal economies prove to be detrimental to the environment? Or to the formal sector? Also, how have efforts led by governments, authorities, or even international institutions impacted informal markets in the past, how do they impact informal markets currently, and how are they likely to in the future? (Benson et al., 2014). Hence, the usefulness of a comprehensive study that streamlines the contributions and influences of the informal economy and developmental polices within specific environments gives this study overwhelming justification.

In addition to the above-mentioned, recent findings about the informal economy have failed to view the informal economy as a system, as noted by Meagher (Meagher, 2017). Failure to do so has thus limited analysis on historical differences, and on differences within colonial states and governments, the nature of engagement within the global economy, and how all these factors shape the informal economy differently (Meagher, 2017). What makes an informal economy thrive in one area and not in another? Should policies on the formal economy be adapted to respond to these variations within the informal economy? Meagher (2017) has thus emphasised the need to view the informal economy, especially within Africa, as a system, one that is shaped by its interactions with the state as well as with institutional, economic and historical factors. This notion has influenced adoption of the selected theories in this thesis: the globalisation thesis, complementary theory and the illegal school (see Theorisation of the Informal Economy). The informal economy is a system that is intertwined with the formal economy and occurs not only in developing countries but also in developed countries. Within the informal economy are various networks that expand into an illicit dimension that makes up the illicit informal economy (Meagher, 2017). As Meagher notes, it is crucial to examine how complex networks are created, and to understand how the state relates to the informal economy in different contexts (Meagher, 2017). Where, for example, informality is based upon a strong entrepreneurial system, support from the state may be constructive. Similarly, in a setting where the informal economy is based upon vulnerable networks of labour, a different kind of support will be needed that expands inclusion. Also, where the informal economy is based upon a high degree of criminality, corruption and coercion,
a system of economic support will seem ill-advised, as the process of ‘inclusion’ becomes questionable. This research recognises these points and incorporates them within its analysis, examining the networks that exist within state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives and how they shape the informal economy, and exploring whether the networks of peacebuilding based upon corruption, criminality and so on affect the informal economy and, if so, in what way. To examine this, the next section of this chapter explores the concept of peacebuilding, identifying the gaps within the literature, and how this links to the informal economy, as previously discussed.

**Liberal Peacebuilding**

So far, this chapter has discussed the definition of the informal economy, its scope and nature, and has highlighted various theories within the literature that are applicable to this thesis. It has also shown how the works of Meagher (2014, 2015, 2017), Johnson et al. (1998) and Danielsson (2015) have shaped the conceptual framework and structure of this research. In order to further contribute to the conceptual framework this section provides a foundational understanding of the concept of ‘peacebuilding’ – what is meant by peacebuilding and how this fits within the narrative of the informal economy. Mainly referring to democratic states, the idea of liberal peacebuilding has antecedents dating back to the eighteenth century, drawing upon Kantian thought, with the end of the Cold War strengthening its basis (Kant, 1971). Finding its foundation on the idea that democratic states are unlikely to engage in physical warfare among themselves but would much rather enforce development, stability and peace (Kant, 1975), it is a framework or discourse in which a liberal epistemology of peace is formed, aimed at projecting a form of government that is reliant upon its viability and legitimacy with its recipients, operating at both the state and social level (Richmond and Franks, 2009). The conceptualisation of peacebuilding has been informed by certain key aspects, which are: the rule of law, democratisation, free and globalised markets, neoliberal development and the development of human rights (Richmond and Franks, 2009). Liberal peacebuilding theory concerns the principle that democracies will not go to war with one another if they have institutional constraints that would make it difficult. War is less likely between countries that are economically interdependent, because going to war can interrupt trade. It has been said that liberal peace is the corollary of democratic peace theory (Parmar, 2013). It is not based upon coercion but, rather, upon the belief that liberalism is the best way for states to relate to one another. Driven by interdependence as well as democracy, liberal peace theory holds a central place within liberalism theory (Carlsnaes, 2013). According to liberalism the conditions for cooperation between international governments is fostered by economic interdependence; because states function as rational actors who have mutual economic and political problems, an environment of cooperation becomes necessary for their common good (Carlsnaes,
Also, within liberalism, since states must act transparently and be accountable to those who voted them into power, for this reason, democracy functions as the basis for peace. It follows that it becomes unlikely for them to engage in secret policies, war or even geopolitical deception (Howard, 2008). For this type of peace to be obtained, the democracy must be stable, stability here referring not only to military or even economic means but rather a long-term peace that is based on the functioning of democratic values as well as justice (Kant, 1975).

Within liberal peacebuilding, there are two strands or approaches, namely the Wilsonian and hegemonic neoliberal approaches. Based on the promotion of free-market economies and democracy, the Wilsonian approach is the classical model of liberalism that exists between states (Plant and Plant, 2009; Roberts, 2013). This approach embraces the notion that democracies are more stable and are more likely to enjoy human rights and accountable governments (Plant and Plant, 2009; Roberts, 2013). It is based upon the premise that democratic states will not engage in conflict or war with one another because of the trade they enjoy and because the states are accountable to the people. Although hegemonic neoliberal peacebuilding embraces the similar notion of political and economic liberalism, it differs, however, from the Wilsonian approach (Debiel et al., 2016). It promotes peace based on the interests of international actors; as such, it tends to avoid disruptions that will affect actors in the global market, focusing more on the problems or conflicts of the individual, and this is what makes it neoliberal in orientation. Within the hegemonic neoliberal approach to peacebuilding open political discourse is not promoted.

Within liberal peace theory, free-market economies and democracy make countries more peaceful. With a foundation on governance and development, liberal peace is premised upon the notion that states will resolve disputes peacefully (Newman et al., 2009). Newman identified that although, in theory, peacebuilding is viewed as being ‘liberal’ in nature, it tends to be geared towards repressing or curbing conflict according to the interests of international peace or “particular hegemonic strategic interests” that fall in line with the security agenda (Newman et al., 2009, p. 16). This implies that rather than falling in line with Wilson or Kant’s views on peacebuilding, it is more reflective of the notion put forward by Hobbes (Hobbes et al., 1998; Hobbes and Tuck, 2011).
The Political Economy of Conflict and Peacebuilding in Africa: Gaps in the Literature of Liberal Peacebuilding

In previous studies on liberal peacebuilding, different variables have been found to be related to its interpretation within African countries; although nurtured around respect for human and civil rights, free markets have failed, especially in Africa, to, in Salih's opinion, “deliver tangible developmental or economic benefits.” (Salih, 2017, p. 133). The reality of liberal peace is that it has resulted in various manifestations in different countries, leading to varying forms of democratic experience, which has further led to the negative social effects of neoliberalism. Salih notes that within most African countries democracy has been treated as a synonym for development (Salih, 2017). Citing examples of 12 African countries, he argues that development through peacebuilding is contingent upon the outcome of the political economy of peace rather than on the imposition of liberal peace within these societies, noting that the interests of citizens within these societies lie in democracy and development, to which the precursor is its linkage to peace and development. (Salih, 2017). As Fischer states:

This conflation may seem insignificant since both theorists and practitioners refer to the liberal kind of democracy that has come to prevail in the West. Nonetheless, it is important to appreciate the significant differences between the democratic and the liberal aspects of these regimes in order to grasp the peace that prevails among them. (Fischer, 2000, p. 2)

Salih contends that the notion that liberal peace ensures that nations live in peace refers specifically to certain types of states (Salih, 2017). These states have over a long period of time developed liberal traditions that extend beyond the mere existence of polyarchy and democratic institutions (Salih, 2017). It follows that if liberal peace is indeed about the promotion of liberalism it will face various challenges within African countries, as they are not yet fully liberal. These states are, however, seen as being states at various stages of democracy (Salih, 2017).

In addition, the promotion of liberal peace has led to a disconnect within the political economy in various African states, thus leading to further problems (Richmond and Franks, 2009). This happens where the allocation, as well as the control, of resources can be defined as the site of power, which also becomes the site of domination within post-conflict societies (Richmond and Franks, 2009). This understanding provides insight into the analysis in this thesis, as it examines how and to what extent peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism. The empirical data revealed that there is
indeed a disconnect between the reality of peacebuilding and the theory, which shapes how peacebuilding initiatives are influenced by neopatrimonialism (see Theory of Peacebuilding vs the Reality of State-Led Peacebuilding Initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers States). Furthermore, this view is supported by Jones, who highlights three criticisms of liberal peace. Firstly, he argues that liberal peace does not differentiate ‘old’ and ‘new’ democracies; it is, rather, focused on exporting from the old into the new without any consideration for the people, especially the poor (Brown et al., 2001). Agreeing with Salih, Barnett contends that,

(b)ecause liberal states have these desirable dispositions, peacebuilding has attempted to transplant and nurture these attributes. Exhibiting their own brand of shock therapy, international peacebuilders attempt to transform nearly all features of the state society, accomplishing in a matter of months what took decades in the West. (Barnett, 2006, p. 6)

Salih’s second criticism of liberal peace is the assumption that African states are ready to integrate as their preferred paradigm the core values of liberalism on development, peace and state building (Salih, 2017). Salih’s logic is that if these values have been questioned within Western democracies, why then should they be uncritically integrated into African countries? This critique is another element that has shaped the conceptual framework of this thesis.

Salih’s third criticism of liberal peace is that it does not take into consideration the historic tension between liberalism and democracy. He notes that although liberalism is in favour of free markets and property rights it tends to lean more towards the private sector and civil society (Salih, 2017). The issue with this is that it leads to a formula of empowering and creating opportunities for criminalised elites who were part of the war/conflict economy. Through the manipulation of external and internal programmes of privatisation, these elites exploit liberal peace and consolidate their power, which leads to the expansion of the war/conflict economy (Salih, 2017). Thus, elected leaders, especially within African countries, have continued the abuse of human rights towards their populations, which undermines and betrays liberal peace.

Salih notes that, within African countries, the notion of liberal peace seems to have neglected the social conditions of the people in comparison with Western countries (Salih, 2017). He further observes that 50 per cent of people in African countries live below the poverty line, thus liberal values such as individual rights, free speech, equality and so on do not, on their own, translate into peace and development (Salih, 2017). As important for state building and development as the core ethos of liberal
peace is, it does not, however, provide an avenue through which the poor in African countries can realise the benefits of free trade in which their personal, global and national share is negligible. Thus, Salih contends that liberal peace, which is conditional on economic liberalisation has, so far, not yielded results; he cites the lack of evidence pointing to how the free market has led to the reduction of poverty or even contributed to equality. Furthering this point, Cooper states:

[At] the global level, neoliberalism has fostered a particular kind of globalization that in simultaneously weakening states and fostering the free movement of goods, has created conditions under which local conflict entrepreneurs have been able to utilize flexible worldwide trading networks to generate global revenues from local predation. (Cooper, 2005, p. 468)

Furthermore, existing research recognises the critical role played by liberal peace theory in increasing the number of democratic states. However, one major theoretical issue emerging is that neoliberal economies – especially within post-conflict states – have, among the poor, exacerbated economic marginalisation, increased social injustice, fomented grievance and, to some extent, increased poverty. In other words, liberal peace has begun to undermine social peace and could quite possibly lead to a relapse into violent conflict. Attempting to explore this, Christian Morrison’s work focused on answering the question of whether the IMF humanitarian emergency programmes caused conflict (Morrisson, 2000). He begins by distinguishing between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ repression: soft repression refers to responses to demonstrations and strikes; while hard repression refers to major contributions to violent conflict. He concludes that the IMF programmes may, indeed, cause soft repression but not hard repression, noting that soft repression should be anticipated when implementing liberal programmes (Morrisson, 2000). Similarly, Salih asserts two propositions from Morrison’s analysis. The first is that most humanitarian programmes are carried out on a short-term basis, and do not consider the social injustice that emanates from the conflict when implementing or forming policies (Salih, 2017). The second proposition is that because of being ill-prepared to manage long-term safety nets, most countries coming out of conflict do not mitigate the social problems that were responsible for the conflict in the first place (Salih, 2017). Thus, it can be deduced that these humanitarian emergency programmes have not been successful, because not only are they seen as being short-lived remedies designed to curb political tensions, but also, because the problems are exacerbated by economic liberalisation and lead to a relapse into conflict.
Thus, it can be observed that economic liberalisation policies that have been implemented through the concept of liberal peace have resulted in the supervision of the market, leading to exploitation by the state and various warlords (Turner and Pugh, 2006; Vandeginste, 2012; Mohamed, 2017). This has led to warlords becoming commercial cartels, who are often protected by the economic reforms of ‘liberal peace’, as seen in Afghanistan (Mac Ginty, 2010; Mehran, 2018). It is now well established that the dividend of liberal peace benefits the criminal entrepreneur who also benefited from the political economy of conflict. However, the influence of this situation has remained unclear with regard to the political economy of peacebuilding and the implications of this for the overall peacebuilding agenda.

Hence, African nations have been seen to adopt the neoliberal paradigm with regard to economic and public policy. This has resulted in these state institutions adhering to a broad free-market paradigm because of the influence of international organisations. Examples can be seen in nations such as Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Angola, where there has been a failure to ensure the equal spread of the peace dividend, which in some cases has undermined peace itself (Mohamed, 2017; Jackson and Allouche, 2018). This has led to the further marginalisation and suffering of the people who had previously endured hardship during the time of the conflict. This situation has, in some instances, resulted in peace ‘rewarding’ those who engaged with the criminal economy (Mohamed, 2017). Likewise, these peacebuilding initiatives are top-down. The top-down approaches are based upon realist exercises that are geared at establishing security and stability through negotiations with the local top-level power holders. These power holders thus play leading roles in peacebuilding: the rationale here is that in order to sustain and maintain peace there must be cooperation among the elites. On the other hand, bottom-up approaches entail resolving the conflict between the conflicting parties in order to facilitate accommodation. This is described by Kaldor as a “cosmopolitan” approach, one that “embraces tolerance, multiculturalism, civility, and democracy” (Kaldor, 1999, p. 116). Thus, bottom-up approaches are community-based and entail engaging with civil societies.

A prime example of this can be seen in Sierra Leone, another country plagued by conflict, more specifically due to the resource curse. Rich in natural resources such as diamonds, fertile land and timber, the conflict that plagued the country from 1992 to 2002 not only destroyed properties and led to the displacement of people, but also disrupted government, schools and health facilities (Jackson and Albrecht, 2014; Jackson and Allouche, 2018). However, the country was able to successfully re-establish itself, holding two elections, in 2002 and in 2007, and returning many displaced individuals; scholars such as Michael Chege referred to is as “the state that came back from the dead” (Chege, 2002, p. 148). However, despite this turn in Sierra Leone, Thomson notes that the country remains at
the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI), stating that there would need to be a re-establishing of certain areas of government in order to sustain recent improvements. He notes, however, that “re-establishing institutions carry with it the risk that old abuses will return” (Thomson, 2007, p. 34). This raises the question of how best to establish and implement liberal peace within society, while also avoiding the re-institution of warlords and criminals that thrived in the political economy of conflict, and has, therefore, led to mixed reviews with regard to interventions in Sierra Leone (Thomson, 2007). It has also been noted that attempts through the judiciary process aimed at attacking corruption have had little or no impact (Thomson, 2007; Bindi and Tufekci, 2018). Also, the rivalry that exists between various chiefdoms makes it hard to evaluate and promote citizen participation to deliver better services to the country (Bindi and Tufekci, 2018). Furthermore, it can be noted that the establishment of executive checks has been unsuccessful, thus continuing the thriving patronage network system that exists in Sierra Leone, with old patterns emerging again.

Moreover, the political economy of African conflicts has determined how resources are allocated in various states, the notions of losers and gainers, rent-seeking, and social and political factors. These factors are mostly based upon greed or grievance, as noted by Collier: reliance on resources like oil (more accurately termed the “resource curse”), diamonds and opportunities lead to rebellion (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005). Thus, it can be deduced that conflicts within Africa arise from poverty and want, and are attempts to address the government’s failure to provide security (human and physical), as power has been captured by elites for private gain (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005).

It is crucial to note that the conflict in the Niger Delta, like many others, serves as an example of a nation affected by multiple factors, such as corruption, greed, environmental degradation, the oil revenue distribution allocation, and the destruction and mismanagement of resources. Another dimension of the conflict is the pitting of various ethnic minority groups against the ethnic majority, which is then used as an instrument of manipulation by the elites, and by various groups such as MOSOP, thus, adding an ethnic–political dimension to an already complex conflict. Likewise, warring parties within the conflict depended on the exploration of and trade in resources, thus encouraging criminality and corruption to thrive. This results in a political economy centred on securing resources and maintaining the flow of arms and equipment, which in turn leads to a fierce and unrelenting political economy (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005). While these factors and more are discussed in more detail in The Political Economy of Conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers States, it is crucial to note that their multi-layer dimensions make it difficult to pinpoint the main cause of conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers. However, it is also key to
note that pinpointing one major cause of conflict is not always important for or beneficial towards the peacebuilding process. What conflicts like that in the Niger Delta highlight, is the diverse, complex and intricate nature of conflicts, which should, in turn, be met with peacebuilding methods that address their complex nature.

Within the political economy of African conflict, it is crucial to note the different multiple, and sometimes contradictory, interests of various groups. These groups can include private businesses, armed forces, state operators, citizens, political parties, victims, spoilers, disputants’ religious entities, and regional and international stakeholders such as NGOs, peace activists, humanitarian agencies and so on. It is also important to note the national and global governance policies that either directly or indirectly perpetuate the political economy of conflict. The Human Development Index (HDI) shows that despite many African post-conflict societies achieving economic growth, most of these societies remain poor, with over 50 per cent living below $1 a day (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2019). It has been noted that Africa is the only region to have witnessed an increase both in the incidence of poverty and in the absolute number of poor, with some 300 million people – almost half the regional population – living on less than $1 a day (UNDP, 2019). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which became the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) (formerly the Department for International Development – DFID), notes that in Mozambique, for example, among the rural poor economic growth and political achievement have been low while inequalities remain high. For example, referring to Mozambique, Gastrow notes: criminal actors “rely on the ‘purchase of impunity’ through bribery and corruption in order to operate without too much state interference. They cultivate connections at the highest levels of the state hierarchy or of the ruling party and seek their protection in exchange for money.” (Gastrow, 2002, p. 18). Thus, can this be said for all societies of ‘liberal peace’, or is this specific to Mozambique, and, if so, why? Does the implementation of liberal peace play a role in this and, if so, what is that role? And how does this affect the general peacebuilding agenda in Mozambique, Sierra Leone or any other country? As a means of testing these considerations, this research examines the liberal nature of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states. To do this, it analyses how neopatrimonialism influences peacebuilding and affects the overall peacebuilding agenda.

Furthermore, the literature recognises that the political economy of liberal peace has fallen short of addressing development problems such as poverty, social justice, exclusion and human insecurity (Philipsen, 2014; Rampton and Nadarajah, 2016), noting that this can be attributed to the tension that exists between democracy and liberalism, which leads to contradictions within political and economic
liberalisation. As a result, there tends to be an increase in social conflicts as well as in violent conflicts, thus resulting in development and peace being undermined or destroyed in the long run. Especially within Africa, these economies are rushed into a ‘liberal peace paradigm’ under the neoliberal policies of economic liberalisation through privatisation and free markets (Philipsen, 2014; Rampton and Nadarajah, 2016). However, the long-term outcome is the failure in the sustainability of this peacebuilding and a questionable economy. Thus, the problem within post-conflict societies with regard to the informal economy is not connecting or disconnecting the informal economy from the formal economy within the nation, but, rather, changing the nature of the interactions between the two in order not to undermine the transition of conflict to peace, as well as building up the broad base of development and recovery.

Thus, taken together this raises the question of why this is happening and whether this sort of liberal peace is, then, acceptable? Is this variation of liberal peace more likely to be embraced by the African countries, as seems to be the norm? If so, what does this mean for peacebuilding within those specific countries and in Africa? Emphasis through the liberal peace paradigm on civil liberties and democracy alone, while failing to incorporate the social dimension, will continue to fuel tensions between socio-economic conditions and liberal peace. Thus, there exists a mismatch between economic liberalisation and the political agenda within the notion of liberal peace that has been dominated by neoliberal policies; this mismatch can lead to a relapse in conflict. It becomes necessary, therefore, to examine the question of the cause of this mismatch, and whether and how it needs to be addressed, or does this represent an accepted version of liberal peace? These are questions which, to an extent, this thesis aims to address.

**Neopatrimonialism**

This section briefly sheds some light on the general understanding of neopatrimonialism, discussing its links to patronage, clientelism and corruption, and exploring how the literature treats the possible links between neopatrimonialism, conflict, the informal economy and peacebuilding challenges. This section aims to assess how the current literature has addressed the relationship between conflict economies and neopatrimonialism and what the implications of this are in post-conflict or peacebuilding settings; the main component of this work is to assess how previous literature on neopatrimonialism has accounted for the obstacles surrounding conflict and their overall influence on the peacebuilding agenda. Also, within neopatrimonialism, the notion of clientelism will be explored, distinguishing between the ‘big man’, political clientelism, the political entrepreneur and godfatherism in order to
understand the relationship between neopatrimonialism and conflict, and how they feed into each other as well as into the cycle of conflict.

The prefix ‘neo’ is added to patrimonialism to distinguish it as a modern variant of Weber’s work on the typology of authority. Imposed by colonialism, this veneer of rational-legal authority takes on a personalistic nature that becomes characterised by patronage, clientelism and corruption (Pitcher et al., 2009). According to Blundo and Medard, neopatrimonialism can be seen as a prolongation of the notion of traditional patrimonial domination developed by Max Weber, which is based upon the idea of the confusion of the public and private in the context of traditional legitimacy (Médard, 2002). The recourse to the prefix ‘neo’ is intended to emphasise that we are no longer in the traditional context. The neopatrimonial state is understood as a state that is structurally and formally differentiated from society, while, in the way it functions, the public and private spheres tend informally to get mixed up (Médard, 2002). In a sense, the state is privatised for their benefit by those who hold a position of authority, first at the summit of the state, but also at all levels of the state pyramid. The political leader behaves like a patrimonial chieftain, that is, like the true owner of his realm (Médard, 2002).

The term neopatrimonialism was first applied in research on the traditional patterns of authority within various parties in West Africa by Zolberg in 1966; it has since been applied elsewhere, especially in African states, but also in Latin America, Asia and Europe (Zolberg, 1985). Studies of neopatrimonialism sought to explain it as a result of continued premodern cultural norms or as one of the effects of colonial rule. Likewise, many studies on neopatrimonialism have used it as a means for explaining economic stagnation, underdevelopment, poor leadership and other factors. In addition to this, recent works have also examined and explained the concept and closely related terms as labels for identifying regimes, leaders and systems (von Soest, 2006; Bach, 2011; Kelsall, 2011; Pitcher et al., 2013; Degila, 2014; Hopper, 2017; Sigman and Lindberg, 2017; Ugur-Cinar, 2017; Khan, 2018; Kimani et al., 2021). This work, however, is concerned with examining how the concept of neopatrimonialism and its related concepts – such as clientelism, corruption and patronage – influence peacebuilding and shape the informal economy and post-conflict society.

In neopatrimonialism, it can be noted that a distinction exists between the public and private, at least formally. According to Erdmann and Engel, neopatrimonialism is a “mixture of two, partly interwoven types of domination that co-exist namely, patrimonialism and legal-rational bureaucratic domination. (...) elements of patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic domination penetrate each other.” (Erdmann and Engel, 2007, p. 18). Similarly, according to Jean-Francois Medard, neopatrimonialism
represents a confusion between the public and private spaces as well as a lack of differentiation between the office holder and his office (Medard, 1982). According to him, juridical norms, as instructions, are masked by the illusion of a functioning legal bureaucratic system. The distinction between public and private is, rather, “negated and voided of its contents” (Medard, 1979, p. 68). Kohli notes that it is the lack of an “effective public arena” able to differentiate between private and public interests that leads to the functioning of neopatrimonialism within the state (Kohli, 2012). He also highlights, giving the example of Nigeria, that elites are consumed with the hunger for power, stating that elites are focused “on maintaining power and on privatising public resources for personal gain or gain by [their] ethnic communities.” (Kohli, 2012).

Thus, taken together, neopatrimonialism can be seen to be the overlap between public and private, the political and the economic, the individual and the collective (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994; Erdmann and Engel, 2007; Sindzingre, 2012). It exists where there has been a blurring of the public and private domains, which therefore leads to the privatisation of state resources as individuals treat them as their private property. It consists of the centralisation of political power, the private use of state resources, and the redistribution of personal favours as well as state resources (Bach, 2011; Kelsall, 2011; Sindzingre, 2012). State resources, natural resources (diamonds, oil, etc.) and state-owned enterprises are some of the resources which are accumulated (Sindzingre, 2012).

According to the literature, neopatrimonialism refers to the simultaneous operation of two Weberian ideals: the rational-legal and the patrimonial (von Soest, 2006; Bach, 2011; gur-Cinar, 2017; Kimani et al., 2021). Patrimonial here denotes the relationship between a patron and client in the social and political order, in which the patron awards gifts from his own resources as a mean of securing the loyalty and support of the clients (von Soest, 2006; Erdmann and Engel, 2007; Bach, 2011; Kelsall, 2011). These gifts could refer either to protection or to material resources. These patrons are usually office holders who misuse both or either public funds or the office they hold as a means of securing support from their followers (von Soest, 2006; Bach, 2011; Kelsall, 2011). An example of this within the state tax collection agency could be the placement of unqualified officers by patrons to fill top- and middle-level positions in order to influence the system (von Soest, 2006). Such an act would weaken the tax administration as strategies would serve political agendas and the private interest of the patron rather than the state’s agenda (von Soest, 2006). Examples of influencing the system could be the prevention of lawsuits against patron-owned businesses, the inhibition of controls at border posts, or – the most prominent feature in African states – the harassment of the patron’s opponents.
As further noted by Erdmann and Engel:

All the attempts to define neopatrimonialism (or modern patrimonialism) deal with and try to tackle one and the same intricate problem: the relationship between patrimonial domination on the one hand and legal-rational bureaucratic domination on the other, i.e. a very hybrid phenomenon (...) the term clearly is a post-Weberian invention and, as such, a creative mix of two Weber types of domination: of a tradition subtype, patrimonial domination, and legal-rational bureaucratic domination. (Erdmann and Engel, 2007, p. 17)

Neopatrimonialism is often contrasted with rational-legal authority, where the latter is characterised by impersonal logic, law and reason, which form the bonding agent for the legitimacy of authority (Pitcher et al., 2009). Emphasis on the coexistence between patrimonialism and the legal-rational structures within neopatrimonialism, therefore, raises questions pertaining to the forms of interactions between them, and the resulting outcomes (Bach, 2012). This raises questions concerning the neopatrimonial state’s capacity or lack of capacity to produce policies that serve the public. Attempting to explore this rationale further, Daniel Bourmaud (1997, p. 62) defines neopatrimonialism as a “dualistic situation, in which the state is characterised by rationalisation, as well as by bureaucratisation.”

Medard notes that neopatrimonialism has two foundations: firstly, neopatrimonialism is anti-democratic, meaning that it is based upon various mechanisms that ensure the stability of authoritarian regimes, thus undermining competition and political participation (Medard, 1991); secondly, neopatrimonialism plays a central role in Africa’s economic crisis as it prevents capitalist accumulation (Medard, 1991). As such, its removal became a wide obsession with the study of African politics for both economic growth and transformation (Oarhe, 2013). Neopatrimonialism has also become a universal concept used for understanding the political weakness and economic crisis in Africa (von Soest, 2006), with scholars like Bratton and Van de Walle basing this upon the idea that neopatrimonialism is a situation in which the informal particularistic politics of the leaders and elites are placed above formal state institutions, with blurred lines between the separation of the ‘private’ and the ‘public’ realm (von Soest, 2006; Van de Walle, 2012). Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle state that:

While neopatrimonialism practice can be found in all politics, it is the core feature of politics in Africa and a small number of other states ...[P]ersonal relationships are factors
at the margins of all bureaucratic systems, but in Africa, they constitute the foundation and superstructure of political institutions. The interaction between the ‘big man’ and his extended retinue defines African politics, from the highest reaches of the presidential palace to the humblest village assembly. (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997, p. 459)

Furthermore, according to Bratton and Van de Walle (1997), the elements of neopatrimonialism were manifested through the redistribution of state resources and a systematic return to clientelism, as well as through the use of presidential offices for the concentration of power, to benefit an individual. In neopatrimonial regimes, the chief executive maintains authority through personal patronage, rather than through ideology or law; with neopatrimonialism, the right to rule is ascribed to a person rather than to an office. In contemporary neopatrimonialism, relationships of loyalty and dependency pervade a formal political and administrative system and the leader occupies bureaucratic offices less to perform public service than to acquire personal wealth and status (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997). The distinction between private and public interests is purposely blurred. The essence of neopatrimonialism is the award by public officials of personal favours, both within the state and in society (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997).

Neopatrimonialism is a multidimensional concept within the political sphere, recognised as having economic outcomes as well as social norms. Within economics and when looking at conflict economies, it tends to be understood in simplistic terms; however, an economic view overlooks its complexity and possible involvement in conflict economies. Furthermore, the dual-track system of the accumulation of both wealth and power by patrons can also be adjusted to fit into and function within economic policies established by foreign donors as well as global economic markets (Compagnon, 2012). Markets are transformed by neopatrimonialism into private membership groups that function according to allegations and collusion, which thereby results in the erosion of the public sector, as personal interest is pursued in preference to public development. For example, in Zimbabwe, programmes were used by the government to enrich the family of the president. As such, economic contexts inform neopatrimonialism and neopatrimonialism informs the economic context (Sindzingre, 2012). Furthermore, relationships between neopatrimonialism and economic development, or the lack thereof, can be traced in various works, one of which is that of Theobald (1982). According to Theobald, a public patrimonial administration came about because of antidevelopment. Working within Weber’s logic, Theobald states that individuals within bureaucracies rely upon public office in order to secure private gain, as a result of a lack of institutional arrangements by the states, which consists of revenue provided to the state (Theobald, 1982). This, therefore, leads to a failure to create credible professional
apparatus, as stable revenue cannot be provided by the state, leading to the reliance on personal networks for funds, power and connections by officials. This reliance upon personal networks, therefore, erodes the formal institutions and can be seen as a hinderance to development.

Previous studies into neopatrimonialism and development, such as those carried out by the International Financial Institution (IFI), and within policymaking literature, have focused keenly on corruption. This has led to blame being ascribed to ‘weak institutions’ and ‘poor governance,’ rather than focusing on neopatrimonialism as a problematic feature of the legacy of conflict, or even of underdevelopment (Sindzingre, 2012). Linking conflict economies to neopatrimonialism, William Reno’s research on civil war in Sierra Leone expressed how the institutional arrangements of power and the personal wealth accumulation by elites had led to the creation of a “shadow state” (Reno, 1997). The “shadow state”, therefore, formed a narrative for understanding how a state was meant to function and how it actually did (Reno, 1997). Reno, thus, links neopatrimonialism with the rise of violence and the asymmetrical pattern of distribution of resources, with the prevalence of gangs and criminal networks, and the intervention of warlords (Reno, 1997). The functioning of neopatrimonialism within the state, therefore, leads to the risk of a “parallel power network, matching existing state hierarchies”, according to Ilkhamov (2007, p. 71).

The concept of neopatrimonialism has been applied in various ways within the literature, and the following four descriptions represent its broadest illustrations: 1) At the state or community level, as social relations of personal loyalty solidified through bonds of dependence and subordination; 2) as rent-seeking behaviours and authority that is characterised by personal patterns, mainly practised by African rulers and elites; 3) the continued blurring of public services and personal gain which leads to economic development; 4) to characterise a type of regime, especially the one-party system in Africa (von Soest, 2006; Pitcher et al., 2009; Degila, 2014; Hopper, 2017; Sigman and Lindberg, 2017; Khan, 2018). This work, however, recognises the vast coverage of neopatrimonialism within the literature and, although it will briefly explain each broad area, it will be primarily focused on points two and three in order to examine the current literature of neopatrimonialism and its role in understanding the post-conflict environment and the formation of peace.

Thus, analytically, neopatrimonialism consists of three components, which are: the concentration of political power, the award of personal favours, and the misuse of state resources (Erdmann and Engel, 2006; von Soest, 2006; Ilkhamov, 2007; Bach, 2011; Guliyev, 2011; Kelsall, 2011; von Soest et al., 2011). The concentration of political power refers to a situation in which a single individual dominates the
decision-making process by either delegating or making the decisions themselves. It is characterised by the formal and informal rules resting on one man – the president; this is known as presidentialism (Ilkhamov, 2007; von Soest et al., 2011; Van de Walle, 2012). This brings into play the ‘big man’ dimension of politics, in which the patron or leader stays in power over a long period of time and sometimes even till he is dead (von Soest, 2006). This individual is seen as being largely above the law and, as such, is not subjected to the checks and balances that are otherwise present in mature democracies. Alternatively, there could be a rotation of power between political elites of the same party to prevent the opposing party from taking over, developing their own dominance, and extending their clientelist network (von Soest, 2006; Ilkhamov, 2007; von Soest et al., 2011). The centralisation of power further finds expression in the short tenure and conscious change of key officials such as ministers. For example, in Zambia, the average tenure of ministers is 2.4 years, so members only operate for half of the legislative period (von Soest, 2006). This results in a situation of ‘elite circulation’, which is a prominent feature of multi-party systems. What this means for neopatrimonialism is that the network of client–patron relationships continues to branch and to include more individuals at various levels.

The second component of neopatrimonialism – the award of personal favours – refers not only to the circulation of favours but also to personal favours being awarded as a means of serving power. For example, the status quo is maintained by a system of clientelism branching down from the president to his immediate followers and into a network of other links that even reach down to the everyday man and local village chiefs (Van de Walle, 2012). The third component of neopatrimonialism refers to fiscal resources being relied upon for their redistribution through clientless logic, entailing the misuse of state resources (Van de Walle, 2012). As such, these components shape the conceptual framework of this thesis and mould the narrative of this thesis in its analysis of what happens to political clients post-peacebuilding, and whether and how these relationships are influenced by the post-conflict environment and the formation of peace economies, which is one of the central aims of this thesis (see Conceptual Framework and Research Questions).

On the rise of ‘gatekeeper politics’ in South Africa (Beresford, 2015), Beresford recognised the need to understand the “African” political system. He noted that previous works have focused especially on this and have linked it to neopatrimonialism. However, there is a need to understand patronage politics from a broader perspective – that of gatekeeper politics. Beresford noted that gatekeeper politics “is how political leaders in positions of authority within the ruling party or in public office control access to resources and opportunities to forward their own political and economic ends.” (Beresford, 2015,
This is closely associated with neopatrimonialism but is not situated within its traditional framework. Whether referred to as clientelism, prebendalism, neopatrimonialism or gatekeeper politics, there is a need to understand the parallel system of governance and resource control that exists, as is explored by this thesis through the frame of patronage peacebuilding.

Concepts within Neopatrimonialism
The foundation of theorising about the political economy of neopatrimonialism was laid by Richard Sandbrook, who examined the “private appropriation of states powers” within African states with regard to underdevelopment (Sandbrook, 1986). Sandbrook identified that in some African states a representation of “economic objectives [is subordinated] to the short-run exigences of political survival” for the elites (Sandbrook, 2000, p. 97). Peter Evans further expressed the link between neopatrimonialism and underdevelopment, stating: “the preoccupation of the political class with rent seeking has turned the rest of society into prey”, further explaining that “it is not the bureaucracy that impedes development so much as the lack of capacity to behave like a bureaucracy” (Evans, 1987, p. 570). Neopatrimonialism can be combined with patterns of production of various public policies and embedded in a state’s informal structure, operating within criminal networks. For example, according to Fithen and Richards’ work, “the [Revolutionary United Front] RUF represents a paradox. It claimed to have an ambition for a more just society, and yet ended up a random and arbitrary killing machine”, seeking profits, where possible (Boas and Jennings, 2005, p123). Similarly, as stated by Medard, “Unlike the patrimonial regime, the neopatrimonial regime hides behind a façade which is complex and differentiated” (Medard, 1982, p. 181).

Thus, the neopatrimonial paradigm is known by a variety of names, such as ‘big man politics’, ‘personal rule’, ‘politics of the belly’, and is based upon the understanding that affairs of the state are run by informal institutions (Medard, 1991). Using as examples the existence of child soldiers in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the concept of neopatrimonialism has been used to explore social relations. In his work, William Murphy explained youth clientelism in the service of violence through neopatrimonialism and patrimonialism (Murphy, 2003). He argued that ‘big man’ logic within these shadow states and in Liberia and Sierra Leone characterised the regimes during the periods of conflict. Both politicians and military leaders were known as ‘big men’, taking advantage of youths and controlling natural resources, dispensing a patronage system to youths for their role in the violence in return for loyalty, protection, administration roles and even arms (Murphy, 2003). These patron–client relationships trickle down through the command structure into the civilian population, where rebel groups then exercise control (Murphy, 2003). This creates a situation in which rebel groups are perpetuating violence over space
and time because of the relations of dependency upon their patronage system. Murphy’s work in Sierra Leone also informs the conceptual framework of this thesis; his work analysing the trickle-down effect of the patronage network while also considering the ‘big men’ (patrons and godfathers) in conflict situations, is applied in this research; however, rather than focusing on conflict, this thesis advances Murphy’s thinking by substituting conflict with peacebuilding. This, then, forms the basis of the first research question, which aims to examine how and to what extent peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and how this influences the peacebuilding agenda (see Research Questions, number one).

While Murphy's (2003) work concentrated on examining the micro-level relationships between a commander and his troops, others, such as Medard, have examined the predominance of personal relationships within African politics (Medard, 1982). They note that African societies were historically organised according to a patron–client structure, which has now become embedded within the political infrastructure. With reference to Rwanda and Burundi as “traditional clientelist states”, Medard argues that the relationship between the patron and client forms the underlying basis of the state, from the king down to the local peasant (Medard, 1982). As with Medard, Hyden also emphasised that this personal rule can be seen in all areas of the world and “a lineage orientation” of various kinds and other forms of “primary reciprocity” further governed African communities (Hyden, 1997). According to Hyden, this explains why informal rather than formal rules have had greater salience in Africa.

Less is said within the literature concerning the behaviours and actions of non-state groups within conflict and how they change over time: why is it that movements that start as a social rebellion against the state transform into a mirror-image of the state they set out to fight against? (Boas and Jennings, 2005). One explanation previously discussed is Keen’s notion of greed and the need for self-enrichment. Although this explains why groups change their dynamic, Boas and Jennings take this a step forward with a dual analysis of why groups forsake their political agenda to become more focused on profit-seeking. (Boas and Jennings, 2012). They analysed both where the state and the state’s structures placed these groups, and the place of profit-seeking, looking at Central and West Africa. They analysed how local, national and international responses affect the various dimensions of conflict, and examined how the RUF were never treated as being anything other than thugs and greedy bandits, which is what they eventually became, with the same being seen in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, where armed youths putting forth real social issues were treated as bandits that could be crushed by force. Boas and Jennings argue that neopatrimonialism has assumed a machine-like character, occurring in many insurrections fuelled by resource extraction (Boas and Jennings, 2005).
Similarly, as Clapham stated, neopatrimonialism cannot just be seen as a limited pattern; rather, it is a systematic institutional structure that is characterised by the informal themes of presidentialism, clientelism and the use of state resources to maintain legitimacy (Clapham, 1985). As such, the next subsection discusses the role of political clientelism, breaking the concept down into discussions of the political entrepreneur, the middleman and godfatherism, in order to understand neopatrimonialism and its relation to the legacy of conflict economies, and post-conflict societies.

The ‘Big Man’
Within the dynamic of neopatrimonialism, the literature has highlighted a factor which concentrates on the patterns and behaviours of various leaders post-independence. In these studies, the focus is laid on the rule of the ‘big man’, or ‘personal rule’, in which power is retained by leaders in order to accumulate wealth through reliance on their neopatrimonial networks (Pitcher et al., 2009). Examples of such studies are Callahy’s work on Zaire, Joseph’s work on Nigeria, and Reno’s work on the warlord states of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In all these works, the key features highlighted are the recognition of patron–client ties in relation to professional and political advancement, and the misuse, by leaders, of state resources in return for the loyalty of patronage networks, especially with regard to natural resources (Pitcher et al., 2009). Economic enrichment is sought by both the patrons and the clients, and this pursuit trumps public advancement. This can, therefore, be linked back to David Keen’s work on how conflict becomes a pursuit of economies by other means and stops being about one side winning. Rather, interested parties can be seen to have a vested interest in, and to benefit from, the continuance of conflict (Keen, 2012). Although these studies remain influential in identifying the role neopatrimonialism plays in the overall economic stagnation of a community, they fall short of assessing how neopatrimonialism sustains the functioning of the informal markets in which the clients operate, and what this means for African communities. This gap is filled by the second research question in this thesis, which examines how neopatrimonialism shapes the informal economy (see Research Questions, number two). Moving back to the notion of the ‘big man’, this is expressed through political clientelism and godfatherism, as discussed below.

Political Clientelism
Noting the embedded nature of clientelism in society, the following few paragraphs will engage with the literature on the question of what determines the existence of clientelism. According to anthropologists, there is a two-pronged answer to this. The existence of clientelism is linked partially to environmental conditions, which contribute to material insecurity, and is also a result of situational
factors. For example, the initial client of political clientelism has been said to be a refugee or a kinless man who sought out a protector (Mair, 1961). Another perspective with regard to what determines clientelism can be explained by Lucy Mair, who notes that the need for a patron does not reflect the “necessity for survival” but is more to “advance one’s economy and social status”, thus reinforcing Keen’s work with regard to the idea that conflicts shift to becoming more about vested interests and economic agendas (Mair, 1961, p. 325; Keen, 2012). Furthermore, as highlighted by J.J. Maquet’s work, clientelism could not have developed without: a) the favouring of economic conditions to produce consumer goods; and, b) the means by the patron to control economic surplus (Maquet, 1961). There are various types of clientelism, such as tribute clientelism, political clientelism, mass clientelism and so on. While this research will highlight each type, it is primarily concerned with political clientelism, which will be explored in detail below. Tribute clientelism refers to the exchange of gifts, more typically within the traditional kingdoms, based upon the client and patronage bonds of reciprocity and trust (Van de Walle, 2012). Within the scope of the ‘big man’ paradigm, patrons, for example in African society, adopt the cultural repertories of traditional forms of tribute as a means of legitimising the pursuit of client relationships. Mass clientelism refers to the allocation and provision of state resources and public offices to the mass of clients through party organisations and electoral politics (Van de Walle, 2012). Elite clientelism, on the other hand, refers to those who are narrowly associated with the political elite, based upon the characteristics of prebendalism, granting personal favours in the form of state resources, and even the strategic allocation of political public offices to elites (Van de Walle, 2012).

As identified by Nicolas van de Walle, political clientelism is “a ubiquitous feature”; thus, it will not disappear (Van de Walle, 2012). It is, therefore, essential to study and understand how this feature is embedded within society, as well as how it involves and influences the very structure of the political economy. As this is a complex and large topic, this section aims to examine empirical and theoretical observations within the literature of neopatrimonialism in order to expose the gaps that are suggestive of the need for further work to be carried out. This section examines and distinguishes between various types of political clientelism, further branching into political entrepreneurism and godfatherism. In addition, this will help in understanding the political power structures in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Political clientelism can be defined as a reciprocal and personal relationship between a superior and an inferior, with the command of unequal resources, and the norms of rationality, universalism and anonymity being absent from the relationship nexus (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972; Van de Walle, 2012).
It serves as a binding adhesive in which the patron is bound to the client and vice versa. As such, political clientelism is a personal reciprocal relationship between actors involving mutually beneficial transactions and the control of unequal resources that could have political ramifications beyond the dynamic of that relationship (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). The scope of political clientelism, therefore, allows for the recognition of three vital components: 1) the asymmetric relationship discernible in the patron–client relationship; 2) the durability and locus of the relationship; 3) the dimension of the character of the transactions within the relationship (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). Within studies of political clientelism, especially with regard to the region of Africa, it is viewed as being a leftover effect of pre-existing traditional cultures (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). However, this notion has been contested by Van de Walle, whose argument against it was based on two points. Firstly, that this atavistic view cannot be correct as political clientelism is a feature that is not present within Africa alone but is also found embedded in different societies, such as in Latin America and Europe; although it is found at different levels, it is still present (Van de Walle, 2012). Secondly, clients exist in modern states on the condition that political actors allocate resources by preferential discretion for what they deem will result in a political advantage (Van de Walle, 2012). As such, it can be deduced that political clientelism exists in all modern states, at various levels and, as will be shown within this section, political clientelism plays a function within the economic structure of a society.

Political clientelism differs from the dynamics of mere common friendship in that it involves to a greater extent the conditional nature of personal loyalties (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). This characteristic, therefore, acts as a means through which discrepancies in status and power are reflected, both uniting and separating the patrons and clients (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). According to Scott, the patron–client relationship can be seen as:

a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron. (Scott, 1972, p. 92)

The asymmetrical dimension of this relationship is highlighted by Eric Wolf’s phrase “lopsided friendship”, expressing the differential control that the patrons have over resources and the nature of the obligations, flowing not just from the clients but from the patrons too (Wolf and Silverman, 2001). The dynamic can manifest, for example, as a client owing tribute to his chief, and the chief owing him
political privileges and rights, or as a peasant owing a local politician a vote and the politician owing to the peasant material needs (Wolf and Silverman, 2001). Thus, these relationships are based on complementary roles that are rooted in reciprocal rights and obligations.

With the above concept in mind, we can, therefore, recognise the importance of “middlemen” or “social brokers”, as highlighted by Jeremy Boissevain’s work in Sicily, where the middleman functions as the broker between the two parties and forms a bridge through which communication is made (Blok, 1969; Boissevain, 1969), serving to overcome gaps in communication and to form connections between groups, cultures and other factors. This brings into discussion the role of the broker within neopatrimonial relations (Boissevain, 1969). As such, it is crucial to note that, as neopatrimonialism expands within the state and other bureaucratic institutions, so also do the functions of the broker. Furthermore, as new political institutions are formed, the linkages through the brokers tend to increase through channels such as kinship, family ties, ethnicity and so on (Boissevain, 1969). Thus, as state functions shift and evolve over time to become more and more vested in individual interests, brokerage functions also tend to expand beyond the initial starting point into national institutions, pressure groups, political parties and so on (Boissevain, 1969). This gives us a picture of the neopatrimonial network and how it can branch out beyond the simple linear client–patron dynamic.

Furthermore, it also becomes necessary that within each relationship type the transactions in the client–patron relationship are examined, as they vary. The term ‘transactions’ refers to a mutual exchange of beneficial obligations between the patron and client, with the transaction depending on the needs of the client as well as the overall influence of the patron. In some instances, these transactions can be completely linear at the local level, while at other times they might flow into the hierarchy of a government through various persons of influence, thus resulting in a situation in which “the organization of government and the structure of patronage are parallel hierarchies” (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972, p. 155).

In addition to this, clientelism is intimately linked to poverty and inequality, of which it is probably both a cause and a consequence (Clara, 2010). Also, as noted by Hopkin (2006a), clientelism and corruption are interlinked, as clientelism incites corruption and vice versa. It is crucial to note that despite notions that clientelism would disappear because of democratisation, it does, however, persist in both developing and developed countries, irrespective of democracy (Clara, 2010).
Just as the variables of clientelism are subject to political change and development, so also is the type of clientelist relationship. For example, factors such as technological or economic change can reinforce the patron’s position, with the possibility of their clients changing but their positions remaining the same (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). As such, when patrons give way to the emergence of new patrons, the displaced persons are alternatively converted into “brokers” or “middlemen” (Boissevain, 1969; Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). Although the type of resources available for use may vary, this does not change how resources are used. However, in the new situation, brokers may use state resources in the form of policy outputs to achieve their desired goal (Boissevain, 1969; Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). This has, therefore, taken the locally centred nexus of exchanges of either prebends or tributes into the broader dimension of a network of formed relationships that involves political balancing, and a wider network (Boissevain, 1969). As such, efforts towards intervention within the socio-economic milieu may alter the original position of the patron to that of a broker, but, overall, it may have little effect on clientelism itself (Boissevain, 1969).

Furthermore, in accordance with Mushtaq Khan’s work, which critiques the excessive focus on the adverse effects of clientelism and rent-seeking, this thesis does not seek to list or merely identify the effects of clientelism and rent-seeking (Khan, 2005). Rather, just like Khan, it acknowledges the inevitable nature of political clientelism and rent-seeking in all societies, especially where markets are imperfect (Khan, 2005). As such, the focus of studies should not be on where and to what degree these features exist in societies, but should shift to a more effective analysis as to whether these two phenomena lead to the creation or capture of rents, and what this means for the societies in which they occur (Khan, 2005). This would give way to an understanding of how rents could lead to the stabilisation of the political process, the growth of the markets and, where conflict occurs, a shift into the formal market structure. Consequently, it becomes clear that clientelism cannot be meaningfully studied outside the setting in which it occurs, because its nature and dimensions depend on the structure of the society within which it occurs, as well as the political structure of that society. There also needs to be a distinction made between patterns that encompass the whole state and neopatrimonialism patterns within the state, as this study shows in Chapter 4.

In addition, as recognised above, relationships also change within the patron–client relationship: there exist what are known as ‘role-sets’, which are seen as paired relationships that link the patron to the client and vice versa, while a clientele network is an aggregate of role-sets linked to each other in such a manner that the patron also occupies a client position to a superior of his own, who in turn is his patron (Lemarchand and Legg, 1972). The reason for this identification is to note that client and patron
can replicate themselves within various intergroups, or even institutional levels. As such, the simple, straightforward relationship thought to exist between a client and patron may be a little more complex, and could possibly extend across a segment of society or the whole society itself.

Thus, it can be deduced that the wealth of the economy and the resources available to the state influence the scope of clientelism regardless of the political regime. Where there is a lack of resources, clientelism is more likely to occur within the distribution of public offices by elites. The average citizen does not receive adequate funds to sustain themselves and, as such, even the smallest political benefit received through clientelism would be valuable (Van de Walle, 2012). The wealth of the economy and the resources a state has can both be identified in neopatrimonial systems, and together form a gateway into the operations of informal institutions, opening up the means for doing whatever is needed to survive, including for personal enrichment. This brings into discussion the link between conflict, peace economies and neopatrimonialism.

Political Entrepreneurship

Branching off from political clientelism, we move into the dimension of political entrepreneurship. Political entrepreneurship involves similar features of conquest and the preservation of power by political actors, establishing links within a neopatrimonial system. Referring to political entrepreneurs, Compagnon viewed them as a group of individuals who live off politicians as a source of income (Compagnon, 2012). Constantly in pursuit of resources, positions of power as such are not necessarily their interest, but are, rather, a means by which prebends may be obtained for themselves or their clients, all of which contributes to the preservation of power. It is within this context that Weber views corruption as an “irregular and formally illegal variant” of the entrepreneur’s income (Weber, 1959, p. 127). It can be identified that the loyalty of followers can be traced to symbolic elements such as kinship, religion, witchcraft, charisma and so on, which is exploited by the entrepreneurs (Weber, 1959).

Using the example of a boss within twentieth century American politics, Weber describes how the political entrepreneur invests his own finances and controls a number of votes, which he then delivers to a particular candidate in exchange for some sort of influence over decisions within the state as a return on his investment (Weber, 1959). The political entrepreneur is supported by a team, and aspires to power through the guaranteed supply of material and rewards for his clients. Similarly noted by Bailey, to be a successful leader, one must, therefore, collect “more resources than one’s opponent and use them more effectively. Attacking an opponent means trying to destroy his resources or
preventing him from acquiring some or using them efficiently” (Bailey, 1971, p. 37). Building up and maintaining efficient support is the foundational basis of political entrepreneurship. In the pursuit of clients, there exists competition among various patrons; the struggle is about how one can outbid another patron through the combination of resources and the mobilisation of clients. This is a prominent theme that is explored by examining the struggle for power in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Godfatherism

Godfatherism is another concept embedded within neopatrimonialism, which explores relationships between patron and client that can be linked to conflict and peacebuilding, as this thesis shows. Godfatherism refers to a situation in which individuals dominate various public institutions by manoeuvring into elected offices as well as by manipulating other offices for their protégés (Albin-Lackey, 2012). These godfathers are not merely financial supporters, but rather possess the ability to mobilise individuals into violence, and work through corruption to hobble any competitors (Albin-Lackey, 2012). According to Daniel Bach, these godfathers represent the ‘strong men’ who can challenge the ‘big man’:

While the big man combines economic power with key political functions as a broker in a neopatrimonial setting; the strongman does so through his ability to control illicit forms of violence, if need be through the manipulation of public means of coercion. The strong man may be a warlord or the boss of a gang; he may also be observed in Nigeria under the fourth republic, a rogue politician, or his “godfather”. (Bach, 2005, p. 67)

Godfatherism is the process by which links are established between an individual and the institutional hierarchy in order for the individual to receive favoured treatment and support. As stated by Joseph, it is the process where:

An individual seeks the support and protection of an oga or a godfather while trying to acquire the basic social and material goods – loans, scholarships, licenses, plots of urban land, employment, promotion – and the main resource of the patron in meeting these requests is quite literally a piece of the state. (Joseph, 1991, p. 207)

Furthermore, according to Albert (2005), godfathers serve as political gatekeepers, who influence politics and manipulate society by surrounding themselves with an array of loyalists. They determine
who participates in politics and when (Albert, 2005). As noted in the HRW (2007) report, godfathers are more than just political campaign financiers: their power stems not only from their abundant wealth but also from the ability to influence and deploy violence, and from corruption that manipulates the local, state and national political system in order to support the politicians of their choice.

Godfatherism has characterised the political, religious, social and commercial networks of Nigeria since the colonial era. Several studies on Nigeria have featured the role of political godfathers and their godsons within the scope of fraudulent elections, and intra-party and political conflicts – a political interaction that promotes corruption, thus resulting in the stifling of democracy (Albert, 2006; Nnamani, 2006; Onwuzuruijbo, 2006; HRW, 2007). Both the godfather and the godson become critical factors (roles) in the development agenda by raising a network of individuals in religious, commercial and political arenas. In an atmosphere where political patrons thrive and seek office, godfathers are beneficial. Godfathers can include current and retired military generals and past presidents. Politics around the godfathers is centred around enjoying a portion of the ‘national cake’, as well as personalised control over it (Albin-Lackey, 2012). Within godfatherism, the interest of the godfather lies not in occupying political office, but rather in dominating and controlling these offices by filling them with their protégés, who would not be able to obtain political office without the help of the godfathers (Albin-Lackey, 2012). Government offices are, therefore, viewed by godfathers as investments which, when in their control, can yield greater rewards of wealth and power.

In practical terms, the godfather serves as a benefactor and mentor who trains their political godson to achieve success, and supports him not just with their wealth but, most importantly, with their network of connections. They shield their mentee from politics and plans that are likely to negatively influence them. The godson thus reciprocates, firstly by remaining loyal, and then by serving the demands of the godfather through the promise of control and power when successfully elected to office (Albin-Lackey, 2012). Furthermore, the godson expresses his support through symbolic gifts, and occasionally hosting lavish parties in honour of the godfather. As noted by Komter, “mutual loyalty, often supported by gifts, connects those involved in collective hostilities towards third parties as well as those who maintain collective friendships.” (2007, p. 94). Two very public godfathers in Nigeria, who were interested in the illicit economy and who furthered the criminalisation of politics, were Chief Lamidi Adeidibu and Chris Uba (Albin-Lackey, 2012). Through corruption and violence, they influenced the governments of their states.
It is crucial to note that corruption features prominently when talking about godfatherism (Aderonke and Awosika, 2013; Martini, 2014; Adeosun et al., 2016). Godfatherism has created a functioning system in which formal and informal institutions limit access to public goods, thus godfathers demand regular ‘returns’ from their protégés. These rewards range from contracts to stolen government funds, as well as the ability to appoint various positions within the government (Albin-Lackey, 2012). Godfathers derive their authority from effective proficiency in criminal activities, ranging from financing thugs to rigging elections, and when necessary bribing various officials who either stand in the way of their selected protégés taking over, or assist in making this a reality (Albin-Lackey, 2012). As such, politicians that have been helped are in debt to the godfathers. In reality, the entire country is reliant on a rent-collection system, which dictates not only the electoral process, but also the power structure. Elections in Nigeria are characterised by multiple voting, intimidation of voters, hijacking of ballot boxes, vote buying, violence and the stealing of ballot boxes (Idada and Uhumwuese, 2012; Martini, 2014). The inability to conduct credible elections since 1999 has been attributed to the existence of godfathers, especially within Anambra, Oyo, Enugu and Rivers states, due to the intense political tensions within these states (HRW, 2007). For the results of the 2019 general elections were said to be dictated by former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, Senator Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, former Lagos state governor Bola Tinubu, and current president Muhammadu Buhari, who were all regarded as godfathers (Shakirudeen, 2017).

Godfathers are seen to have transcended the political realm and entered into other areas of societal life, such as religion, commerce and even child-rearing, thus influencing the advancement and growth of a society. Although the empirical data for this thesis did not reveal much detail about the notion of godfathers, a minority of participants did agree that they sit at the top of the power structures of the political realm. AD1, an interviewee, notes that the godfathers mostly hide in the shadows and can be linked to any crime; they control everything that goes on, beyond the state level to the entire federal government. He argues that godfathers are the financial muscle behind most patrons, and that any examination of power dynamics is incomplete without mentioning godfathers. Thus, although the notion of godfatherism is a minor theme within this research, it opens avenues for future studies to examine the role and impact of godfatherism within the political economy of peacebuilding.

The Link between the Informal Economy, Peacebuilding and Neopatrimonialism

As studies have previously shown, testing and ascertaining the link between the informal economy, peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism can be difficult; however, there does exist clear evidence of an
affinity between them. Thus, taking all these relationships together, neopatrimonialism extends far beyond political domination; it is also embedded within the social and economic relations that together shape the state. It facilitates the solidification and growth of power structures in situations of conflict and in post-conflict settings. These power structures are simply replaced by the incoming political elites whose interest is in receiving their ‘cut’ or, as it is widely known, their share of the “national cake” (Van de Walle, 2012). This situation creates a legacy of neopatrimonialism that can lead to the build-up of corruption as it grows and evolves. Hence, with the central objective being the relationship between conflict and neopatrimonialism, current literature on neopatrimonialism does recognise the legacies of neopatrimonialism and its continuous cycle, but falls short of assessing the effect of these legacies and how they relate to other dimensions of the state, such as its economic, social and even political spheres. This reveals a need to explore the connection between the legacies of neopatrimonialism and conflict within a given state, region or even globally. Also, as identified by Wolf, it becomes necessary to recognise the location and cooperative ramifications of these clientele ties within the community, as he puts it, “where the patron is incorporated into the lineage to form solid patron-client blocs”, or “the institutional framework is extensive and the ties between multiple sponsors and multiple clients are diffuse and cross-cutting” (Wolf and Silverman, 2001, p. 204). As such, it also becomes necessary to examine how these various dimensions affect the political economy of a country as both one aspect and various interrelated structures of the country. In addition to this, a study based upon the actors within the political economy of peacebuilding will, therefore, contribute to an understanding of the reproduction of neopatrimonialism in relation to the legacies of conflict and peacebuilding.

Work on African democracies and market economies continues to refer to their informal, personality- and patronage-based nature, which is heavily based upon a neopatrimonial infrastructure, as opposed to formal institutions such as the rule of law or free and fair regular elections, which are some of the foundations of democracy (Pitcher et al., 2009). According to Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, this is:

> Very fruitful - but only insofar as the term “patrimonial” is used to designate not a level of “development” or differentiation of political regimes, but rather a specific way of coping with the major problems of political life which may cut across different levels of “development” or structural complexity. (Eisenstadt, 1973, p. 9)

In addition to this, the impact of neoliberal policies on the social welfare of the general population is also an area of interest when examining the link between peacebuilding and neoliberalism, the question here pertaining to the effect these economic policies have on the social welfare of society. This is an
issue raised by Dzelilovic but not covered in her work. She notes that the creation of social security and stability influence political participation as well as participation in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, and thus have the potential to influence the implementation of liberal peace (Bojicic-Dzelilovic, 2015). A lack of social security can lead to a reliance, for survival, not only on patronage networks but also on the informal economy.

Thus, from the examples cited it can be concluded that work on the political economy of conflict and on the neoliberal solutions suggested as addressing it have not given sufficient attention to socio-economic improvements and development of the informal economy, which constitutes a source of support for most of the population. As noted by Salih (2017), in its zeal to promote human rights and democracy, liberal peace theory, both in practice and principles, falls short by not taking into consideration the fact that post-conflict economies have been crippled by debt, poverty, diseases and so on, and may not be able to comply with the ethos of liberal peace just yet. Hence, it could conceivably be hypothesised that liberal peacebuilding in practice promotes relationships of clientelism within certain areas of states. Thus, this thesis tests this hypothesis by examining how and to what extent peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and how this shapes the informal economy, as well as how this influences post-conflict society and the overall peacebuilding agenda.

Furthermore, examination of the implementation of the liberal peace agenda by neoliberal policies reveals that these policies have fallen short of addressing individual impacts or shaping poverty reduction in terms of employment creation. Poverty and unemployment rates not only affect the formal economy but also impact the informal economy, as noted above. Over time there has been an immense interest within this area of peacebuilding studies, circling around poverty reduction and placing a focus on the need for employment creation to secure economic recovery and reduce poverty, which could positively affect the formal economy within any given society. Thus, it can be deduced that economic policies or reforms that increase employment opportunities will foster poverty reduction and subsequently lead to the establishment of economic security, promoting political participation and fostering peace. However, despite knowledge of this, there remains a gap in the systematic adoption of such policies within the peacebuilding agenda. Rather, efforts have been centred on macroeconomic policies that are in tune with monetary and fiscal policies, while institutional reforms that shape employment creation and lead to poverty reduction in order to foster peace receive less attention. This affects not only the scope of the formal economy but also that of the informal economy. The most probable reason for this in post-conflict societies is that institutional reforms seem to be more political in nature and to take a longer period to bring about. They could also involve the difficulty of relocating
a country’s resources as well as the structural realignment of the economy, which, as previously stated, runs the risk of corrupt elites or politicians using these reforms not only to secure a position of power and control but also to use it as a way of obtaining wealth, as is shown in Salih’s work. Thus, there is a complex web of issues that needs careful consideration when assessing the effects of neoliberal policies on poverty, as well as when examining the link between peacebuilding, neopatrimonialism and the informal economy.

Within the peacebuilding literature a sensitive issue that has also been explored is the trade-off that sometimes occurs at the end of a conflict, while a society is transitioning into the post-conflict stage. Despite the opinions of various scholars, many peacebuilding operations have either officially or unofficially engaged in compromise with warlords or criminal elites to foster peace. This ranges from including warring factions in power-sharing agreements and arranging amnesties for past crimes, to the toleration of illegal economic activities; a glaring example of the forgoing is the warlords in parliament in Afghanistan. This raises questions about stability and whether it should be pursued at all costs if that involves engagement with war/conflict criminals, and the question of to what extent should the state be willing to compromise? Should activities that existed within the conflict economy continue to thrive within the post-conflict stage in order to facilitate support and foster peace? To what extent will negotiation be deemed as buying peace, and is buying peace wrong? Does it in any way jeopardise the peacebuilding agenda? Also, should conflict criminals be recognised in peacebuilding forums for development? Should the state adopt an exclusive or inclusive approach to conflict entrepreneurs? Hence, in Chapter 4 this thesis examines the buying of peace adopted by the state and what the implications of this are.

Furthermore, the notion of legality differs across the various types of clientelism. Patronage, as previously stated, is perfectly legal, although it constitutes favouritism, which is a ‘grey area’ that is frowned upon. There is nothing illegal about the use of the patronage system within a state and it remains a practice in even the most mature democracies (Van de Walle, 2012). As such, the question then arises as to what the point is of studying a patronage system and its relationship to peacebuilding. The patron–client relationship comes into question when the intentions of the patron are fuelled by greed, as previously highlighted by Collier’s work and subsequently David Keen’s work (Collier, 2004; Keen, 2012). The relationship begins to operate within prebendalism, where the rule of law is subverted for personal gain, thus spreading within society. Therefore, the methods pursued for attaining these resources by both the patrons who need it and the clients who set out to obtain it for their patrons for personal enrichment become illegal (Van de Walle, 2012). Although this thesis is not centred on the
notion of whether a society is democratised or not, it is, however, essential to note that, according to Van de Walle’s work, clientelism is influenced by the nature of democratisation of a society (Van de Walle, 2012). He argues that the public would benefit more from clientelism in a society that is more democratised than they do in a society that is less democratic. His notion is that the less democratic society would favour the elites through clientelism, while the rule of law would be subverted, and various rights undermined as well (Van de Walle, 2012). This, therefore, could be a starting point for a comparative study on the varying dimensions of clientelism in democratic and non-democratic states.

Salih observes that the politics of conflict becomes interwoven into the fabric of the new political economy that peacebuilding is trying to establish, thus allowing criminal markets to thrive (Salih, 2017). Similarly, Medard notes: “while it is necessary to have the political power to be rich, it is also necessary to be rich in order to retain political power” (Medard, 1992, p. 172). Tim Kelsall also states that development in nations such as African states has been adversely affected by a system in which the leader is known as a ‘big man’ through the allocation of lucrative and productive economic opportunities to their various clients to secure legitimacy (Kelsall, 2012). As such, studies around development and economics need to develop a means of replacing these clientelist ties or bonds with a more arm’s length programmatic relationship at all levels, such as between political parties, officials, business associates, and – especially – electorates. The examination of this relationship with the intention of transforming it into a more productive and transparent one forms a basis for new analysis, which could study the relationship between conflict and neopatrimonialism. Thus, this research examines the bonds of clientship between patrons and clients and how they shape peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers states, and, further, how this shapes the informal economy, based on the observations of Salih (2017) and Kelsall (2012).

Conclusion

This literature review chapter has provided an overview of key academic discussions and interpretations of the informal economy, peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism. Section one drew on the definitions, scope and nature of the informal economy, highlighting the various theories within the literature. While recognising the weaknesses and strengths of previous work, it argued that this thesis adopts the globalisation thesis, complementary theory and the illegal school, which together fully capture the universal and interlinked nature of the informal economy and formal economy, while recognising the existence of social networks within both. This section recognised that there is a link between the informal economy and conflict, which is characterised by inequalities, hierarchies, privilege differences, neopatrimonialism and clientelism, which together increase activities within the
informal sphere undertaken in order to survive, while also promoting growth in the size and scope of the informal economy. While the relationship between the informal economy and peacebuilding exists, a study of this relationship is lacking, as shown by the works of Meagher (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017), Danielson 2015) and Jones.

Section two examined the understanding of liberal peacebuilding and the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding within Africa. It noted that the promotion of liberal peace has led to a disconnect in the political economy within the African states, where there is competition for control of resources, which can be seen as a site of power and has also become a site of domination within post-conflict societies. The activities of peacebuilding create opportunities for political influence and competition, which leads to a struggle for power among elites. This reinforces the need to examine the nature of peacebuilding within specific states.

Section three addressed the conceptualisation of neopatrimonialism, exploring the current literature that has addressed the relationship between conflict and neopatrimonialism and what the implications of this relationship are in post-conflict or peacebuilding settings – a focus which is the main component of this work. It further examined the notion of the ‘big man’, distinguishing between political clientelism, political entrepreneurism and godfatherism.

The final section linked the three conceptual terms, peacebuilding, the informal economy and neopatrimonialism, together. It noted that linking the three are a number of factors: poverty, the trade-off that sometimes occurs at the end of a conflict while trying to transition into the post-conflict stage, political competition and the power struggle. This section further noted that to fully understand how neopatrimonialism shapes peacebuilding and how it influences the informal economy these elements must be examined within the context of the political economy of peacebuilding.

Based on this gap and the above-mentioned arguments, this chapter shows that the link between peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism with regard to the informal economy has not received adequate attention in the literature. Consequently, this is the area in which this study becomes relevant. This study draws on popular political, economic, social and scholarly discourses discussed in this chapter on the informal economy, peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism, as well as on data from fieldwork, in order to examine how and to what extent state-led and donor-based initiatives are influenced by neopatrimonialism, and what implications this has for the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. Having discussed the conceptual framework of this thesis, in Chapter 3 we take this investigation
further by presenting a case-study analysis of the conflict, the peacebuilding process and the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State.
Chapter 3 – Conflict, Peacebuilding and the Informal Economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State

Introduction

This chapter focuses on providing a broad overview of Bayelsa State and Rivers State, systemically taking into consideration the conflict and peacebuilding process thus far. As the focus of this thesis is peacebuilding and the informal economy in these states, this chapter will start by providing an overview of the long and complex conflicts in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. The reason for starting with the conflict within the states is that, although the focus of this thesis is on peacebuilding, a background knowledge of the conflict will facilitate understanding of the peacebuilding initiatives and how they shape the informal economy. Thus, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section highlights the history behind the conflict, exploring the incidence of violence within the states and the interplay between resource conflict and the contextual factors responsible for the conflict, and examining the cultural, political and socio-economic dynamics. It will also highlight the various causes and the way they interplay in the conflict, which include ethnic divides, oil bunkering, environmental degradation, the weak and fragile state, arms proliferation, the emergence and spread of armed youth groups and militant groups, and will note the existence of elite bargains, resistance and patronage networks as they evolve over time. This section then discusses state-led peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, dividing them into ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ approaches. The specific objective of this section is to help shape our understanding of the current peacebuilding agenda; this is important as it provides an understanding of the peacebuilding landscape examined by this thesis. This exploration also serves to aid understanding of the blurred lines between peace and conflict in these states and the continued lack of sustainable peace.

The second section discusses the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. Although there is no evidence that measures the exact size of the informal economy within these states, this section highlights the levels of unemployment and types of jobs in the informal sector, thereby providing a foundational understanding to the informal economy, which is examined in Chapter 5.

The third section examines donor-based peacebuilding initiatives that address the conflict within Bayelsa State and Rivers State. It gives an in-depth overview of the peacebuilding initiatives selected, that is, the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), and the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), focusing specifically on the Partner for Peace (P4P) and Integrated
Peace and Development (IPDU) programmes. This section analyses the peacebuilding initiatives carried out by these organisations, focusing on how they were formulated and designed, as well as how they framed peace. Furthermore, it will discuss the types of initiatives engaged in, and how they structured the peacebuilding agenda, as knowledge of this plays a pivotal role in understanding the peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa and Rivers states, which will also be examined in more detail in Chapter 4.

Therefore, the overall objective of this chapter is to provide a solid foundational understanding of the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Understanding the crucial dynamics in the conflict and exploring the peacebuilding initiatives will aid understanding of the research questions: how and to what extent state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and political patronage; and how these initiatives influence the informal economy and the illicit informal economy and shape post-conflict development and the formation of positive peace.

The Political Economy of Conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers States

To understand the nature and characteristics of peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, there is a need to briefly examine the conflicts. Home to about 20 million Nigerians, the Niger Delta is one of the regions within Africa that has been plagued by intense conflict and violence over the years (Courson, 2009; Benson et al., 2014). The Niger Delta is in the south-eastern part of Nigeria and is mainly covered with creeks, forest and marshes. It is home to several minority ethnic groups, who have, over the years, all borne their share of the cost of oil exploration and believe that the government has marginalised them (Courson, 2009; Benson et al., 2014). The Niger Delta is marked by an amalgam of smaller ethnic groups, from the Ijaws to the Efik, Esan, Ibibio, Itsekiri, Annang, Oron, Okrika, Ogoni, Isoko, Urhobo and Epie-Atissa people, to mention just a few (Mähler, 2010). The exploration for and discovery of oil within the region has led to continuous investments within that sector that have not only crippled other sectors but have further led to conflict over its ownership and rewards (Benson et al., 2014). The region of the Niger Delta has been the site of active and violent conflict since 1999, with major actors ranging from the Nigerian government, the oil corporations and the indigenous people, as well as militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Niger Delta Freedom Fighters (NDFF) (Ifeke, 2000; Ikelegbe, 2006; Oyefusi, 2007; Courson, 2009; Akpan, 2010; Ajala, 2016). Due to the violence and the constant disruption of oil exploration, poverty within the region has increased, thus leading to socio-economic unrest that has been attributed to a number of factors, such as a lack of transparency, violations of human rights, high levels of corruption, lack of accountability in governance, political and
social injustices, and environmental degradation over the last 50 years (Ukeje, 2008, p. 10; Mähler, 2010; Bamidele, 2017). The conflict is complex and interwound with various overlapping problems, such as poverty, corruption and political instability (Basedau and Mehler, 2005, p. 9), and is further intensified by political elites and the struggle for power.

Map 1 Map of the Niger Delta showing Bayelsa and Rivers States

Source: by Endoro Oweikeye, 2017, p. 13

Prior to the discovery of oil, the economy in Bayelsa and Rivers depended upon cash, food crops and fishing (Alley et al., 2014, p. 377; Akanmidu, 2015, p. 18). As far back as 1970, Nigeria was producing rubber, palm oil, palm kernel, cotton, rubber and cocoa, which boosted its foreign earnings, enhancing them by 75 per cent; however, as a result of the oil boom agriculture was slowly replaced, transforming Nigeria and both Rivers’ and Bayelsa’s economy to becoming highly dependent on oil rents (Sekumade, 2009, pp. 1385–1386; Pak and Ebienfa, 2011, p. 140). The harmful effects on these states have led to the destruction of employment opportunities in agriculture, extending beyond Rivers State and Bayelsa State to the entire Niger Delta region (Sekumade, 2009, pp. 1385–1386; Pak and Ebienfa, 2011, p. 140). Created in 1996 by the late Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha, Bayelsa State has eight local government areas (LGAs), namely: Brass, Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama, Southern Ijaw
and Yenagoa. It also has 105 electoral wards or registration areas, 24 state constituencies, and three Senatorial Districts. It shares boundaries with Rivers State in the east; Delta State on the north, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west and south (Ebiede, Bassey and Asuni, 2021). Agricultural production and petty trading are the main sources of income, with a majority of the population in the rural areas being farmers. Rivers State was formed in 1967 by the government of General Yakubu Gowon, with its capital known as Port Harcourt, and has Anambra state bordering it to the north, Bayelsa to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. It became home to various armed militant groups, such as the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) and the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) (Ebiede, Bassey and Asuni, 2021), with prominent militant leaders like Ateke Tom, Alhaji Asari Dokubo, Soboma George, Sobomabo ‘Egberipapa’ Jacreece, and Farah Dagogo. Both states serve as hubs to decades of socio-economic instability and underdevelopment within the Niger Delta region that led to various forms of environmental conflicts, political violence, backwardness, extreme poverty, deprivation, unemployment and poor infrastructure, that was further exacerbated by competition for resources and various armed groups (Ebiede, Bassey and Asuni, 2021).

As highlighted by many previous studies on what is termed the ‘resource curse’, Bayelsa and Rivers has served as a prime example for discussion on natural resources (Auyt, 1993; Collier and Hoeffler, 2001; Le Billon, 2001; Sachs and Warner, 2001). Over 50 years of oil production has, indeed, not resulted in socio-economic development, thus reinforcing the resource curse dynamics present in the region. In addition, previous work on Bayelsa and Rivers has analysed the regional conflict using the greed and grievance paradigm (Renner, 1996; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Collier and Hoeffler, 2000, 2002). Also, as noted by Eifert, Miguel and Posner (2010) and Beyers (2015), ethnic and religious identities in Africa have been the instruments through which there is competition for political power. However, a closer look into the conflict within the region reveals that it is not so much the distribution of resources that was the problem, although this was partly the issue; rather, the distribution and management of resources by the government served as a major cause of the conflict (Ajala, 2016; Ebiede, Bassey and Asuni, 2021). This problem stemmed not only from a dependence on oil, but also from weak resource management leading to further socio-economic challenges (Mähler, 2010; Ebiede, Bassey and Asuni, 2021). This situation led to high levels of unemployment as the population was left without jobs; unemployment levels in the Niger Delta are higher than in the rest of the country, with over 50 per cent of the population living on less than a dollar a day and 80 per cent on less than $2 a day (UNDP, 2008, p. 35), as shown in Figure 5 Unemployment Rates in Nigeria by Geopolitical Zones (2018) (IDEA, 2001, p. 254; UNDP, 2006, p. 131; Aigbokhan, 2007, p. 195).
This chapter distinguishes between the primary and secondary actors in the peacebuilding (conflict) process in Bayelsa and Rivers. The key players in the conflict in these states were the federal government, the state governments, regional development organisations, oil companies, militant groups and communities. The primary actors consisted of the militants, political elites and Niger Delta communities. The political elites (who I also refer to as ‘the patrons’ in this research) and militants constitute primary actors as they have been the main actors in the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers. The resource curse arguments were strengthened by the notion that Nigerian elites and oil companies were in pursuit of oil wealth, thus fuelling various drivers of violence. This is evident from the allocation formula of resources in the region, as oil profits largely benefited a select few Nigerian elites and oil companies, to the detriment of the Niger Delta communities (Wengraf, 2018). The elites have benefited from the oil profits, neglecting problems such as poverty, unemployment and pollution. Thus, corruption and the indices of oil bunkering have increasingly worsened the living conditions of the general population. This situation, along with the presence of ethnic rivalries, and the rise in and competition among militant groups has further fuelled violence in Bayelsa and Rivers.

The secondary actors in the conflict were the traditional leaders and civil society, who played a supportive and intermediary role (Mawere, 2014). They include traditional and religious leaders, and civil society. Traditional leaders are recognised authorities, who have for decades aided in sustaining the customs and traditions of the Niger Delta. They serve as intermediaries between the state, federal government and the local population, dealing with cultural matters such as issues about land, land customs and promoting cultural values, as well as performing intermediary roles for members of their respective traditional areas (Mawere, 2014, p. 3). Traditional leaders or community chiefs served as agents, who represented their communities when oil spillages happened, in order to discuss or review compensation. Van Kessel and Oomen (1997, p. 585) have noted how traditional authorities in Africa have adapted to the changing times. They have remained relevant despite political regimes changing from dictatorships to democracies; this highlights how traditions adapt to societal transformations. Traditional leaders in the Niger Delta have played various roles in the resource-based conflict in the region, mediating between the government and fighters (Ikelegbe, 2005; Asuni, 2009).

Van Kessel and Oomen (1997) have also highlighted how easily traditional leaders have been manipulated by the patrons of Bayelsa and Rivers, aligning themselves within the patronage networks. It has also been observed that some traditional leaders have contributed to the oil conflict while aligning their interests with oil companies and political elites (Ikelegbe, 2005; Asuni, 2009; Kiipoye, 2015;
Iwilade, 2017). For example, the process of paying compensation to host communities was done through traditional leaders; payments were made by the leaders, whose job was to distribute funds to the affected members of the community. However, this rarely happened; in practice what occurred was that the bulk of the payment remained with the leaders, and some of it was given to leaders of militant groups in the creeks (Kiipoye, 2015; Iwilade, 2017). Thus, the payment was not received by members of the affected community. In many cases, the community was told that compensation had not been given, which further fuelled conflict with the oil companies. As previously noted by Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2005), corruption-related funds flow not just from the state levels to the federal government, they also flow to the traditional leaders, who function as local contractors. Thus, it can be deduced that traditional leaders play both positive and negative roles in the conflict. As noted by a traditional ruler of the Efuts in Calabar of Cross River State, Muri Effiong Mbukpa, “some traditional leaders are militants in traditional attire” (The Guardian, 2016b). He further stated:

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

Thus, it can be noted that certain traditional leaders have, indeed, played a role in the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers states, and have aligned themselves with the patronage system. The mutually beneficial relationship between the primary and secondary actors in the conflict has hindered the peacebuilding process in the Niger Delta.

Taken together, analysing both the primary and secondary actors also demonstrates that, just as in other African societies, the conflicts in Bayelsa and Rivers states have been affected by socio-economic groups that influence local politics for their personal interest. Furthermore, such analysis provides understanding of the important background in which the involvement and importance of certain actors (e.g., patrons, traditional leaders) in peacebuilding initiatives has contributed to patronage peacebuilding; this will be further explored in Chapter 4. Table 4, below, further highlights the main stakeholders in the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers.

| Federal Government | Receives taxes, royalties, and equity income from the oil companies and decides on their
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------
| **State and Local Governments** | The nine oil-producing Niger Delta states receive 13% of the revenues from the oil and gas which they produce, along with the statutory monthly allocation given to all 36 Nigerian states. The substantial increase in revenues flowing into these states and their local government areas has not translated into sustained development. Given the high stakes of holding public office, a number of local politicians have been charged with rigging elections in order to win, thereafter misappropriating funds. To reassure their oil producing communities, seven states have created specific organizations to channel oil revenue funds for their development. |
| **Regional Development Institutions** | The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC, 2000) is funded by both public and industry sources to plan and implement projects for the region. The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA, 2008) has an overarching mandate to implement major regional infrastructure projects and support programs for youth. In general, regional organizations have shown mediocre performance due in part to inadequate planning, poor focus on results, lack of transparency and under-funding. |
| **International Oil Companies** | About two dozen international oil companies (IOCs) operate in the region. Nearly all actively contribute to the NDCC and directly fund development in local communities as a way of acquiring a social license to operate within the region. Increasingly, the development projects |
are applying best-practice development strategies and are being undertaken in partnership with international donors, NGOs, and government institutions at various levels. At times, IOC community projects have been hampered by inadequate planning and co-ordination and poor regional security.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resistance and Armed Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since the 1990s, a variety of resistance and armed groups have emerged, a number joining together in 2005 under the umbrella Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Typically they pursue a dual agenda, one a political struggle against grievances of resource control and development neglect, the other violent tactics to further profits from oil theft or other illicit trade. Many “militants” justify violence as a response to the perceived injustice of not benefiting from their own resources while suffering the negative consequences of industry activity. They often demand greater local control, more transparent management of oil revenues, and adequate compensation to those affected by oil extraction. A number of groups have taken advantage of the situation to operate as criminal gangs that engage in petty crime and kidnapping for ransom. The various groups and networks are very diverse, ranging from criminal gangs to non-violent advocacy groups, and they do not fit easily into fixed categories. In October 2009 more than 20,000 ex-combatants accepted amnesty from the government and have been participating in a program of disarmament,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communities

Most men and women in the Niger Delta feel politically disenfranchised and disadvantaged in comparison to the rest of Nigeria. They are frustrated that they cannot legitimately benefit from the oil resources, and they often distrust leaders who purport to negotiate on their behalf. Conflict occurs both among and within communities over access to benefits from government and companies. Being designated as a “host community” to an oil facility comes with benefits, but historically this practice has exacerbated jealousy and fighting among communities and has also led to disputes over “oil” boundaries. Surveys show that communities welcome contributions of assistance but prefer to be in charge of planning and managing their own development.

Source: Francis, Lapin and Rossiasco, 2011, p. 5-6

Table 4 Main Stakeholders in Bayelsa State and Rivers State

Over the years, various scholars have attributed different causes to the conflict in the region. Ejibunu (2007) noted that the causes of the conflict are: the degradation of the environment, high unemployment rates, economic distortions, violations of human rights by both private and public organisations, the overall structure of the Nigerian government, and the division tactics used by oil companies within the region, as well as corruption. Ajala (2016) notes that negligence on the part of both the government and oil companies can also be linked as a factor to the build-up of conflict in the region. The lack of proper oil exploration and the failure to clean up oil spills further created a climate of pollution (Ajala, 2016). For example, it has been estimated that between 1958 and 2010 there have been between 9 and 13 million barrels of oil spilled through oil exploration activities within the region (Baird, 2010). Amnesty international (AI) report that people in the Niger Delta have “to drink, cook and wash with polluted water” (AI, 2009); this results in health problems within the region ranging from
Another cause of the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers was attributed to the oil revenue distribution allocation carried out by the Nigerian government, which was at the expense of the indigenous people of the region. The proceeds of the oil discovered was used to develop the regions of the three major ethnic groups and to line the pockets of their elites, at the expense of the Niger Delta states, the region where the oil was found (Ojakorotu and Gilbert, 2010). It is crucial to note that years after the discovery of oil the residents of the Niger Delta are still regarded as minorities, and, as rightly observed by Ojakorotu and Okeke-Uzodike, at present, “Nigerian federalism is skewed, and it does not adequately cater for the interests of the minority.” (2006, p. 101). This is important, as hostilities between ethnic groups in Rivers State and Bayelsa State were intensified by the increase in oil prices and the struggle for oil lands, which were a symbol of power. Thus, the conflict saw ethnic hostilities being reignited due to the existence of oil royalties, the need for political influence and even over electoral representation (Ajala, 2016). Consequently, conflict was exacerbated, as the only way people in the region could benefit was to have some affiliation with oil. In turn, the need to be affiliated with oil led to oil bunkering (Ajala, 2016).

Another oil-related cause of conflict was economic sabotage because of oil bunkering. Oil bunkering here refers to the siphoning and transport of refined or crude oil that is usually sold in illegal black markets, not only transported within the Niger Delta region but also shipped to the neighbouring states of Senegal, Benin and Ivory Coast, and to Asia, Europe and even America (Asuni, 2009; Vreÿ, 2012; Alohan, 2013; INGWE, 2015). The theft of oil has transitioned from small-scale theft with canoes in the 1980s to larger-scale more organised attacks by cartels and militant groups (Ajala, 2016). The actors within this thriving illegal oil economy vary from members of militant groups, security personnel of the Nigerian navy, and the police force (AI, 2005, p. 35; ICG, 2006, p. 9), to even local politicians and elites, as well as godfathers of the community. Experts who have analysed the chains of sales have said that involvement in illegal oil bunkering goes up to the “highest levels of government” (Lubeck et al., 2007, p. 9). Thus, it is clear that due to the inconsistent nature of conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers and the high levels of corruption and lack of transparency and accountability, along with growing militarisation, illegal oil bunkering is a thriving business that is here to stay, as it aids the poor and lines the pockets of those in power (Mähler, 2010). What is interesting to note, however, is that from 2006 till the present (2021), the government has remained nonchalant in dealing with oil bunkering issues, raising questions
again about the priorities of the state and the factors put in place to ensure the continued flow of illegal oil bunkering.

Another element that has led to violent conflict in the region is the destruction and mismanagement of resources. The resources in the Niger Delta have been mismanaged, or rather lack effective sustainable management, and this has triggered several conflicts (Sala-i-Martin, 2003). The lack of proper exploration on the part of the oil corporations, and the lack of enforcement of proper exploration methods by the Nigerian government have led to violent responses by the people. Improper resource management resulted in economic distortions, leading to widespread unemployment and poverty. Furthermore, a key element that has emerged through analysis of the Niger Delta is that not only is the distribution of resources an issue in the region, but also the governance behind the distribution is problematic. Consequently, economic distortions and the lack of proper resource management are central contextual links to violence within Bayelsa and Rivers (Mähl er, 2010; Alohan, 2013).

Furthermore, a significant aspect of the conflict was the circulation of weapons within the region, which was a crucial factor in the onset of conflict (Zinn, 2005, p. 106; Okonta, 2006; Mähl er, 2010; Nwonwu, 2010). The proliferation of arms within the region can also be linked to electioneering campaigns. Youth in these regions have been armed during elections since as far back as 1999 (Zinn, 2005, p. 106; Okonta, 2006; Mähl er, 2010; Nwonwu, 2010). The sources of these weapons are different, with some being traced to the Biafra war, and others being imported from neighbouring countries due to porous borders such as those with Cameroon and Chad (HRW, 2003, p. 25; Hazen and Horner, 2007, p. 34). Groups were enabled with cash and given arms, with the sole aim of intimidating voters and ensuring ‘the right candidate’ was selected. The weapons used during elections were the same weapons used to carry out crimes such as stealing and terrorising communities, which served as an alternative response to unemployment, in addition to attacks on oil pipelines and various oil installations (Zinn, 2005, p. 106; Okonta, 2006; Mähl er, 2010; Nwonwu, 2010). In addition to the proliferation of arms, dirty politics and antics have been promoted due to poor structures and a lack of transparency, leading to personal enrichment through the patrimonialism and corruption that existed within the system, and fostering crimes such as blackmailing and kidnapping (Corruption Perception Index; Zinn, 2005, p. 106; Okonta, 2006; HRW, 2007, p. 96; Nwonwu, 2010). The phenomenon of kidnapping was dominant in the 1990s and grew over the years into a lucrative business in the region (ICG, 2006, p. 1; Hazen and Horner, 2007, p. 69). This business thrived as expatriates employed by oil companies were held captive, and, over the years, the nature of the kidnapping changed to include the children of wealthy Nigerians and members of the elites themselves. According to Bulwark Intelligence in 2018 the states that recorded the highest
number of kidnappings included Kaduna, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Zamfara and Katsina (Assanvo and Okereke, 2019). Over time, the motive for conflict has shifted, overtaken by a thriving economy of violence that is fuelled by the illegal oil trade and kidnapping. Hence, networks have continued to build and grow in complexity, changing leadership and continuing to embezzle funds from the people through kidnappings, blackmail, terrorising communities and so on (Mähler, 2010; Obi, 2010; Omotola, 2012; Iwilede, 2017; Obi and Oriola, 2018).

Figure 4 Perceptions of Causes of Conflict in the Niger Delta

Source: Amoateng, 2020, p. 120

The table in Figure 5 was compiled by Elvis Nana Kwasi Amoateng in his thesis on the Niger Delta, and highlights what people of the Niger Delta believe to be the actual cause of the conflict in the region (Amoateng, 2020). According to his analysis, many believe the conflict in the region was a result of bad institutions and environmental degradation, while many also consider the factor of greed among the leaders in the region to be significant (Amoateng, 2020). Thus it can deduced that there are varying factors that have caused the conflict in both Bayelsa and Rivers, among which are environmental degradation, weak state institutions, oil bunkering, youth dissatisfaction, frustration, poverty and the mismanagement of state resources to mention just a few. These factors can be grouped into structural factors, driving factors and provocating factors, as illustrated by Table 5, below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Factors</th>
<th>Social High Social Fragmentation</th>
<th>Government System Flawed Federalism</th>
<th>Economic Political Economy of Oil</th>
<th>Cultural / Political Patrimonialism</th>
<th>Security Weak State Capacity to Protect Citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driving Factors</td>
<td>Strong bonding within groups, weak bridging between groups, Youth Bulge</td>
<td>Strong center, weak periphery State vs. traditional systems</td>
<td>High dependency on oil, capital intensive</td>
<td>Weak state-citizen relationships, primacy of informal networks</td>
<td>Weak rule of law Security forces poorly oriented and coordinated, limited presence of the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provoking Factors</td>
<td>Hardening of social identities, tensions over access to oil benefits, intergenerational conflicts</td>
<td>‘Winner-takes-all’ political system Sense of relative inequality, lack of inclusive, transparent and democratic political institutions</td>
<td>Perception of relative deprivation, environmental damage, loss of traditional livelihoods</td>
<td>Pervasive corruption, poor governance and impunity, rent-seeking behavior, lack of public transparency and accountability</td>
<td>Highly profitable illegal activities, arms proliferation, culture of violence, poorly trained and equipped security forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak mechanisms for dispute resolution, patterns of social protest</td>
<td>Sense of political marginalization, under-representation</td>
<td>Profiting from instability, e.g. oil bunkering</td>
<td>Political manipulation of tensions, rigged elections</td>
<td>Vigilante justice, private security contracts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Factors Influencing Instability in the Niger Delta

Source: Francis, Lapin and Rossiasco, 2011, p. 23

Thus far, this section has shown that there are indeed many contributing factors – both resources based, and non-resources based – that are responsible for conflict within the Bayelsa and Rivers states. Thus, there is no consensus as to which of these factors resulted in the conflict. However, it is crucial
to note that oil is said to have been the major motive for grievances held by the population of the region. There are other causes of the conflict that are beyond but closely linked to oil, which include overall mismanagement, weak state institutions, indebtedness and falling oil prices (Mähler, 2010; Francis, Lapin and Rossiasco, 2011).

Consequently, the injustices within the Niger Delta states gave rise to various forms of resistance, such as from militant groups, gangs and vigilante groups, who demanded the transparent management of resources and compensation within these states. The underlying causes of resistance were unemployment, economic marginalisation and poverty. It holds that the presence of socio-economic inequalities in society would provide conditions in which such resistance would exist. These groups used violence as a means of pursuing their objectives and fought for the control of local communities. Additionally, the opportunities for violent conflict were increased by the presence of oil, which served as a financing tool for militant groups. As noted in the Introduction, with regard to the self-financing nature of conflict explored by Johnathan Goodhand (2008) (see Chapter 1), the rents from oil promoted patronage networks and corruption, which formed the foundation for illegal oil bunkering (Mähler, 2010). Apart from militant groups, other criminal gangs were formed within the Niger Delta; however, it is crucial to note that the line between these two is often blurred (Francis, 2008). While some groups were criminal organisations obsessed with the pursuit of power, others were mere indigenes fighting for what was rightfully theirs in the only way they knew (Bamidele, 2017). As some of these groups will be discussed further in chapters 4 and 5, rather than providing a selection from a broad spectrum of groups that have played a role – whether through action or debate – in the Bayelsa and Rivers conflict, Table 6, below, provides a brief overview of some prominent non-violent advocacy groups, militant groups, cults and vigilante groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Adaka Boro’s Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF, 1966)</td>
<td>NDVF was the first Ijaw nationalist armed group, which in 1966 called for creation of an independent Niger Delta republic. This action pre-dated the well-known secession of Biafra, contiguous with Nigeria’s then eastern region. The leader, Isaac Adaka Boro is an Ijaw hero, who mobilised a force of 150 men that fought valiantly for 12 days until they were arrested on charges of treason. Boro was later pardoned by General Gowon and led the Federal forces in their first attacks against Biafra in the coastal Niger Delta. He was killed in battle at the age of 30 and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force</strong> <em>(NDPVF, 2003)</em></td>
<td><strong>Led by Ateke Tom, and based in the Okrika area of Rivers State, this large force was independent of MEND, but was occasionally allied for specific operations. Known for sophisticated and lucrative bunkering operations, a direct pipeline from the Port Harcourt refinery to Tom’s camp was found in March 2008.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Asari was famed for his violent clashes with militant Ateke Tom (below) over territory, bunkering routes, and political alliances. They vied for the role as former Rivers State Gov. Odili’s ‘chief security officer’. Asari was arrested on charges of treason in September 2005 after calling for the dissolution of Nigeria and was released in June 2007 as part of a political arrangement aimed at engaging militants in dialogue. In 2008, Asari organized a conference on the Niger Delta in Abuja, opened by then vp, Goodluck Jonathan. He is now a ‘militant statesman’ who did not accept the 2009 amnesty because his acceptance would, by implication, cast him in the role of a criminal, not a rights campaigner.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(‘leopard’) Boro, has been a point of reference for Ijaw nationalists ever since. He was a native of Kaiama, hence the symbolism of the 1998 Kaiama Declaration. Dokubo Asari (below) named his Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force after the original NDVF</td>
<td>is remembered by Ijaws throughout the world on ‘Isaac Boro Day.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force</strong> <em>(NDPVF, 2003)</em></td>
<td>NDPVF has been led by Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo Asari since declaring “all-out war” on the Nigerian government in 2004. The group has now become a non-violent political platform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for Asari’s demands for self-determination in an ‘illegitimate’ federal Nigerian State. He justifies bunkering as a form of resource control.

A breakaway faction from Asari’s NDPVF is the ‘Martyr’s Brigade’, whose spokesperson ‘Cynthia Whyte’ announced MEND’s first 2005 attacks. She (or he) also speaks for a high-minded political umbrella group, the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC).

September 2005 after calling for the dissolution of Nigeria and was released in June 2007 as part of a political arrangement aimed at engaging militants in dialogue. In 2008, Asari organized a conference on the Niger Delta in Abuja, opened by then vp, Goodluck Jonathan. He is now a ‘militant statesman’ who did not accept the 2009 amnesty because his acceptance would, by implication, cast him in the role of a criminal, not a rights campaigner.

**Niger Delta Vigilante Movement (NDVM, 2003)**

Led by Ateke Tom, and based in the Okrika area of Rivers State, this large force was independent of MEND, but was occasionally allied for specific operations. Known for sophisticated and lucrative bunkering operations, a direct pipeline from the Port Harcourt refinery to Tom’s camp was found in March 2008.

In December 2007, following increased incidents of piracy and sabotage, the JTF launched an aerial attack on Ateke Tom’s camp. On Christmas and New Year’s Days, the NDVM counterattacked in PH, shooting up a major hotel and other targets. Tom and his men have accepted the amnesty.

**Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP, 1990)**

Co-founded by the late Kenule Saro-Wiwa and G. B. Leton, MOSOP is headquartered at both Port Harcourt and Bane, the Saro-Wiwa Ogoni family compound. Active members are drawn from Ogoni youth. Typically, all adults among the Saro-Wiwa and eight followers were imprisoned in 1994 for allegedly conspiring to murder four Ogoni chiefs acting as negotiators with the government. The Ogoni nine were hanged in November 1995 in what MOSOP termed an “ex-judicial murder.” The execution led to a three-year period of international sanctions against Nigeria by
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ijaw Youth Council (IYC, 1998)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founded by Oronto Douglas, Asume Osuoka, Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo Asari, and others, the ICC was formerly headed by Chris Ikiyor and currently by Abiye Kroymiema. This vocal advocacy and civil rights group seeks justice and equity for the oil-bearing Ijaw communities in the Niger Delta. The IYC militant wing, the Egbesu Boys, was headed by Asari until late 2003 and is now inactive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The IYC became the driving force behind the famous Ijaw manifesto or ‘Kaiama Declaration’. Today, the IYC regularly dialogues with the government and industry to seek common ground on issues or to resolve conflicts. The group also negotiates for security contracts and other forms of employment for Ijaw youth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These two groups are often at odds. Deegbam operates in Rivers State, especially Ogoni, Buguma, Degema, and many slums of Port Harcourt. The founder, ‘Occasion Boy’, or Onengiefori Terika, was killed in 2003 by Deywell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deegbam is a ‘street’ wing of the Klansmen Konfraternity. It was once allied with Dokubo Asari’s NVDF, created in 2004 (see below). Deywell is a ‘street’ wing of the Supreme Vikings Confraternity (SVC). It attracts petty criminals and controls drug and other forms of trade in peri-urban areas of Port Harcourt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

500,000 Ogoni pay levies to the organization. Ken Saro-Wiwa authored the Ogoni Bill of rights, calling for greater Ogoni autonomy, share of oil revenue, compensation for environmental damage, and eventual withdrawal of Shell from Ogoniland’s 96 oil wells and five oilfields. Website: http://www.mosop.net

many Western nations, including suspension from the Commonwealth, until the death of military dictator, Sani Abacha, in 1998.
Deywell operates in peri-urban areas of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, and other large cities and towns in the eastern Niger Delta, including Bayelsa State.

Table 6 Overview of Resistance Groups Discussed in Empirical Chapters

Source: Francis et al., 2011, p. 55

The next section aims to examine the state-led peacebuilding responses adopted by Rivers State and Bayelsa State.

**State-Based Responses to the Niger Delta Oil Conflict**

Conflict within Bayelsa and Rivers emerged with the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta between 1956 and 1958, arising out of tensions between the foreign oil corporations and the Ijaws and Ogoni people, who felt marginalised ( Adeyeri, 2017). This began what is today seen as a long, complex and zigzagging process that continues to relapse, and as the conflict changes so does the peacebuilding process: from the Ijaw unrest in the 1990s to the creation of the Niger Delta Commission in 2000, and the emergence of armed groups, which led to the oil crisis that started in 2004 and still continues (Adeyeri, 2017). Included in the oil crisis were the phenomena of kidnapping and piracy, and the full-blown emergence of militant groups, which reached its peak in 2008–09, leading to the amnesty programme in 2009 (Adeyeri, 2017). Both military and civilian governments of the Nigerian state have, since independence, tried to resolve efforts in the Niger Delta. A 2006 report found that there have been more than 12 panels in the 46 years of independence aimed at ending poverty and the problems associated with poverty (ICG, 2006, p. 17). These approaches have, however, been seen in different ways. According to Cyril Obi, the methods used by the Nigerian government have been based upon “avoidance and confrontation” (Obi, 2002, p. 99). This implies that the efforts made by the government have not been aimed at resolving the conflict and were not in the interest of the people in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Rather, these approaches by the government further exacerbated the conflict within the region, as observed by Inuwa (2017), who stated that peacebuilding there was based upon minimalist and maximalist approaches. According to the minimalist perspective, the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers is a threat to the stability and security of the country, thus, the nation must apply lethal force in order to maintain the situation. In contrast, the maximalist approach views the conflict in the region as being grounded in deep underdevelopment in the region (Inuwa, 2017, p. 160). Overall, analysis of the state-
led peacebuilding approaches in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, explored below, shows the use of both ‘carrot’ (positive methods) as well as ‘stick’ (coercive methods) that have been described as “heavy-handed military tactics” (Hazen and Horner, 2007, p. 96).

The ‘Carrot’ Approach

The carrot approach is a non-violent method of peacebuilding; according to Nye (1990), this is a soft-power approach. For example, the Willink Commission report, commissioned by the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) between 1960 and 1966 (Akinyoade, 2018, p. 223) was a soft-power approach used by the government. It was aimed at developing agriculture within the region; however, it failed because of the Nigerian Biafra civil war which took place in 1967–76 (Ifedi and Anyu, 2011, p. 85). Following this initiative was the River Basin and Development Authorities Decree, established by the civilian government of Shehu Shagari (Ezenweani, 2017). The Niger Delta Basin Development Authority was then created (NDBDA) “to address the environmental challenges in the region and aimed at irrigation, water supply facilities, fishing regulations and pollution control” (Ezenweani, 2017, p. 1590). However, the agency failed because of funding issues and the nature of its board, as those in charge were accused of embezzling funds (Adegeye, 1982, p. 301).

Subsequently, in 1982, the Presidential Task Force on Niger Delta Development (PTFNDD) was established by the government (Ahonsi, 2011, p. 25). This enabled the national assembly of the country to enact the revenue provision allocating 1.5 per cent of oil profits to development in the Niger Delta (Akinyoade, 2018, p. 223). However, this also failed, as the national assembly was unable to create an administrative agency to manage the funds (Akinyoade, 2018). The next initiative aimed at addressing conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers was during the Ibrahim Babangida administration in 1992, and was based on the Belgore Commission report, which was set up by the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). OMPADEC was supposed to focus on environmental pollution (Gabriel, 1999, p. 94). However, OMPADEC’s projects collapsed because of the embezzlement of the commission’s fiscal allocations, thus leading to many debts and fraud (Gabriel, 1999). As a result, the Nigerian government set up an Interim Management Board, which was saddled with the responsibility of reducing OMPADEC’s task (Frynas, 2001, p. 34). Despite this, OMPADEC ended up in 1999 with a lot of unfinished projects (Omotola and Patrick, 2010, pp. 123–125). All this led to the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000, to fill the gap created by OMPADEC, with the objective of developing the Niger Delta states. As found within its mandate, the NDDC aimed to build:
a strong and progressive society in which no one will have any anxiety about basic means of life and work; where poverty and illiteracy no longer exist, and diseases are brought under control; and where our educational facilities provide all the children of the Niger Delta region with the best possible opportunities for the development of their potential. (NDDC, 2015, p. 1)

The NDDC aimed to boost development programmes and ensure peace within the Niger Delta communities (Christmas, 2018, p. 72). The focus of the initiative was geared towards building social, human, environmental and physical infrastructure development (Idemudia, 2009; Adeyeri, 2017). Although funded by both public and private sources, operations by the NDDC were disrupted due to inadequate planning, corruption and poor funding (Francis, 2008; Idemudia, 2009; Adeyeri, 2017). In addition, operations were awarded without due process and board decisions were not implemented by the state governments; hence, the NDDC suffered as huge financial crimes continued within it, and this led to abandoned development projects because of the embezzlement and misappropriation of funds (Aghalino, nd, p. 46). Although these peacebuilding initiatives were aimed at building peace, they were, instead, seen as political moves aimed at ensuring that the oil bunkering stopped. Rather than addressing the causes of oil bunkering, the initiatives were aimed at boosting the production of oil (Steinmo, 2008). The NDDC also failed to surmount its challenges because it was corrupt (Steinmo, 2008, pp. 152–153). The creation and failure of these commissions led to an initial rise in the expectations of people in the Niger Delta, followed by frustrations, thereby leading to more aggression, and further leading to people being pitted against the state (Steinmo, 2008; Francis, 2008; Idemudia, 2009; Adeyeri, 2017; Akinyoade, 2018, p. 223).

Another ‘carrot’ approach used by the government was to turn a blind eye to violence, especially when it did not disrupt the flow of oil (Akinyoade, 2018). The federal government, the state, local government, and even oil companies have also not played a role in stopping oil bunkering, thus leading to a lack of accountability in dealing with oil bunkering. According to the former managing director of the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC), Chris Finlayson, in 2003, small-scale oil theft was tolerated by the company as they believed they were unaffected by it and it was a way ‘to keep the locals happy’ (Akinyoade, 2018, p. 223). It has been claimed that the reason oil theft was tolerated by the local and state governments was that it was a means by which to elevate pressure on the state to provide economic and development support to the region. In an interview with the International Crisis Group in 2006, an officer of the state government stated that “when the boys are bunkering, they are quiet” (International Crisis Group, 2006), and added that clamping down on this
will lead to tensions within the state. Consequently, this unwillingness of the state to curb oil bunkering has not gone unnoticed by militant groups, who have taken the opportunity to capitalise on this (Akinyoade, 2018). The oil bunkering business is seen as a thriving industry and one of the quickest ways of making money within the region. Therefore, it has resulted in further clashes between militant groups over routes and pipelines. Between 2001 and 2004 there were several clashes between militant groups over oil bunkering routes, resulting in more harm being done environmentally and even the loss of lives and destruction of properties (Ajala, 2016).

Likewise, in 2004 various new patronage alliances were being formed. Peter Odili, the governor of Rivers, attempted to broker peace within the state by initiating the ‘Millionaires Programme’ (CEHRD, 2004, 2005; Watts, 2007). The aim of this programme was to offer 1 million Naira (£4100) to all youths who turned in a weapon to the government. This weapons-for-cash programme was implemented as a response to the rivalry between Mujahid Asari-Dokubo and Ateke Tom, which was escalating into violence in Port Harcourt. However, despite meetings with the government the peace failed to hold when Asari-Dokubo accused the government of insincerity, insisting that the government was favouring Ateke Tom. This led to a break in relations between Odili and Asari-Dokubo (CEHRD, 2004, 2005; Watts, 2007). A further consequence was the formation of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), as Asari-Dokubo sought the support of Government Ekpe and an arms dealer, Henry Okah (Watts, 2007; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012; Ubhenin, 2013). What is interesting to note here is that the peacebuilding process did not refer to establishing and building peace within the region, but rather focused on handing out cash pay-outs within the clientelist relations. Thus, the methods used by both the state and national governments led to alliances between militant groups and gangs.

Another initiative aimed at peacebuilding in the Niger Delta was established in 2008 by the late president, Umaru Musa Yar’adua. He established the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA), aimed at addressing development challenges as well as unemployment in the region as part of the wider government framework (Ekpenyong et al., 2010; MNDA, 2013; Uchennia, 2014; Babatunde, 2017; Kpae and Adishi, 2017). It is crucial to note that although the MNDA was implemented during a period of intense conflict in the Niger Delta, a proposal was made for a peace summit (Isidiho and Sabran, 2015; Onapajo and Moshood, 2016, p. 42). However, yet again, the peace summit failed, thus leading to the formation of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta (TCND), which was tasked with developing non-violent approaches to addressing the conflict within the region (TCND, 2008, p. iv). The TCND recommended the establishment of the amnesty, which was later implemented in the Niger Delta.
region in 2009, serving as the last state-led regional ‘carrot’ approach in the Niger Delta (Onapajo and Moshood, 2016, pp. 42–43).

The carrot approach to peacebuilding was furthered solidified in 2009 with the emergence of the amnesty programme. Between 2006 and 2008 Bayelsa and Rivers faced a peak of intense conflict with the emergence of various militant groups. As a response to this, the Nigerian government implemented an amnesty programme across the Niger Delta region (Budd 2004; the Vanguard, September 19, 2009, pp. 15–16; This Day, November 4, 2009, p. 7; the Vanguard, February 3, 2010). The amnesty programme aimed to repair and rebuild trust between militants and the Nigerian government. Many elites were seen to visit militant camps to re-establish dialogue with the youths, a move which to many was aimed at restabiliing the patrimonial system (Budd 2004; the Vanguard, September 19, 2009, pp. 15–16; This Day, November 4, 2009, p. 7; the Vanguard, February 3, 2010, p. 5). The programme received mixed reviews from Deltans as well as peacebuilding analysts, with some viewing it as a success while others saw it as a complete failure (Oluduro and F. Oluduro, 2012; Agibioa, 2013; Okurebia, 2013; Uddegbum, 2013; Chinweike, 2017; Ebiede, 2017; Wilade, 2017; Omoleye, 2020). The amnesty programme was not seen as a peacebuilding initiative that targeted peace; rather, it was another ‘band-aid’ which strove in the direction of ‘patronage peacebuilding’ – a concept which will be explored in the next chapter (Chapter 4). As noted by Iwilade, and corroborated by Watts and Nwajiaku-Dahou, the amnesty programme was merely performative, and served neopatrimonialism rather than development and peacebuilding (Watts, 2007; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012; Iwilade, 2017). Iwilade noted that the amnesty was a tool used by the elites to restore incentives and participation in the patron network, as well as being intended to link patrons and clients beyond the Niger Delta region to the broader Nigerian society (Iwilade, 2017). The programme was designed to grant amnesty and provide finical assistance to the perpetrators (Watts, 2007; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012; Iwilade, 2017). This was not only seen as a means of buying peace but was also viewed as a reward programme by patrons. It was for this reason that the programme did not address the root causes of the conflict, but rather aimed to stop the attacks on refineries by offering up another quick and, yet again, ‘band-aid’ approach to peacebuilding. Thus, the amnesty programme was not viewed as a peacebuilding initiative, but rather as a power restructuring tool, whereby clients were repositioned, and the client networks restored in order to re-establish the flow of oil and restore the failing Nigerian economy.

Table 7, below, provides an overview of the state-based initiatives aimed at addressing conflict, as discussed above, and indicates why each initiative failed, in order to give better foundational understanding of peacebuilding within the region.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Mandate</th>
<th>Why it Failed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960–1966</td>
<td>Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB)</td>
<td>Facilitate agricultural development</td>
<td>Outbreak of Biafra civil war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>River Basin and Development Authority Decree</td>
<td>Assist irrigation, fishing regulations and control pollution</td>
<td>Inconsistent mandate with objectives of 1958 Willink Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA)</td>
<td>Address ecological and environmental concerns</td>
<td>Inadequate Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1.5% Revenue Derivation</td>
<td>Tackle development</td>
<td>Bureaucratic derivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–1999</td>
<td>Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)</td>
<td>Address ecological and environmental pollution</td>
<td>Corruption, embezzlement and fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)</td>
<td>Promote sustainable development and peacebuilding</td>
<td>Corruption and non-strategic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA)</td>
<td>Address development and infrastructural challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next section discusses the ‘stick’ approaches used by the national and state governments in response to conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers.

**The Coercive ‘Stick’ Approach**

Apart from the above-mentioned ‘carrot’ approaches to violence, the Nigerian government has also employed a hard-power, or ‘stick’ approach, which is linked to the use of violence or coercive methods to respond to agitation (Nye, 1990, p. 157; Emeseh, 2011, p. 58). This was done using the military through the formation of the Joint Task Force (JTF), also known as Operation Restore Hope (Chiluwa, 2011, p. 199). As was seen in the 1990s, the Nigerian government decided to match ‘weapons for weapons’, and used excessive force and violence when responding to conflict (Iwilade, 2017). This approach increased the intensity of violence not only in Bayelsa and Rivers, but also between militant groups and the JTF (Punch, 2017). From the early onset of the conflict, the response by the Nigerian government has mostly been oppressive, as exemplified when Adaka Boro’s NDPVF twelve-day revolution was met with brutal force by the government. Not only were Boro and his members arrested but they were also sentenced to death. However, they were granted amnesty during the Biafra war (Bourne, 2015, p. 7).

Another example of brutal force was the treatment of members of MOSOP; their leader Ken Saro-Wiwa protested the environmental degradation in the region and was sentenced to death in 1995 (*Independent*, 1995). Protest in the region was almost always met with violence by the government. In 1994 the Nigerian government created a task force intended to reduce the violence (Civil Liberties Organization, 1994). The task force was seen to raid villages associated with MOSOP, and within just a couple of months was said to have raided over 60 towns (Civil Liberties Organization, 1994). Troops were further deployed to various villages, leading to various violations of human rights, such as the molestation of women (Amnesty international, 2004). During this period the region was marked by clear mayhem caused by the security forces (HRW, 2004). According to Human Rights Watch (2004),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Niger Delta Amnesty and DDR Programme (NDA and DDR)</th>
<th>Promote peace and address security and development challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 7 Periodisation of State Policy Responses in the Niger Delta (1960–2009)

Source: Ayuk, 2020, p. 61
abuses ranged from random killings and the arrest of people without cause, to the detainment of hundreds of people, as well as the rape of women and girls. In addition, various prominent MOSOP activists were declared as ‘wanted’ by the government. The security forces remained in the Delta carrying out several human rights violations in the name of reducing violence, without any check from the government (HRW, 2004). It is also crucial to note that the armed response by the Nigerian government contributed to the militarisation of the region.

Another stick response by the state government was in November 1999, when the military was deployed to the Odi community in response to the death of seven policemen; as a result, there was an intentional and total wipe-out of the Ijaw community at the request of the president, usually referred to as the Odi massacre (Ukeje, 2011, pp. 89–90; Punch, 2017). As a result of this action, the JTF was deployed to maintain law and order within the region and to ensure oil infrastructure protection. However, as noted by Ovonikoko (2018), the JTF was formed not to provide security to the people of the region; rather, it was deployed to provide security to the multinational personnel and ensure a safe environment in which to produce oil. Thus, the Nigerian government failed in its duty to ensure proper monitoring and to enforce proper oil exploration in the region; rather, the government used excessive force as a means of peacekeeping which further led to the destruction of the Niger Delta states. Furthermore, between 1998 and 1999 there were numerous clashes between the security forces and militant groups. It was during this time that the government deployed warships and troops to curtail peaceful protest (HRW, 1999; Ovonikoko, 2018). Brutal force was used during this period, with the killings, torture and forced detention of many in the region (HRW, 1999). Further crackdowns occurred in Bayelsa and Delta states because of the Kaima Declaration issued by the IYC, which led to further violations of human rights (HRW, 1999; Ovonikoko, 2018, p. 124).

Another ‘stick’ approach was seen in 2005, when military troops not only openly and randomly opened fire on residents in Odioma, Bayelsa, but also raped women and burnt down houses.

Security forces were deployed in search of militants; however, rather than peacefully conducting the searches, the troops worsened the situation not only by the killing of civilians who were mistaken for militants but also by committing violations of human rights (ICG, 2006, p. 6). In an HRW report (2007, p. 20), Asari-Dokubo was quoted as stating that the war against the oil companies and the government by the NDPVF was “provoked by the government’s attack on his base […] and his recognition that the state government’s behind-the-scenes diplomatic effort to resolve the crisis threatened to marginalise him” (HRW, 2007, p. 20).
In addition to such actions, the Nigerian government incorporated the use of the ‘stick’ approach into law, for example: the 1967 Petroleum Decree, which allowed for groups to be punished using illegal action (Fayemi et al., 2005, p. 55); the 1975 Anti-Sabotage Decree, which brought in the death penalty; the Treason and Treasonable Offenses Decree, passed in May 1993 in response to the 1990 Ogoni Bill of Rights launched by MOSOP, which deemed MOSOP actions as treasonable, and punishable by death. These were seen as political strategies, intended to control the communities in Rivers and Bayelsa, instilling fear into them, and using fear to crush protest, rather than as addressing the issues being protested about (HRW, 1999). The stick method was seen as being used for two reasons: firstly, to crush protest, and secondly, to bring an end to insecurity and bring the youth back into the patronage networks (Iwilade, 2017).

Despite numerous state-led peacebuilding initiatives the Niger Delta region still suffers from abject poverty and low human development. Omokhoa and Ikelegbe (2016) noted that many of the victims of the conflicts in the Niger Delta remain uncompensated and there remains the problem of unemployment. It can be seen that the failure to bring about improvement is because the peacebuilding policies and approach implemented by the Nigerian government and the individual states of Rivers and Bayelsa have focused on two approaches (Omokhoa and Ikelegbe, 2016; Iwilade, 2017): firstly, the use of brutal force, and secondly, the strategy of co-opting youths into the patronage network. Thus, this section has shown that state-led peacebuilding initiatives have not led to durable peace in Bayelsa and Rivers and have, rather, given rise to new conflicts and militant groups. Initiatives such as the amnesty programme have shown that instead of fostering durable peace the result has been to contribute to a perverse incentive structure that makes violence and power appealing in Bayelsa and Rivers. Consequently, this thesis argues that such initiatives have led to ‘patronage peacebuilding’, a concept I have developed, and on which I elaborate further in the next chapter (Chapter 4). Thus, Chapter 4 explores patronage peacebuilding through the various militant networks and power structures discussed above, and how this has influenced the overall peacebuilding agenda, addressing the first research question, which seeks to examine how and to what extent donor-based and state-led initiatives are influenced by neopatrimonialism. However, before this, the next section examines the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states.

**The Informal Economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State**

As are most informal economies, the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states is large, heterogeneous and dynamic, and currently few studies have been able to ascertain its size, its
determinants or its characteristics. Despite its wide importance, current knowledge of the size, causes, characteristics and dynamics of the informal sector remains very scanty and inadequate. Despite an increase in discourse and narratives on the increasing interest in Nigeria’s informal sector as a tool for the actualisation of sustainable growth and development, among other beneficial possibilities, there seems to be a shortage of research work in the field in Nigeria, specifically in the Niger Delta. Several broad attempts have been made to understand the informal economy of the whole country, painting it with one paintbrush (Meagher, 2013; Etim and Daramola, 2020; Onwo and Ohazulike, 2021). Although these studies spark conversations on the informal economy, representing the economy as singular fails to capture the differences that occur regionally, in various states, and even within the different geopolitical zones of the country. This lack, therefore, serves as the motivational basis for this study. This study aims to address one aspect of this lack by providing an understanding of the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states, and then exploring how that can be translated into a regional understanding of the informal economy of the Niger Delta. Information on the size and employment structure within the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers is hard to obtain; however, through analysis of the informal economy in Nigeria and the scope of unemployment rates in Bayelsa and Rivers, and by referring to the National Bureau of Statistics, I was able to develop a picture of the structure of the informal economy in these states, including the jobs, level of unemployment and state of the natural environment.

The informal economy plays a significant role in the Bayelsa and Rivers overall economy by creating employment and reducing unemployment and poverty. Bayelsa and Rivers states are largely underdeveloped and suffer from high levels of poverty, inequality and rising unemployment (Ismail and Fasanya, 2012). As previously discussed, an era of violent conflicts, extortion and instability have hampered sustainable development efforts and made equitable growth and poverty reduction extremely difficult. Furthermore, while the informal and formal sectors do contribute to employment generation, poverty, inequality and unemployment are still increasing significantly in Rivers and Bayelsa states (Ismail and Fasanya, 2012). Nigeria’s Poverty Profile, released by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics in 2019, shows 40 per cent of the total population, equating to almost 83 million people, live below the country’s poverty line of 137,430 naira ($381.75) per year (NBS, 2019).

In many communities affected by conflicts in Bayelsa and Rivers states, for decades the informal economy has been the main – or one of the main – sources of work. Most employees work within the informal economy, in a precarious situation, with low pay and no social security or safety net; many find the informal sector a haven – since the government cannot provide them with suitable jobs,
working in the informal sector seems to be the last resort (Agbuabor and Malaolu, 2013). This pattern simply continues through the conflicts, but the context and type of work are affected by violence, and new economic structures emerge as a direct result of crises. The informal economy is associated with microeconomic activities, such as furniture making, woodwork, tailoring and carpentry, and tax evasion is predominant in this sector (Agbuabor and Malaolu, 2013).

The informal economy faces a lot of difficulties, with one third of businesses being challenged by instability, while all businesses in Rivers and Bayelsa are affected by an acute lack of electricity (Meagher, 2013). All these factors combine to have a major impact on the fragility of the economy. These conditions increase the vulnerability and impoverishment of the population and have increased the level of unemployment over the last decade, particularly among both male and female youth. Poverty rates, therefore, are also high. Without functioning labour exchanges, workers rely on unscrupulous brokers. Furthermore, there are many examples of how individuals and communities revert to, and rely on, each other to overcome the lack of regular supplies of goods and services, and the absence of governance; this illustrates both the strength of social capital and the resilience of informal economies during, and in the immediate aftermath of, violent conflicts. Broadly speaking, they all represent informal ‘livelihood economies’ that begin with survival and in time can improve security situations. For example, in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, the emergence of a criminalised service supply is often consolidated. Organised gangs or ‘mafias’ operate water, electricity and transport sectors, fight over ‘turf’ or unpaid ‘loans’, and suppress or extort small-scale enterprises (Ikelegbe, 2006; Meagher, 2013).

It is key to understand how the informal economy and the illicit informal economy in both Bayelsa and Rivers thrive beyond the very obvious implications of the persistent conflict within the region (see The Political Economy of Conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers States). The factors that contribute to its growth include inconsistent government policies, taxation, poor socio-economic environment and inadequate credit facilities, as well as problems with scarcity of inputs or raw materials, low production and returns, the high cost of enterprise establishment/operation, poor and sometimes non-existent infrastructure, a lack of information, knowledge and access concerning productivity-enhancing technologies, problems with land tenure and irregular means of transportation.

As previously stated, the informal economy is present in both developing and developed countries; although its size differs it nevertheless contributes to the economic growth and development of each country (Ihua, 2009). The outputs of the informal economy include the provision of services and
products, and job creation, enhancing standard of living while also creating wealth (Ihua, 2010; Anyadike-Daness et al., 2013). The informal economy within Nigeria contributes 53 per cent of the official GDP and has a participation rate of 66 per cent, providing cheap labour, accessible goods and resources that enable income generation for those involved in it (BIS, 2013). Activities within the informal economy range from construction, trade and commerce to the manufacture of vehicles, radios, television sets and refrigerators, and include other services, such as carpentry and both agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Agricultural activities include petty trading and farming, for example, crop growing and animal husbandry, while non-agricultural activities include tertiary activities such as hairdressing, photography, transport, small-scale distribution and production, private taxi drivers, and modern and traditional crafts. It is crucial to note that as Rivers and Bayelsa is an oil production region, its informal activities differ from those of the Nigerian state as a whole, as it includes the oil economy. However, despite the discovery of oil most of its population still live in poverty, and there is a high level of unemployment within the region, as shown in Figure 5 Unemployment Rates in Nigeria by Geopolitical Zones (2018) (Kayode et al., 2014). As there is no current data on the size, of the informal economy in the country as whole, and a lack of data on the regional break down of the informal economy, the analysis in this thesis of the informal economy is incomplete. While it captures the level of unemployment it does not fully capture the nature and overall size of the informal economy in Rivers State and Bayelsa State.

Figure 5 shows the levels of unemployment in Nigeria across the six geopolitical zones in 2018. It can be seen that the south-south (Niger Delta) has the highest level of unemployment, despite being the oil producing state, as discussed above.
**Figure 5 Unemployment Rates in Nigeria by Geopolitical Zones (2018)**

Source: Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, 2018

**Figure 6 Unemployment and Underemployment in Southern States of Nigeria**

Source: Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, 2018

A closer look at the south-south region (Niger Delta), as shown in Figure 7, expands on Figure 6 by analysing the south-south into its individual states, and shows levels of both unemployment and
underemployment. Of most relevance to this thesis is the data for Bayelsa and Rivers states: in 2018, Rivers State recorded the second-highest rate of unemployment (36.54%) and the highest rate of underemployment (21.7%). Bayelsa State was close behind Rivers, recording 32.6 % unemployment and 17.2 % underemployment. Thus, it can be assumed that these states have a thriving informal economy due to the high level of unemployment.

Figure 7 Unemployment Rate in Nigeria in 2020

Furthermore, when comparing the unemployment rates in states across the whole country, as in Figure 7 (2020), it can be seen that both states still report very high levels of unemployment. In fact, the rate of unemployment has increased in both states, which raises questions about how sustainable and successful economic programmes within those states have been. Furthermore, it can be inferred that as the unemployment rate rises, so does participation in the informal economy (and the illicit informal economy).

In addition to this, within the informal economy diverse interest groups such as political leaders, elites, bureaucrats and militia groups are in constant pursuit of power and wealth, thus leading to the blurring of lines between formal and informal activities especially in the illicit informal economy. Thus, the illicit informal economy within Bayelsa and Rivers is characterised by unrestricted trade, illicit financial flows and exploration activities by political elites who serve as patrons, interacting with clients who are drawn from the general population, such as youths who have some affiliation with militancy and crime. Activities within the illicit informal economy exist especially within the oil sector, such as illegal oil businesses and refineries (Garuba, 2010, p. 4).

Although this section has not discussed the size of the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states, due to there being limited available data, it has, however, highlighted activities in both the illicit informal and informal economy. It has also discussed the poverty and unemployment levels within these states, which, when combined with the knowledge of the informal economy and the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding discussed in this chapter, forms a basis from which to examine how state-led peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism (Chapter 4), and how this influences the informal economy (Chapter 5). To explore how donor-based initiatives influence peacebuilding and the informal economy, the next section examines the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) and the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND).

**Peacebuilding Initiatives (NSRP and PIND)**

This section focuses on introducing and analysing the structure, framework, scope and limitations of the peacebuilding initiatives analysed in this thesis, namely the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) and the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND). It examines the economic initiatives of these programmes, bringing into focus the Partner for Peace Initiative and the Integrated Peace Programme, which both operate under PIND. It aims to critically examine these
peacebuilding initiatives with the hope of assessing their roles in peacebuilding and how they interact with the informal economy. This will provide a foundational understanding of the peacebuilding initiatives in order to critically explore: firstly, how and to what extent are state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives shaped by neopatrimonialism–clientelism and political patronage? (Chapter 4); and, secondly, how state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives shape the informal economy and challenge post-conflict development and the construction of peace economies. (Chapter 5).

**Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP)**

Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the NSRP was a $33 million programme designed specifically to prevent violent outbreaks of conflict, create mechanisms for responding to conflicts and support a proactive reconciliation process in the Niger Delta (NSRP, 2014, 2017). It was a five-year programme conducted between 2013 and 2017 that was spearheaded by the British Council in conjunction with Social Development Direct (SDD) and International Aid (IA) aimed at supporting peacebuilding initiatives that were Nigerian-led in establishing and maintaining peace in non-violent ways (NSRP, 2014, 2017). It strived to reduce the negative impacts of conflict on vulnerable and marginalised groups, which they defined as women and girls, as well as to reduce the numbers of deaths resulting from violent conflicts (NSRP, 2017). The NSRP’s goal was to transform the conflict environment into a more stable, proactive and safe wealth-creation environment (NSRP, 2014). This was a goal that most would view not only as overambitious, but also as hard to measure and sustain, a recurring theme within most peacebuilding initiatives in Rivers and Bayelsa.

The NSRP’s major work took place in eight states within the country, namely: Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers in Southern Nigeria, Plateau and Kaduna in the middle belt, and Borno, Kano and Yobe in Northern Nigeria. The selection of the focus areas was based upon their having high levels of conflict, but also included areas where local opportunities and capacities could be strengthened in accordance with the programme’s objective of achieving proactively transformed conflict environments (NSRP, 2014). In addition to this, the selected states were of crucial importance to Nigeria’s economy: specifically, Kano, Kaduna (viewed as the economic power of the North), and Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta with their high concentration of oil. The inclusion of Borono and Yobe were because of cross-border militancy and various problematic ideologies being promoted there; the NSRP wanted to build up the states’ resilience to these ideologies and to the cross-border militancy occurring in the states (NSRP, 2014). In addition to this, these states also had a concentration of other DFID-supported programmes; for example, the Market Development Programme for the Niger Delta that was implemented in 2014, the UNICEF-led Girls’ Education Programme (GEP), funded from 2005 to 2019, and the Education Sector
Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), delivered by a Cambridge education-led consortium during 2008–14. DFID has spent £102 million to date, with a further £126 million committed in 2019.

The NSRP worked at the national, state and federal levels concentrating on four specific areas, namely: security and governance, economic and natural resources, women and girls, and research, media and advocacy (NSRP, 2014), as shown in Table 8 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Stream</th>
<th>Security and Governance</th>
<th>Economic and Natural Resources</th>
<th>Women and Girls</th>
<th>Research, Media and Advocacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Improved conflict</td>
<td>Mitigating drivers of</td>
<td>Increasing participation of, and reducing violence against, women and girls</td>
<td>Improved conflict prevention policy and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management mechanisms</td>
<td>conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved through</td>
<td>Broader societal participation in and oversight of conflict management mechanisms at federal, state and local level.</td>
<td>Reduced grievances in target areas around economic opportunities and distribution of resources.</td>
<td>Increased and more influential participation by women and girls in institutions and initiatives relevant to peacebuilding, with reduced prevalence and impact of VAWG.</td>
<td>Research, advocacy and the media having an increasingly positive influence on policy and practice relevant to stability and reconciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be accomplished by technical assistance to improve the coordination of security providers and make them more accountable to the public.</td>
<td>To be accomplished by supporting communities to manage conflicts about economic opportunities, land use and oil spills.</td>
<td>To be accomplished by supporting the implementation of a National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) as well as creating safe spaces for girls and women.</td>
<td>To be accomplished through commissioning, delivering and disseminating high quality policy-relevant research; strategic partnerships with key Nigerian institutions; training to media partners and others to increase conflict sensitive practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Key Activities Delivered Through NSRP’s Platforms and Initiatives

Source: NSRP (2017)

Within the above-mentioned areas the NSRP’s major objectives were to enhance broader social participation, to improve conflict management mechanisms, and to reduce violence against vulnerable groups – specifically women and girls – as well as incorporating these vulnerable groups into the peacebuilding process (NSRP, 2014). The NSRP also focused on the drivers of economic and natural resources with the aim of mitigating them, and through research and disseminating information improved policies geared towards conflict prevention as well as increasing conflict sensitivity and media training through supporting Nigerian-led initiatives (NSRP, 2014). Superficially, these objectives were impressive; however, yet again they are quite overambitious and hard to sustain (NSRP, 2014). Empirical data has revealed that since the end of the NSRP programme in Rivers, the inclusion of women into the peacebuilding process has not been sustained, with women returning back to the household roles they previously occupied rather than attending peacebuilding meetings as used to occur during...
the life of the NSRP (DB3, 2019; DB6, 2019). Some women still engage in the peacebuilding process; however, without constant funding and supervision, peacebuilding processes, such as the peace clubs, have not continued. In addition, the NSRP objectives had no sustainability plans; thus, as with most donor-based initiatives that cease when the funding ends, there was no continuity or methods put in place to sustain the implemented structures.

The integrated approach adopted by the NSRP and DFID-Nigeria, while concentrating on the above-mentioned areas, overall aimed to accomplished three things: firstly, strengthening the peace architecture to mediate and resolve conflict; secondly including a broader part of the marginalised population into the peacebuilding process; and finally, influencing policies that addressed the management of conflict (NSRP, 2017). Thus, it can be deduced that the NSRP aimed at increasing initiatives, capacities and interventions within society in order to broaden the participation of institutions and actions within the conflict area so as to bring about positive changes, not only in the practice of peacebuilding, but also in policies to enhance stability and sustain peace (NSRP, 2017). This was an overambitious and bold objective; however, when considering previous peacebuilding initiatives enacted by the state in Bayelsa and Rivers this was a push in the right direction. The question remains, however, whether the NSRP accomplished their objective, and whether it has been sustained after the end of the initiative. This point will be further analysed below, after fully understanding the framework and make-up of the NSRP.

The NSRP brought together various initiatives at different administrative levels to strengthen the peace architecture for the National Peace and Security Forum, Women Peace and Security, and State Conflict Management Alliances. Despite this, it did face some challenges, for example, with regard to broadening societal participation. The NSRP report identified both long- and medium-term goals, thus bringing into question how sustainable this platform would be after the NSRP was gone (NSRP, 2018). Furthermore, another challenge for the NSRP was where it was difficult to determine when a conflict had truly been resolved or whether it had merely halted, with the probability of said conflict resurfacing; as such, this made it difficult to measure the value of the mediation or prevention method.

Recognising the multifaceted nature of conflict in the Niger Delta, the NSRP adopted an approach that was based on four major principles:

- Being strategic: this involved working with initiatives that depicted a “demonstrative effort” to resolving conflict non-violently.
• Playing a facilitating role: creating spaces that brought people together, both marginalised and non-marginalised groups, for constructive dialogue to take place that involved managing violence.

• Supporting and working to establish change: working with the architecture that was already available rather than creating one from scratch.


Table 9, below, highlights the key activities delivered through the NSRP’s initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Key Activities: Targeted influencing and persuasion</th>
<th>Key Activities: Convening platforms and bringing people together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerholders / state and traditional authorities</td>
<td>Advocacy and mobilisation (including research) on targeting powerholders around specific, pre-defined agendas and issues. Building strong networks with key allies and champions within government.</td>
<td>Convening key powerholders into longer term organization / platforms (‘strengthening the peace architecture’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens / protagonists of conflict</td>
<td>Sensitisation, awareness-raising and training of conflict sensitive ways of action</td>
<td>Bringing stakeholders in / protagonists of conflicts together, providing the space for mediation, dialogue, and collective decision-making on conflicts. Building ongoing relationships with communities undergoing conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9 NSRP Work Areas and Target Groups**

Source: NSRP, 2017, p. 9

The designs of the NSRP programme were centred around creating policies and practices that peacefully managed and reduced the incidence of violent conflict. It also targeted the negative impacts of violent conflict within its operational states, especially on the vulnerable and marginalised groups (NSRP, 2017). It was for this reason that it was selected as one of the peacebuilding initiatives to be analysed within this research, (NSRP, 2017). Although not an element fully explored in this thesis, it is, however, crucial to note that gender was embedded in all outputs of the programme, which aimed to facilitate situations of gender equality. It focused on broadening societal participation and this was specifically aimed at women and young girls. The reason for this was that the NSRP recognised the prevalence of violence against women and girls and structured essential elements of its programme to address this, and sought its reduction. The ambition of the programme with regard to women and girls was to achieve more influential participation by women and girls in institutions and initiatives relevant
to peacebuilding, and to reduce the prevalence and impact of violence against women and girls; however, given the timescale of five years, this goal was found to be overambitious, thus the programme shifted its goal accordingly, to being only that of representing the views of women in peacebuilding (NSRP, 2018). The empirical data shows that the involvement of women and girls in peacebuilding activities stopped once the programme ended.

Thus, taken together, although during the life of the NSRP it was reported that there was a reduction in the incidence of violence, thus strengthening the peace architecture, the 2017 report states that there is little evidence to show how the NSRP contributed to mediating and resolving conflict (NSRP, 2017). It is impossible to determine whether this reduction in violence was because of initiatives carried out specifically by the NSRP or because of other factors. The objective of the NSRP to increase the peace capacities of the stakeholders, and to improve their skills and understanding of peacebuilding with training seems not only to have been overambitious but also to have been difficult to measure and, more so, to sustain. Despite this, it can be observed that the NSRP did indeed establish spaces for state and non-state actors to work together through the establishment of Peace Clubs. This allowed for the flow of information between the two groups of actors, enabling stakeholders to have a shared position in the peacebuilding process. However, the sustainability of this after the end of the programme is indeed questionable, especially after the NSRP funding ended. Therefore, it can be noted that the NSRP did create space for dialogue and bring ‘marginalised’ groups to the peacebuilding process; however, the overall agenda of the problem was overambitious and hard to measure.

Thus, this thesis aims: firstly, to examine how and to what extent the NSRP was influenced by neopatrimonialism (Chapter 4), and secondly, how the initiative shaped the informal economy beyond what has been stated in its policy briefings (Chapter 5). The next section examines the framework of the second donor-based initiative, the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND).

The Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND)

Established in 2010, PIND, funded by Chevron Corporation, is a regional strategy that set out to analyse socio-economic problems in the Niger Delta (PIND, 2011). It aimed to do so through the building of networks between local and international partners that would work together to develop and implement new sustainable solutions that would address conflict and reduce the dependence on oil within that region and the country at large. Understanding that the multifaceted socio-economic challenges in the Niger Delta cannot be addressed by one organisation alone, PIND is based upon
recognising the need for partnerships and collaboration; this creates an opportunity to learn and adopt from others, thus leveraging existing network resources and expertise. The overall objective of PIND is to build equitable development in the Niger Delta and a strong legacy of sustainable peace by striving to move towards a unified community that possesses shared goals, through co-creation and organisational transformation that builds economic development (PIND, 2011).

PIND is a non-profit organisation with its headquarters based in Abuja and office branches in Warri, Delta and Port Harcourt (PIND, 2011). Working together, Chevron funds PIND through the Niger Delta Development Initiative (NDDI), with the strategic objective of attaining an equitable economic environment and sustainable peace in the region. The initial funding received from Chevron was used to set up the organisational structure of PIND. The NDDI, based in Washington, focuses on the planning, funding and partnership development by raising awareness within the international community and supporting poverty alleviation, while also providing grants for various projects (PIND, 2011). PIND within the Niger Delta works on the project implementation and operational planning, the day-to-day decision making on the ground as well as monitoring the performance of various projects. The initiatives PIND engages in focus on market development, building local capacity and mitigating conflict, as well as raising awareness on issues within the region (PIND, 2011). PIND also added capacity building and advocacy to its agenda, aimed at promoting economic growth with local partners and serving as a catalyst for system change in order to reduce poverty (PIND, 2011). This entails pursuing a healthy civil society by functions such as advocacy, and supporting policies and institutions that drive economic advancement, addressing gaps in infrastructure systems such as information, power, communications and so on. This allows for a holistic approach that strives to create a healthy economic development environment in the Niger Delta (PIND, 2012). Thus, like the NSRP, PIND sought to create partnerships, and enhance peace architecture and economic advancement.

PIND sets out to build and sustain partnership networks that have shared goals and shared knowledge, and are aimed at “forging peacebuilding that leads to equitable economic development in the Niger Delta so as to achieve a legacy of peace and development in the region” (PIND, 2012, p.7). Partnership with various networks is not about agreements, but rather embraces and pushes to create spaces where constructive discussions and shared resources can create long-term development solutions. For example, PIND officials have established links between the local police and the population. As a result, when there are instances of gang violence or community clashes, members of the population report it to PIND, who in turn report this to the police (PIND, 2019; DB4, 2019). An interview with a member of PIND revealed that due to the established network between the organisation and the police force, PIND
has been invited into security hearings and even to mediate local conflict, a privilege not enjoyed by other organisations. Thus, it can be deduced that PIND has indeed established networks of partnerships between the local community and the state forces.

Furthermore, PIND recognises that without extensive knowledge of the region and its dynamics, economic growth is impossible. Therefore, PIND works on extensive research that serves to supplement information on the economy, industries and people to further economic opportunities within the region (PIND, 2019). While recognising the gaps within its analysis, and that it will not always have sufficient information, PIND strives to ensure that it does. As admirable as this sounds, it is critical to examine how the lack of sufficient knowledge affects PIND’s research and peacebuilding agenda, and how this influences the informal economy.

PIND recognised the problems in Bayelsa and Rivers with regard to economic inequality, and the minimal success in sustaining peacebuilding within the region by the government; this resulted in a deep-rooted analysis to address these issues, with specific regard to the poor and marginalised groups. Understanding that economic development is the pathway to prosperity, and acknowledging the link between economic development and conflict, PIND took a market-based approach to achieve sustainable economic development (Fund for Peace et al., 2015). This was especially important since 70 per cent of the Niger Delta population live below the poverty line, and have limited access to basic amenities such as safe water, healthcare and shelter, as well as educational attainment. PIND’s approach aimed at identifying the driving forces for growth in the market systems as well as the factors hindering economic growth. Designed to increase the efficiencies of various sectors such as palm oil and aquaculture through research and analysis to raise awareness and people's incomes within these sectors, each programme aimed to increase capacity and connections, and to create platforms by identifying market systems and sectors where the poor were not achieving, and potential opportunities to promote pro-poor market development (PIND, 2019). PIND’s reason for its focus on economic growth was because conflict hinders economic growth and a lack of economic growth sparks conflict.

PIND’s focus on economic development centred around sustaining improvements to incomes for a significant number of the poor through symmetric change. This model was adopted by many organisations, including DFID, within various programmes in Africa, Asia and other places. This approach fitted with the vision of PIND that strove for poverty reduction and improved incomes (PIND, 2014). The market development approach aimed to strengthen market systems to ensure that they benefited the poor. It involved an analysis of the market to identify any market weakness that
prevented the poor from benefiting, and initiatives that focused on addressing causes and not symptoms of market weakness. PIND aimed to produce initiatives that strove for systematic change to ensure a clear vision. To carry this out effectively, PIND had to better understand the economy with regard to the position of the marginal groups within the region. Thus, additional research was carried out by NNF to build upon previous PIND studies. It was on this basis that groups were selected and further investigated (PIND, 2019; Fund for Peace et al., 2015). Thus, it can be seen that economic development and conflict as well as peace are dependent upon one another (PIND, 2019). As such, as will be examined in Chapter 5, it is key to analyse how the programme focused on the informal economy as it strived for economic development.

Beyond the economic development intervention, PIND implemented conflict sensitivity training as part of an overall strategy targeting effective leadership (PIND, 2019). Small grants were given out that focused on strengthening a peacebuilding and early warning system, and reducing ethnic conflict; this was in response to the levels of lethal violence in the Niger Delta which increased in the last quarter of 2018, mainly due to the elevated incidence of gang, communal violence and election violence (Fund for Peace and PIND, 2018). Although most peace interventions undertaken in this quarter were focused on election violence mitigation, there were interventions undertaken by the Partners for Peace network; for example, in Bayelsa State they conducted a sensitisation campaign against cultism and criminality in the state. This involved carrying out a school-to-school campaign against cultism in hotspots in Yenagoa, Southern Ijaw, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, and Brass local government areas (Fund for Peace and PIND, 2018). In addition, further campaigns were conducted at the University of Port Harcourt. Further analysis of the programmes showed that their impact with regard to reducing election violence and reduction of cultism was not measured, thus bringing into question the impact of these programmes (DB3, 2019).

The Integrated Peace and Development Unit (IPDU)

To fill the gap and provide more concentrated and operational level support in targeting and responding to conflict, PIND created the Integrated Peace and Development Unit (IPDU). The IPDU is a response strategy that seeks to promote synergy and collaboration between international, local and regional partners to address early warning signs of conflict, focusing on youths as well as gender issues. It serves to respond to emerging threats by mobilising actors and resources through research, capability and applied learning, and to act as a research powerhouse that fills gaps in partners’ knowledge, as well as being a clearinghouse for existing research (PIND, 2016). IPDU was intended to have a sustained impact on clearing information on the conflict in the Niger Delta as well as being a platform for training and
undertaking projects (PIND, 2015). IPDU carries out various functions, such as providing research to various donors and private sector actors, and fulfilling their own peacebuilding mitigation objectives, bringing promising initiatives to life, for example, peace messaging and early warning analysis. It is made up of three core components, namely:

- **Applied learning**: this aspect implements the projects.
- **Research**: this is geared towards filling gaps and sharing knowledge between the donor community and the government stakeholders.
- **Capacity building**: this serves to provide defined training that is needed. (PIND, 2015).

Some of IPDU’s key achievements include the successful running of an SMS warning platform, which served as a means of tracking and reporting conflict in communities in Bayelsa and Rivers. IPDU has further built the capacity of conflict management, ensuring inclusivity by incorporating International Oil Companies (IOCs), security agencies, government workers, NGOs, development practitioners and so on, providing training as well as using the Partners for Peace network and working with other security and peace agents. In addition, between January and March 2015, IPDU was able to successfully run a sensitisation programme on peaceful elections in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states.

The **Partners for Peace (P4P)**

The Partners for Peace (P4P) is a regional platform that was launched in 2013 in the Niger Delta (within PIND) that brought together people of different backgrounds and perspectives in order to identify and address the root causes of conflict and to build sustainable peace (PIND, 2014). The P4P programme membership was open to individuals and organisations who had a drive and commitment towards peace and development in the Niger Delta region (PIND, 2015, 2016). P4P chapters were created across the nine states of the Niger Delta region. P4P is governed by a Board of Trustees that provides fiduciary and strong oversight; these state chapters are intended to create enabling environments where economic development could happen as well as interventions that establish peacebuilding. P4P serves as a network that builds peace by identifying agents of peace at the grassroots level and strengthening these networks and empowering them towards sustainable peace (PIND, 2016). It creates new conflict risk factors for detecting early warning signs to conflict. It aims to establish and strengthen grassroots networks to build up conflict resolution capability by establishing a network of self-identified agents to build peace in the Niger Delta region, as well as creating initiatives that are more integrated, and enabling economic growth and development. The P4P networks within each state are independently
managed and organise their own interventions; however, technical and capacity support is given by the overall network (PIND, 2015, 2016).

P4P works as a catalyst that promotes collaboration between stakeholders to facilitate effective peacebuilding. These grassroots networks, along with PIND, work to amplify the voices of the participants (PIND, 2016). PIND created the P4P to ensure the voices of all peace agents are included and heard within the peacebuilding process, by creating inclusive networks. This network strives to increase proactive action, build team spirit and encourage volunteerism. P4P objectives are carried out by implementing three components – network, action and voice:

• Network – this strives to build a strong network of inclusive stakeholders, including civil societies, NGOs, private companies, community-based organisations, and so on, who aim to strengthen economic growth and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta.
• Action – through small grants the network is able to carry out trainings.
• Voices – this seeks to empower the voices of positive actors as well as broadening the P4P network (PIND, 2015).

Figure 9, below, is a visual representation of how these components work together:
Partners for Peace works to address early-stage conflicts before they worsen; some of the roles include improving conflict situations during elections and establishing a Community Stakeholders Network (CSN) in various local government areas (Fund for Peace et al., 2015). These networks are made up of trained volunteers comprising various individuals who work hand in hand with the Community Life Project (CLP) to create a text-platform that enables people to send early conflict warning text messages to a dedicated Short Message Service (SMS) hub. In response to these messages, the hub involves the necessary security forces. P4P also supports local peace actors and capacity networks. My fieldwork at PIND revealed that this is indeed a sustainable initiative, as they are able to monitor and connect with the platform daily, hence, they can report crimes and violence to the local authorities. However, the process is not simple, as it requires verifying the information and sometimes this can take a long time, at which point the conflict might already have happened.

P4P has also created a peacebuilding map that helps it address conflict in the Niger Delta. The map is populated with conflict information on the nine states, generated through shared knowledge and holistic patterns of conflict risk, and cuts across communities, organisations, private companies, civil societies, NGOs, the general population and so on (PIND, 2019). The map serves as an effective way of tracing conflict within the region and observing the impact of peacebuilding initiatives within the region (PIND, 2019).

This section set out to analyse the two peacebuilding initiatives explored in this thesis: the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) and the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND). It discussed their overview, design and structure, and each peacebuilding initiative was analysed. It also noted the limitations of the programmes. It can be deduced that the NSRP and PIND are both, indeed, exceptional peacebuilding initiatives whose objectives and framework do fall within the economic agenda of peacebuilding; however, when examining the initiatives in detail there is a problem of a lack of sustainability and of failing to measure the effectiveness of the initiatives. Both initiatives serve to address the economic needs of the Niger Delta. PIND serves to create a networking space to allow peacebuilding agencies to come together, share ideas, and identify and communicate early warning signs, and mitigate them. Both initiatives strive to positively impact the peace architecture of Bayelsa and Rivers states. However, the programmes were both overly ambitious, and
their success could not be measured. After conclusion of the NSRP its sustainability has been difficult to maintain, raising the question of the efficiency of the programme in the first place. With this in mind, this thesis aims to examine how and to what extent the NSRP and PIND are shaped by neopatrimonialism in Bayelsa State and Rivers State and how this shapes the informal economy.

Conclusion

The main goal of this chapter was to provide background knowledge of Bayelsa and Rivers, exploring both conflict and peacebuilding within the region. The chapter was divided into three subsections that focused on analysing the interplay between the conflict, peacebuilding and the informal economy in the Niger Delta with a specific focus on Rivers State and Bayelsa State. The first subsection analysed the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers, highlighting the discovery of oil and exploring violence within the region in terms of oil bunkering, crimes and the proliferation of small arms. The exploration of violence also served to depict the complexity of the conflict and showed the need to shift from previous known paradigms and theories on conflict to embrace new ones within the current dynamics of fragile peace in the region. As noted by Shahrbanou and Chenoy: “underdevelopment may not directly cause violent conflict but poor social, economic, and environmental conditions, as well as weak or ineffective political structures, diminish a state’s capacity to manage tensions in a non-violent manner.” (Shahrbanou and Chenoy, 2007, p. 34). Thus, when relating this to Bayelsa and Rivers it is evident that decades of neglect on the part of the state have indeed impacted peace and security in the region. Furthermore, the conflict within these states is linked not only to oil but also to the arms trade, and takes place between networks of militant groups, the elites, international actors and security forces. The broader interplay between these different actors has led to the impediment of several governmental initiatives as the actors involved in the conflict and peacebuilding processes remain the same (Mähler, 2010). As such, both the conflict and peacebuilding processes serve the interests of the actors involved, rather than focusing on the interests of the population. Hence, depending on the approach used, as discussed in the chapter 3, various studies have concluded that the blame should be placed on the Nigerian government and/or on the oil companies. The continued environmental degradation, weak structures, high levels of corruption and thriving patrimonial networks have resulted in violence that continues to occur in the region.

In sum, it can be taken that several factors are associated with and responsible for conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers, and that these go beyond oil. It is also crucial to note that the era was indeed marked by conflicts such as the various ethnic cleavages which later manifested into national polarisation between the geographical entities of the north and the south. Furthermore, the perennially weak institutions
within the region also play a crucial part and the discovery and exploration of oil further led to the consolidation of political institutions. Bayelsa and Rivers has also been a region marked by poverty and a lack of modernisation due to the lack of resource management and sustainable development initiatives.

The second subsection analysed the transition from conflict to peacebuilding initiatives, highlighting the various responses by the government. This analysis divides the state-led responses to conflict into two main groups: the ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ approaches. The third subsection examines previous research on the informal economy in Nigeria and then moves to the Niger Delta, linking it to the political economy of peacebuilding to pave the way to addressing the objective of this research.

The fourth subsection discussed the peacebuilding initiatives used for the empirical data, namely: the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) and the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), analysing the structure, framework, scope and limitations of the initiatives, as well as their achievements over the years, specifically with regard to economic development through the market. Both initiatives work to address early warning signs of conflict within the Niger Delta, build economic development through peacebuilding, amplify the voices of the community and to promote synergy and collaboration between international, local and regional partners. However, this chapter showed a mismatch between the objectives and what the initiatives delivered, (which is further explored in Chapter 4), as many of their objectives were overambitious and hard to sustain and it was difficult to measure their effects and impacts.

The next chapter aims to answer the first research question, which seeks to analyse in greater detail the extent to which peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and what the implications of this are for the peacebuilding agenda. The peacebuilding initiatives carried out by PIND and the NSRP serve as a focal point to broaden the scope of the analysis on peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Furthermore, to provide a more holistic analysis, this research also incorporates initiatives carried out by various partners of PIND and the NSRP.
Chapter 4 – Peacebuilding: Through the Lens of Clientelism and Power in Bayelsa State and Rivers State

Introduction
The specific objective of this chapter is to answer the first research question: how and to what extent are state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives shaped by neopatrimonialism—clientelism and political patronage? The chapter gives an account of the research findings concerning the understanding of peacebuilding, and the influence of neopatrimonialism on both donor-based and state-led peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, emerging from the perceptions of participants in interviews. Existing studies that have analysed the impact of state-led initiatives have looked at the overall impact across the Niger Delta states, instead of taking an individual state approach (Omeje, 2004, 2006; Eberlein, 2006; Omotola, 2009; Uduji, Okolo-Obasi and Asongu, 2019; Ufua, 2019). In addition, works such as those by Ushie (2013), Kiipoye (2015), Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016), and Iwilade (2017), which have analysed the impact of patronage politics specifically on the amnesty
programme, have not sufficiently explored the impact of patronage politics beyond the amnesty programme. This chapter integrates respondents’ perceptions, views, understanding and experiences to illustrate the degree to which the donor-based and state-led actors have shaped the peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. Together with the data obtained from respondents, the data is triangulated with secondary sources to evaluate how state-led and donor-based initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism that previously existed in the conflict setting and how this shapes the post-conflict setting. In turn, this chapter investigates the degree to which examination of both state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives can enhance our understanding of peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism. This is important because, despite the existence of several state-led and donor-based initiatives the status of the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers states has alternated between ‘active’ and ‘inactive’, resulting in the emergence of new actors and an unstable peace (Newsome, 2011; Onuoha, 2016; Reuters, 2017b). The chapter begins by examining firstly the donor-led initiatives, and then the state-led initiatives, exploring the reasons why some actors tend to benefit more than others, and what the broader impact of this is on the peacebuilding agenda.

To fully answer the first research question, this chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section examines participants’ understanding and the focus of both state-led and donor-based initiatives – the overall peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. It highlights whether the overall peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa State and Rivers State has changed. The empirical data presented here helps to set the scene for an understanding of the current peacebuilding agenda in order to effectively examine whether and how state-led and donor-based initiatives are being influenced by neopatrimonialism.

The second section begins to answer the research questions, examining how and to what extent the donor-based initiatives carried out by the NSRP and PIND are shaped by neopatrimonialism. This section finds that although these donor-based initiatives do intersect with governmental structures at various levels, they are, however, not shaped by neopatrimonialism in Bayelsa and Rivers. Rather, they are shaped by the interests of their respective donor organisations; this leads to donor-centric approaches that, according to participants, then lead to the autonomy of initiatives and a reliance on foreign aid that means these organisations serve merely as gap fillers in Bayelsa and Rivers. This is a notion explored by Bailey (1998), Dicklitch (1998), Lind (2000), and Chiller and Fouron (2001, p. 212), who observed that NGOs do not just function as gap fillers but become an “apparent state”. The data also revealed that there is a gap between the theory (knowledge) of peacebuilding and the reported reality of the achievements of these initiatives (PIND and the NSRP).
It is difficult to place state-led peacebuilding efforts within the liberal peacebuilding narrative, as discussed in Chapter 2. This is because instead of reducing and addressing violence and grievances such as poverty, environmental degradation and pollution, state-led initiatives in Rivers State and Bayelsa State neither addressed the underlying causes of conflict, nor dealt with the grievances relating to their not bringing about institutional change; rather, they restructured the patron–client network, incentivising militants to stop using violence through financial deals with patrons. This demonstrates how conflict is managed, and how cooperation between the patrons, militants and clients is permitted and in turn increases the level of conflict. The distribution of economic privileges and favours is central to the establishment of power relations and the entire patronage network. Thus, it can be deduced that the state intends to provide financial opportunities for both the patrons and clients in order to maintain and establish institutional arrangements that will in turn help shape the patronage network, therefore, reshaping the different conflict drivers and creating entrepreneurs. This makes it problematic to conceptualise state-led peacebuilding as an integral trajectory of liberal peacebuilding. Consequently, in place of liberal peacebuilding, and encompassing its relationship with neopatrimonialism, this chapter argues that the concept of patronage peacebuilding is a better explanatory framework for the state-led peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers states. The third section, therefore, examines how state-led initiatives are influenced by neopatrimonialism by examining how these initiatives have enhanced the involvement of certain key actors in peacebuilding, namely the patrons – who are the political elites, ex-militant leaders, politicians and military generals – as well as the clients – who are ex-militants, youth and sometimes the general population of Bayelsa State and Rivers State. The data suggested that state-led peacebuilding initiatives are fuelled by neopatrimonialism and based on reconstructing the power structures that existed during the conflict in Bayelsa State and Rivers State; consequently, this led me to coin the term ‘patronage peacebuilding’ to describe this phenomenon, as best explaining state-led intervention measures in Rivers State and Bayelsa State. The central argument is that patronage peacebuilding is understood as a political and economic process of establishing peace that is centred on the advancement of the various political agendas, not just of the patrons – that is, the godfathers, ex-militant leaders, political elites – but also of the clients, through the manipulation of socio-economic conditions and institutional arrangements to the reconstruction of power dynamics in Bayelsa and Rivers states. It is a process that restructures the power dynamics within the post-conflict setting, reinforcing the apportionment of the benefits that existed within the conflict. Patronage peacebuilding shows that although these arrangements sometimes keep violence at bay, they are, however, detrimental to the overall peacebuilding agenda. Also, rather than focusing solely on the intentions of patrons and clients this chapter also examines the institutional impediments that have undermined peacebuilding. Additionally, this section examines the
roles patrons and clients play in the peacebuilding process, how they fuel the struggle for power, and the socio-economic factors and institutional practices contributing to patronage peacebuilding, all of which have further led to corruption and competition in the political economy of peacebuilding.

The fourth and final section examines our understanding of how donor-based and state-led initiatives have shaped the peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. The empirical data suggests that both state-led and donor-based initiatives have influenced the peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa State and Rivers State in three ways: firstly, one effect of the initiatives has been to lead to the tolerance of patronage peacebuilding; secondly, patronage peacebuilding has led to the reliance on NGOs by the local population; and, thirdly, patronage peacebuilding has facilitated the ‘blame game’ that occurs between state-led and donor-based organisations. The understanding of this concludes the analysis of how state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by clientelism, making an important contribution to the field of the political economy of peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism. This opens the door to exploring how state-led and donor-based peacebuilding shape the informal economy in Chapter 5.

Understanding and Focus of Peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State

Before examining how and to what extent donor-based and state-led peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism, this section highlights the understanding of the focus of peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State on the part of participants. This was an emerging theme within the empirical data, as participants who answered questions on peacebuilding within these states noted that it is not enough to analyse the peacebuilding initiatives without taking into consideration the understanding and the focus of the overall peacebuilding agenda (AD3, 2019; DB2, 2019; DB6, 2019). Thus, although this was not within the initial scope of this study, the prominence of the theme in the empirical data could not be ignored, and hence constituted an unanticipated finding. Interviews with both state-led and donor-based peacebuilding organisations in Bayelsa State, Rivers State and Abuja showed that there is a general understanding of peacebuilding which subscribes to the notion offered by liberal peacebuilding, as expressed in Chapter 2 (see Liberal Peacebuilding). This notion of peacebuilding goes beyond the absence of conflict and/or violence to include sustaining the livelihoods of the population; as DB8 described in his interview, peacebuilding is:

initiatives, methods that are used to manage and resolve conflict. (DB8, 2019)
Similarly, DB7 also describes peacebuilding processes as being a means of:

- teaching people how to manage conflict to ensure sustainable development and growth, cutting across family, and agencies globally, nationally and locally. (DB7, 2019)

In the same vein, SB1, a representative within a state-based institution, described peacebuilding as:

- the process of addressing the drivers and outcomes of conflict by speaking to the drivers, dealing with the root causes, the drivers and the conflict itself. (SB1, 2019)

While DB5 highlights the economic dimension of peacebuilding, stating that peacebuilding is a process of:

- building capacity around information that helps to de-escalate issues when language comes into play. A process that builds economic and social structures to facilitate the promotion of peace and reduce the recurrence of violence. (DB5, 2019)

This view was further supported by SB10, who notes that:

- Peacebuilding goes beyond peacekeeping and peacemaking to ensure society is reconstructed, enabling actors to have stable livelihoods, enabling environments to work. (SB10, 2019)

Similarly, DB1 agreed stating that:

- Peacebuilding is an inclusive process that brings about political, social and economic and attitudinal changes to sustain livelihoods. (DB1, 2019)

Thus, taken together, the overview is that peacebuilding is understood as the process of reconstructing the minds of the people with the assurance of hope, and of aiming to resolve injustice in non-violent ways. It is also seen as involving the process of educating youths, women and leaders – both traditional and political – and resolving conflicts as noted above. Thus, it can be deduced that both state-based and donor-based organisations subscribe to the same understanding of peacebuilding, which falls in line with the notion of liberal peace, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see Liberal Peacebuilding). This universal understanding allows us to then move on to examining the activities and roles these organisations play in peacebuilding, to see whether they subscribe to the
universal understanding of liberal peacebuilding or are shaped by other factors: of specific interest to this thesis is neopatrimonialism, and how this influences the peacebuilding agenda.

Interviews with participants revealed that opinions were divided as to whether the focus of peacebuilding remained the same – that is, resolving violence by appeasing the clients and patrons – or whether it has changed and evolved over time. The chart below (Figure 9) represents the perceptions of interviewed participants on the focus of peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. As highlighted in the previous chapter, state-led peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers has been based on two distinct methods, characterised as ‘carrot’ and ‘stick’ approaches. These initiatives mainly focused on resolving violence by appeasing the perpetrators of the conflict, who we now refer to as the clients, and the political elites, who are the patrons (see The ‘Carrot’ Approach and The Coercive ‘Stick’ Approach). Thus, the peacebuilding agenda has failed to take into consideration the causes and motivations of the conflict, such as environmental degradation, ethnic divides, high levels of unemployment, inequalities and the oil economy, to mention a few (see The Political Economy of Conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers States). The results of the research show that there is a nearly even split among participants, with 48 per cent of participants believing that the focus of peacebuilding has changed, and 52 per cent disagreeing.

Participants who argued that the focus of the peacebuilding agenda had changed believed that the focus of peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State had changed, but not fundamentally. They held the opinion that the environment had changed within these states; however, the factors – such as the need for environmental development, issues of oil rents, unemployment rates and so on – and actors had not entirely changed (DB5, 2019; DB3, 2019; SB3, 2019). They recognised that the focus of peacebuilding has moved from the study of militants to the study of ex-militants, thus the focus of peacebuilding is no longer on militant groups. This has resulted in a shift in the mindset from being agitators to being ex-agitators and currently being advocates of peace (SB3, 2019; SB5, 2019). According to interviews, the peacebuilding agenda has shifted from a concern over environmental needs to a development dimension that is aimed at restoring Bayelsa, Rivers and the entire Niger Delta region. It is crucial to note that early state-led peacebuilding initiatives in the Bayelsa and Rivers states saw the indigenous people being ignored; recently, however, channels have been opened and panels set up where citizens can openly express their opinions, as well as being part of the peacebuilding initiatives, including donor-based organisations; this indeed represents a change from the neglect indigenous people had previously suffered. However, it becomes important to ask to what extent these panels do indeed create and implement peacebuilding in these states, or whether they are a means by
which ‘false power’ is being given to the people in an attempt to buy peace. Figure 10 gives a breakdown of the participant’s opinions based on the institutions they are affiliated with (state-based, donor-based and academia). Interestingly, it shows that the majority of those who believe the focus of peacebuilding has changed work within the donor-based institutions.

On the other hand, other participants disagree, stating that the focus of peacebuilding has indeed changed in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. According to these interviews the peacebuilding agenda has shifted from a concern with environmental needs to focus on a development dimension that is aimed at restoring Bayelsa, Rivers and the Niger Delta region. These interviewees are of the opinion that the actors and focus of peacebuilding activities have changed. An interview with DB9 (2019) highlighted a controversial point – that there had been no oil issues from 2009 to 2015, as well as a reduction in cultism and kidnappings, thus showing that the focus of peacebuilding has indeed, in their opinion, shifted from peacemaking to actual peacebuilding, with development and sustainability coming into play (DB9, 2019). This point is controversial because there have been attacks on oil companies, clashes between gangs and the emergence of new militant groups, thus raising an important question: how can the focus of peacebuilding have shifted when issues that have existed since 1999 still remain unresolved in 2019? As shown in Figure 9, 52 per cent of participants believe the focus of the peacebuilding agenda has not changed; they believe that the ‘actors’, whether being referred to as militants, ex-militants, patrons, political elites or godfathers, are still the focus of peacebuilding. They further recognised that the focus of peacebuilding remains on environmental challenges, especially since these issues were never addressed. Furthermore, as we take a deeper look into ‘patronage peacebuilding’, the general structure of power and the informal economy within Bayelsa State and Rivers State, these actors (militants or ex-militants – the clients – and the godfathers and political elites – the patrons), irrespective of how they identified themselves, indeed remain the focus of the peacebuilding agenda. This shows that although there was some change in how actors were seen or referred too, the focus of peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State has remained fundamentally the same over the last ten years. The 52 per cent of participants (who believe the focus has not changed) argue that the post-conflict period has brought about the emergence of new actors – that is, new clients and new patrons – who did not possess power during the conflict period but who now do within the post-conflict environment. The emergence of these new actors is linked to the struggle for resources and the changing nature of power structures, which is examined further below.
Figure 9 Focus of Peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State

Source: Author’s notes and interviews

Figure 10 Percentage of People within Institutions who Believe the Focus of Peacebuilding in Bayelsa State and Rivers State has Changed

Source: Author’s notes and interviews
It is interesting to note when comparing Figure 10 and Figure 11 that, overall, a greater percentage of people working in donor-based organisations believe the peacebuilding agenda has changed, while in the state-based institutions, in contrast, workers predominantly believed it has not.

In summary, from the data presented in this section it can be deduced that although there is evidence to support the notion that the focus of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states has changed, a deeper and closer look has shown that the focus of peacebuilding has not changed. The overall dynamic of the focus of peacebuilding has remained political: although there has been an emergence of new structures and institutions, for example, the involvement of actors such as new NGOs, patrons and clients, the lack of focus on the actual roots of conflict (ethnic divides, environmental degradation, inequalities and so on) remains. The focus of peacebuilding in the Bayelsa and Rivers states has always been on what I would term a ‘band-aid’ approach. Just as a band-aid stops the flow of blood from an injury, so also the ‘band-aid’ approach refers to temporarily addressing conflict but failing overall to address the root causes of the conflict. The ‘band-aid’ approach is aimed at quickly restoring negative peace – as this
analysis will show – for the continuation of personal economic agendas in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Only the actors, and perhaps even the political entrepreneurs, have changed, while the nature of the conflict has remained the same over the years. As DB6 points out:

It is for this reason the Niger Delta remains where it is today. As the focus remains truly political and the hunger and struggle for power remains, true peacebuilding will never occur. (DB6, 2019)

The next section examines how and to what extent donor-based initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism. It integrates respondents’ perceptions, views, understanding and experiences to illustrate the degree to which the donor-based and state-led actors have shaped the peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa and Rivers states. The roles donor-based actors play within the peacebuilding agenda of these states is examined, providing a context for understanding the actors’ inclusion or exclusion of various groups from initiatives, as well as exploring whether and why some actors have benefited more than others.

**Donor-Based Peacebuilding Conducted by the NSRP and PIND**

This section aims to examine how and to what extent the donor-based initiatives carried out by the NSRP and PIND are shaped by neopatrimonialism in Bayelsa and Rivers states. As stated in Chapter 3 (see Peacebuilding Initiatives (NSRP and PIND)), it was noted that these donor-based organisations are united by a common goal of reducing violence and sustaining peace in the Niger Delta region. The roles of these groups included mobilising local people, strengthening the participation of the public, building ethnic alliances, and creating platforms articulating the demands of the people in order to promote peace and economic opportunities. During fieldwork, respondents shared their views and perceptions regarding whether and how donor-based peacebuilding initiatives conducted by PIND and the NSRP were influenced by neopatrimonialism. Most of the participants believed these donor-based initiatives were not influenced by neopatrimonialism but were solely influenced by their respective donors. According to AD2:

NGOs go where the money is, or rather where the research money is, and donors decide what they want and that’s where the money is focused. (AD2, 2019)

Similarly, DB3 pointed out:
PIND goes where the problems are – through data-driven approaches we assess what needs to be done in a specific community and what we can do practically. We focused on the grassroots approaches because that is where we believe it will be more effective. (DB3, 2019)

DB1 argued:

We work with the government, but we are not influenced by it. The government listens to what we have to say in terms of security like the Niger Delta Peace and Security Network in both Rivers and Bayelsa. (DB1, 2019)

As PIND is formed along the lines of interest of the donors, rather than along vertical cleavages based on either regionalism or ethnicity, this falls in line with thoughts expressed by Larry Diamond, who recognised that this helps organisations such as this to "cross-cut the principal polarities of political conflict." (Diamond, 1994, p. 9). However, it is interesting to note that when it comes to engaging with people in different local governments, members of PIND expressed how important it was for them to know how to negotiate through the inter-party rivalry occurring in the state. This inter-party rivalry is part of the struggle for power that occurs within patronage peace, which is discussed further below. It is crucial to note that this inter-party rivalry served as a hindrance to peacebuilding exercises. This was expressed by DB6, who highlighted the need to understand the political terrain:

We have to understand the political and economic terrain in which we find ourselves. We cannot just go here or go there because the perception of our activities by the population can hinder how we do our jobs. So, we try to have no political association with any party or government. Yes, we work with those who are in power, but we do not go beyond that relationship. (DB6, 2019)

As DB5 stated:

There are elements of politics in peacebuilding, we see it, we know it. All you have to do is look at the political terrain. But it is not from our end. We are held to a higher standard than the Nigerian government or the state governments. This system put in place keeps us accountable, there is no accountability in Nigeria or the individual states. (DB5, 2019)
Likewise, DB3 noted:

Because we have no political motivations or benefits, we do not need political merit, we are guided and structured by the objectives of our donors. The politicised climate does not affect how we work. Yes, we take into consideration danger and instructions from the government based on security. (DB3, 2019)

It is crucial to note, beyond the awareness of patronage peacebuilding, that donor-based organisations are able to carry out their initiatives despite patronage peacebuilding, as noted by DB3:

We don’t just operate without permission. To go into certain places, we seek permission from the traditional leader and only when we are granted permission do we go. (DB3, 2019)

This point was further echoed by AD1 (2019), who highlighted the importance not just of seeking permission from all organisations, but also the need to offer “blessings” to traditional leaders. He expressed how blessings were previously offered to traditional leaders and then shared among members of the community. However, today, these blessings are no longer shared within the community but are means of bribery and ways of appeasing traditional leaders who are now ex-militants like Ateke Tom. DB4 reflected on the importance of working with the state:

We cannot work without stable collaboration between us and the various levels of government. We inform the state of our findings, analysis and reports, and even collaborate on programmes. (DB4, 2019)

Furthermore, participants stated that although these initiatives worked within the states at various levels, they were not influenced by the dynamics of party rivalry, nor by the struggle for power and the need for favouritism and political favours; they noted that peacebuilding initiatives were carried out in accordance with data and collaboration with various levels of the state. As expressed by DB2:

We use hotspots of conflict and conflict indicators to track conflicts especially violence affecting women. There is no involvement from the state in our intervention process or
communities we target for sensitisation programmes. Our organisation is strictly data-driven. (DB2, 2019)

When asked how donor-based organisations stay neutral, he stated:

We focused on the objectives of our donors, beyond that we have no power or influence. (DB2, 2019)

While also agreeing with the above view, DB9 recognised the power struggle that occurs not only in Rivers and Bayelsa but also in the whole country by saying:

There is a power battle going on not just in the Niger Delta but across Nigeria, the trick is to know how to avoid these battles. NGOs like ours stay neutral, we do not influence or pledge allegiance to politicians, political parties or government. (DB9, 2019)

This discussion introduced the notion of fake NGOs versus real NGOs. As noted by AD6:

We know the real NGOs, the ones carrying out real peacebuilding, we know them. The ones run by our own people are something else. But these international ones, they seem to be doing good. (AD6, 2019)

Similarly, AD2 further noted:

Depending on the donor, local councilmen, senators are involved in some donor-based peacebuilding initiatives. However, when the donors are international donors, the local Nigerian government has little or no influence on the approach of the initiatives. (AD2, 2019)

Additionally, AD3 noted:

Because these donor-based organisations like the NSRP are not funded by the Nigerian government they cannot be run by the government. As far as the government is concerned these groups are helping to do the work they (the government) should be doing. Which allows them (state government) to continue their activities. (AD3, 2019)
This suggests that because donor-based initiatives are based on the funding of international or foreign bodies, they have little accountability to the constituency they operate in. The empirical data suggests that the donor-based organisations are autonomous, and function more as facilitators of foreign funds than aiming to implement grassroots change. In addition, this creates a situation that leads to the dependency on foreign aid, thereby fostering what Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001, p. 212) have termed an “apparent state”, where NGOs take on the responsibilities of the state as the population becomes dependent on NGOs for aid. When projects end this situation creates long-term stability issues and a lack of continuity.

In addition to the dependence on foreign funding, donor-based organisations' projects tend to focus on problems that can produce quick and acceptable results for their donors. This leads to projects such as the provision of primary health, income generation through grants and group farming, the implementation of safe water projects and so on, rather than projects which address intangible benefits such as political empowerment or addressing ‘hot’ or conflict issues. Likewise, AD3 also noted:

The NGO sector is involved in early warning detections, capacity building and raising awareness of peace. For example, the Niger Delta dialogue is much disjointed even within this sector. Concern continues to be on how we stop the militants from resuming attacks. There is no regulation of the activities of NGOs with regard to this. (AD3, 2019)

Similarly, DB6 also noted:

Yes, we work to prevent conflict through different programmes like Partner for Peace initiatives, but understand that conflict mitigation resolutions do not address criminality around Rivers or Bayelsa. These are the real issues that need to be addressed. We are limited to our core focus and what we can carry out. (DB6, 2019)

This lack of regulation led some participants to raise questions about the effectiveness of the initiatives carried out by PIND and the NSRP. As AD6 noted:

A lot of these NGOs are limited not just in terms of resources but also their influence and its overall impact. The real question that needs to be asked is, what is the real impact of all these sensitisation programmes and workshops? You go to Okolobiama, and you talk to them about peace, what does that do to people with no jobs and starving? (AD6, 2019)
In the same vein DB6 noted:

NGOs try to do the government’s work. However, NGOs mostly treat symptoms. (DB6, 2019)

This thought was echoed by AD4, who raised an interesting point. He believed donor-based initiatives never really address the conflicts within any given society. He asked:

How can you expect someone who has never experienced a day of poverty, a day without light (power supply), have access to clean water, to solve the problems of people who go through this daily? (AD4, 2019)

He further argued that donor-based initiatives are present only for a limited time and once their resources run out or they achieve their objectives they leave, without even questioning the notion of the sustainability of the implemented initiatives (AD4, 2019) and hence whether donor-based initiatives are effective. DB3 admitted that despite the organisations’ success in various activities, when it came to measuring the effectiveness and impact of various initiatives, such as local sensitisation programmes, nothing had been done. DB3 stated:

PIND works with various partner donor-based corporations like us; we carry out KAP workshops – knowledge-based workshops based on attitude and practices to help people see each other as one rather than as tribes. However, we haven’t measured how this affects or influences the communities, but I feel there is an influence. (DB3, 2019)

This was evident with the peace club initiative formulated by the NSRP. The peace clubs are a commendable achievement of the NSRP that engaged both non-state and state actors through coordination, capacity building and encouraging the accountability of conflict institutions, and they fostered an inclusive sustainable peace process. Peace clubs focused on two things: firstly, “targeted influencing and persuasion” among the protagonists of the conflict, that is, the local communities; this was carried out through awareness raising, conflict sensitisation and so on; secondly, the NSRP brought people together, and thus provided a space in which collective decision-making and dialogue could occur (NSRP, 2014). This created a space for dialogue and teaching and by creating this safe space individuals were enabled to build their confidence and were made aware of their rights. For example, in Rivers State, it was noted that 80 per cent of participants strongly agree peace clubs were extremely
important and relevant and built their self-confidence (NSRP, 2018). This brings into question the effectiveness of peace clubs: if the primary impact was boosting confidence, how does this influence peacebuilding, criminality and violence? In addition to this, fieldwork in Bayelsa and Rivers states showed that in the long run peace clubs were ultimately not sustained (D3, 2019; AD2, 2019).

In the same vein as the subject of peace clubs, AD3 observed:

Donors involved in various stages of economic empowerment have used various tools, like the media, drama and even football, targeting specific elements like early warning signals, focusing on women and youth. The NSRP stated its domestic enhancement of women's inclusiveness in peacebuilding brought structural change and promoted coordination. However, the real question is whether this has continued since it ended: sadly, the answer is ‘no’. (AD3, 2019)

According to NSRP reports, women’s involvement was promoted by the Rivers State peace clubs, with communities applying what had been taught in the various peace clubs (NSRP, 2017). However, empirical data on the ground suggested otherwise. Despite reports of 353 initiatives contributing to peacebuilding and raising awareness about VAWG (NSRP, 2018) between 2014 and 2017, DB6 (2019) revealed that the presence of women during meetings went no further than their mere presence. Although they did receive some training, it was difficult to measure its effect and whether it had indeed made an impact on the peacebuilding process. In addition, NSRP officials believed participants attended simply for the food being given at the event and not for any other reason. The NSRP reports that in Rivers and Delta the role of the peace clubs was evident, with approximately 200 reports being made to ‘the observatory’ on the positive impact of the platform (NSRP, 2016).

This point also reinforces the notion that NGOs serve as gap fillers; this is discussed in more detail below. Thus, the research evidence referred to in this section indicates that among the different participants it was believed that owing to the involvement of international donors in PIND and the NSRP, these initiatives were not influenced by local patronage networks in Rivers and Bayelsa states. Although the NSRP and PIND were not influenced by patronage it was observed, however, that because of the donor-centric approach these initiatives were regulated neither by the Nigerian government nor by the state governments, which caused participants to question the impact and language used by both organisations. There seems to be a consensus between some academics and workers in state-based institutions on the language used by NGOs and, surprisingly, by some donors as well. For instance, when
lamenting the issue of inter-party rivalry and how this feeds into the struggle for power, furthering the narrative of patronage peacebuilding, SB11 explained:

Now you have to understand the dynamics of peace in both areas, from the perspective of the state and international NGOs. Yes, they (donor-based organisations) are not swayed by the local politics, they have their bubble in which they function. (SB11, 2019)

As discussed above, although donor-based organisations seem not to engage in patronage peacebuilding they must, however, navigate through the inter-party rivalry which is a manifestation of the struggle for power in order to carry out peacebuilding initiatives. While many participants did not go into the specifics of what this looked like in reality, beyond the blessings paid to traditional leaders, there is a sense that things are not always black and white – sometimes donor-based organisations have to operate within the grey areas to get things done.

Similarly, another aspect expressed by SB2 described how:

There is a separate reality in which not only the state and these NGOs function. What we know to be peacebuilding from the books is perfect, but it is not always manifested in real life. There are too many factors that shape, reshape and influence the whole narrative, and what you are left with is a peace that is structured to a specific area, both at the nation, state, local and NGO level. (SB2, 2019)

Thus, the participant’s positions suggest that despite the overwhelming successes reported in both PIND and the NSRP reports, there is, however, a visible discrepancy between the reports and the ground realities in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Not only is there a problem of sustainability – which can be seen especially with the NSRP initiatives as they have failed to continue after the end of the initiative – but there is also an issue with measuring the impact of initiatives such as peace clubs, the meetings held by partners for peace and various sensitisation programmes. The empirical data revealed that not much is known about the impact of these problems, indicating a difference between the reality of projects versus the reports about them. Furthering this point, DB7 exclaimed:

In the Niger Delta big money talks, as a result there is no regulation of practices of donors by the government and that is where the problem lies. (DB7, 2019)
In summary, the evidence in this section indicates that data from field research revealed that the NSRP and PIND peacebuilding initiatives are not influenced by neopatrimonialism; however, they are donor-centric. Participants were of the opinion that because these initiatives are donor-centric they tend to be autonomous and not accountable to the locals, which leads to reliance on foreign aid. Furthermore, the dependence on foreign aid leads to a lack of regulation of initiatives; as such, most initiatives are quick and tangible, such as the creation of water supplies or the provision of healthcare, which in the long run do not address conflict or violence. Additionally, this encourages NGOs to become service providers and gap fillers, as noted by Bailey (1998), Dicklitch (1999), and Glick Schiller and Fouron (2001). In addition, this section highlighted how donor-based organisations negotiate within local politics to sometimes engage in grey areas that are not often mentioned in textbooks. Finally, this section also noted a difference in the language used in policy briefings, the reality in Bayelsa and Rivers states and the impact of these initiatives.

Another interesting finding in the interviews was the contrast between the theory of liberal peacebuilding and the reality, or rather the practice of peacebuilding initiatives as conducted by the state-led initiatives in Rivers and Bayelsa. This third subsection focuses on furthering the understanding of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers by exploring the theory versus the reality of peacebuilding in state-led initiatives. To do this, the section examines the empirical data on the peacebuilding initiatives carried out in the states of Rivers and Bayelsa, bringing into focus the second theme of this chapter: ‘patronage peacebuilding’. This finding raises intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent of peacebuilding being practiced within these states, and its implications for the broader peacebuilding agenda. The understanding and interpretation of ‘patronage peacebuilding’ is further analysed in relation to power, bringing to light from the interviews recurring themes of corruption and competition, and how these have shaped the peacebuilding agenda.

**Theory of Peacebuilding vs the Reality of State-Led Peacebuilding Initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers States**

The findings of this thesis are interesting because they indicate that there was a difference between the generic understanding of peacebuilding, as discussed in the literature review (see Liberal Peacebuilding) and the beginning of this chapter, and its practice by the state at both the national and state levels. However, despite this apparent consensus in the definition of peacebuilding, a recurrent theme in several of the interviews was a sense among interviewees that the generally
agreed definition of peacebuilding did not apply within Bayelsa State and Rivers State. These interviewees observed that what existed in Bayelsa State and Rivers State was a self-seeking economic and political engagement disguised as peacebuilding, citing as an example the amnesty programme that started in 2009 and the pipeline protection initiatives. As recognised by Jonathan Goodhand (2003, 2005), conflict becomes self-financing for elites and clients; this characteristic has now been reflected in the peacebuilding process, especially in Bayelsa and Rivers. In both these states, the central focus of the national and state governments’ peacebuilding policies has been one dimensional – focusing only on rebel–state conflict, as shown in Chapter 3 (see Table 7 Periodisation of State Policy Responses in the Niger Delta (1960–2009)). The reason for this was that the conflict affected the oil industry, which in turn undermined the economy of the state. This led to two crucial consequences: firstly, the other dimensions of the conflict, such as ethnicity, environmental degradation and crime, were ignored and became more complex in nature; secondly, the focus on militancy led to a need for a ‘band-aid’ solution in order to restore the economy. Hence, interviewees constantly referred to state-based peacebuilding initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers as “peacebuilding in terms of the Niger Delta”, or “peacebuilding in the Niger Delta”. Thus, the empirical data indicates that what in reality (or in practice) existed, had been interpreted and understood from the local perspective as “peacebuilding in terms of the Niger Delta”, or, as I elegantly put it, ‘patronage peacebuilding’. Patronage peacebuilding is the process of restructuring the patron–client networks that existed during the time of conflict, in the post-conflict environment. The concept of patronage peacebuilding is important because it helps us to examine the shifting nature of neopatrimonial relationships that underpin the state-led peacebuilding process in Bayelsa and Rivers states, highlighting the actors, motives and practical processes, which sum up the major focus of this section. The major objective of the restructured networks is to ensure that a stable flow of oil rewards clients, and to maintain the power dynamics within the state. Thus, this section will examine the subtheme – the struggle for power. This section will, further, examine patronage peacebuilding as a network of shifting alliances around securing power and wealth through peacebuilding, thus making it a lucrative industry. It also highlights how methods of buying peace enacted by state-led initiatives have turned peacebuilding into an economy that breeds corruption and fuels competition for power. These components serve not only to provide an understanding of patronage peacebuilding but also to highlight how state-led peacebuilding initiatives have been influenced by neopatrimonialism in Bayelsa and Rivers, shaped by clientelism, and what this means for the peacebuilding agenda. This analysis is supported by work such as that of Salih (2017), Iwilade (2017) and Ebiede (2017) as discussed in Chapter 2 – Literature Review: Assessing and Contextualising the Informal Economy, Peacebuilding and Neopatrimonialism.
Patronage Peacebuilding

As noted in Chapter 3, elite politics is a distinct feature of Nigerian politics, which accelerates governance failure and fundamentally inhibits state capacity (Ebiede, 2017). It involves a ‘cake-sharing’ psychosis and the corruption of state officials, the determination of public policies based on competition for sectional advantages, the misuse of state resources and lack of accountability in the democratic political process. As with clientelism (Omobowale and Olutayo, 2007, pp. 425–446; Elischer, 2008, pp. 175–201; Omo-bowale, 2008, pp. 203–224), neo-patrimonialism (Von Soest, 2007, pp. 621–645) and other internal failings of the state in Africa, this feature of Nigerian politics is a debilitating element of the political culture with adverse impacts on development and the entire social structure. This form of government has also been referred to as the neopatrimonial state “in which officeholders systematically appropriate public resources for their own uses and political authority is largely based on clientelist practices, including patronage, various forms of rent seeking, and prebendalism” (Van de Walle, 2001, p. 52). It “is a complex mode of government” that denotes “the accumulation of wealth through tenure of political power” (Van de Walle, 2001, p. 52).

Thus, as the term suggests, ‘patronage peacebuilding’ refers to a political and economic process of establishing peace that is centred on the advancement of the various political agendas, not only of the patrons (that is, godfathers, ex-militant leaders, political elites), but also of the clients, in order to reconstruct the power dynamics in Bayelsa and Rivers states (AD1, 2019; SB 12, 2019). It is a process that restructures the power dynamics within the post-conflict setting, reinforcing the distribution of benefits that existed during the conflict. Thus, in order to continue to survive and thrive within the new post-conflict era, those in power in the conflict era must develop creative means of maintaining their power. This phenomenon was noted by Sandbrook (1986) in work which examined the need of political elites to survive, which in turn leads to economic competition. Similarly, as Bailey (1971) notes, in order to survive opponents must collect more resources and where possible destroy their opponents. The data revealed that patronage peacebuilding is transforming peacebuilding into a productive economy that lines the pockets of the patronage peacebuilding entrepreneur and advances their personal goals. Hence, ‘patronage peacebuilding’ is also a short-term political practice that institutionalises self-enrichment and power-sharing through clientelist networks made up of godfathers, political elites, ex-militant leaders and members of groups, youths and the general population of Bayelsa and Rivers states, which, overall, destroys political and economic development. It also means that there is a form of power-sharing between state actors and non-state actors; thus, the current and previous state-led
Peacebuilding initiatives have always contributed to the continued flow of oil, as well as restructuring and maintaining the power structures in Bayelsa and Rivers. The state-led peacebuilding initiatives created a space for power and competitive political manipulations that marked the struggle for control through the ownership of resources such as land and oil. As noted by DB6:

Peacebuilding is an interesting space in which to analyse the shifting nature of relations among the various social categories and networks and how they are called into service. (DB6, 2019)

Patronage peacebuilding came about as a result of the breakdown of patronage networks that existed in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. In the early 2000s, elites in the Niger Delta began to lose control of their clients as a result of the attempts to clamp down made by the then president, Obasanjo, in order to maintain “resource control” (Iwilade, 2017, p. 270). President Obasanjo’s agenda was geared at stopping the appropriation of resources by the local politicians in the south as well as curbing their influence (Iwilade, 2017). This resulted in the arrest and embarrassment of many southern politicians, such as the impeachment of the late chief Diepeye Alamaseigba, who was the former governor of Bayelsa State (Iwilade, 2017). This clampdown resulted in links between patrons and clients being broken as patrons were no longer able to protect and provide for their clients (Iwilade, 2017). Consequently, the clients became impatient, leading to breakdown of the client networks. Hence, the Obasanjo regime disrupted the patron–client linkages which had maintained relative peace within Bayelsa State and Rivers State (Iwilade, 2017). Thus, it was argued that the youth militancy that thrived between 2000 and 2009 was the result of a fall out between the Nigerian political elites and their clients (Tarela, 2013 int; Obi, 2014; Ajala, 2016; Iwilade, 2017). This was seen in studies that linked the rise of insurgency and the collapse of public order to the breakdown of the clientelist network (HRW, 2004; Osaghae et al., 2007; Courson, 2009; Ukeje and Iwilade, 2012). Thus, it can be observed that the rise in insurgencies coincided with the decline in power of local elites, thereby influencing their clients, and resulting in the mobilising of armed groups.

As such, political competition within an environment fuelled by neopatrimonialism is all about the struggle for wealth and power, where the weak or poor serve as mere pawns who have no chance of competing. To succeed, the patrons and entrepreneurs must, therefore, engage in less than fair means, such as embezzlement and corruption, to get what they want. This often leads to both patrons and clients engaging with the informal structure just to succeed. (Kelsall, 2011; Sigman and Lindberg, 2017). This engagement, therefore, entails clients and patrons participating within the scope of conflict.
economies to fulfil their economic agendas, be it self-enrichment for survival or merely for continuing a conflict. It becomes plausible, therefore, to imply that clientelism emerges because of a state of generalised insecurity. This places both insecurity and clientelism as by-products of the lack of peacebuilding or state structures. As such, in situations of inadequate distribution, productive clientelism functions as an alternative to the lack of ‘social security’ within the state. The use of violence as well as the lack of functioning institutions, therefore, helps to maximise the enrichment opportunities of patrons, here not only politicians but also former military heads who could later become warlords, as was the case in Somalia (Compagnon, 2012).

As such, elites attempted to recapture their clients and maintain the power structures in Rivers and Bayelsa. To address the violence in Bayelsa and Rivers the national government launched many state-led initiatives. Earlier responses by the Nigerian government, in the 1900s, have been described as “inadequate" and "half-hearted" by the media (Daily Champion, 30 August 2004), with the World Bank report seeing the response by the Nigerian government as "ineffective" (Moja, January 2000, p. 42) because the responses failed to stem the resurgence of violence (Daily Trust, 6 August 2002; Smah, May 2001, p. 5; HRW, 2019). For example, in 2004 the government approved an operation called ‘flush out three’, which was aimed at cleansing Rivers State of illegal weapons. This was a joint mission between the navy, air force, police and army. In addition to this, there was a behind-the-scenes peace agreement conducted between Asari’s NDPVF and Tom’s NDV by the governor, Peter Odili. (HRW, 2005). During this period troops were deployed to areas such as Amadi-Ama, Tombia, Okrika, Buguma, Bukuma and Ogbakir. However, the NDPVF accused the government of launching raids in Tombia, Bukuma, Ogbakiri, Buguma and Oru Sangana. Although these attacks were denied by the army spokesman, Captain Kanu, local NGOs in the state reported attacks on several fishing villages. (HRW, 2005).

In a bid to restore peace and stop the violence between Asari and Tom, a peace agreement was finally signed on October 1 2004, calling for an immediate ceasefire and disbandment of Asari’s NDPVF and Tom’s NDV (HRW, 2005). To maintain the ceasefire several local committees were established to monitor the progress. In addition to this the government offered $1800 in exchange for each rifle surrendered (HRW, 2005). Furthermore, members in detention were released in exchange for weapons, and amnesty from prosecution was granted to other members of these two groups. The initiative saw about 1100 weapons being collected; however, it was noted that these were old weapons, while more sophisticated ones remained in the possession of these groups (HRW, 2005). In addition, the government started an employment generation programme, which sought to rehabilitate former
fighters; despite this, however, the initiative suffered as officials did not develop proposals for the creation of these jobs (HRW, 2005).

However, tensions between Asari and Ateke Tom continued to engulf the city of Port Harcourt (CEHRD, 2004, 2005; Watts, 2007). This led to another early initiative used by the state government to restore peace – the Millionaires’ Programme, which offered every youth one million naira (about £4100) for turning in a weapon. The initiative came about as tensions arose between Mujahid Asari-Dokubo and Ateke Tom. However, before an arrangement could be reached Asari-Dokubo accused the government of favouring Ateke Tom. As a result, the relationship between Odili and Asari-Dokubo was broken (CEHRD, 2004, 2005; Watts, 2007). One consequence of the breakdown of this patron–client relationship was Asari-Dokubo collaborating with Government Ekpemupolo (Watts, 2007; Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2012; Ubhenin, 2013; Iwilade, 2017). Thus, these early initiatives by the state, rather than addressing conflict, contributed to the breakdown of client relationships, furthering the conflict as well as leading to the collaboration of various militant groups.

A popular state-led peacebuilding initiative, which many believed was aimed at reconstructing the patronage network, was the 2009 amnesty that was granted to 20,000 ex-militants and has been ongoing for over a decade (Ikelegbe, 2005; Tarela 2013; Obi, 2014; Kiipoye, 2015; Nwankwo, 2015; Ajala, 2016; Iwilade, 2017; Ebiede; 2017). Its achievements and failures have been contested across the literature (Ikelegbe, 2005; Tarela 2013; Obi, 2014; Kiipoye, 2015; Nwankwo, 2015; Ajala, 2016; Iwilade, 2017; Ebiede; 2017). The amnesty granted by the Yar’adua administration included the following: the state would not prosecute any offences associated with militants’ activities (Yar’adua in The Vanguard, 25 June 2009, p. 8); the state also offered training, education and cash pay-outs to all ex-militants in the programme who returned their weapons (Ikelegbe, 2005; Tarela 2013; Obi, 2014; Kiipoye, 2015; Nwankwo, 2015; Ajala, 2016; Iwilade, 2017; Ebiede; 2017). In addition to this, ex-militants were expected not to attack any oil infrastructure within the Niger Delta region. Although it was noted that the amnesty led to relative peace in Bayelsa and Rivers states this was not attributed to the ceasefire, but rather to the restoration of the patronage network (Iwilade, 2017). Iwilade described the amnesty programme with the idiom ‘bridges and dams’, as it was a means by which the patrons rebuilt the ‘dams’ for their clients rather than a means for ‘building bridges’, by which he meant to refer to infrastructure, health and education, to name a few examples (Iwilade, 2017).

The amnesty programme ensured that while the general population of Bayelsa and Rivers have not benefited from the oil revenues, what has been created is a system in which ex-militant leaders
transition from being clients, some positioning themselves as patrons, or partners of other patrons, thus forging an alliance between the two. It was for this the reason that the amnesty programme was exclusive in nature, as observed by AD5:

The amnesty programme was an initiative implemented by the Nigerian government that was characterised by negotiations as well as the solidification of patronage networks as efforts were made to draw youths in. (AD5, 2019)

Thus, another reason the amnesty programme was viewed as an element of patronage peacebuilding was due to its ‘inclusive’, or as some scholars refer to it, ‘exclusive’ nature (Iwilade, 2017; Nwokolo and Aghedo, 2018). As noted by Iwilade, when questioning how inclusive the amnesty programme was, he determined that although the amnesty programme was deemed to be an exclusive process, it was, however, inclusive. He stated that it was an inclusive process because it did not leave out anyone who belonged to the patron–client network that the state was aiming to reconstitute (Iwilade, 2017). This distinction not only indicates the motivation for the amnesty programme but also highlights it as a co-opting mechanism and another ‘band-aid’ mechanism enacted by the government. In an interview with Iwilade, Tarela stated:

Nobody who was an armed fighter and wanted to participate in the amnesty was left out. In fact, people had to go about looking for people to include. Many of the commanders got slots more than the number of fighters. Even the JTF people lobbied our commanders and got people inside. In my own case, I was able to include my girlfriend, my cousin, and another friend. (Iwilade, 2017, p. 16)

Iwilade further stated that the problem various scholars had was that they viewed the amnesty as a process that targeted the public; it was, however, an exclusive process aimed at a specific group of people – the clients, who were connected to the pre-2004 patronage network (Iwilade, 2017). Thus, it can be assumed that the amnesty programme targeted specific individuals (the clients) and reintegrated them back into the patronage network. This thought was expressed by DB6:

The amnesty programme was one of the biggest ploys the Niger Delta region has ever seen. It saw the likes of Tom Ateke, rise to more power, becoming traditional leaders while the boys (militants members) suffered. (DB6, 2019)
One efficient way by which the neopatrimonial networks were reconstructed within peacebuilding was the granting to militant leaders of multi-million-dollar pipeline protection contracts. This method of establishing peace can be seen as the ‘buying of peace’, as identified by Paris and Newman (Newman et al., 2010). Although these contracts were open and business-like, they resembled payoffs that were made to host communities by oil companies (Ebiede; 2017). This finding is consistent with that of Dr Tarila Marclint Ebiede’s (2017) work in Beyond Rebellion: Uncaptured Dimensions of Violent Conflicts and the Implications for Peacebuilding in Nigeria’s Niger Delta. He noted that these contracts were awarded especially in Rivers and Bayelsa states as a means of patronage, thus leading to further violence within the region as it validated one group above others (Ebiede, 2017). It was reported that multi-million-dollar contracts were signed between the elite network and militant leaders, as well as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). In 2011, the NNPC is reported to have paid Ekpemupolo 22.6 million dollars to guard the pipelines he used to attack. Likewise, the NNPC paid Victor Ben and Ateke Tom 8 million dollars (Wall Street Journal, 22 August 2012; The Nation, 28 August 2012; National Mirror, 13 January 2013). This raises questions as to the extent of the influence the militants exerted in the peacebuilding process, and, as noted by Peel (2009) and Nwajiaku-Dahou (2010), the nature of the complex networks and interests of ex-militants. When discussing the pipeline protection deal offered to militant leaders, Asari-Dokubo stated:

It’s true, to some extent. I will not deny it. So, if somebody takes food from my mouth, me and my 18 children make we no eat [should we not feed?]? Jonathan dey eat for Aso Rock with his children [The President, Goodluck Jonathan, is living comfortably] […] If Jonathan, with all my contributions, cancels my pipeline protection contract – if I had one – I will fight him. (The News, 13 January 2013, p. 20)

However, what was seemingly interesting was that despite these huge amounts paid to the militant leaders, the volume of oil still increased, as noted in Chapter 3 (Fabiyi, 2012). Some said this was due to militant groups revolting against their leader because they did not reveal their share of the ‘national cake’; others attribute this to militant leaders’ continued attacks despite receiving funds, to see how much they could extract from the government (Fabiyi, 2012; Ajala, 2016; Iwilade, 2017; Ebiede, 2017). Therefore, state-led initiatives were more focused on buying peace; whether these were just for term goals, or for paying lip-service, as a result the initiatives were not working. This raises the question of how the state was building peace. Furthermore, despite the funds paid to militant elites, there have still been clashes between groups over the protection of pipelines, and even attacks on pipelines; this has furthered the proliferation of arms because sometimes security forces become involved and, as
previously discussed, their weapons are obtained. Thus, the protection of pipelines has added another complex dynamic to the conflict in the region that continues the cycle of violence and arms proliferation, and which, along with the effects of the peacebuilding initiatives, perpetuates violence and the struggle for power.

Similarly, Kiipoye has noted:

Ex-militant commanders who were once enemies of the Nigerian state now hobnob with managers of the state. The state and oil TNCs [transnational corporations], once seen as symbols of exploitation and oppression to be subverted whenever possible, are now the allies of ex-militants. Militants, once seen as energy infrastructure attackers, are paid heavily to protect it; whether actual protection takes place or not is a different matter altogether. (2015, p. 9)

Likewise, this was noted by Iwilade (2017) in his interview with Tarela, an ex-militant, who stated that:

They have even politicised this amnesty programme. They have dragged all our militant head [s] into politics. They have changed the mentality of our heads from freedom fighters into political activists. (Tarela, 2013 int.)

While discussing why the amnesty programme had continued despite high levels of insecurity and violence, AD5 (2019) acknowledged that this was due to a lack of understanding of peacebuilding, describing the initiative as being a mockery of what peacebuilding should be. He further stated that to really understand the amnesty programme and why it has continued, one must look closely at the political powers that make up not just Bayelsa and Rivers alone but the entire Niger Delta region. AD5 stated:

This peacebuilding as you call it, is just a game, a political game, and as long as the same structures remain in place, amnesty will continue, and nothing will change. (AD5, 2019)

He concluded by asking what the amnesty programme had really done in terms of development for the region, for individuals and for the state, emphasising again that this initiative was used to quickly restore peace, restore oil and keep full the pockets of those in power – but it had truly failed in promoting and maintaining peace.
This idea was further expressed by Elvis Nana Kwasi Amoateng (2020), who emphasised that the 2009 amnesty programme was, rather, an “amnesty trap”. He noted that rather than serving as a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme, it was in fact a rearmament, remobilisation and disintegration (RRD) programme that rearmed, remobilised and disintegrated clients. Amoateng expressed this using an image, displayed below – Figure 13. According to Amoateng (2020), through conflict containment, peacebuilding initiatives underline institutional arrangements in the system in Bayelsa and Rivers that have enriched political manipulation and socio-economic conditions; these conditions have led to further violence, which is contained for the benefit of the political elites, which then led to the “amnesty trap” (Amoateng, 2020, p. 8). This thesis contends that rather than establishing institutional reforms and resolving conflict, the state-led initiatives such as the 2009 amnesty programme provided a short-term containment of violence, without any established plans for sustaining long-term peace in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, as expressed by Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016, p. 71). Furthering the logic of Iwilade, Amoateng (2020) noted that the amnesty programme largely targeted a political settlement aimed at political leaders, prominent traditional leaders and ex-militant leaders. Thus, the amnesty largely excluded the general population, and was, rather, a short-term conflict containment plan; this observation falls in line with Chikwem and Duru’s (2018, p. 50) argument that the Niger Delta region will return to violence once the contracts and cash handouts stop, and reinforces Amoateng’s (2020) logic of an amnesty trap, as well as the logic of patronage peacebuilding.

Figure 12 Amnesty Trap
Thus, the logic of patronage peacebuilding underscores the manipulation of socio-economic conditions that contain violence in Bayelsa and Rivers, using secret bargaining between the patrons and ex-militant leaders (Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye, 2016). These bargains created conditions in which the conflict appeared to be resolved; however, there remains the likelihood of violence returning when these networks break down, as they did previously, leading to the 2009 amnesty programme. This was seen in 2016 when violence resurfaced in which there was a strong presence of militant groups in Port Harcourt and Yenegoa. Thus, it can be deduced that despite the amnesty programme and the pipeline protection initiative, a perverse incentive structure was created that reshaped the patronage network system – patronage peacebuilding. When the patronage network was broken, violence ensued, therefore reinforcing claims that the payment of youths and training through the amnesty programme did not constitute a lasting solution (Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye, 2016, p. 82). However, one thing in particular that can be observed from the views expressed by the participants is their focus on what the amnesty was ‘meant’ or ‘intended’ to achieve, rather than on the amnesty’s outcome. This brings into scope the difference between the theory of peacebuilding, as discussed in Chapter 2, and the reality of peacebuilding in terms of its actual effects on the ground, as reflected in Salih’s work (Salih, 2017). Most participants agreed that the 2009 amnesty programme was aimed at containing violence temporarily, rather than addressing the root causes of conflict and building sustainable peace, thus demonstrating the state’s lack of commitment to long-term peacebuilding and the resolution of conflict.

Apart from the national amnesty programme that started in 2009, Rivers State carried out a state-led amnesty in 2016. In September, Governor Wike created an avenue for cults and militants to surrender their weapons, offering reconciliation and rehabilitation (Akasike, 2020). The state-led amnesty saw 22,430 cultists accept the amnesty, with Governor Wike also stating that the collection of 911 assorted arms, 7,661 assorted ammunitions and 147 explosives made the programme a success and the state relatively peaceful (BellaNaija, 2016). It is critical to note that this amnesty was not monetised like the 2009 amnesty, as the governor claimed that those who would surrender would do so sincerely and not out of the need for money; he further claimed that those cultists and militants would be rehabilitated and become part of society (BellaNaija, 2016). To prove the success of the programme, Governor Wike disbanded the committees in charge of the state-led amnesty (BellaNaija, 2016). However, two things are interesting when considering this state-led initiative. Firstly, the state-led initiative took place at the same time as the ongoing 2009 amnesty programme. This raises questions as to the success of the
2009 amnesty – if there was a reduction of violence due to the 2009 programme, what was the need for another programme, especially while payments were still ongoing to the ex-militants? Secondly, Wike made a point of stressing that this initiative was not politically motivated, thus raising questions as to whether the 2009 amnesty was indeed politically motivated, as many had already speculated. It is also crucial to note that despite the national 2009 amnesty programme and the state-led 2016 amnesty in Rivers State, the cultists and militants still returned to crime, as reported in 2017 and 2018 (Vanguard, 2020). Thus, it can be deduced that this state-led amnesty was not successful.

Furthermore, despite the 2016 state-led amnesty, three other peacebuilding initiatives enacted by Rivers State governor, Wike, were the following anti-crime and anti-gang bills in 2018 (Akasike, 2020): the Rivers State Neighbourhood Safety Corps Law No. 8 of 2018; the Rivers State Secret Cult and Similar Activities (Prohibition) (Amendment) Law No. 6 of 2018; and the Rivers State Kidnap (Prohibition) (Amendment No. 2) Law No. 7 of 2018. (Akasike, 2020). These initiatives were aimed at enhancing security in Rivers State, as Wike stated any cultist caught breaking the law would face the death penalty. However, it was speculated that this was an attempt by Wike to arm the youths for the upcoming elections (Akasike, 2020), which brings us back to the logic of patronage peacebuilding and the reshaping of the patronage network.

Furthermore, as shown from the discussion above and in Chapter 3, none of the state-led peacebuilding efforts aimed at building and fostering peace within the region have yielded peace. The empirical data further revealed that in order to secure political power, ‘patronage peacebuilding’ exercises were carried out within various communities (AD1, 2019; DB3, 2019). These exercises went beyond the peacebuilding initiatives and were aimed at ensuring the control of power. This could be seen happening within the states in the lead up before an election, whether it be a presidential or even a governor election. Patrons were also able to build and establish legitimacy through elections and the delivery of some development services (Engel, 2005, p. 205). During elections, political elites and godfathers sponsor their preferred candidate and political groups to ensure their political power is maintained and their interests in the revenue distribution are not undermined. Gubernatorial elections in Nigeria have further complicated issues of power and resources, especially in the Niger Delta region (Watts, 2007, p. 650), as state governors control and appoint civilian positions, patrons and godfathers, and usually try to reinforce their positions and candidates using militant groups, cults and gangs. These groups disturb the voting process through intimidation as disruptive military officials have provided arms to NDV and NDPVF and finance (Bøås, 2011, p. 119). For example, the governor of Rivers, Peter Odili, deployed the NDV and the NDPVF for his re-election in 2003; however, after winning the elections he distanced
himself from both groups (Bøås, 2011, p. 120); thus, such happenings have become the norm within the region. For example, it was speculated that the Niger Delta Development Corporation was formed as a means for the clientelist electoral contract to buy votes for former president Olusegun Obasanjo (Engel, 2005, p. 205). Pre-election months were filled with candidates engaging in vote-seeking activities, such as providing food, gifting money and making the promise of jobs (AD1, 2019; DB3, 2019; SB6, 2019). Hence, access to the clientelist networks is exchanged for different political favours, thus leading to weakened and dysfunctional political structures as this system no longer represents the interests of the people, but rather, that of the patrons. (Oyebode, 2014, p. 139). However, what became interesting, emerging from the perception of interviewees, was the assumption that these efforts were also a means of controlling the population. As noted by SB6:

> During the period of elections, we (military) are told to patrol more. We are dispatched to various Local Government Areas (LGA) to arrest and keep an eye on gang members. In Khana LGA, earlier this year (2019) we were deployed to round up boys (thugs) even before any violence happened. We never knew where the orders came from, but we suspected. (SB6, 2019)

He further stated that sometimes the locking up of the boys (thugs) would handicap the opposition parties:

> When we have these boys in lock-up it means whoever sent us can carry out his objectives within the communities, especially the LGAs. (SB6, 2019)

Similarly, AD6 stated in his interview:

> Peace during elections means that people can elect their candidates of choice or rather the candidate selected for the people. (AD6, 2019)

He further explained that, especially in Nigeria, elections weren’t as simple as electing an official of choice, but rather, involved a lot of back-channel movements and the manipulation of the police and military to carry out raids, increase patrols and investigate more crimes. AD6 exclaimed:
The manipulation of state resources comes into play right around elections, there are so many: “raids”, and “patrols” just to take rival gangs out of commission. Efforts by both the police and military are no longer genuine but they become puppets for politicians. (AD6, 2019)

The participants’ opinions discussed above can be seen as vividly exemplified in the 2003, 2005 and 2019 elections, which were primed with electoral rigging across the whole of Nigeria, but more prominently in Rivers State. Particularly in 2003, as noted by an HRW report (2004, pp. 14–19), young men were recruited by politicians to intimidate and bring in votes with the promises of “money, cars and trips to the US in exchange for their efforts to ‘canvass the votes’ for the PDP” (HRW, 2004, p. 15), thus, escalating violence and criminal intimidation within the region. Additionally, in an interview with HRW (2007, p. 81), Ateke Tom, leader of the NDV, acknowledged his role in carrying out criminal intimidation for the then Rivers State governor, Peter Odili, saying:


This view was supported by SB12 who stated:

It is a known fact that militant leaders and gangs were used by politicians to control the population, manipulating votes and instilling fear. But so were the members of the police and army, you didn’t know who was trustworthy and who was dirty. And that has been the way things have been for years. (SB12, 2019)

Furthermore, in the 2005 elections in Port Harcourt Human Rights Watch reported that security forces were unavailable to curb violent attacks; when questioned about this the State Commissioner of Police exclaimed: “The police don’t have the fire power in comparison to the militia.” (HRW, 2005, p. 6). It was also reported by NDPVF members that security forces watched and did not act when they attacked villages or tried to stop clashes between groups: “The MOPOL [mobile police] in this town (Tombia) protected them [Tom’s NDV]. MOPOL shot at us.” (HRW, 2005).

Later elections were no different: in 2015, Rivers State recorded the highest amount of violence, with 16 out of the 66 incidents reported by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) taking place there. The perception of interview participants was that violent acts were carried out by militants
hired by parties in order to disrupt the voting process. This was due to the ongoing rivalry between the political elites (INEC, HRW, 2019) As noted by A4:

I do not vote: not because I believe my vote does not matter, which it doesn’t, but the insecurity is too much. I stay home and so does my entire family. It is better not to get involved and caught outside. (A4, 2019)

Between 2017 and 2019 in Rivers State, supporters of the PDP and APC candidates for the position of governor clashed several times. This was collaborated by AD4:

You never knew when it would start (violence), all you needed to know was never to stick around when it did. Even to report to the police, for all you know you could be reporting to the enemy. (A4, 2019)

Similarly, SB13 noted in her interview:

Gangs and cults belong to the highest bidder and have no loyalty to anyone. (SB13, 2019)

This was more recently seen in the 2019 elections at both the federal and state levels, which experienced intense levels of violence with security agencies such as the army and local police used by political elites and political parties (HRW, 2019). During the national and state elections in February, March and April 2019 the deployment of the military during the election period stirred concerns about the role the security forces would play (HRW, 2019). It was found that in areas such as Bonny, Abonnema, Isiokpo and Okrika in Rivers State voters were scared off by armed men while military men just stood and watched and, in some cases, even helped the armed men load the ballot boxes and intimidate voters (HRW, 2019). Despite claims by the police of increased security and the deployment of troops it was observed, however, that there was little or no response from the security agencies to acts of violence (HRW, 2019). Security agents did nothing to curb violent attacks; this fuelled the complicity of security agents to patrons as they aided in the theft of election materials and intimidated voters. Organisations such as SB Intelligence reported that 626 people were killed during the election cycle in 2019.

Furthermore, during the state elections in Emuoha, Phalga and Bonny (towns in Rivers State) it was reported that men with glass bottles, rods, machetes and sticks attacked the polling centres, targeting voters (HRW, 2019). They stole ballot boxes, threatened to kill electoral officials and destroyed some
ballot boxes. These men were working for either the APC and/or the PDP and were strategically placed at various polling centres (HRW, 2019). It was reported that in these areas officials were told to go to certain locations to sign off election results (HRW, 2019). For example, it was also reported that in Abonnema security agents arrested the only doctor, detaining him in a base in Port Harcourt for over three days in order to treat the injured militants (HRW, 2019). Also, in Abonnema neither security agents nor INEC officers did anything to stop armed thugs who were sent by the APC to intimidate voters (HRW, 2019).

Additionally, in Kalabia in Bonny, APC supporters and the military attacked PDP supporters at the polling centre. In a battle between APC and PDP supporters at the polling centre, military officers shot at civilians, injuring many (HRW, 2019). They ransacked homes, intimidating people (HRW, 2019). As described by a 23-year-old man in Emuoha, the police took off their uniforms and ran with protestors when attacked by thugs at the polling centre (HRW, 2019). No backup security agents were sent when asked, in addition to there being no investigation of the crimes (HRW, 2019). Representatives of the organisation We the People reported 40 dead and 52 injured. They noted that people jumped into nearby rivers to escape the gunfire, and some drowned (HRW, 2019).

Thus, beyond the use of militants, the police and the army to intimidate voters and disturb the voting process and control the citizens, pre-election initiatives saw the solidification of patronage alliances between militant leaders and politicians within the state, which is another element of patronage peacebuilding. According to DB5, peacebuilding functions as both a battleground for the struggle of power as well as an instrument in which performance power is carried out to control the population. As noted by DB5:

After the elections the numbers of raids decreased, check points were removed from villages. Not only did the police presence disappear but so did the politicians, promises of jobs and better development within the region, all gone. (DB5, 2019)

This quote reinforces the concept of ‘patronage peacebuilding’, further depicting it as a means through which the struggle for power is fought serving the economic needs, as noted by Goodhand (2003, 2005).

To summarise, the logic of patronage peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states stems from the goal of maintaining institutions to sustain the selfish economic interest of patrons such as political elites,
traditional leaders and ex-militant commanders at the expense of the local population. This is illustrated by the pre-election initiatives, the amnesty programme, the pipeline protection initiatives and the state-led amnesty enacted by Rivers State. Such initiatives lead to patrons and clients having mutually beneficial relationships that have perpetuated violence in these states. In addition, state security agencies have been used to suppress community protests, allowing patronage networks to thrive. This has contributed significantly to the lack of consistent institutional reforms to address the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Thus, the various state-led initiatives have restored previous clientelist relationships between local elites in the Niger Delta and their clients, elevating the political, economic, and social significance of former fighters and integrating new individuals into the power structures.

The Struggle for Power

A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense among interviewees that the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers has been based upon competition, as described earlier, and its aftermath, and that the competition then continues on into the peacebuilding process (DB4, 2019; SB11, 2019). Thus, patronage peacebuilding has perpetuated the struggle for power – for the control of oil, wealth and financial advantage that was part of the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers states. The focus on the power structures is important for two reasons. Firstly, the aim of examining the power structures, or rather the restructuring of the power structures within peacebuilding, is to shift the narrative of the literature from focusing on the role the patrons have within the power structures to also examining the role of clients within the power structures. Classical models of neopatrimonialism have fallen short of capturing the role of clients in the shifting nature of actors. Secondly, highlighting and noting the impact of the re-alignment of the power structures within Bayelsa and Rivers brought about by peacebuilding policies shows the emergence of new dominant actors, whether as patrons or clients, as well as the potential for new conflict trajectories. Therefore, this analysis shifts the focus from the neopatrimonial relations in the arenas of conflict in which both the patrons and clients engaged, to the struggle that still exists within the ‘post-conflict’ stage. The focus on the struggle for power aims to show how both clients and patrons manipulate and question the narrative of peacebuilding within post-conflict Rivers and Bayelsa. This is synonymous with Ekeh’s analysis of the war of independence in Africa (Ekeh, 1975). He notes that the struggle for power between the European and African bourgeoisie was more about power than about the needs and rights of the people. This is similar to the case in Rivers and Bayelsa, with the slight difference being that the competition there is between the African bourgeoisie and elites. Thus, building on Ekeh’s narrative, it is crucial to note that the struggle for power functions regardless of who it comprises. Thus, it is not about who fills the positions, but rather about how that position fits within the system and how the system in turn fits within the culture of the state and the
country. Thus, the struggle for power is not just about the actual people who are engaged – the patrons and clients – as it continues to thrive even as the individual patrons involved change. The specific concern within this section is how the struggle for power influences the peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa and Rivers.

Exploring patronage peacebuilding and the dynamics of conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers revealed that there was immense competition and a struggle for power among patrons, clients and conflict entrepreneurs. The interests of patrons are conveyed through political considerations in order for them to stay longer in power and, thus, be able to manage oil rents, land ownership, and resource control and distribution (Beuran et al., 2011). Power is accumulated through oil wealth; as a result, patrons and clients struggle and compete by offering various rewards and favours to their allies and clients (Beuran et al., 2011, p. 1). As such, those who lack power (clients) and desire to be included in decision-making matters in high political positions, and have access to oil, thrive and climb the patronage ladder, thus leading to violent resistance. Especially within the context of the Niger Delta, as explained by SB1, power is synonymous with the control that an individual possesses in terms of territory. Territory refers not just to large acres of land, but to land with oil. Land that, as he puts it, is:

rich in natural resources, the more oil you have or, rather, have access to, the more power you hold. (SB1, 2019)

As such, it is not just about how much ‘turf’ (land) an individual possesses; the true value of the turf is the availability of oil and how that can influence people. Hence, power structures are shaped and controlled on the basis of the ownership, perceived ownership and the control of natural resources (SB1, 2019). Thus, in order to possess this power, there is intense competition among not just the various patrons, but also among clients and potential clients. Thus, it becomes key to examine how competition between patrons takes place, how it is different from competition between clients, and how this shapes the peacebuilding agenda.

Exploring the competition between patrons is instrumental to further understanding patronage peacebuilding, because it is as a result of this competition and the need for power that patronage peacebuilding thrives. Hence, different groups form tactical alliances with different patrons to seek and benefit from resources (Ebiede, 2017, p. 13). The empirical data shows that this struggle has continued beyond the conflict and even been restructured by the peacebuilding process. As groups struggle for power there is a constant shift in alliances as groups such as MOSOP, the Ijaw Youth Council, CSOs and
even some local NGOs form alliances to challenge not only the legitimacy of the state, but also the patronage networks. Interviewees shared the opinion that the lines were constantly blurred between who the actors were, how they fought, what they fought for, and the nature and depth of their alliances. However, within the narratives certain variables were relatively constant. These observations are supported by work such as that of Iwilade, in which he recognised that for the patrimonial networks to thrive, certain levels of violence must exist. This is because the clientelist order is dependent upon the formalisation of power and the ability of those in power to perform violence when needed (Iwilade, 2017). Thus, the continuation of low-level violence in Rivers and Bayelsa is a deliberate act on the part of the elites to privatise violence as they struggle for power: power is maintained by the ability of patrons to use violence to their advantage. Hence, as patrons compete to gain power this translates through the actions of clients, as stated above, and in turn fuels competition among clients.

In addition to examining the ways that patrons compete, it is also key to examine competition among clients. One form of client competition is through exerting authority to show patrons their strength by carrying out attacks on energy infrastructure – the more gruesome the attack the more dominance and power the individual gains. As noted by AD3:

Clashes in the rural areas are means of showing power. These cult and militant groups are showing the powers that can be used. (AD3, 2019)

Similarly, in his interview SB5 stated:

The rate of poverty and lack of development in the Niger Delta region makes competition between the boys (clients) for power more fuelled with aggression that leads to clashes between various gangs and cults. (SB5, 2019)

The process of competition among the clients differs slightly from that among the patrons: clients compete by forming new networks. According to participants the clients were subverting the process of inclusion within these networks in order to build their own networks. Themner (2012) noted that to understand the dynamics of post-conflict policies it is essential to examine the role of mid-level ex-fighters as they represent a key position in the re-organisation of power. These new networks formed by clients because of the grudges they hold, therefore, serve to disempower the existing power structures and also act as a form of resistance against the existing system, thus showing resentment towards the existing patronage network. Clients were not only fighting against the existing power
structures but were transitioning from being clients to being patrons by creating their own networks in which they were seen no longer as clients, but as patrons. This, therefore, created another vacuum – one that was filled by lower-level armed fighters rather than politicians. Hence, the positions of all actors within the power structures remained precarious as the system was insecure with constant exchanges happening (Pratten, 2013). As such, this thesis observed how previous research has failed to take into consideration the exchange between these clients or ex-militants because they do not possess a high profile and, as such, it is believed they do not have access to the centre of power and are unable to exert any real influence; however, this thesis reveals that these clients challenge the neopatrimonial logic, ‘re-capturing’ various ranks. Thus, the reconstruction of the patronage networks has not only reconstructed these networks but has also led to a counter process of the creation of new networks run by clients; this is also noted by Iwilade (2017). These newly established networks are, in theory, diffusing authority and control. A further study that focuses more on these newly built networks is, therefore, recommended. These emerging networks are based on a common concern for the distribution of power and politics within the region, as well as for what life would look like after the conflict within the post-conflict area. As noted by SB6:

The focus of the boys (clients) is no longer the political incentive of criminal activities within the state but what life looks like beyond the security and comfort they once enjoyed. How they can be in control. However, the real question is how not how long elites stay in power but how long till new formations emerge and take over. (SB6, 2019)

The ability of ex-militants to form their own alliances demonstrated that, in this sense, combatants or clients have their own interests and even use regional problems as motives to continue rebellions that were seen as having ended. Hence, as these new networks are formed, they undermine and break down the existing power structures. It becomes necessary, therefore, to be aware of the impact this has and whether this could lead to another insurgency outbreak that is led no longer by the patrons, but rather by the clients, and what this means not only for the power structures in the region, but also for peacebuilding. Is there an expectation of a shuffling of the power struggle? How can this be prevented – or is this the reform that Rivers and Bayelsa so desperately need? Thus, it can be deduced that the perception of participants was that state-led peacebuilding initiatives are fostering not only patronage peacebuilding, but also the emergence of new power structures led by clients as a means of struggling and competing for power.
The empirical data from this research also suggested that most clients compete not only to gain power for themselves, but also to provide for their families; as such, they are increasingly likely to have more than one patron (DB6, 2019; DB2, 2019). It is this endless competition that fuels the re-emergence of conflict within the region, as clients and patrons compete to climb the power ladder. This situation was worsened by the dominance of ex-militant leaders being challenged when the Buhari regime’s anti-terrorism approach to peacebuilding involved the displacement of militancy leaders (Iwilade, 2017). This gave room to those who previously did not benefit from the patronage network to finally struggle to be on top and make their claim to power. As noted by DB6:

The boys (militants, cults and gang members) are constantly fighting and struggling to get out of the creeks, because of this no one remains on the top for long. Today Tom is in power, tomorrow someone else takes over. (DB6, 2019)

This results in an increase in violence as clients fight to become the new leaders of their groups.

Furthermore, the displacement of militant leaders empowered rival groups to seek control. This created a space in which groups could confront each other. The struggle for power was, thus, not just within groups but also between various groups, with some of these hostilities being fought based on differences of ethnicity. For example, in Rumuji and Ovogo communities in Emohua LGA, in June 2016, a cult clash between ‘Icelanders’ and ‘Greenlanders’ saw two police officers and five other persons killed. Also, in June 2017, in the Tai LGA of Rivers, in Sime community, 14 persons were killed in another clash between the Icelanders and the Greenlanders (Vanguard, 2020). In Omerelu community in Ikwerre LGA, in 2018, five people were killed and four more beheaded in a clash between rival cult groups (Vanguard, 2020). It was speculated that these attacks between rival groups were intended to demonstrate to patrons what the groups could do.

As DB9 notes, clients might not need the power they acquire immediately, but the possibility of being the next in line or the next leader, fuels constant competition, through crimes, kidnapping and hostilities in various communities, all for a share of the ‘national cake’:

They (clients) saw how peacebuilding operations like pipeline protection programmes were given to their oga (leaders). Everybody wants part of the national cake. (DB9, 2019)
Hence, peacebuilding is no longer concerned with building peace, but rather serves as a means for the continuous struggle for power to control resources, and both clients and patrons compete for the benefit this control offers after the conflict.

Consequently, the views expressed by interviewees indicate that the current state-led peacebuilding agenda within Bayelsa and Rivers has been less than comprehensive and is still focused on the rebel-state dimension that shaped previous peacebuilding approaches. The method of displacing militant leaders served only to create power vacuums that clients struggled to fill, which further led to intensifying violence within the ‘post-conflict’ area. In addition, the displacement of militant leaders failed to address the other dimensions of conflict that were emerging, or rather that were never addressed in the first place, thus calling into question whether peacebuilding was actually occurring in Bayelsa and Rivers states, and in the Niger Delta as a whole.

In addition to this, the empirical data showed that the struggle for power led to the political space being shared between state and non-state actors. As SB5 states:

> Sovereignty is shared between the political elites, the state and the boys. In fact there are some areas in the Delta that have been left to militants to control. No security agent goes there unless there are looking for trouble. (SB5, 2019)

Similarly, AD6 noted:

> Power is still shared between the political elites and the creeks (militants). It is the constant battle between these actors that brings about problems in the region because at one point the political elites are in control, and another time the militants are in charge. Right now, I will see there is some balance. However, who is to say tomorrow the militants don’t seize control? I don’t know. (AD6, 2019)

Hence, as both state and non-state actors competed for power over resources, this led to the creation of ungoverned spaces (AD1, 2019; BD5, 2019). Although the notion of ungoverned spaces was not a prominent theme emerging from the empirical data, it is, however, crucial to take note of this issue, as a few participants did mention it. Furthermore, this reinforces Iwilade’s notion that some sort of violence needs to occur in order for the patrimonial networks to thrive (Iwilade, 2014). Thus, SB5 (2019) notes that it is within the ungoverned spaces that these occurrences happen. He said that such spaces
are deliberately left for non-state actors to operate within. SB5 further stated that ungoverned spaces are manifested practically through protection money being paid to the non-state actors by the local community to ensure their businesses are protected or not harmed. Within these ungoverned spaces the state actors have no control or power over what goes on. Similarly, SB8 (2019) noted that these ungoverned spaces further manifest themselves as physical areas within the Niger Delta region that are under the total control of non-state actors. According to SB8:

There are physical areas within the Niger Delta that belong to (thugs) non-state actors. These are areas given to them by the government. Everyone knows it and accepts it. (SB8, 2019)

Iwilade (2017) and Kiipoye (2015) both state that the patron–client relationship does not fully capture the institutional arrangements between political elites (patrons) and their clients, who engage especially in using co-option or co-optation. Co-option connotes a one-sided political or business alliance in which the elites dominate and control their clients within the patronage networks, and, as noted by Cheng et al. (2018, p. 2), these clients are controlled through informal and formal structures. However, co-option cannot be used to fully define the mutual symbiosis that exists in the Niger Delta, as patrons do not necessarily have the upper hand in the peacebuilding process in Rivers and Bayelsa. Both the clients and the patrons benefit from the relationship, and interchange positions as the struggle for power continues. Patrons must make clients happy to keep the balance of power and ensure their (clients) carry out the interests of the party. Thus, elites provide financial deals, and clients, who could be ex-militant leaders, keep elites happy by carrying out their agenda.

Thus, one can speculate that the struggle for power within the region outweighs the need for positive peace. It can be observed that the lack of liberal peacebuilding (as understood in the literature) within the region can even be seen as a deliberate act by the state actors, because as the state system continues to weaken, the patronage power structures remain, and economic interests are met. It can be said that patronage peacebuilding is adversely affecting the advancement of development in Bayelsa and Rivers and is more concerned with re-establishing the power structures in order to advance the personal and political agendas of patrons. As peacebuilding initiatives serve as means of restructuring patron networks, the battleground for the struggle of power and competition among clients and patron alliances is constantly shifting. This is represented by the patronage pyramid in Figure 14, below (see Figure 14  Power Pyramid in Bayelsa and Rivers States), with the arrows representing the constant movement among various positions.
Corruption

The empirical data also showed a prominent subtheme within patronage peacebuilding to be the nature of corruption within state-led peacebuilding. Corruption can be understood as the conflation of public and private domains by patrons for personal benefit. However, as noted by Olivier de Sardan (1999, p. 28), corruption occurs in various forms and it is therefore important to distinguish between them: for example, between ‘big-time corruption’, which is “practiced at the summit of the state...
(presidents, ministers, directors of important offices, directors of public or parastatal enterprises), involving millions or even billions of CFA francs” (Sardan, 1999, p. 28); and ‘petty corruption’, which is carried out by clerks, nurses or customs officers and policemen (Sardan 1999, p. 28). He further noted that these two forms can be seen as being two poles of a continuum. Beyond personal greed and the necessities of rewarding a circle of supporters, or co-opting potential opponents, the sustainable pattern of high-level corruption is further embedded in and rationalised by the insecurity of power tenure; this, then, invites political corruption – the use of corrupt gains for political aims rather than economic ones, which can sometimes be an exchange of favours and not necessarily money. Hence, corruption can be seen as being part of the fabric of social and political relationships, and is synonymous with stealing, especially in Bayelsa and Rivers, as noted by former president, Goodluck Jonathan in his seventh Presidential Media Chat in 2014:

Over 70 percent of what are called corruption, even by EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission) and other anti-corruption agencies is not corruption, but common stealing. Corruption is perception, not reality. (Premium Times, 2014)

Similarly, as AD6 notes:

Corruption extends beyond the influence of special treatment by the executive and legislative branches. (customs) Officials can extract payoffs in return for overlooking the illegal underpayment of taxes or for tolerating illegal activities such as smuggling. (police) Officials may demand payoffs (bribes) in exchange for not arresting citizens. (AD6, 2019)

In contrast, DB6 notes the nature of corruption among state agents:

Kidnappings are not just kidnappings anymore. The police in the state arrange the payment of ransom, where is that done? Beyond that the police receive their own cut from the kidnappers. You even have police officers who sell/lease their guns to non-state actors. All this happens because of a lack in the system. A lack in training and a lack in funds. So, the system is broken. (DB6, 2019)

In 2019 TransparencIT carried out an analysis of corruption in Nigeria, highlighting the levels of corruption within various organisations (TransparencIT, 2019). The analysis showed that the top five groups with the highest levels of corruption were: the police, members of parliament, local government
officials, government officials, and judges and magistrates, as shown in Figure 14 Level of Corruption in Nigeria by Institutions in 2019. This analysis complements the findings of the research empirical data discussed in this thesis.

**Figure 14 Level of Corruption in Nigeria by Institutions in 2019**

Source: TransparencIT, 2019

This endless circle of payoffs that results in a vicious spiral begins with political leaders buying off powerful actors such as wealthy businessmen, criminal groups and so on, through patronage. In turn those powerful actors buy off weak politicians, and other criminal groups and individuals with the
promise of business ventures and future jobs. Thus, the ‘post-conflict’ political system is then caught in a corruption trap of pay-offs. This leads to the formal institutions being undermined and to greater competition, not only concerning power, but also over state rents and corrupt proceeds. This also leads to violence, some of which many believe to be what led to the conflict in the Niger Delta. Hence, patronage peacebuilding fuels the struggle for power, which is interpreted through competition that further leads to corruption.

In addition, the flamboyant lifestyles of leaders within the region not only raise the question of what the money in the region was being used for, but are also an indication of how funds were being diverted for personal use (Ejibunu, 2007). For example, Dr Peter Odili, the former governor of Rivers State, in 2006, budgeted $1.3 billion for the entire state; within the budget he allocated $65,000 a day for transportation to the office of the governor, which, when looked at in context, is clearly inflated. In addition to this, $38 million was allocated for two helicopters, which also begs the question of the need for two helicopters, and how much these would actually be used (Ejibunu, 2007). Furthermore, within the budget a mere $22 million was allocated for healthcare for the whole state, which is less than that budgeted for the helicopters: this surely brings into question the priorities of the state (Ejibunu, 2007).

Furthermore, in 2012 the former governor of Delta State, James Ibori, was set to be imprisoned for fraud for 13 years over the sum of £50 million. Although he was discharged and acquitted for the same charges in Nigeria, in a London court he was found guilty of ten counts of conspiracy to defraud and money laundering (BBC, 2012). The misappropriation of public funds is another reason why elites in the Niger Delta have not been trusted to deal with problems within the region, especially as politicians have financially supported militant groups such as the NDPVF and NDV (HRW, 2003a/b).

It can be taken that although the relationship between private and public power does not always involve corruption through monetary pay-offs, such relationships can, however, serve the interests of a particular businessman or politicians, and frequently this involves criminal elements. All this contributes to a trickle-down effect: violence and the demand for pay-offs does not stop with patrons and clients, it also flows down criminal organisations, guerrilla groups, para-military organisations, even the nation’s regular armed forces. Furthermore, in 2012, Global Witness (2012), cited in Martini (2014, p. 5), estimated that between US$300 billion and US$400 billion has been lost to corruption since Nigeria’s independence. In addition, Kellogg, Brown and Root – a US construction company – pleaded guilty to the payment of about US$180 million as a bribe to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, the petroleum ministry and other government officials in order to secure US$6 billion worth of contracts (Martini, 2014, p. 7). These examples also show how, at the local level, actors are connected, and, in essence, the embezzlement of such large amounts only leads to the suffering of the general population.
Corruption within the region raises many questions as it shows that sufficient resources exist; the problem, however, is how they are distributed by the state: because the state is not accountable and transparent funds are embezzled, leading to further corruption (Ajala, 2016).

Considering the perceptions of participants, it can be understood that the combined goal of pursuing political and economic profit is used as a method not only by patrons to struggle and maintain power against their opponents, but also as a means by which individuals join militant groups in order to survive, further leading to violence that serves the personal economic interest of patrons. This work has also shown how patronage networks and corruption have been fuelled due to weak institutions and still formative state-building processes, and the rising importance and status of oil (Brunner, 2002, 292ff.), which fosters informal political arrangements and the mismanagement of public funds (Mählner, 2010). Thus, the failure of the political institutions can be considered not only as a contributing factor to the conflict but also as having provided the opportunity for violence and corruption to continue in the region.

Through the existing power structures the patrons can capture the political and economic benefits of reconstruction, transforming the peacebuilding process into a profitable economy. Corroborating this point, an interviewee, DB2, stated:

"War is in indeed profitable, but so is peace. And in the Niger Delta, state-led peacebuilding is a lucrative economy. (DB2, 2019)"

Affirming that if the elite who are in power during a conflict can maintain their position, they can therefore position themselves to benefit further, as credible sources of power and institutional constraint remain weakened, he further noted:

"(State-led) peacebuilding ensures state institutions remain weakened, so these fail to take them (patrons) out of power. Funds have been diverted to private accounts so peace becomes an economy for those in power. (DB2, 2019)"

Similarly, SB9 (2019) noted that the lucrative nature of state-led peacebuilding has led to indigenous NGOs now being composed of professionals, local elites and bureaucrats, who see it as an alternative source of income. As people have seen the flood of donor money pouring in, many have turned their ambitions towards starting NGOs. SB9 stated:
I remember a specific NGO that was started by a prominent leader who I will not name. He used his girlfriend as front man, and everything went into her personal account. Believe me when I say no initiative was carried out by that NGO and there are many like that out there. (SB9, 2019)

However, despite the negative connotations of patronage peacebuilding, part of the empirical data revealed that it has, however, led to relative peace, and in some instances halted violence. The patronage approach to peacebuilding has resulted in various skill acquisitions programmes, although these have emerged specifically around election times. Patronage peacebuilding is also seen to be bringing youths together to form a united front for change that is aimed at development. The extent to which this will actually happen is yet to be determined. Thus, with the establishment of relative peace, albeit short-lived, can we really view patronage peacebuilding as destructive? If the actors constantly remain the same, and the struggle and control for power are the sole aim within the region, does patronage peacebuilding not ensure some sort of balance or control? Should the focus then be on changing how peacebuilding has always been? What are the risks of doing so? Will that not just be another way of re-establishing power structures? Thus, there is abundant room for future research in order to truly understand patronage peacebuilding and its influence beyond the peacebuilding and development agenda.

Another emerging theme in the empirical data was that patronage peacebuilding has simultaneously challenged the structures of power to influence the culture of social, political and economic infrastructures. Thus, it not only affects the formal structures of power but also the traditional space, which will be explored in the next section.

**Patronage Peacebuilding and the ‘Destruction’ of Traditional Structures**

Interestingly, the traditional structures in Bayelsa and Rivers states was another subtheme that emerged from the interviews with participants, within the narrative of state-led peacebuilding initiatives. As explained in the previous chapter the traditional structures – involving elements such as chiefs, titleship, palaces, beads and so on – are sacred, and represent the culture and customs of the land. These structures evolved out of ceremonies (for example, traditions existed that the leaders were consulted before members of the society made decisions such as the purchasing of various territories, for the ‘gods’ to bless the purchase), and engagement with peacebuilding activities within the region began, with homage being paid to the ancestors and traditional leaders. SB3 noted:
Traditions in the Niger Delta were built on over 50 years of sacred respect of the land. The land represented more than just oil and wealth but represented the deep connection of the different groups of peoples, a sense of belonging, representing a collective identity in the customs of the land. (SB3, 2019)

Furthermore, traditional leaders voiced concerns for their communities, mediated in cases of kidnapping and carried out philanthropic work. Through the intervention of some traditional leaders, there has been a reduction in criminality, and these leaders have served as the protectors of the land. Overtime, however, the roles of these traditional structures began to change, and there have been various theories as to why this was so. One theory, which was referred to by various participants, is that over time traditional structures have lost their value “selling out to Western culture”, and to the patrons and political leaders, because of greed and their (the traditional leaders’) need for survival. As explained by AD3 in his interview:

Tradition in the Niger Delta has been corrupted and the ancestral integrity westernised due to the discovery of oil which led to traditional leaders becoming greedy, struggling for their own share of the national cake or chin chin. (AD3, 2019)

In his opinion, the discovery of oil led to the empowerment of various militants, who later became more widely respected, feared and even honoured than were traditional leaders, thus changing the dynamics of the economy and the power to allocate resources. Customs such as offering a sacrifice to the ancestors by paying homage to the traditional leaders were no longer upheld, thus the legitimacy of earlier traditions was no longer valued. Similarly, DB9 noted:

Traditional structures have been watered down and what exists now is rather a structure that upholds tradition just in face-value and name. (DB9, 2019)

Patronage peacebuilding is perpetuated through the traditional structures not only by means of various appointments, but also by the distribution of handouts or ‘gifts’ that are given to various traditional leaders as part of the patron system, which further reshapes the traditional structure (AD1, 2019).

DB9 argued that the traditional structures were now a means to attain power, as militants began to take what they wanted and some even bribed various traditional leaders just to acquire more ‘turf’ and
to have their actors blessed, so that people would accept the militants. Thus, the nature of traditions is changing such that it longer focuses on the people and customs of the land, but rather is used as a means of acquiring wealth and power in Bayelsa and Rivers.

Tradition was further influenced when a new trend emerged; few viewed this new trend as an approach to peacebuilding, and many saw it as yet another means by which patronage networks were being restored, in other words, as another element of patronage peacebuilding: the appointment of militants as traditional leaders – an example is Ateke Tom. As SB7 stated in his interviews:

Militant leaders as traditional heads, whether figurative or performative, is the ultimate erosion of traditional powers – it linked the sacred power of tradition to militancy. The sacred nature of strength, kinship, identity that was associated with the traditions of the region that should have been upheld by the elders of the land, was thrown, and associated to the dirty game of power. (SB7, 2019)

This further reinforces the narrative of patronage power networks and shows that what really mattered was the maintenance of power. AD1 stated:

Previously traditions were upheld and even believed to have been more powerful than the state as it outlived the state; however, the new link between militancy and tradition saw that militancy sought to transcend the state, through traditional power. (AD1, 2019)

Thus, it can be deduced that patronage peacebuilding created and fostered an enabling environment for certain actors, in this case various militant leaders, who were and still are connected to power structures, enabling them to obtain more power. The ascension of these militant leaders to the position of traditional leaders brings into question the motives of those who placed them in power, as well as the role these new traditional leaders will play in society. AD3 (2019) offered his opinion by stating that this was a power move on the part of the patron in terms of positioning their clients, but it was also another means by which institutions change, and new power wants to occupy the old spaces of power. The aim of disempowering the traditional was to restructure the power structures that had existed, or rather in this case restructure the power structures that existed during the conflict into continued existence in the post-conflict society. For example, according to SB13:
Former Governor Amaechi appointed someone who he knew would be loyal to him as chief; however, the youths refused, which resulted in conflict as they burned down the traditional leader’s house. Something that would have never been thought of in the past. (SB13, 2019)

The reshaping of traditions therefore led to the disconnect between traditional leaders and their communities, further affecting how peacebuilding, or in this case patronage peacebuilding, was carried out. The population of communities believed that the leaders no longer “felt their pain” or “fought for them” as SB3 (2019) noted in her interview. This led to increasing the gap between the community and the state, and also now between the community and the traditional leaders who had once upheld the customs of the land. She believed that the lack of support from the traditional leaders and the state has led to communities beginning to fend for themselves, thus empowering various community networks. She exemplified this by stating:

Communities now must fend for themselves and protect their own. So a lot of illegal oil bunkering sites are being protected not just by thugs but by the community as a whole, as these are the source of income for everyone. (SB3, 2019).

Further highlighting the way these changes feed into how individuals identify themselves, SB3 said:

Nigerians, especially Niger Deltans, as they prefer to be called that. Or rather to be identified from the ethnic group or community they come from. Whether Ijaw, Itsekiri, this shows a link to the power structure of that ethnic group but also shows loyalty to your community because they owe more to their communities than the state. (SB3, 2019)

Thus, here can be seen a sense of loyalty to the community that led to an identity based on tribalism rather than nationalism, which could form the basis for future research. As noted by Asari-Dokubo:

[The struggle] has something to do with our Ijawness. The Nigerian state is stealing from us, we say no more stealing of our resources. Give it back to us. Our language and our culture which the Nigerian constitution has dubiously eliminated and said that it is Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba [...] that will be taught our children, we say no, we want to speak our Ijaw language, exhibit our culture. (Newswatch, 13 January 2004, p. 13)
In sum, identity, culture and tradition play a part in how people react to conflict and the peacebuilding process. These ethnic links form the basis of a foundation on which alliances are formed. Thus, the empirical data suggests that patronage peacebuilding has fostered the disempowerment of structures, and has led to institutional and transformative methods of peacebuilding being sought after by the members of communities more than by the traditional leaders who previously did this. Patronage peacebuilding has further increased the gap between the state and the population, with the effects being seen not only in the appointment of militants as traditional leaders and the disregard for traditions, but also in the reaction of youths. These factors also bring into question the peacebuilding agenda in Rivers and Bayelsa.

To summarise, this section has shown that taking a historical overview of analysis of the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers, it is clear that state peacebuilding initiatives have enhanced the capacity of patrons and clients to the detriment of building durable peace (Kiipoye, 2015; Iwilade, 2017). The poor execution of state-led initiatives, and the struggle over and reconstruction of power dynamics has led to patronage peacebuilding in which the patrons and clients are benefited, further incentivising rebellion and violence within the region. Thus, state-led initiatives, rather than addressing the problems, have substituted a mutually beneficial arrangement between patrons and clients, demonstrated by the fact that ex-militant clients who were once enemies of the state have now become influential members of power structures through the distribution of special financial favours. These empirical findings suggest that the approaches taken by the government, both at the state and the national level, have been ‘quick-fix’ responses to complex issues. These responses, whether forceful or tactical in nature, were aimed more at stabilising the oil economy than at addressing peacebuilding. The constant ‘band-aid’ method resulted in a short-cut approach to peacebuilding that over the years has redefined peacebuilding within the region to become what I have termed ‘patronage peacebuilding’. This raises questions regarding the state’s capacity and political will; after all, maybe this approach is all the state has the capacity for? If so, when and how will the state develop the capacity to do more and go beyond ‘quick fixes’? However, despite all this, I believe the state does have the capacity to go beyond patronage peacebuilding. As such, through the constant competition for power and wealth, the state does not lack the financial capacity for the development of roads, buildings and basic amenities. However, this financial assistance keeps on being ‘redirected’ into the pockets of patrons. Furthermore, the lack of accountability on the part of the state towards its people regarding these funds makes the establishment of peace even more challenging – as we saw recently when public funds were ‘redirected’, and attributed to a snake swallowing $100,000 or £72,250 (BBC News, 2018; Bukola Adebayo, 2018), and a monkey running away with N70 million
Thus competition among clients and patrons has led to corruption and the disempowerment of traditional structures. The next section explores the overlap between patronage peacebuilding and the donor-led peacebuilding initiatives explored within this thesis. This is critical, because the way in which donor-led peacebuilding initiatives are intertwined with state-led peacebuilding projects makes it impossible to avoid the issue of patronage peacebuilding. Thus, it becomes crucial to examine whether and how patronage peacebuilding influences these initiatives and vice versa.

The Overlap between Patronage Peacebuilding and the NSRP and PIND

Another emerging theme from the empirical data was the overlap between state-led peacebuilding initiatives and donor-based initiatives. This section explores the overlap between patronage peacebuilding and the NSRP and PIND. It examines two emerging themes from the literature: a reliance on NGOs, and the ‘blame game’ played out between the state and NGOs.

Tolerance of Patronage Peacebuilding

One unanticipated finding, as seen in the difference between the initial template and the finalised template in Chapter 1, despite the negative connotations of patronage peacebuilding and its effects in Rivers and Bayelsa, was the acceptance, or rather the tolerance, of patronage peacebuilding as a way of life. The perceptions of participants, as seen in the empirical evidence, suggested that the patronage networks in Rivers and Bayelsa have existed and structured the way the states have been run for years. Thriving on networks, back channels and godfathers in the way they do, in order to begin to question the system, one would need to know where to start from: something that is not difficult, but is, rather, impossible. This view was echoed by SB4, who stated:

You may knock one patron out or he may lose power, but that just means someone more powerful has taken his place. (SB4, 2019)

She further stated:

To survive in the Niger Delta is about who you know and what you can accept. (SB4, 2019)

As noted in the Iwilade interview in 2013, Tarela, an ex-militant included in the amnesty programme, stated that the state-led peacebuilding initiatives were not to be questioned. Tarela recollected the treatment he received as a result of questioning the system. In his words:
They called me to Abuja [...] other people from other schools were there. [...] without even giving me an opportunity to speak, they said by protesting I was threatening the presidency [...]. Before I [understood what was going on] the SSS [State Security Services] came in, hand-cuffed me and one of my colleagues and took us to the guardroom. They forced us to write undertakings. All those things were being done to shut us up [...] they seized our ID Cards and told us we were no longer in the programme. We were even beaten up, you know? By Soldiers and SSS [...] the most painful part of it is that when I reported to my commander, he just said I should shut up. That what was I complaining about. We are just enduring the situation now because there is no choice. (Iwilade, 2017, p. 17)

Thus, it can be deduced that coercion also plays a role in maintaining the power structures. And when this is encouraged even by those within the power structures, order must be ensured.

Similarly, one concern expressed regarding the tolerance of patronage peacebuilding was that it connotes ‘negative peace’, especially in Bayelsa and Rivers. Talking about this issue DB6 said:

When looking at Rivers State especially, it can be noted that there is relative peace; however, when looking at it in terms of positive peace and negative peace – negative peace is all the state enjoys. (DB6, 2019)

He further pointed out that this is “all the Niger Delta is going to get” (DB6, 2019). He believed that the need for power and the need to control the resources in states like Bayelsa and Rivers drives all decision-making. It is for this reason that state-led peacebuilding within these states will continue to be politically and economically driven, thereby bringing about only negative peace, and further illustrating that until patronage networks are fully dissolved and power structures truly redefined, these states will continue to suffer from the recurrence of conflict. This raises questions such as: who will dissolve these power structures, and how will new power structures be implemented? Or even the question of whether the dissolution of the power structures will be enough to maintain peacebuilding. Or, rather, is peacebuilding going to continue in the same vicious cycle, serving patrons, incorporating more clients into the patronage network and failing to address the needs of the people? However, currently the needs of the people are being catered to, or rather not catered to, by patrons; this has led to a system
of tolerance and acceptance in which the population is more concerned with getting access to patronage networks than with bringing about change.

Reliance on Donor-Based Organisations on the Part of the Population

The perceptions of participants suggested that, apart from traditional networks, because state-led peacebuilding has taken the form of patronage peacebuilding this has created a vacuum: the gap between the on the ground reality of the governance of resources and control of power in these states, versus the liberal peace vision. This gap is being filled by the creation of various NGOs within the Niger Delta region. The creation of these NGOs as such does not seem to be the issue; however, there seems to be an emerging reliance on NGOs as problem solvers (DB3, 2019). When asked about the reliance on NGOs, the participants were unanimous in the view that NGOs are, indeed, now tasked with filling the vacuum created by patronage peacebuilding. As seen with the emergence of NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s, when NGOs were viewed as being a “magic bullet” and as a means for the empowerment of people, so also is the case in Bayelsa and Rivers (Edwards and Hulme, 2000). Rather than serving as agents of empowerment, donor-based organisations have served as ‘gap fillers’, thus reflecting the structural interests of donors, and the regime in power. Donor-based organisations in Bayelsa and Rivers provide crucial services to the states; for example, the Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathway, which provides funding to the youth, while the aquaculture value chain project and the cassava value chain project provide funding and training to farmers. In their account of the development of reliance on NGOs, DB7 said:

Patronage in the Niger Delta is no secret, people are waiting and positioning themselves for aid and no longer trust the system: if you can’t get in with the network you rely on the next best thing, the NGOs. (DB7, 2019)

Due to weak institutions in Bayelsa and Rivers states, donor-based organisations serve to fill the gaps, providing poverty alleviation projects, basic social care and education. A surprising number of participants disagreed and argued that in societies such as Bayelsa and Rivers, donor-based peacebuilding is exactly what is needed. SB5 (2019) noted that the Nigerian government had tried for years to stabilise and resolve conflict within the region and had failed. She observed that organisations such as PIND filled the gap where the government was unable to and built bridges where the state failed to act. DB3 (2019) further agreed, noting that the relationship between the state and the population had been destroyed, thus making carrying out peacebuilding operations harder. Thus, donor-based institutions assist by facilitating these relationships and filling the gap caused by the state’s
failure. With PIND serving as a gap filler to the state, this has led to a continued lapse in the provision of services by the state. The state has come to depend on the provision of services by various donors. “NGOs get co-opted (consciously or unconsciously) by the regime, which uses the NGOs for legitimacy building and social service gap-filling”. In addition, programmes targeted at advocacy and service provision may not be mutually exclusive but there is a dominance of emphasis on service provision. Thus, donor organisations become service providers rather than agents of change. Consequently, this returns us to the issue of questioning the impact of donor-based initiatives, which focus only on quick and tangible programmes and serve merely as service providers and gap fillers and are unregulated.

In this sense, the relationship between NGOs and the regime is not competitive, but is complementary, where donor-based organisations do not challenge the state, and are aware of the power structure in which they serve as gap fillers. However, it is crucial to note in the age of neo-liberalism that the responsibility for peacebuilding lies not only with the state by also with various donor organisations who should keep the state accountable. Thus, these organisations must go beyond being gap fillers and take more proactive empowerment roles towards building peace and ensuring development. However, at the same time, the limitations to attaining this must be realised, especially the limitations that come as a result of the state. In the case of the Bayelsa and Rivers states the limitation is patronage peacebuilding.

This was further echoed by DB5 and DB6 (2019), who collectively agreed that real peacebuilding does not occur in Bayelsa and Rivers; where possible, NGOs are expected to resolve all issues. DB6 (2019) stated:

> NGOs have specific agendas and interests, and above all else have a limited timeframe and resources, so we can’t do it all, but we are expected to do it. (DB6, 2019)

He further noted that this has resulted in members of the community resorting to them (NGOs) to solve their problems before going to the police or even the government. Thus, one of the more notable roles that PIND plays is that of an interface between the population and state institutions such as the police (DB6, 2019).

However, despite this situation some participants disagree with the notion that there is a reliance on NGOs. In fact, contrary to the belief that NGOs are the saviours, there was some contention that the activities of the NGOs have been hindered due to patronage peacebuilding. In an interview with DB1
(2019), he recalled an incident where his team were forcefully removed from a community in Bayelsa State. As expressed by numerous participants from PIND, members of the local community were not welcoming when they were approached by the organisation, because PIND members were mistaken for government officials. DB5 exclaimed:

They thought we work with the state government – despite seeking permission from the local elders, when we began our sensitisation programme, they demanded we leave, mobilising thugs to escort us out, which they did. (DB5, 2019)

He revealed that this had not been the first time, and in fact some communities had even refused any form of help saying, “we are tired of the government”, or “it will always be the same”, or “you only want our votes”, “you are just back to take numbers and go” (DB5, 2019). He concluded by saying:

Peacebuilding is a collective effort between peacebuilding researchers, managers and the community. We depend on the community a lot, not just for guidance within the remote areas, but also as potential conflict managers as we can’t always be there. How do you build peace when a community does not help? (DB5, 2019)

These quotes illustrate the gap between the power and governance dynamics of the Delta and views of the situation expressed by peacebuilding professionals.

DB5 further exclaimed that, as a peacebuilding agency, most of the time they are forced to renounce any association with the government; only once this is done to the satisfaction of the community, can peacebuilding programmes, such as sensitisation, within these communities take place (DB5, 2019). We can see that not only has state-led peacebuilding created challenges for NGOs, but they have also worsened the already existing condition of mistrust between the people and the government, which now extends to other peacebuilding agencies who are not, in fact, affiliated with the state.

It was what the donor deemed important or necessary that the donor-based agencies addressed or tried to address. As such, these limitations led to situations where only the symptoms seemed to be tackled, and the various root causes were not dealt with (DB5, 2019). Such approaches act only as a quick-fix type of peacebuilding that may not be sustainable, especially after the completion of the NGO’s goals. Thus, as identified by a few interviewees, the negative cycle of peacebuilding is perpetuated. Upon review, the data revealed that the NGOs indeed felt the effect of patronage
peacebuilding; however, on the other hand, government agencies felt that NGOs and the way they carried out peacebuilding were to be blamed for the resulting negative peace. This then brings out another theme – the ‘blame game’.

The Blame Game
As mentioned above, participants perceived that blame shifting or blame avoidance was another emerging subtheme, which mostly occurred between NGOs and governmental agencies, at both the state and national levels. There was a consensus expressed by most participants that there was now a reliance by the local population upon NGOs, who were expected to address concerns of insecurity and to establish sustainable peace. This reliance upon NGOs has further led to mistrust of the Nigerian government as well as of the federal states of Rivers and Bayelsa. According to Hood (2007), blame avoidance is a descriptive account of a force that is often said to underlie much of political and institutional behaviour in practice. However, there seems to be a lack of exploration of blame avoidance from a local dimension, especially within an Africa perspective. A significant contribution that sought to address this was Anna Mdee’s work on blame and responsibility in respect of local governance performance that was centred on Tanzania (Mdee and Mushi, 2020). Mdee and Mushi (2020) noted that the avoidance of blame has been used to sidestep responsibility. This is evident in Bayelsa and Rivers as both NGOs and governmental agencies feel each has failed in their responsibility and they constantly push the blame onto one another. Thus, this not only makes it difficult for any form of accountability to take place, it also constitutes a blame game.

As noted by Mdee and Mushi (2020), blame can be shifted either sideways, upwards, downwards or outwards depending on the positions of players. There are three main ways in which blame avoidance occurs, namely: presentational, agency and policy. ‘Presentational’ uses the media to shape the narrative; ‘agency’ diffuses responsibility by distributing it between various actors; and ‘policy’ concerns the use of various policies that succeed in either shifting or reducing the blame. In Bayelsa and Rivers states we can see agency being in constant use, especially on the part of the state and national governments. As noted by SB10:

> Issues are resolved by creating committees, these committees create sub-committees who also create ad hoc groups. What makes this worse is that there is no cooperation within these groups. Rather these committees are a waste of time as nothing is ever resolved but resources are spent on endless meetings and future policy recommendations that are later ignored. (SB10, 2019)
On the other hand, AD4 (2019) argues that the problem lies not so much with these committees but rather with the communication, or lack thereof. He argues:

The lack of communication between parties consists of the real problem in the Delta. Once that is addressed real change will begin to occur. (AD4, 2019)

AD2 (2019) also argued that there is a lack of communication within organisations: he claims that briefings and reports are not even read by the responsible parties; how, therefore, are policies to be implemented when the reports containing them are not even read? This is corroborated by AD1 (2019), who knows that policies, not just in Bayelsa or Rivers but in the whole of Niger, are shaped by internal politics rather than by the recommendations of the real experts. This hints at the gap between a performative level of policy speaking to the liberal peace world, and the real dynamics of power.

Additionally, according to AD1 (2019) the blurring of lines between the various levels of state institutions has led to further blame and avoidance in Bayelsa and Rivers. He states:

If responsibilities are shifted within an agency on who is meant to carry out a project and when, how much more would that translate to the overall agenda of that agency be it peacebuilding, development or providing a specific service to the region? (AD1, 2019)

It is key to note that mapping dynamics of blame and responsibility is necessarily a complex multi-level process that requires engagement with citizens, non-state actors and government actors across all levels. Thus, when the lines of cooperation and responsibility are blurred this can be challenging.

AD1 further argues that the problem lies within the organisations, whether they are run by the government or by NGOs, noting that there needs to be a transformation of organisations so that they are firstly accountable to themselves, and then can be accountable to the people they serve (AD1, 2019). AD3 (2019) had a similar view, further stating that a crucial problem within the region is the lack of understanding of responsibility, not only on the part of citizens, but also on the part of government agencies. He notes:
Most government agencies do not know their mandate or what they are meant to do. These organisations are understaffed and overworked so most times this is where the problem lies. (AD3, 2019)

However, SB10 (2019), who works for a government agency, had a contrasting view of where the problem really lay in terms of responsibility and blame, and did not see the difference NGOs were making within the Niger Delta. She stated:

All they (NGOs) continuously do is have one town hall meeting after another. What does that really achieve? We see so many NGOs within that region, but what is it they really do? (SB10, 2019)

Interviewee SB10 argued that NGOs take on more than they should and beyond this there is little or no cooperation between the NGOs and the government (SB10, 2019). In contrast, DB3 (2019) noted that government agencies do not want to cooperate with NGOs, exclaiming:

On paper the government is willing to help; however, in practice they never really do. Rather, the process of involving government agencies is filled with bureaucracy and lack of planning. But there is no partnership in terms of interventions in peacebuilding. (DB3, 2019)

Similarly, DB6 (2019) noted that there is only so much the NGOs can do, stating:

NGOs try to do the government’s work. However, NGOs mostly treat symptoms. And if the government does not do its job, we will keep treating victims. (DB6, 2019)

Thus NGOs are limited not only in their agenda and scope but also by their resources. They are geared towards the interests of the donor and, as shown in Mdee’s work, tend to have little impact on the public space in terms of, for example, aiding citizens to hold the government accountable, which can be problematic (Beckmann and Bujra, 2010; Mdee and Thorley, 2016b). Thus far, exploration of the blame game and blame avoidance has raised a few questions for further research: who is responsible for acting? Does responsibility lie with the citizens to ensure their government provides for them? Should the burden fall on NGOs, and, if so, why? Should NGOs have the right to hold governments responsible for the lack of peace and development? What would this look like, in practical terms? In
societies such as Bayelsa and Rivers, where patronage peacebuilding is the form peacebuilding takes, what practical steps can be taken to address blame avoidance and to hold not only governments, but also NGOs accountable?

As Mdee noted, when thinking specifically about the liberal peace type of social accountability, the line of responsibility needs to be clear in order for social accountability to be successful, based on the notion of the ‘citizen holding the government to account’ (Wild et al., 2015; Andrews, 2015; Mdee and Thorley, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). Beyond this, there also needs to be clarity in showing how these social accountability and responsibility policies are to be implemented, especially in societies that claim to practice liberal peace but are neo-liberal in nature: in societies such as Rivers and Bayelsa, where the public outcry and protest aimed at holding the government responsible for the neglect of development has backfired on the people, there needs to be more than the expectation of merely underlining the responsibilities within government policies.

Thus, it can be inferred from the data that there is a blame-avoidance game occurring in the sphere of peacebuilding within the Bayelsa and River Niger Delta, with donor-based and state government agencies on opposing ends. The narrative seems to shift the blame back and forth, consequently there is no room for real accountability. It is not clear who should be blamed, or held accountable; what is clear, however, is that beyond the policies, there needs to be cooperation and communication between NGOs and government agencies in order for them to be able to effectively carry out peacebuilding and ensure development.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has principally demonstrated the extent to which donor-based and state-led peacebuilding initiatives were influenced by neopatrimonialism in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. It has shown that the donor-based peacebuilding organisations, the NSRP and PIND, were not influenced by neopatrimonialism within the state. These initiatives are donor-centric, which participants expressed meant that the organisations were autonomous and not accountable to the local state. As a result, this leads to the implementation of a lot of quick and tangible programmes by the NSRP and PIND, which in turn leads to them becoming service providers and gap fillers to make up for the state’s weakness. The chapter has also shown that there was a difference in the language used with regard to the reporting of the impacts of the programmes enacted by PIND and the NSRP and the reality in Bayelsa and Rivers states.
The chapter has also shown that state-led peacebuilding initiatives have not adequately dealt with the conflict in Bayelsa and Rivers states, and have instead created a perverse incentive structure that can fuel further violence. There has been limited effort on the part of either Rivers State or Bayelsa State in pursuing long-term peacebuilding initiatives. This chapter supports scholarly views – such as Kiikpoye (2015) and Iwilade (2017) – that have argued that there has been a transformation of patronage politics, especially when looking at the amnesty programme. However, this chapter has shown that such analysis can be applied beyond the amnesty programme to include other state-led initiatives. While some of the initiatives, such as the amnesty programme, did bring about temporary peace, the amnesty programme fuelled informal agreements between the patrons and clients which were not accompanied by substantial institutional change. As noted by Aduloju and Okwechime (2016, pp. 524–525), proper implementation of peacebuilding initiatives needs to go hand in hand with addressing problems such as environmental degradation, infrastructural facilities and poverty. This chapter has argued that state-led initiatives in Bayelsa and Rivers states have been characterised by political manipulation of socio-economic conditions to maintain power structures and reshape the patronage network. As such, examination of state-led initiatives has raised questions regarding the sincerity and commitment of Bayelsa and Rivers state governments to peacebuilding (Osah and Amakihe, 2014; Osah, 2016; Iwilade, 2017). As a result, integrated theoretical understanding of liberal peacebuilding, as discussed in Chapter 2, does not align with the reality of the state-led initiatives being carried out in Bayelsa and Rivers states, which are, rather, shaped by patronage networks, resulting in patronage peacebuilding. More specifically, patronage peacebuilding has led to the incentivisation of militancy in Bayelsa and Rivers states and the recurrence of hostilities in various places that have previously experienced conflict, as well as the struggle for power among patrons and clients. As the term conveys, ‘patronage peacebuilding’ involves peacebuilding efforts being carried out that are specifically based on patronage networks as well as purposely targeting client networks. The struggle for power among patrons has led to various lucrative financial offerings to both clients and patrons, which has resulted in longstanding problems such as corruption and the ‘destruction’ of traditional structures, furthering the notion of patronage peacebuilding. As such, it is believed that peace within the Niger Delta states has been a means of enriching patronage networks and buying loyalties through the purchase of peace, rather than addressing the incidence of conflict itself. This has led to the struggle for power among patrons, leading to further corruption and even to the deconstruction of traditional structures and powers within the Delta, with the buying of traditional leaders. The traditional structures within the Niger Delta were sacred customs that brought together the people of the region with their ancestors and with the ancestral heads chosen to represent them. There existed a bond between the people and
their traditional leaders, and many believe that these traditional structures held even more power than the state governments, as they outlived the authority of whoever was in power. However, as the struggle for power in the region intensified, the traditional structures began to be corrupted. Existing traditional leaders began taking bribes from patrons, as community lands were sold off at the expense of the people. Furthermore, traditional leaders were replaced by ex-militants as a means of buying peace in order to secure power in the favour of certain patrons. This further advanced the agenda of patronage peacebuilding, destroying the bond that once existed between the traditional structures and power.

Against this backdrop, the next chapter evaluates whether and how donor-based and patronage peacebuilding shape the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states.
Chapter 5 – Shaping the Informal Economy? The Nexus between Patronage Peacebuilding and the Informal Economy

Introduction

Having explored how donor-based and state-led peacebuilding are influenced by neopatrimonialism and the effect of this on the construction of peace and the overall peacebuilding agenda, this chapter focuses on expanding the analysis by introducing the second key element of this thesis, the informal economy. The chapter aims to understand the nexus between donor-based peacebuilding and state-led peacebuilding – now recognised as patronage peacebuilding – and the informal economy, by examining how and to what extent state-led and donor-funded peacebuilding initiatives have shaped the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section combines the knowledge about the informal economy detailed in both Chapters 2 and 3 with understanding of peacebuilding initiatives, analysing firstly how the donor-based initiatives (the NSRP and PIND) influence the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. This section finds that these donor-based peacebuilding initiatives do not deliberately consider the informal economy; however, their initiatives do involve members of the informal economy. As such, members of the informal economy are not fully included in the peacebuilding process, making its members seek alternative means of survival, as is discussed in the second section.

The second section examines how patronage peacebuilding shapes the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states. The empirical data revealed a prominent theme – patronage peacebuilding as the criminal enterprise of peace. The examination of the criminal enterprise of peace focuses on how patronage peacebuilding functions as a thriving economy of profit for its actors and how it overlaps with the informal economy, adversely creating various criminal enterprises among the local population in three ways: firstly, the relationship between patronage peacebuilding and the informal economy leads to ‘positioning’ for aid by the population; in the illicit informal economy this positioning has led to a second phenomenon, which is the ‘performance of militancy’ in Bayelsa and Rivers; thirdly, as patronage peacebuilding prioritises power structures at the expense of true liberal peacebuilding, the population in the informal economy is increasingly marginalised, which further leads to the underdevelopment of Bayelsa State and Rivers State. Consequently, patronage peacebuilding shapes the informal economy by deliberately pushing people into both the formal economy and the illicit informal economy, thus fuelling violence.
The NSRP, PIND and the Informal Economy

As stated in the Introduction, the informal economy refers to those activities undertaken outside state control, and beyond the reach of tax authorities, at various levels and by different actors, aimed at generating profit, meeting personal or household welfare needs, circumventing state control and taxation, or facilitating advantages in business and politics (ILO, 2013). It includes small-scale, local practices – such as casual labour – and organised criminal activities which generate very significant revenues (ILO, 2013). The findings show that both PIND and the NSRP have facilitated the agency of some members of the informal economy in a number of ways, including through providing different life skills, through the practical orientation of the training and self-confidence thus gained, and through increased participation in work and income generation. While many donor-based organisations’ involvements in peacebuilding – especially within their official project and reports – are highly remarkable, these projects do not deliberately target the informal economy. Various donors avow the involvement of members of the informal economy through the monitoring, project design and evaluation stages (PIND, 2017; NSRP, 2017). The informal economy, however, is not deliberately included in their managing and monitoring plans; this is seen through the information about the informal economy, which among these organisations in the field is apparently scarce. As noted, DB6 remarked:

I cannot really say how many people make up the informal economy, it is hard to measure, not just for our organisation but for the entire state. (DB6, 2019)

A survey of the PIND website yielded little evidence of the importance attached to the informal economy. Although there are universal mentions of supporting, promoting and ensuring the effectiveness of various development projects that target farmers, there is almost no mention of the overall impact of this on the informal economy and on other dimensions of the informal economy. In addition, some of the evaluations carried out included providers that examine various grants; however, this is more focused on the number of grants received rather than on the impact on the recipient and the overall community (PIND, 2017). Consequently, the sustainability of grants projects beyond the life of the donor-based organisations can be questioned. As seen within the NSRP, when projects ended and no more grants were being awarded, what did people within the community then do? In addition, an anecdotal review of PIND projects showed that the informal economy is rarely an integral part of the project reporting process. Reports highlight the number of grants but fail to consider the impact and long-term sustainability plan of the informal economy. As DB3 observed:
Our initiatives do not really focus on those who are in the illicit informal economy or a wide variety of the informal economy. We target farmers, local businesses willingly work with us and provide trainings, work and grants. In terms of local carpenters, hairdressers and others we haven’t really measured the impact of this on lifestyle choices and involvement in the informal economy beyond this. (DB3, 2019)

In a similar vein DB5 noted:

PIND is yet to play its part measuring how the informal economy is affected by our initiatives; however, PIND has pumped in a lot of money into peacebuilding. We are limited as we are donor focused. (DB5, 2019)

Furthermore, an examination of PIND’S current policies and practices revealed that the donors indeed have expectations, but not requirements, that the informal economy be included within their contracts or grants. Although some governments have plans to include the informal economy within their objectives, donor-based organisations have no requirement upon them to do so (DB5, 2019). Maybe this is due to the financial constraints that various donor-based organisations face. There are pockets of projects that target specific areas of the informal economy, such as farming and mining; when looked at as whole, however, these projects do not amount to 5 per cent of peacebuilding initiatives. As noted by DB3:

We have worked with those in the informal economy in contact with other local NGOs. We work with market actors through capacity building programmes, conflict sensitising trainings, evaluating how the market actors affect the community they are in positively and negatively. For example, we have (engaged) with various area boys (thugs) talking about how they tax those in the market. (DB3, 2019)

PIND did consider the dynamics and changes within different channels of supply within the market and what drives those changes. It carries out market surveys on groups that they deem marginalised, in order to determine the value chains and the needs of these groups. The analysis also showed opportunities for growth, and areas in which the poor could participate in these opportunities. Who defined who were the ‘poor’? How were participants selected? The random selection of who was deemed ‘poor’ was not intentional and did not provide for the sustainable future development of either Rivers or Bayelsa. In theory, the development of value chains mapped out the function and contrasts
of growth on the position of the marginalised within these systems as well as how the markets failed to meet their needs. As SB11 remarks:

   Peacebuilding initiatives focus on research through mapping, interactions with various networks, some forums, education about conflict. Some programmes target the general population but not necessarily the informal economy, or even illegal informal economy within the area. (SB11, 2019)

One of the unique things about the NSRP was that it aimed to support Nigerian institutions, organisations and individuals in the management and reconciliation of conflict, specifically focusing on the marginalised and vulnerable, which, as identified by the NSRP, were women, youth and some work focused on disabled individuals. However, it is crucial to note that although the NSRP did include an aspect of the marginalised population, and indeed was an economic programme that aimed to target economic development and sustainability, it was limited in its understanding of the marginalised groups. Although the programme focused on marginalised groups, it is key to note the people who, although marginalised, were not included in this analysis, that is those with disabilities; likewise, members of the informal economy were not included, even though the NSRP aimed to focus on economic advancement (NSRP, 2014). Although it did include women and girls, who were otherwise not involved with peacebuilding, it failed, however, to also focus on the parts of the population that were marginalised due to lack of economic development in the Niger Delta. Within its framework the NSRP did not officially include the informal economy, although it did touch on a few members within that sector – a process identified and labelled as ‘the touch and leave’ approach, or rather what I refer to as a ‘band aid’ approach.

Although this partially inclusive approach by the NSRP created opportunities for participants to better express their opinions and allowed them the opportunity to engage in the process, yet again the NSRP approach was limited in its delivery; while providing a space for the ‘marginalised groups’, the language used by the organisation, its narrative of the marginalised groups being a conflict driver was misguided. What the NSRP failed to make clear was how and whether the inclusion of women within the peacebuilding agenda had any sustainable impact on the process. Indeed, creating a space where the voices of the marginalised can be safely heard is essential, especially to growth and development; however, as the literature suggests, it is hard to determine how this is transformative to the peacebuilding process. This again shows the limitations of the NSRP, especially with regard to members of what they deemed to be marginalised groups.
Thus, this section has argued that although some members of the informal economy are included in initiatives such as meeting with partners for peace, grants to farmers and market analysis of the poor and marginalised – which focuses on girls, women and – there is, however, no deliberate effort to include the informal economy as a whole in the peacebuilding initiatives of PIND and the NSRP. Hence, as the next section will show, this has led to a large part of the informal economy being ignored, and, therefore, having to look for alternative means of survival.

**Patronage Peacebuilding and the Informal Economy – the Criminal Enterprise of Peace**

As discussed in Chapter 4, the end of the conflict may not encourage the development of a transparent and accountable government, especially if those who gained financially from the conflict are in power and seek both to preserve past gains and to benefit from the rebuilding effort. Thus, to continue to survive and thrive within the new post-conflict era, those in power in the conflict era must develop creative means with which to maintain their power. One such means is transforming state-led peacebuilding initiatives into a productive economy that lines their pockets as well as serves their personal goals, as discussed in Chapter 4, through various initiatives such as awarding contracts to ex-militants, stealing funds and developing fake development programmes. Moving this discussion forward, this section examines how patronage peacebuilding shapes the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, exploring an emerging theme from the empirical data – the criminal enterprise of peacebuilding, which can be analysed into three parts: ‘positioning’ for aid, the ‘performance of militancy’, and the further marginalisation of the population within the informal economy.

When discussing whether the informal economy was included in the peacebuilding agenda of the state, participants had differing views. One recognition expressed by AD2 (2019), was that the informal economy had not been included in the state-led peacebuilding process:

> The informal economy in the Niger Delta region serves oil production chains and agriculture. There is no deliberate effort from the state to develop these value chains that will give a trickle-down effect into the broader informal economy that will help the people.
> (AD2, 2019)

He further stated:
The informal economy as a whole is not factored into development plans or peacebuilding initiatives of the state, and this does affect people's lifestyle choices. There are so many skills acquisition programmes but no skills assessment. There needs to be a strategy that involves the people. (AD2, 2019)

Similarly, AD1, argued that:

The informal economy was not planned by the state, most of it came about as a result of survival instincts, and as such will never be included in its plan. (AD1, 2019)

In the same vein, AD3 stated in his interview:

The relationship between the state and the local population is tense partly because it remains to be seen how the state involve people in the informal economy in the decision-making process. (AD3, 2019)

However, an interesting point was made by SB4, who further recognised that the informal economy has not been included in the peacebuilding process, saying that, thus the:

informal economy is a ticking time-bomb, that will soon go off. (SB4, 2019)

She explained that the lack of focus on the informal economy continues to foster frustration within the members, stating:

The frustration is not just felt by the locals like farmers who can’t farm, or fishermen who can no longer fish, but even civil servants who have to have a side business because the government deals salaries payments. Everyone is angry, look at the history of the region when the people become frustrated. (SB4, 2019)

She links lack of development and sustainable peacebuilding initiatives to the incidence of violence, comparing the frustration of the people to a ticking time-bomb. This view is supported by the work of several scholars, such as Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009), Ibaba (2011), Odoemene (2011), Offiong and Cocodia (2011), Otite and Umukoro (2011), Amaraegbu (2011), Kaur (2013), Nwagbara (2015), Aniche (2019), Edafejrhaye and Alao (2019), to mention a few, who have linked the frustration to violence in
the Niger Delta. The consensus among these scholars is that the high level of unemployment, lack of development, slow response of the political systems, corruption and environmental decay have made the people ill-equipped to cope with the environmental changes, thus sowing the seeds of frustration (Otite and Umukoro, 2011; Offiong and Cocodia, 2011; Odoemene, 2011; Kaur, 2013; Edafejrhaye and Alao, 2019). As a result, the people have become susceptible to the expression of aggression and militant activities. The frustration-aggression explanation, which was pioneered by John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O.H. Mowrer and Robert Sears in 1939 explores conflict as resulting from a blockage of goal attainment. This work was furthered by Faleti (2006, p. 47), who noted there is a gap between what people feel they deserve and what they get; this results in frustration, which then manifests into aggression and then violence. In the same vein, Ibaba expands on this theory, exploring the notion of the frustration-aggression trap (Ibaba, 2011). Ibaba (2011) observes that the frustration trap is a condition where groups and individuals are unable to release themselves from frustration due to the surrounding policies and environment, which reinforces the blockage of goal attainment. Blockages such as corruption thus create the conditions for violence, which can be triggered in the region. He further highlights the challenges posed to peacebuilding, noting that Port Harcourt is the centre of frustration, thus leading to more violence because it is the ‘oil headquarters’ of Nigeria (Ibaba, 2011). Thus, due to frustration arising from high unemployment levels, those in the informal economy are referred to as a bomb, ready to explode.

Furthermore, SB4 (2019) noted that peacebuilding initiatives do indeed carry out training and sensitisation programmes for those who are unemployed, programmes aimed at ending cultism and so on; however, there remains a failing to empower individuals – the enabling environment is yet to be established and sustained. This point is corroborated by several participants, among whom there is a consensus that the informal economy is not included in the current peacebuilding agenda in either Bayelsa or Rivers. As SB3 remarked:

The lack of a deliberate focus on the informal economy creates a gap in society, people are not carried along. There is a lack in various industries as dropouts and those with just a school leaving certificate cannot find work beyond the informal economy. In other ways, we failed to incorporate them, thus pushing them back into an informal sector. (SB3, 2019)

AD2, further corroborated this, saying that there is:
No deliberate effort from the state that will develop other value chains that will trickle down into great informal economies that will help people. The informal economy is not situated in the peacebuilding agenda as the state does not see the value chains from the point of the people. So, some communities develop associations that try to empower unemployed youths as well as women. They also protect illegal bunkering projects, protecting their communities as these are the projects providing for the villages. (AD2, 2019)

Interestingly, this is similarly remarked upon by AD1:

Except threaten[ed] by the informal economy the state does not concern itself with the suffering of its people. The state of Niger Delta is a micro-organism of the Nigeria state. The informal economy that does not relate to the stability of power of the ruling class is none of their business. The criminal economy that cannot be controlled, tolerated, and therefore undermines the security of power concerns the state. (AD1, 2019)

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that the informal economy and its members are not considered within the peacebuilding agenda of the state beyond sensitisation programmes aimed at building knowledge of peacebuilding. As participants suggest, as long as the informal economy does not tamper with the formal economy, or rather the oil economy, the state government does not bother with it. However, there were interesting views contesting these notions, as some participants believed that the informal economy was indeed included within the state’s agenda. As opined by DB2:

There was not much state focus especially in the past on the informal sector of the whole Niger Delta, as long as things like illegal refineries did not disrupt the flow of oil, they (government) did not bother with it. However, now through the Niger Delta Development pathways we are working with the government in particular states. (DB2, 2019)

A broader perspective was adopted by AD3, who highlighted the motivations of the state, including the informal economy within the peacebuilding agenda, stating:

The informal economy is situated in the peacebuilding agenda, non-state actors operate within the realm of the informal economy. In terms of targeting, the government is
targeting parts of the informal economy, for example, the bikes and sowing machines initiatives. But the questions are, what the nature of the targeting is: how have the resources allocated to this sector served as an enabler to sustain the informal economy? How have the challenges of those in the informal economy been addressed by the initiatives, what are the infrastructural challenges (roads, power supply), and how has the government addressed the issue of organised taxation by the informal actors? (AD3, 2019)

This view was supported by DB3, who stated:

Recently this year there has been so much talk from the government about the informal economy, but specifically the illegal oil refineries. They are working to create an initiative to make all the illegal refineries formal. But we all know this is because of the self-interest it has. What about other dimensions of the informal economy? What happens to them? Where are the initiatives for them? (DB3, 2019)

The motives of elites in Rivers and Bayelsa states have been questioned by various authors over time (see Ibeanu, 1997; Omeje, 2005; Abang, 2014), who question the motives of the patrons; this further reinforces the notion of patronage peacebuilding, discussed in Chapter 4. As Abang (2014) notes, the elites have ulterior motives; this can be seen especially when looking at the establishment of the Ministry of Niger Delta to complement the already existing Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). According to Abang, despite the state’s efforts to establish peace through the NDDC, there is a recurrence of violence. He blames the ruling class, as corroborated by Ibeanu, who explains that:

The Nigeria petty bourgeoisies are not given to ideological fidelity. They are simply powered by fetish. In another case, they lack the discipline and strength of character to consistently pursue any ideological line. What is always overriding is power, money… (Ibeanu, 1997, p. 21)

In the same vein, Dafinone (2008) questions why, despite the efforts of the NDDC, various militants have gained credibility, arguing that the “NDDC has achieved very little”; Dafinone goes further to maintain that the master plan was crafted by expatriates in collaboration with a few political elites and was imposed on the people (cited in Akinwale and Osabuohien, 2009, pp. 149–153). Omeje (2005) takes this a step further by referring to these elites (patrons) as “rentier elites”, stating that these are individuals whose economic interests and institutional roles are interfaced with the distribution and
exploration of rents. Thus, the patrimonial political culture in Bayelsa and Rivers fosters ‘rentier elites’, and the absence of bureaucratic, functional, legal and developed institutions further encourages and skews the motivations of elites. Thus, these scholars note that economic, business and political interests and profit drive the motives of the state with regard to the interests of the local people.

Expanding on this notion, AD2, breaks down the motives of the state, remarking:

Sometimes the state supports skill acquisition programmes, this is done as a buying strategy due to push-back from the people. The state does have a methodology to incorporate the informal economy, it is always a peace buying technique to continue the flow of oil. (AD2, 2019)

Similarly, AD1 argues that the informal economy is indeed included in the peacebuilding agenda of the state due to the benefits it provides to the formal economy, stating:

The formal economy depends on the patronage of the informal economy. It has helped those in the informal economy, where those in formal economy fund the informal economy. (AD1, 2019)

Likewise, AD2 holds the view that:

Value chains in the informal economy have emerged as a result of the kind of political climate and the type of initiatives occurring. As a result of these value chains, there seems to be subtle support in terms of looking the other way at illegal refineries when it does not harm the government, especially when they know the people – their boys used during elections. The patronage system safeguards them and the security agendas also look the other way. (AD2, 2019)

Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that the informal economy is included within the state’s peacebuilding agenda; however, it is a method of buying peace and continuing the established patronage network by rewarding the perpetrators of conflict either through funds or jobs, targeting especially those in the informal economy. Taken together, thus far, there have been contrasting views on whether or not the informal economy is included within the peacebuilding agenda. However, overall, the perceptions of participants have provided crucial
insights into an important theme emerging from the discussions: the criminalisation of peace. Patronage peacebuilding is leading to the criminalisation of peace, as the perception of participants below show. As DB6 notes, patronage peacebuilding is:

redirecting people, channelling people into the informal economy as there is nothing to do in the formal economy, some of the (state-led) peacebuilding initiatives are given to people in the sector as a result of patronage networks. (DB6, 2019)

What is particularly interesting from the quote above, is the apparent lack of a functioning formal structure. Indeed, Bayelsa and Rivers are rich states, not just in the natural resource of oil but also because of agriculture in terms of farming and fishing, as discussed in Chapter 3, as well as everyday business ventures. However, the notion that despite this “there is nothing in the formal economy” is alarming, because this paints the state as a weak state, unable to cater to the needs of its people. It also raises questions regarding state capacity and the nature of the state. As discussed in Chapter 3, both Bayelsa State and Rivers State have suffered from environmental degradation, which has indeed affected their capacity. This argument is furthered by Sobek (2010, p. 267), who notes that state capacity plays a critical role in the conduct and onset of violence, as strong states can deter violence while weak states are unable to do so. In the same vein, Fearon and Latin (2003) noted that weak states cannot police their territory effectively. As AD1 observes:

The illicit informal economy thrives when it meets the needs of those the state did not capture. It provides employment. When the state is weak there is a rise in the illicit informal economy, people become more desperate. And who and what makes the state weak? The patronage networks, lack of development, lack of real initiatives. It’s an endless cycle. (AD1, 2019)

Likewise, the work of Theobald and Englebert is further reinforced by Eric Budd and Jay Oedlbaum on the relationship between neopatrimonialism and underdevelopment (Budd, 2004; Oelbaum, 2002). Budd recognises that although all states are characterised by patrimonialism, they all exhibit different levels of it, and he goes on to examine the various levels of patrimonialism in African states. Through a ranking system, he notes that the more patrimonial a state is, the lower their national gross product (Budd, 2004). Within the ranking there are nations such as Botswana being categorised as “moderately patrimonial” and states such as Gabon, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe that are described as “highly patrimonial”. Oelbaum takes this notion a step further by examining international financial institutions within the postcolonial era and their interactions with other developing countries (Oelbaum, 2002). He
examines Ghana under Jerry Rawlings’ regime, explaining that neopatrimonial relations show how neoliberal market reforms might be accomplished where there is a lack of popular support (Oelbaum, 2002). Within his research, he argues that various international actors subscribe to the view that “donor-support programmes of economic liberalisation undermine clientelism and require a fundamental change in the way African leaders relate to and reward their followers”. (Oelbaum, 2002, p. 286) Despite this, African leaders are still able to capture these resources and operate in an informal flexible network of ‘personal’ relationships, which could further lead to the corruption of the IMF and other bureaucratic structures (Oelbaum, 2002). It can be implied, therefore, that the capture of these resources by African leaders creates a situation in which the citizens lack the necessary support to live a normal daily life as their support is being stifled by the elites, thus forcing them to engage within the informal economy as a coping strategy. As identified by Jonathan Goodhand (2003), there is a gap in understanding whether the capture of this donor support has any influence on the functioning of the citizens in the illegal economy resulting from a lack of support from the government.

This further advances the argument that, as a result, weak states share sovereignty with non-state actors, as discussed in Chapter 4. Hence, the existence of weak governments amplifies poverty and violence, making conflict more feasible (Akpan and Umoh, 2016). Thus, as the culture of corruption and patronage have become the norm in Bayelsa and Rivers, the state institutions have further weakened, as noted in Chapter 4. As patronage peacebuilding interacts with the informal economy, purposely integrating and redirecting people back into the informal economy and the illicit economy, this further weakens the state. On the flip side, as noted by Ogunkola, Aiyede and Haruna (2018), this situation allows the informal economy – especially the illicit informal economy – to thrive at the expense of peacebuilding, leading to crimes such as the vandalisation of oil infrastructures, oil bunkering and kidnapping, which are carried out by members of the illicit informal economy, such as the Greenlanders, Icelanders and MEND. This point is supported by DB3, who stated:

[State-led] Peacebuilding initiatives being carried out affect people's choices because peacebuilding does not take into account the skills and needs of the people, that is why the informal economy thrives. (DB3, 2019)

Further leading to various adverse effects, the violence starts up again when the perpetrators are not satisfied. This brings into question the effectiveness of patronage peacebuilding in the first place. In addition, the patrons maintain their position of power, capturing the political and economic benefits of peacebuilding as patronage peacebuilding interacts with the informal economy through the criminal
enterprise of peace; this is seen through the distribution of incentives, causing individuals to ‘position’ themselves for aid, as well as criminalising those who are outside the peacebuilding process. The perceptions of participants were that ‘patronage peacebuilding’, rather than addressing the conflict and developing the informal economy, repositions clients in the patronage networks and the general population in the informal economy as victims; they are then forced to ‘position’ themselves, by forming strategic alliances with various patrons in order to survive. As DB5 noted:

Lack of resources in the Niger Delta brought about ‘creativity’ – resources depend on connections for people and the influence of the resources. (DB5, 2019)

This was further raised by AD1:

[State-led] Peacebuilding can also be seen as a criminal enterprise that criminalises those that are outside of it. (AD1, 2019)

He observed that due to the absence of comprehensive policy frameworks, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as overlapping functions and institutional rivalry within the state, people must become “creative” to survive in Bayelsa and Rivers. He explained that this was a strategy employed by the government: rather than addressing the root causes, the formal economy is left to suffer, thus pushing people into the informal economy. Thus, if this follows, we can take it that in order to possess power in the formal economy, patrons seek to destroy it, and instead push people into the illicit informal economy by offering inclusion in various peacebuilding initiatives. AD1 further stated:

It is not enough to merely have a 9–5 job, when government pays, what do you do? When you don’t sell your goods in the markets, because there was a clash between two rivalry groups who still taxed you at the end of the day. What do you do? You have to align yourself with someone who will throw ‘small jobs’ your way. Peacebuilding in the Delta region is a process that incentivises informality to be formalised. (AD1, 2019)

This point was further corroborated by AD3, stating that:

Peacebuilding is redirecting people, channelling people into the informal economy because there is nothing to do and the peacebuilding agenda does not cater to them.
State-based peacebuilding in the Niger Delta is not about the victims but the perpetrator. (AD3, 2019)

Similarly, SB11 argued:

The political nature of peacebuilding initiatives pushes people to the informal economy. Where they find the need to be linked to a patron than working a normal day job. Having two or more patrons is better than working here. (SB11, 2019)

Thus, it can be deduced that citizens (who later become clients) position themselves, but in this case it is, however, the government officials or patrons who are pushing the citizens to position themselves. Clients are now being redirected and positioned into the illicit informal economy. This is where the struggle for power within the formal economy takes place, and, as such, for a patron to be able to access and hold power within the formal economy they must first have a strong power pull in the informal economy (AD1, 2019; AD2, 2019, DB5,2019). Thus, the channelling of people into the informal economy is seen as a deliberate act, intended to achieve this power pull over other patrons (AD2, 2019; SB12, 2019). This positionality can either be seen as a reward from a patron to a client, or to a client’s family member, or as a means of buying loyalty. Thus, this removes the opportunity to be a part of the peacebuilding process from individuals who really should be a part of the peacebuilding process and renders them, rather, as pawns in the struggle for power within the region. As noted by AD1:

More people are trying to get into the informal economy to be formalised. This increases competition in the informal economy, everyone wants to be included, to have a patron to get their share. Everyone wants in at all costs. (AD1, 2019)

In the same vein, AD3 notes:

Peacebuilding needs to be participatory, and where this is lacking the state will have to impose quality programmes from the top. As such, the informal economy is alienated. There is a gap between the state and those who find themselves in the informal economy as a coping mechanism. State actors want to leverage development programmes to support their own agendas to those who need it. (AD3, 2019)
The evidence reviewed here seems to suggest that the clients are purposely pushed into the informal economy, to position them to survive. However, the empirical data revealed that not only is this happening, but clients are more specifically ‘positioned’ into the illicit informal economy. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are various dimensions of the informal economy. The illicit/shadow or criminal economy is the part of the informal economy that deals with criminality. The empirical data suggested that the interface of patronage peacebuilding and the illicit informal economy leads to the ‘performance of militancy’. The ‘performance of militancy’ occurs when individuals pretend to be affiliated to a specific militant group, which sometimes leads to the individuals becoming involved in militancy, paying dues to be part of militant groups, or even just running errands for militant groups (AD1, 2019). AD1 describes this as the process or act of pretending to be a militant or of being part of a militant group, thereby placing oneself in a position to receive the benefits accorded to the militant groups by the government. According to empirical evidence, this became a popular theme because many youths and victims of crime in the Niger Delta do not see a way out of poverty, thus fuelling the problem. AD1 remarked:

Amnesty didn’t foresee the youths, but the youth foresaw themselves in the amnesty ‘performing militancy’, therefore, agitating people to be included, thus a process of incentivising agitators to be included, describing peace as the process that incentivises informality to be formalised. (AD1, 2019)

He further noted that the youths agitated to be included in the state peacebuilding process; they pretended to be involved with militant groups and stole guns so they could be included in the amnesty. He concluded by describing:

a process of incentivising agitations to be included. (AD1, 2019)

The act of performing militancy might not have been very harmful if it had remained just that – a ‘performance’; however, empirical data suggested that, as time went by, many dropped the ‘performance’ and actually joined militant groups. One cannot just claim to be part of a militant group and expect to just be accepted. As one interviewee put it, many had to pay their “dues” in order to be included onto the list supported by the government. The dues in question ranged from petty crimes and running errands for the groups, to actually becoming initiated into the groups as members. This illustrates how the incentive for ‘performing militancy’ was pushing people into actually embracing militancy, making it an everyday thing. As described by one interviewee, performing militancy became
a process that “incentivises informality to be formalised”, as well as being a means by which peacebuilding was becoming a criminalising enterprise. These observations are supported by the work of Peter Evans (1987), who argues that the state transforms its population into prey; similarly, Boas and Jennings (2005) note that as a response to conflict, groups seek profit and the means of survival. Thus, it can be taken that at the interface of patronage peacebuilding and the informal economy, patronage peacebuilding is pushing people into the informal economy and the illicit informal economy because the state does not include them in the peacebuilding architecture. Consequently, this creates a social imbalance as there is no clear path for social mobility, or rather for peace and survival, beyond the patronage networks. This route in turn leads to further criminality and violence, thereby creating what I have termed the ‘patronage peacebuilding cycle’.

Figure 15 Patronage Peacebuilding Cycle in the Informal Economy

A third consequence of the interaction between the informal economy and patronage peacebuilding, beyond positioning and performing militancy, is that it has led to the further marginalisation of the population in Rivers and Bayelsa states. Marginalisation is synonymous with being excluded from the mainstream; groups are made marginal by rendering a section of the population politically inconsequential, thus leading to their neglect. Ibeanu (1999) noted that marginalisation is the process of setting different standards for different people in a polity. This was similarly noted by Kuper and Smith (1969, p. 440), who state that marginalisation is “the total exclusion of subordinate sections from
the inclusive public domain.” As discussed in Chapter 3, the population of Rivers and Bayelsa states were already marginalised as a result of the political, social and economic situation in the states, including lack of development, high levels of unemployment and violence in the region. The empirical data revealed that this problem is continued and even furthered by the state, extending it into the informal economy. Thus, state-based initiatives focus on power structures and there is a deliberate lack of focus on the informal economy; beyond criminalising clients these practices have played a key role in the ongoing exclusion of the population in a disempowering context. The context of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers adds additional layers of marginalisation and inequalities, especially among various vulnerable groups. As a result, people in Bayelsa and Rivers states are confronted with serious issues, including threats to life, liberty and security, damage or destruction of homes and other properties, forced displacement and restrictions on freedom of movement and access to livelihood systems, lack of education and health, and lack of accountability and effective remedy (Iwilade, 2017; Ebiede; 2017). These are issues which peacebuilding does not fully resolve. Furthermore, according to Guttere (2018) marginalisation breeds inequality in the social system. Thus, structural dislocations interact with patronage peacebuilding and the informal economy to create further inequality in the social system. As clients and the general population are disempowered and struggle to be part of the patronage network by forming alliances, this leads to the disempowerment of these groups as it pushes them into crime and violence (Iwilade, 2017; Ebiede; 2017; AD1, 2019; SB12, 2019). This marginalisation furthers state abuse, with pervading insecurity and violence. Thus, peacebuilding initiatives in the region are complex and varied, and underlie most conflicts – especially those that have erupted within the last decade – resulting in marginalisation. These situations have engendered contradictions and tensions in the public sphere. They have also underlined an almost pathological context in which allegations of domination and exclusion among individuals and groups have become ceaseless and widespread, leading to struggles and violent conflicts over oil-based revenues in the region (Omemma, 2019). Thus, the criminalisation of peace further leads to the marginalisation of the population, thereby triggering violence.

Taken together, the nexus of peacebuilding and the informal economy has led to the criminalisation of peace; this, in turn, has led to positioning and the performance of militancy, which have further led to increasing marginalisation in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Thus, marginalisation further explains the disposition to militancy and violence, the recurrence of conflict and the overall failure to build peace economies.
Conclusion

This chapter has examined how donor-based and state-led peacebuilding initiatives interact and shape the informal economy. It explored the connection between actors, their interests and correlations, as well as the incentives used to include or exclude the informal economy from the peacebuilding agenda. It argued that the informal economy is not deliberately included in the peacebuilding agenda of donor-based organisations.

Despite the existence of contrasting views – as to whether or not the informal economy has been included in the agenda of state-led peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states – it is my opinion, based on the empirical evidence, that the informal economy has officially been included within the peacebuilding agenda; however, there exists an interaction – and even, some might say, an overlap – between participants in the peacebuilding process and members of the informal economy, as well as the illicit informal economy. This conclusion is grounded in the logic that the secret deals undertaken in the informal economy between patrons and clients have helped to maintain the patronage network that has been important for containing violence. At the interface of patronage peacebuilding and the informal economy, patronage peacebuilding reinforces the political manipulation of violence in Bayelsa and Rivers states. As the analysis above has shown, the chapter argues that patronage peacebuilding has pushed people into the informal economy as a means of survival, as patrons have used oil rents to entice the clients – militants and the general population – thereby criminalising peacebuilding in three ways: firstly, by forcing people to ‘position’ themselves for ‘aid’; secondly, ‘performing militancy’; and thirdly, furthering marginalisation of the population, especially those in the informal economy. This raises the question of the state’s capacity to cater for the population. Thus, the findings of this study add a new perspective to studies of the informal economy within the context of the peacebuilding agenda. The patronage peacebuilding framework shows how the state has disempowered and marginalised communities, or rather enabled empowerment within a disempowering context, thus providing empirical evidence that state-led peacebuilding initiatives do inadvertently affect the peacebuilding agenda in Bayelsa State and Rivers State.
Chapter 6 Conclusion

The specific aim of this chapter is to highlight the contribution of this research as well as the motivations for further research. This thesis study has critically investigated the impact of neopatrimonialism on state-led and donor-based peacebuilding initiatives and the relationship between peacebuilding and the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State.

This thesis has analysed the conflict and the peacebuilding process in Bayelsa and Rivers states, highlighting the key actors involved in the conflict (Chapter 3). The destruction of the environment and of livelihoods due to the discovery and exploration of oil has further heightened poverty and unemployment in the region, as well as the capacity of greedy patrons to accumulate enormous oil wealth to the detriment of the local population. Thus, the institutions and behaviours of state and non-state actors have shaped human development (or rather the lack thereof), thus contributing to violence and poverty and leading to militancy (Chapter 3). This thesis also discusses the state-led initiatives aimed at peacebuilding in the Niger Delta during the conflict, categorising the initiatives as taking either a ‘carrot’ or a ‘stick’ approach, and examining the framework of the donor-based organisations PIND and the NSRP, in order to provide foundational knowledge of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states, thus, setting the scene for analysing how state-led and peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism and how this shapes the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states, using a thematic content analysis approach.

Methodology

The thesis has reached these findings through its fully integrated analysis, which is based on a combination of qualitative methods in order to provide a grounded perspective. The use of qualitative methods allowed me to fully attain a high degree of analytical and research rigour when exploring, firstly, the understanding of peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states and how and to what extent it is shaped by neopatrimonialism, and, secondly how the peacebuilding initiatives have shaped the informal economy – and the effect on the illicit informal economy within these states. This was achieved by integrating semi-structured interviews, government documents, reports and policy documents, which aided in providing in-depth accounts of participants’ experiences that fed into this research. Furthermore, in this thesis data triangulation was used to utilise the research content, which helps in validating and comparing materials from different sources.
Research Hypothesis

The thesis began by introducing three central concepts: the informal economy, peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism. It noted that the informal economy not only serves as a driver to conflict but can also continue to operate once open conflict has ended. When considered in a post-conflict setting, parts of the informal economy can lead to the consolidation of peace, thus consisting of a problem. This becomes a problem not only because it threatens peacebuilding but also because it also threatens the non-illicit part of the informal economy, which, as this thesis has pointed out, functions as a coping mechanism. Furthermore, the illicit informal economy promotes activities that lie out of the control of the state, which also threatens the establishment of public institutions. As such, there needs to be a proper understanding of the nature, dynamics and scope of the illicit informal economy, how it is related to the informal economy and is shaped by various factors, such as peacebuilding. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 1, the use of power by the elites has led to formal institutions being supervised by corrupt and personal leadership, as actors operate in both the illicit informal economy and the formal economy. As such, the interactivity blurs the already complicated lines demarking where the informal economy and formal economy begin and end. Furthermore, the peacebuilding initiatives in the post-conflict environment reinforce this personal leadership and corruption, especially between patrons and clients. Therefore, the political economy of peacebuilding functions as a lucrative economy that politicises elites in the formal, informal and illicit informal economy, which leads to the accumulation of networks that thrived within conflict settings (Chandler, 2013). Taken together it can be understood that not only is the nexus between peacebuilding initiatives and the illicit economy rooted in political protection and clientele networks, but that the struggle for economic power which as at the interface shows peacebuilding to be anti-democratic (Chandler, 2013; Iwilade, 2017). This implies a paradoxical nexus between peacebuilding initiatives and the illicit informal economy, a nexus which is rooted in a tight association of political protection, clientele networks and economic capital between the various networks and agents within the state (Chandler, 2013; Iwilade, 2017). Consequently, this thesis seeks to explore the paradoxical nexus between peacebuilding and the informal economy by giving the illicit informal economy a central role within the peacebuilding agenda, using Bayelsa State and Rivers State as a case study. Firstly, it explores the type of peacebuilding being promoted in Bayelsa State and Rivers State, focusing on the two main stakeholders – the state, and donor-based organisations. Secondly, it analyses how the peacebuilding agenda shapes the informal economy and the illicit informal economy.

In order to accomplish these objectives Chapter 2 aimed to provide an extensive literature review, clarifying terms such as the informal economy, peacebuilding, neopatrimonialism and the illicit informal
economy, while also highlighting the understanding or lack of understanding of the illicit informal economy through the lens of peacebuilding. Although this was not an original contribution, such clarifications provided an important foundation to the conceptual framework. This chapter started by acknowledging that there was no universally accepted definition of the informal economy; however, it explored definitions by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It noted that while the definition of the informal economy has changed over the years there were similar elements across time. These similarities included:

a. It refers to economic activities that are not recorded (Schneider, 2002).

b. These activities are not captured by the state's national or statistics accounts (Castells and Portes, 1989; De Soto, 1989; Harding and Jenkins, 1989; Fiege, 1990; ILO, 2013).

c. These activities are invisible to policy formulation (ILO, 2013).

d. Actors employed within the informal economy are excluded from labour standards such as safety, health, minimum wage, working hours (ILO, 2013).

As such, the definition of the informal economy used throughout this thesis is based upon the points listed above. This chapter then analyses theories of the informal economy to build an understanding of the interactions between the informal economy and the formal economy. The chapter argued that to fully capture this interaction scholars need to combine two or three theories in order to counteract their weaknesses. To this end, this thesis adopted the globalisation thesis, complementary theory and the illegal school, which together capture the relationship between the formal and informal economy through social networks that are interlinked and sometimes lead to illicit activities. This chapter then sought to explain liberal peace theory, identifying the gaps within the literature as it pertained to the informal economy, especially in Africa. It highlighted works such as those of Salih (2018), Meagher (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017) and Danielson (2015), and highlighted the existence of the relationship between peacebuilding and the informal economy, while stressing a lack of knowledge regarding what type of relationship this is and who it really serves. Chapter 2 also illustrated the link between the three key concepts of the thesis to form the conceptual framework of this thesis. These are: poverty; the trade-off that sometimes occurs at the end of a conflict while trying to transition into the post-conflict stage; political competition; and the power struggle, which highlights the niche for this study, while also highlighting the gap this thesis aimed to fill. The final section in Chapter 2 examined not only the definition of neopatrimonialism but also its relationship with conflict and how neopatrimonialism feeds into the cycle of conflict, thus, providing foundational knowledge to fill the gaps within the literature and accounting for the obstacles around building peace.
Chapter 3 aimed to provide background knowledge of Bayelsa State and Rivers State. Firstly, it explored the interplay between conflict and peacebuilding. It showed that there were several main factors responsible for the onset of conflict within these states, ranging from the discovery of oil, environmental degradation, corruption and greed, to the militarisation of the region, to mention just a few. As such it is quite difficult to pinpoint a single cause of the conflict, highlighting the complex and intrinsic nature of the conflict. This highlights the need to shift from previous paradigms that embrace greed and grievance alone to one that takes into consideration the current complex nature of the conflict. Secondly, this chapter focuses on providing an overview of the state-led peacebuilding initiatives implemented across the Niger Delta states. It categorised these approaches into ‘stick’ and ‘carrot’ initiatives, highlighting the failures within each. The overall analysis of the peacebuilding initiatives in the Niger Delta showed that attempts at peacebuilding were not only short term, but were also driven by corruption and greed, which resulted in the failure of most. Another dimension of the peacebuilding initiatives was that they were mostly aimed at buying peace rather than at addressing the root causes of conflict. The third and final section of this chapter analysed the informal economy in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. Although the data within the area was limited with no report detailing the full number of members of the informal economy, this section was able to depict various activities within the informal economy. It also highlighted activities that fell within the illicit informal economy, for example, the difference between an unregistered captured and an ex-militant leader bunkering oil refinery. Therefore, illustrating the difference between the informal economy and the illicit informal economy. The overall objective of this chapter is to provide a solid foundational understanding of the political economy of conflict and peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states, setting the scene for the analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

Research Findings

In answering the first research question, of how and to what extent state-led and donor-based initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism, this thesis has made two critical findings. Firstly, it can be discerned that the donor-based organisations were not influenced by neopatrimonialism but, rather, were found to be very donor-centric. This donor-centric approach led to the belief that donor-based organisations were autonomous, and therefore not accountable to the local government or population. Hence, it was argued that this leads to the execution of quick and tangible programmes that were unregulated by the state. Thus, the NSRP and PIND became service providers and gap fillers because of state weakness. Consequently, this led to dependency on foreign aid for the development of the region, and calls into question the impact and suitability of these initiatives. This thesis also argued that there was a discrepancy between the language used by donors in the policy reports and the reality in Bayelsa.
State and Rivers State. The thesis argues that despite the positive connotations it is hard to measure the effectiveness and impact of the initiatives on the local communities.

Secondly, this thesis found that state-led peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states was influenced by neopatrimonialism (Chapter 4), arguing that the lack of peace in Bayelsa and Rivers states is not because of the oil economy, nor because of the destruction of resources or inadequate resources, but can instead be attributed to the nature of the state-led peacebuilding initiatives occurring within those states. As state-led peacebuilding initiatives have elevated corruption and reconstructed patronage networks that existed during the conflict, these state-led peacebuilding initiatives have, thus, led to institutional arrangements that undermine peacebuilding measures and focus instead on incentivising the elites and restructuring the patron–client relationships. This complex nature of peacebuilding and the perceptions of participants allowed me to frame the relationship between peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism, as ‘patronage peacebuilding’, one of the more significant findings to emerge from this study.

‘Patronage peacebuilding’ refers to the political and economic process of establishing peace that is centred on the advancement of the various political agendas of the patrons. It is a process that restructures the power dynamics within the post-conflict setting, reinforcing the benefits that existed during the conflict through institutional arrangements. It has a short-term political purpose, which institutionalises self-enrichment and power sharing and is, in turn, reinforced through neopatrimonialism–clientelism and godfatherism; overall, this destroys political and economic development, not only at the state level but also at the federal and local levels. Thus, the concept of patronage peacebuilding highlights how peacebuilding has reverted to the remobilisation of ex-fighters and the reconstruction of power structures that existed during the conflicts in these states, thus leading to the further disintegration of Bayelsa State and Rivers State. Further, the concept of patronage peacebuilding highlights the transformation of relations between political elites and their clients, as noted by Iwilade (2017), who states that the real goal of state-led initiatives such as the amnesty programme was to re-establish power relations between patrons and clients. This thesis argued that state-led peacebuilding, otherwise reframed as patronage peacebuilding, has largely been involved in the crafting of institutions that have perpetuated the struggle for power and the short-term containment of violence in order to restore and reshape the patronage network. This included the patrons – political elites, traditional leaders, godfathers and ex-militant commanders who serve as the main architects of the conflict in the first place – as well as the clients, ex-militants, youths and the general population of Bayelsa and Rivers states who have played supporting and intermediary roles to
the patrons. The thesis expanded on work by William Reno as discussed in Chapter 2. Reno (1997) observed that the institutional arrangements of power and the personal wealth accumulation by elites had led to the creation of the “shadow state”. This shadow state therefore led to a narrative of how a state was meant to function and how it actually did (Reno, 1997). Reno linked violence and neopatrimonialism to the disruption of resources as well as to the prevalence of criminal networks, which Ilkhamov (2007, p. 71), similarly, noted led to a “parallel power network, matching existing state hierarchies”. This phenomenon can be seen in Bayelsa and Rivers states when exploring patronage peacebuilding. Hence, patronage peacebuilding has therefore led to two defining features: institutional weakness that causes failure to deliver adequate democratic policies; and political actors who utilise this weakness to retain power.

This thesis also argued that patronage peacebuilding depicts how a short-term or temporary peace is achieved in Bayelsa and Rivers states through institutional arrangements that support the creation and distribution of wealth and power. Thus, in this vein, the extent to which patrons can form alliances and beneficial arrangements with clients helps to determine the duration of peace in these states. Hence, patronage peacebuilding does not guarantee peacebuilding and conflict resolution, especially when institutional reforms are excluded from the peacebuilding process. Patronage peacebuilding reinforces patron–client relations as political elites find protection under dispersed armed groups that are loyal to them and pay off non-state fighters who pose a significant threat to the elite revenue-generating stream. Thus, violence in Bayelsa and Rivers tends to be temporarily halted by the state government without their having any intention of addressing the underlying problems that continue to fuel conflict in these states. Thus, various state institutions have enhanced the capacity of patrons to contain violence and continue their activities. Patronage peacebuilding, therefore, has largely pursued the interest of patrons and clients as the two groups who most benefit from the spoils of patronage networks to the detriment of peacebuilding for the local population (Wengraf, 2018, p. 159). Thus, peacebuilding in Rivers and Bayelsa is more focused on restructuring the socio-economic dimension and re-establishing and maintaining power than on sustaining peace and development. This perspective furthers the analysis of Medard (Medard, 1982) on the predominance of personal relationships within African politics (Medard, 1982) as well as that of Sandbrook (2000), who identified that in some African states, the representation of “economic objectives [is subordinated] to the short-run exigences of political survival” for the elites (Sandbrook, 2000, p. 97), as examined in Chapter 2. Thus, not only has the peacebuilding process been fuelled by neopatrimonialism, but, more importantly, peacebuilding reconstructs the power structures that existed during the conflict era within the post-conflict situation.
Furthermore, a crucial finding of this research is how patronage peacebuilding affects the power structures, leadership and governance in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Clearly, as indicated by this research, because the patronage network has become a major determinant of access to a better livelihood, it has become the dominant way of life and the means by which individuals thrive within post-conflict Bayelsa and Rivers. Some of the power-sharing opportunities involve traditional authorities, politicians, local leaders and members of the community receiving their share of funds, or the ‘national cake’ as it is commonly referred to. Fundamentally, patronage peacebuilding has changed the power relations among traditional leaders, who used to represent the traditional authority of the gods. Nowadays, traditional leaders are rather ex-military leaders who seem to only represent traditions figuratively. As Faleti (2006) explains, the advantages and disadvantages of unequal distribution that occurs in society reshapes relationships and behaviours, which also serves to bring about conflict. In the same vein as disused in Chapter 2, Lucy Mair noted that the need for a patron does not reflect the “necessity for survival” but is more to “advance one’s economy and social status” (Mair, 1972, p. 606). This also falls in line with Jonathan Goodhand’s (2003; 2005; 2012) work, which examined the notion that conflicts shift to becoming more about vested interests and economic. Hence, as indicated in Chapter 4, ex-militant leadership is slowly displacing traditional structures. Thus, competition for local positions and rulership becomes even more fierce due to the benefits they accord; thus, groups and individuals all engage in violence in order to remain in power. It is for this reason that the post-conflict environment is flooded with the sparks of future conflicts.

The struggle for power has also reconstituted social and economic structures, creating new social relations and the emergence of alternative power structures that are no longer led by patrons but are now being pioneered by clients themselves. The new relations, however, are still characterised by the effects of conflict economies, such as a lack of employment, environmental scarcity and the struggle over land, as well as the exclusion of most of the population. Iwilade (2017) also notes the emergence of new networks in the Niger Delta region and calls for the examination of what this means for the region. Consequently, new power relations have been created by patronage peacebuilding that are sustained through violence and fierce struggles. Thus, there is an intense tug-of-war over power going on, in order for various interests to continue profiting in the post-conflict society, not just among patrons but also among clients. Hence, any opportunity that will provide access to patron networks becomes highly valued. The desperation and need to be included within these power structures leads to violent killings and fierce struggles that lead to competition for resources and access to development programmes. A pattern of violence emerges as the quest for political positions thrives, with elites and clients struggling to gain and retain political authority. Thus, there is fierce competition and a struggle
for leadership, and for access to patron networks, as the benefits and opportunities serve as catalysts that fuel the struggle for power.

Taken together, understanding of patronage peacebuilding highlights the importance of including power relations in the socio-economic and political processes of peacebuilding, as they play an important role in the survival and governance of a given society. This exploration has also shown that an increase in peacebuilding initiatives will not reduce conflict. However, peacebuilding initiatives need to focus on destabilising the power structures that thrived during the conflict, as power structures do substantially shape peacebuilding, with political elites continuing to seek more ingenious access to political positions. Peacebuilding initiatives also need to re-introduce new power structures that promote proper governance aimed at sustainable peace and development.

While expanding on the impact of neopatrimonialism on donor-based and patronage peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers (Chapter 4) the empirical data also revealed three subthemes: the tolerance of patronage peacebuilding, the ‘blame game’, and the reliance of the population on NGOs. These factors all contribute to the failure to construct peace. As shown by this thesis, lack of cooperation has led to blame avoidance, which not only makes the pursuit of accountability difficult but also leads to issues with assessing the suitability of initiatives. The lack of cooperation between the state and federal government, and NGO agencies has resulted in an overlap of the non-implementation of projects and an increase in bureaucracy.

The second aim of this study was to investigate how donor-based peacebuilding initiatives and patronage peacebuilding (state-led initiatives) shape the informal economy (Chapter 5). Through analysis of interviews and document analysis this thesis argued that, firstly, regarding donor-based initiatives, we find that the informal economy is not included in the peacebuilding agenda of either PIND or the NSRP. It found that even though these peacebuilding initiatives do sometimes cater to people within the informal economy, for example, market women, unemployed youths and so on, the informal economy is not deliberately included within the peacebuilding agenda. As such this neglects members of the overall informal economy, pushing them to look for alternative means of survival.

Secondly, concerning patronage peacebuilding, this thesis argued that the informal economy is selectively included in the peacebuilding agenda, which has led to the criminalisation of peace in three ways. Firstly, it has led the population into ‘positioning’ themselves within the community for aid. As noted in Murphy’s work, discussed in Chapter 2, the patron–client network had a trickle-down effect,
taking advantage of youths and controlling resources and returning loyalty of protection and even arms.

As such, because the population in Bayelsa and Rivers are not deliberately included in peacebuilding they have to ‘position’ themselves for assistance; this involves operating within the informal economy to attract a patron. Beyond the population positioning themselves, the patrons also position the population, as they (the patrons) are more concerned with restructuring the power structures than with establishing and maintaining peace and building economic advancement. Secondly, the criminalisation of peace led to the ‘performance of militancy’. As observed in the empirical data the youths were not included in the state’s planning; as such, they had to find a way themselves into the plan – this was achieved through ‘performing militancy’: this was the act of pretending to be part of a militant group. As noted by Khan (2005) the failure of state systems pushes the population to provide for itself, which is the case in Bayelsa and Rivers states. According to Van de Walle (2012) this is because even the smaller political benefit of clientelism would be valuable; as such, when applied to the case of Bayelsa State and Rivers State, this is why citizens would rather pretend to be part of militant groups to be included into the patronage network. The third of the three aspects of the criminalisation of peace is the further marginalisation of the population, especially those in the informal economy. Thus, the new nature of selective inclusion means that the population now directly and indirectly depend on the patronage of peacebuilding in order to survive. Paradoxically, instead of peacebuilding initiatives improving the economic and social wellbeing of the informal economy, they have led to the further marginalisation of agency within the informal economy. This is heightened by the struggle for power and the benefits that power brings – benefits such as access to patron networks, ownership of land, employment, education and so on. Thus, it could be argued that while patronage peacebuilding creates an opportunity for change it comes at a cost: an alliance within the patronage networks – networks that are full of back-channel deals, corruption and crime. Consequently, it can be deduced that patronage peacebuilding creates conditions of conflict within the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states.

In summary, this dissertation has centrally argued, firstly, that donor-based initiatives are not fuelled by neopatrimonialism but are driven by the motives of their donors, while state-led peacebuilding initiatives are shaped by neopatrimonialism leading to patronage peacebuilding, which centres on institutional arrangements to restore and maintain the patronage network. Secondly, that this has impacted the peacebuilding agenda by leading to a blame game and the reliance of the population on NGOs, leading to the failure to construct peace. And, finally, the lack of a deliberate focus on the informal economy by state-based and donor-based initiatives has led to the criminalisation of peace,
where people in the informal economy position themselves for aid and perform militancy, which has further led to the marginalisation of the population.

Contributions to Academic Research

This thesis has demonstrated and applied original and innovative methods of study, not only exploring peacebuilding initiatives but also examining the nexus between peacebuilding and the informal economy from the perspective of the work of the NSRP, PIND and governmental agencies. The sheer complexity of the informal economy entails that no single approach to understanding the phenomenon’s articulations is possible or appropriate – hence, the use of rich and critical descriptive interviews to provide in-depth accounts of participants’ experiences, which fed into this research. Thus, all the components and foundations within the qualitative research design contribute to contextualising and understanding the research questions within this study. The study design also fosters a better understanding of peacebuilding within Bayelsa and Rivers and how it is shaped by neopatrimonialism, and, overall, how it influences or is influenced by the informal economy. The research has created an interesting thematic template that illustrated the significance of the various themes within the analysis, thus, demonstrating the usefulness of the theoretical framework in studying the different themes, especially within a political economy narrative, which still adopts a rather narrow conceptualisation of the informal economy. Building on previous academic studies highlighting the link between peacebuilding and the informal economy as discussed in Chapter 2, the thesis, firstly, expanded on the works of Meagher (2014, 2017), which identified the need to shift from a blanket representation of the informal economy to focusing on specific states and cities. As such, this work focused on the informal economy in the states of Bayelsa and Rivers as a gateway to understanding the broader picture in the Niger Delta. The thesis, thus, provides an understanding of these states’ informal economy while also expanding on a regional understanding of the informal economy. Secondly, Meagher (2014) also identified the need to explore how the informal economy is shaped by governance with regard to factors such as history and gender, noting a lack of information on the underlying factors that influence how state institutions and the economic development agenda interact and influence the development (and size) of the informal economy. As such, this thesis expanded on this notion by exploring how the illicit informal economy is shaped by peacebuilding initiatives, recognising how the notions of neopatrimonialism and power are key elements not just within peacebuilding in Bayelsa and Rivers states but also in influencing the conflict within these states. Consequently, this thesis has demonstrated the value of thematic template analysis through which the emerging themes can be directly compared prospectively and retrospectively. Thus, in methodological terms, this thesis has
shown the conduciveness of sequencing the narratives of the fieldwork into themes and how these themes interact and shape various perspectives.

This thesis contributes to political economy scholarship by exploring how peacebuilding initiatives shape the informal economy and what this means for the overall peacebuilding agenda. It builds on three notable contributions to political economy literature. The first is the continuation of the thematic analysis of the political economy of peacebuilding, and how the political economy of conflict can be detrimental to the overall peacebuilding agenda. As discussed in Chapter 2, both Danielsson and Meagher recognised the need to better understand the informal economy beyond its scope and size, to include the implications it holds for economic change, especially within local institutions in Africa (Meagher, 2014; Danielsson, 2015), and to move towards the inclusion of economic change in local institutions in order to question whose interests were being met and who was being included (Meagher, 2014; Danielsson, 2015). Likewise, as observed by Keith Hart: “We need to know...what social forms have emerged to organise the informal economy as well as examine the institutional particulars sustaining whatever takes place beyond the law.” (2006, p. 33). Meagher recognised that the informal economy was useful more as an interventionist goal in which the pool of workers, as well as institutions within the informal economy, were regarded as useful for reducing cost and facilitating access to the informal market. The outcome was that a part of the informal economy became marginalised, while other actors within the informal economy were ‘included’ (Meagher, 2016). As such the informal economy fell in line with the agendas of governance, thus leading to techniques of governance becoming more involved with working, classifying, managing and restructuring the informal economy in order to build inclusive markets that were synonymous with global businesses. Hence, the informal economy is viewed more as a workforce to be harnessed than as a system that needs to be transformed, especially within the continent of Africa. Thus, this research expanded on these notions, showing that, indeed, the informal economy in Bayelsa and Rivers states was harnessed for the use of political elites, leading to the positioning of aid, performance of militancy and the further marginalisation of the population.

This research also reinforces the liberal assumptions of mainstream peacebuilding, which highlights that the rule of law is the bedrock for liberal peacebuilding efforts. However, it provides an alternative to the idea of liberal peacebuilding, recognising that the theory of liberal peacebuilding differs from the reality of peacebuilding on the ground. This thesis furthers the argument that liberal peacebuilding initiatives should be context specific. When examining the case of Bayelsa and Rivers states this thesis shows that the liberal peacebuilding initiatives are fuelled by patronage networks and exclude local
stakeholders. Thus, just as Bhikhu Parekh and Claude Ake reject a universal idea of liberal peace, so also does this thesis argue for a more content-specific understanding of liberal peacebuilding that takes into consideration the political, historical and cultural ideas of a given state or nation. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2, Salih (2017) notes that the reality and its manifestations differ in different countries, leading to varying forms of democratic experience. He notes that when looking at nations in Africa, peacebuilding is contingent upon the outcome of the political economy of peace rather than the imposition of liberal peace, which in turn leads to the negative effects of neoliberalism. Similarly, the work of Iwilade and Amoateng (2020) is critical of liberal peacebuilding in the Niger Delta, focusing on the amnesty programme and introducing the notion of the amnesty trap, as discussed in Chapter 4. Furthermore, Salih (2017) notes that liberal peacebuilding does not take into consideration the post-conflict economy especially those aspects which are carried on from the conflict setting, a gap this thesis aimed to fill. He noted that in the post-conflict setting, especially among the poor, liberal peacebuilding was fostering economic marginalisation, grievances and social injustice. Thus, this thesis shows that liberal peacebuilding in practice in Bayelsa and Rivers states promotes relationships of clientelism and fosters patronage peacebuilding.

This thesis furthers contributes to neopatrimonialism scholarship in two ways. Firstly, previous work on Rivers and Bayelsa has been particularly focused on understanding them from the perspective of conflict. Thus, this thesis builds on existing neopatrimonialism scholarship that has shaped the interpretation of the conflict and expands on it to consider the interpretation of peacebuilding in both states, rather than relying on a blanket representation of the whole Niger Delta. Secondly, this thesis places patron–client relations at the centre of its analysis and explores their fluid relation to both peacebuilding and the informal economy, to further understand how the informal economy is shaped in post-conflict societies. Rather than adopting the usual conceptualisation of these relationships – with the clients being exploited by the patrons, as previous studies on Nigeria have understood – this thesis explores how these networks create agency within the informal economy, which in turn has created new power relations in Bayelsa State and Rivers State. This thesis not only draws attention to often-ignored elements in the discourse of political economy, especially within the Niger Delta, which has been dominated by the greed and grievance dichotomy, but also advances the understanding of the informal economy.

The final contribution this thesis makes is to the knowledge and understanding of ‘patronage peacebuilding’, which is the nexus of peacebuilding and neopatrimonialism. Thus, understanding the nexus between neopatrimonialism, patronage and peacebuilding can help to ensure that designs for
economic and social policy aim to tackle the power structures within the informal economy and do not re-institutionalise the already existing power structures. Therefore, as the term suggests, ‘patronage peacebuilding’ refers to a political and economic process of establishing peace that is centred on the advancement of the various political agendas and the reconstruction of the power dynamics in Bayelsa and Rivers states to reinforce the distribution of benefits that existed during the conflict. Patronage peacebuilding highlights that as the patrons struggle to remain in control and power in the post-conflict setting, as noted by Sandbrook (1986), there is competition. According to Bailey (1971) this competition is due to the need to eradicate opponents. Consequently, patronage peacebuilding institutionalises self-enrichment and power-sharing through clientelist networks comprising godfathers, political elites, ex-militant leaders and members of groups, youths, and the general population of Bayelsa and Rivers states. Furthermore, this thesis is complemented by studies conducted by Kiipoye (2015) Iwilade (2017) and Amoateng (2020) on the peacebuilding process in Nigeria Delta, observing that in Bayelsa and Rivers states, peacebuilding is a process where cooperation between the patrons, militants and clients is permitted and, in turn, increases the level of conflict in the post-conflict setting. Thus, in place of neopatrimonialism and patronage peacebuilding this thesis contributes to neopatrimonial scholarship by formulating a better explanatory framework for state-led peacebuilding, which can be of use in future studies.

Overall, the interview and case study approach has allowed the exploration of positive, negative and neutral responses from participants, thus giving a more balanced approach than one focusing only on the negative responses. The interviews also aimed to gather the viewpoints and perspectives of various peacebuilding agencies’ staff and officials in order to compare and, most importantly, enrich the data. This was done by including analysis of selected committee reports. The structure of the interviews also allowed participants to set their own definitions and understand concepts such as peacebuilding and the informal economy. It also provided insights into institutional themes, as well as how donors and state organisations expressed sustained perspectives on peacebuilding and the informal economy. The structure of the interviews also provided understanding as to why and how narratives did or did not change, thus, allowing the research to comprise rich and varied data.

Furthermore, the research questions explored within this thesis are highly essential and timely, especially within a political and democratic context, as the political role of both formal and informal institutions remains uncertain in Bayelsa and Rivers. Efforts to restore peace in the Niger Delta further add to this uncertainty, alongside a broader global debate about the political security, not only of the Niger Delta, but of Nigeria as a whole. As this thesis has shown, the roles of peacebuilding agencies,
their nature, responsibilities and functions are equally a source of uncertainty even within these organisations themselves. Even the members of peacebuilding agencies themselves remain uncertain about the real impact of peacebuilding initiatives, and about when real peacebuilding will occur within these states. They question what successful peacebuilding would look like and whether it will ever occur. They further recognised the need to include the informal economy within the peacebuilding and development agenda, but fear, however, that this will only involve efforts to formalise the informal economy based on the interest of the patrons – a development which could lead to more harm than good being caused.

Thus, the theoretical, methodological and analytical framework of this thesis has provided a valuable means of understanding and examining the attitudes, perceptions and understanding of the participants, not just concerning peacebuilding, but also of the nexus between peacebuilding and the informal economy; this contributes to an understanding of how peacebuilding initiatives are influenced by neopatrimonialism and shape the informal economy.

**Future Research**

The findings of this research are applicable beyond Bayelsa and Rivers and could be employed as theoretical frameworks for broader studies on the informal economy and development institutions. As this thesis has illustrated, the effects of the narrative are contextualised by the respective audience, thus, no single narrative can be effective across all disciplines, and no single narrative can therefore be universally related to by an audience; hence, further research will enable understanding of various narratives, not just of the political economy of peacebuilding, but also of the informal economy. As such, this topic does, indeed, merit greater scholarly attention. These studies could make remarkable contributions to the study of the political economy of peacebuilding, and could further understanding of the informal economy.

A prospective study could expand on the narrative of patronage peacebuilding, examining this phenomenon in relationship to the formal economy in various cities, states and countries as a whole. In addition to this, studies could also focus more specifically upon comparing several different informal economies – a cross-national approach on how patronage peacebuilding shapes development at a regional and national level. This study could either be a report or an impact paper, thus ensuring that its value stems from observations emerging from the thesis, as well as the significance of the informal economy in other areas. Future research could also examine different layers of the informal economy beyond the illicit informal/criminal economy, and how these shape engagements in development,
formalisation, and so on. This could encourage greater engagement with theories of the informal and formal economy and serve as a means of more deliberate empirical analysis. This analysis could be applied in countries where the clientelist web and predatory practices corrupt and frustrate the process of institution-building and democratic consolidation, in a similar way as was carried out in this thesis. Furthermore, another study could focus on changing the orientation of the people, especially the youths, in the informal economy, which could focus on the culture and identity of the indigenes and the make-up of the informal economy. A study of this nature is essential in understanding perceptions, not only of peacebuilding initiatives but also of the informal economy within the individual states in Nigeria, in Nigeria as a whole, and in other countries as well. Thus, the conclusions drawn from the research are applicable and relevant beyond the narrow understanding of the informal economy.


Assessment of Nigeria's Kidnapping Crisis. In ENACT Africa. Available at: <https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/nigerias-kidnapping-crisis>
[Accessed 29 September 2021].

Asumah, S. Diversity, social justice, and inclusive excellence.


Bailey, N. 2006. NGOs Take to Politics: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Mexico’s Democratization Effort. [online] Citeseerx.ist.psu.edu. Available at: <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.577.5275&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
[Accessed 29 September 2021].


241


Renewed Potential for Violence: Bayelsa Gubernatorial Election.


Harding, J. 2013. Qualitative data analysis from start to finish. London: SAGE.


Ihonvbere, J. (1989), The Political Economy of Crisis and Underdevelopment in Africa: Selected


Investigation into Urban Informal Tire Repair Service in Ilorin, Nigeria, Canadian Social Science.


KANU Ikechukwu, A. 2017. GWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN AFRICA. An African Journal of Arts and Humanitie. 3(7).


King, N. and Brooks, J. Template analysis for business and management students.


Moser, C. 1978. Informal sector or petty commodity production: Dualism or dependence in urban development? World Development. 6(9-10), pp.1041-1064.


O'Reilly, M. and Parker, N. 2012. ‘Unsatisfactory Saturation’: a critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. Qualitative Research. 13(2), pp.190-197.

Oarhe, O., 2013. Tonic or Toxin? The State, Neopatrimonialism, and Anticorruption Efforts in Nigeria.


Roberts, D. 2013. Liberal peacebuilding and global governance. [Place of publication not identified]: Routledge.


Snyder, C. 2015. A Case Study of a Case Study: Analysis of a Robust Qualitative Research Methodology. The Qualitative Report.


Swanborn, P. 2012. Case study research. [Place of publication not identified]: Sage South Asia.


The Institute for Economics & Peace, 2020. POSITIVE PEACE REPORT 2020 ANALYSING THE FACTORS THAT SUSTAIN PEACE.


Thomas, G. 2011. How to do your case study. Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE.


Yin, R. 2016. Qualitative research from start to finish. New York, NY: Guilford Press.


Yin, R. 2018. Case study research and applications. Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Interview Mode</th>
<th>Interviewer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November 2019</td>
<td>AD1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Peacebuilding Scholar</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November 2019</td>
<td>AD2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Peacebuilding Scholar</td>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August 2019</td>
<td>AD3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>University of Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August, 2019</td>
<td>AD4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>University of Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August 2019</td>
<td>AD5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>University of Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November 2019</td>
<td>AD6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Open University</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August 2019</td>
<td>DB1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>PIND</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August, 2019</td>
<td>DB2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>PIND</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th August, 2019</td>
<td>DB3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>PIND</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th August, 2019</td>
<td>DB4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>PIND</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th August, 2019</td>
<td>DB5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>PIND</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th August, 2019</td>
<td>DB6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>PIND</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st October, 2019</td>
<td>DB7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>NSRP</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th August, 2019</td>
<td>DB8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>NSRP</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th August, 2019</td>
<td>DB9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>NSRP</td>
<td>Face to Face Port Harcourt</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd October, 2019</td>
<td>SB1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th November 2019</td>
<td>SB2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)</td>
<td>Face to Face Bayelsa</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th October 2019</td>
<td>SB3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Institute For Peace and Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th October 2019</td>
<td>SB4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Institute For Peace and Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th November 2019</td>
<td>SB5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Face to Face Bayelsa</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th November 2019</td>
<td>SB6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Face to Face Bayelsa</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th November 2019</td>
<td>SB7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Face to Face Bayelsa</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th November 2019</td>
<td>SB8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Face to Face Bayelsa</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th November 2019</td>
<td>SB9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th November 2019</td>
<td>SB10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st November 2019</td>
<td>SB11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>College of War</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st November 2019</td>
<td>SB12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>College of War</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th October 2019</td>
<td>SB13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Institute For Peace and Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Face to Face Abuja</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th Oct</td>
<td>SB14</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Institute For Peace and Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Ramya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B Sample of Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of peacebuilding?
   a. Has the focus of peacebuilding changed overtime in Rivers and Bayelsa state? How? In your opinion, has the population that is self-employed become situated within the current peacebuilding agenda?
   b. How have you seen the peacebuilding initiatives in Rivers and Bayelsa state support the part of the population that are self-employed? Any examples?
   c. In your opinion how has this affected/influenced i) people’s lifestyle and job choices? What kind of self-employed jobs do they do? Are they more criminal related or not? ii) people engaging in criminal activities.
   d. In your opinion, have the resources that have been made available for peacebuilding activities increased or decreased people’s reliance on self-employment in Bayelsa/Rivers? How?

2. How have you seen the state participate through with various peacebuilding organisations in initiatives that are targeted at the population that is self-employed?
   a. How have you seen the relationship between the state and the population that is self-employed evolved over the years? Does this affect how peacebuilding initiatives are carried out? If so how? Any examples? How has this promoted or obstructed peacebuilding?
   b. In your opinion, how has the state (Rivers or Bayelsa government) provided support for peacebuilding initiatives specifically focused on those that are self-employed? Do you think this has this promoted or obstructed peacebuilding? If so how?
   c. In your opinion, is the state doing enough to be involved in peacebuilding initiatives.

3. Over the years how have you seen areas or communities (in Bayelsa and Rivers) selected for peacebuilding operations? How involved has the state been i.e. Local councilmen, senators etc. involved in the process?
   a. Have you seen these policies evolve over the years, if so how and why? In your opinion, have these polices been effective in curbing peacebuilding initiatives based on political merit.
   b. Does the involvement of state influence peacebuilding outcomes? Example?
   c. Has there been any incidence of peacebuilding initiatives being carried out as a result of political favouritism or merit? If so, how was this dealt with?

4. How involved have you observed donors in the process of peacebuilding? How does the donor’s influence or agenda influence peacebuilding? In your opinion, does this have any influence on those that are self-employed.
   a. Do you feel there is an abundance of NGO’s working within Rivers and Bayelsa state? In your opinion has this affected the state’s role in engaging with peacebuilding. How? Is this also influencing the part of the population that is self-employed?

5. Have traditional structures (leaders, organisations, traditions) played in a role in peacebuilding in Rivers and Bayelsa? How?
   a. How has this influence/ shaped peacebuilding?
b. How has this affected the part of the population that is self-employed?