DELTA STATE DIASPORA AND THE RAMIFICATIONS OF ETHNIC AMBIVALENCE FOR HOMELAND DEVELOPMENT

BY

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to the Almighty God for granting me the strength and courage to finish it.

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ABSTRACT

Diaspora's reputation as an agent of homeland development through remittances has gained unprecedented traction since the turn of the 21st century. The African Union's declaration of the diaspora as Africa's sixth region underscores this assumption, just as the mobilization of formal and informal activities around the value of the Nigerian diaspora testifies to the prominence the country accords its diaspora for development. While scholars have continued to investigate the developmental role of the Nigerian diaspora, little has been done to investigate the disproportion in the diaspora interface with the Nigerian homeland states. This study, therefore, examined the phenomenon of ethnic ambivalence among Delta State diaspora and how the attitude has hindered development in the homeland.

Lucy Tse's "Ethnic Ambivalence" was adopted as the framework to foreground the study, while the ethnographic design was used for data collection. Primary data were collected from three locations: London, Lagos, and Delta State. The locations represent foreign diaspora, local diaspora, and homeland, respectively. In-depth interviews were conducted with 40 purposively selected respondents in both locations of the diaspora in London and Lagos. The snowball technique was employed to select five respondents of each ethnic group—(Ijaw, Isoko, Itsekiri, and Urhobo)—excluding the Igbo-speaking group whose diaspora interfaces with their homeland. Key informant interviews were conducted with four respondents from each ethnic group who had an understanding of their ethnic ambivalence dynamics. Four sessions of focus group discussion, comprising eight discussants each with each ethnic group, were held in the homeland in Delta State. Non–participant observation and field tours of some communities in the state were carried out. Relevant literature made up the secondary data. Data were categorised and thematically analysed.

The major causes of ethnic ambivalence by Delta State diaspora identified were multiculturalism, interethnic marriage, ethnic minority status, environmental degradation, corruption and bad governance, insecurity, poor homeland infrastructure, fear of witchcraft, perceived cultural incivility, distrust, poor value system, *deve* (illegal fee) collection, interethnic friction, and home-based overwhelming demands. While under-development, value system distrust, and bad governance dominated the narratives of foreign diaspora, local diaspora dwelt heavily on witchcraft, lack of love, and disunity as factors precipitating their ambivalence. As for the home-based, the diaspora's exhibition of arrogance and overbearing attitudes account for the strain in relations. For all three locations, multiculturalism, ethnic minority status, interethnic marriage, *deve*, insecurity, and environmental degradation were causes of ethnic ambivalence that undermined the diaspora's agency as homeland developers. While the Urhobo and Isoko diaspora blamed their ethnic ambivalence on the supposed lack of love and disunity by fellow kinsmen, city life heavily influenced the Itsekiri diaspora. The Ijaw attributed their ethnic ambivalence to environmental pollution and perceived cultural incivility.

Delta State diaspora has enormous potential and resources to be one of the prominent homeland developers in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the diaspora, government, and the homebased need to be flexible, strategic, more accommodating, sincere, and focused in their relationship with one another and the homeland for the ultimate realisation of development in the state.

Keywords: Delta State, Diaspora, Ethnic ambivalence, Homeland, development
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

A significant body of contemporary scholarship has contributed immensely to the discourse of diaspora and the homeland. It has linked the development of the homeland to the diaspora, especially in the global South, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Some scholars argue that the diaspora is an agent of development—a position that has been confirmed in sending countries around the world (see Pande 2014; Lampert 2010, 2014; Wapmuk et al. 2014; Baaz and Akesson 2015). It is for this commendable impact that the African Union pronounced the diaspora as its sixth region. Following the acknowledgment of the African diaspora as its sixth region by the African Union in 2005, the continent has continued to engage the diaspora in its development plan as evident in individual countries' experiences. For instance, Egypt received generous repatriation of diaspora remittances with an estimated $28 billion in 2018, making it the highest recipient of diaspora remittances (PwC 2019). This has offered the opportunity for constructing critical developmental projects in the country. While Nigeria is the highest recipient of diaspora remittances in West Africa, the state of Ghana also recorded robust diaspora remittances in 2018, and this has continued to be a strategic and essential component of Ghana's economic success as one of Africa's leading nations in the economic ranking (Lampert 2010; Akesson and Baaz 2015; PwC 2019).

Nigeria's impressive record of remittances, just like that of Ghana, has encouraged investments of diaspora members in the different local economies of their home states within Nigeria. These investments have been acknowledged as significant contributions to the viability of the beneficiary states (Ugherughe and Jisike 2019). Fadipe (1970), cited in Tijani (2007), posits that as soon as the Yoruba community senses that their population size is relatively large, they form an association and these associations play a remarkable

role in ensuring collective social and developmental projects in the homeland—asituation which is also a common sociocultural practice of the Igbo from Eastern Nigeria (Tijani 2007: 65). Presumably then, the Yoruba of the West and the Igbo of the East have good numbers of their indigenes in the diaspora. These sects have earned appreciable respect following their incredible engagements in the homeland, visible in the rich socioeconomic development pedigree that these regions hold within the Nigeria polity (Ajaegbu 2017, Tijani 2007). Edo State, a sister state to Delta, has also not fallen short in its diaspora's engagement with the homeland. The real estate sector is one area where Edo State has enjoyed the prominent obligation of the diaspora for the advancement of the homeland. The Edo State diaspora has even gone on to partner with the state government to ensure the success of the homeland (*Vanguard* Sept. 4, 2018). Despite these laudable strides, however, the diaspora has also recorded some drawbacks that challengeits goodwill agency in the homeland.

While a few empirical studies counter the claim, they nevertheless affirm that the agency of the diaspora can also instigate poverty, cause underdevelopment, create inequality and provoke war (Skeldon 2008; Castles 2009; Davies 2012; Hautaniemi and Laakso 2014). These cheering applauses and unfortunate indictments of the diaspora indicate that the diaspora wields a force in their homeland that directly and indirectly influences both its internal and external policies. Other studies have also interrogateddiaspora disposition to the homeland, the quality of the relationship between several diasporasand their various homelands, and also how such relationship rubs off on the homeland either positively or negatively, thereby creating a binary of optimism and pessimism (Oh 2012; De Haas 2012; Bivan et al. 2018; Surovana 2018; Ullah 2018).

Knowledge about phenomena can be affirmed and established, among other things, through an ethnographic study conducted in different places upon the gathering of empirical data. The study of diaspora as a phenomenon and its multidisciplinary nature has been contextualised to bring to light the different dimensions and nuances that abound in it. In addition, the concept of diaspora has been categorised as old and new, representing historical and contemporary diaspora. Narratives of the historical diaspora, on the one hand, underscore the Jewish exilic dispersal and the African Trans-Atlantic

slave trade (Safran 1991; Gilroy 1993; Palmer 1998; Cohen 2008, Sheffer 1986). On the other hand, new diaspora, otherwise known as contemporary diaspora, has become such a complicated category that it is regarded as 'promiscuous', 'slippery, and emotionally charged' owing to the different contexts in which the term is deployed (Tololyan 1991, Band 1996). As said earlier, global, regional, country, and state perspectives have been explored to advance the discourse of diaspora and other related concepts in different contexts (Suleiman 1998; Reynold 2002; Lethlean 2003; Skeldon 2008; Kastner 2010; Pasura 2010; Marchand et al. 2015; Chand 2016; Remennick 2018; Ullah and Kumpoh 2019). While some of these studies appear too phoney to clarify particular cases, others are closer to the discussion intended in this study about Delta State.

Delta State diaspora, as established in this study, shows a weak diaspora-homeland relationship, particularly within the Delta South and Central senatorial districts. However, the situation in Delta North, a region peopled by the Anioma (Igbo-speaking people of the state), shows how diaspora indigenes from that region have contributed to homeland development with evidence of their sterling contributions. These people, just like the Igbo across the Niger River and in Edo State, enjoy a tradition of diaspora return for homeland investment and development. Perhaps, by being a frontier zone, the culture of cordial diaspora-homeland relationship is drawn from the geographical and cultural proximity of two regions predisposed to return and remittances. By contrast, the other regions of the state, peopled by the Ijaw, Urhobo, Isoko, and Itsekiri, record negligible diaspora return investments for homeland development.

The agency of the African diaspora for homeland development is not limited to remittances. Instead, there are other physical and tangible investments, structures, and engagements in the homeland's economy that register the agency of the diaspora, both as a complement to public sector initiatives and processes, and more importantly, as a reflection of the strategic importance of the diaspora in homeland development. In other words, for the diaspora to earn its place as a developer of the homeland, their matrix of smart engagements should extend beyond physical and tangible structures to initiatives and ideas that are development-inducing (Bahar 2020; Tirziu 2020). Implicated in the discourse of diaspora is the question of return, considering that diaspora is suggestive of

absence from home (Suleiman 1998; Ashcroft 2008), which makes the possibility of return logical. While scholars argue that diasporas choose to stage return in literal or figurative terms, one main thing, especially in contemporary times, is how diaspora return has come to be associated with homeland development (Akesson and Baaz 2015). Return or temporary visits are ways by which links and ties are strengthened in the eventuality of a future temporary or permanent return. This tone of engagement allows us to understand the psychology of the relationship in a manner that makes it cordial. More often than not, these returns, whether temporary or permanent, oil the wheel of friendship, induce loyalty and respect from the home-based and pave the way for healthy social networking (ibid). Incidentally, this kind of relevance, honour, and respect may not be categorically accorded to the Delta State diaspora because of their obvious disconnection and apathy for the homeland. Their reluctance is not unconnected to their ambivalence towards their ethnicities.

The deployment of ethnic ambivalence in this study draws upon the original resonance articulated by Cyrus (2002) to mean the betrayal of a certain level of "dualism" that fragments an individual's identity between an original homeland and a new location in the diaspora. As a critical variable in this study, the term 'ethnic ambivalence' aims to examine the implications of the ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora for homeland development. By implication, this study presupposes the inadequacy of oil revenues for the development of Delta State.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Generally, the world over, people have always migrated for one reason or the other, either forcefully or voluntarily, thereby underscoring the dynamics of historical and contemporary movements. Underlying the phenomenon of migration are concepts of homeland, host country, temporary or permanent return, the formation of diaspora, and commitment and remittances. Diaspora's indispensability to their home countries has attracted not only scholars but also government officials and policymakers. Literature establishes that the importance of the diaspora is tied to its commitment to the development of the homeland through different forms couched in an umbrella term known as remittance(s) and this includes but is not limited to social, ideological, technological,

financial, and cultural contributions (Akanle 2012; Akesson and Baaz 2015; Ajaegbu 2017; Ango et al. 2017; Oluwafemi and Ayandibu 2017). The remittances are heterogeneous, such that some come in as household maintenance upkeep, others as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and still others as electrical and mechanical goods, domestic goods, and brain gain, to mention but a few. The multifaceted engagements of the diaspora resonate with the outcome and level of development in sending countries. Thus, the dynamics of diaspora engagements have generated a plethora of results—concurring and contrasting views. While some scholars have established empirical facts about the merits of remittances, some others argue that it otherwise reinforces brain drain, inequality, poverty, and conflict as seen in Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia (Skeldon 2008, Laakso and Hautaniemi 2014). However, the literature on the significant role of remittances to the homeland far outweighs whatever negativity may come with it. Remittances are at the centre of the economic discourse of sending countries, pointing to an agency of resources necessary to develop the homeland.

The studies that have established the negative effect of remittances do not hesitate to acknowledge the dominant understanding of the essence of diaspora remittances, which is actually to achieve an appreciable level of development in the homeland. Aside from its liberating characteristics expressed in donations to family members or Foreign Direct Investments, remittance has demonstrated the capacity to strengthen and sustain social ties or networks to facilitate smooth and pleasurable experiences upon the diaspora's partial or full return to the homeland. This strand of effect created by the healthy relationship diaspora has with their homeland fosters psychological and emotional balance and signals the mobility of their homelands (Osoba 1969; Adepoju 1974; Kastner 2010; Lampert 2014; Ango *et al.* 2017; Ullah and Kumpoh 2019). These studies establish the fact that there is a burning passion exuded by the diaspora communities they examined, and this passion sustains the diaspora's efforts at maintaining affinity and relevance with their homeland. This is barely the situation with Delta State diaspora as defined in this study.

By being a crude oil-producing state, sharing in the environmental mishaps like other crude oil-producing states in the country, and also a miniature Nigeria because of its ethnic diversity, literature on Delta State has been primarily dominated by discourses on

environmental challenges and their fallout like militancy, insecurity, ethnic rivalry, brigandage, culture and history (Alagoa 1963; Ojakorotu and Gilbert 2010; Maiangwa and Agbiboa 2013; Otuaro, 2018). Studies have also affirmed the intersection of oil exploration negativities and migration in the state (Olaoluwa 2020). However, little scholarly attention has been paid to diaspora relationships with the homeland and how that influences development, as established in the literature. Data from the field establishes that the Delta State diaspora is ethnically ambivalent towards its homeland in many ways. This state of ambivalence has triggered a disconnection from the homeland, and in extreme cases, severed ties with the homeland. Invariably, this negates the ascription of the development agency to the diaspora, as evident in the literature. This study, therefore, investigates the challenges and causes of the ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora communities concerning their reluctance to assume agency for remittances, return, and development in the homeland.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions guide the research:

1. What factors are responsible for the ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora communities towards the homeland?
2. What are the peculiarities of the ethnic ambivalence among the identified ethnic groups?
3. How do the home-based perceive the ethnic ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora?
4. What is homeland to the diaspora?
5. What are the implications of the ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora for homeland development?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the underlying causes of the ethnic ambivalence of the Delta State diaspora to underscore its effect on the development of the homeland.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the factors responsible for the ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora communities towards the homeland.
2. To ascertain the peculiarities of ethnic ambivalence that exist among the identified ethnic groups.
3. To examine the perception of Delta State diaspora's ethnic ambivalence by the home-based.
4. To establish what Delta State homeland means to the Delta State diaspora.
5. To discuss the implications of the ethnic ambivalence of the Delta State diaspora for homeland development.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study covers the Delta State diaspora in London, the United Kingdom (UK), translocals in Lagos State, as well as the home-based in Delta State. The historical event of the 15th century witnessed a prominent representation of people from the old Delta State region in different parts of the world. Its strategic location by the Bight of Benin made it easier for the people to be taken away to the other side of the Atlantic. Rich in natural resources like spice, salt, and palm oil, its littoral characteristics give it an easy reach and make trading activities thrive (Akanle 2012, Lloyd 1963, Courson 2016). Like any other region in Nigeria, the British presence in the region and the privilege of its colonial rule leave a residue of bond, loyalty, and affinity, especially from the locals. This mutual relationship has continued to endear people from the region and particularly Delta State indigenes to the United Kingdom.

In Nigeria, Lagos State serves as a local host for people from Delta State because Lagos State has an incomparable economic, social, and political advantage over any other state in the country, and this fascinates migrants from within and outside Nigeria (Osoba 1969, Osho and Adishi 2019). For a holistic and detailed understanding of the study's aim, the home-based in Delta State also constitutes the research population. An effort was made to study the dynamics of diasporic commitment to the homeland with a focus on the Delta State diaspora. It also examined how the attitude of the Delta State diaspora towards the homeland has played out within the purview of development discourse in the state.

1.6 Justification of the study

The link between the diaspora and homeland development is of increasing importance in globalisation and international migration discourse. The discourse has been dominated by regional approaches, especially in analysing Africa's place and fate. While this approach is *ab initio* caused by a paucity of information about nation-states making up the continent, its continued dominance hardly provides country-specific empirical, statistical, and/or reliable economic indices to improve meaningfully the understanding of diaspora-homeland development connection in the African context. The focus of this study on the Delta State diaspora, as a representative sector of local and international Nigerian migrants, is a modest objective in responding to this kind of challenge in diaspora literature and analysis. Empirical data about two critical categories of diaspora — local and international — show dynamics in the discourse of the diaspora-homeland relationship. On another note, it allows for comparative analysis of differential experiences potentiated by the diaspora categories, given their ordinary state of origin in the Nigerian polity.

Closely related to the significance highlighted above is the theoretical contribution to the discourse of diaspora and its allied concepts: homeland, remittances, identity, return, and development. Its theorisation of ethnic ambivalence based on a specific case study underscores the interrelationship between ethnic ambivalence and the diaspora's commitment to the homeland. Premised on the multi-ethnic/cultural composition of Nigeria and the findings of Delta diaspora apathy to homeland [development], the study examines what ethnicity and its implication mean for understanding the peculiarity of Delta State diaspora in the context of other Nigerian diaspora communities' disposition to homeland development. While this study objective specifically isolates Delta State diaspora and subjects it to ethnic analysis, it constitutes a general contribution to theorising about the connection between homeland development and diaspora from the perspective of ethnic nationality.

The proposed study is qualitative, a design that presents a methodological justification for empirical study. For data collection, the study relies on fieldwork involving qualitative techniques such as focus group discussions and key information, and in-depth interviews.

The orientation of primary data collection gives an empirical grounding to the study's contribution to diaspora and development dynamics and discourse. Considering that proactive countries, as either a host or homeland, keep reviewing their immigration policies and international diplomacy, there is needful dependence on reports emerging from studies. Not only does the state or government present a source of the empirically grounded report, but international communities and agencies often depend on such a report for policy design and implementation. It is in this regard that the study's findings and recommendations become justified.

Most importantly, the significance of the study is in the profound disruptive position of the Delta State diaspora to the development agency arrogated the Nigerian diaspora. Nigeria's position as the highest recipient of diaspora remittances in West Africa undoubtedly confirms the African Union's declaration of the diaspora as a resource for the development of the continent. However, the Delta State case is an indication that this applause is not flat support as the remittances are disproportionately spread across different states in the country. Perhaps, the Nigerian diaspora's remittances are concentrated in specific regions or states in the country, because the Delta State diaspora reflects a contradiction of this applause ascribed to the Nigerian diaspora. Caution should be taken so as not to appropriate this developmental agency on a general basis. The study, therefore, encourages us to engage in a state-by-state analysis of the diaspora's commitment to the homeland. That way, not just specificities, and details will be ascertained, but other critical issues in society will be revealed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEWANDTHEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Diaspora

The landscape and location of Delta State in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria are strategically and particularly important to the effectual running of the country. The state, with its natural endowments, including but not limited to crude oil, palm oil, and rubber, contributes substantially to the total economic earnings of the country via crude oil exploration (Deinne and Ajayi 2018), thus making it worthy of the attention ofgovernment and scholars. Scholars have carried out studies on different areas of concern in the state, ranging from its economy and its implication for Nigeria to environmental degradation and ethnic crisis. Poverty and unemployment, hooliganism, culture and ethnicity, comedy, militancy, history and evolution, environmental displacement, and migration, especially historically, have also been subjects of academic inquiry in the state (Lloyd 1963; Derefaka and Anozie 2002; Ogbogbo and Muojama 2008; Okuyade 2011; Abang 2014; Deinne and Ajayi 2018; Olaoluwa 2020).

Despite the focus of researchers on the aforementioned areas, there has not been much concentration on the contemporary migratory patterns of the state's citizens. Where such studies have been carried out, they have mainly focused on the migration of its people due to the relocation of oil-producing companies as a result of the repeated crises in the state (which is more or less a staff transfer). A few other studies have also focused on migration and remittances (mainly household remittances) (Udoh et al. 2009; Omeje 2010; Mordi and Opone 2017). Such studies pay little or no attention to the ambivalent disposition to ethnic affiliations among indigenes of Delta State in the diaspora. Neither do these studies inquire into how, in Delta State, this ambivalence has raised questions of development usually promoted by the diaspora. Suffice it to say that this ambivalence, which stems from the ethnic heterogeneity of the state and other instigating factors, challenges the

diaspora's agency as developers of their homeland which could have been achieved through different forms of remittances. Given this, this research seeks to address the ramifications of ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora towards the homeland and other allied matters that are fallouts of this ambivalence.

As stated earlier, there is a dearth of scholarly work on the diaspora's ethnic ambivalence exhibited towards their homeland. Where diaspora's attitude towards the homeland conceived as ambivalence was discussed, contextual empirical African studies have not adequately explored or done an extensive investigation of the root causes of such ambivalent attitude towards the ancestral home like the one explored in this study. Such a study is important considering the historical and contemporary narratives of Africa as a sending continent. Despite acknowledging historical diaspora, this study privileges contemporary diaspora discourse, putting ethnic ambivalence and, consequently, development at the centre of the discussion. In discussing the phenomenon of ambivalence, therefore, it is necessary to explore the position of scholars concerning the concept of diaspora.

The concept of diaspora has been the central focus of numerous scholarly works on migration across the globe. Although most of these works have been from the historical perspective, this historical bias affects everything from the definition of the diaspora to how diasporas are classified into types or even what constitutes a diaspora (Sheffer 1986; Safran 1991). Attempts to define diaspora in absolute terms often raise further questions or have been considered too narrow or too loose to account for the peculiarities of spaces and identities. Several other studies have vigorously discussed diaspora and its dynamic relationship with the homeland and vice versa (Pande 2010; Morawska 2011; Ullah 2018; Ullah and Kumpoh 2019). These scholars believe that members of the diaspora community exhibit various forms of attitudes towards the homeland, which induce narratives justifying the difficulty of defining it (Tololyan 1991). Drawing from the positions of these scholars, from all indications, there is an apparent binary that cuts through the diaspora’s affinity with the homeland. While some are committed, this commitment can either be positive or negative (Laakso and Hauteniemi 2015). Others express a lukewarm attitude towards their homeland (Surovana 2018). This lukewarm

disposition, otherwise regarded as ambivalence, has continued to redefine the concept of diaspora and its related discourses, especially when explored in different contexts.

Due to the difficulty of defining the term 'diaspora', circumstances play an important role in conceptualising the term. This begs the question of what, who, how, and when is a situation or people regarded as diaspora? For Safran (1991), the term's fluidity informed his argument on its existentialism. The author, in an extended configuration, proposes six features necessary to qualify a diaspora. For him, diaspora exists when:

> (1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original `centre' to two or more peripheral', or foreign, regions; (2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland - its physical location, history, and achievements; (3) they believe that they are not - and perhaps cannot be - fully accepted by their host society and therefore, feel partly alienated and insulated from it; (4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return - when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and (6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (Safran 1991: 83- 4).

Safran (1991)opines that diaspora exists when people are dispersed from their original homeland to two or more foreign lands with a vivid ambulant abstraction of their ancestral home to which there is a longing and an eventual return of themselves or their offspring. Safran's description is nuanced, projecting essentials for diasporic status, detailing remittances for development, and dispelling ambivalence due to the active but mental connection the homeland makes to the diaspora (Ullah and Kumpoh 2019). His further engagement points out that a degree of force leads to a people's expulsion or dispersal from their ancestral home, which would determine what constitutes a diaspora, semi-diaspora, or non-diaspora. In other words, there is a nexus between instigating factors and

diaspora status, and these push factors come in variations as well as frequencies that qualify the make-up of diaspora.

Safran's idea of idealising the concept of diaspora is leveraged heavily on the dominant historical narrative of involuntary migration: Jewish diasporic experience and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This dominant narrative foreground the strict presence of involuntary movement, trauma, nostalgia, and longing for a return to the homeland in its eventuality. How then can this argument be sustained in the face of the contemporary migration pattern for which movement is voluntary with little or no traumatic experience or nostalgia, nor a longing for home return? Perhaps push factors stemming from socio-economic factors, political instability, civil unrest, and natural disasters could instantiate subtle involuntary migration undercurrents to a foreign land. The author's measurement of a degree raises a question about what precisely 'absence' from home to a foreign location translates into. Does absence connote something other than its literal meaning, mainly because the author has suggested that one can be away from home and may not be considered a diaspora? That is to say, the subtlety or fierceness of force that led to the dispersal from the homeland informs the type and quality of diaspora in the host country. Even though Safran's position is queried for its singular and historical view of diaspora, his degree of specificity can be drawn to analyse some of the cause(s) of the expulsion of the Delta State diaspora.

Gilroy (1993) weaves this debate on diaspora around the classical features entrenched in the discourse of the concept, which is violence and trauma. He defines diaspora as a "network of people, scattered in the process of non-voluntary displacement, usually created by violence or under threat of violence or death" (p. 328). Like other historical scholars, Gilroy goes down a dominant path to reiterate the presence of enforced scattering, flight for safety, and the presence of community, which in a way erases the idea of individualism (Safran 1991). This position underscores the connection between communality and homeland connections as much as it does individualism and ethnic ambivalence (Igiede 2013, Grossman 2019). For Gilroy, movements have to always be characterised by some degree of force and brutality, which is indicative of the notion that voluntary diaspora cannot form a diaspora enclave. The applicability of this position in the

contemporary discourse of diaspora may well flaw the dynamics of movements that produce diaspora in a host country. However, the logicality in the stance of this author finds a place in some contemporary migration where subtle force which has taken different forms (corruption, poverty, unemployment, environmental disaster, lack of basic amenities/infrastructures) is unleashed on the people, thus forcing the affected to flee (Olaoluwa 2013, 2020).

Such positions taken by Safran and Gilroy give accent to the reason Anthias (1998: 557) maintains that diaspora is a 'kind of mantra' used to describe the processes of settlement and adaptation relating to an extensive range of transnational migration movements. Though arguable, Zeleza (2005) posits that a movement is not an automatic ticket for the diasporisation of a people, a position Safran (1991) shares. What this suggests is that not all dispersals constitute a diaspora and neither does a diaspora live in perpetuity. By implication, some diaspora can cease to exist, hence Anthias' justification highlighting the concept as a 'process'.

In trying to arrive at a definition of the concept of diaspora, Butler (2000) provides us with precautionary measures under which the phenomenon can find its meaning. According to her, the conceptualisation of diaspora should take into cognisance two fundamental principles of multiple identities and phases of diasporisation over time. The underlying assumption is that the formation of diaspora comes with time, but one critical observation is what would the measurement of time mean for this author. How long will it take for a people outside the homeland to pass as diaspora? What qualifies longevity to satisfy the requirements of diasporisation?

The author provides five criteria to aid the categorisation of diaspora, and they include the reason and condition for dispersal; relationship with homeland; relationship with host land; interrelationships within diaspora groups; and comparative study of different diasporas. This schema is not just simple but smart enough to imply historical and contemporary considerations in the discourse of diaspora for an all-inclusive context of movement. Such a nuanced position appropriately discusses the Delta State diaspora specifically, mainly because there is a profound emphasis on relationships of different

categories between diaspora and the homeland/host land and among diaspora members of the same origin or homeland. The lack of cordial relationship between homeland and fellow diaspora reeks of disconnection, suggesting that not everyone or every situation can pass as the diaspora.

Lending his voice to the discourse of the phenomenon, Cohen (2008) adopts a discursive approach to explicating the diaspora concept. For Cohen, diaspora is an evolving term that has metamorphosed into phases, thus justifying the expanded and diluted meanings ascribed to it, making it challenging to set its limits (Tololyan 1991, Brubaker 2005). His identified four phases of metamorphosis emerged to create a more robust and enduring dynamic that balances the dominant historical narrative with contemporary diasporic movements.

Cohen's discussion toes the line of Safran but provides a template for some amendments and modifications. Both authors share more than their opposition to the discourse on the concept of diaspora. Perhaps Cohen figured some degree of repetition in Safran's diaspora features, hence, the expansionary review to modify, amend, and also further the scope by adding four other features sub-categorising the diaspora—1) groups that are dispersed as a result of colonial or voluntarist reason, 2) labour diaspora, 3) trade diaspora, 4) imperial diaspora, 5) deterritorialised diaspora. Safran’s vague categorisation of diaspora becomes clearer as Cohen delimits the categories for aptness, lucidity, and comprehension. By appropriating four social science delineating tools which are emic/etic relationship; the passage of time; common features; an ideal type, the author's social constructivism promises a possibility beyond the historical dominance of the term to fill the lacuna of scholars like Safran and Gilroy by its integration into contemporary diaspora discourse. Cohen offers broader criteria that accommodate new claimants of the term as against singly victim diasporapropagated by Safran. A further discussion to buttress his stance is made by providing nine diaspora schemas to create distinctions among diaspora:

> 1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions; 2) alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions; 3) a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history,

> suffering and achievements;4) an idealisation of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation; 5) the frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland;6) a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate;7) a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;8) a sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even where home has become more vestigial; and9) the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism (Cohen 2008: 17).

By expanding the scope of previous scholars, Cohen's criteria support the flexibility of the phenomenon. The author presents a likely fluid and malleable use of the concept but draws attention to its potency and function. Like Brubaker and Safran, Cohen did not attempt couching a definition for the concept; probably because of its contested and possible widespread nature, which has drawn attention and interest from government and scholars from different fields of endeavour. His identified types of diaspora consider that diasporic movements and why people move would continue to evolve, hence the need to keep it open for more usages and dynamics. Thus, his position can be drawn upon to allow for a clearer understanding of the tinges of diasporic movements that have/are taken/taking place amongst the Delta State diaspora in contemporary times. To grasp the essence of Cohen's position at elucidating contemporary claimants aligning with the discourse of diaspora, it is imperative to consider a few empirical studies to establish the validity of the expanded meaning of diaspora. This in itself would allow the mainstreaming of the Delta State diaspora into the discourse, having proven from previous empirical studies the nuances of diaspora formation.

Pasura's (2010) study of Zimbabweans in Britain dramatically illustrates an intriguing dimension to the discourse of diaspora. His study proposes an experiential meaning for the

concept. The author considers the various contributions and views of diaspora by diaspora scholars and periodises the Zimbabwean diaspora. This means that identifying the dynamics for which expulsion occurs would resolve the stereotyped meaning that fits comfortably, which scholars try to give to the phenomenon, as well as the consideration of the nuances for which the term is deployed. Pasura's study reveals the tenacity that the concept of diaspora is conceived as reverse colonialization as justification for diaspora stay in Britain and as legal home, *wenela,* and the Egypt Babylon metaphor (ibid).

According to Pasura, some Zimbabweans in Britain refute emphatically the derogatory tags such as refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants, ascribed to them to justify that they are on a rightful retrieval mission to take back what colonial Britain robbed themof. They liken their challenges to the biblical Egypt-Babylon narrative, which foregrounds the discriminative, dehumanising, and racial treatment they face in the host land yet upholds a dogmatic resilience. Such experiences resonate with various studies that have laid bare migrants' challenges in host lands (Wright *et al.* 2005; Kastner 2010;Mensah 2014; Almutairi 2015). The migrant labour system informed the *wenela* narrative during the colonial period when migrant labourers could not return to their homeland. Such adjective (*wenela*) is deployed in contemporary times as some diaspora see themselves in the same light of not returning home, not because they do not want to, but because the circumstances are not permissible (Abang 2014). Yet, some others consider Britain a legal home, not only because goals are being met but also because home is a relatively personal resolution to make. There is a sense in which this resolve reinforces the concept of cosmopolitanism that justifies home as anywhere in the world.

From the preceding, the different periods and experiences that inform the outflow of people from Zimbabwe are essential in the unpacking of the meaning diaspora Zimbabweans give to the concept. Such tenacity as encountered with the Zimbabwe diaspora has continued to undermine the attempts by scholars at arriving at a conclusive definition of the term. However, the study is credible because it underscores the different meanings of 'diaspora' as conceived by members of the diaspora. It encourages that the search for a definition of diaspora is taken beyond the academia or governance and placed at the feet of the diaspora because by being in the diaspora, their position is experiential,

thus making them the ideal ones to explain the concept. For scholars of diaspora, it suggests a rethink of the formulaic conception of the definition of the term. However, what remains important is the consideration of factors that propel flight from the homeland. This is important because by so doing, a more precise understanding, as well as a justification or criticism, will be given to the deployment of the term in a more pragmatic view that will keep in check the meaning congestion that may overwhelm the phenomenon.

Discussing diaspora within the refugee framework, Wahlbeck (2002), in his study of Kurds in Britain and Finland, considers diaspora as a social norm that treats the concept as an 'ideal type'. The author argues that an ideal type is justified under the lens of diaspora parameters to underline the inherent dispersal dynamics of the term (Band 1996). Any movement thus becomes an ideal type once it meets the considerations of absence from home. With that, the concurrent nature of the concept, which relates to the homeland and destination country, is adequately defensible. His understanding of the ideal type further reinforces the intensity of the characteristics surrounding the expulsion from home to categorise the diasporic agency under review. Wahlbeck's view stands to support Safran's to denote the heterogeneity of circumstances that would make a group of people living outside their country of originbe considered full, partial, or non-diaspora. Although a tease-out from a larger project, as acclaimed by the author, the article contextualises diaspora against the background of refugee discourse which is only a strand of not-being-at-home as posited by Suleiman (1998). His argument underscores the historical conception of the meaning of diaspora, which connotes forceful expulsion and the feeling of trauma by the victims. Therefore, his view comes off as too rigid to unpack the diasporic situation of the Delta State diaspora.

In an attempt to define diaspora, many scholars have ended up describing it because of the complexities of the different experiences that inform the movements of people. Mohan and Zack-Williams (2002) argue from an implicative premise upon articulating the various views of diaspora scholars. They contend that diaspora is suggestive of 'shared consciousness and deterritorialised 'belonging' whose identity is dynamic. Their position presupposes that the diaspora is not under compulsion to identify with a homeland as

against previous scholars' (e.g. Safran, Cohen, Gilroy)dominant view. Identifying with a particular homeland for these scholars limits the diaspora and denies them of expressing their desire or ability to choose where they intend to cling. In that case, identity becomes fluid, and homeland draws from the merit of cosmopolitanism where the world fits in as home.

Bearing the African diaspora, which is coated with trauma and horrific experience from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, in mind, Mohan and Zack-William (2002) resist the dominant ambiguous discourse of diaspora with dispersal and trauma as its central themes. By proffering a more nuanced attempt, the authors consider the slippery nature (Band 1996) of the term to include voluntary and proactive movements vis-à-vis historical narrative that has long overwhelmed the understanding of the term. The intuitive implication is an indication that other variables than forceful displacement with all its entrenched features are accountable for people's movement, leading to the formation of diasporas (Gilroy 1993, Safran 1991, Cohen 2008).

The idea of shared consciousness allows us to sense the commonness in the identification and cultural similarities that bind the diaspora. In the same vein, deterritorialised 'belonging' underscored by the authors indicates the fluidity in diaspora identity. There is a sense in which this challenges the confinement of the diaspora to geographic space and creates the interface between the country of origin and the receiving country. The overlapping identity of the diaspora, consequent upon the cultural interaction of home and host country, leaves the diaspora in a ‘process of becoming’ (Mohan and Zack-Williams, 2002), which further complicates the attempt at defining the concept. Since Delta State is known for its ethnic diversity, the position of these authors is instructive in reflecting on the ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora.

An intriguing definition that underscores the prominence of a diaspora’s link with the homeland is provided by Sheffer (1986). The author regards the diaspora as a group of migrants who have found settlements in a host country but reserve a strong affinity with their home countries. In an attempt to move beyond the boundaries of the dominant ideology of 'diaspora' that resonates with trauma, violence, brutality, and an afloat feeling of homelessness, Sheffer's description emphasises the homeland's place as a crucial factor

to be considered in the discourse of diaspora. For this author, features such as citizenship, ethnicity, place of birth, the motive of migration, push factors, and years spent abroad are inconsequential to categorise a person or group of persons as a diaspora. This definition emphasises the diaspora's active link and interest in the homeland, an action that contrasts with what is obtainable with the Delta State diaspora as constituted by Ijaw, Isoko Itsekiri, and Urhobo ethnic groups. Sheffer's view helps us understand the central place of the homeland in unpacking the concept of diaspora as it applies to the Delta State diaspora and their conception of home.

While the Delta State diaspora invalidates Sheffer's position on the one hand because of their nonchalant disposition towards the homeland, they drive home the point about the vital ingredient of diaspora, which is an attachment to the homeland. Such a position raises further questions that compel the interrogation of how diasporas are formed. These would include questions such as: Do migrants always constitute a diaspora? How should other nationals that identify with a different country be categorised, considering Sheffer's emphasis on identifying with an original homeland as a justification for being its diaspora?

Where existing literature offers a sharp projection of historical diaspora by scholars, Grossman (2019) aggregates definitions from the humanities and social science perspectives. The author intimates about the binary created in the quest to define diaspora. On the one hand, the constructivists tend to view diaspora as a type of consciousness, while the positivists (of which the author is one) see diaspora as a social construct. His analysis of the texts brings to light six salient characteristics common to them. These features include dispersal or immigration, a location outside a homeland, community, orientation to a homeland, transnationalism, and group identity (p. 2). These inform his proposition of an integrative definition, which allows elements from both fields to synthesise to provide a comprehensive definition. Grossman defines diaspora as a transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity (p. 5). Unlike scholars with a historical bias toward the concept, Grossman's definition of diaspora appears to be mindful of the historical and contemporary narratives configured to mean voluntary and involuntary movements.

However, the characteristic of trauma, which is akin to dispersal or involuntary movement, as the case may be, seems blurred. Although his six identified features are distinct, they are not exclusive in themselves in discussing the concept of diaspora. Dispersal or emigration arguably implies an absence from home, thereby activating the status of a transnational—a term which Band (1996) asserts aligns with contemporary movements.

Of importance to this study is the group identity, which gives a sense of communal tie that speaks to their sense of belonging to a homeland (Grossman 2019). Because the concept of individualism tends to shut away from activities or connection with the homeland Igiede (2013), the idea of group identity is to keep that in check in the promotion of unity and togetherness. Grossman's (2019) discussion of community is particularly striking, yet it reflects contrastively the attitudes of the Delta State diaspora. Grossman views the community as an organisational formation that shares a common connection and brings cohesion. However, the idea of a community does not automatically translate into solidarity toward one another. It then becomes logical to infer that members of a diaspora can be in a foreign land without forming a community. The absence of a community, which could have served as a platform for unity and solidarity, explains the reluctance in responding to the homeland as often exhibited by the Delta State diaspora.

In his article titled *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Brubaker (2005) deviates from the norm of defining the term for obvious reasons. The term has assumed a rather promiscuous category by its semantic expansion to accommodate other forms of movements (Tololyan 1991); hence, Brubaker opines that it is inherently dispersed. His reflection on the different variances of the concept places the author on a cautionary pedestal that rejects the definition offered by diaspora scholars like Safran, Cohen, Sheffer, Gilroy, etc. The author follows a historical trajectory of the meaning ascribed to the term and the deployment in an emerging context to capture the two common features that resonate with the term— 'process of displacement' and 're-rooting with the homeland'. His position foregrounds the evolutionary nature of the term, and that will continue to sustain the term's contemporary tempo. He argues that the concept's scope is broadened beyond dispersal or expulsion and border demarcation that is reflective of political and other

restrictions due to its alarming proliferation. Brubaker's argument highlights the disappearance of the discriminating force, which the term historically commands. The author identifies three essential elements prevalent in the multiple definitions that have been constant in diaspora discourse: the first is dispersion [which often denotes forceful or traumatic expulsion, usually across state borders]; second is homeland orientation [conceived as real or imagined, providing the diaspora with a sense of value, identity and loyalty]; and finally, boundary maintenance [which is the preservation of a specific identity vis-à-vis host community, i.e. the maintenance and sustenance of the diaspora ethnic identity in such a manner that affirms its supremacy even in the host land] (pp 5-6).

As a contribution to the theorisation of the concept, Brubaker (2005) argues that diaspora should be viewed as a category of practice and analysis. He puts it thus:

> We should think of diaspora in the first instance as a category of practice and only then ask whether, and how, it can fruitfully be used as a category of analysis. As a category of practice, "diaspora" is used to make claims, articulate projects, formulate expectations, mobilise energies, to appeal to loyalties. It is often a category with a strong normative change. It does not so much describe the world as seek to remake it (p. 12).

Looking at Brubaker's contribution to theorising the concept of diaspora, it is apparent that the author only provides an overview of the concept. Rather than proffering a precise definition, the author pokes its limitations. Brubaker's contribution to knowledge leaves us with very little to hold on to in finding a path for the concept, but provides us with yardsticks for categorisation, having met basic requirements to be considered an analytical tool like Wahlbeck (2002) has done. As a category of practice and analysis, this study finds Brubaker's idea significant in unpacking claims, projects, expectations, energies, and loyalties of the Delta State diaspora.

The semantic expansion for which the concept of diaspora is deployed is because the term brings under the same umbrella other individuals like migrants, transnationals, expatriates, international students, and tourists who are also outside their countries. According to Faist (2010), this expansion is necessary to broaden its scope and application because of the inability to reach a definite definition. Such difficulty is encountered because of the

dynamics, contexts, and peculiarities causing the categorisation, characterisation, and typologies as means for demystifying the term. In a bid to resolve the contentions and struggle at having a definite definition of the controversial term, Suleiman (1998) simply defines diaspora as "not being home." On the one hand, the term takes care of any form of absence such that whatever form of movement is undertaken by a person in its broad or narrow categorisation, it surely simply means "away from home" whether within or outside a local or international geographical space.

Suleiman's (1998) position is, however, rather simple and lacking the very underpinnings for which diaspora exists, especially as regards its connection with home. The position presents the concept in such a manner that could almost make it lose its very substance. It then means that a person who sees a friend off at the bus stop automatically is in the diaspora. How do such movements and other similar ones amount to diaspora? Even though all movements involve the two fundamental concepts of place and time, not all constitute a diasporic movement. As such, Suleiman's argument is only partly suitable for discussing the Delta State diaspora.

In an attempt to straighten the challenges militating against a generally acceptable definition of the concept of diaspora, Bakewell's (2009) approach, like that of others previously discussed, is caught up in the web of describing rather than defining the concept. He presents some salient features which he regards as necessary before a group of people can be regarded as a diaspora. According to him, we can say a group of people is in diaspora if they meet the movement criteria from their original homeland to more than one country, either through dispersal (forced) or by expansion otherwise considered voluntary. Furthermore, he details that this group must search for better livelihood; they must have a collective myth of an ideal ancestral home, a robust ethnic consciousness sustained over a long period, based on a shared history, culture, and religion; and a sustained network of social relationships with members of the group living in different countries of settlement (ibid).

Bakewell's (2009) idea is considered too exclusive to acknowledge that members of the diaspora consist of economic migrants seeking to eke out a living outside their original homeland. His position raises fundamental questions: what happens to students who have

travelled abroad for studies or those who have gone on visits or vacation, as well as expatriates who spend most of their time in the country where they work? It touches on categorising people in the diaspora who do not know anybody living in other countries of settlement. What can be said of the diaspora that identifies as a citizen of his original homeland but does not maintain a 'strong ethnic consciousness? Even in light of this, how is 'strong' measured?

It must be pointed out that Bakewell's notion of ethnic consciousness resonates with Wahlbeck's (2002) study of Kurds in Britain and Finland, whose ethnic and homeland consciousness is reinforced by the sustenance of relationships with members of the diaspora in other countries through telephone, social media platforms and visits. Such practice is borne out of acknowledging the consciousness of shared history and culture that the diaspora is inclined to address in the ambivalent tendency often exhibited by them. The implication for characterisation, which reinforces an active functionality and continued commitment to the ancestral home, underscores a binary between migration and diaspora. This is to say migrants do not always constitute diaspora and vice versa. Drawing from Wahlbeck (2002) to explain this binary that differentiates the concepts, the features that define a diaspora that is not prominent in evaluating a migrant are highlighted. Therefore, it can be conceded that Bakewell's (2009) position bears an overarching emphasis on economic migrants who would satisfy the criteria of seeking a living outside the homeland but falter on other indices. Although Bakewell's position finds worthiness with some of the objectives of this research, the identified questions found answers in the latter part of this study.

After the event of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade that witnessed the mass migration of people from the Niger Delta region, the experience of migration and diaspora started losing its popularity as fewer people embarked on a such ventures to other cities within and outside the country (Thornton 2015). However, unprecedented mass migration gained traction in the new millennium following the perennial crisis in the region (Omeje 2010). Following a series of civil unrest, the multinational oil companies in the region relocated their businesses to more conducive and peaceful environments—adevelopment that left the state in economic comatose. The economic vibrancy that once characterised the state

soon gave way to near lifelessness which triggered an exodus of Deltans. Emigration from the state became a survival strategy for many from the state. With migration being the first step in being away from home, more diaspora communities are emerging from this movement. Drawing from existing literature, the concept of diaspora has been explored to carry elements or features of instability—instabilityin the sense that the diaspora is here as well as there, thus, underscoring the concepts of host and home. Despite being away from home, home assumes an ambulant category thereby putting the diaspora in perpetual motion—a motion that is not without an implication for the question of return. Though the term may be suggestive of a long absence from home, this does not translate to its non-existence, thus sustaining its connection with the homeland.

2.2 Diaspora and Homeland

It is no gainsaying that the historical understanding of diaspora has concepts such as dispersal (forced or involuntary), trauma, homeland, ancestors, and return ingrained in it. Following that, scholars of the diaspora have emphasised the existence of the homeland, whether imagined or real, as critical to the discourse of identity, which gives the diaspora a sense of belonging (Anderson 2006). The resolution by the dispersed to maintain and sustain the collective consciousness of their identity reminds them of their homeland. However, the passage of time and the birth of succeeding generations are sometimes inimical to the sensitivity of the homeland (Ullah 2018). In contemporary times, the diaspora's reasons for migration—especially migrants from the global South—are informed by many circumstances usually borne out of dissatisfaction with the origin-state (Olaoluwa 2013). Logically put, diaspora relationships and responses to the homeland are primarily informed by the experiences that precipitated the flight.

In his book titled *Global Diasporas* (2008), Cohen presents two radical empirical cases whose diasporic experiences are informed by the forceful expulsion from their homeland. The Jews and the Sikhs diaspora, as represented by Cohen in the discourse of homeland, are emblematic of the unpacking of forceful migration. Both share similarities of lost territories, which they agitate for to have a defined identity. What is important here is how the knowledge of a stable homeland shapes and frames the identity its indigenes carry about within and outside it. The (re)creation of the Jewish homeland and the Sikhs' which

bears abnormalities have continued to restrain the recognition of its sovereignty and legitimacy, thus further complicating the interpretation of the homeland by the diaspora. Seven categorisations of the Jewish population spread across the globe are created by the author. Just like Pande (2010), the point is to get a sense of the scale and distribution of the various interpretations ascribed to the homeland. The Jewish categories are Zionists, Patrons, proto-Zionists, Zealots, religious reform groups, Assimilationists, post-Zionists, Yordims sabras, and transnationals (pp 106-112).

A further narrative to explicate the invasion of the Sikhs who make up another tribe of the Punjabi area in India by the British is important to shed more light on how attached a diaspora can be to their homeland. According to Cohen, the British invasion fragmented the Sikhs and dispersed them into different countries, including Canada, Britain, and the USA. He points out that the recruitment of Sikhs into the British Army produced close interactions between both cultures, with the influential hegemony tilting in favour of the British. Invariably, the influence took a toll on the Sikhs' cultural and religious practices and gave way to the assertion of Hinduism (p. 113). However, a drastic change occurred that caused the reversal of British influence. The Sikhs developed the courage to challenge the British hegemony; the response was an inadequate reward for their efforts. The Sikhs soldiers resorted to aggression and ruthlessness, which led to protests that resulted in civilian fatalities. The protests, attacks, and reprisals were directed towards reasserting their Sikh state from the Indian government, and the return of the British was championed by the reawakening of their political activism and religious zealousness, which gave rise to the Khalistan movement (Cohen 2008).

The struggle for an independent homeland in both contexts underscores the traumatic experiences and challenges encountered in the host countries. The activities that led to removing the diaspora from their land of origin subjected them to continued psychological hurt (Said2009). An expected and natural response is the longing for a place of solace and succour — a territorialised homeland – expressed by members of the diaspora. It is important to state that the disposition of the diaspora towards the 'homeland', irrespective of the cause of movement, is crucial in its unpacking. Whatever the cause of movement, there are two sides to a coin and there can be nuances of reactions. The reaction(s) is/are

mainstreamed in the individual's interpretive prowess, thus making the concept of homeland an individualistic responsibility. Cohen's examination of both contexts appears too narrow to explain the aim of this study concerning the Delta State diaspora and the homeland. This is because it is focused on the victim diaspora who were forcefully displaced from their countries of origin without acknowledging the voluntary diaspora of contemporary times. However, the show of commitment by the diaspora of both countries to an 'imagined homeland' sits well for understanding the place of the Delta State diaspora and how it relates to the homeland.

According to Grossman (2019), the concept of the homeland is an 'undertheorised' one. Sadly, diaspora scholars have not rigorously engaged the discourse of homeland like they have other concepts connected with the debate on diaspora. The dynamics tied to attempts at theorising 'homeland' are relatively different, considering the peculiarities of states. The cases of Kurdistan, Chechnya, Armenia, and Palestine allow us to make sense of the wholesome or partial independence a state, otherwise referred to as a country or homeland, possesses. The author hints at the multi-ownership claim made by different diasporas on a particular territory as seen in the instances of Jews and Palestinians, Turks and Kurds, Tamils and Sinhalese. His reference to Hear, Shain and Barth are instructive in clarifying the concept of homeland. For the referenced authors, it is inconsequential if the diaspora or their ancestors have lived in the acclaimed homeland, neither does it matter if the said state has sovereignty. What is of importance is for the diaspora to view it as its homeland, a position which Sheffer (1986) strongly supports. Central to this conceptualisation is the diaspora's tenacity to conceive a place as a homeland irrespective of ancestral cleavage or political recognition of the territory he/she so conceives as a homeland. That is to say, an individual may express a sentimental link to a particular place, and that assumes a homeland, even if his/her ancestors did not hail from the said place.

In the same vein, the notion of tie or bond is very important in constructing the home. Grossman assumes homeland as connotative of the 'spiritual bond between nation and territory' (p. 9). His idea of homeland is closed based on other physiological and biological implications connected with an attachment by the diaspora to it. Way beyond spiritual

bond are views (see Anderson and Peek; 2002; Derefaka and Anozie 2002) that underscore how the totality of a person's life is tied to the environment in which they live, herein conceived as a homeland. Worth noting is the apparent absence of ethnic ambivalence in the narratives involving the multi-ownership of a particular territory. The idea of multi-ownership of a particular territory is crucial in explaining 'home' for the Delta State diaspora, considering its cultural diversity.

In their study of the diaspora in Brunei, Ullah and Kumpoh (2019) highlight the interrelatedness of the diaspora and the homeland. The study emphasises the binary between physical and mental home. While the physical represents the destination country, the mental is where their heart is (ancestral home). Ethnically diverse Brunei is home to different diasporic communities. Their study resonates with the literature that asserts that though the diaspora is absent from their countries of origin, their presence is significantly felt in the homeland through active participation in the homeland's endeavours. The argument that diaspora holds a different type of tie to the homeland tends to diminish as they are assimilated into the host's culture. This sounds superfluous considering that the diaspora has ceaselessly remained resilient in their commitment to the homeland and, in cases where Brunei has metaphorically assumed a melting pot, the image of the homeland still endures with the people. However, the scenario is different for second-generation diaspora whose ambivalence is borne out of the blurred orientation about the homeland or even the lack of it, hence the slack in the homeland's attachment.

The application of the five transnational engagements (transportation, telecommunication, tourism, transfer or mover, and trade) developed by Orozco (2005) to explain the Brunei diaspora affirms that there is substantial sustenance of tie with the homeland irrespective of religion, trade, or cultural contact. The study falls short of exploring other causes of ambivalence, having identified a culture mix. Therefore, the study does not suitably apply to examining the Delta State diasporic ambivalence, being the focal point of this study.

The contextual narrative of the Jewish diaspora and their homeland by Burla (2015) is significant, considering the historical narrative that dominates the discourse of diaspora. The author reiterates the essence of border definition by nations. Following the political and religious contention of the state of Israel, Burla (2015) engages diaspora and

homeland within the context of the Jews and asserts that ethnic/religious underpinnings characterise the Jewish border. The relationship, that the elites at home maintain with the diaspora, espouses the influence the home-based have on the diaspora. This influence is branded by three factors, which define the narratives told to the diaspora by the elites at home. Among these narratives include one told about the diaspora in the homeland; the one about the need to employ an imaginative agent suitable for transnational framing(one that has been employed successfully in the past); and the political goal the homeland presents to the diaspora (p. 603). The account foregrounds the role of trauma in the discourse of homeland. The place of trauma in the construction of the homeland is underscored to knead the diaspora in the situation of envisaged future trauma and the protection of their territory (homeland), thus referred to as 'salvaging' protective'. Burla's contribution to the discourse of diaspora and homeland is significant to this study, considering the doggedness of the Jewish diaspora's commitment to protecting the homeland. The Jewish case study allows us to question the position of the Delta State diaspora and their sense of the homeland.

The longing for home, emanating from the feeling of trauma, is a common narrative about the diaspora and their connection with their homeland. Scholars like Safran and Cohen favour diasporic homeland discourse as one that is often searching for a home with a craving for return. Put differently, the diaspora remains committed to the homeland, thus making it enduring. More broadly, the diaspora comprises not only forced or involuntary migrants but also voluntary migrants. For cosmopolitans who constitute a strand of voluntary migrants, home is anywhere, and as such, their disposition to the homeland may be influenced by their understanding and construct of home. Empirical findings from Morawska (2011) show that diaspora imagination or understanding of the country of origin is more complex and dynamic than imagined and is subject to space and time.

Exemplifying this, Morawska recounts the trajectories of five empirical cases including the Polish in America and the United Kingdom (UK), Cuban refugees in Miami, the Hungarian political refugees in North America and Europe, and the Mexican migrants in America in their representation of the homeland. The ethnonational sameness of the Polish in America and the UK provides a comparison that allows for the understanding of the

imagination the diaspora has about the homeland. The Poles in America displayed enduring loyalty, which explains their hesitation to acquire American citizenship (see Morawska 1996; Jacobson 1998). It further explains why, after decades of settlement in America, only about 20% have been naturalised (Morawska 2011). The case of the United Kingdom provides us with lower-class Poles whose stay has drifted, from their contemporary predecessors to leveraging their British stay, to be indifferent about the homeland, only to be rattled when the situation calls for solidarity and defence of the homeland.

In the same vein, Cubans in Miami and the Hungarians spread in North America and Europe are two contrasting instances of political refugees whose cases explain the historicity of the concept of diaspora. These two cases revolve around forced expulsion or involuntary migration from circumstances beyond their control. The arrival of the Cubans in America and the liberal reception with which the Americans received them paved the way for them in business and even politics (Morawska 2011). Many of them participated in American politics and used the opportunity to show patriotism and solidarity with the homeland as they campaigned against anti-Castro and anti-communism and succeeded (ibid). On the other hand, Hungarian migrants, particularly the intelligentsia, expressed strong antagonistic emotion towards the regime that expelled them from the homeland with sustained imagery of the homeland (Morawska 2011). Albeit, as the Hungarians continued to deepen their integration in the destination country, their commitment to the homeland gradually waned.

Finally, Morawska relays an often-neglected dimension, which hinges on the gender narrative of the working-class Mexican diaspora. He highlights migrants' daily interaction with an American employer, financial and personal independence, and the homeland's patriarchy as responsible for their ambivalence towards the homeland. The plethora of instances showing similar features yet conflicting results of the diaspora remind scholars to be mindful of the relativism of assumptions in their attempts at conceptualising the phenomenon of the diaspora concerning the homeland. The broadened scope of the study to cover some nuances of the diaspora's imagination and interpretation of the homeland is

germane to the discussion of this study. However, the causes of these variations only capture the realities of the Delta State diaspora.

A study by Surovana (2018) in Serbia shows that Slovaks' migration history plays a prominent role in how the diaspora constructs their homeland and destination country. According to the author, identities or diasporic identities become dynamic with the passage of time and the contexts under which it is viewed. In the author's study, all respondents identified as Slovaks, with an appreciable number aligning with their ethnic group. Among other factors considered important as parameters for a 'true Slovak' is the ability to speak Slovak, the possession of Slovak ancestry, belonging to the Christian faith, and finally, the emotional and psychological feeling of being a Slovak (p. 1091). The study also reveals that the Slovaks hold multiple identities vis-à-vis national and ethnic identities considered not mutually exclusive because of the distinctions in the value they (Slovaks) place on these identities. While some felt attached to the homeland (Slovakia), irrespective of the external pressures they encountered from Serbs, most of the respondents expressed commitment to their host country (Serbia). However, the study favoured respondents who were born in Serbia or lived long in Serbia, thus narrowing the study's population scope. Therefore, this study engages the broader spectrum of the population in the two diaspora locations for a more nuanced result.

From the onset, this study has established the enormous literature that exists in the discourse of diaspora. Some of these studies have discussed diaspora policy as it concerns destination countries and homeland because of its essential position when evaluating the diaspora's commitment to both places (Wapmuk et al., 2014; Baaz and Akesson, 2015). However, there is a dearth of literature concerning origin-state roles and responsibilities in the discourse of diaspora and homeland. It will, therefore, not be appropriate to conclude this section of diaspora and homeland without exploring the efforts by homeland governments at getting the diaspora committed by facilitating their 'stakeholdership' in their countries of origin.

Informed by the developmental agency that most countries' diaspora has assumed, the government in many sending countries has designed conscious and proactive policies to facilitate their ties to and engagement with their diaspora for mutual benefit. More

importantly, these engagements strive to ensure the homeland remains an unforgettable category with the diaspora irrespective of where they are and/or the circumstances they find themselves.

Contrary to the generic discourse of the concepts of diaspora and the homeland, Kalm (2013) offers us a 'sending' dimension to the discourse of diaspora and homeland. The author highlights, among other tactics, legal, cultural, political, and economic strategies, which consider the diaspora as constituents, co-nationals, political participants, and taxpayers respectively (p. 384). The discourse is furthered by elucidating upon the dual citizenship granted by sending countries to their diaspora. For her, this implies granting the diaspora a franchise to participate in homeland governance and politics from afar, and imposing a tax on the diaspora, especially those who do not want to return home as a 'moral obligation'. This is done vis-à-vis the encouragement to invest in the homeland and the re-appreciation of the diaspora, through the inauguration of diaspora special days to celebrate them as co-nationals, heroes, and heroines, as well as through roots tourism (Rodriguez 2002; Durand 2004; Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) 2007; Larner 2007; Mahieu 2019).

The proactive mechanisms to maximize the resource of the diaspora, upon the realisation of its economic contributions to states of origin, leave the government to continue to facilitate diaspora relationships and negotiate loyalty through development-oriented strategies (Kalm 2013). By this action, homeland governments extend their governance beyond their territories to the diaspora to sustain their attachment to the homeland, knowing that the complete integration of the diaspora in the host country may spell misfortune for the sending country. Kalm's emphasis on government policies centred on engaging the diaspora is oblivious to the need to set proactive measures to cushion the effect of unforeseen or unexpected outcomes of these policies or strategies. For instance, the absence of possible disadvantages of engaging in such strategies as fund management was not adequately captured in the work. Thus, the article is too goal-oriented such that exigencies were not created for the tripartite actors—migrants, sending and receiving countries—in the face of any unforeseen eventuality. However, such strategies are employed by different homeland governments with home-based modifications to suit

theirpeculiarities. The probability of emulating and deploying a similar or modified strategy, especially within this study, is critical in addressing ethnic ambivalence with a goal of homeland development.

The conviction that the diaspora shows their commitment to the homeland by participating in the cultural, political, economic, religious, and social undertakings of the homeland is reflected in Turcu (2018). In his article, the author brings to the fore the political bearing that allows the diaspora to perform their civic responsibility. He identifies normative and socio-political considerations as factors driving the phenomenon of enfranchisement (Kleist 2008; Leblang 2010; Collyer 2013; Turcu and Urbatsch 2015). Though Turcu (2018) stresses nuances of reforms and electoral laws that limit (proactive and reactive) the exercise of diaspora franchise, it is implicative of the significant role the diaspora plays in the homeland. As the article resonates with a plethora of diasporic enfranchisement literature, the concept of the homeland is not given priority, judging that the essence of the enfranchisement is geared towards the homeland. This study, therefore, finds Turcu's article of minimal importance because of this lacuna which is central to it.

In addition, Gamlen *et al.* (2019), a study just like Kalm's (2013), underscores the negligence of scholarship in the origin state's effort to make the homeland a moveable and enduring category for the diaspora. The authors investigate 113 empirical cases of institutions in origin countries meant to coordinate not just the activities of the country's emigrants but their descendants (second generation onward). The study foregrounds the emergence of diaspora institutions aimed at tapping the resources of the diaspora, granting them a sense of belonging by embracing them to partake in the definition and shaping of the homeland's political identity, and governing the diaspora to be ambassadors of the homeland as they adhere to global values. The scholars offer three theoretical perspectives to throw more light on the emergence of diaspora institutions deployed by home countries to keep the diaspora closer home. The first is the tapping perspective, otherwise regarded as a lobbying strategy. This strategy admonishes the diaspora to advance the homeland's economy and serves to broker peace in the home country in times of conflict or crisis (see Akesson and Baaz 2015, Laakso and Hautaniemi 2014).

Succeeding the first is the next strategy known as the 'embracing perspective'. For 'embracing perspective', home states extend their political policies beyond their borders to include the diaspora in policy formulation and other relevant matters (see Ullah 2018). The third perspective, known as 'governing', seeks to encourage global best practices in promoting decentralised migration governance. Here, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) as well as the Migration and Remittances Program at the World Bank are significant influencers in forming these strategies. While the first two perspectives are indicative of formal domestic institutions geared toward exploring the resource of the diaspora, the governing perspective describes the involvement of international organisations that support the global governance of the diaspora. The practice of these models would encourage nations to emulate and learn best practices from other nations for the benefit of the diaspora, homeland, and host country. This model can equally be articulated to resuscitate the homeland's memory for the Delta State diaspora and the advantage of development.

Conflict is a phenomenon that entrenches the clash of interests, which, amongst other things, has led to the dispersal of people and the formation of diaspora. These formations or sects are caught in-between conflicting ideologies of ambivalence towards the homeland, undying commitment, or total resentment to it, which is informed by their experiences with the homeland. The reviews of a special issue by Koinova (2018) underscore the peace and conflict agency of the diaspora to homelands that are caught up in conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. The author draws attention to empirical cases of diaspora mobilisation that situate it as moderate, radical, or a combination of both actors in defending their stake in the homeland. The review highlights the following themes: transitional justice, contested sovereignty, fragile states, and ethnic activism as crucial in the understanding of the diaspora as non-state actors. With empirical evidence from different parts of the world, she demonstrates how statehood dynamics have informed diaspora mobilisation about dispatching the appropriate strategy for negotiating or lobbying for genocide recognition, prosecution of government officials, ceasefire, etc. The positive or negative interventions of the diaspora as advocates either for peace or against it, depending on the context, have proven that the diaspora is made up of people either born or made leaders (p. 1257) who are either passionate or dispassionate about the

homeland. Looking through the lens of Koinova to analyse the context of this study is logical, bearing in mind the different ethnic crises that have bedevilled Delta State in the past. While Koinova's review foregrounds the place of the diaspora in mobilising support for the homeland, not much significance can be recorded for the Delta State diaspora or/and their roles in brokering peace in the homeland.

As highlighted in the introductory part of this section, modern-day diaspora is facilitated by the homeland's inability to cater to the needs of its citizens, which has various consequences for the home states. In Aguilar Jr.'s (2015) study of the Filipinos in the US, the author hinted that the relationship between the Filipinos in the diaspora and the homeland is a complex web, based on the individualistic perception that constitutes the body of the diaspora. While some are very resentful of the homeland, others celebrate its cultural practices; yet some others, assume themselves saviours who have come to deliver the homeland from the wreckages of political, economic, and linguistic crisis. The author reports that most Filipinos in the diaspora are negligent of the homeland, considering the low number of Filipinos who participate in diaspora voting exercises or acquire Philippines citizenship even when their country allows dual citizenship.

Furthermore, Aguilar Jr. (2015) details that the detachment from the homeland's ethnic culture/identity is relatively high with the second generation. There was a decline in the way the second generation attached the sentiment to the homeland. They expressed indifference and were more committed to their US citizenship status. Based on the high naturalisation of the Filipinos in the US, the author creates a binary to distinguish the diaspora from labour migrants for more understanding. According to Aguilar Jr., the distinction of the 'labour migrant' from the usual diaspora is necessary to understand the variations in commitment and responsibility to the homeland. While labour migrants show more commitment to the origin country, the diaspora rarely tows that line. Labour migrants, according to Ullah (2018), are temporary residents who return home when deemed necessary, unlike the diaspora, whose tendency to return home is near impossible. The diaspora has hitherto transcended from flows into stock, and therefore constitutes permanent residents in the host country. While the study highlights challenging homeland circumstances as causes for contemporary migration, it fails to recognise that these causes

could also be considered forceful because the conditions for expulsion are compelling to instigate an outward search for a better life. This position is necessitated following the Filipino's resentment of their homeland, as deduced from the study. The study provides a framework that interprets the condition of the Delta State diaspora.

In all of this stimulating literature, the underpinning narrative reveals that the diaspora's concept cannot be discussed in isolation without a connection to the homeland. Whether mental or physical, the diaspora connection with the homeland is undebatable.

2.3 Diaspora and Development

The concept of 'development' assumes a complex category to define it, owing to its multifarious, notoriety, and broad contextual usage (Skeldon 2008; Wapmuk *et al*. 2014). Its fluidity allows it to feature in every facet of life where it is deployed by people and institutions of various endeavours. The current complexity associated with the discourse of diaspora has thrown up the poser: is the diaspora an agent of development or not (Akesson and Baaz 2015; Hautaniemi and Laakso 2014)? This question is borne out of the fact that studies have also countered the developmental agency of the diaspora to establish the negative impact of the diaspora on the homeland (Skeldon 2008; Davies 2012). However, empirical studies evidencing the commendable role of the diaspora as an agent of development of the homeland through their different forms of commitment have also been established (Wapmuck *et al.* 2014; Akesson and Baaz 2015). Such studies are informed by the fact that some countries of the world receive more immigrants (e.g. the USA), with an insignificant number emigrating, while the reverse is the case for others like countries of the Global South (Skeldon 2008). The assertion by diaspora scholars that migration is often from a poor, underdeveloped, or developing nation—plagued by poverty, corruption, political instability, and environmental factors, amongst others—to a more developed and industrialised nation is underpinned by a lack of development and the search for it (Skeldon 2008). Thus, development forms an integral part of underlying movement or migration, which culminates in diaspora formation.

The centrality of development to the discourse of diaspora tells why the government of sending countries are particular about the diaspora, intending to encourage and maintain a relationship with them through the formulation of policy tools. The diaspora is an essential

component of the economic mantra, not only for the sending countries but also for the receiving of labour availability. That does not imply the discountenance of the diaspora's negative influence on the country of origin. To drive home this claim, the medical brain drain in 2008, where an estimated 20,000 medical practitioners migrated from Nigeria to the Americas for better productivity and life, is apt (International Organization for Migration 2003: 216). Similarly, the diaspora has been accused of instigating unhealthy relationships in the homeland and promoting crime, inequality, and poverty, whether consciously and/or unconsciously (Beyene 2015). Irrespective of these proven and/or speculated claims, the interrelation between diaspora and development benefits outweighs the liabilities (Hautaniemi and Laakso 2014).

The place of the diaspora in the development of the homeland cannot be overemphasised. Countries like China, India, Mexico, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Ghana have established agencies that see the mutual benefits of the homeland and the diaspora (Lampert 2010). The relationship between the homeland and the diaspora is expected to be symbiotic. This symbiosis is expressed in ways including but not limited to remittances, brain circulation, foreign direct investment, and global networking on behalf of the homeland by the foreign capital (social and intellectual know-how) that they have acquired (Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002; Skeldon 2008; Pande 2014; Baaz and Akesson 2015). The responsibility is tied to the perceived advantage of remittance heterogeneity the diaspora commands, having lived in and engaged with their respective host countries. Thus, the original homeland then becomes a benefactor of the ingenuity and development of the diaspora (Lampert 2010). However, when development by the diaspora becomes an aberration, the response to the homeland becomes distorted and even erased in extreme cases (Ullah 2018). To this end, this study conceives diaspora and development as concepts that are not mutually exclusive to mean that the development or underdevelopment of a sending country depends on the commitment of the diaspora.

Within the context of diaspora and homeland development, Pande's (2014) study of the Indian diaspora is critical to this study which contrasts with the attitude of this study's population. According to the author, the migration of Indians following the unemployment that engulfed the country after the Second World War led to a massive brain drain from

the country. Ironically, while the migration of skilled workers is often linked with underdevelopment and labour shortage, it has produced a somewhat positive result in China and India (Lampert 2010, Skeldon 2008).

In furtherance, Pande (2014) accounts that the swiftness of the Indian diaspora to transform brain drain into brain circulation (a process of exchanging skills between the diaspora and the homeland) has brought massive development to the country. The author identified other commendable areas where the diaspora has made a beneficial impact in the home country. Examples include investing in education and linking the homeland to international networks as seen in the IT industry, which has unarguably fostered foreign direct investment (FDI). The FDI has been identified as one of the most important areas the diaspora contributes to the development of the homeland (p. 122). This portfolio practically influenced the growth of the industry, which earned India the reputation of being the leading IT nation in the world by 1999 (ibid). The symbiotic relationship between the Indian diaspora and the homeland increased sales of software from US$31.4 billion from export in 2006-2007 to US$62 billion in 2011-2012 (p. 123). Such a commendable landmark was attained by the diaspora, which created incredible employment opportunities for professionals and entrepreneurs. In such a situation, the poverty rate and crime are expected to reduce drastically and have a trickle-down effect on other aspects of the social and psychological well-being of the people.

Unlike the Indians, the Bangladeshi diaspora is an ambivalent category in terms of the development of the homeland. The very essence of diaspora as a resource for the development of the homeland appears to be elusive in the context of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada, as they have not prominently featured as developmental agents for their home country. Ullah's (2018) study of the Bangladeshi-Canadians reveals three categories of diaspora emerge when using the alignment of development with diaspora as a method of diaspora categorization. These three categories include 1) those who are disinclined to invest, 2) those who are indecisive but have potential, and 3) those who have already invested in the homeland (p. 43). His empirical study shows the previous efforts made by Bangladeshis who, before emigration, had their investments ruined

following the volatile political situation and unpredictable inflation in their origin country (p. 43).

Following such a predicament experienced by the Bangladeshi diaspora, most of them decide to invest in an economy where their investment is relatively guaranteed growth as against the homeland's unsavoury structures that discourage foreign investment (ibid). These disturbing yet justifiable reasons should not be taken with levity if a country seeks to benefit from its diaspora. Succinctly, a conducive and stable environment (political, economic) secured by government policies is critical to secure the convictions of the diaspora to invest in the sending country. The conditions informing the attitude of the Bangladeshi diaspora towards the homeland are no different from what is obtainable with the Delta State diaspora; however, there are no data to justify the comparison to determine the better of the two. Again, the population of this study is citizens of a state in Nigeria, whereas Ullah's study covers the population of a country. Irrespective of the indices, both cases have similarities that deter the diaspora from engaging with the homeland.

Wapmuk *et al*. (2014) highlight the nexus between diaspora and development, focusing on the Nigerian diaspora and its laudable role in developing the nation. The authors underscore the need for the Nigerian government to tap into the diaspora's reservoir of financial, social, and technological capital —a strategy that has helped countries that have explored the resource of their diaspora for homeland development. In this spirit, the focus of the research, which is 'development by the diaspora', aligns with the interests of Nigerian organisations in London and their transnational linkages with home (Lampert 2010). Both studies affirm the positive role of the diaspora as powerful agents of the development of the homeland. Similarly, the significance of diaspora relations as well as policy initiatives and efforts by the Nigerian government to activate and promote the diaspora's engagement in homeland issues are adequately discussed.

Some of the sterling interventions of the diaspora include its strategic role in the restoration of civil rule in Nigeria in 1999 and the promotion of bilateral relations, amongst other things (Wapmuk et al., 2014). The commendable interest of the diaspora in the homeland led to the formation of Nigeria in the Diaspora Organisation (NIDO) and several other associational bodies. It has facilitated economic advantages through trade

and investment, remittances, and returns. This constitutes a significant core of the discourse of diaspora link with homeland development, with Nigeria taking the lead position in the total remittances in sub-Saharan Africa, and coming fifth among the top ten recipient countries in the world (ibid). Still, within the Nigerian context, Benin City, being closer to the state under study, is worthy of commendation for the large concentration of property development undertaken by the diaspora (Wapmuk et al., 2014). This landmark was made possible because the Edo State diaspora are given a sense of relevance both by the indigenes and the government. Comparing Delta State and Edo State justifies the word 'commend' because both states have a long-standing history of coexistence until 1991 when Delta State became autonomous. It begs the question of why the Delta State diaspora does not commendably engage with the homeland.

However, although Wapmuk *et al.*, just like Skeldon (2008), commend the diaspora's commitment to the homeland, they do not hesitate to spell out their negative influences. Delimiting the role of the diaspora within the Nigerian context, Lampert (2010) emphasises the dynamic role of the diaspora in the home country through its associations in the United Kingdom. In this study, not much accolade isgiven to the foreign diaspora as to the local diaspora. Lampert's study reveals that the local diaspora is more responsive and prompt to the homeland's needs than their foreign counterparts. Many factors at home and abroad define the way local and foreign diaspora members relate to the homeland. These factors, with particular reference to Delta State, are examined in the latter part of this study.

An edited volume by Baaz and Akesson 2015 reaffirms the diaspora agency for homeland development and the different capitals (social, cultural, financial, political, educational, etc.) necessary for the diaspora’s smooth stay and flourishing of their investment. The study was conducted in seven African countries, and the findings concerning development were nuanced in the different study areas. While the study found grey areas and impediments that often discourage the diaspora from engaging in businesses or Foreign Direct Investments, it did not dither in celebrating the diaspora as the new developers of the homeland. Despite the wars that have ravaged countries like Somalia and DR Congo, the aid to victims and infrastructural reconstructions have been made possible by the

diaspora's efforts. Hautaniemi and Laakso's (2014) study is not very different from the Delta State situation because of the intermittent conflict phases that have bedevilled the state. Like any other war, the consequences are apparent, but the response from the diaspora found in the examples given above as documented by Hautaniemi and Laakso (2014), and Baaz and Akesson (2015) are dissimilar in proportion to the Delta State situation.

The appropriation of development by the diaspora in Delta State is essential, considering the little benefit the state has recorded from crude oil revenue. From the preceding, we have seen correlated developmental results in FDI, brain circulation, IT development, economic boost, and real estate development between the diaspora's commitment to the homeland and development in different circumstances. Where the diaspora's relationship is fractured, the natural outcomes fall short of development, especially in sending countries and states. In Delta State, where development that should reflect vibrant economic activities, adequate and effective infrastructures, and active socio-cultural life, among others are at a pitiable level, the different forms of diaspora remittances are crucial to restoring and securing an enduring developmental legacy in the state. This comes as an alternative to the development of the homeland where other notable and official sources of revenue may have fallen short in providing and ensuring development due to factors like corruption and mismanagement bedevilling the system (Oniemola and Tasie 2019).

2.4 History and Evolution of Delta State Diaspora

This section offers a discussion on the history and evolution of the Delta State Diaspora. The aim is to engage with the contemporary diaspora dynamics by tracking the historical trajectory of movement within and outside the region in general and the state in particular. It is divided into three phases: trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and post-colonialism. Each of the eras bears some differing dynamics and peculiarities, and motives drive the activities that distinguish one from the other. These dynamics underscore the patterns of migration and help in providing a clearer understanding of the perception of homeland since the historical event of the 15th century.

The history of the Delta State diaspora cannot be discussed in isolation from Nigeria's diaspora in particular and Africa's diaspora in general. Before the 15th century, movements

and trades in and out of independent kingdoms were devoid of horror despite local trade in slaves until the trans-Atlantic slave trade altered the dynamics of Africa's history. This means that no isolated diasporic movement can adequately be discussed without its historical trajectory connected to the plethora of events that transpired in pre-colonial and colonial African states.

According to Wapmuk *et al*. (2014: 303), it will be challenging to discuss the diaspora of different African countries if Africa as the land of origin and the eras of enslavement—the trans-Atlantic slave trade—are ignored. The authors categorised migration into six: Africa as the original homeland of humans, thus, the continent from which other continents were peopled; pre-modern diaspora; trading diaspora; trans-Atlantic slave trade diaspora; colonial diaspora; and the contemporary diaspora.

The human evolution from *Homo heidelbergensis* down to *Homo sapiens* more than six million years ago, as posited by scholars, affirms Africa as the first homeland of humans (Palmer 1998; Wapmuk et al. 2014; Olaoluwa 2019). Migration precedes settlement. It is through the process of migration that settlements are formed, and communities emerge into countries. Arguably, the earliest form of human migration took place in Africa and spread to other parts of the world. The second historical migrants were the Bantu-speaking people believed to have migrated south and east of Africa and further into the Indian Ocean from present-day Cameroun and Nigeria around 3000 BC. The third is constitutive of the trading diaspora, which captures merchants, traders, soldiers, and slaves to Europe, culminating in diasporic groups in different parts like Spain, Portugal, and India (Palmer 1998). These three categories preceding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, in a way, shaped Africa's history in general and Nigeria's in particular. However, none is as prominent an event in the African migratory pattern's historical narratives as the following three categories—the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and contemporary diaspora.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade signalled a historical phase in the history of Africa and Nigeria; it was a phase that up-turned the narratives of human migration in Africa generally. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was an episode that witnessed the forceful sale and expulsion of men, women, and children from the shores of Africa. The total estimated figure of those forcefully displaced by the trade is about 11 million persons from Africa to

other parts of the world (Wapmuk *et al.,* 2014). It turned out that Nigeria contributed the highest number of slaves, which was about 4million, to the pool of slaves shipped out of the content within the period (ibid). These slaves, who were vibrant and energetic, were dominated by the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Ibibio, and people from the Niger Delta region (Lloyd 1963; Alagoa 1970; Okediji & Okediji 1972;Tamuno 1972; Lynn 1981; Wapmuk et al. 2014). The outflow of Africa and Nigeria's rich human resources affected the continent gravely, thereby leaving the continent and country vulnerable to underdevelopment several centuries after (Wapmuk 2014). It speaks of the destructive effect of European contact, interaction, and influence on the black world. Thus, the infrastructural decay, corruption, mismanagement, poverty and lack, and the malfunctioning of other social institutions that have ravaged the country cannot be divorced from the event of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This situation has continued to defile modernity, technological advancement, and infrastructural development prominent in advanced countries. As a reactionary mechanism to the effect of that monumental human phenomenon of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, dissatisfied people from the global South, especially those in Africa, have continued to migrate to the West for a better life.

Going further, colonialism replicated its preceding era, except unlike the slave trade, it came with a superior strategy of subtle victimisation, discrimination, exploitation, and onward exportation of Africa's natural resources. Africa's territories were demarcated along natural and artificial boundaries andtreatiesdisadvantageousto Africa, Nigeria, and the Delta region were signed specifically by Europeans after the abolition of slavery in the 18th century. Colonialism is a process of lording it over the weak to take advantage of the colonised and push the frontiers of their (colonialists) national ideologies, otherwise known as nationalism. According to Palmer and Perkins (2007),

> Nationalism in the form of the desire to exalt a state and to add to its prestige drives men into carrying their flag, their culture, their language, and their institutions into every power-weak area on earth, and it compels governments to justify, defend, and champion the economic ventures of their nationals in foreign lands, especially weak ones (p. 162).

Palmer and Perkin's view allows us to understand that colonialism, which swept through the continent of Africa in the 19th century, reinforced in a different way the same treatment that was meted out to Africans during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Broadly, this cruel and dehumanising treatment is informed by the construction of Africans as uncivilised. This derogatory perception drove the audacity of the colonial masters to dominate, subjugate, and even govern the people (Africans) to achieve their aims.

Scholars argue that the 19th century which witnessed the invasion of British colonial power and its repatriation of Africa and Nigeria's natural resources across the Atlantic also triggered the massive movement of people from Nigeria (Bakewell 2009; Wapmuk *et al.,* 2014). This exodus is not without its consequences which are visible in different aspects and institutions in the country and are blamed as a contributory cause of contemporary migration (Bakewell, 2009).

Contemporary migration in Nigeria took centre stage after independence in 1960 when the country was greeted with an economic crisis occasioned by the collapse of crude oil prices, the reign of autocratic and oppressive regimes, and the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which triggered massive poverty and brain drain (Wapmuk et al. 2014:307-308). These identified social and economic factors were propellants and facilitators for flight in search of economic, social, and political powers in Nigerians. A similar situation and other factors like ethnic rivalry, oil, and environmental pollution exist in Delta State. The consequences inform why the state records one of the highest numbers of active unemployed youth in Nigeria (NBS in Deinne and Ajayi 2018).

2.4.1 Delta Diaspora in the Period of Atlantic Slavery

Before the historic trans-Atlantic slave trade of the 15th century, Nigeria and other African countries had practised domestic and inter-communal slavery, and this was carried out with a greater sense of liberalism than reckless brutality (Ogundele 2010; Evans, and Ryden 2018). Slaves were treated humanely and had privileges of freedom, the opportunity to own properties, and even marriage to their master's offspring (Ogundele 2010). Jaja of Opobo quickly comes to mind as one slave who rose to become a king. Crude treatment was only meted out to slaves who were considered either too slothful,

stubborn, or both. For this reason, some slaves were used as a penalty to settle disputes; the Arochukwu oracle in the Niger River Delta is a case in point (Thornton 2015).

Trade-in-slaves were relatively peaceful and somewhat mutual between the slave master and the slave merchant in the days before the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Lloyd 1963; Alagoa 1970). However, that status quo was truncated when trade-in slaves took a dehumanising form by the turn of the 15th century. The perilous change was triggered by the high demand and lucrativeness that followed the trade-in-slaves. An overwhelming measure of cruelty was unleashed on Africans and soon slavery became a lucrative venture. Trade-in slaves escalated and this led to the emergence of warlords who benefitted from the transaction. That dramatic turn of violence now associated with the slave trade opened a new vista that altered the pattern of relationship between the slave merchants and the sellers, leading to the emergence of varied narratives in the history of Africa, Nigeria, and the Delta region specifically. With the passage of time and the increase in the demand for slaves, trade-in-slaves soon became a lucrative venture, and slaves outshone other commodities (Lloyd 1963; Alagoa 1970;Tamuno 1972; Lynn 1981). The slave trade era from the 15th to the 19th century was a defining period for the continent of Africa, particularly for its transcendental dent that still resonates even in the 21st century. The residue of that era has remained inimical to the structures that make its different societies generally and the Delta region in particular.

One critical element that facilitated this historical movement is nature. Environmental features like rivers were crucial to the commercialisation of slavery in the then Delta region (Lloyd 1963; Lynn 1981). According to Thornton, any given coastal state serves as much as a transit point. Thus, the network of rivers transecting the region aided the daily in and outflow of people searching for daily bread or income and the facilitation of the slave trade. These networks of rivers aided local trade contacts with people from other regions and Europeans during and after the slave trade eras (Lloyd 1963; Nzewunwa 1983; Balogun 2000; Ogundele 2010). Scholars recall that in pre-colonial and colonial times, the people in the Delta region were predominantly fishermen, rubber tappers, farmers, and traders leveraging the resources provided by their environment (Lloyd1963; Alagoa 1970; Lynn 1981). That is to say, the environment is a critical factor in the lives of

the Delta people, especially as their trade, profession, and art were developed from their daily interaction with their immediate environment. This position was also furthered by Anderson and Peek (2002), and Derefaka and Anozie (2002), who posit that man exploits his natural resources found in the environment and utilises them to achieve the satisfaction of his aspirations. This daily interaction with the environment lays the foundation for norms, ultimately defining the patterns practicable in a society. The phenomenon of arts, trade, profession, values, norms, religion, food, and others are subsumed in the culture that defines the totality of a people's way of life. Thus, the viability and sustenance of the environment are highly significant to the identity and economic stability of the Delta region and its people.

By this littoral quality, some ethnicities were closer to reach and had contact with other people. Since the Itsekiri occupied the upper part of the river bank while Ijaw was in the lower, contacts between the Itsekiri and the Portuguese slave master and the British colonial master privileged Itsekiri as prominence was bestowed on them as commercial and political mediators between them and other ethnicities in the region. They were well settled in the hinterland of the state (Otite 1977). Such an advantage secured them from being sold as slaves and provided them with the privilege to dominate the other ethnic groups in the region and spread their territories.

By being the first to contact the Portuguese in the Delta state region, Lloyd (1963) accounts that the Itsekiri's first emigration was borne out of the population increase, which informed expansion to other places to find new settlements that extended to the Benin River. The second cause of migration is linked to the contact with the European traders whose ship anchored at the Benin River, and the third emigration cause was the flight of chiefs who rebelled against the tyrannical King Akengbuwa to the lower Benin River. Afterward, there was migration to other surrounding parts of Warri that was populated mainly by the Itsekiri community which was founded by the wealthier of Akengbuwa’s sons. The Urhobo, with an overarching dominance that shielded the Isoko, occupied the hinterland while the Ijaw peopled the riverine area of the region. Lloyd details that most of the people sold into slavery were from the Urhobo ethnic extraction and a few Ijaw indigenes were expelled from their communities following their committing a grievous

crime. These people were either given away for a sum or used as pledges for debt. Because the Itsekiri had the first advantage of coming in contact with the white men, they served as intermediaries between the slave merchants and the slave captors. So, just like the Badagary people of Lagos, they maintained solidarity with their ethnic nationalism to protect their ethnic nationals while selling other ethnicities into slavery. The trade-in-slaves flourished because access to slaves was relatively easy due to the prominent presence of banditry and inter-village wars, and the absence of a central authority (Thornton 2015).

According to Thornton, the Kingdom of Benin of which Delta State was a part, participated actively in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. However, its participation was instead categorised as relapsing. This presupposes that the kingdom stopped only to resume the sale of slaves during the civil war in 1716 (ibid). Wars became an avenue for the generation and sales of slaves, and the people who inhabited the present-day Delta State constituted the victims that made the slave number. To buttress Thornton's point, Tamuno (1972) claims that a large percentage of the pool of slaves taken to the New World from Nigeria's coast was mainly from the Delta region.

2.4.2 Colonial Delta and Its Diaspora

Understanding the trans-Atlantic slavery and the roles played by different actors, especially in the region under study, is a pre-condition for understanding other periods that categorise mobility dynamics of the citizens of Delta state. The trans-Atlantic slave trade came with brutality, coercion, abuse of fundamental human rights, oppression, and economic exploitation (Ogundele 2010). Inherent in these is a residue of psychological disorientation, leaving myriads of impressions, opinions, and ultimately character formation that define the victim's personality. There is a sense in which the condition surrounding a migrant's move is tantamount to his/her disposition to the homeland (Carling and Schewel 2018). The horror of the middle passage and the condition to which the slaves were subjected on the other side of the Atlantic have generated a mixture of interpretations and reactions to 'ethnic-cultural practice' and 'homeland' for which Ogundele's *Understanding Nigeria within the context of the Atlantic World* is seminal.

Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1833, the different states, kingdoms, and communities that makeup Africa soon had a new dispensation of engagements and interfaced with Europeans. This was another era in Africa's history that retained the hegemony of the Europeans over Africans in the form of colonialism. Slaves, the main commodity of trade, were replaced with palm oil as a principal export commodity, with Britain as the monopolist buyer (Courson 2016). The Niger Delta region had the most fertile soil for this product and became the commercial hub for this activity. Intrinsically, following the Industrial Revolution and the invention of the industrial machine, Europe became more advanced in technology, and the need for manpower was no longer essential, hence the need for fewer slaves. Machines had replaced labour, saved time, and given more yield and productivity. The need for materials for production and natural resources became the new alibis for further exploitation of the continent. However, to achieve this, the people had to remain under subjugation. Hence, the swift replacement of trans-Atlantic slavery with colonialism enabled Europeans to control their resources for onward exportation to Europe and the Americas. Indeed, it came with its subtle strategy that has continued to rid Africa, Nigeria, and even Delta State of natural and human resources.

The year 1900 birthed the territory named Nigeria with Britain as its colonial master. Before the amalgamation in 1914, Nigeria's territory had existed distinctly as the Southern and Northern Protectorates (Crowder 1978). Henry Hugh carried out a further division of the entity. He divided it into Northern, Western, and Eastern provinces. These divisions came under British colonial rule, and the system of governance was the indirect rule. Indirect rule mediated the governance of the people through indigenous rulers who were subjects vested with autocracy but were accountable to the colonial masters. The indigenous rulers became more potent in their communities and exercised force and authority on harmless and weak people. This informed the subservience and subordination that prevailed at that time.

Courson (2016) corroborates Bakewell's (2009) assertion that the period of colonialism was when the colonial masters raped Africa of her natural wealth. According to him, two objectives characterise the period —to ensure the rampant exploitation of natural resources and expand the market for British manufacturers to justify more ripping off (p.

48). This practice of exporting the country's agricultural produce caused a shortage of food and increased economic hardship (Berry 1992), thus encouraging emigration. The colonial masters only did well to construct railroads that moved raw materials to the harbour for onward transportation to the colonial state to facilitate this process. The geographical location of Delta State by the Bight of Benin automatically denied it such development. Rather, British presence and trade activities in the Niger Delta region, of which the present Delta state is a constituent, created an avenue by which many citizens of the state moved to other parts of the country and even to countries outside Africa.

2.4.3 Post-colonial Delta Diaspora—Mid-West Region, Bendel State

Bendel State, also referred to as the Mid-Western region, was a multi-ethnic state and that multicultural characteristic` makes it a perfect example for situating the more significant Nigerian ethnic plurality. This feature was an alibi for the bifurcation of the region because of cultural disparities. The emergence of the mid-western states in 1963 and the subsequent confirmation from the Western Region, though inherently politicized, was born out of the need for a common cultural identity by the region's people (Otite 1977). By implication, many ethnic groups inhabited the region. It was formally constitutive of twelve major ethnic groups that soon disintegrated following conflicting political interests (ibid). Intuitively, the cultural peculiarity that was denied or repressed eventually became the reason for further bifurcation. Thus, the oneness that saw the region's creation waned drastically as minority ethnic groups agitated for minority autonomy. The struggle for the actualisation of minority ethnic interests and cultural identity recognition in almost every part of the country was pushed for and facilitated through clusters of ethnic nationalism (Otite 1977; Attah 2013).

The region was created shortly after independence in 1960 and the country at the time was one thriving on the proceeds of crude oil discovered only a year before. This boom placed the country on a pedestal of economic buoyancy, ultimately making her an immigrant nation. The period of economic boom anchored on oil exploration was short-lived and was overtaken by myriads of economic and social vices culminating in the cyclic movement of people (De Haas 2006). Movement out of the region is thus closely connected with factors like ethnic disparities coupled with the collapse of crude oil prices; autocratic and

oppressive regime; insecurity, political instability, the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which triggered massive poverty; brain drain syndrome, etc. (De Haas 2006;Bakewell and De Haas 2007; Wapmuk *et al*. 2014). Against this backdrop, people sought freedom, security, and better economic opportunities, for which their growth, development, and comfort were guaranteed outside the state.

The downturn of events underscores the underlying reasons for a mass exodus from the country and the region specifically. According to De Haas (2006) and Bakewell and De Haas (2007), Nigerians and particularly Bendel citizens migrated en masse to the country of her colonial masters, the United Kingdom, for education purposes. Shortly after, the United States of America took centre stage as an immigrant nation for its economic advantage. In addition, other African countries like Ghana and South Africa played host to low-skilled Nigerians. As deduced from the preceding, the post-oil boom period marked a crucial period for the nation's economy as poor wage remuneration and insecurity of lives and property facilitated the migration of people from the country. The situation deteriorated gravely to give way for a wave characterised by all sorts of movements—legal and illegal—temporarymigration and permanent settlement (Marchand *et al.*, 2015). Today, diasporic enclaves have been formed from those movements in the New World.

2.4.4 Contemporary Delta State

Although the idea of migration is as old as the human race, yet, diaspora discourse only began to emerge with the event of the Jewish exilic movements and the trans-Atlantic slave trade that took place many centuries ago. Despite the relative newness of the concept, scholars have continued to explore the concept to unravel the inherent dynamics and interface it straddles. The numerous interfaces that the concept has with other phenomena like culture, politics, and economy, just to mention but a few have endeared leaders and citizens to it. For this reason, the country's governments have relentlessly engaged with their diaspora through amenable working policies. The relationship between sending countries' government and their diaspora can be said to be in different variations—high, average, or low—justas some have maintained enduring, relatively young, or reignited relationships with their diaspora. For example, diaspora discourse in Nigeria is receiving increasing attention, and this development is not unconnected to the

actions carried out by the Nigerian government to officially engage the diaspora by declaring July 25th of every year as Nigerian Diaspora Day (Wapmuk *et al.* 2014). That declaration was made in 2005 by former president Olusegun Obasanjo at a conference held by the Nigeria National Volunteer Service (NNVS) in 1999 after the reinstatement of democracy in the country. However, there has been no significant acknowledgement or/and engagement of the diaspora by successive administrations (ibid). As for the NDD, although, according to Wapmuk *et al.* (2014), the maiden edition had a low turnout, which was not surprising, the project soon grew progressively with succeeding editions. Of the 76 attendees in 2005, there were 200 people in attendance in 2006 (Marchand et al. 2015). The whole essence is to encourage engagement of the diaspora and commitment to the home country's development (ICMPD & IOM 2010; Wapmuk et al., 2014).

Contemporary Delta State has not always existed on its own; as an entity, it has undergone a series of evolution, which account for what it represents today. It was formerly part of the Western and Mid-Western regions (1963-1976), and the state was known as Bendel State from 1976 to 1991. The General Ibrahim Babangida decree on states creation in 1991 birthed Delta and Edo States from Bendel State. The present Delta State, though a continuation of the old Bendel uniqueness, allows for the creation of its distinct history, even as it is detached from the more prominent space from which it was carved. New narratives and the nuances of different prevalent issues emanate to give a material basis for new and dynamic yet peculiar knowledge (Okumagba 2011; Courson 2016; Okoh 2016; Dabiri 2018; Deinne and Ajayi 2018; Afatakpa 2019). As in other eras discussed above, diasporic movement from contemporary Delta State to other parts of the country and foreign lands has continued unfettered.

According to Osoba (1969), statistical information on migration in Nigeria is relatively scanty. It is substantially true that movement, be it within or outside, is usually from areas with a subsistence economy. The situation is not any different at the state level with specific reference to Delta State, which further justifies why the literature on migration and diaspora patterns is limited. Nevertheless, reflecting on Osoba's claim in juxtaposition with the current issues prevalent in the state, it will not be out of place to agree with the author. The state is more or less grappling with the subsistence economy following the

inactiveness of the ports and the relocation of oil-producing companies (Omeje 2010, Abumere 1979). The state's economic life became grounded, and the poverty level among the people increased (Deinne and Ajayi 2018). Invariably, the status of the state has been altered to become a sending state as against its receiving status before the dismantling and dislocation of economic activities.

2.4.5 Some Burning Issues in Contemporary Delta State Diasporic Dispersal

Over time, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism have been blamed for the underdevelopment and dispersal experienced by Delta State, instead of paying objective attention to the current underlying causes of homeland dislocation. This is because dispersal issues in contemporary Delta State seem more compelling than the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism experiences. Apparent pressing issues like militancy, lack of basic and infrastructural amenities, existing economic and social imbalance, ignorance, greed, moral decadence, ethnic rivalry and conflict, environmental exploitation and degradation, kidnapping, despondency, illiteracy, unemployment, and hooliganism, among others, constitute the fundamental problems wrestling with the state. Today, this complex web of issues has created a fertile ground for stereotyping her people as lazy, hoodlums, and illiterates in contemporary narratives, a pattern that requires unprejudiced examination while considering the myriads of realities in the state (Deinne and Ajayi 2018; Olaoluwa 2020). With the prevalence of these vices, the natural response deployed by some citizens is a flight for a better future. More often than not, these migrants relegate the homeland following the persistence of the problems. While serving as push factors, these challenges also inform the way diaspora perceive the homeland, basically in a negative light.

The preceding reveals that these problems are vestiges of the two significant periods in the history of the country in general and the state in particular, perpetuated by greedy and corrupt political leaders and selfish traditional rulers (Paki and Edoumiekumo 2011). But as Ogundele (2010) suggests, rather than casting endless blame on the two significant eras seen above, contemporary Nigerians must learn from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism and deploy positive strategies for the improvement and development of their society.

One primary source of conflict in Nigeria is land (Courson 2016).As such, of the many challenges confronting Delta State, the one associated with land acquisition appears critical in the state's growth, development, and sustainability. The bleak situation of land administration, contentions, acquisitions, and development is at the centre of contemporary diaspora dispersal and diaspora-related development in the state. Contentions for land in the state come with physical combat as well as spiritual. This dilemma can be blamed on the nominal size of the landmass of 16,842km2. As a panacea to address the socio-cultural and economic land challenge in the state, the government introduced a "FASTTRACK 90" policy to guarantee a Certificate of Ownership within 90 days. This policy, which was launched amidst pomp and high expectations in March 2016, has become ineffective. It soon raised reactions and comments that presume that the policy was a political show rather than a genuine attempt at solving the age-old problem of land ownership in the state (Dabiri 2018). Like those in the diaspora, landowners who are indisposed or unavailable to process their documents within the stipulated period soon had challenges with their landed assets. This painful experience accounts for why most diaspora members exhibit detachment, culminating in ambivalence towards the homeland.

One essential but rather ignored issue that has encouraged the flight of Delta State people is multiculturalism in the state. The state's linguistic heterogeneity further reinforces the level of poverty and underdevelopment in the region. This assertion leverages the claim by Banks and Textor (1963) that linguistically heterogeneous states are usually disadvantaged economically, unlike homogenous ones that are relatively better developed using *per capita* GNP as a standard for measurement. A study by Deinne and Ajayi (2018) shows that the resources in the state have been curses rather than a blessing. This study points out that Delta State is one of the states with the highest number of actively unemployed youths in the country, causing a high poverty rate and all its adverse consequences. This comes as a justifiable reason for people to move either within or outside the country in search of greener pastures. However, it is imperative to put on record that countries like Canada and Italy are examples of linguistically diverse but developed societies. Unlike the situations in Canada and Italy, Delta State's linguistic diversity is tantamount to the ethnic rivalry that has permeated the fabrics of interrelationships and interactions among and within ethnic groups. Even in the absence of physical aggressions and confrontations, the

atmosphere remains volatileand subtle rivalry remains present (Maiangwa and Agbiboa 2013). Although it is arguably inappropriate to compare a state to a country,there is a need to draw attention to the dynamics of the phenomenon or concept of multiculturalism in different contexts. While Banks and Textor's (1963) position is challenged in the case of Canada, it adequately describes the Delta State scenario. More validation to both authors is availed in the analysis chapter for a clearer understanding of what challenges diaspora agency of development in Delta State.

2.5 Diaspora Return and Remittance Dynamics

In this section, the study considers diaspora return and their remittance dynamics for the improvement, growth, and development of the homeland. Empirical and theoretical literature is reviewed for a more nuanced understanding. Return is a state in the migration process that is often considered the extreme or last resolve by the diaspora, especially against the backdrop of permanence (Sørensen et al. 2002). As the economy, security, education, and other social institutions improve, providing the diaspora with newer and better opportunities, the tendency to return by them becomes high, as old diaspora return to their homeland to explore the opportunities therein. In light of that, Bakewell (2008) considers migration as a rite of passage for the young in search of a better standard of living**.**

Diaspora and remittances are concepts that are not mutually exclusive as have been vigorously affirmed in empirical studies (Orozco 2005; Oluwafemi and Ayandibu 2014; Pande 2014;Ajaegbu 2017; Akesson and Baaz 2015). Absence from home automatically implies abundance, and the diaspora is conceived to be in it (abundance), from which he/she is expected to extend benevolence to the community or country of origin. This has served as a premise for authors who have argued that the relevance of the diaspora is ingrained in the remittance to the homeland (Kastner 2010). Remittances are vital ingredients that facilitate and grease the oil of friendship and maintain social ties. Okumagba (2011) argues that it informs the quality of loyalty and respect meted a migrant upon return or visit. The importance of the diaspora, as far as remittances are concerned, cannot be overemphasized as sending countries regard them as development partners, and

the failure of the diaspora to assume that position calls for sanctions in some countries (Akesson and Baaz 2015).

The concept of remittances is relatively broad, and that is why Skeldon (2008) argues that remittances to the homeland are only an aspect of the broader spectrum, which narrows the essence of the ascription of development to people outside the shore of their homeland. Diaspora remittances have facilitated both tangible and intangible development at different levels in their respective countries of origin. These gestures include Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), household remittances, remittances to support small-scale businesses, political advocacy, provision of humanitarian relief materials for war-torn countries, cultural and ideological exchange, and provision of new and improved technology, amongst others (ibid). For these benefits, many countries place a high premium on their diaspora and formulate policies for the mutual benefit of the homeland and the diaspora. In extreme cases, some countries place sanctions on diaspora who are not responsive to the homeland. This much is the case with the Ghanaian diaspora, whose failure to commit to the homeland's needs attracts strict disciplinary measures (Akesson and Baaz 2015). Such a diaspora is considered a waste and less valuable to the home country.

Drawing upon empirical research on the dynamics of return and remittances to the homeland by other scholars, Mohan and Zack-Williams (2002) argue that the initial push factors inform diaspora to return and send remittances. Their position aligns with an earlier study by Todaro (1969), who posits that migrating is a collective decision made at the family level. Usually, this collective decision places heavy expectations on the migrant because migration has been conceived as a survival strategy by most people from the global South. Their flight, according to Olaoluwa (2013), is in response to the various faltering activities (political oppression, poverty, insecurity, corruption, ethnic and religious bigotry), which automatically compel them to assume the agency of solution providers and contributors to the economic well-being of the home-based and the country in general as the GDP rises.

The role of formal and informal money transfer institutions in facilitating remittances to countries of origin of the diaspora is underscored by Mohan and Zack-Williams (2002).

The authors highlight the conditions determining both partial or full returns and remittances. Among other determining factors are economic, political, cultural, and social stability in the country of origin, as well as push, and pull experiences at both home and host countries. While the authors' position highlights the role of the diaspora with a commendable appraisal for its impact on their countries, they, however, do not consider the fact that the diaspora has been found guilty of instigating and even sustaining conflict in some African countries like Cote d' Ivoire (Hautaniemi and Laakso 2014).

Apart from the dominant discourse of domestic diaspora remittances to assist family members' upkeep, especially African families, Chand (2016) concedes that the diaspora is a resource agency by which the African continent can develop. He affirms the exponential increase in the official remittances to sub-Saharan Africa from US$3.2billion in 1995 to US$32 billion in 2013. The author identified some responsive policies that the countries of origin can leverage to strategically engage the diaspora for economic, social, and political development by encouraging dual citizenship, enfranchising the diaspora to vote during elections from destination countries, and expanding and extending banking windows to the diaspora among others. His suggestions are basically to secure a formidable, responsive, committed, and enduring diaspora for the African continent that will serve as a bridge between the continent and the West.

Aside from the foremost remittal pattern that has dominated the literature, diaspora explores other ways of giving back to their homeland. It could come as a way of performing their civic or public responsibility, sometimes regarded as charity or love of homeland (Lethlean 2003; Johnson 2007). In an ethnographic study of the Filipino diaspora by Espinosa (2016), the author brings to fore their philanthropic donations and their developmental impacts on the mother country. His study of the Philippines' LINKAPIL program reveals that the Filipino diaspora has contributed immensely to the development of the home country in diverse ways, including the provision of health care, installation of water pumps, donations to victims of natural disasters, setting up of scholarship grants, and floating of microfinance banks to provide small loans to farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs.

Diaspora philanthropy provides for a broader reach of beneficiaries to diaspora remittances to family members and friends, which often features in literature and have been accused of causing inequality and worsening poverty levels (Skeldon 2008; Davies 2012). According to Espinosa (2016), diaspora philanthropy is more than performing an economic function and serves as a form of social, cultural, and diplomatic remittances that bring about development, wealth sharing, and social justice. About 15 million people have benefited from the LINKAPIL program under the umbrella of 'Diaspora to Diaspora', and their focus resonates with education, health, and social welfare. His presumption that the diaspora's passion behind this commitment is to make up for their absence and assuage the feeling of guilt accentuates Kastner's (2010) view that remittances sustain friendship and induce loyalty from the home-based.

Though challenges faced by LINKAPIL were discussed as well as its flexibility and malleability, its effect on the diaspora was not adequately examined. This study nevertheless provides us with nuances and diversities in the discourse of diaspora remittances and the role of government in the sending country. Such interplay of government and diaspora engagement for remittances makes it all the more central and relevant to the interest of this study. However, a drawback of the article exists in the blurriness in discussing the concepts of philanthropy and remittances (cash and materials). No clear-cut difference was established between philanthropy and remittances, thus, making the study appear too ambiguous.

In a different study, the nexus between development and migration does not seem to sit well with Bakewell (2008). The author presumes that the fundamental ideas of development underpinning diaspora interventions across Africa need to be reconceptualised to fit the expectation of a mobile world. He argues that migration to a more industrialised or developed country is not a panacea for poverty, as rural-urban migration would cause urban unemployment and poverty. Therefore, the concept of development demands a reappraisal to produce a win-win-win situation for the migrant, sending, and receiving countries. Concepts such as brain drain or brain waste are a signifier of the migration of the productive set of professionals of a sending state, which suggests a non-proportionate contribution to the development of the homeland. For

Bakewell, the movement of people from their countries in search of greener pastures leaves a vacuum in human resources upon which development hangs. Inevitably, remittances cannot bring development when skills in human resources are away in a different country.Again, context comes to play as countries like China and India, who are ready examples of migrant benefactors, encourage migration (Skeldon 2008, Lampert 2010). These countries' governments deploy a symbiotic strategy to engage brain circulation and brain gain from the diaspora to advance and develop their societies.

Within the discourse of diaspora and remittance, the dominant understanding has often revolved around international diaspora as transformative agents of homeland development. Contrary to the sacred recognition ascribed to the diaspora as the saviour of the homeland and as a channel of civilization and development, Lampert (2014) contends that the foreign diaspora has not lived up to the laudable expectations in comparison with local diaspora or internal migrant remittal. His study of Nigerian-based organisations in London and their remittance response reveals that the foreign diaspora is far from being responsive as they have played a very marginal role in their transformative expectations of them. According to him, when commending the specific source of diasporic benevolence, the local diaspora in big cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt is lauded over foreign diaspora from the same state, village, or clan. The local diaspora contributes to a pool of funds to award scholarships to students, provide potable water to the community, create the foreign diaspora association and invest in the homeland.

In discussing the reason for this disparity between both groups of the same ethnic enclave, Lampert highlights the challenges confronting foreign diaspora that have limited them from participating maximally in homeland projects. Some of these challenges are the key factors of mistrust and distance, and these quell diaspora's zeal and enthusiasm to commit themselves to their homeland's needs. The reason for this disparity between these two diaspora categories is not far-fetched as local diaspora are unarguably closer to the homeland, and that allows them reachability, accessibility, and faster connection with the homeland and promptness of decision (Lampert 2010, 2014). Thus, the high-level influence demonstrated by the local diaspora queries the much-ascribed premium placed on the foreign diaspora. Given this, the study advances the need for the discourse of

remittance to pay attention to internal diasporic remittance and its dynamics for homeland development. The situation is not different for the Delta State diaspora as the local diaspora expressed more commitment to homeland needs than their foreign counterparts in London.

Even though scholars argue that remittances reinforce inequality between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, except aid or an official developmental plan is explicitly targeted at a particular scheme for eradicating poverty, irrespective of the economic status of the people (see Skeldon 2008), remittances have liberated individuals, communities, and countries at large from a level of lack and underdevelopment to a level of having and developing or developed as seen in India, Lebanon, the Philippines and China (Pande 2014, Lampert 2010). These countries have risen above their socio-economic deficiencies by leveraging their diaspora members' soft-power influences, commitments, and engagements.

On a broad scale, remittance has been established as a form of development of the homeland that guarantees hitch-free interaction, especially in the eventuality of the diaspora's return, either partial or full (Ahlburg and Brown 1998;Grootaert, 1998; Black and King 2004). Therefore, it is important that where the full return is in view, the social capital, which the diaspora returns with, be retained, such that the returnee continues to access the foreign professional network built in the host country for the benefit of the homeland.

Skeldon’s (2008) discussion on the role of East Asia diaspora return to the homeland draws attention to two fundamental points. First, pull factors that facilitate the return, and secondly, the diaspora return was part of a wider diaspora population comprising the highly skilled from the developed world. It is essential to understand the dynamics surrounding the relativity of the diaspora migrants of East Asia in order not to be caught in the web of fallacy. The narrative surrounding the state-of-the-art development in East Asia is more or less one of the ripple effects. The author intimates that the economies of East Asia sent a large number of students to developed nations, which, expectedly could have amounted to brain drain but fortunately resulted in brain gain ultimately. These students were magnanimous and patriotic enough to give remarkably to the homeland by

channelling most of their resources to the support of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the construction of infrastructures. Invariably, their gestures have accelerated development in their respective home countries. Today, the countries of Eastern Asia are transforming to become global centres for academic excellence to train highly skilled individuals. That gesture facilitated the rapid development that projected the pull factors to the homeland. Returnees thus had something to leverage upon temporary or permanent return. Inherent in this is the strong expression of patriotism for the ultimate realisation of the good of their homeland, a gesture that cannot be categorically ascribed to the Delta State diaspora.

The East Asia situation is more or less a give-and-take venture with the government actively involved in the migration of its people. There is a mutual agreement between both sides (government and migrants), which has paid off well in the region's development. Furthermore, it has produced a heterogeneous diaspora in terms of skill, education, political ideology, social capital, and cultural blend beneficial to the land of origin. Fundamentally too, the cordial and standing understanding between both parties indicates a selfless mantra that the diaspora is not a resource that can be efficiently mined or exploited, nor is the relationship parasitic (Nyberg-Sørensen *et al*. 2002).

Drawing from the literature that has explored the contemporary evolution of the Nigerian diaspora and the government's relationship with it (Wapmuk *et al.* 2014; Marchand etal. 2015), the relationship between both is portrayed as exploitative, one-sided, and parasitic. This position is borne out of the fact that unlike some other sending countries like Ghana which have portrayed a high sense of diaspora's hospitality, welfare, concerns, and recognition, the same cannot be categorically told of the Nigerian government, whose nonchalance has exacerbated the frail Nigeria diaspora relationship with the homeland.

2.6 Delta State Diaspora Ambivalence towards Homeland and Opaqueness of Identity

Diasporic discourse, which is indicative of movement or straddling of places, also implies the movement of several other intangibles, which, according to Mishra (2012: 65), are represented in their "cultural artefacts" and "native consciousness." The physical or tangible movement of people and objects embeds the intangibles and abstracts that include ideas, information, religion, sickness, sexuality, and culture. These movements allow for

the re-living of different cultures outside the diaspora's original homeland. For instance, one ethnicity that has considerably and commendably replicated both tangible and intangible elements of their culture in distant lands like North America and the Caribbean several centuries after the trans-Atlantic slave trade is the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria (Njemanze and Njemanze 2011; Ajibade 2013). To say Delta State diaspora does not have such a cultural pedigree would mean comparing a butterfly to a bird considering their opposite ethnic status. This argument counters the hypothesis of this research because the low numerical strength is too insignificant to form a formidable enough force to re-enact their culture in the Americas, thus justifying their ambivalent disposition towards their homeland. It is in contention of this position that Owen (2006) and Nandi and Platts (2020) reverse this antithesis based on their study that shows the resilience and commitment of minority ethnic groups with an unwavering cultural presence in the diaspora. Regardless of the resilience of some minority ethnic groups in maintaining their ethnic identity, literature has been primarily dominated by a withdrawal and ethnic ambivalence which is profound among ethnic minorities. This is the reality of the Delta State diaspora.

From time immemorial, people have moved from one place to the other, and when these movements take place, tangible and intangible cultural practices also move with them into a new environment that equally has its cultural practices, thus enabling cultural contact. Cultures do not stop at the contact level; they are subject to change due to their interaction with other cultures (Shome and Hedge 2002; Idang 2015). When such interaction takes place, influence occurs, or the cultures contend with one another, remaining adamant in resisting influence. However, the debate about culture is not just old and new; it is currently ongoing, with the assertion that cultures are technically dynamic and are subject to influence from other cultures. A consideration of scholarly works, both theoretical and empirical, allows this section to describe the ambivalent contentions confronting the Delta State diaspora.

In his essay titled “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, published in 1990, Stuart Hall expounds on the interaction of cultures as diaspora traverse new spaces or are relocated to a new environment. His discussion underscores how the diaspora cultural identity and

artefacts do not retain their original state in a new cultural domain but undergo a continued modification that translates into new meanings from the past. Fundamentally, diaspora cultural identity is caught between two worlds' heterogeneity; nevertheless, diaspora usually expresses a desire to uphold their original identity, as seen in Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993). Juxtaposing both narratives, the instability of cultural identity is subject to gain, loss, and a possible design of a hybrid or entirely new identity.

Gilroy's use of "double consciousness" foregrounds the warring ideals of home and host cultures that ultimately lay the foundation for a feeling of ambivalence. One may further make a case or, better still, justify the feeling of ambivalence when the trajectory of treatments that the slaves were subjected to is tracked. According to Ogundele (2010), one significant effect, which explains ambivalence, is the de-Africanisation of many local cultural values and the inculcation of Western values through teachings in churches and schools. With that in view, the passage of time gradually wipes the memory and culture of the homeland, a situation which is apparent in the narrative of Olaudah Equiano, one of the slaves taken to the Americas (Okpewho 2009). The consequence still resonates in contemporary times with the narrative that indigenous African/Nigerian values, cultures, knowledge, and practices are archaic, fetish, unorthodox and backward.

In their article, Bivan *et al.* (2018) fascinatingly explain cultural interaction. According to them, when people of different cultures interact, there will be changes and modifications in the cultures involved, thereby producing a new brand of the two that is neither the one nor the other. Bivan *et al.* (2018) fail to acknowledge that as cultures interact to produce a cultural mix or blend, there is equally the retention of some aspects of the affected cultures. There are mutually transposed elements that feature in the new version. Bivan *et al.*(2018) track the trajectory of ambivalence back to three periods, namely the slave trade era, colonialism, and post-colonialism. For them, these periods have produced victim diaspora as well as the contemporary diaspora. Even though victim diaspora is tied to the first two periods while contemporary belongs to the last age, both exhibit ambivalence and cultural hybridity consequent upon the new cultural version of the interface of homeland and host cultures. The authors assert from their textual analysis that the state of disillusionment and detachment that causes the compromise of homeland is informed by

varied experiences like racial discrimination, rejection and hostility, and unwelcoming attitudes of the home-based. They identify the inferiority attitude of the colonised, whereby their imitation of the colonizers is key in furthering the cultural hybridity of the diaspora. The struggle to be like another person betrays the copier's originality, thereby eroding the homeland's identity.

Diaspora is caught between the culture they lost and the one they cannot imbibe, consequently creating a clash of identity, which Shija in Bivan *et al.* (2018) views as ambivalence informed: desiring one thing as well as its opposite. The authors deployed the term "mother country" to mean host country while "motherland" is the country of origin. This study argues that the deployment of the term "mother country" is an attempt to further blur the identity of the diaspora about the homeland. It reiterates the diaspora ties with the country of destination in a manner that gears up their responsiveness to the host country. The "mother" term invokes the diasporic experience of forceful expulsion and subtle cajoling to see the destination country as home also.

However, the mothering reference for both locations reminds the diaspora that the destination country is not home; there is a home country where the diaspora still holds tightly to his/her values. In discussing the concept of ambivalence, the authors engage four theoretical frameworks, which include the Blame theory, Post-Colonial theory, Melting pot metaphor, and the Biblical metaphor. The Biblical metaphor stipulating one body with many parts was emphasised in the decolonisation of ambivalence. It promotes oneness using a multicultural lens (Ndhlovu 2016). However, if essential questions surrounding the living conditions at home are improved upon, it can reverse the feeling of ambivalence considerably to the barest minimum (Bivan *et al*. 2018). Questions like where and what the diaspora returns to would be inconsequential because the conducive condition in the homeland can ultimately redefine their perception of home in a positive light for a temporary or permanent return. In response to these daunting questions, the East Asian governments provide an enabling environment to encourage and remind the diaspora of the homeland (Skeldon 2008).

Individualism is closely connected to disunity. The strict living conditions in the global north force migrants into self-centeredness. The study by Igiede (2013) highlights

individual ethnocentric attributes in renegotiating their identity in the diaspora. According to the author, the situation has resulted in friction, thereby truncating diaspora cohesion and unity within the diaspora enclave in host countries. Such unbridled ethnic and religious fragmentations are identified as one reason Nigerians have suffered during most of their tenure in the United States. This much is argued by Robinsons (2002) that diaspora cohesion and unity would create support for the real or imagined home. By implication, the togetherness of the diaspora invokes a sense of responsibility to the homeland. The effect gives the diaspora some sense of physiological (social, financial, psychological, and emotional) stability. Such support facilitates and accelerates the diaspora's actualization of his/her goal, promising responsiveness to the home-based.

The above allows us to understand that the frictional condition of living amongst the diaspora is central to the discourse of ambivalence, which they show to the homeland. The metaphoric and literal social distance that the diaspora is challenged with drives them into isolation and individualism. Igiede's adoption and engagement of social identity theory accentuates the demerits of divisions bedevilling the diaspora. The author argues that the way people see themselves as members of a particular category creates a binary of 'we' versus 'them' (Moore 1994). They are influenced by the beliefs, practices, norms, rules, and regulations typical of that category. Much of these are internalized by the diaspora from the host country. Therefore, the initial ethnocentrism for which the diaspora is identified is distorted (Igiede 2013). The superior hegemony, laws, and practices of the host land become a definer of the diaspora's characteristics.

Furthermore, Igiede's inclusion of the second-generation diaspora in his discourse exacerbates the inadequacies associated with their perceived inferior identity and ambivalence. The first-generation immigrants were acknowledged to have attempted to transmit their religious and cultural practices to their offspring; nevertheless, make an insignificant impact due to the prevailing social norms and practices their wards are exposed to in the destination country. By being their country of birth and one they are familiar with, the second-generation diaspora tends to express more connection to it than the country where their parents hail from, which is their country of origin (Oh 2002; Igiede 2013; Ullah 2018). For all its profoundness, the study pays little attention to the

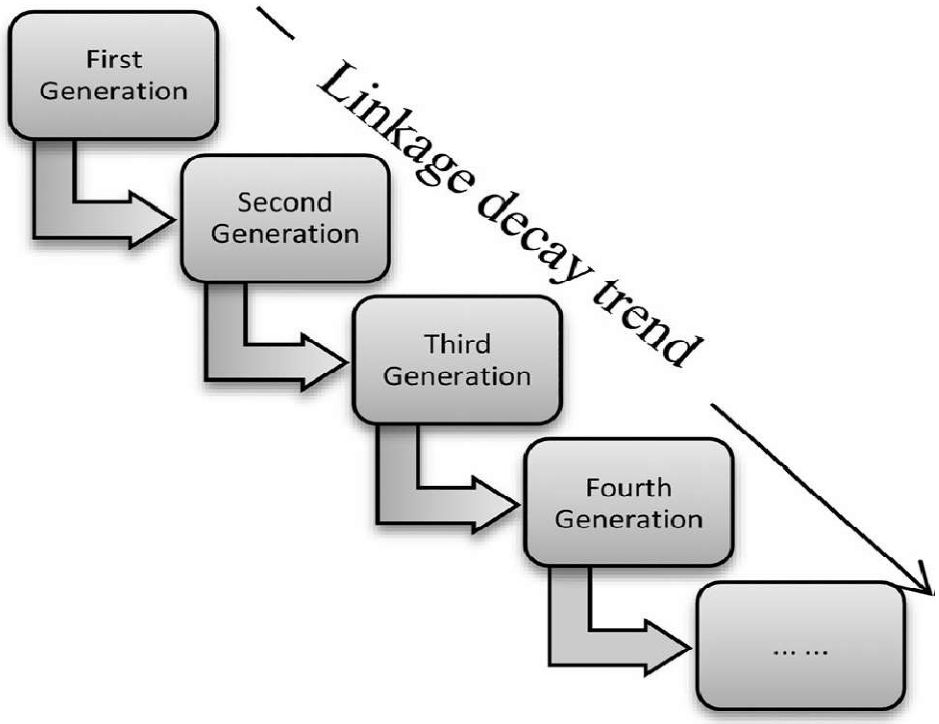
role of the host country in renegotiating the diaspora identity, a critical element in unpacking the diaspora-homeland relationship.

The concept of identity appears to be the subject of a social construct. It has played an essential role in the contemporary discourse of migration, its role in receiving countries, and the consequent effects on the sending country. Identity is constructed following age-long patterned norms, rules, culture, and traditions practised by the people within a given territorial jurisdiction. This suggests that identity is not an innate thing, nor is it a natural endowment but one borne out of patterned social constructs. Its centeredness gives prominence to the study of migration because the identity, which the migrant identifies within the host country, is crucial to understanding their homeland's commitment. More often than not, migrants are challenged with a dilemma of multiple identities, the bedrock of ethnic ambivalence.

Bangladeshi diaspora in Canada is more or less caught in the web of ethnic ambivalence despite its reputation for keeping family ties, as reported by Ullah (2018). The author highlights that the connection between the Bangladeshi diaspora and the homeland gets weaker as they are stabilized and integrated into the host community. The relationship between the diaspora and the origin country also wanes as generations born in the host country show a stronger tie to the host country in comparison to their country of origin. According to the author, if indices like nationalities of both parents, living country, and, possibly having the child in another country, are considered, ascertaining the specificity of the second or third generation's identity becomes compounded. Contact and interaction of approximately three cultures leave the child in a somewhat confused state of trying to grapple with and choose an identity, which invariably would be of better benefit to him/her. The hegemony of the host country usually reduces the diaspora to victims of discrimination, and this they try to manage in the best possible way. An attempt to compensate for the discrimination they often suffer makes Bangladeshis live lavishly beyond their means.

Still, to Ullah (2018), the study draws attention to a tone of craving for high social networks and acceptance, and this rubs off on their commitment to the homeland as their financial capacity gravely declines. Consequently, it is the incapability to respond to the

homeland's need in terms of remittances for its development, except for domestic purposes to family members and friends that fuels their ambivalence. The study also reveals resentment and discontentment arising from the prevalent barriers and limitations in establishing a business to dissuade emigration as factors contributing to the ambivalent nature of the diaspora. It is this dissatisfaction with the homeland that informs the resolution to look for a better life abroad. This reason resonates with Olaoluwa's *Crashed Dreams in the Sahara: African Cosmopolitanism in Across the Desert,* published in2013. Put differently, the experiences before migration are crucial in understanding the ambivalence often exhibited by the diaspora.



Representation of generational hierarchy. Adapted from Ullah (2018)

The fading away of the homeland arguably depicts that from the fourth generation into the fifth generation, the homeland would have assumed an elusive category, making time a critical variable in understanding ambivalence and, ultimately, homeland (Oh 2012).

Invariably, the bond would gradually slacken as generations emerge and raise questions of identity on the one hand and development by diaspora following the disappearing of the

homeland on the other. The variation in the connection between the diaspora and the homeland makes categorisation of the diaspora important in the discourse of the diaspora-homeland relationship. The position of Oh (2012) and Ullah (2018) is too generic and absolute to presume that as generations emerge in the diaspora, the original homeland disappears. Contrary to that generalisation is the unrelenting commitment of the Jews and Sikhs to their homeland several generations after their dispersal as captured in Cohen (2008). Regardless of Cohen's contention, the Delta State diaspora studied in this research finds semblance with the indicators underlying the Bangladeshi diaspora as reported by Ullah (2018).

In addition to the discourse on ethnic ambivalence, Oh's (2012) ethnographic analysis provides a more robust perspective of the identity crisis that informs the feeling of ambivalence among the Korean-Japanese residing in Japan, the two Koreas, and a third country. It highlights the evolutionary explanation of the confusion often experienced by the Korean diaspora to (re)construct their identity. Three stages of evolution of the Korean-Japanese diaspora were identified as defining the identity of the diaspora: they are passive, post-diaspora, and, transnational diaspora. The three stages represent three different periods: the colonial, the cold war, and the post-cold war era, respectively. These periods were further characterised by involuntary expatriation to Japan, the decision to remain in Japan, and lastly, migration to a third country other than the two Koreas and Japan.

The historical trajectories of the Koreans precipitated the formation of the Mindan and Soren for South Korean-Japanese and North Korean-Japanese, respectively, to sustain their tie with the homeland. This instead produced shades of decisions for the diaspora destination, which resulted in transnational diaspora for some. A majority of the first-generation emigrants remained in Japan; some took to a very different country, leaving only an insignificant figure to return to their ethnic Korea. Interestingly but ironically, the proportion that maintains ties with the homeland, especially first-generation migrants, is laced with some distancing from the homeland. The memory of the homeland blurs further as the diaspora bifurcates into generations (Ullah 2018). Therefore, a majority of them are mainstreaming into Japanese society, imbibing their culture and accepting its citizenship.

Identity ambivalence is also accentuated as migrants move to a third country, often informed by motivation and environmental structures. The study provides an evolutionary understanding of identity crisis, which keeps the diaspora in a state of limbo.

As long as humans inhabit the earth, the question of migration would continue to feature in human discourses, with scholars and non-scholars interrogating the peculiar narratives that give different meanings to the thematic items prevalent in the concept. Oh's (2012) study of the Korean-Japanese extends the discourse on ethnic identity against most scholarly works that present diaspora ambivalence in the light of spontaneity. It also resonates with the melting pot metaphor of Bivan *et al.* (2018), where cultures that define identities interact, influence, and blend to produce a hybrid version or a very new culture. By implication, therefore, the gradual disappearance of cultures following integration into a new society is identified as a factor responsible for the ethnic ambivalence of the diaspora.

Ndhlovu's (2016) work challenges the frameworks of multiculturalism, which came to the fore around the 1960s to 2000, and super-diversity initiated by Vertovec in the unpacking of the diasporic identity. The principles of multiculturalism, which are expected to promote equality, ethnic and cultural diversity, and correct the hegemony of western cultures and racial discrimination, were faulted based on their inability to articulate the cultural identity of the diaspora. In a way, multiculturalism has become an avenue for exclusivism of people from the Global South (Ndhlovu 2016). The author raises five strands of criticism from these two issues: firstly, the hegemony of Western ideology has reduced and demeaned the values of the minorities, thereby reinforcing neoliberalism; secondly, it embraces the divide-and-rule strategy; thirdly, it carries the view of an unchanging socially enclosed entity; fourthly, the emphasis on culture has led to the ignorance of other important aspects such as the non-cultural aspirations of people; and finally, it has reinforced the wheel of exclusion rather than the inclusion of cultural differences. Concisely, multiculturalism is propaganda for make-believe that is devoid of the sincerity of purpose for which the concept was intended.

Like multiculturalism, super-diversity is a framework that considers concepts such as religion, culture, technology, and language to discuss the interrelationship amongst

different peoples of the world. Though more contemporary in its approach, its conceptualisation needs to be more standardised and expanded to make up the grail areas of multiculturalism. These expansions were viewed under two developmental schemes: the dynamics of migration patterns and the technological exposure and access of the individual. Ndhlovu (2016) argues that the evolution of the digitalized contemporary world calls for revisiting the parameters used in analysing migration and the cultural identity of the diaspora.

To augment these theoretical frameworks, the pluralisation of theoretical orientations is recommended. The essence is to realise the nuances that define how diaspora identify themselves and how the global community equally identifies them. The author underscores the Southern theory that foregrounds the discussion of decolonial epistemology (Comaroff and Comaroff 2011). According to him, decoloniality has four strands: coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge, coloniality of being, and coloniality of nature. These strands allow us to push the frontiers of Afrocentric discourse of identity because they address the peculiarities of African States. The criticism by Ndhlovu highlights the contentions around identity construction that plunge the diaspora into a state of dilemma. Though there is no clear distinction in the categorisation of diaspora within the discourse of identity, the 'western-centric dominance implied in the work is contentious. Since the experiences underlying the movement from the home of the historic and contemporary diasporas are different, their interpretation of identity would be influenced by choice and other social realities. Invariably, the uncertainty of the diaspora's identity is akin to the discourse of ambivalence, which is prevalent amongst most Delta State diaspora.

The empirical study conducted by Surovana (2018) affirms that members of a minority ethnic group are often reluctant to identify themselves as members of their kin states and regard their state or country as distant because of its non-connection. However, this is not to emphatically say that language heterogeneity is the leading variable for ambivalence; a country with one language is not assured of cultural unity and homeland development. There could be other crucial variables informing either ambivalence or the pride of diasporic people, which are identified in the data presentation and analysis chapter.

Ethnic ambivalence has not only been captured in empirical studies but has also been reflected in creative and artistic work. Taking the works of two Afro-Hispanic writers, Ramon Diaz Sanchez (*Cumboto*)and Adalberto Ortiz (*Juyungo*),into consideration, Cyrus (2002) sheds light on the cultural and racial ambivalence demonstrated by the authors. The feeling of living on the fringe or having a hyphenated identity pushes the authors for an 'either' of the two options. He argues that white-dominated media seek to debase black culture, which creates timidity, inferiority, subjection, and subjugation, thereby encouraging racism which leaves authors in a dilemma of ethnic ambivalence. The concept of '*mestizaje*' means Eurocentric dominance of literary criticism which aims to represent foreign creative standards and further compounds the ambivalence as displayed in the texts. His argument underscores the western hegemony and politics that exist in publishing scholarly works in high-impact journals or by top-notch publishing houses because of the reputation they hold at qualifying the scholarship ability of the writer and how that position elicits fulfilment.

The pessimism of relegating knowledge originating from Africa to the background because of the intention to retain the Western superiority as the originator of knowledge causes Black authors to settle for less recognized publishing houses, which may not come with the much-desired accolade and appreciation that strikes a chord of encouragement for more strides. Such racial condition expounds the reason for the profound ambivalence often exhibited by the authors. Cyrus (2002) explains that the rampage between the two-personality embodied in one body walking in dissonance could only be united physically and psychologically by synthesising the social and human differences. The article presents a situation that calls for the prioritisation of needs. There is a conflict of interests as authors are caught between the decision of achieving a career that appeals to the conditions of white cultural hegemony and the dogmatic maintenance and pride of their ethnic uniqueness. Such conflicting situations give a clue into a possible reason for the ambivalence of the Delta State diaspora when extended to other areas of human endeavours and engagements.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Concepts play a vital role in scholarship. They are coined not just for aesthetic reasons but also for the body of theories to unpack them within academic discourse. They are usually engaged to drive the course of an idea, and when that is done, to facilitate and accelerate meaning (Ndhlovu 2016). It, therefore, implies that concepts gain meaning when they are deployed and engaged as instruments to explain an idea. The meaning could be either positive or negative, depending on the analysis and intent of the user or writer.

On the other hand, a framework allows the formation of an underlying structure to which a problem can relate. Therefore, a conceptual framework foregrounds the diagnosis of concepts within a structure that describes an entity or a process. It gives a more precise understanding and position of the subject under discussion. Thus, situating this study within the conceptual framework of 'ethnic ambivalence' provides more valuable insights into the interrogation and provides a more nuanced understanding of how the Delta State diaspora perceive their ethnic identity and construction of homeland for development.

Following the historical trajectory of migration in the state and the presence of multiculturalism, it is relieving, rather than surprising, to know that Deltans (as the people from Delta State are commonly referred to) are labelled ‘disunited or/and detached’ from the homeland (especially the ethnic groups that make up the population of this study) by even native Deltans at home and in the diaspora. Much of this reflects in their everyday narratives and interaction with one another and others within and outside the state. Indeed, if concepts such as multiculturalism, minority ethnic status, cultural hybridity, multiple identities, language endangerment, and interethnic marriage (Tse 2000; Ndhlovu 2016; Bivan *et al*. 2018; Remennick 2018; Surovana 2018) are considered, then many Deltans,irrespective of location, demonstrate the aforementioned states of disunity and detachment. The above-listed concepts resonate with ethnic ambivalence in profound ways that produce distinctions in narratives and findings, especially in contextualized studies. In this section, this study reflects on the Delta State diaspora and the ramifications of ethnic ambivalence for the homeland's development within the conceptual framework of 'ethnic ambivalence'. Its cultural peculiarity informs the essence of a brief discussion of multiculturalism in particular. The research's intention precisely is not to determine the

diaspora's degree of ethnic ambivalence but to draw attention, particularly to its ramifications with ephemeral integration of the delineated themes listed above), specifically in the interpretation of the development of the homeland.

The concept of multiculturalism has particularly interested scholars since the 1950s (Ndhlovu 2016). The concept, which depicts the existence and presence of minority ethnic groups sharing space with majority ethnic groups, has received widespread adoption by western liberal societies to accommodate minority ethnic groups who usually are constitutive of immigrants (ibid). Nonetheless, minority ethnic groups still experience marginalisation due to the hegemonic dominance of major ethnic groups. To help us understand this claim, the ethnic rivalry between the Urhobo and Itsekiri, and Urhobo and Isoko in this study in particular, quickly comes to mind. The agitation informs this rivalry to challenge the perceived dominance that the Urhobo ethnic group strives to assert over the Itsekiri and Isoko. Arguably, this instance validates Kymlicka's (2012) position that the marginalisation of minorities has been the foundational cause of many human-rights revolutions and activism across the world. This indicates that ethnic hegemony exhibited by ethnic majors defies the essence of multiculturalism which is to challenge cultural and racial inequality while promoting cultural equality and tolerance of its differences (Ndhlovu 2016). The prominence of the concept became necessary to facilitate the co-existence of different ethnic groups within a given geographical space. However, racial persistence, immigrant minorities, and stigmatisation have limited the kernel of the concept, thereby producing complex controversies as criticized by scholars (Turner and Khondker 2010; Vertovec 2010; Kymlicka 2012; Ndhlovu 2016). Despite his stimulating engagement, Ndhlovu (2016) falls short of acknowledging the risk of cultural endangerment of minority ethnics like those studied in this research.

Appropriating this concept for this study is germane. As with academic studies, issues around crisis/conflict, cultural diversity, comedy, natural resources, environmental issues, and social problems have been intensely discussed and contextualised within the purview of Delta State (Courson 2016; Deinne and Ajayi 2018; Olaoluwa 2020). However, the strand of multiculturalism entrenched in the state has not received adequate attention, particularly within the discourse of diaspora. Delta State is one with multiple ethnicities as

identified in the first chapter, and it is rated a minority group within the larger Nigeria society (Otite 1977; Elugbe 2003). Although the essence of multiculturalism is to encourage the coexistence of diverse cultures within the same space, major ethnic groups have continued to overshadow minority groups (Ndhlovu 2016). The discourse particularly finds its bearing within the context of migration (ibid). This is so because the migrant is caught in between maintaining his/her heritage or culture with that of the dominant culture that characterises the host society.

By movement and the insignificant number of native speakers of migrants' languages, the dominant culture takes precedence above others. That narrative, again, can be faulted when contexts are brought to the fore. Migration or not, minority discourse is more complicated within the Delta State context. Despite its categorisation as one of the states with minority ethnic groups, the politics of ethnic sentiments further divide the people in such a manner that some ethnic groups are categorised as a minority within a minority ethnic state. For example, the Itsekiri group is often considered a minority due to its low numerical strength compared to other ethnic groups in the state. Ironically, such derogatory remark about the Itsekiri ethnic group has not deterred them from consciously representing their culture within every space they find themselves. The report by Elugbe, edited by Fardon and Furniss (2003), confirms why the Itsekiri language and culture will endure the test of time, following different maintaining and sustaining strategies and initiatives aimed at preserving the language and culture.

Most important for this study is the umbrella concept of' ethnic ambivalence'. Scholars consider ambivalence a state of having a divided will, being torn between conflicting but related attitudinal interests (Frankfurt 2002; Poltera 2010; Bean and Martinez 2014). In this light, the apparent deduction would mean that these conflicting interests can possess the same force for which the individual is trapped. The individual decisive prowess is rattled only to be resolved upon consideration of several other variables expected to serve their interest. This underscores the place of coherence in human decision-making. Some victims of this conflict decisively identify with one, leaving the other to suffer, while some others identify with the most preferred but express self-control over the other, yet some others dissociate from both interests (Poltera 2010). The complexities of choice conflict

inform the degree to which the individual is given. As a result, ambivalence could be mild, acute, or chronic (ibid), depending on the severity of the available options. It is imperative to know that whatever the degree of ambivalence within the context of ethnic discourse, an individual's disposition to circumstances is tantamount to defining or threatening their original identity.

Ethnic ambivalence, which is the concern of this study, describes a feeling of disconnection from one's original ethnic culture, having moved from the homeland into a new society with the dominant culture. Tse (2000) describes it as a state where ethnic minority individuals exercise near-to-nothing interest in their ethnic culture, with some individuals actively rejecting ethnic identification. Studies have demonstrated that people from language minority groups have a high tendency for ambivalence and even culture evasion (Bamgbose 1994; Tse 2000;Cyrus, 2002; Igiede, 2013;Bivan *et al*., 2018; Surovana 2018; Ullah, 2018). The dominant argument is that ethnic minorities indulge in associating and identifying with the dominant group because of the superior pedigree against the inferior conception they nurse about their own ethnic culture. Given the adequacies of the dominant language, a simple explanation for this dichotomy is the monotonous responsibilities that privilege it as a country's official language and one that earns its speakers class and status. There is a sense in which such a situation is a determining variable that lays the foundation for possible survival in the host country.

Within the framework of ethnic ambivalence, the generic actions by minority groups often include conformity to the ideals and norms of the dominant group. Acquiring the dominant language forms an integral part of the discourse of ethnic ambivalence. As said earlier, apart from just being the dominant language, it is mainly needed to negotiate daily activities and socialisation as well as class 'hierarchisation', bringing to the fore the place of individualism (Tse 2000). Such a dilemma influences an individual's decision which more often than not is almost sure that he/she would align with the language of possibilities (i.e. dominant language) (Mushonga and Dzingirai 2020). With that, the precedence for ethnic ambivalence is automatically and subconsciously activated.

Empirical studies conducted by scholars (see Kim 1981, Atkinson 1983, Phinney 1990) describe ethnic ambivalence as a period of actively rebuffing one's ethnic culture by

preferencing and practising the characteristics of the dominant culture. These scholars proposed models that define the stages of the ambivalence of minority individuals. Although the models are not uniform, they bear similar features that inform the shift from a period of preference for the dominant culture to a stage of awakening of one's ethnic minority status, onto a period of identity and cultural identification, and finally, ending in a time of ethnic identity conflict resolution and incorporation of ethnic identity into one's ultimate ethnic identity (Tse 2000 p. 186). It must be noted, in all fairness, that there is no absoluteness in any given study. Thus, there are ethnic minorities who have strong ties with their ethnic culture and, as such, do not experience ethnic ambivalence, which reinforces the dynamics of the term (Owen 2006; Nandi and Platts 2020). Ironically, the Itsekiri of Delta State quickly comes to mind in this regard as a people whose weak numerical strength has defied pressures from other, significant ethnic groups to profoundly establish themselves in the state.

All these discourses of minority groups and multiculturalism in one way or the other promote the feeling of ethnic and identity detachment. There is a sense in which this reinforces the foremost understanding of diaspora ethnic ambivalence. The underlying assumption that underscores the binary in categorising language into multilingual or monolingual is that multilingualism tends to division while monolingualism possesses the features of unity (Bambgose1994). This position is prominent and, at the same time, contestable within the Delta State context. The presence of multilingualism in the state has been blamed for its lack of cooperation, but one may ask why unity has equally been elusive amongst the Urhobo (monolingual) who constitute a significant group in the state. It then would constitute an academic fallacy to generalise the applicability of the discourse.

With the prominent representation of Deltans in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as Thornton details, one would have expected the diaspora members to have re-enacted their cultures in the New World, but the tenets (as discussed above) associated with minority ethnic groups could not sustain cultural practices in the Americas. This affirms the veracity of the notion that the Delta scenario further reiterates the phenomenon of ethnic ambivalence and a disconnection from their homeland. As detailed in the analysis chapter, the nuances of

this ambivalence span social relations, economic, cyberspace, and community organization factors, among others. From non-identification with the state to name conversion, refraining from speaking the language, and dissocialising from a fellow Delta citizen, members of the Delta State diaspora are trapped in the matrix of ethnic minorities, multiculturalism, and ethnic ambivalence. Just like the ethnic heterogeneity of Nigeria allows the questioning of the 'Nigerianess" of its diaspora, according to Wapmuk *et al*. (2014) and Marchand (2015), so is the Delta State diaspora caught in the same dilemma.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the method through which the study was carried out and the relevant participants for the study. The home-based, together with the local and foreign diaspora, constitute the data population of this study. To achieve a detailed study devoid of generalisation and clumsiness, data was collected on a location basis. Because the study covers four different ethnic groups living in three locations, data were categorised to ascertain the peculiarities that define the diaspora's ethnic ambivalence. The data collected from the field correlate with the study's objectives, answer the research questions, justify the study, and validate the theoretical framework.

3.1 Research Design

In collecting the necessary data for the research, keeping in view the research questions, this study adopts a qualitative approach, which entails interviews, discussions, and a multi-sited ethnographic research design. Qualitative research underscores the nuances, contexts, multidimensionality, and complexity, which resonate with the analysis and explanation of the subject under interrogation (Mason 2002). The need for adopting a qualitative research design is further justified because of its ingrained features that help the researcher see things through the lens of the interviewee. It furnishes the researcher with the privilege to understand the driving force(s) such as feelings, values, and perceptions that influence behaviour and gives a better understanding of the formation of a cultural phenomenon and its function, human condition, and social philosophy, which form the crux of this study (ibid). Engaging different forms of interviews, which also are the primary source of data collection, experiences, whether direct or indirect as they relate to the phenomenon interrogated, further enriches the study.

Multi-sited ethnography requires multiple locations for data collection and entails physical observation, i.e.; the researcher has to be present in person. Additionally, this type of

ethnography transcends the conventional, rigid single-sited method, which is closed up to empirical changes across boundaries (social, political, economic, and cultural) because it allows the researcher to explore the dynamics amongst variables in the identified locations, and can draw categorical statements about a particular phenomenon in a particular context (Marcus 1995). It best suits this study because spatial mobility resonates with the term. Secondary sources include journal articles, newspapers, textbooks, archival materials, news reports, government publications, magazines, and internet collections to supplement and consolidate the findings from the primary source.

3.2 Study Area

Although the study is about the Delta State diaspora, it was carried out in three different locations: Delta State, Lagos State, and London. While Delta State represents the homeland, Lagos State covers the local diaspora and London plays host to the foreign diaspora. Delta State is located in the south-south region of Nigeria and is referred to as a miniature Nigeria' because of its ethnic plurality (Otitie 1977). The state houses five ethnic groups, namely, Ijaw, Anioma, Isoko, Itsekiri, and Urhobo. The Anioma represent what is today regarded as 'Delta Igbo' because they strike some cultural similarities, especially in the spoken language, with the Igbo across the country's River Niger. Isoko and Urhobo have some linguistic semblance and other cultural practices connected to Benin; Itsekiri is a strand of the Yoruba language but draws heavily from the Bini culture, and Ijaw has an entirely different language.

There are 25 local government areas with three senatorial districts in the state. These study groups, which exempt the ‘Delta Igbo’, occupy Delta Central and Delta South senatorial districts. Delta State is bordered by Anambra, Edo, Bayelsa States, and the Bight of Benin. The ethnic groups under study occupy 16 local government areas of the states, namely Ethiope East, Okpe, Sapele, Udu, Ethiope West, Warri South, Ughelli North, Ughelli South, Bomadi, Burutu, Patani, Uvwie, Isoko North, Isoko South, Warri North, and Warri South-West**.** The Anioma peopleoccupy Delta North senatorial district. Just like the Anioma, the Urhobo is under one senatorial district, which is the Delta Central, while Ijaw, Isoko, and Itsekiri make up the Delta South senatorial district.

Lagos State is situated in the South West region of Nigeria and is bordered by Ogun State, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Benin Republic. It is home to Nigeria's most vibrant economy because of its enduring economic legacies, thereby making it a destination location for people within and outside Nigeria (Oshoand Adishi 2019). The choice of London as a representative location for foreign diaspora is heavily influenced by Britain's colonial history with Nigeria and an earlier historical event where the Delta State region participated actively in the trans-Atlantic slave trade that took slaves from Africa to the West. These encounters, according to Idang (2015), account for inevitable cultural diffusion such that even after the abolition of the slave trade and colonialism, there is still a profound socio-cultural affinity with the United Kingdom that makes it home to Nigerians at large and Delta State in particular.

3.3 Study Population

The study population comprises indigenes of the Ijaw, Urhobo, Isoko, and Itsekiri ethnic groups who are in the diaspora and home-based. As stated earlier, the Anioma are excluded from this study because, just like their Edo and Eastern proxies, they have a diaspora community that interfaces with the homeland, and that excuses them from this interrogation. Since the indigenes of these two states have a culture of return and remittances to the homeland, it explains why Anioma, a frontier people of Delta State, also share that ideology, practice, and culture.

The study's populations are spread in almost all parts of Nigeria though in varying proportions. In other words, the number of the said population is more significant in the local study area in comparison with what you find in the Northern part of Nigeria and some other states. The reason is not farfetched owing to the socioeconomic advantage Lagos State has over other states in the country (Osho and Adishi 2019). They are also spread across the shores of the country. As has been discussed earlier, the United Kingdom comes off as home away from home for migrants from Delta State, so many migrants from the state choose the United Kingdom as the destination country. The two diasporas are adopted to have comprehensive information about the internal and external dynamics of the Delta State diaspora.

3.4 Sampling

For this research, In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were conducted with the local and foreign diaspora in Lagos State and London respectively. In addition, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with discussants in Delta State while Key Informant Interviews (KII) with custodians and scholars of the cultures took place in different parts of Delta State. Key Informants who are 'custodians' or 'cultural scholars' furnished the researcher with a cultural and scholarly explanation of the dilemma. Interviewees at both locations of the diaspora were educated, with an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) being the leastqualification among respondents. These participants were teachers, corporate workers, and the self-employed.

The decision to engage FGDs was because getting discussants in the Delta State homeland was a much easier task compared to other locations, and also, it allowed discussants to reflect collectively to facilitate unhindered conversations. This collective participation helped discussants to draw support from one another they were relaxed and encouraged to express deeper concerns leading to the production of meanings regarding the diaspora, homeland, and development. Many of the discussants were bachelor's degree holders, with only a few having an Ordinary National Diploma. This is an indication that the discussants were literate enough to understand the phenomenon and respond to questions accordingly. The age range was 20-60 years for interviewees and discussants while informants fell within the 45-70 years age bracket. There was no gender bias in selecting interviewees; neither was marital status a defining factor. This neutrality allowed the study the opportunity to explore the nuances that define interviewees' behaviour.

3.4.1 Sample Size

For each of the twodiaspora locations,there was a total of 20 IDIs conducted with 5 members of each of the four ethnic groups selected for the study. For a more robust understanding of the phenomenon interrogated in this study, four FGDs (one per ethnic group) took place in Warri, Delta State, and 8 discussants made up each FGD. Four KIIs with informants from each of the ethnic groups held in different parts of the state gave deeper insight into the preoccupation of this study.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The heterogeneity of the study population calls for a careful selection of participants to ensure that the infinitely large population, which can be challenging to manage, is bridled. Difficulty in tracking transnational and local diaspora automatically leaves the researcher with the option of the snowball technique in data gathering. Thus, the study adopted a combination of purposive and snowball techniques. The purposive technique allows the researcher to make a deliberate choice based on her professional judgement in the selection of interviewees as considered relevant to the study. The Snowball technique, on the other hand, explores a contact'snetwork, where an interviewee refers the researcher to a potential interviewee, and the list continues until the researcher is satisfied or data collection is saturated.

Even though diaspora members form and belong to associations in the host countries, Lampert (2010) affirms that members hardly turn up for meetings. This thus justifies the adoption of the snowball technique for this study. Although the purposive technique represents only a small size of the population, it is expected to represent the entire spectrum of the problem (Ogundipe *et al*. 2006; Ashindorbe 2016). To limit the biases of the researcher in using the purposive technique, the following constituted the criteria for selecting interviewees:

- should be Delta State indigene
- must be willing to participate in the interview sessions
- should, but not compulsorily, be resident in the study locations
- could fall under 1st, 2nd, or 3rd generation of the study population
- must be an adult male or female not less than 20 years
- could be married, divorced, widowed, or single
- must be willing to approve the use of data collected in the course of the interview

3.6 Instruments and Methods of Data Collection

Data was collected qualitatively through In-Depth-Interviews (IDI), Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and observation. The three categories of interviews were conducted with the aid of an IDI guide, FGD guide, and KII guide to

offer direction for the interview sessions. Because of the variables, locations, and contexts of this study, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was the most ideal. The essence was to guide the sequence of the questions, which allowed for flexibility during the interview or discussion sessions. Such a pattern gives further insight and clarification on a subject matter because the researcher could probe further and more profoundly into vague and unclear opinions, allegations, and claims. The interviews and discussions were recorded electronically with the permission of the interviewees to satisfy ethical requirements. This electronic recording availed the researcher the opportunity to have access to all the information without missing any intelligence, a situation that might have arisen if interviews were to be in longhand.

All interviews were conducted in the English language. However,the Pidgin variant of the English Language was used by some discussants, not because discussants could not speak the colonial version of it, but because Pidgin English is the first language of the discussants and many of the discussants felt more comfortable with it. Using pidgin made the users more relaxed and expressive both in their gestures and words. Pictures were taken with some of the interviewees during the interview, while some were taken after the session. These pictures, especially those taken during the interview, were taken with the consent of the interviewees for ethical purposes.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from all three locations were manually transcribed for onward engagement. The transcribed data were systematically classified under themes and sub-themes to prevent haphazard outlook and clumsiness. Descriptive and explanatory styles were deployed for data transformation. This type of analysis gives a more straightforward meaning to the raw data, thereby making information and interpretation a lot easier and more lucid.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

This study is not without its limitations, but the bulk of it was primarily connected to sourcing for interviewees in both diaspora locations. Although some indigenes are either members of the general state association and/or in their community associations,

membership attendance has been classified as poor. Because of that, many members exited the associations, and that has crippled the active functionality of these associations. So, the associations are there in abstract and intangible forms but lack the substance to drive a challenging course. This condition informed the reliance on the snowballing technique to get interviewees for the study.

One profound challenge of this study was connected to the economic situation and job engagements and demands of some interviewees. Some of them had more than one job so they juggledboth domestic and official responsibilities and that affected the allotted time for interviews. Many interviews were conducted on the go, while some were conducted in restaurants, cars, and even train stations in London. Other interviewees opted for a telephone interview after failing to show up for an appointment with the researcher. In Lagos State, also, interviews were conducted in offices during breaks, as well as in restaurants and shops. Because of these limiting circumstances, some interviews were rushed and as such lacked details that would have elucidated some information.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Preamble

For a detailed understanding and interrogation of any global phenomenon, it is pertinent to situate it in relative contexts. In this chapter, data from the identified study fields are presented to underscore the ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora with a focus on homeland development. To adequately situate the data within the context of the study, further analysis was done using descriptive and narrative styles. Literature was engaged to complement, substantiate and/or contest existing positions to produce an appreciative understanding that addresses the objectives of the research. These objectives are mapped out in themes with further breakdown into sub-themes, where necessary. The divisions are required to facilitate systematic presentation, coherence, and logic to avoid data glut and, by extension, analysis. Findings suggest that the variables of ethnic ambivalence as identified by (Bivan *et al*. 2018; Ullah *et al.* 2018; Ullah and Kumpoh 2019) are echoed in the narratives from the field. Aside from these variables, there are other identified factors stimulating ethnic ambivalence. Thus, this study expands the discourse of ethnic ambivalence in light of other peculiar variables. Different issues constitute the thematic groupings depending on emphasis while maintaining the overarching variable of multiculturalism as a concurring concept with literature- hence multiculturalism serves as a point of departure.

To help us understand the data and put the analysis in proper perspectives, fundamental demographic information is availed as interviewees' responses are engaged. This information covers their age, gender, generation, location, year of migration, marital status, educational level, occupation, and ethnicity.

4.1 Objective 1: Factors Responsible for the Ethnic Ambivalence of Delta State Diaspora Communities towards the Homeland.

4.1.1 Complexities of a Culturally Heterogeneous Society

In this theme, various factors that define a culturally heterogeneous society are examined. The sub-themes validate, reiterate and consolidate existing literature while also calling attention to peculiarities.

4.1.1.1 Multiculturalism

By gathering data from three different study areas, context, also conceived as location and ethnicity, herein played a prominent role in the narratives as identified causes of ethnic ambivalence. As there are aligning positions that run through all three locations, so are there differing but peculiar causes linked mainly with location, as well as the ethnic groups that form the scope for this study. The peculiarity of Delta State distinguishes it from the majority ethnic groups in Nigeria because there is a sense of concentration for these other groups, while the Delta case is one of dispersion. According to participants from all three locations, the ethnicities in Delta State are many and fragmented[1]. In Heller's (1996) discussion on the many faces of multiculturalism, the author argues that multiculturalism is promoted in the world so that all ethnics and ethnicity can coexist in a manner that allows freedom and survival. The reason for this is not far-fetched and cannot be divorced from the fundamental precepts of multiculturalism meant to promote harmonious and homogenised cultural existence. Ironically, data from the field in this study overwhelmingly contradict this position. What is most apparent in the views and opinions of the interviewees is that multiculturalism has resulted in animosity and contempt, which has hitherto affected relationships within and outside the state.

[1] One might note, however, that the number of ethnicities in Delta State cannot be compared to other states in the country e.g. Edo State. But the deployment of 'many' is because the ethnic groups except the Itsekiri are fragmented such that communities are poles apart. These communities have their traditional leaders who always try to negotiate the interest of their community alone. Thus, these fragmentations cum varying and sometimes conflicting interests, giving an outlook of a state with an outrageously high number of ethnicities.

Multiculturalism featured prominently in the views of interviewees, and they all saw multiculturalism as a problem. The critical informant for Itsekiri, who had a different view on multiculturalism, believed that if the cultural diversity in Delta State were adequately harnessed and articulated, it could be sold anywhere in the world, and that could serve as a source of revenue for the state. Coming from an Itsekiri person, one is not surprised as the Itsekiri portray a high sense of positivity towards their homeland as is explored further in the later part of this chapter. For the majority of the interviewees, the connection between multiculturalism and ambivalence towards the homeland by the diaspora was intriguing. They considered multiculturalism as 'the forced cohabitation of people with different ideologies from different ethnic groups and cultures. They believed that in such arrangements, conflicts are inevitable. They also drew connections between the size of the state and the ethnic and cultural differences. An ideology of space sharing was needed to justify their ambivalence. George (Ijaw/42 years old/male/unmarried/BSc/ first-generation diaspora) had spent 13 years in Lagos State and he manages a logistics company. He had this to say:

> How can people with different cultural inclinations be put in a tiny space? Other major ethnic groups have one race spread in different states of the federation. But the case of Delta is different races compressed into one state with a tiny landmass. Multiculturalism is the reason ethnic groups are selfish and do not want to pull forces for an all-inclusive growth, progress, and development of the state. I do not feel obligated to commit to such a place with many owners. (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019)

The above view casts multiculturalism as a problem and becomes the reason the diaspora does not assume agency for the development of the homeland. The tone is suggestive of resentment and accounts for the disconnection of some diaspora from the homeland. Despite Ijaw being the 4th largest ethnic group in Nigeria, spread in the different states along the bank of the Atlantic, George's grouse on multiculturalism is strongly based on land mass and his inability to reconcile what he thinks is forced coexistence. Peradventure, if George had hailed from Bayelsa State, a state that solely belongs to the Ijaw and is regarded as their cultural and political capital of the Ijaw people, he may have had a

different view and a healthier relationship with his homeland because his primary wish of sole ownership would be served.

The presence of multiculturalism has generated a sense of un-belonging to their ethnicity, a point that Imoagene (2012) also emphasises. When a comparison was made with the major ethnic groups in the country, the diaspora from Delta State was quick to admit that they have a homogenous culture and language. Even though they (major ethnic groups) have their dialects, a unifying language binds them together. The Delta State case is fuelled by the absence of a common language among the different groups, and this barrier is made out as symbolising confusion, and disagreement, and has been crafted into the mentality of the people of the state. Although Pidgin English has been adopted as a unifying language that finds common ground among the people, especially the four ethnic groups that make up the population of this study, it does not dilute their awareness of multiculturalism in the state. What makes this point significant is how eight other interviewees reiterated their non-commitment to the homeland because they perceive it as belonging to many ethnicities. While it is not the prerogative of this study to sound, insensitive or criticise the logicality of interviewees, it does not take away the fact that the original homeland is fixed except where a decision has otherwise been made to appropriate elsewhere as a homeland.

Along the same line, Faith (Itsekiri/45 years old/female/divorced/MBA/accountant/ first-generation diaspora (UK)) believes that multiculturalism in the state is the worst problem for the Delta State people. She said: "Different languages make people be on the edge when they are together because they see one another as strangers, so they cannot trust the other." This opinion aligns with Verkuyten's (2006) view of multiculturalism and cultural diversity as threats to social cohesion. The acceptance of individuals as unique humans, which is argued to be the crux of multiculturalism, particularly concerning it being a solution to cultural diversity, is negated because it has rather created an atmosphere of fear, distrust, anxiety, rejection, and conflict.

The entirety of multiculturalism captures the connecting variables that are discussed below. As viewed with a lens that is divisive following its majority-minority dichotomy, the discourse of multiculturalism is reinforced in the data gathered from interviewees for

this study. In Nigeria, where Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa, are recognised as the three major ethnic groups, ethnicities in Delta State and many other states are considered ethnic minorities. Even as a state with minority status when juxtaposed within the larger Nigerian society (recall from Chapter Two), there still exists minorities among minorities in Delta State. The Itsekiri and the Isoko have been tagged as minority groups in Delta State because of their low numerical strength, but as asked earlier, what makes up a majority within a state made up of a minority ethnic group? But, if we all belong to one ethnic group or the other, it is unjustifiable and culturally demeaning to use socially constructed derogatory parameters and labels to distinguish some ethnic groups from others. While it is safe to say the whole of humanity cannot belong to one ethnic group, ethnic reductionism must be a topical issue for scholars and governments to address at all levels because of its counter-development capacity. In this ethnic majority-minority binary, the reality is that identity discourse seems not to be one of the challenges of dominant groups basically because they do not require efforts to gain recognition and acknowledgement or struggle for supremacy and privileges, unlike ethnic minority people.

4.1.1.2 Ethnic Minority Status

A spin-off from the discourse of multiculturalism led to the majority-minority dichotomy. With the identification of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba as the major ethnic groups in the country, other ethnic groups take up the minority status, and this has been identified as a critical factor in ethnic ambivalence (Ullah *et al.* 2018; Sagiv and Yair 2019; Ullah and Kumpoh 2019).

As said in the earlier part of this research, Delta State is a microcosm of Nigeria, making it ethnically heterogeneous. As a matter of expansion, the world is ethnically diverse and filled with mobile humans. The interplay of man and migration allows us to understand Bivan *et al.'s* (2018) position on the impure status of culture globally. The authors argue that as cultures interact upon contact, they will be cross-pollinated to produce hybrid versions. Thus, no culture is sacrosanct. Even though some of the interviewees exhibited knowledge of the dynamics and complexities of cultures, their minority status weighs on them as a heavy burden, often leaving them in a state of shame. The narrative from Maureen (Ijaw/35 years old/ female/married/BSc/Nurse/ first-generation diaspora) who

moved to London in 2016, and lives in London, the United Kingdom, underscores this factor:

> I had an encounter in Nigeria before coming to the UK, and that informed my detachment from the tribe. Someone asked where I am from, and I said Ijaw, and the person expressed some kind of surprise that tells that the tribe does not even have visibility. Here in the UK, the same thing happened, and you hear these foreigners tell you Yoruba I know, Ibo I know, but I have never heard of this tribe from Nigeria. Because we do not have a diaspora presence, it is difficult even meeting ourselves. The subtle alienation one feels even when one finds oneself amid fellow Nigerians can be depressing. It is pathetic, and I feel like one should not be made to feel this irrelevant because one is from a minority group. So, I decided to always conceal my ethnicity because it has rather brought me dishonour than pride (IDI/London/January 2020).

Looking at this view, the question to ask is what qualifies the adequacies of a majority ethnic group. What variables give them an edge over minorities? Earlier, this study has argued that majority ethnic status is a function of number and strategy, especially when other matters of relevance and representation (political, cultural, economic, or religious) are concerned. Hoon (2006) asserts that dominance of culture is achieved when a particular culture is established and universalised as the society's norm, and that justifies this study's argument that ethnic majority status is also a function of strategy. Courson (2016) contends that the Delta State region's contribution to the pool of slaves is insignificant following their minority status. This study agrees in part with this point, particularly because the diaspora laments their small number in London; but the study argues that this is not enough justification for Delta State diaspora's ethnic ambivalence towards the homeland. This contention is because some minority ethnic groups, like the Ibibio in Cross Rivers State, for instance, have a formidable diaspora presence with an appreciable connection with the homeland.

The response by Maureen above supports extant literature that there is a correlation between ethnic minority status and low self-esteem (Jensen Negy *et al*. 2003; Kong and Yu 2019). Some members of the local diaspora also corroborated Maureen's position,

saying they are always ashamed to say they are from Delta State or even speak the languages because when they do, people look at them strangely because of the uncommon nature of the language. Also, visible in the responses is the concept of recognition and how the absence of it signifies a lack of respect. As Verkuyten (2006) argues, the implication is that indigenes from such minority groups are susceptible to discrimination that sadden the victim and engenders self-hate. The view ties with the position of Maureen and interviewees in Lagos and London because, as we can deduce, it shows that people with a strong ethnic identity feel good about themselves unlike those without, and there are correlated consequences. Deductively, ethnic minority people are more likely to have identity challenges because identity, as Hoon (2006) assumes, should be singular.

Although a counter-argument by Jackson and Nesterova (2017) suggests the fluidity of identity as determined by prevailing circumstances, none of the positions is absolute. On the one hand, some of the interviewees disregard Hoon's position (2006) because they argue that their ethnic minority status is only pushed to the rear, thus giving salience to Jackson and Nesterova's (2017) view about identity fluidity (2017). Judging from the positions of some other interviewees, on the other hand, one is convinced that they agree with the position of Hoon (2006) that identity cannot be pluralised. For instance, Mrs. Leblanc, an Urhobo lady married to a Frenchman, categorically said, “My husband is French, so I am French. I cannot subject myself to double and conflicting identity. It is emotionally draining”. This kind of view mostly resonates with the second-generation diaspora, a position Ullah *et al.* (2018) hold that as generations emerge, the bond between the diaspora and the homeland wanes. For first generation migrants who are in a spousal relationship with partners from different ethnic and cultural groups, still expressed a subtle tie to their ethnic identity. Interviewees who support Jackson and Nesterova's (2017) concept of cultural fluidity are in the first-generation category. They share a mild and subtle knowledge about the homeland but are confronted with the prevailing societal circumstances that dilute their identity. Impliedly, an ethnic psychological disposition is subject to a convincing individual opinion which is a first step to conquering the low self-esteem inherent in ethnic minority status.

Diaspora also suggested that their settlement in another country or state, and subsequent interaction with another culture, leaves them in a state of limbo. The conflicting loyalty demands from both ethnic groups place people in a position of ethnic ambivalence. Supporting the prejudices and yet identifying the indispensability of the ethnic majority, an interviewee revealed that she would encourage her children to marry from a majority ethnic group because she carries an emotion of shame by being an indigene of an ethnic minority, a status that is worsened by constant reference to it by her spouse. Such trauma finds resonance with Unison's (2012) survey. Unison's study reveals that the vast majority of people do not want any form of ties with ethnic minorities in their personal lives. The subjective and negative view informs this decision of ethnic minorities as a people hostile to progress, a position which has been substantiated in literature (Gilroy 2004; Birani and Lehmann 2013; Jackson and Nesterova 2017). Such stereotypes, drawn from literature and confirmed by interviewees' perception of Delta State people as backward and lazy, are signposted by the realities on the ground and are discussed under other themes in the course of this analysis.

As the Delta State diaspora continues to exhibit ethnic ambivalence towards the homeland, they integrate this into the apprehension of their identity. A few members of the diaspora reported name changes, deliberate adoption of Western names, and alterations. Mr. Peters (Urhobo/54 years old/male/married/MSc/engineer/ first-generation diaspora) who migrated to Lagos State in 2003, confessed to changing his name from 'Ejaita Ovie', an Urhobo name, to an English one and adopting Olufemi, a Yoruba name, as his surname. He continued by saying others modify or add names from any of the three major ethnic groups, depending on the location you find yourself as well as other factors, e.g. interest. The interviewee alleged that these changes are done for various reasons. According to him, people change their names because they feel inadequate with their ethnic identities, particularly because of their minority status. Others do it to get help and open doors of opportunities for themselves. Yet, the name change is borne out of shame or dislike for the said name by some others. As he proceeded, Mr. Peters revealed an interesting connection between age and identity. In his words,

> I came to Lagos in my 30s after I realised my life was not making the kind of progress I desired for myself and time

> was running fast. So I decided to migrate to Lagos, employed a strategy for easy access, opportunities and privileges, and because I feel averagely comfortable, I do not feel any sense of ethnic or identity betrayal. (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019)

A plethora of reasons ranging from inferiority complex to identity fulfilment and accessing opportunities and managing sociocultural and socioeconomic pressure in the host land inform either name change or modification. This identity inadequacy is baggage borne by many indigenes from minority ethnic groups, especially as they have to adopt an indigenous name from any of the three major ethnic groups in the country, as demonstrated by Mr. Peters. The interviewee draws a line between age as a variable in determining socioeconomic achievement. This is partly because of societal expectation that puts some people under pressure and personal goals and standards that one may have set for oneself. In other words, identity becomes amenable as gains are in sight. The dynamics and complexities of identity and culture continue in Jackson and Nesterova's (2017) view of the fluidity of both and how they are adapted to prevailing societal circumstances. In a similar vein and drawing from Mr. Peters' position of how names are changed because of access to opportunities, Van Houtum and Struver's (2002) metaphoric conceptualisation of 'door' allows openness for possible sharing following the melting of border differences.

Strategies are designed to achieve a purpose but these strategies do not always meet the expectation sometimes. Perhaps if Mr. Peters did not achieve his aim of relocation in the first instance, he might have had a different view about the concept of ethnic identity and/or even regret rejecting his original identity. One critical question is: are all the indigenes from these desired ethnic groups successful? Of course, no is the natural answer; basically, because regardless of the advantages or privileges that come with ethnic majority status, it is not an automatic ticket to the place of success. One needs to work out the modalities to success, bearing in mind that success is relative. Thus, when indigenous names are relegated to the rear to allow appropriation of another name, symbolic or abstract borders become blurred to facilitate the intention. That in itself deepens the feeling of ethnic ambivalence.

Along the same line of argument, the minority status of Delta State is also deepened by the

low number of her indigenes, not only in London or Lagos State, as fields of this study but anywhere in the world. All foreign interviewees lamented the situation, and a good number attributed their ambivalence to their insignificant number in the diaspora, saying, "It is not easy to come in contact with a Delta State person as you would a Yoruba". According to Promise (Urhobo/44 years old/female/married/B.Ed./teacher/first-generation diaspora) who migrated to London in 2001, the first time she came across an Urhobo indigene in the diaspora was in 2011.

Promise's experience is an indication of Delta State's relatively small population, hence the low representation in other parts of the world. Although Courson (2016) makes a case for the region's contribution of people taken away as slaves during the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade era, it does not translate into a formidable numerical strength that can give a significant representation of the homeland in the diaspora. For instance, if in the 21st century, the state still has less than 10 million citizens (NBS 2018), four centuries after the abolition of the slave trade, then one will understand why Promise did not come across a kinsman in the diaspora until ten years after her relocation to London. How would the people from this region have been able to compete by speaking their language and establishing their culture in a space with people who have a higher numerical advantage? They would have been forced to learn and adopt the dominant language among the slaves, and that practice has continued to play out into the present, with people from Delta having a preference for other ethnic majority languages and cultures. So, if we consider ethnic majority privilege from this angle, we would be right to say numbers define majority-minority status.

4.1.1.3 Inter-ethnic Marriage

Marriages between people from different ethnic backgrounds have been identified as a causative factor for ethnic ambivalence (Root 1992; Sagiv and Yair 2019). The scholars' position is informed by the fact that couples become ethnically conscious of their partner's ethnicity. By straddling two ethnicities, the vicissitudes of ethnicity become a determining factor in the discourse of homeland development. What this means is that ethnic loyalty may be divided as spouses consciously and unconsciously connect double ethnicities, thereby challenging their interest in homeland development. Sagiv and Yair (2019) argue

that ethnically mixed people maintain dual identities, but they see themselves first, as part of the majority, and maintain a repressed bloodline attachment that calls for their ethnic loyalties to the other. For all the people interviewed, in the diaspora and the Delta State homeland, 8 out of every ten were married to a different ethnic group other than theirs. Some were married to people from other ethnic groups within the state, but the home-based made the numbers in this category. Most of these interethnic marriages—to people from other states and even foreigners—were found with the local and foreign diaspora. What this means is that relationships are connected to the locations one finds him/herself more often than not. Interviewees saw interethnic marriages as a cause of ethnic ambivalence to their homeland because there is a high tendency to align with your spouse in the course of your marital journey. Hailing from a state with minority status, they expressed only a subtle loyalty to their ethnicity but aligned more with their spouse's, especially when that individual is from a majority ethnic group in the country, which was the situation in most cases. In the few cases where both spouses were from different minority ethnic groups, the decision was rather fluid, depending on some prevailing circumstances like availability and presence of a spouse, patriarchy advantage, or breadwinner edge.

In a patriarchal society like Nigeria, one would expect that men from Delta State with spouses from other ethnicities would assert their authority in giving their homesteads cultural identities. However, this research found out that 9 out of 10 men in this category relegated their ethnicity and left their wives to take the lead on that while others simply adopted the English Language alongside a liberalised pattern of living in their homes. The excuse for this is that they do not want to confuse their children because they spend more time with their mothers. For some of these men, their wives can persuade them into interfacing with their (wife's) homeland. Delta women married to men from other ethnicities confessed to submitting to their husband's ethnicity because they thought it was the right thing to do. Either way, indigenes of Delta State in a spousal relationship with partners from other ethnicities outside the state embrace their spouse's ethnicity over theirs. To buttress this point, Tega (Urhobo/47 years old/male/married/MSc/ first-generation diaspora) whose stay in London had been up to 12 years, said his children

usually visit France because his wife is French, but they have never visited Nigeria. The only Delta State identity his children have is their surname; they have English first names.

As for Mrs. Oloyede (Isoko/53 years old/female/married/M.A./first-generation diaspora) who is married to a Yoruba from Ilorin with her family living in London, she believes that she and the children are, first and foremost, Ilorin indigenes before they are Delta. For children from interethnic marriages, ascertaining their identity is even more complicated. The same position was taken by Gladys (Itsekiri/39 years old/female/married/BSc/second-generation diaspora), a line manager whose parents migrated to the UK in the 70s. Her submission: "I am married to a Greek, and where my husband goes, I'll go". The difference between these two interviewees is obvious in their responses by the way they express the consideration of their ethnicity. A critical look at Mrs. Oloyede's prioritisation of ethnic identity for her children leaves room for her ethnic cleavage on her kids, but that of Gladys is an outright disconnection from her ethnic identity. Their positions are not unconnected to the generational difference notion which has been established in the literature that as generations emerge, the diaspora's relationship with their homeland declines (Ullah 2018).

Mr. Patrick (Ijaw/48 years old/male/married/BSc/first-generation diaspora), security personnel who was transferred to Lagos State in 2012, found some corresponding similarities with Tega's submission above. However, Patrick's situation is closer home than Tega's because his children's first names are indigenous. Patrick's reason for undermining his culture reinforces interethnic marriage as a reason for ethnic ambivalence.

> I speak English to my children because my wife is from Edo State. My children are fluid, culturally, and do not align with any particular culture because the English language is a common language to their mother and me. I also do not want to assert my ethnicity because I do not want my wife to feel oppressed, and now, I regret not teaching my children my culture and language. The only thing I did was to give them indigenous names, which is an identity for them (IDI/Lagos/December 2019).

With the prominence of dual ethnic identity, this double-consciousness usually experienced by emerging generations, according to Du Bois (1903), is bound to reflect in

what Vertovec (2008) regards as 'refusal of fixity', thereby signalling indifference in appropriating an ethnic identity. We must bear in mind that while the burden of identity from such a union is usually heavy on the children, most of the interviewees caught in this interethnic web of marriage adopt English as the language of communication, and this, in the long run, relegates other cultural practices to the rear. First-generation parents have less of this challenge to deal with. Amid such consciousness, ethnic identities become easily amenable, hybridised, fluid, or even ousted completely, especially by other generations who, according to Bhabha (1994), are usually in a third place (i.e. neither of the parents' original homeland). Although this study subscribes to this point, it adds that we should not be too comfortable with this identity contest between the offspring of interethnic marriage, especially those domiciled in the parent's original homeland, particularly one that is ethnically diverse like Delta State. Therefore, inter-group marriages cause a surge in ethnic ambivalence, especially in a culturally diverse society like Delta State. In prognosticating what the future of inter-group marriage looks like, Mr. Usievo (Isoko/51 years old/male/married/HND), a trader who relocated to Lagos State in 1997, submits that:

> As you grow old, your wife becomes the lead, and the husband is the follower. They pull us to their communities, especially because that is where they are familiar and because we are old, we follow. There is an adage that says the woman is the neck while the man is the head so, anywhere the neck turns, the head will follow (Interview/Lagos/December 2019).

Whether male or female, we have seen that patriarchy is relegated in interethnic marriage between Delta State indigenes as conceived in this study and indigenes from other ethnicities. Perhaps, the submission of Delta State indigenes to their spouses' ethnicities is a validation of existing literature that interethnic marriages involving ethnic minority parties pull them farther from their ethnicity (Surovana 2018). The practicalities found with these interviewees set the stage for ethnic ambivalence towards their homeland and further buttresses the theoretical framework of this study, as Sagiv and Yair (2019) argue that inter-group marriage foments ethnic ambivalence.

Still, this development is often influenced by the high level of illiteracy among the

ethnicities identified in this study on inter-ethnic marriages. Except for the Itsekiri, who see the boy and girl children as equal and encourage the same level of formal education for both, the other ethnicities studied have a large population of uneducated females. Discussants from Urhobo echoed the discrimination against the girl child, noting that education and empowerment are the causes of interethnic marriages. According to them, education and empowerment have created a vacuum and made their female children unappealing for marital considerations. Fejiro a first-generation diaspora, (Isoko/35 years old/male/single/BA), a radio presenter, quipped that "the Urhobo, Isoko, and Ijaw are illiterate tribes".

In their understanding, and based on the realities on the ground, education/literacy forms a critical factor in the consideration of spousal relationships. Female educational disempowerment is a national problem, which Nwapa (cited in Silkü 2008) firmly condemns. According to her, the practice is an old one that should be addressed. Ideally, a nation or people that want to be successful cannot relegate such an important sect of their population to the background, especially when females make up almost half of the total population, as is the case in Nigeria (Silkü 2008). The marginalisation of the female gender in the state can also be said to be a contributory factor to the poverty level among three of the four ethnicities examined in this study. Jayachandran (2015) confirms this position with his submission that a nation that wants to grow and develop cannot do so without the empowerment and active participation of the female gender in different activities that drive the economy.

Going further, a few second-generation diaspora members who participated in the study revealed that their parents' union was a burden they had to deal with because the advantaged spouse in terms of ethnic status threw derogatory words at their partners, and sometimes their family members constructed the other partners with these labels. An interviewee confessed to being depressed because of these demeaning constructs, and her feeling is corroborated by Lusk *et al*. (2010) who note that children from mixed parents are prone to depression and anxiety. This is because they are aware of the conflicting binary of privileges that one party enjoys over the other, and it makes them feel they are at the centre of a war involving two people from different ethnicities. The situation of

complex animosity and differences between spouses of different ethnic groups played out in the ethnic conflagrations that rocked Warri in the 1990s. It didn't sit well with many people, especially those who witnessed their kith and kin killed by people from their spouses' ethnic groups. For this reason, many marriages were dissolved, which further increased the number of divorcees in the state (Monday, KII, 2020).

Again, the points they (interviewees) made align with Sagiv and Yair's (2019) position that inter-ethnic marriages are confronted with issues bordering on racism and ostracism. The present study adds the lack of intimacy as a contributory factor to challenges facing inter-ethnic marriages. These are accompanied by stereotypes that centre on value priorities, civil behaviours, cleanliness, literacy, population strength, etc. Kemi (Isoko/22 years old/female/single/college student/second-generation diaspora) whose parents migrated to the UK in 1990, said while her father is Isoko, her mum is Yoruba. However, she chooses to relegate her minority status to the background and identify as a Yoruba because of the inherent advantages of being an ethnic majority indigene.

From the foregoing, we have seen the consequences of intermarriage and the possibility of being pulled in different directions. This is confirmed, by the diaspora, as a major reason for their ambivalence towards their homeland. While some home-based also see inter-group marriage among the different groups in Delta State as a cause of ethnic ambivalence and disunity, others believe that it has ravaged the state with the attendant human resources and even brain drain. The argument here is that since interethnic marriage, especially with people from ethnic groups outside the state, is a common practice among the people of Delta State, marriage becomes a medium through which the state loses its human resources that should otherwise contribute to the development of the state.

4.1.1.4 "Perceived Primitiveness" of the Culture and the People

There is an outrageous perception among some interviewees that their culture is primitive. This understanding allows us to make sense of the remains of colonialism carried into the postcolonial era. Colonialism operated through binaries where the colonisers saw themselves as civilised by their position and privileges, and saw the colonised as uncivilised. The situation is no different in postcolonial times as some people, because of

the socio-political advantage associated with their majority status, see themselves as civilised while others are labelled with derogatory tags like primitive, uncivilised, and barbaric. Birani and Lehman (2013) contended that the victims of this derogation are often people with ethnic minority status, especially as they are not socio-politically privileged like their majority counterparts.

The authors' "invisible" description of ethnic minorities is premised on the fact that minority ethnic groups are not recognised nor acknowledged by the majority, and there seems to be a culminating effect of culture shock, which many ethnic minorities consider to be a disadvantage. While culture shock depicts a preponderance of the unimaginable, there is a sense in which this expression lays the foundation for the evaluation of ethnic practices as different from the norms as hegemonic constructs. This situation gains salience in the considerations of some Delta State diaspora as they carry a perception that their culture is too archaic and shameful to identify with. Meanwhile, shame, according to Sieff (2016), is concealing. He explains that shame carries elements of trauma, and it is pervasive, such that it can affect our relationships, not only with oneself but also with others, whether physical or abstract. The responses from many interviewees are evocative of Sieff's assumption, as they confirm his submission of concealment. In this context, it is translated into withdrawal from the culture and, by extension, the homeland. The experience of Mr. Tonbra (Ijaw/31 years old/male/single/HND/first generation diaspora), a clearing and forwarding agent who had spent three years in Lagos State at the time of the interview, is one of many who recalled meeting kinsmen who showed a high level of resentment for their culture.

> I met with an Ijaw person here in Lagos who was annoyed that I spoke the language to him. What surprised me most is the fact that people were not even there. I asked him why he was angry at me, and he declined to explain but insisted that I should always interact with him in English. So, even in closed settings, some people are ashamed of speaking the language. They think it is local (IDI/Lagos/December 2019).

Along the same line, Mr. Matthew (Itsekiri/45 years old/male/married/HND/first-generation local diaspora) an hotel manager whose relocation to Lagos State was in 2005, said Delta State culture, especially the Ijaw, Isoko, and Urhobo, is a closed culture that has

refused to evolve like the Itsekiri and Ika. The same is said to be true with the three major languages in the country as languages that have witnessed considerable developmental attention (Adegbija 2004). In furtherance, Matthew argued that

> It is only a matter of time before a stagnant language and culture go into extinction. When you refuse to open up to the fast-changing and shrinking world, the world will leave you behind, and as a matter of fact, indigenes from that culture will move with the currency of the world, leaving their cultures behind (IDI/Lagos/December 2019).

This position finds significance with some interviewees abroad who bluntly said the culture and the people are anti-progressive and anti-development. Blessing's (Urhobo/46 years old/female, divorced/ BSc/second-generation diaspora) parents migrated to the UK in 1972 she works with the UK transport services. She detests the Urhobo mode of greeting and considers it a symbolic form of slavery. The Urhobo word for the greeting, which is culturally expected to come from a younger person to an older one, is *miguo*, literally meaning 'I am on my knees, while the receiver responds by saying *vrendo*, meaning 'get up, well-done'. Going further, she complained about the compelling ways that elders demand this greeting to repulse the younger person as if an English 'good morning' is less of a greeting than the traditional salutation. For her, the intention behind a greeting is what should be the driving consideration in the exchange of courtesy. Blessing sternly reiterated these questions:

> Why do I need to go on my knees to greet an elder? Why can't my salutation of love be accepted for what it is? Why should the vestiges of slavery in which they participated be visibly prominent in their cultural practices even in the 21st century? Only slaves knelt to serve their masters, and I am not a slave. Neither will I inculcate such practice in my kids (IDI/London/January 2020)

One wonders what is slavish about an indigenous way of greeting; after all, other ethnic groups in the country have peculiar demonstrations that accompany greetings.

As she furthered her discussion, Blessing, quickly countered this position citing the Yoruba culture. In her view, the Yoruba greeting is not condescending or demeaning even though the men prostrate while the women kneel. She sees it more as an expression of

respect than a demeaning act. She argues that the Yoruba salutation of *e ka' ro* is equivalent to 'good morning' in the English language, just like the other two periods of the day—afternoon and evening. According to her, Urhobo has only one form of greeting meant for the different periods of the day, something she finds to be a cultural defect. Her expectation of different salutations for different periods of the day like the Yoruba is suggestive of some level of comparison. Blessing's perception of her ethnic group's greeting pattern as a slavish position is faulty, especially considering her comparative view with the Yoruba. This is because while salutation in her culture merely translates into 'I am on my knees, more often than not, the actual action of kneeling is not observed. The irony is how, in her admired culture—the Yoruba— elders are greeted with the accompanying actions of either kneeling or prostrating, depending on the gender. Perhaps then her sense of cultural primitivism is based on other cultural practices than greeting.

Whilst her opinion cannot be trivialised, it is pertinent to stress that cultural practices should not be judged or evaluated by the parameters of others because cultures are uniquely distinct. There is nothing contemporary; neither is there anything primitive about a cultural practice since all cultures, just like races, are uniquely different. Blessing's position is an indication that people will align with other norms and values that appeal to their morals when they feel inadequate in their ethnicity of birth. In other words, the quest for modernity and modernisation among ethnic minorities can be interpreted in the context of a cultural perception that underscores the morality informing certain actions. What is apparent from the views of interviewees is personal interpretation informed by cultural variations. These interpretations have shown some notable consequences of inferiority complex, a feeling found in people from ethnic minorities (Kong and Yu 2019). Therefore, it can be concluded that a person from an ethnic minority group may withdraw from their original ethnic culture and align more with an identity that supports their values and ambitions.

Blessing, by way of protecting herself from shame, has become hostile and simultaneously extricated herself from identifying with her original ethnic group, consequently paving the way for ethnic ambivalence, the crux of this study. Aside from the local interviewee who is a first-generation diaspora, the disengagement apparent in the expressions of Blessing

resonated with some other interviewees abroad who incidentally were all second-generation diaspora. Whilst this finding is not surprising, particularly because Ullah *et al*. (2018) reveal that connection with the homeland diminishes with the emergence of generations, the situation is aggravated when discussed within the concept of shame. However, these views contrast with Nandi and Platt's finding (2020) that minority ethnic groups express a strong ethnic personality with a second-generation diaspora. Their findings applaud the efforts of parents or guardians who impart their ethnic values and culture to their wards despite the challenges, pressure, and influence of destination countries. This is an indictment that the negative perception of emerging generations of diaspora about their original culture and identity is a function of parental influence.

Peradventure, this perception about the culture is fast affecting its relevance as well as its sustenance, and it is a clear sign that the cultures are under threat of extinction. As stated earlier, different ethnic groups formed the scope of this study, and so their views about their cultures and their survivability are nuanced. For instance, members of the Itsekiri ethnic group who participated in this study expressed some reservations about the argument that their culture is fast eroding. While one would have expected them objectively confront this increasing cultural threat, all of the interviewees rather said the erosion of cultural practices is not limited to the Itsekiri as other majority cultures are experiencing the same challenge. Their argument stems from the knowledge of a fast-changing world, and their culture is adapting to the changes that come in a contemporary and advanced world. The situation is different with the Urhobo and Isoko. Members from both ethnicities acknowledged the decline of their languages and cultures with no hesitation. As Urhobo and Isoko interviewees lamented, the fading culture as seen in the narratives under the theme of language primitiveness and the rigidity of the Urhobo and Isoko culture is foregrounded. As for the Ijaw, there seems to be a high level of liberality about their culture and its status. Their disposition also draws from the natural habitat that freely provides them with basic survival needs.

What appears to be the objective of the Urhobo and Isoko ethnicities has some elements of sentimentalism for the Itsekiri, especially when the culture of hospitality is discussed. However, the culture of unity developed from the awareness of their minority status has

also aided flexibility in the culture, thus validating Mathew's assertion of Itsekiri culture as being a more developed one. Despite their minority status within a minority ethnic state, the Itsekiri portray a stronger ethnic personality than members of other ethnicities interrogated for this study, and this syncs with the argument of Nandi and Platts (2020) that ethnic minorities strongly preserve their minority ethnic identity and status because they have a unique sense of linked values (Sobolewska *et al*. 2018). Although the same cannot be said of the Isoko ethnicity who are also considered to be in the minority in the state, their situation draws from the influence of Urhobo with whom they have had common cultural values for ages. The positions of the four ethnic groups from Delta State are elucidating and consolidating the need to contextualise literature rather than generalise. ary of generalisations in the discourse of any phenomenon.

4.1.1.5 Inability to Speak the Language

Language as a fundamental concept in identity is not new to scholarship. Language gives meaning to identity because the speaker's communicative prowess is a reflection of a well-grounded knowledge of not just who they are but where they hail from (Rajagopalan 2017). In a peculiar case like Delta State, with all its multilingualism, Pidgin English has assumed dominance and watered down the ethnic identity of the people. Interestingly, this Pidgin English dominance is rather a turn-off for the diaspora, especially because it is largely considered a language of communication for the illiterate. The number of participants both in the diaspora and homeland who were proficient in their language is very insignificant. For instance, even though Mr. Eyimofe (Itsekiri/37 years old/male/single/BA/first-generation diaspora) who migrated to London in 2011 identifies with his ethnic association in the diaspora, he is still caught in the shadow of his identity. His submission was that

> Language is critical to identity, and because I literally cannot speak the language, it does not make me feel any sense of connection with the homeland. Perhaps if I could speak, I would share an affinity with it and relate to the issues concerning the home (IDI/London/January 2020).

In a similar tone, Mr. Matthew supported this view thus:

> When people cannot speak the language, it pushes other indigenes away from them. Peradventure, I can speak

> other languages, and I see its speakers, I become closer to those other people. So, the cause of the detachment is not speaking the language (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

Evident in this view is the psychological effect of creating a dent in the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland due to the diaspora's inability to speak their indigenous language. Such was the finding of Colón-Quintana (2020), who argues that language fluency allows stability, emotional balance, and conviction in the identity of an individual. With that in view for Eyimofe and many others in similar situations, there is a wavering sense of their identity, and that has continued to redefine their relationship with the homeland. What should have established a mental sense of connection with a home in the least is lacking.

At this juncture, the unifying agency of Pidgin English could help sustain the diaspora's connection with the homeland, especially because the variant has increasingly gained wider usability and acceptability in the state, country, and even the world at large. Its wide usage and acceptability are informed by its ease of usage and relatability among people from different ethnic groups. The use of Pidgin English for match commentaries in the 2018 World Cup is proof that the variant is advancing its frontiers globally.

However, there have been debates condemning the adoption of Pidgin English as a national language because it is widely perceived as an inferior language for the illiterate and uncivilised. Despite this criticism, the language is more popular than English, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba (Ehondor 2020). This lead which Pidgin English enjoys following its unifying agency is an indication that different ethnic groups can coexist without feeling a sense of strangeness amid other ethnic groups. Even though Pidgin English is the major language of communication in Delta State, the diaspora's disposition towards the homeland challenges the unifying agency of Pidgin English because the language does not do justice in connecting them to their root. There are a lot of expressions, practices, and proverbs that cannot be adequately captured with Pidgin English. Even when they try to discuss deep cultural matters in Pidgin English, the chances are that messages may lose meaning. So, no other language connects ethnics to their culture like their indigenous language.

4.1.2 The Drawbacks of Solitary Living

4.1.2.1 Floating the Stroke of Individualism

Stretching the application of George's view above yet delimiting it to the family setting, individualism against communality is evident among interviewees as a cause of ethnic ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora. Interviewees agree that individualism is taught and imbibed by the people from Delta State. According to them, an average Delta State family subconsciously encourages individualism, and that aligns elsewhere in this chapter with the position of many interviewees that ambivalence is a reflection of the shallow relationship that an individual has with the family and, by extension, homeland. They believe that a person who is involved in deep family values will always connect with home. To substantiate this point, Birani and Lehmann (2013) highlight the inevitable place of bonding and social capital as important in achieving success at any level in a relationship and society.

The rupturing presence of individualism has been blamed as being responsible for the hate that interviewees complained about. Despite the proverbial saying, and as also reiterated by Birani and Lehman (2013) that much progress is achieved with unity as there is power in teamwork, it does not appear to be the norm in reality. Individualism is, first and foremost, learned from the family and therefore renders this proverb meaningless. The acrimonious emotions that stem from this reality are evident in the narrative of Mr. Oshare (Urhobo/40 years old/male/married/BSc/first-generation diaspora), an Uber driver who relocated to Lagos State in 2009:

> Individualism is enshrined in the training system and pattern of children. The types of realities the child is exposed to are ingredients that form that child's character even in adulthood. It is in Delta State that children are trained to keep malice with their parents and even siblings, and everyone seems to be cool with such an attitude. It is normal. Instead of parents interfering when their children are at loggerheads, they either pretend not to know or, better still, take sides with one. How will there be peace and unity that will translate into connectedness in such a family? (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019)

In validating the view above, Kate (Isoko/42 years old/female/married/B.A./first-generation diaspora) a curator who went to the UK when she was 18, shared her experience with her younger sister as well as their mother's reaction to the issue. According to her,

> I informed my mum of the dispute between me and my younger sister, and I expected her to take necessary disciplinary action at settling it, but she rebuffed us and said we should settle our differences and that she was not going to meddle in our affairs. I mean, if we could settle it ourselves, I would not have involved her. Later on, I found out she took sides with my sister. That was why she chose to live in denial and pretence while her family disintegrated before her eyes. And now, we all live like single children from the same parents (IDI/London/January 2020).

Kate's response reveals, on the one hand, an awareness of self-protection, on the other hand, emotional detachment from the bloodline. Her experience and expectation of her mother underscore parental psychological control and child relational aggression (Kuppens *et al.* 2009). It is obvious in Kate's response that even though studies have established a strong influence of parents on their children, some parents still lack the courage and fairness to attend to some critical issues that may arise within the family circle. In line with Kate's experience, it was observed that in the Delta State homeland, parents go as far as telling their young children to rise to the challenge of independence and they use dispassionate words like 'I have given birth to you if you like don't brace up to the challenges of life and fend for yourself". These words, especially if spoken to a child with low self-esteem, may have a far-reaching effect on the emotional configurations of the growing child. Children's malicious behaviour is further exacerbated by parents' preferential treatment of one child over the other. An example of this is when parents gift a child or children, leaving one out on the ground that the disfavoured child is disobedient and stubborn and, as such, should be punished by denying such a child the privileges other siblings receive.

Harry (Urhobo/53 years old/male/married/MSc/first-generation diaspora), a Lagos-based, interviewee whose migration dates back to 1999, corroborated this situation when he said that the ideology of individualism is even enshrined in the proverbs of the people,

especially the Urhobo. He related the saying that "if you have my plate in your house, go and break it", meaning that nobody is indebted to the other. This, according to him, is why the people do not live a communal life. As a result, they are quick to sever ties with anyone and at any time. Proverbs like this can be said to be laden with ego and have the capacity to stir up mutual resentments. This goes back to the prominence of malice highlighted by Oshare and Kate above, which has eaten deep into the fabrics of familial relationships. Perhaps, a brief discussion on the socio-political structure in Urhoboland will help us understand their republican nature. It is not the intention of this study to take sides with Oshare, Kate, or Harry, nor does it seek to dispel their positions; rather it wishes to shed light on how much the average Urhobo person dislikes the idea of subjection.

The Urhobo sociocultural and political configuration is known for its non-centralised republican system (Ashe 2017). The formation dates back to the people's experiences before they migrated from Benin. Their migration gave birth to new settlements and sub-groups that share linguistic as well as cultural commonalities with other groups who also migrated to the region now known as Delta State. Some historical sources say that most of the Urhobo sub-groups migrated from Benin hence the near similar outlook in culture between both (ibid). Before their migration, Benin practised a centralised political system where everyone deferred to the Oba of Benin, and this was the system most of the early Urhobo people were exposed to[2]. Because the system was characterised by absolute power, there was high-level repression and dehumanisation. Significant sacrifices were demanded from the masses upon the order of the Oba, and these demands which sometimes involved death were too enormous for the masses, thus precipitating their migration from the kingdom[3]. Their migration from that environment where the political system exposed them to harsh and cruel conditions shows that the Urhobo had a different type of political view that contrasts with what they had been exposed to. They have a more

[2]An oral interview was conducted with Okotie Ejowhomu I. Omosivie of Agbarho in 2010 by MO. Ashe

[3] ibid

liberal political system[4], one which is characterised by fairness and equality. Having experienced such cruelty, oppression, and domination, they were in the best position to judge such practices as inhuman and ensure that they were not permitted in their new settlements.

Like the Igbo republican system, the villages, made up of quarters, were the highest political units in the land (Ikime 1969). The one which was believed to be the earliest settlement was regarded as the headquarters. History has it that other villages were constituted from this, an attempt that duplicated villages as seen in the contemporary Urhobo village settings (Ashe 2017). Even though every village remained loyal to and maintained a legal relationship with the headquarters, they maintained control over their internal administration. So, the new system allowed these sub-groups to preserve their culture and institutions as well as helped them to understand the socio-political system of other sub-groups for peaceful coexistence. Therefore, the republican nature of Urhobo is heavily influenced by their past experiences while under the Benin empire.

However, discussants in the Delta State homeland faulted the claim that Urhobo is egoistic and individualistic by alluding that such comments as made by Harry above are made when there is a misunderstanding or disagreement between people and should not be taken seriously or considered as one of their cultural adages. Even though those who counter these adages often cite other sayings that promote unity and communality, there is still the dominant presence of individualism in the lifestyle of the people. Beyond the physical expression of detachment, there is a huge psychological trauma that comes with this malicious practice. Evidence provided by Baker and Verrocchio (2014) sufficiently supports the claim that psychological maltreatment is a function of poor parenting, and as a matter of fact, it must be exhibited over some time. If the views above were situated in proper context, one would agree that such treatment and comments are sufficient to

[4] Ashe's position on the liberality and moderation that should characterise life and living is that it is not worth the sacrifices of humanity as reflected in Urhobo names like Reflected in traditional names like Akpoeghagha (life is a formality), Onomuoakpokpo (who takes the world with him at death) and Oboakpororo (humanity's view of life)

undermine family bonds, promote individualism and independence at a tender age, and incite hatred for other siblings, even family members, and ultimately homeland.

As interviewees juxtaposed the Delta State peculiarity with other ethnicities in the nation for better understanding and clarity, Mr. Alfred (Isoko/47 years old/widower/OND), a traffic warden said a commitment to the homeland would continue to be elusive because they do not have the culture of communality. He said:

> The Bini migrants work with networks that assist them to migrate, and as such, there is a conscious allegiance to the networks which enjoin you to contribute to the migration of others from the homeland. In the Eastern part of Nigeria, they have a culture of helping one another to achieve their goals. Among the Igbo, a community can sponsor an intelligent child to medical school so that when the child finishes, he is a doctor for the people. By so doing, such a person owes allegiance to the community that gave his/her life meaning. The same can be said of the Yoruba and Hausa. Why will a people with such a culture not have a diaspora culture that interfaces with home? In our context, you take charge of your life at a tender age, and that explains why the diaspora does not feel committed to the homeland when they eventually find fortune afterward because most of them were self-made (FGD/Delta State/February 2020).

Alfred's response and the preceding views on individualism allow us to make sense of the action-reaction binary of experiences and consequences thereof. Having endured for a long, a practice soon becomes a culture of the people, the consequences of which can either be productive or counter-productive in the long run. In this context, it is largely counter-productive, as is obvious in the weak state of the diaspora's relationship and development in the state. Connections that should have stirred development in the homeland have been destroyed from the cradle, leaving the state to wallow in wanton lack and stagnation.

4.1.2.2 The Complex Mix of Parental Influence

One subtle yet prominent cause of ethnic ambivalence is the positions of parents and the ideas they feed their diaspora children with. Views and positions from Focused Group Discussions echoed the negative impact of parents on their children. The discussants

blamed diaspora ambivalence on either their home-based or diaspora parents. Some discussants in the two diaspora locations also mentioned that counsel and warnings by their parents admonishing them to steer clear of the homeland as a cautionary factor pulled them away from the homeland. These warnings are connected to sad experiences—whether own or another's—that have left some families in devastating conditions. Patience (Urhobo/45 years old/married/BSc/second-generation diaspora), a teacher whose parents migrated to Lagos State in 1969 revealed:

> I saw my father try to interface with the homeland and try to build a home there that would have encouraged him to return, but five times my father tried to raise just a fence, five times it fell. He was eventually poisoned to death when he went visiting. But before his demise, he warned us never to return home. I had a horrible experience when we went visiting, and I almost lost my life. My younger sister, who thought she was a super being, violated my father's orders by visiting the homeland and paid with her life also. My mum, who also lives here in Lagos, reminds my siblings and me whenever she calls us not to ever visit home or take her remains there when she passes on. Home is a no-go area for me (IDI/Lagos/ December 2019).

In adherence to such words of caution by parents, diaspora on visits is always careful about what and where they eat, and how they move. With the warnings at the back of their minds, they are always careful not to reveal their itinerary or plans, especially as it concerns returning to base. According to Endurance (Isoko/23 years old/single/female/BSc) a youth copper with the Federal Road Safety Corps and one of the discussants, returnees always choose less conspicuous departure.

There are underlying spiritual explanations to justify these proactive measures, one of which is basically to avert an accident, as it is believed that many returnees meet their sudden death through accidents on their way to their new homes or destination locations. According to the discussants, parents even tell them (diaspora) what to say or do when they meet anybody they have formed a negative opinion about or considered evil. Often, returnees not only heed the advice of their parents because, as Lux and Walper (2019) argue, parental support, responsiveness and training are the bedrock that forms a child's attachment pattern, but also because they trust their parent's judgement and believe they

have a better understanding of the people in the homeland. An earlier study by Knight *et al*. (1993) laid the foundation for the argument that people will develop strong ethnic identities through parental socialisation. If the narrative of parental influence is dominated by the home-based as detailed above, it highlights the possibility of some iota of truth in the accusations by the diaspora because it becomes apparent that the home-based are aware of diaspora fears, anxieties, and allegations that have hitherto informed parents' or close relatives' cautionary advice to their diaspora relatives who either return temporarily or permanently to the homeland on what and how to carry out their daily endeavours. The supernatural claims of bewitchment by the diaspora do not have scientific proof; however, the repeated mentions of the claims by discussants are not necessarily to affirm and validate the diaspora's position but basically to caution them against demonising the home-based.

This theme greatly underscores the logic of attachment discourse which highlights parents' responsiveness as physical caregivers, as informing a child's attachment pattern (Lux and Walper 2019). When stretched beyond its scope, attachment discourse is reflective of the discussants' position emphasising the undisputable connection or bond the migrant had with the homeland. Drawing from the analysis of attachment theory prediction and the position of many discussants who formed the Itsekiri Focus Group Discussion, the strategic importance of the homeland as a place of origin and/or giver of life is not easily upturned such that absence from home cannot sever ties with the homeland. Usually, the first-generation diaspora confirms this hypothesis because of their closer connection with the homeland, unlike succeeding generations whose relationship with their homeland is either weak or absent (Ullah 2018). However, such assertion needs to be properly contextualised because discussants from the Itsekiri ethnic groups claim that their relatives maintain a cordial relationship with the homeland. According to them, the diaspora even returns with their offspring to help them familiarise themselves with the homeland and even participate in its cultural activities. By their double minority status[5], this claim contrasts Birani and Lehmann's (2013) report that minority ethnic groups express timidity

[5] Aside from being a minority ethnic group within the larger Nigerian context, the Itsekiri ethnicity is further considered a minority in a minority ethnic state because of its low numerical strength compared to other ethnic groups in the state.

in identifying with their ethnic identity. The fact is that this claim is not absolute as there were a few, though an insignificant number, of the Itsekiri diaspora who exhibited apathy towards the homeland; therefore, they are not exonerated wholly from the phenomenon interrogated in this research. The confidence exhibited by interviewees in the claim of a responsive Itsekiri diaspora was lacking in the responses of other ethnic groups, and this is an indication that they are aware of their increasing disconnection from the homeland

4.1.2.3 Fear of the Supernatural

In exploring the theme of the supernatural, witchcraft ran through the contributions of a majority of the interviewees. It was, however, observed that the Itsekiri and Ijaw did not give too much consideration to the belief, while the Isoko and Urhobo exhibited and expressed the existence and destructive capacity of witchcraft. Injustice cannot be divorced from the concept of witchcraft because witchcraft is all about injustice against and oppression of fellow humans. In brief, Luther, cited in McBride (2019), believes witchcraft is the direct opposite of pious protestants because rather than nurture and protect, they destroy. To avert misfortunes from befalling them (interviewee), many of them go into solitude and/or completely sever ties with their family members. As one local diaspora said, "I do not go home because when you go, they (witches) will remember one is alive for them to attack. I changed my number and name on social media for complete disconnection". With this, parents' caution of their children when they visit, as hinted above, is given further validation. Diaspora disguising their appearance when returning is a common practice, and they usually spend only a few days when they visit. For some others, they engage in spiritual exercises to fortify themselves against diabolical attacks before, during, and after a visit home. Eseoghene (Urhobo/ 36 years old/married/BSc./first-generation diaspora), a self-employed diaspora who migrated to Lagos State in 2010, explained why she does not visit home:

> I do not go home because people at home, especially old people, are evil, and they use their spiritual powers to pull people down just because they are not as fortunate as the person. Someone who was up and doing well before going home will just begin to experience an unexplainable decline in their undertakings. They inflict you with poverty, and sickness and eventually kill you.

> Some just die by accident on their way back to base (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

The quote above is a template that represents the narratives and grievances of the majority of the local diaspora. Critically, the accusing finger pointed at the home-based is instructive, in the sense that there is a clear indication that the supernatural world is integrated into the physical, as far as unfortunate events befall them. The ambivalence that they ascribe to the effect of metaphysical power—witchcraft in particular—is nuanced and variegated. Different experiences underlie this reason, and most were recorded by the Urhobo and Isoko diaspora. Further, in the interview, Eseoghene swore to never go to the homeland nor even associate with the people from the homeland. In this wise, the memory of the homeland continues to diminish because the grief of her experiences tends to transcend generations. Under such circumstances, a culture becomes recessive for another to be dominant, and that plays a pivotal role in promoting cultural hybridity or synthesis. When cultures are hybridised, boundaries not only get blurred, but practices draw meanings from different available elements (Overbeek and Tamás 2018).

Interestingly, the indictment and stereotype of the aged are not surprising as old people have been noted to suffer alienation, societal neglect, and being tagged as witches (Atata 2019). The crucial question asked here is: are the young pious? Exonerating responses were provided by the diaspora, and excuses were made for them. For Eseoghene, "the younger people are usually not spiritually evil because they are enlightened and more educated; rather, they could be miscreants, hooligans and individualistic". Her view also goes to show how being aged is synonymous with illiteracy and irrationality. Such a myopic response is undone by studies that have established witchcraft across different age groups and continents (Cimpric 2010; Okon 2012; Atata 2019; Sneddon 2019).

These allegations allow us to understand the relationship between witchcraft and underdevelopment. Many of the interviewees blamed their financial challenges on witchcraft and conceived it as a concomitant cause of poverty. These allegations are not typical of only Delta State people, as similar views are popular among other ethnic groups (Kakwata 2018)[6].

[6] For more insight on how poverty can be addressed without blaming it on witchcraft, see Kakwata (2018)

In Eseoghene's view above, there is a clear relationship between spirituality and ignorance. The response sheds light on the limited education and exposure that influence the mentality of some people against socioeconomic, infrastructural, and health challenges. Sometimes, for this reason, people are labelled as witches and blamed for their predicaments. It is interesting to note that allegations of witchcraft came from the local diaspora, with none from the foreign diaspora. In the light of the disparity in data between the foreign and local diaspora, particularly with regards to witchcraft, this study, therefore, contends that witchcraft is a function of socioeconomic challenge, infrastructural decay, government maladministration, and institutional failure to make available necessities of life for the citizens. Atata's (2019) study corroborates this position following their conclusion that witchcraft is a function of an underdeveloped society (p 244).

Further, in the discussions and interviews with key informants for Itsekiri and Ijaw, as well as discussants for both ethnic groups, it was revealed that the practice of witchcraft is not common in their ethnicity. As for the Itsekiri, they have a culture that deals with anyone who is found to be a witch, and that has served as a deterrent to others. In the Itsekiri culture, the dead are not buried, except the search for spiritual purity is done. If a deceased is posthumously found to have been a witch, such a person will not be given a proper burial; instead, the corpse is thrown into the evil forest to be feasted upon by wild creatures. These deterrents are socially inclined because of the looming embarrassment and damages they bring to the families of the deceased within the community. While it is acceptable that this has contained the preponderance of witchcraft, the study believes that for the Itsekiri culture to have a deterring measure is an indication that there exists witchcraft. The Ijaw, on the other hand, do not have any cultural explanation for the near absence of witchcraft in their socio-cultural narratives and beliefs. They trump their culture of fraternal brotherhood, where an injury to one is considered an injury to all. Ninety percent (90%) of interviewees from Ijaw and Itsekiri debunked the presence of witchcraft in their culture and blamed their ambivalence on other factors.

This study finds it intriguing that the diaspora, particularly local, blame their woes on witchcraft alluded to the home-based in an absolute manner—absolutism in the sense that witchcraft is limited to their ethnicities while other ethnicities and races are considered

pious. Witchcraft is only one of the many possible spiritual traits a human can have, and it has been documented to be present in other parts of Africa and even in the West (Atata 2019; McBride 2019). This is not to say other ethnicities are absolved of this as Alata (2019) argues; yet, they have a diaspora that relates to the homeland (Lampert 2010; Ajaegbu 2017). Many interviewees who reacted to this explained their sentiments that the witchcraft of other ethnicities is not as destructive as those of the Delta State people in the homeland. To make us understand the gravity of his decision, Mr. Peters said: "My father had landed properties in my village, and a house which he never completed but my siblings and I have decided to let it go because of their glaring spiritual attack."

These unfortunate experiences of Patience and Mr. Peters above leave memories that recast the homeland as unfriendly and unwelcoming. The overarching concentration on the metaphysical holds an apparent and established decision on the homeland, especially for people who have had first-hand experiences of evil attacks on their family members during a visit to the homeland. To buttress her convictions, Patience said she follows her friends to their villages in the Eastern part of Nigeria, and she can eat and sleep peacefully, but the same cannot be said of her hometown. Such comparison reinforces the stern resolve to sever ties with the homeland is sometimes manifested, even to the extent of forfeiting their inheritance, as evidenced by Mr. Peters. For a majority of them, they have adopted a cosmopolitan status whereby they call their place of domiciliation home.

4.1.2.4 Contesting the Bogus Supernatural Claim and Diaspora's Perception of the Home-based

The preceding theme detailing diabolism and the evil of the home-based is not without contestation from the home-based. Akpomena (Urhobo/50 years old/male/married/NCE/civil servant/home-based) finds these claims bogus and ludicrous. He stated: "If the diaspora who is considered to be living in relative abundance is complaining of being bewitched and afflicted with sickness and poverty by the home-based whom they see as living in lack and poverty, who will the home-based accuse of their condition? How can someone comfortable enough to fend for him/herself point accusing fingers at one who has nothing as perpetrators of evil occurrence in their lives?"

Discordant positions between the home-based and the diaspora fill their narratives. The shifting fault lines have created a binary of superior/ inferior dichotomy for which the home-based express their displeasure. Laefa (Ijaw/24 years old/female/single/BSc holder/home-based), a sales representative averred: “diaspora think they are better than us; people who have seen the light just because they now live in bigger cities. Even when they manage to interact with us and visit sometimes, they always want to exert control and behave like it is all rosy for them in their cities of residence. I think they put up a well-packaged identity and personality for the period they will be with family and friends in the homeland."

The superior/inferior dichotomy is a double-edged sword that cuts through homeland/diaspora understandings. The question asked here is who confers inferior or superior identity on whom and what are the parameters for these considerations? Responses trail this question such that the construction of superior/inferior perception is a question of the mind. The home-based believes the diaspora see themselves as superior while on the other hand, the diaspora consider the home-based as inferior and low to interact and interface with. While the true state of the diaspora's living conditions may not be known to the home-based, they are sufficiently convinced that people in the diaspora are no better. These presumptions set against a culture of animosity, jealousy, envy, resentment, and distance, facilitate a tension of inter and even intra-ethnic and family discrimination, which undoubtedly reinforces ethnic ambivalence that leaves the homeland as the ultimate loser.

With the presumptuous perception of the duo (Laefa and Akpomena) considered above, the home-based also launched their irritation over diaspora consideration of them as beggars and people who have problems they heap on the diaspora. According to some discussants, the diaspora sees them as parasites, people always requesting money as if we are nonentities that have no future. For Dennis (Isoko/38 years old/male/married/BSc holder/home-based), a farmer,

> …all we do is sit at home and wait for them to feed, clothe us and pay other bills for us. As a result, they sometimes block us and even do not pick up our calls even when we just want to check on them. We should

> mind our business while they mind theirs also (FGD/Warri/Delta State/February 2020).

This position again reiterates the “we” versus “them” dichotomy, thus emphasising the blame theory of Bellaby (2018) that indicts the other party in the sense that the diaspora's ambivalence is unconnected to the home-based financial pressure. The home-based find this appalling and insulting to their character and personality but the diaspora, nonetheless, expresses their disappointment at the attitude of the home-based. Tangbowei and Elo, interviewees in London, share the same sentiments on the financial pressure the home-based usually mount on them. Hear Tangbowei (Ijaw/43 years old/married/male/BSc holder/first-generation diaspora), a pastor who migrated to London in 2010:

> The people at home lack conscience. They think we pick money from the streets of London. Maybe if they know a little of what we go through before we send them £100, they will appreciate it. How can someone without any meaningful source of livelihood be having children and expecting a brother or sister who is abroad to train the child? When we do not give, they tag us as stingy, selfish, and greedy. It is unthinkable. The people are driving us crazy, and it is taking a toll on our mental, psychological and physical health (IDI/London/January 2020).

For Elo (Isoko/45 years old/female/married/MSc holder/first-generation diaspora), a computer scientist who migrated to London in the early 2000s, her experiences drove her into taking drastic actions by blocking what she called "parasitic relatives" from reaching her through phone calls or on any of her social media handles. Her foremost reason for that action was to secure and maintain her sanity. To buttress the points of these foreign members of the diaspora, a few videos have surfaced on social media pages like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, showing the diaspora venting their anger and pouring out their minds on issues of pressure from the homeland and how it is driving some of them into depression. However, this *ding-dong* position seems to be inconsequential in the narratives of the local diaspora. The local diaspora expressed a better connection with, and understanding of, the home-based, basically because they are closer home and understand the realities of the home-based (Lampert 2010, 2014).

Perhaps, David’s suggestions (which are discussed under a different theme) that the diaspora normalise compensating the home-based whenever they call for their assistance

is a fair strategy that would help maintain a cordial relationship between the diaspora and the home-based. It will not only make them commit to the errand, but it can also erase the intention to cheat the diaspora. Although the number of interviewees that condemned the action of the foreign diaspora only shows an insignificant increase above those in agreement with their positions, it is encouraging and also a sign of hope to have this number of local diaspora show support for the home-based and the homeland. If one assumes that the local diaspora in support of the homeland would be more connected to the homeland than the ones in support of their foreign counterparts, one would be justified considering their position. Ironically, however, seven of the local diaspora in support of the home-based expressed ambivalence towards the homeland. Why? Their charged responses show that they are emotionally invested, and their ambivalence is premised on other factors that are considered in this analysis chapter.

4.1.2.5 Lack of Love and Unity

The concept of unity, according to Thakhathi and Netshitangani (2020), fosters peace, progress, and development of any inter and intra-person, group, and societal relationship. Unity stirs up commitment and alliances that are supportive of one another for diverse human engagements. However, the understanding from the field shows that the Itsekiri and Ijaw were far better when it comes to unity and love; although not absolutely, the margin of error can be regarded as insignificant. The reason for this allowance will be expatiated upon in the course of the analysis. An opposite as well as a ubiquitous situation involving the Urhobo and Isoko dynamically supported this theme as a cause for ethnic ambivalence. Eight out of ten people from Urhobo and Isoko echoed in unison, "there is no brotherly love and unity among us". To buttress this point, one of the local diasporas gave an explicit scenario of where and when disunity among families is transmitted: “a child is unconsciously exposed to hatred and disunity at a tender age by the actions of the parents who accord their favourite child better treatment than another”.

The view of this interviewee is an indication that this practice is common among many Urhobo and Isoko parents in Delta State. Clear evidence is found with victims of such aggressive treatment, and they are more likely to have an independent and striving mentality. Aggressive parenting has been found to have weighty consequences on adult

children (Khusaifan and Samak 2016). The consequences, including personality disorder, social and emotional deficiency, and cognitive underdevelopment, are informed by these sad experiences. Going by the response above, one is provided with an understanding of the root cause of hatred and disunity that have pervaded the smallest units of society, especially in Delta State. The animosity unconsciously initiated by parents for purposes of discipline has had the long-term effect of becoming the way of life of an entire group of people. Eunice (Isoko/46 years old/female/widow/B.A.) a caterer who relocated to Lagos State in 1996, confessed she was a victim of child favouritism with her parents giving her sibling preferential treatment whilst growing up, and this informed her detachment from her family and the Delta State homeland. She noted that she had found solace in her children and the few friends she now regards as family. According to her, the problem began with the mother who incited her younger sister to believe that she was the cause of the sister's childlessness. The situation not only degenerated beyond reconciliation but also implicated other members of the family. Now, the love that should exist within a family has been replaced with hatred for one another. As hate and animosity gain more momentum over love and unity, the diaspora is drawn further apart from the homeland.

Equally, as members of the Urhobo and Isoko communities express their views condemning the animosity that exists among members of both ethnicities, they did not hesitate to acknowledge the unity that exists between the Itsekiri and Ijaw races. With a rather wistful expression on their faces, the discussants for Urhobo unanimously said, "the Itsekiri are united and wise, and you cannot take that away from them. That is why they are progressive because they help one another when opportunities emerge. They are relentless in their mission to remain the most relevant group of people in the state". This view explains why the Itsekiri and Ijaw are better connected with the homeland than the Urhobo and Isoko. One noticeable attribute during the fieldwork is the cordiality that was displayed and the unity and mutual respect demonstrated by the Ijaw and Itsekiri as against what is obtainable with the Urhobo and Isoko ethnic groups. The view echoed by the Urhobo, detailing the enviable attribute of the Ijaw and Itsekiri, is reiterated in the response of Harry, Stanley, and Eseoghene below. Harry narrated his experience during a job search while he was still in the homeland. According to him,

> I applied for a job in an oil company and was told by the person who interviewed me then that I would need to change my name to an Itsekiri name if I need the job. I asked him why I should drop my Urhobo identity for Itsekiri to secure a job in a state where I am an equal stakeholder. He answered and said 98% of the Urhobo people working in the company took Itsekiri identity, and that is the way it is done here. It was then I knew Urhobo have a big problem on their hands (Interview/Lagos/January 2020).

The condition that informs Urhobo indigenes to give up their identity, though highlighting all shades of desperation and deceit, is a survival strategy for them. Harry's response also accentuates the agency that abounds with Itsekiri's identity to unlock opportunities for opportunity seekers (Otuaro 2018). What is subtly implied is how Urhobo language and identity have degenerated into baggage that denies the indigenes opportunities even in their home state. The above response indicts the Urhobo race of not being supportive of one another when circumstances demand such. This allegation seems to be familiar to a majority of the indigenes because not less than half the population interviewed complained about the Urhobo and Isoko descendants being hostile and cruel to their fellow kinsmen. Stanley (Isoko/51 years old/male/married/B.A./second-generation local diaspora) whose parents relocated to Lagos State in the 1960s, is an artist. He recounted his experience with an uncle:

> I had the opportunity of travelling abroad when I was much younger but needed only the sum of N25,000 to process my document. I approached my uncle, and he pretended he would help me. After using me for menial jobs in his house for days, he told me bluntly that he did not have money to support that ambition of mine. Without mincing words, he asked, why would that opportunity come to me when his kids are there? (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019)

Eseoghene whose view was largely supported by a majority of the Urhobo and Isoko participants at home and in the diaspora said:

> Once you greet an Urhobo person in an office with the language and he doesn't answer, know that he will not help. Because of that behaviour, most of them do not connect with home because they know they have not

> sowed a seed that will make them comfortable around people at home (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

The apparent refusal to assist a relative and, by extension, a kinsperson as echoed by interviewees provides evidence why the Urhobo people are considered a poor race because they have ignorantly refused to apply the principle of love suggested by Marx. For Marx (cited in Hartwig 2015), love, a critical virtue of human existence, provides a principle that presupposes that the free development of one is a condition for the free development of all. Aside from the prevalent unsupportive attribute of an average Urhobo and Isoko indigene is detachment from home. In other words, the individual is not ignorant of his/her relationship with the kinsmen, and that pricks his/her conscience and informs why they are apprehensive around their kin. We can see the disparity and obvious contrast that exist in the views of Harry and Eseoghene above. The experience of Harry is an indication that there is a huge cultural threat to the Urhobo and Isoko identity and culture, even as the Itsekiri and Ijaw are more accommodating and hospitable, thus justifying their advantage.

The way the Urhobo and Isoko blew the trumpets of the Itsekiri and Ijaw, especially under this theme, even without any question being put to them, is instructive, and it signals a yearning for qualities that the Itsekiri and Ijaw possess. The affected groups blamed the division and disunity on the geographic fragmentation of the Urhobo and Isoko communities. Communities, especially in the Urhobo-dominated villages, are barely more than 1 kilometre apart from one another but with different variants of the language and, in most cases, a different traditional ruler. The same goes for the Isoko and Ijaw. As for the Itsekiri, the Olu of Warri is the sole and paramount ruler, with no dialectical variant of the Itsekiri language, despite having different Itsekiri villages. The Itsekiri also appropriated "Big Warri", one of their villages, as the ancestral home of all Itsekiri, irrespective of the community one hails from[7].

[7] The evocation of Big Warri as the ancestral homeland of the Itsekiri further explains the unity that many confirm exists with the group. So, aside from their original homeland, there is an ancestral one that binds all indigenes together. It should be noted at this point that the city of Warri is a sociocultural and uniting homeland for not only the Itsekiri but also Urhobo and Ijaw. This point is drawn from Senayon Olaoluwa's theorisation of 'overlapping homelands' in one of his lectures on 'diaspora and homeland' in (June) 2018. There is a fragmentation of homeland and also possible homeland commitment, so if the diaspora exhibits

Urhobo and Isoko ethnicities in Delta State are too fragmented such that for every power pole, there is a new community. These fragmentations have created autonomous identities that may potentiate conflicting interests through acts of competition/contestation, fratricidal, and war of attrition that stifle growth and development. Despite the dialectical variances that exist in the Ijaw language, it was admitted by its interviewees that they are one united ethnicity with a general variance of the language— a practice not seen with the Urhobo and Isoko. Whilst these cultural delineations throw up conflicting and concurring dynamics, a dichotomy exists between the four ethnic groups mapped for this study. While unity and love resonate with the Ijaw and the Itsekiri, hate and disunity were realities found to be challenging the Urhobo and the Isoko. This position finds concordance with Badiou (2003) that there is no force as powerful as love, for, in it, you find tetra-unity. Thus, while this may account for one of the reasons the Urhobo and Isoko are ambivalent towards the homeland, the ambivalence of the Ijaw and Itsekiri stems from other factors than love and unity. However, there is no absolutism in this dichotomy as not all Itsekiri and Ijaw are absolved of this problem; neither is every Urhobo or Isoko guilty of disunity. Some Urhobo and Isoko interviewees shared some beautiful experiences they had in the past, detailing how they have received assistance from kinsmen whom they never knew before.

Timini (Ijaw/55 years old/married/male/B.Ed.), a secondary school principal, believes this undoing character of hatred, animosity, and disunity is a problem of an average Delta person regardless of ethnicity. His response is revealing and further buttresses the point that Delta State indigenes just do not enjoy helping one another:

> The school owned by E.K Clark is managed by his Yoruba wife. The staff roll call is dominated by Yoruba names. When they wanted to paint the school, they brought people from Osun State as if there are no professional painters in the whole of Delta State. There is no better word to describe it than hatred (FGD/Warri/Delta State/February 2020).

ethnic ambivalence towards the city of Warri, a 'uniting homeland', their indigenous homeland suffers a greater degree of ethnic ambivalence.

First and foremost, the message of putting other ethnicities before one's own is what is highlighted in this response and further validates why some of the groups in the state are seen as poor because they do not assist one another to achieve their goals. In addition to that, the response lends credence to the aligning realities argued under intertribal marriages of Delta State citizens to their spouses regardless of which of the spouse hails from the state. This response, with its ethnic undertone, falls short of acknowledging that employment is done based on requirements, and these requirements are determined by the employers. So, ethnic sentiments most likely may not take the lead over qualification and competence. This response, as a representative of responses like this, however, makes this point crucial in understanding not just poverty but apparent dissociation among kinsmen that many interviewees complained about.

On second thought, experiences appeared to have played a role in this anomaly and consequently defined the relationship that transpires with fellow kinsmen. Reports on betrayal found a place within this theme. Some interviewees said they had paid bitterly for helping their kinsmen because betrayal was their reward in the end, and this has affected their relationship with people from the state. For some, alliances are better pitched with other ethnicities because of the sense of neutrality that comes to play. Just like the virtue of trust discussed under a different theme in this chapter, betrayal is not a function of ethnicity but personality. Noonan (2011) argues that human nature is a combination of many possibilities. Just as it is human to betray, so is it to be compassionate. The allegation that they prefer to help people of other ethnic groups does not exonerate other ethnicities from the tag as betrayers. One thing that is critical at this point is the heavy presence of a feeling of insecurity that constrains them from assisting their kith and kin. So, because of muddled-up emotions, many of them will rather conceal their identity when they come in contact with someone from their ethnic group. As they distance themselves from their people when they meet in the diaspora, they subconsciously extricate themselves from the homeland, and that has amounted to negative implications for homeland relationships and possible remittances for development.

Along the same line, Margaret (Itsekiri/43 years old/female/divorced/ HND/first-generation local diaspora), an interior/exterior decorator who migrated to Lagos State in 2007, gave an insight into her experience with her sister:

> I approached my sister, whom I know is comfortable financially, for a soft loan to offset my kids' school fees because my money was stuck in an investment. She advised me to withdraw my children from the school and enrol them in a government school if I cannot foot my bill. I think she is insecure because she has heard of my children's academic performance (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

First and foremost, Margaret's response, like Timini's, supports the argument that not all Itsekiri and Ijaw indigenes are absolved of the indictment of Urhobo and Isoko as a people who do not share in the principle of brotherliness. Bunnin (2020) explains that love brings liberty and allows human actions to emanate from the point of reason rather than emotions. The author's analysis of Spinoza's account of psychology espouses that the vulnerability to our emotions is borne out of our ignorance. This view is apt for understanding challenges of Margaret. Here is not to support the interviewee but the concluding statement of this response is suggestive of envy—the kind of envy that resonates with Stanley's encounter with the uncle above—which is also a product of presumption. While neither the details of that engagement nor the disposition of the sister in question are known, what is obvious in the contribution of this interviewee is the absence of support. To grasp a proper understanding of the situation, especially as it underscores the positions of other interviewees, and not to sound generic, love, as deployed by interviewees and observed by the researcher, begins from the family inter-personal relationship and graduates to inter and intragroup relationship, thus foregrounding Negir's (cited in Laurie and Stark 2017) ideological contextualisation of love. Margaret's disappointment, as deduced from her response, reflects an impression that her sister does not want the best for her children. The chances are that this interviewee would likely exercise some measure of constraints around her sister, one which may transcend her generation if measures are not taken against such.

4.1.2.6 Love and Unity in the Domain of Social Media

The worry over hate and disunity has stirred discussion even on social media platforms. The age of social media has modified human activities in an unprecedented manner. Jiang *et al.* (2016) argue that the media are image formulators capable of informing the perception of viewers to redefine their mindset towards a particular issue, phenomenon, person, or process. Ever since the birth of social media and the showcasing of different activities, there have been rumours that some activities on social media are far from real (Wagner and Boczkowski 2019). As a warning, some media content must be taken with a pinch of salt. This is the case with some of the ethnic groups that make up the population of this study. There is a seeming mediated reality giving a sense of false unity, even as there is animosity deep within. The promoted and mediated unified front of the Urhobo, for instance, is a far cry from the realities of splinter and factional groups that have become the pervading identity of the Urhobo and Isoko groups. Conditioned and packaged appearances of unity promoted via social media do not strike a chord of unity with the actual manifested division that this study gathered.

Recently, there has been an intentional and dedicated deployment of social media for the rejuvenation of cultural consciousness within the ethnic groups and this has even cascaded down to communities within the state. This study is not ignorant of the love and unity that seem to exist among members of different groups across different social media platforms. However, the reality is rather in contrast to the "virtual" love displayed on these platforms. For example, there are virtual language classes on some of these platforms, designed to teach people and strengthen their masteries of the different languages and cultures in the state. Ironically, such energy does not transcend the virtual to the physical because many of the interviewees in the three locations unanimously hold the same perspective of the general unfriendly character that people from Delta State exhibit when they meet their kinsmen.

A counter-argument was raised by the Urhobo key informant, Sunny (52 years old/male/married/Ph.D.), who is a lecturer with a Ph.D. qualification. He submitted that it is malicious to say the Urhobo and Isoko people do not help one another. His argument rather towed the path of hospitality and generosity, particularly because the Urhobo are

more selfless and exercise fairness than the other ethnicities in the state. In his view, an Urhobo person will always consider the neighbour when sharing because they believe that the stranger should be treated right. After all, he/she leaves with an impression that will either make or mar the interest of the people. A typical analogy was given by him: "If the sharing of ten slots for employment is to be done by an Urhobo person, and there are three ethnicities inclusive of Urhobo, the coordinator will prefer to give four slots each to the other ethnicities and give two to his people. His reason will be that if he takes four or three, he would appear as an oppressor or greedy, so he would rather prefer to deny his kinsmen, and that was how the Urhobo and the Isoko nation lost their value of charity-begins-at-home and unity among themselves". On the one hand, it depicts a character of geniality which Lashley (2015) aptly says is offered with all sense of sacrifice, while it is seen as foolishness by some others. This study discovered that as humane as that virtue is, it has created an unhealthy relationship between the Urhobo and Isoko nations and people. They see others first before themselves, and that has grossly hindered their relationship with one another and the homeland.

It may seem as though this research has taken a unilateral position that diaspora's remittances are expected to be recorded only in tangible structures, or even counters the positions of some respondents who share a disappointing opinion about the unreceptive and unsupportive attitude of some kinspersons. On the contrary, this research, while recognising the disappointing positions of some respondents about the inhospitable attitude of their kinsmen, admits that the Delta State diaspora does not only give back to their homeland but helps their fellow kinspersons in more ways than one. Further observations from field tours and informal interactions with some people in different communities, confirmed that association members for the ethnic groups have shown solidarity with the homeland through their donations and offering of scholarships to people at different educational categories/levels. At some other levels, learning materials are made available to students in many government schools. They renovate the structures in some schools to create a more conducive learning environment in the communities and the state. Medical equipment has also been donated to mainly public hospitals in different locations in the state, just as there has been the provision of potable water in some communities (KII 2020).

Social media has also contributed in no small measure to promoting unity among the kinsmen as people interact on their ethnic platforms. Recently, there has been a growing practice of financial support, especially for the sick, by members of these ethnic associations on social media. Members pool resources to cater to sick members who need financial assistance and sometimes these efforts are done within the shortest possible time following short notice. Although one may not categorically attribute this gesture solely to the diaspora because membership is not always restricted to only people from the diaspora, one clear thing is that social media is accelerating and changing the dynamics of diaspora remittances (Espinosa 2016).

To say this commitment contradicts the thesis of this research goes without saying, but like other states or regions that have been identified in this study as having vibrant diaspora relationships with the homeland, they engage in both forms (tangible and intangible) forms of remittances. The gains of a formidable diaspora relationship are reflected in different aspects of their socioeconomic, and political life. Therefore, without bias or prejudice, the argument of this research is sustained.

4.1.2.7 Lack of Relatives and Friends in the Homeland

For some diaspora, the memory of the homeland would not be blurred for them if they had family and/or friends there. Many of them find it unreasonable to consider a visit to the homeland when they do not have anyone there. Different situations formed different categories for this theme. For some first-generation diaspora who did not grow up in the homeland, they are neither connected to the state of their birth nor the homeland they possibly did not interact with before migration. For some others who have lost close relatives or have also relocated, the homeland is almost not in existence for them. In the words of Mrs. Balogun (Isoko/46 years old/female/married/BSc./first-generation local diaspora), an Agricultural consultant who relocated to Lagos in 2005, “I was born and raised in Sokoto State, and now live in Lagos State. Both parents are dead, and my two siblings also do not live there. I simply do not have any connection to the place”.

Similar narratives also framed many second-generation diaspora's disconnections from home. Most of these people are better connected to the culture into which they are born and have little or no knowledge of what cultural practices are obtainable in their parents'

homelands. More often than not, most of them do not feel any sense of connectedness, affinity, or allegiance to anyone in the homeland, a pattern that is inevitable as generations emerge (Ullah 2018).

4.1.3 Absurdities from Home

This theme explores the different abnormalities that describe the practices of the people at home. These abnormalities which diaspora find disturbing and which cause their disconnection from the homeland, are noticeable both among the youth and the elderly in the state.

4.1.3.1 The Cankerworm of Laziness Exhibited by Many Youths

The youths of any nation are the most vibrant category of society with a penchant for the growth and development of society. Scholars across different disciplines establish the pivotal role of the youth as nation builders and agents of development (Aluede et al., 2011; Okafor 2011). Adopting the United Nations' description and demographic representation of the youth as people within the age bracket of 15-25, it follows that identified and expected variables of energy, ingenuity, innovativeness, industriousness, resourcefulness, spontaneity, talent and skills are fundamentals in a youth. This is not to say that people above or below this age bracket do not feature in giving value to their societies. That is why in Nigeria, which is the broader context for this study, the Youth Policy considers people within the age bracket of 18-35 as a youth, a grouping that signifies the most agile category of the population. The application of these qualities to positive and productive use serves as a driver of sustainable and developed institutions for an effective and efficient economic, social, political, and religious structure of the society—the vision of the United Nations. Across Nigeria, many youth movements have expressed their positions on different affairs in the country, especially on issues bordering on social injustice and human rights violations (Abdullahi *et al*. 2014). These demonstrations again draw inspiration from the undoubted zeal and enthusiasm premised on their qualities as young people as identified above.

Kendall (2004) argues that social movements spring up from a collective awareness to challenge and resist unacceptable policies and actions that are considered detrimental to

the societal structure for the ultimate realisation of a positive change. However, mixed feelings trail this position, especially within the context of this study. The peculiarities in the Niger Delta region have produced different youth movements such as the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force, among others. These groups challenged perceived age-long political marginalisation and environmental and human exploitation by both oil multinational companies and the State (Ojakorotu and Gilbert 2010) while concurrently advocating the progress, growth, and development of the Niger Delta region. These agitations and actions have been largely categorised as anti-governmental.

Despite the condemning tag of militancy used in describing these agitators because of their crude and illegal method of venting their anger, one must not lose sight of the few dividends that these protests have fetched, such as infrastructural projects and the establishment of the Ministry of Niger Delta and the Niger Delta Development Commission. It is important to take cognisance of Ahmad's (2017) argument that development is a by-product of conflict, crisis, or war. His review of the book titled *Conflict and Development* sufficiently captures the context of the Niger Delta with its focus on poverty, profit, political economy, and institution. It highlights how stakeholders who exploit natural resources also drive conflict and development (p 409).

On the flip side, the militant protestations and actions of these groups against the exploitative operations of multinational oil companies brought grave consequences to the region, especially Delta State. The once virile economic and social life of Delta State was soon thrown into a state of despondency because of insecurity indexed by incessant attacks on oil workers and facilities as well as the ethnic conflicts that ravaged Warri and its environs. The major fallout of these developments was the relocation of the oil multinational companies away from the state. This negatively impacted economic and social life; youth unemployment surged and infrastructure in the state deteriorated. Consequently, poverty and violence became commonplace in Delta State. Such a scenario is eloquently captured by Hönke (2014), who believes that violence and poverty become associated with particular neighbourhoods or communities, marking them as other and stigmatizing all those within them as violent or deviant. The effects of such configurations

are processes of social exclusion that inscribe insecurity as a permanent fact of life.

Hönke's view helps us understand the ravaging realities associated with the youth of Delta State as discovered in data from the field. Eight out of ten diaspora members blamed the ambivalence of the diaspora on the youth. In the words of Frederick (Ijaw/51 years old/male/married/BSc/first-generation diaspora), an insurer who migrated to London in 1997, "The youths in the state are all shades of liability. They are lazy, swindlers, ignorant, rude, visionless, and lack creativity and ingenuity". These are stigmatising adjectives with which to describe a people, and the possibility of challenging these condemnations is tough because, as Hönke (2014) posits, there is a preponderance of stereotypes and dichotomies before youth can do or even show their capabilities for solutions or alternatives. The physical and symbolic manifestation of violence and terror has reorganised the order of activities in the structures and institutions of the state to such an extent where perceptions, opinions, and facts about the youth are bookended with negativities associated with thuggery, illiteracy, militancy, kidnapping, armed robbery, and laziness among others.

To support this notion, Ms. Elizabeth (Ijaw/31 years old/female/single/BSc./first-generation diaspora), a beautician who relocated to Lagos State in 2016 believes:

> People at home live life like they own it all. In the evening, they just take their bath, brush their hair neatly, tie wrapper on a white singlet and start strolling by the riverbank like someone without a future and looking lost. No plan, just live for each day as a local champion. Meanwhile, the time they spend cleaning themselves up, a mechanic in Lagos or Abeokuta is repairing a car and adding to the economy of his place. So, if people say they are lazy, they are largely right because they are not resourceful. It is difficult identifying with such types of people because of the difference in outlook on life (IDI/Lagos/December 2019).

To many of the diaspora, laziness is more evident in how vibrant youths practically avoid job engagement by trading their opportunities for bargained sums with people who are willing to take up the same job. Some believe the youths choose not to work but articulate

a sense of financial entitlement by any means possible. Harry, in his confusion, narrated another experience of his:

> How can upcoming generations prefer to be ghost workers to the point that they even sell what is their right as far as something paltry is coming in? They do not want to work but lusciously desire income for extravagance. Before I got the job that demanded I change my identity, I was offered a job that was to pay 120k, and the offeror said N40,000 would be remitted to them monthly, which automatically means my take home is N80,000. When I asked to know who the 'them' are, I was told that apart from the original owner of the job who incidentally isn't interested in working for 30 days only to receive a 'paltry' N120,000, there are middlemen to be settled like the chairman and community leader. If you default, they will deal with you mercilessly. This does not happen with Yoruba people. How can that type of environment be safe and developed? (IDI/Lagos/December 2019)

Both Elizabeth and Harry show good knowledge of the realities of job/economic engagements among the people, having spent significant years of their lives in the homeland. There is an audible undertone of anger in their responses following their irritation at youths' attitude to work. Their responses also show people who have extricated themselves from a perceived laid-back environment, a people whose understanding of life, survival, and success sharply contrasts with that of their counterparts in the homeland because of their resourcefulness and commitment to earning a living. Perhaps the obvious irreconcilable values informed their emigration to a more challenging socioeconomic environment/state—Lagos State.

Brennan *et al*. (2009) opine that the creativity and ingenuity of youths are fundamental virtues that drive societal transformation and cohesion. By inference, the absence or non-applicability of both is capable of stagnating society and even causing possible friction or violence. To say violence hinders youth ability is an understatement as many Delta youths, especially the home-based, are engrossed in the social vices that deter the progress of any society. This reality highlights the nexus between youth insurgency and youth unemployment and poverty, which has also been foregrounded in literature (Abdullahi *et al*. 2014; Siro and Sundramoorthy 2019). In challenging the positions of the diaspora, the

home-based contested their views and considered them unfair and insensitive to the practicalities of the state. Discussants argued that Delta youths are industrious and would not hesitate to be engaged legally. In a saddened tone, a discussant posed a question to counter the stereotypes that the Delta State people are challenged with. Mofe (Itsekiri/28 years old/male/single/male/NCE), gym instructor asked:

> How will they apply their industriousness when all they have always known how to do has been stripped off them? It is the most unfair thing to say if anybody conceives Delta youths as hooligans and lazy. Are the youths in London, Lagos State, or Imo State faced with similar challenges as Delta's? (FGD/Delta State/February 2020)

It is critical to also come to terms with realities embedded in this view. These are realities that suggest that some concerns cannot be changed, especially oil exploration activities that negatively impact the environment. In such a case, the real thing is to develop alternatives to check the problem. What appears to be inalienable is the opposing positions between the diaspora and the home-based. These contrasts show differences in values and norms based on experiences at home and in destination countries.

4.1.3.2 Aggressive *Deve*[lopment] Claim and Levies

Deve, derived from the word, development, is a fee charged by community leaders and youths before any physical project, especially construction or installation, can be carried out in most communities across the state. The demand for *deve* has become an albatross that stifles development in the state. This fee comes under the justification that the land on which the construction or installation stands is in the demanding community. The "illegal" fee was initially demanded and collected by youths in the community, and this was remitted to the leaders, who in turn gave a fraction to the youths as a reward. Over time, the demand and collection of *deve* became a business venture for the youth— a lucrative but dangerous one. The claim for *deve* soon took a desperate turn as community youths became fragmented and different factions demanded it. These different groups often employ violence in extracting compliance and payment. They also confiscate equipment, assault workers, kidnap workers or business and building owners, and in extreme cases, they have been known to kill workers on site.

As interviewees lament the cruelty perpetrated by these *deve* collectors, their expressions and gestures are suggestive of exhaustion, repulsion, ambivalence, and/or even complete withdrawal. Their view of this cankerworm—*deve*—is as critical and salient as the problem of insecurity which is prevalent in the state. Interestingly, while acknowledging the stronghold of this indiscriminate and illegal extortion, the home-based refrained from being judgemental of the diaspora's decision not to invest, especially in landed assets, in the homeland. Many of them said because of the violent methods used in collecting *deve* they are likely to be ambivalent and relocate their investment like many members of the diaspora do. Daniel (Ijaw/51 years old/male/married/M.A./first-generation), a journalist who relocated to the UK in 2005 helps us to understand the gravity of this burden on the diaspora as well as its consequences:

> Investing or constructing a building project in Delta State is tantamount to suicide. I tried siting a tile-production company in the state because my dad is from there, but I was practically frustrated by the different levies demanded by different factions of the youths. I had to relocate the project to Akwa-Ibom, where my mum is from. It was so bad that from the minute our agent went to show us available and befitting land, the youths in the community showed up to let us know they are entitled to some 'illegal claims'. The project was to have foreign partners; that is to tell you it was a big project that would have even taken some of the youths off the street. Delta State lost the opportunity because of a lack of vision, pride and stubbornness, laziness, and greed. When I went to my mother's state, my team and I were given a warm welcome and land by the traditional ruler himself, for which we made payment. Today, the company is thriving, some of the youths are duly employed, and development is being brought to the community (IDI/London/January 2020).

Corroborating this reality, Gideon (Itsekiri/33 years old/male/single/BSc.), a photographer, said:

> You see Dangote's refinery in Lagos State; it was originally supposed to be sited in Sapele. But the investor knew the restiveness and demands from the youths would halt and slow his investment. Dangote bought Nigeria's Ports Authority (NPA) trailer park in Warri, but when

> youths flooded the place with their problems and demands, he moved his idea from the state. Warri is a shadow of itself. It has expired. No economic life (Discussion/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

Along the same line, nowhere in the interviews was the menace of collecting *deve* by jobless youths and selfish leaders painted as irresponsible as in the response below by a home-based. He described an ongoing event (as at the time of the interviews) that explains the damage of *deve*. According to Victor (Urhobo/42 years old/male/married/BSc.) who is a nurse,

> This *deve* practice in Delta State is irredeemable because it is an easy way to make money in the state. It is daily revenue, and that explains the reason they cannot eradicate it, even when the government had announced that the *deve* claim is unlawful and offenders will be punished. But they do not have the moral justification for enacting that policy because they have failed the youths on many fronts. The situation is so bad in Delta State because the youths who carry out this mayhem at construction sites can kill to get what they want. Again, the leaders cannot control the youths because they are election tools for them during elections.

He reflected further:

> …I am not ignorant of the fact that youths in some other states in Nigeria also make this claim, but I can tell you for a fact that it is not as deadly as it is in Delta State. The ones in Delta State have different factions who come at different times to cause trouble and hinder the pace of work on site. This puts an excessive financial burden on the owners of these building projects. I am currently building a house, so I am categorical about what I am telling you. The situation has so deteriorated to the extent that even when sand suppliers come to offload sand on my site, I am made to pay. I do not think *omo onile* will reduce such pettiness in Lagos State (FGD/Delta State/February 2020).

For all three responses, there is a common message of socio-economic security and safety implications for the state. Incidents such as the ones narrated by these interviewees show an unstable and tense environment unfit for investments and diaspora interface with home.

Elsewhere in this chapter, more details are given on the socio-economic situation in the state as a contributory factor to the ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora.

Although the *deve* struggle may not be as dangerous in other communities in the state as it is in Warri and other major towns in the state, the situation cited in Lagos State is relatively the same in the sense that lands are sold and are sometimes resold, thereby causing chaos between/among buyers (Ayodele 2017). The such advantage-taking criminal practice may be connected to the pull factors and socio-economic promises that Lagos State has over other states in the nation. This has endeared Lagos State to many people from within and outside the country, and it is only a matter of time before the migrant residents begin to advance their ambition to owing properties in the state. Because the demand for landed property outweighs the supply as a result of the small landmass of the state, competition as well as "money power" becomes critical factors in these realities. Victor's response shows that the inability of the government to stop the practice reflects its incompetence and unwillingness to cause disaffection since the same youths are often used by the political class for electoral crimes to facilitate their assumption of political positions in the state.

Furthermore, the acknowledgement of *omo onile* by Victor above is an indication that the discussant speaks in comparative terms to show that he is not vilifying Delta State land practices and youths; neither is he ignorant of what is obtainable in other places. To help understand why the Delta situation is more dangerous, Powede (Ijaw/41 years old/female/divorced/B.A.), a radio presenter, noted during the FGD that:

> The severity of *deve* in Delta State, especially in Warri, is unqualifiable. In other places like Lagos mentioned by some other contributors, their elders have not lost their right to caution the youths. In Warri, there is a flip in position. The youths are the elders while the elders, the youths. Here, the youths tell the elders what to do. They have practically toppled the elders. They can even beat an elder to a pulp if he or she tries to caution them, and it is also because some of these elders have lost their birth rights and values by their illicit acts and corruption with the government (FGD/Delta State/February 2020).

Just when conclusions were about to be drawn on the scope of these anti-developmental claims, attention was called to other economic activities that have been crippled by illegal extortion. One commercial driver and two traders recounted their experiences at their places of economic engagements. They recalled experiences that defined their situation as pathetic, exploitative, unfair, and usurping, almost nullifying their survival efforts. This was evident in the FGD with the discussants in Delta State as Mr. Oyibode (Urhobo/55 years old/male/married/OND), a commercial car driver put it thus:

> When we try to make ends meet so we can take care of our families, they exploit us. We are working for them because the amount they collect after each passenger load is outrageous. They collect half the amount of what we collect from passengers for doing nothing. Car maintenance and fuel will also be deducted from the money. At the end of the day, we are left with little or nothing. I think it is not just insensitive but wicked of them to unleash such unfairness on people who do the stress while they sit back and impose levies on us. Yet, we have a government that is paying no attention to these challenges (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

The notion of exploitation is very profound in the response above, showing the prioritization of financial interest over humanity (Spash 2020). Oyibode's view is suggestive of systematic exploitation of humans and resources that leaves people helpless and renders them complacent (Wollner 2019). Similar comments typified the negative experience of a trader in one of the markets in Warri. Mabel (Itsekiri/48 years old/female/married/B.A.), a trader, shared her ordeal:

> … then they came one day to collect money, I could not afford it because I had made other payments earlier on. They did not even allow me to explain before they threw away my fruits, and many were destroyed. I cried that day not only because it was a huge loss of money but also because the money used in setting up the business was gotten as a loan. What we pay in a week is unthinkable, and such an act cannot stop because it is easy money for them and the community leaders they report to. So, even when you decide to report them, they have the protective shield of some powerful people. Police cannot stop *deve* and levy collection because they are accomplices too. They have their agent who does the collection on their

> behalf. We do not even know the legal ones. We are just compelled to pay everyone they impose on us (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

This study found persuasive evidence in the menace of *deve* when the interviewee above, who is a trader in one of the markets in Warri, invited the researcher to her shop for a few hours to grasp first-hand knowledge of the routine exploitation they are subjected to. Within five hours, six different groups came to demand one levy or the other. Of the six, three—local government levies, security, and cleaning levies— were considered legal. The remaining three went to people who considered themselves powerful thugs that control the market. One of the remaining levies was tagged chairman's allocation; another untitled levy was collected by people who came with a fierce-looking man whom the researcher presumed was in his late 30s, and who was an ex-convict, according to the interviewee. Failure to pay this particular levy could lead to the seizure of merchandise worth more than the requested amount. The last payment was meant for government workers who were meant to man the market. These people who do not collect the monies directly employ proxies to do the collection on their behalf. They resort to the collection by proxy because the levy is illegal and they do not want to be implicated in the illicit act. Despite all that was witnessed by the researcher, the interviewee stressed that some other collectors did not come during the period of observation.

The bitterness and resentment of many in the diaspora are reflected in the narratives above. The diaspora and the home-based express their disappointment and dissatisfaction with these extortions, which they consider detrimental to the development of the state. Both diaspora and home-based are subjected to different forms of payment before they can proceed with their projects. What rationale justifies the incessant illegal levies placed on investors who want to bring development to a community? These extortions are unexplainable and deter the diaspora and intended investors. For this reason, real estate investments are conspicuously negligible in the state (Ayodele 2017).

Another form of *deve* collection was brought to the fore by interviewees. This form of extortion has resulted in the closure of investments because of the financial burden that business owners are made to bear. Below is the ordeal of Tegwolo (Isoko/50 years

old/male/married/MSc./first-generation diaspora), an investor in the homeland who migrated to Lagos in 2000 and who, incidentally, was an interviewee in this study:

> …your establishment is subjected to perpetual payment because they argue that the project is sited in the land that belongs to their community, and as such, it is their right to make demands. This is quite different from the company's initiative of corporate social responsibility. Even when they are offered opportunities in such companies or during the construction work, they outrightly turn it down for the ludicrous reason that they cannot be engaged in such works to make a living. It got frustrating to the extent that I had to shut down and sold off everything (IDI/Lagos State/January 2020).

With other experiences, we have seen that these claims are not limited to construction but extend to other areas of the economic life of the state. Traders in the market lamented the different levies they are made to pay in a day, stressing that failure to pay is often visited with force and sometimes violence, including seizure of wares, disposal, or destruction of same. At the motor park, the situation is no better as commercial drivers are forced to remit half of the total amount they carry per trip. Even when the state is experiencing a severe economic setback, the presence of *deve* has further weakened the economic fabric of the state. As a major threat to investment and development, the youth have undermined social relations due to their aberrant attitude, which has over time become the norm. Delta State and the youth have gradually snowballed into redundancy not so much because the prerequisite for a thriving economy is absent but because they have not been channelled purposefully for the right and positive cause. Data from the field reveal that these outrageous displays and claims by the youth undermine investments and building projects of which diaspora are most likely to be part.

4.1.3.3 Faulty Value System and Poor Character Formation

Diaspora's inability to comprehend the attitude of the home-based has laid the foundation for disconnection from the homeland. Compared to the realities they experience daily in their destination countries, many of them decried the poor character formation of the people at home as repulsive. The poor value system, according to people in the diaspora,

supports immorality, disrespect, disunity, hate, and greed. As Kate furthered her discussion, she said:

> The little things people at home take for granted are the ingredients that enrich relationships. They command mutual respect, encourage the diaspora to commit more, and open opportunities. Words, phrases, and sentences like 'please,' 'thank you, or 'I'm sorry are courteous remarks that you do not readily find among people at home like you do here. I am yet to fathom why this is difficult for the people at home to imbibe. I mean, they fail to meet up at an appointed time, and instead of them being sorry, they justify it by saying it is an African culture to be late; nonchalance is self-destructing; the value system is sore because younger people uncouthly insult the older at will or even beat them up in the name of anger; children insult parents; impatience is inherent, there is a high level of foolishness among youth, high level of sheer stupidity. It is repulsive, and I find that kind of environment inhabitable (Interview/London/January 2020).

Exposure to a culture that places a premium on mutual respect, unlike the opposite as claimed by this interviewee, makes home uninteresting and inhabitable. Counter-narratives by the home-based challenged diaspora's perception stating that they do not have the moral justification to condemn the behaviour of the home-based, as there are more disrespectful practices in the West than there are in the homeland. Back at home, these concerns are not limited; neither do they generally apply to all persons in the homeland. Forms of disrespect and absence of courtesy are individual traits that cut across all ethnicities and cultures; yet, other groups do not discard their homeland in the name of courtesy. Even though caution is taken to remain objective to varying views, one must remember that reaction to incidences is borne out of individual discretion. This may not be a principal cause of ethnic ambivalence by the diaspora, but it became important to state it because a sizeable number (13 specifically) of respondents acknowledged it as a contributory cause of disconnection from the homeland.

Because of the unexpected number of interviewees that drew attention to this factor, observations were keenly made during the fieldwork in the Delta State homeland. What was seemingly apparent was the gross absence of respect and courtesy among the people.

This has gone on to form their character, and that further explains the prevalence of social vices in the state. These attitudes are copied at an early stage in the growth of a child. A discussant who is a teacher in Big Warri, an Itsekiri community, narrated how a pupil in her class desires to be a 'community boy' when he grows up because the father is a 'community man' and he has seen that he never runs out of cash. People who ascribe such a title to themselves are bullies who coerce the community under their terms and forcefully control the activities in their communities. Often, their decisions and positions about certain issues in their communities always take precedence.

While parents are expected to take up the mantle of parenthood and place their offspring on a better path than theirs, parents in this region have left young children to their fate. Children become self-made with little or no value instilled in them by their parents. It is on this basis that Tabak and Zawadzka (2017) argue that successful adulthood is a reflection of positive parenting and vice versa. For this pupil whose ambition is to become a 'community man,' he already sees this title as a profession worth emulating. Over time, he is going to learn the act of bullying, disrespect, and oppression, among others, because, as we can infer, the foundation that should shape the mentality and upbringing of a child is faulty *ab initio*. Parental neglect, ignorance, and failure were captured in the view of Mrs. Emiko (Itsekiri/52 years old/female/married/M.Ed./first-generation diaspora), a teacher whose relocation to Lagos State was in 1999:

> It is in Warri that a young teenage daughter will tell the parent that she will not sleep in the house, and instead of the parent interrogating the movement of the child with necessary chastisement against such attitude, they will rather tell the child not to return empty-handed. What does that translate into? I mean, it is a sore value system. In those days when elders see youths of the opposite sex together, there is this fear that immediately causes both parties to disperse, but now, when elders see youth in an awkward position, rather than interfere like they used to, the first thing they do is to secure his phone. Even at that, if you are unlucky, these unscrupulous youths will still collect it from you. They ask you to hand over your phone to them as if they are the rightful owners. Why will I want to interact or invest in such an environment.?An environment that has lost its attractiveness.No morals nor values (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

Some parts of Mrs. Emiko's view underscore the changing dynamics of values in society. These dynamics bring to the fore the argument that no culture is sacrosanct, as every culture is subject to change, having contacted other cultures, interacted, and gradually diffused some practices afterward (Idang 2015). In the fast-changing world of the 21st century, information technology has accelerated this process, and the grip of many cultures is constantly being watered down. Often, these changes are not retractable. The irrevocable alteration and shattering effects of these changes are what Shome and Hedge (2002) refer to as the 'problematics' of culture. For instance, the culture of respect that is highlighted above has continued to wane just as the moral of dignity continues to dwindle, as reflected in the first sentence of the response.

Emiko's view above is quite revealing of the eroding moral and cultural values and how the consequences are manifested in increasing social vices in the state. From parents expressing fear at parenting their children to the elders' anxiety about their safety, the situation in Delta State has translated into deep resentment for the homeland by the diaspora. Considering the rhetorical question posed by this interviewee, it is apparent that the homeland has indeed lost its attractiveness because basic moral values are largely absent.

4.1.3.4 Lack of Trust and Fraudulent Actions of the Home-based

In addition to the plethora of issues and concerns from all three locations, 'trust' was a recurring index, especially with the diaspora in the two locations. Their grievances are connected to the betrayal and fraudulent dealings of some home-based, notably the squandering or diversion of funds meant for projects that could have sustained and maintained, in the least, a fond diaspora-homeland relationship (Ullah and Kumpoh 2019). As a representative of the views under this theme, Oshare said:

> I know many people living in Lagos State and abroad that have been swindled by the people at home. You must be emotionally and financially stable to be able to cope with the disappointments that you find with people at home. I gave some goods to my brother to sell and return a percentage of the money to me; he sold and never remitted a dime. Even when I decided to go through my elder sister to build a house at home, she did worse than

> what my brother did. I mean, she practically used my money to settle herself. She bought land and laid the foundation; whereas, what I had sent home was enough to build a minimum of a duplex. I was angry, and because I did not want to commit an unpardonable crime, I just sold the property and cut them off (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

To help us understand the gravity of this cause, other diaspora felt that the home-based are bereft of conscience, particularly because they know that return to the diaspora, though possible, is usually not an option for most of them. To buttress the point of Oshare above, Monday (Isoko/51 years old/male/married/Ph.D.) a lecturer who was a key informant, said:

> Oftentimes, many of the people or relatives at home do not carry out the project the diaspora commissions them to do. Even in instances where you have seen the projects or even visited to confirm the project and the stage it is, which gives the diaspora some level of assurance, the truth is that that is not even enough because they can make you complete the project and still lay claim to it and deny the diaspora ownership. If the diaspora argues with them, they can even kill the person (KII/Emevor, Delta State/February 2020).

This inhuman act dealt with the diaspora accounts for part of the cause of ambivalence that this study seeks to establish among the Delta State people. The views of the interviewees above unearth the fraudulent actions that may have affected the diaspora. Experiences such as the one described by Oshare above perfectly align with the story of Osas, a returnee that was widely published in the media. Having been away from the country, Osas, while in Italy, regularly sent money home to his sister to facilitate and oversee a house project on his behalf. He returned home to discover that his sister had not built the house but swindled him (Information Nigeria, June 14, 2019). The greed and the selfishness of the home-based also manifest in other ways as they have been known to hire killers to eliminate anyone who may want to open the lid on their crimes, as revealed by the key informant from Isoko.

There is the continued production and projection of a stereotypical message that is somewhat ambiguous to the world, especially because not all diaspora-homeland

engagements end terribly. The concept of trust is a relative one and a function of an individual's character formation. Therefore, the virtue of trust is not confined to a place, age, race, or even gender. Even though a commendable level of hospitality and loyalty is found in the home-based, the contending perception, opinions, or even experiences of the diaspora have continued to hamper the livelihood and development of the homeland and its people. Diriye (Ijaw/52 years old/male/married/LL. B/first-generation diaspora), a clerk who moved to Lagos State in 2005, shed more light on the cause of the ravaging distrust exhibited by the home-based:

> The trust level back at home is low because the economy there is zero, and people are surviving on any little thing that comes in. Most people are impoverished and therefore depend on those little remittances that come in. They spend it with the hope that they will repay it, but in nearly all cases, repayment is impossible because of the poor economy. So, how do you expect such a person to be trustworthy? The situation they are faced with has redefined their virtues and character in a negative light (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

In large measure, the untrustworthiness, as understood from the response above, is a result of economic factors borne out of disempowerment by environmental pollution and the unavailability of viable government alternatives. Deinne and Ajayi's (2018) interesting insight into the poverty level in the state only justifies Diriye's claim that the home-based are unjustly tagged and stereotyped. Whatever justification Diriye provides, this act constitutes all shades of wrong. In the spirit of cutting down on the disappointment that often arises from the diversion of diaspora's remittances, David (Itsekiri/32 years old/male/single/BSc/first-generation), an NGO volunteer diaspora who migrated to Lagos State in 2017, submitted,

> …a diaspora member who always waits for pleas before he/she sends money or other remittances home is insensitive and wants to be worshipped. Do you wait for your child to cry before you know it is time to feed the child? So, why wait for the people or family members at home to ask before you help them? Is it because you want to exert your place of authority, or do you want to justify your opinion of them as disturbances? (IDI/Lagos/December 2019)

The status of "local diaspora" is an important one because they share in the realities of both the home-based and the foreign diaspora. By being within the shore of Nigeria, the local diaspora experience similar socioeconomic, infrastructural, and insecurity challenges that are prevalent in the country, while their absence from home implies that they are also expected to commit to homeland requests and needs. Their mediatory status is expected to make them dispassionate in their views about both the home-based and the foreign diaspora, but because the local diaspora is closer home, they expect that the foreign diaspora should be more understanding and sympathetic towards the home-based. This is the sentiment that David reiterates, while he also admonishes the foreign diaspora to be more concerned with the plight of the home-based. Eleven of the twenty local diaspora interviewees show support for this view, but the other nine are a significant number, and they condemned the action of home-based as the foreign diaspora did. Perhaps, experiences, whether direct or indirect, have also left vestiges of distrust for the home-based.

4.1.3.5 Overwhelming Demands of Home-based

Another challenge that impedes the healthy relationship between the diaspora and the homeland is the nature of the demands made on the diaspora by the home-based. Because absence from home is often associated with abundance (…)[8], the home-based often regard the diaspora as a source of revenue and a means to an end (Okonkwo 2019). This challenge is in harmony with the views of the home-based somewhere in this research that the diaspora sees them as parasites. In an exasperating tone, Maureen complained that the demands of and how the home-based make their requests could be "demoralising". In her words:

> …I went as far as showing my family members my take-home for the month, thinking it would give them a sense of what the realities are over here so that they can at least take a step backward in their request, but I only ended up being stupid with that action. My younger brother

[8] Senayon Olaoluwa. Opening M.A. class lecture when introducing the concept of diaspora and remittances at the Institute of African Studies, the University of Ibadan in June 2018. The discussion in the class grew organically out of practical and empirical contexts that suggest the consequent link between absence and abundance.

> challenged me and said with our high level of technology; I could have doctored the document. He queried me for giving him £100. I went raging mad and decided not to honour their requests (IDI/London/January 2020).

Elo whom we encountered earlier, lends a voice to Maureen:

> I trashed my SIM card and got a new one. The number was given to only a selected few because I do not want any miserable disturbance from people at home. Those people can drive one crazy. They think we pick money from the streets of London (IDI/London/January 2020).

These views clearly show the frustration that drives the decisions of diaspora and the underlying causes that inform their severance of ties with family and, ultimately, the homeland. Despite the extent Maureen went to get the sympathy of her family members, the indifference of the younger brother not only showed the ungrateful attitude many of the local and foreign diaspora complained about, but also allows us to understand why Elo, in the response above, took a drastic step in disconnecting from some people at home. Whether partial or total, the diaspora's coping mechanisms that restrict remittances leave undoubted survival challenges for the home-based, which eventually impacts the overall development of the homeland.

4.1.4 TheMulti-Faceted Fronts of Insecurity

In exploring the theme of insecurity, Akinyele's (2001) explanation of the concept of holistic protection of a nation-state against an internal and external threat that undermines the values and interests of the state is important in unpacking the intricacies and nuances of insecurity in Delta State. The Delta State context of security foregrounds the “rounded” importance of security to reinforce the notion that security is not just the absence of physical war. In other words, there may be an absence of physical war but structural, psychological, political, and economic wars may be taking place. Until the 1990s, insecurity in Delta State was an unfamiliar phenomenon, at least not on a scale of constricting the state. The relocation of the Warri South Local Government headquarters from Ogbe-Ijo, an Ijaw community, to the Itsekiri community of Ogidigben in 1997 led to the outbreak of a long-drawn, deadly conflict between the Ijaw and Itsekiri in Delta State. The conflict led to the loss of lives as well as property owing to arson, brigandage, and

wilful destruction. Many years after, the imprints of the conflict are still fresh in the memory of the people of the state, especially the Ijaw, Urhobo, and Itsekiri. This has continued to define and determine the developmental status of the state. The underlying cause of the conflict bordered on the age-long marginalisation of some ethnic groups, particularly the Ijaw, and what is considered an unfair allocation of resources and the inherent dividends in the state (Otuaro 2018).

4.1.4.1 Insecurity Caused by Ethnic-induced Conflict

Mbah *et al.'s.* (2019) argument on exclusion-inclusion binary shows that when people are excluded they suffer ruins, while the included, who coincidentally are the advantaged, most certainly enjoy prosperity and benefits. This argument is germane in understanding the neglect and abandonment that characterise the position of the Ijaw ethnic group in particular. Going by these allegations and grievances, the Ijaw felt cheated and resolved to uphold their quest for justice and equity to a logical conclusion. One fundamental factor that drives militancy, revolution, protests, and riots is a long-standing history of neglect. Where issues bordering on injustice, unequal access to resources, political maladministration, oppression, corruption and mismanagement, environmental degradation, and many more are not strategically resolved by the government, violence and instability will persist (Büscher 2018). During an FGD, Deinne, (Ijaw/47 years old/male/married/BSc.), a hotel manager who is also an Ijaw youth leader, noted that

> …for long, the government has benefitted from the spoils of our land, and we are expected to remain mute forever. It hurts to see the level of deprivation in the state, especially in the riverine communities. If we do not talk, they strip us of our socioeconomic engagements, and when we speak up, war is waged against us. The height of insensitivity is unthinkable! (FGD/Delta State/February 2020)

Agonising memory, no doubt, trails Deinne's response and also underscores oppression, poverty, and injustice. The response also tells that this agonising reality has existed for a long time, validating the argument that when abuse exceeds a threshold, violence becomes inevitable (McConnell 2019). So, the continued abandonment and nonchalance of the people are some of the causes of the recurring conflict that plagued the state at that time.

Under such conditions, the government is expected to deploy a strategy of negotiating calm in any uprising. Most times, the government at the federal level deploys the military to quell civil unrest. The choice of a military response by the government, extra-judicial killing, and pillaging of local communities by soldiers, coupled with cases of environmental abuse and injustice by the oil multinational companies as well as greedy and selfish state and traditional leaders have continued to intensify the agitation.

From another perspective, the conflict between the Ijaw and Itsekiri that ravaged Warri hit the state differently because it became a watershed in the state's history, launching it into an era of blurred contentions regardless of the brokered peace. In the summation of interviewees from all three locations, the crisis had an ethnic bias as it was confusing that Warri was the epicentre of a crisis that was originally between two predominantly littoral groups. According to Ebikefe (Ijaw/43 years old/male/married/BSc. holder/first-generation diaspora), an installation officer who moved to the UK in 2013, and whose opinion resonated with that of interviewees in the other two locations,

> …now you see, our people's inability to be discrete and accommodating has caused them a lot, particularly their peace. Do you know what would have gotten to them from the diaspora since the 1990s, if the peace in the land had not been truncated? The Ijaw and Itsekiri crisis was a deadly one, even worse than the familiar Itsekiri and Urhobo. How they got so intolerant of one another despite sharing similar features is unfathomable. It is even more surprising that two coastal communities had to move their destruction to the city, the only city that was the state's first pride and a melting pot for every other ethnic group. (IDI/London/January 2020)

The response above highlights the urban role in conflict dynamics (Büscher 2018), thereby helping us understand the violence that ravaged the city of Warri in the 1990s to early 2000s. The crisis practically took place in Warri although most of the people who unleashed the mayhem were from the coastal regions. The reason is not far-fetched, and it is because Warri is the commercial nerve centre and a melting point of the state. Perhaps if the crisis had been restricted to the coastal communities, as deduced from Büscher (2018), the much-needed attention and goal might not have been realised. More so, the Ijaw and Itsekiri are predominantly coastal people with little or no infrastructure in their

communities. So, the premeditated damage that would produce the needed change may be unrealisable or unsatisfactory if the violence were exclusive to the coastal areas of the state.

During the conflict, ethnicity played a major role both in the destruction of lives and property and in the protection of the same. Discussants in the Ijaw, Urhobo, and Itsekiri groups all agreed on the ethnic dimension of the crisis and the sensitive volatility of ethnicity. As for the Isoko, they rarely are caught in a conflict with other tribes in the state, except for the superior-inferior cold struggle that exists between them and Urhobo. Some ethnic groups latched onto their ethnicity for the protection of their lives and property, while warring ethnic groups hid their ethnic identity for fear of attack on them and/or their property by their enemies. Voices from the Itsekiri discussants were loud in reiterating the damages they suffered at the time. They alleged that the Itsekiri suffered the most because, more than any other ethnicity, their houses were burnt, many of which belonged to the diaspora (Itsekiri FGD 2020). Even though the Itsekiri and Ijaw had their villages in the creeks, at the time of the crisis, more Itsekiri had built houses in the hinterland, and that justified the reason for their claim that they suffered the most (FGDs 2020). This fact was also confirmed by some Ijaw discussants who said building in the city for the Ijaw people started receiving consideration only a few years ago. House owners practically started naming their houses not just with their names but also clinging to their ethnicity and/or even villages to avert attack on their property or life. For instance, tags like "this house belong to Chief Umukoro, an Urhobo man from Eku" became the order of the day. In some cases, some of the few Ijaw and Itsekiri who had houses in the hinterland did not tag their houses because that would give them away from their opponents. In other words, the Urhobo used that medium to extricate themselves from the crisis and also used it to preserve their assets from being destroyed.

The irony of this was that not tagging your house was also a quick sell to the attackers, especially when attackers had confirmed ownership of such property. So, many Itsekiri and Ijaw landlords had to tag their houses with Urhobo identity. What is clear from the strategy is that the phenomenon of ethnicity is explored for different purposes that either produce gains or pains. The situation accentuates Olaniyan and Omotola's (2015)

argument that there is a negative intersection of ethnicity and security during moments of crisis. The authors argue that ethnicity is an identity that is capable of influencing a person's sense of belonging and behaviour (p 304). Put differently, the identity consequences that ethnicity creates define the projection of a character we feel comfortable in. Aside from the loss suffered by many, including the diaspora, the situation explained above is one that subjects identity to fluidity. Fluid identity is subjective, and its subjectivity, as shown here, is informed by the contingents of prevailing realities. Thus, actualities pull underlying weights that nuance human decisions, whether temporarily or permanently.

Conflicts all over the world may take different patterns following the cause, but they all have similar underlying consequences (collapse of economic, infrastructural, political, etc. structures) that would require the conscious and deliberate efforts of all stakeholders to rebuild from the ruins. Ruins, as conceived here, goes beyond structures to holistically include but not be limited to psychological, social, economic, and intra-national/international image that the damage may have caused due to the new perceptions that may have been formed by people within and outside the conflict zone. Without a doubt, the consequences of these ruins have raised anxieties that leaves social, economic, and political panic in the minds of home-based and diaspora from a troubled area, in this case, Delta State (Nnam *et al.* 2020).

Furthermore, the unwholesome action of the government to relocate the headquarters of Warri South Local Government also culminated in the division of the state along ethnic, regional, and political lines. It is a division that has been exacerbated by the awakened understanding of ethnic cleavages. For instance, interviewees said that the Warri crisis opened up a lot of issues that promoted communality which also shows how ethnic and personal interests drive their interactions. People became conscious of their ethnicity and their community and the need to refocus their energy on personal development. Both Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews for Urhobo and Itsekiri confirmed the dynamics that swept through the diaspora and the home-based and their new understanding of home. Home became a sectional entity based on where your grandsires handed down from generation to generation. According to the discussants,

Delta State was seen as an entity without segregation, and people saw themselves as brothers. The aftermath of the crisis and destruction ushered in a new definition of brotherhood because the crisis became an eye-opener for many who erstwhile thought they were one. Claims of government establishments reinforced this division, and unlike before, people started seeing the need to identify with their ethnic group as against the general identity they had lived with for years. According to Amaju (Itsekiri/38 years old/male/married/NCE), a teacher who was part of the Focus Group Discussion for Itsekiri, "Government-owned properties were renamed. For instance, Petroleum Training Institute, Warri has been renamed with the location changed from Warri to Effurun".

A different strain of ownership engineered by ethnicity, with a myriad of consequences, is the concerns of Mr. Onajite (Urhobo/51 years old/male/married/B.Engr), a building contractor.

> Delta State lost the EPZ project worth billions of dollars to Cross River State due to the ethnic rivalry that rocked the state. Even though the government in its discretion assigned the processing unit to Ugborodo, an Itsekiri community, and the export zone to Okporoza, an Ijaw community, the crisis between Ijaw and Itsekiri contesting the allocations halted that project until it was lost. This is a project with collaboration from foreign counterparts, yet the people could not look beyond their differences for the benefit of themselves and their children. Who likes to identify with anti-progressives? (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020)

There is an obvious consciousness of selfishness to amass benefits to individual communities, and this has become a manipulative tool by different ethnicities in the state. So, when the government proposes to cite a project in the state, again, ethnicity is reinforced as to which community should host it. Mismanagement of such a volatile situation can result in conflict, and the aggrieved often use violence as an instrument of gain (Duyvesteyn 2000). The Maritime University project by the Federal Government was another example that informants and discussants referred to as a "stroke of luck" because, according to them, the ethnic rivalry could have led to the relocation of that institution to another oil-producing state. The government, in its discretion, adopted a smart way by citing the administrative body in an Itsekiri community while the campus was located in

an Ijaw community. These are some of the repulsive situations that have continued to discredit the homeland and influence the diaspora's relationship with the homeland. Expressing the displeasure of the diaspora towards this situation, Tosan (Itsekiri/46 years old/male/married/B.A./first-generation diaspora), an administrator who relocated to the UK in 2010, said, "I have never seen people who hate themselves so much to the extent that they chase away development because of ethnic sentiments". Tosan's statement allows us to understand the depths ethnic rivalry can reach. Whether or not projects are beneficial to the state, the cankerworm of ethnic sentiments shuns that consideration as far as the project is not directly cited in their ethnic, or geographical location.

The overbearing influence of ethnicity among the different ethnicities in the state, even when they meet outside, creates a stroke of difference that has continued to define the relationships of people who are from the same state and their concept of home. In the course of the ethnography, it was observed that many of the Urhobo and Itsekiri interviewees had this possessive sentiment about the ownership of Warri, the nerve centre of the state. There is the interplay of a simultaneous internalisation of possession and rejection of bowing to pressure or perceived intimidation from the other. This authoritative contrast resonates with the interviewees, and Mrs. Ovughe (Urhobo/51 years old/female/married/OND), a wholesaler and one of the discussants, put it bluntly, in the following words: "Delta State originally belongs to the Urhobo, and I am passionate about it. The other ethnicities except for the Isoko who recently are extricating themselves from the Urhobo are either settler or were politically carved into the state".

The tone of Mrs. Ovughe exudes audacity, passion, and resilience for the homeland on the one hand and the contestation over ownership of the state on the other. Delta State is home originally to 4 indigenous ethnic groups until the recent extrication of the Isoko from the Urhobo, thereby making it five indigenous ethnic groups. These groups have historical narratives that situate them as the owner of the state, and these narratives are informed by some factors like early arrival, numerical strength, and even resources. These narratives fuel assertion of authority that has repeatedly caused conflicts between ethnicities in the

state[9]. Verkuyten and Yildiz (2006) argue that deliberate assertion of minority cultures and identities will cause friction and weaken the stability of a place. This situation is challenged in Delta State because the force with which Urhobo interviewees exert their majority advantage is apparent, especially because literature has affirmed that the ethnic majority enjoy diverse opportunities and have a superior edge and advantage over minority groups (Walton 2013). However, if the number is the variable for determining ethnic status, then the question asked in Chapter Two is critical. Since the Urhobo people carry the sentiments of the majority group because they have higher numerical strength, why then do they feel threatened, particularly by the Itsekiri, whom they consider the smallest group in the state and even in the country to such an extent that they have to reiterate their numerical advantage at any given instance? Perhaps, they like to emphasize the need for them to always be the main beneficiaries and/or have a sizeable portion of the benefits accruing to the state. Historical precedents discussed earlier leave vestiges of animosity that have allowed ethnic sentiments to protract in the state. Thus, Young's (1990) cultural imperialism is reality such that the presumptuous superior-inferior cultural dichotomy in the state is a threat to social cohesion, political integration, and cultural unity.

4.1.4.2 Dynamics of Economic Insecurity

Arguably, Delta State is one of the major sources of revenue for the federal government due to crude oil deposits and oil exploration activities going on in the state. However, natural resources in Nigeria, as in other places in Africa, have contributed to the outbreak of many violent conflicts leading to insecurity (Hönke 2014.) The situation in Delta State is not different but rather expansive in its insecurity challenges. As acknowledged by Nnam *et al*. (2020), the panic created by the crisis, conflict, war, terrorism, and unrest is

[9] Before the creation of regions and states, indigenous groups have peopled different geographical locations in the world, continent, and region. When the Portuguese and Europeans came into the region now called Delta State, they were met with the Ijaw and Itsekiri who occupied the littoral space of the region. The Isoko and Urhobo occupied the hinterland, while the Igbo were at the extreme of the hinterland. When the Europeans got to Warri, the city under repeated contestation over ownership was originally called 'Ware' an Ijaw word for a house but was corrupted into Warri by the Europeans. As far as the state is home to different indigenous groups, versions of different narratives will continue to be a challenge to the original owners of the land. (see also Okon 2012)

nuanced, and the Delta State situation ranges from social insecurity to physical, economic, agricultural, environmental, medical, educational, cultural, and psychological insecurities. More importantly, the crisis that broke out in the state in the late 1990s had ethnic colouration, and the companies had too many interests to deal with. People were targeted in the state, and the oil workers were the most victimised. Mr. Isaac (Isoko/51 years old/married/ BSc./first-generation diaspora), a sports coach who moved to London in 2010, put it this way: "We stay here (London) because of security, not just security in terms of armed robbery but the security of your job, income, health, infrastructural security. No necessities of life in my home state. It slows your eagerness to return, and by the time you get to 60-65 years of age, going home is relegated to the background".

The insecurity in the homeland is at an ebb where the return is unthinkable. Responses such as Mr. Isaac's give clues to the economic challenges the state is grappling with. This confirms Nnam *et al.'s* (2020) position that the intractability of insecurity goes beyond the destruction of lives and property to damage the fundamentals of macroeconomics. As macroeconomics is affected by market uncertainty, movement to an environment where investment has a good level playing ground that guarantees a better profit margin is inevitable. When old age catches up with them in their country or state of destination, returning to the homeland becomes a mirage for several other reasons, which are embedded in the response of Mr. Isaac. Having lived abroad for a long period, there is a high tendency that the diaspora would have lost significant touch with home. For people who have been exposed to easy access to basic amenities in an environment where infrastructure is functional and there is some reasonable level of decorum, value, and justice, returning to an environment where these facilities and cultures may not be within easy reach raises anxieties that are scary to dare.

Many interviewees also expressed their worries as they lamented the lousy culture of "meritocracy" and how that has swept away values in the homeland, leaving a trail of insecurity in its wake. Drawing from the response above, insecurity is complicated, and the experiences of some first-generation migrants who have encountered situations where their positions of merit were of no use to them created a sense of insecurity that even informed their relocation in the first place. Mrs. Oloyede (quoted earlier), narrates her

ordeal about how she was denied a teaching position in one of the Polytechnics in Delta State because she did not have a "godfather". The most annoying part, according to her, is that she was told she was the most qualified, but the recruiting boards were caught in a fix because there were letters from other applicants who had been referred by some influential people in the state. While some interviewees emphasised this point as part of the reason they do not feel committed to the homeland, the problem, according to Kirya (2020), is not space-bound as similar practices are found in other countries of the world. Similarly, the near-to-nothing meritocracy experience, according to the majority of the diaspora, is a form of insecurity that they do not want their children to be subjected to. The situation not only highlights the systemic decay in the state and country at large but has gone on to redefine the diaspora's relationship with the homeland.

When attention was drawn to the preponderance of their concerns in other states of the federation, counter-reactions justified their positions, especially as Lagos State came in handy for them as a comparative standard. They (foreign diaspora) argued that even when the same can be said of other states, they will hardly deny their citizens/indigenes based on godfatherism, especially for state government jobs. They believe that such practice is not endemic in Lagos State because that is one state where job opportunities are relatively fair if you have proven to be qualified for the job. People from other parts of the country are given opportunities to serve in some elective and non-elective positions in Lagos State, a situation that will be vehemently opposed in many other states of the federation. The diaspora sternly abhors this practice that makes the homeland unattractive for any consideration.

So far, there has been a concerted reflection of the diaspora as an agent of the development of the homeland. Sending countries, especially those in Africa, consider their diaspora as important tools for nation-building, a position held by the African Union (Akesson and Baaz 2015). This view is enabled by the remittances, foreign direct investments, and other forms of the capital of the diaspora which are strategic in pushing economic activities in the homeland (ibid). However, for this to happen, the homeland has to be attractive, having positioned itself by providing a secure and viable business environment. That is to say, if there is a shortfall or unavailability of pull indices, the

natural response is reluctance from willing investors because no one would adamantly invest in an environment with obvious investment uncertainties. According to responses from the diaspora, economic activities in the state are in the doldrums and discouraging, which is why they cannot commit to the homeland's development through investment. Hear Diriye:

> I will like to relocate a part of my business to Delta State, but the economic activities in the state are grounded. There has to be some appreciable level of assurance before any investor can take the risk of staking his resources. In Delta State, the new oil well is commercial tricycling and petty trading. The investment atmosphere is not encouraging. It is saddening! (IDI/Lagos State/December 2020)

Drawing from Sauner-Leroy's (2004) argument that productive investment correlates positively with risk-taking and negatively with uncertainty, we understand some of the considerations that drive investors' decision of taking up an investment. For this author, investors would rather invest in a promising environment with apparent risks than in one with uncertainties. Diriye's position corroborates this fact because no investor would commit their resources in an environment where failure or bankruptcy is more likely to be the fate of the business or investment. This view is also predominantly held by the foreign diaspora. Of all the foreign diaspora interviewed, none of them fancied the homeland as a viable place for investment; rather Lagos State was a spot-on choice for the few of them that considered investing in the homeland as part of their contribution to its development. Under that guise, Nigeria is rather broadly adopted as a homeland in place of the state of origin. The choice of Lagos as a place for investment did not come as a surprise, considering its huge economic pedigree as the commercial nerve centre of the country.

4.1.4.3 Civil Insecurity

Civil insecurity was also recorded as one of the causes of ethnic ambivalence of the Delta State diaspora—civil insecurity in the sense that safety has become a luxury in the state. This comment by Mr. Isaac, below, is indicative of the tensions and challenges that have held the state down:

> One time when I visited home, I was shocked when my father asked us not to come to the village. Even when we defied his orders and still went, he ordered us to leave the community before 6 pm to Warri because he didn't want hoodlums to attack my sibling that went visiting and me. If my father, who was living there, felt unsafe in his village, how can his children feel safe? Even when we returned to Warri to spend the night at a cousin's house, we couldn't even get sound sleep because the night was hot and the generator was turned off by midnight. When I asked why it was turned off, I was told for security reasons that the noise does not attract armed robbers… (IDI/London/January 2020)

Isaac's reason for homeland detachment, though strengthened by parental influence, is heavily tied to insecurity. Tangbowei shared his thoughts:

> Back in the day, they used to say if you don't feel safe in your village, you won't feel safe anywhere. Staying out late is not a thing that is encouraged in Warri and its environs. Home as in Delta State is not safe. I feel very uncomfortable and unsafe when I am in Delta State. Even when I manage to visit, I remain in Lagos or Abuja. Kidnapping and robberies are things any sane person should be scared of. I know it is in all states, but it is only when one visits Warri that you hear that you cannot be outside by 7 pm. I don't hear that elsewhere. That kind of story is another level of unsafety again (Interview/London/January 2020).

If 7 pm, as claimed by the diaspora, has become the safe time limit one can be outside one's home in a cosmopolitan city like Warri, what can be said of smaller communities in the state? These challenges, according to Nnam *et al.* (2020), have darkened the clouds with anxiety, fear, and uncertainty to deter prospective return. Mr. Tegwolo believes that insecurity is dreaded by the diaspora because they are an easy and prime target. His view is not unconnected to the abundance that is connected to absence from home and how that abundance and reflection of it gives the diaspora away[10]. Such easy detection resonates with the rich-poor contrast that is very obvious in the state, especially as Deinne and Ajayi

[10] Senayon Olaoluwa. Opening M.A. class lecture when introducing the concept of diaspora and remittances at the Institute of African Studies, the University of Ibadan in June 2018. The discussion in the class grew organically out of practical and empirical contexts that suggest the consequent link between absence and abundance.

(2018) reported. Since the state, according to the authors, is one of the poorest in the country, a condition that is visible in the rising number of economic disengagements of vibrant men and women due to environmental pollution, the gap between the rich and the poor is further widened. With the increasing poverty level in the state, the diaspora argues that it is easy to identify someone who is relatively comfortable, and that makes them an easy target for armed robbery attacks in particular. Tegwolo's view below captures one of the fears of the diaspora and the consequent homeland disconnection.

> The country's rich-poor gap is a worsening factor in the diaspora's relationship with the homeland. For instance, if I have a car and house in Warri, nobody will see me as rich because a lot of people have to. But if I go to the village, I will be regarded as rich because only a few people have such. Thus, it will be easy to identify the rich. The same goes for the diaspora, as they are easily spotted, and that makes them vulnerable to attack. No sane person will consciously want to put himself in harm's way just to maintain a relationship with his homeland (IDI/Lagos/December 2019).

4.1.4.4 Cultural Disengagement Caused by Insecurity

Interviewees recounted how cultural practices that should have pulled the diaspora to the homeland are going into oblivion due to the menace of insecurity in the state. As we shall see in the narratives, these cultural events were a look-forward-to for the diaspora, but the severity of insecurity has created grounds for detachment of the diaspora from the homeland. In describing festivals as “integrative sites”, Perry *et al.* (2020) detail that they speak to connection in the sense that tangible and intangible cultural heritages are entangled. Put differently, festivals form the core of any culture, and practices that define these cultures are critical to its sustenance and responsible for the bonds that exist among the people. Call it a festival, *juju*, or carnival, there are cultural practices that are held sacred by different groups.

Among different indigenous groups across Africa, different festivals are celebrated, and some of these are defined by age groups or/and even gender considerations, among others. The Nigerian experience of festivals is rich, diversified, and variegated because of its cultural heterogeneity. From the New Yam festival of the Igbo to the Olokun festival in

Benin, the Eyo festival in Lagos, the Osun-Osogbo festival in Osun State, and many more, the festivals with all their glamour express cultures in many ways than one, and for various reasons but more importantly, unity (van Niekerk Jr 1986). In Delta State, many festivals characterise the different ethnic groups in the state. The different communities and villages in the state explain the multiplicity of festivals that are celebrated in the state. These festivals were confirmed by interviewees from the three locations that formed the study area for this research to serve as a melting pot for indigenes and non-indigenes alike. According to the Itsekiri key informant, whose view was corroborated by the Itsekiri discussants, the festivals are the high points of annual cultural engagements. While acknowledging that almost all Itsekiri communities have their festivals, they noted that the Oyekuru Festival, also known as the coronation festival, is common to all of them. Chief Ojoghor (Itsekiri/61 years old/male/married/MBA), an accountant and a key informant for the Itsekiri who was also a member of the elders' council, noted that

> The Oyeruku festival is the hallmark and unifying festival for the Itsekiri, and part of it is always done in the river. This is a festival that used to bring people from the diaspora to participate, but its beauty of it has been stripped off the festival because of the Warri crisis. The insecurity on our waterways practically took the fun and most interesting part of the festival and, by extension, culture away because the most critical part of the festival can no longer go on the water as it used to be. It was a festival that enabled the diaspora to interface with the homeland, return with a different form of remittances, and participate in and maintain social relationships regularly (KII/Koko, Delta State/ February 2020).

The above view is a huge cultural concern for the Itsekiri ethnic group. A critical part of the culture is gradually sliding into extinction because of insecurity in the state. Even with the brokered peace, it is still considered unsafe to observe such a ceremony on the water. Maiangwa and Agbiboa (2013) say the peace in the Niger Delta region is turbulent, indicating that conflict could be sparked with the slightest provocation. Travelling on the river is seen as a potential and easy way of attack because attendees will be exposed to a higher level of susceptibility. The decision to suspend this glamorous and fun-filled part of the culture by the elders' council is necessary because, on water, more fatality may be recorded, especially because some of the people may not have swimming knowledge, life

jackets may not be readily available, and most people may be unarmed to confront any form of attack. What is left of the culture is more or less carcass, which is inadequate to pull the diaspora. If the security in Delta State is as good as treading on an eggshell, then remaining in the diaspora is an antidote to the menace. Because insecurity lays the foundation for cultural loss, as seen in the narrative, the manifestation of this loss is in the interaction of her people, especially the diaspora, with the culture. As distance compounds the situation with the diaspora, it opens the way for gradual demise and disconnect from the culture and, ultimately, the homeland.

On the wise, committing to these festivals was a near-automatic development of the homeland, especially within the context of housing and urbanisation. According to interviewees, as people returned home yearly to participate in the different festivals, they saw the need for them to build houses and urbanise their communities. That is to say, a diaspora that is given socio-cultural engagements in the homeland may see the need to register his/her presence there by investing in or building a house that would provide decent and comfortable accommodation for him/her upon return. This kind of commitment could encourage a healthy relationship between the Delta State diaspora and their homeland.

4.1.4.4.1 A Different Cultural Strain for Ambivalence

Critical concerns that discredit the festivals were made as a cause of the diaspora's dissociation from the festivals in the homeland because some diaspora perceives them to be a fetish. Rogers (Urhobo/35 years old/male/single/BSc.), a safety worker, was one of the discussants and he explained that

> One major reason the diaspora does not participate is that many of the practices that are observed during the festivals have fetish colourations, and many of these diaspora members are now more secular and have embraced Western religion, so they find our festivals incompatible (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

The discussant buttressed his point by saying that the Igbo New Yam Festival as well as the August Meeting that converges the diaspora do not have fetish colourations. This position is in tandem with a key informant's submission that "our festivals have been

demonised, and that is the reason they do not appeal to the diaspora". Chief Pere's (Ijaw/66 years old/male/married/Ph.D.) intention was not to condemn indigenous festivals but to challenge Western influence on African cultural practices. According to him, "diaspora and even some home-based have been handed the white man's religion that is not only a sharp contrast to our beliefs, values, norms, practices, rituals, and traditions but also demonises what distinguishes us as a people". As many people continue to embrace the new faith (Christianity and Islam), Chike (2008) admonishes that Africans should endeavour to keep their African traditional practices and culture, regardless. The credibility of this assertion is foregrounded in the narratives from the field. Eseoghene, whom we encountered earlier, vehemently criticised the practices that are observed in the festivals that could have encouraged the diaspora to return. She said:

> It is appalling and despicable to see that there are people in this 21st century who are still backward in the name of upholding tradition and culture. Most of those practices are fetish and diabolical. They are satanic. Imagine people still carrying calabash on their heads with paintings on them and their bodies in broad daylight, and they tell me it is part of a festival. Who wants to identify with such in this era when there is a better way to commune with the supernatural and be peaceful? (Interview/Lagos State/December 2019)

The counter-argument from a local diaspora contends that when the Westerners celebrate their carnivals, they have their bodies painted, perform, dance, and cook their local delicacies, as seen in the Nottinghill Carnival in London. How then do we accept the Western practice and refuse our traditional ones? Chief Pere commented, "It is because our psyches have been manipulated and skewed to believe our practices are demonic and contradict the reason of humaneness." This back and forth about festivals and culture allows us to understand the unflinching influence of Western Ideology that sits within the broader context of modernity, globalisation, and even class in society.

4.1.4.5 Insecurity Perpetrated by Multinational Oil Companies

The idea of insecurity is again fuelled by the oil companies' nonchalant attitude and refusal to engage willing, qualified, and employable youths. Accusations are rife in the narratives from the home-based that employment in the multinational companies is usually

done in Lagos State and the people deployed to Delta State. This they find insensitive and unfair to them, especially because they are the ones who endure the impact of these oil exploration activities. These frustrating realities in Delta State find meaning in how multinational mining companies' violence-reducing strategy causes conflict and insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Hönke 2014). As youths mobilise to storm the premises of the different companies in Warri and its environs, halting activities in oil exploration facilities, their request is not to indiscreetly halt economic activities but to demand justice and fairness, particularly for job recruitment (FGD with Itsekiri ethnic group 2020). One of the discussants, Prosper (Itsekiri/45 years old/male/married/BSc.), a site supervisor who coincidentally was one of the protesters that stormed Shell Yard in Ogunu, Delta State, during one of the protests in the early 2000s to demand the employment of the teeming unemployed youth reflected below:

> Oil companies are not being fair to host communities. They do not find us employable because they presume we are not qualified. Meanwhile, they employ people from Lagos and send them to Delta State. Even when they decide to employ us, they give us menial jobs as if we are not educated enough to occupy managerial positions in these companies. I can tell you for the fact that 80% of us who went to protest years ago were educated. The same qualification with which they employ people and deploy to us is what we have yet, and they find us only qualified for menial jobs. Meanwhile, the people that will feel the impact of your activities are the locals. Even when they try by giving a few scholarships just for political reasons, they still do not engage the people when they are through with their education. How do you expect the youths despite all this maltreatment from the companies to be perpetually complacent? The Delta man is not lazy as often envisaged. This injustice is the cause of despair that has consequently created an atmosphere of insecurity in the state. It is this stereotyping that has greatly angered them and forced them to be erratic, thereby leading to insecurity (FGD/Warri/February 2020).

Corroborating this position, the key informant from Isoko reckoned that:

> …the deployed employee is told to keep details about his or her employment to him/herself by not telling whatever

> company/association he/she makes in the state that they were newly employed. They should rather say they were transferred from the headquarters. In addition, the jobs offered by these oil companies are not evenly distributed. They favour one ethnic group more than the other, and this can only fester animosity, which is also a factor causing crisis and, ultimately, insecurity (KII/Emevor/Delta State/ February 2020).

Both positions bear underlying tones of frustration and anger informed by the deceit of, and disregard for, indigenous people. Daily, the people of Delta State are faced with injustices of various forms and degrees. These accusations signalling repeated injustice levelled against multinational oil companies validate "memory abuse" caused by undue advantage taking and an obvious exhibition of insincerity and nonchalance by one over another (Mc Connell 2019). Mc Connell (2019) argues that when a particularly unpleasant event continues unabated, it gets to a threshold where violence breaks out. It is evident from the response that high-level disregard, abandonment, and injustice characterise the insecurity challenges in the state and that until an all-inclusive master plan directs the activities in the state, security in the state will remain a mirage.

The measure and strategy deployed by oil companies are what Maiangwa and Agbiboa (2013) call turbulent peace, and that has not been applauded to have solved a problem dispassionately. The authors argue that negative peace is volatile peace, and its capacity is short-termed for immediate de-escalation of the crisis. Perhaps, what is happening in Delta State is "crisis recess", which can be triggered by even the slightest provocation. To forestall such unfortunate occurrence, Le Billon's (2012) compelling book *Wars of Plunder* argues that for positive peace to be achieved, it is required that people, especially locals, are given opportunities to earn a living, including in the forms of resource ownership, and allowed some level of control and access as suggested by Prosper above.

Le Billon's position finds salience in the resource control agitation in the Niger Delta that sees indigenous people as owners of the land and its resources. The same position is taken by Schweiger (2014) in his seminal recognition theory, which suggests the need to recognise the poor and ensure they are part of the decision-making process. For this author, their agency must be recognised, respected, and socially esteemed to overturn injustice (p 267). Although oil companies have been able to provide a certain level of

security by engaging some of the people, going by the contributions from these respondents, there is a conscious interplay of deception, injustice, deprivation, conspiracy, and prejudice. The undercurrents of injustice from these positions are still prevalent and serve as a build-up for disgruntlement that has been identified as one of the problems causing insecurity in the state, to which the diaspora's ethnic ambivalence is connected. As Hönke (2014:187) asks, "How do you build peace without building it from the bottom–up and based on local livelihood opportunities?" Perhaps Berents' (2015) argument that we would understand how insecurity functions as a fallout of violence and exclusions if we considered the people who are subjected to marginalisation, stigmatisation, exclusion, and denial of legal status, among others, sheds light on the frustrations of the people of Delta State.

To help us understand the transformation in the lifestyle of citizens, the diaspora, especially first-generation, painted vivid pictures of what used to be the condition of living before their relocation. Their contributions have elements of positive and negative experiences. Positive experiences resonate with the diaspora who left before the breakout of the crisis in the 1990s that wreaked havoc on the state, while negativity connecting insecurity and economic disability overwhelmed the views of migrants who left after the 1990s. Thus, various sounds, visuals, smells, and emotions laid the foundation for the memories of a serene as well as destructive past. This was evident in the recount of Mrs. Oloyede:

> When we were in Ughelli, we practically knew everyone on the street and even around the neighbourhood. We knew one another and could tell the owners of the houses and even their children, and nobody paid attention to security. But the last I visited my mum, she did not even know the name of the people living in the next compound, and she had become conscious of security and locking of doors even in broad daylight. That is how far we have strayed and lost the spirit of brotherliness that kept people united. This is a sad reality of apprehension, caution, and fear (IDI/London/January 2020).

To help us understand Mrs. Oloyede's comparative narrative of the situation in Delta State, we consider Mr. Ebikefe's experience. He shared his first-hand experience of the Warri crisis in the late 1990s. His experience was near death, and according to him, he

was alive [at the time of the interview] by a stroke of luck judging from the terror he saw. The attack on their home led to the demise of one of his siblings, and more than two decades after, the memory of that horror was still fresh with him. According to Ebikefe:

> I experienced pain, and I can categorically say it is enough to put one off the homeland. My decision to cite a company in the state is to encourage and resuscitate my relationship with the homeland, especially to be part of my parents' latter days, but the unruly behaviour of the youths again chased me out. The crisis has emptied the people, their values, and their principles. What is riding them is superficial presumptions of what used to be and pride as an oil-producing state (IDI/London/February 2020).

Recall Ebikefe's condemnation of how the deadly ethnic conflict that rocked the city of Warri in the 1990s was informed by a high-level intolerance and inability to accommodate one another. The continuation of his response as indented above is just a confirmation of the ugly realities that people had to deal with. His view of the prevalence of denial in the state is implicative of "ego", which Laurie and Stark (2017) argue incorporates, devours, and abolishes in its early stage. The obvious loss of socioeconomic life and other prevalent and repulsive realities has become a harbinger of insecurity that has continued to create rumpus in the diaspora-homeland interface.

The position of Mrs. Oloyede and the experience of Mr. Ebikefe reflect the condition of the people at home as many of them are tired, frustrated, afraid, and helpless. Mr. Ebikefe's past and recent memory of home is not pleasant one, and that has continued to influence his relationship with the homeland. Unfortunately, a sad experience like that of Mr. Ebikefe plausibly foregrounds how sad memories linger longer than pleasant ones. Furthermore, having accepted the fate that befell his sibling, the sentiments of Mr. Ebikefe are oriented towards the search for normalcy and reconnection in the sense that living and investing in the state should be a thing of unhindered freedom and hospitable attitude, with the potential to attract investors. People are not only scared but there seems to be a looming culture of fear as residents exercise safety measures to prevent an attack or to avoid being in a vulnerable situation that may lead to them being attacked. Mr. Ebikefe also succinctly captures the sensibility of high-level superficiality and pride that is

informed by the awareness and knowledge of being an oil-producing state (oil is a major contributor to the economic sustenance of the country). For the people at home, their economic contribution to the country via crude oil exploration gives them an advantage that makes them feel, though a burden bearer, a sense of indispensable relevance. That said, though not exhaustive, the issues discussed under this theme culminate in what has undermined the security of Delta State in a manner that has gravely redirected the focus of diaspora and the construction of the home.

4.1.5 Bad Governance and Its Fallouts

The challenge of bad governance as indicated in the broad caption is examined alongside the related consequences as causes of ethnic ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora.

4.1.5.1 Ethnic Ambivalence Instigated by Corrupt Leadership

The crisis of bad leadership and their oppressive actions was contested by the foreign diaspora. Emphases were on the cankerworm of corruption, and their concerns not only support Ebekozien's (2020) assessment of corruption as the root cause of socio-political and economic problems in Nigeria but are also in agreement with Acemoglu and Robinson's (cited in Fotin-Rittberger 2014) view of coercive governance. The authors believe that government coerces its citizens, using strategies that keep them repressed so that they can take advantage of their vulnerabilities. These gross actions, according to one of the diaspora, are a put-off and cause of their ambivalence. Their concerns gain momentum from attributed analogous experiences of institutions of both host and homeland. Of the twenty interviewees that constituted the foreign diaspora, none commended the efforts of the state government in any regard. Most of them spoke with an aggrieved tone, as well as aggrieved gestures and expressions. One interviewee branded government officials as "unsecured [sic] criminals" unworthy of any iota of trust. This opinion aligns with the work of Nye that dates back to 1967, which extrapolates the loss of public trust in the institutions as much as they have lost in the government. In other words, for more than five decades, corruption remains undefeated.

The damage that unbridled corruption has caused the country is as exasperating as it is pervasive to the extent that interviewees could not find a befitting word to qualify it, thereby validating Fotin-Rittberger's (2014) view of its regulatory ability in the sense that laws that should prosecute offenders do not do justice to the offence as the offenders are the formulators of the law. Invariably, the law does not have the moral as well as the audacity to punish its initiators to full capacity, hence the perpetuity of corruption. As the foreign diaspora criticised the political situation in the state, many resolved not to return to the homeland. Both local and foreign diaspora, as well as the home-based, recognised the pathetic state government officials have plunged the state into following their deceitful promises; however, the criticism was louder with the foreign diaspora. Kennedy (Urhobo/49 years old/male/married/BSc. holder/first-generation diaspora), a police officer who relocated to London in 2006, expressed surprise at the attitude of the people at home and their docile attitude towards politicians who have mortgaged their future. Regardless of sharing the same ethnic affiliation with the ex-governor, Kennedy dispassionately said:

> I am surprised at how people behave in the homeland because, if we in the diaspora are dissatisfied with the happenings at home and have started taking action against these public office holders when they visit London, why can't people who are experiencing the negative repercussions do the same? I could not believe that Ibori, who drained the treasury of the state, served a jail term in the UK, only to return home to be given a state welcome by people whose future he mortgaged on the altar of greed. The people at home said we know he is a thief, but he is our thief. Leave him to us to discipline. What sort of absurd mentality is that?! (IDI/London/January 2020)

The idea that corruption weakens the institutions of a state is characterised by disheartening evidence like economic collapse, insecurity, and poverty, among others, manifested in weak and dysfunctional institutions. Corrupt practices like embezzlement and exploitation, bribery, mismanagement, and cronyism are identified forms of corruption found with law custodians (Raed 2011). Ibori's corruption trial, as referenced by Kennedy above, is one of many corruption cases in the state and even the country that appropriately reiterates Raed's position. Ibori's loot confirms Ertimi and Saeh's (2013) argument that corruption impacts negatively the economy because of the depression it

causes. These depressions are obvious in the underdevelopment and high poverty level in the state (Deinne and Ajayi 2018).

While the diaspora expected that the victims of these inhumane acts would rise to challenge the "abnormal", voices from interviewees, as depicted earlier, show that the people are complacent and/or even sentimental. Their complacency stems from the fact that they seem to be comfortable with the situation of happenings in the state following the reception and protection of the ex-governor who plundered the state into despondency. As shown in his comment, Kennedy expects the citizens, especially the home-based, to challenge and confront the ex-governor for answers and possible refund through avenues like peaceful protest, press conference, or any other identified medium. But because actions are governed by sentiments, the people found an alibi to exonerate the ex-governor and even grant him a pardon. Their sentiments may also have been informed by an understanding that looting is a common practice in the Nigerian polity, and so there was no reason for them to crucify one of their own.

One obvious reason the diaspora has attacked poor leadership in the state is the conspicuous partisanship governance, alleged to be practiced by any governor who assumes leadership of the state. Due to its multi-ethnic nature, political leaders who have shown partisanship in the state have been exposed as one of the major problems confronting the state. Division and social, political, ethnic, and economic rivalry are reinforced because whoever emerges as governor tends to pay more attention to the development of his ethnic group and region. This view was widely held by all the participants in all three locations. Jolomi (Itsekiri/31 years old/female/married/BSc.), a civil servant, was one of the discussants that condemned the partisan governance in the state. She said,

> When Ibori was there, he transformed Oghara, his hometown, into a city. Uduaghan came and did the same thing. Now Okowa has fixed his developmental focus on his region, the Ibo-speaking part of the state. Massive developmental work is going on there; meanwhile, the region that is laying the golden egg is as good as abandoned (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

Given their cultural origin, views and opinions are characterised by ethnic sentiments. On another level, the corruption that exists in almost all facets of Nigerian society has also migrated to the diaspora as the diaspora lamented the high cost of air tickets for a visit to their homeland as another form of exploitation. From the poor and exorbitant cost of consular services to expensive air tickets, the pressure of returning home is intensified by these factors. Faith shared her thoughts:

> Everything about Nigeria is not transparent, coupled with terrible service delivery. It is not like that with other countries. Our officials treat us with no sense of value. Airlines also exploit this malady for their gains, especially because we do not have a government that has our backs. The distance between London and Nigeria is about the same distance between London and Ghana, but the airfare for Nigeria is outrageous, almost twice what is charged for Ghana. How can one even feel happy to want to throw away money like that in the name of interfacing with the homeland? (IDI/London/January 2020)

An underlying tone of frustration and anger against a government that does not prioritise the interest of its citizens fills Faith's response. The maltreatment from government officials also contributes to the general outcry over the disdainful and disrespectful manner many Nigerians are treated in other countries. The logic here is that if the Nigerian government places little or no premium on its citizens, governments, corporate bodies, and individuals of other counties will most likely capitalise on the situation to exploit and maltreat its citizens. There is an obvious migration of corruption from the shores of the country into the consular agencies in other countries, hence a near-home outlook of dysfunctional services even in the diaspora. There is no gainsaying that just like migration laws of countries are different, policies regulating airlines and their charges for trips also vary, and these variations are based on peculiar considerations and contingencies. These disparities, regardless of regulating policies, are considered exploitative and so are valid reasons for isolating oneself from the homeland. As reasonable as this reason is, it is discountenanced because other ethnicities who connect with the homeland patronise the same "extorting" airlines. Perhaps, other factors that fuel this reason, such as income capacity, may make it more valid.

A different type of bad governance that portrays high-level immaturity was revealed by Tosan:

> The development in the homeland is a thing I cannot comment on. Imagine, when I went to Sapele the last time, the street light that was installed by the chairman was disconnected because he got angry at the people for some personal reasons. Is that type of place developed? We cannot depend on the government. They cannot do it for us. All of them are interested in enriching themselves (IDI/London/January 2020).

If we look at most of the responses under this theme, we would see they emanate from the foreign diaspora, and these stems largely from a place of comparison between the host country and homeland. High-level impunity, nepotism, sense of entitlement, low risk-high benefits, etc., characterise the attitude of public office holders in Nigeria (Ijewereme 2015). The display of pettiness recounted in Tosan's contribution is a reflection of a failed system that allows dysfunctionality to continue indiscriminately. Incidentally, these attitudes are prominent in defining the diaspora's relationship with the homeland.

4.1.5.2 Exploring the Deplorable State of Infrastructure

One of the drivers of the economy is the presence of adequate basic amenities and infrastructure. Scholars argue that it is a prerequisite for economic growth because it affects all aspects of human endeavours, following the World Bank's affirmation that it contributes up to 99 basis points to per capita economic growth (Emmanuel and Fasakin 2015; Babatunde 2018; Ojo 2019). Infrastructure not only guarantees better living for the people but also has the agency to attract investment, visits, and tourism. Unfortunately, infrastructural development is a sad reality in Delta State because there is a lack of potable water, ineffective and inefficient health care services, poor roads, social insecurity, pitiable electricity supply, declining education, etc., all of which account for the obvious underdevelopment in the state (Ebekozien 2020). The absence of infrastructure poses a threat to lives and property, particularly because most people will be unemployed, and it could further intensify the state of infrastructural challenges, as well as other related matters. For instance, the trickle-down effect of insecurity has further deepened an already deplorable condition of infrastructural facilities in Delta State. This view is also shared by

Nnam *et al*. (2020:16) who argue that insecurity, which is a by-product of war, terrorism, conflict, and crisis, results in the destruction of lives and property, discourages patronage, causes infrastructural decay and abandonment, and leads to loss of employment and redundancy. Put differently, there is an influencing characteristic that accentuates the infrastructure-insecurity nexus, such that both are dependent on the other. As many interviewees, local and foreign, emphasised this point, the comparison was made with Lagos State even by the foreign diaspora who, out of fairness, also used Lagos State as a standard of evaluation.

4.1.5.2.1 Poor Hospitality Sector

With its natural resource availability and multiculturalism, Delta State sure has the potential and opportunity to build and become one of the vibrant states with promising business opportunities. The rich cultural diversity stands a good chance of attracting tourists, but it has not received wide patronage because of poor hospitality in the state. An institution with the capacity to generate as much as 5% GDP, the hospitality sector is one viable venture that can push the economic, social, and cultural frontiers of a state (Weerakit and Beeton 2018). With the poor hospitality activities in the state, visits, and returns, whether temporary or permanent, are not given top consideration, thereby worsening the already fragile relationship between the diaspora and the homeland. According to one of the discussants from Ijaw, "one of the reasons the diaspora does not interface with the homeland is because many of them do not have personal accommodation and there are no good hotels that would have augmented for that. The situation is worsened because our villages are in the creeks, and citing a hotel in such an environment is difficult".

In the same vein, Jolomi threw more light on the possible cause of ethnic ambivalence by the diaspora:

> If you go to the East and West, no matter how remote the community is, you can find good hotels, and guest houses, but if you go to Benin River, you will not find anything like that. So, what will attract an Itsekiri person living in Lagos State or even Warri to his native community? What is he going to the village to do when if he goes, he is agitated to want to leave after a few hours?

> But if there are facilities that promote hospitality, people will want to return home (FGD/Warri, Delta State/December 2019).

The availability of good hospitality is a driver of an economy, particularly because it encourages tourism and other forms of business as well as attracts investors. On the other hand, the unavailability of hospitality infrastructure discourages people from engaging with such a place, especially in a modern age such as the 21st century. For many of the diaspora, the availability of this would have augmented their non-ownership of houses and encouraged them to interface more with the homeland since putting up with a family or friend may cause some inconveniences for both parties. The hospitality sector opens up society and allows interaction with people from other places and groups. A ride around some of the communities in the state revealed that the hospitality sector in the state has not been given adequate attention, whether by the private or public sector and this poses a disadvantage to intending and prospective visitors. However, this reality is more severe in the coastal region, as reported in the interviews. Due to the terrain of these places and the non-availability of basic infrastructures, prospective investors are discouraged from setting up hotels there. Otherwise, the existence of such hotels would not only amount to more internally generated revenue for the government but would also keep the diaspora closer home.

4.1.5.2.2 Death-trap Roads and Unavailability of Access Roads

Road, one of the drivers of any nation's development, is essential infrastructure. The easy access that comes with its construction facilitates and accelerates various developmental initiatives by both public and private entrepreneurs. Access roads will automatically rub off on transport infrastructure for easy and safe mobility. In their evaluation, Russ *et al*. (2018) note the huge fraction that transport infrastructure contributes to the development of the country. Their study highlights the "indispensability" of a quality road system to any committed development master plan. The emphasis on quality road system sounds like a mirage in Delta State. Roads and road networks in Delta State appear to be one of the fears of the diaspora, as captured in the response below. Kennedy described the road condition in Delta State.

> I am surprised that as wealthy as Delta State is, they still have problems fixing the road infrastructure in the state. The last time I went visiting, I was irritated by what I saw: potholes everywhere. A journey of 30 minutes took practically 2 hours to cover. On my way to Sapele to visit my mum, I was taken aback when I saw grass growing in the middle of a major road, and everybody seemed to be fine with it. I could not spend two nights in Sapele because if I did, I would have lost my sanity. Everything was just the opposite of normal (IDI/London/January 2020).

Roads in Nigeria have been researched, with the conclusion that their quality is generally poor, and this explains the short lifespan of most Nigerian roads (Odeku 2020). In the same vein, Matawal (2013) argues that the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA), the agency saddled with the responsibility of road maintenance in the country, has not lived up to its responsibility, owing to structural challenges. The weird sight of grass growing in the middle of a major road explains and confirms Matawai's position on FERMA's incompetence at maintaining Nigerian roads. The bewilderment that grips anyone about Delta State and its poor infrastructural level, considering its oil derivative allocation aside from federal allocation, is justifiable. Assumptions from this response suggest that even if Delta State has its internal issues, road infrastructure should not be one of them. Apart from the accidents and insecurity that are imminent on bad roads, there are economic implications for vehicles plying these roads (Odeku 2020). Plying such roads reduces the lifespan of a vehicle and forces the owner to purchase another car sooner than envisage—if the resources are available. Intriguingly, this interviewee was unable to comprehend the complacent attitude of the people which made them comfortable with such absurdity. This awkward feeling syncs with the "mental disorientation" evaluation that Kennedy used in summing up the home-based: "Abnormality seems to be ingrained in the people such that it has tainted their sense of right." So, to maintain their sanity, the diaspora prefers to remain in a society they consider fit for their orientation.

Discussants from the Itsekiri Focus Group Discussion bemoaned the poor road condition, insufficient road network, and/or even road unavailability situation in the Itsekiri area of the state. According to Fidelis (Itsekiri/44 years old/male/married/ MBA), an auditor who showed a willingness to support and commit to homeland development,

> Most of the Itsekiri communities are in the creeks and, as such, do not have access roads. The government should give us access to roads and leave the rest to us. With that, we, the people from those communities, will team up to take development to our communities. Because there are no access roads, nobody wants to do anything in and with the homeland. To finance a building project in those communities will cost as much as the cost for two buildings, not because of *deve* demands, but because the charges on transportation of a bag of cement to those communities are almost the amount with which you bought it. That alone can puncture the passion of the diaspora toward the homeland (FGD/Warri/ February 2020).

The huge cost implication of any project that this response emphasises shows a link to the diaspora's poor relationship with the homeland. The passion with which this discussant spoke shows that the interest of the homeland is a priority, but the lousy state infrastructural development pushes them away. Their commitment is an indication that infrastructural provision or development is not seen as the sole responsibility of the government but also the people. Their willingness is a confirmation of Emmanuel and Fasakin's (2015) empirical study of two contrasting communities (hinterland and coastal) in Ondo State, which revealed that Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) are facilitators of development through their provision of basic infrastructure like schools, markets, town halls, recreational facilities, potable water, etc. Although stronger commitment and engagements were recorded with the CBOs in the hinterland, the coastal areas were also commended for their ability to harness their resources and their initiatives to better the lives of the people. Findings show that economic activities in the studied areas received boosts, a situation which is absent in Big Warri and other coastal communities, such that people have to travel to neighbouring cities to carry out certain tasks that should have been done in the community where they reside.

Drawing an inference from Fidelis' contribution, the lack of accommodation caused by the inability to build because of the inaccessible road for conveying materials and services is a contributory factor to the diaspora's ambivalence. A clear willingness to commit to developing individual communities with little or no assistance is seen in this response, although it is tied to the government's provision of a singular infrastructure—an access

road. Although Emenike (2015) has intimated that road construction is capital intensive, and as such governments source funds through other channels, it does not exonerate the government from this responsibility. The people cannot remain perpetually out of contact with the world, and that is what bridges are meant for: to suspend above natural barriers and connect one part of the community to the other. What is obvious is that the challenges of the state are enormous, and the government, even before assuming the position, is overwhelmed and exasperated—possibly even confused—and does not even know how to begin attending to the issues squarely.

4.1.5.2.3 Lack of Rural Electrification and Poor Power Supply

Lack of electricity also made it to the list as one of the reasons diaspora do not interface with the homeland. Imade (2016) points out that shortage of electricity results in low productivity output, and this has serious implications for employment and is also a potential push factor for people to migrate to other places for a better life. As people get inclined to the practices of the new space during the quest for a more comfortable life, satisfaction could stand as a probable threat to the homeland. Rita's (Itsekiri/31 years old/female/single/B.A./first-generation diaspora) experience was confirmed by discussants in the homeland. Describing her experience upon invitation to attend a function in the state, she related:

> Can you imagine there is no hair-dressing salon in Big Warri? People travel to make their hair in Warri basically because there is no electricity. The people do not even have bulk money with which to get a small generator to float a small business. If the government can give them electricity, it will solve a lot of problems. How do you expect someone who has gone out to other places, seen and enjoyed better infrastructural facilities to return to this type of condition? Not even for a split second will such a person want to stay (IDI/Lagos State/July 2020).

The use of the pronoun "them" is instructive and allows us to come to terms with how diaspora extricate themselves from an unpleasant situation. It brings to the fore we/them binary that explains how the diaspora does not see themselves as part of a homeland group, regardless of affiliations. Assuming the non-electrification of the above community and many like it is blamed on its coastal limitation, what reason is plausible for

communities in the hinterland that have not been electrified? Stanley who shares his thought on a similar situation in the hinterland said, "|… even though my village is upland, electricity in my community has been grounded for decades. Economic activities are grounded". Though his community is in the upland, which does not suffer as many barriers as the coastal regions, the situation is no better. He, however, posed a question: "What excuse does the government of Delta State have to still have a community in darkness?"

The importance of power supply cannot be overemphasised, especially as sustainable development is appreciably attributed to it because without it businesses cannot function at optimum capacity, all things being equal (Oniemola and Tasie 2019). The poor and inadequate electrification that is being experienced in Delta State is a national challenge. This assertion is found in Roche *et al.*'s (2020) report that approximately 10% of the sub-Saharan un-electrified population are Nigerians spread across different states in the country. Whilst Olowosejeje *et al.* (2019) point to the high financial cost on industries in Nigeria due to limited and unreliable power supply, they argue that it has socioeconomic implications on the economy and ultimately the citizens. Whether insufficient power supply and/or the absence of it, the government's inability to provide uninterrupted power supply has consequences on other sections and activities in the country.

With these reports, it is plausible to say there is a correlation between poverty and electricity. The economic implication for the draining reality in Big Warri, an Itsekiri community, is that while the people spend money in a bit to get needed services, they end up spending more than people in a more developed community, the reason being that the transportation cost of accessing needed services in towns creates a “penny-wise, pound-foolish” inevitability, thus deepening their poverty level. Also, recall how Isaac narrated his experience of not having a sound sleep because of an epileptic power supply—a situation they do not have to worry about in London, his host community.

4.1.5.2.4 The Comatose State of the Health Care Sector

Many interviewees in this study, particularly those of the foreign diaspora, indicated that based on health care, they could remain adamant about their ambivalence towards the homeland. One of the daunting challenges in Nigeria's infrastructure is the non-availability of good health care facilities. The crisis in the country's health sector was exposed in the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic reinforced the plea by the masses for the government to overhaul the health sector in the country. As Frederick further explored other crucial issues in the state, he said,

> The health sector in Nigeria is sickening and exacerbating in the homeland, even with all its oil wealth and NDDC projects. I would not want to subject myself or any member of my family to such inadequacies, all in the name of homeland interface. The medical facilities and access here are not only top-notch but accessible. In Nigeria and Delta State, in particular, no structure; neither are there facilities nor a functional system. People live praying perpetually not to fall ill because they may not get quality health care or be able to afford it if they see something close to it. The prayer of an average Nigerian is infrastructure inclined. Here, everything is well planned and laid out to the extent that there are interpreters to assist immigrants who do not speak the English language whenever they visit the hospital. That is a system that works and is proactive (IDI/London/January 2020).

Many other interviewees share this quite explicit sentiment, and the spiritual connection of this is quite striking. In other words, the developmental level of societies defines people's spirituality level. It implies that some of the sicknesses that have claimed and continue to claim the lives of some people in Nigeria would have been treated, but Nigerians and Deltans specifically resort to praying because health care services are unavailable, ineffective, or inefficient. There is a nexus between health consciousness and connection with home, especially when permanent return is considered. For these members of the diaspora whose host government has gone as far as factoring non-English speakers in by providing interpreters to aid their access to health care (see Chen and Chen, 2019), it is inconceivable to return to a society where the health care facilities are near unavailable, let alone accessible.

4.1.5.2.5 Poor Educational Facilities

As interviewees identified the deplorable state of infrastructure in the state as responsible for their ambivalence, Faith drew attention to the poor state of education as being part of the reason for her relocation and detachment from the homeland. In her view, the state's university is as good as a glorified secondary school with little or no modern teaching aid:

> I relocated for further studies because I felt the school lacks the technological capacity to advance the frontiers of knowledge. There are no facilities for effective and efficient learning and teaching. For me, education is the foundation of any form of development, and the provision of adequate and efficient facilities is the solution. It is appalling to see people graduate from the state's university, and you could almost make a bet they did not see the four walls of a university because of the poor standard of education that is informed by insufficient or lack of quality educational facilities and training. The simple and correct expression for a university graduate is as difficult as winning a visa lottery. Imagine! (IDI/London/January 2020)

The consequences of the deteriorating educational level in the state and country at large appear to have moved beyond the domain of development discourse to a cause of the diaspora's disconnection from the homeland. Education in other countries of the world, especially in the global North, has been known to take the front burner because of the benefits it brings, particularly via research and innovations (Hartwig 2006). Beyond mere scholarships and findings, these researches go on to influence policies and decisions regarding various sectors and institutions in these countries. In Africa, some countries commit to educational funding in appreciable measures for the ultimate advancement of their country (Amsterdam 2006). In Nigeria, the budget for education seems to whittle down by the day, and the effect is translated into recurring industrial disputes and actions by academic and non-academic workers. The consequences are apparent in crashing educational quality, technological backwardness/stagnation, and declining state of educational infrastructure and facilities. For example, the absence of quality technology and infrastructure in higher institutions in Nigeria has grossly affected research and development because institutional repositories are below global standards (Okoroma 2018).

Upon visiting Delta State University for validation of the respondent's submission, the researcher discovered inaccessible computers, poor power supply, low internet bandwidth, and inadequate books, thus justifying Okoroma's position. Faith's concerns coupled with the realities on the ground show that the pitiful situation of education in the state is not a recent challenge. This validation visit also meant that Faith spoke from a premise of comparison, having experienced the educational functionalities of two distinct worlds. Her position is subtly reiterated by Tegwolo as he advances his discussion, "…the problem of the Delta person is 'destructive ignorance' and the worse part of it is that they do not know they are ignorant; they will rather claim to be the wisest of them all". For this interviewee, ignorance is a function of poor education, inadequate exposure and enlightenment, and an adamant attitude against accepting a different option. The attitude of ignorance and the high illiteracy level in the state (Okoye and Juweto 2015), especially when viewed against the backdrop of self-destructive assumptions inferred by many interviewees, leaves the diaspora in a state of irritation and consequent detachment.

The poor educational presence in the state is again reinforced in the riverine areas. Tonbra who shared his experience earlier about the resentment shown by a fellow kinsman noted that return was far from his agenda because there are no schools in his community.

> How can one be encouraged to return when the future of one's children will be mortgaged because there are no schools in my community? There is only one primary and secondary school in a distant community to which children from other neighbouring communities paddle. There are no teachers to even do the work. In a government school, there can be as few as two teachers. What can the pupils possibly learn, and how can someone even emerge from such a condition? (IDI/Lagos/February 2020)

Invariably, the depressing state of education vis-à-vis access to educational acquisition poses a huge challenge for the diaspora, especially within the context of return. Diaspora's exposure to an environment with good educational facilities in their host destinations will make the homeland unappealing for a healthy relationship, especially when basic rights and amenities are a luxury.

4.1.5.3 Poverty and Illiteracy

The ubiquity of poverty in Delta State is not new but astonishing, considering the state's enormous natural endowment (Deinne and Ajayi 2018). Mabogunje (2002) said the overriding position of the environment on other parts of the society and the environmental challenges it has mounted on the people have been blamed for the poverty in the state. This stems from the inability of citizens to engage in their regular economic activities owing to environmental degradation caused by crude oil exploration activities. Consequent to this is poverty which has culminated in different forms of social vices. Little wonder Oniemola and Tasie (2019) call poverty a "pollutant". The interrelated dynamics seen in the views so far are further strengthened by the prevailing poverty that is visible among the people. Poverty and illiteracy are not taken only for their literal meanings but stretched into the deeper concerns of the people from the state who for long supported male education. Unarguably, female children constitute a large number of victims of this ridiculous practice where educating a female child is considered a waste by ethnics of varying persuasions. They are a category that bears the brunt of poverty and this has limited their capacities. Below is a detailed opinion on education by Harry, who believes illiteracy is one of the major problems of the Delta person:

> Education is not just about certificates; it is light that opens up the mind in a progressive way and rakes away fear. The unwillingness to help a kinsman is borne out of insecurity, which is proof that such a person has not found light… The practice of denying the girl child education because the people perceive it as not adding value to them is the reason why the men treat our women as pieces of items in marriage and, for so many, do not find them attractive for keeps. It is illiteracy that would make the youth in the 21st-century resort to collecting *device*s, while upcoming youths and children aspire to become community boys because it is a daily and easy way to make money. It is illiteracy that would make someone who can help withhold such because he is scared to be surpassed. Pitching a tent with another ethnicity to the detriment of yours also accentuates the place of illiteracy because all ethnicities are unique. The rivalry and envy prevalent in the state are there because our people have not found light. The challenges are too

> numerous for people who have not found the light to accommodate (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

Whilst it will be needless to discuss the issues raised by this interviewee, having discussed them under their independent themes, it is worthy of note that the importance of education cannot be overemphasised. Weaving different strands of decadence around illiteracy and the need to seek light is instructive and underscores the consequence of lack of knowledge. It is necessary to echo that education, as conceived by this interviewee, is not limited to certification but encompasses the search for truth, fairness, humaneness, justice, love, unity, and progress, among others. Fusing these views, education, when got right, elevates one and serves as liberation from societal vices/bondage. It is that elevation that frees one/a people from poverty, especially one that affects the mind. The positive effect of this elevation, as inferred from this interviewee, promotes and sustains the diaspora's relationship with the homeland. To further give credence to this position, a Facebook post by Alex Gate to Urhobo World United Union, which the researcher came across reads: "Yoruba have Otedola, Hausa have Dangote, Igbo have Ubah, Urhobo has…?" This post allows us to understand how perceived poverty shapes the perception of a people of their homeland/ethnicity. For Alex, the Urhobo nation has not produced anyone with such a level of wealth and influence that would earn it, if not global relevance and recognition like the trio mentioned, at least a continental one. The Ibru dynasty, with all the viable business and wealth potentials it exhibited in the 1980s, which could have ennobled the Urhobo ethnicity, has since collapsed following irregularities that could not be managed. In other words, people feel a sense of pride in identifying and associating with their ethnicity when influential, notable, and wealthy people emerge from it, where otherwise, dissociation from one's ethnicity may be inevitable. Harry is one of the few respondents who spoke passionately about the homeland. Although he showed empathy for the homeland, he was critical of the goings-on in the state.

It is saddening that irrespective of the improving educational achievement of the Delta people, illiteracy was passionately pointed out as a cause of ethnic ambivalence constraining the diaspora from interfacing with the culture and the homeland. Although there is a rude awakening to literacy and education, the effect is unnoticeable, especially because the prevailing circumstances have not categorically and visibly brought the

needed change that the diaspora and also people in the homeland clamour for. Education is liberating but what is most glaring is how education is viewed as certification. This understanding also explains why education has not remodelled the character of the people, nor translated into progress and development of the homeland. Although education has been discussed above, the views on this theme are different. While it was earlier considered under infrastructural decadence, it is considered a socio-cultural problem here.

To shed more light on the endemic poverty ravaging the people, Diriye, who lamented the depressing level of impoverishment in the homeland, describes as pathetic and obsolete the practice that the people use as a coping mechanism.

> I was shocked, when I visited home some time ago, to find out that my people still engage in trade by barter just to get their daily necessities, particularly consumables as well as water. People exchange fish for potable water while others do for *garri* (processed cassava) in this age and time. I find it pathetic and ridiculous because just as it has rendered the people vulnerable to political exploitation, it has driven the diaspora further away from the homeland (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

This view provides a pejorative entry into the debate of "stomach infrastructure" that Nigerian politicians latch onto to get the needed political support of the electorates during elections. It also underscores a corrupt system that pauperises the people and keeps them at the mercy of the leaders (Ojo 2019). Invariably, this becomes another form of vote buying, and they do this by taking advantage of the susceptibility of the poor by wooing them with basic items like foodstuffs, clothes, money, telephone recharge cards, kerosene, *etc.*— a condition created by the political class for personal gains (Okeke and Nwali 2020). Okeke and Nwali (2020) argue that the political class has hijacked the economy, thus making it difficult for the common citizen to access the necessities of life. As such, this particular case of a trade by barter has compromised the mindset and conscience of the common man and makes them act in accordance and agreement with the inducements from the political class.

The deductions from Diriye's response accentuate Ojo's position, bearing in mind the manipulative power of money that politicians employ in buying votes without minding its effects on sustainable democracy. Despite living in a world where cashless transactions

are the new normal, trade by barter which ended in the early 1900s still finds relevance among some communities in Delta State. How will a diaspora who has been exposed to an easy way of transaction, following technological advancement, return to a practice that has become obsolete in an ever-changing world? The sad consequence of corrupt political configurations is reflected in the economic and social arrangements visible in the state, thus erecting a wall between the aggrieved diaspora and the homeland.

As Omotola (2008) argues that poverty is a threat to security, the likelihood of poverty promoting insecurity also finds resonance in Smith *et al.*'s (2013) position. Somewhere in this analysis, it has been established that unemployed youths are tools of exploitation by the ruling class to advance their interests. This exploitation is connected to the people's weak financial status which puts them in a vulnerable situation of settling for whatever appears to satisfy their helpless condition.

4.1.6 Unfettered Environmental Maladies

The intriguing link between ethnic ambivalence and environmental degradation is brought forward under this theme. Here, the interviewees help us to understand the realities of environmental pollution in Delta State and how the incredible natural resource in the state (oil) has become the undoing of the state. Environmental pollution is not only responsible for the migration of the people, but it also influences their disposition towards the homeland.

4.1.6.1 The Paradox of Crude Oil Resource

Environmental discourse in the Niger Delta and the area of study for this research--Delta State—is a frontline issue. The global environmental concern shows that our environment is daily plagued by the vestiges of negative human interaction and that also lends voice to the degrading environmental challenges experienced in the Delta region. Thus, our consciousness is raised to the understanding that nature cannot be cheated, nor can it be denied justice. The impact of oil exploration and consequent spillage caused by ruptured or vandalised pipes informed by grievance over environmental pollution and neglect of the people is devastating. As a result, there is a massive migration from the state to other promising locations within and outside the country. This is because the severe ecological

consequences in the state have left an unproductive and infertile environment, one that is not supportive of any form of agricultural activities which are the mainstay of the people. We would recall that in Chapter One, we established that the people of Delta State are predominantly agriculturists because of their terrain (Alagoa 1963; Lloyd 1963). Any harm done to the environment becomes a huge challenge for the people in all ramifications and specifically, economically.

The discovery of crude oil in Oloibiri in 1957 and other places thereafter caused a major turn-around in the culture that defines the Delta person. As oil companies continue to explore oil unabatedly with a near insensitive attitude to the environment and the ecosystem, the people have continued to experience hardship in an unprecedented manner. As said earlier, pipeline vandalism is one of the causes of environmental pollution and insecurity in Delta State, and the effect of this cannot be exaggerated. Evidence from the field shows the environment as a generous giver and taker. Sometimes, the consequences of the "takes" are higher than that of the "gives". In a communique from a two-day conference organised by the Delta State government on "Securing Oil and Gas Installation in Delta State" in January 2018, it was revealed that:

> An estimated 1.5 million tons of oil have been spilled into the Niger Delta ecosystem over the past 50 years. Over 800,000 barrels of crude oil are lost daily to vandalism, and only 10% of this is usually accessed by oil vandals while the remaining 90% is wasted on the environment resulting in irreversible damage to the ecologies of the impacted areas (Communique, Delta State Government, January 2018).

Implicit in the fact above is that aquatic life will be affected. Where there is no massive death, the possibility of aqua life contamination will be high, since they would have ingested these petrochemicals. With the huge constituents of aqua life forming the consumption/food culture of the Delta State people, there are underlying health implications for the consumption of contaminated seafood. No doubt, there is a chain effect, but this research has found some answers to the massive migration of people from the homeland and the reason for their ethnic ambivalence. In the words of Timipre (Ijaw/46 years old/male/married/BSc.), a civil servant and one of the discussants, "the

fishermen are abandoning fishing because they sit on the high sea all night only to return with few catches that can barely cater for the family needs, let alone commercialising it."

Going by the unfettered crude oil exploration activities and their consequent realities, the new dynamics are redirecting the focus of the Delta State youths and, more importantly, creating a subsequent reconfiguration of their culture. Culture, an all-encompassing phenomenon that creates a distinct identity for a people, is important to retell the assertion of Anderson and Peek (2002) that the practices that make up these distinctions are tied to their environment. Where practices, norms, rituals, etc. are daily challenged by external factors, identity, language, and culture inadvertently begin to lose their relevance. Aside from leaving a scar on the culture, the waning cultural and economic practices borne from interacting with the environment offer an alibi for migration by youths and able-bodied people to explore options for earning a living for themselves and their family members in other encouraging locations.

The situation is not better in the hinterland either. Environmental pollution in the uplands has rendered the soil unfit for planting because deposits of soot and oil spillage have constituted spoilers of the agricultural life and food culture of the people. If one presumes that there is food insecurity in Delta State following the contamination of agricultural produce, it will not be out of place to connect this with soil degradation as a result of oil exploration activities in the state. This anxiety resonates with the positions of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the Food Security Policy Brief (FSPB) that food security is achieved when an adequate supply of quality, quantity, and varieties of food is ensured (FAO 1996; FSPB 2006). A ride around some of the communities around Warri for sightseeing and observation confirmed the people's lamentations of environmental damage. According to Monday, the key informant for Isoko, "The effects of oil exploration activities are what we see manifesting in our agricultural produce. The soil is not fertile to enable a good harvest, even when fertilizers are applied in many cases to boost productivity. The cassavas are stunted, and the yields are insufficient for any commercial consideration". The researcher captured some shots showing a stunted cassava farm in Kokori and a devastating palm plantation in the state.

Plate 4.1: A farmland with stunted cassava trees; *Source: Researcher's field work*

Plate 4.2: A farmland devastated by crude oil pollution in Delta State; *Source: Researcher's field work*

Even as the informant bemoaned the pitiful situation of environmental pollution in the hinterlands, his position was corroborated by discussants who stressed that the situation in the coastal areas of the state is worse. His reason was premised on the fact that the people in the hinterland of the state have a sense of city life and access to “deplorable” infrastructures compared to the coastal areas where there are no infrastructural facilities to assuage their suffering. He added that frustration is written on the faces of the people. These submissions again point to the push factors in migration as expanded by Darkwah and Verter (2014). According to the authors, people move, especially when they do not feel a sense of satisfaction with their goals and aspirations in a particular place, to a place where they perceive will deliver their goals to them.

In the same vein, the pollution of the environment from the activities connected to oil exploration results in the unavailability of potable water in some parts of the state. For those in the riverine, their source of water for everyday use has always been the rivers and the sea, but since the pollution that came with crude oil exploration contaminates their source of water, certain essential needs have been affected. Drinkable water has become a scarce commodity because the people can no longer fetch it from the sea or river due to oil spillage. In some communities, according to Tuoyo (Itsekir/28 years old/female/single/BSc.), a banker and one of the discussants, "people in the riverine still engage in trade by barter. Some of them travel to Ugbuwangue from the coastal communities to fetch potable water. They exchange fish for water and sometimes, food. Who wants to identify with such a practice or condition?"

The situation as highlighted in Tuoyo’s view resonates with Diriye’s as well as the succeeding response below. It underscores the precarious condition and how the people who are incidentally victims of environmental degradation in Delta State negotiate their survival in the face of obvious government abandonment. In addition to the practice of trade by barter, migration comes as a survival strategy for the many who are fortunate to leave. For some, experiences are episodes, and when gone, they are as good as forgotten. For some others, the experiences are etched in their subconscious and continue to define their existence as we shall see with Ebikefe below. In his emotional narrative, he

bemoaned the spoilage of his environment and the ultimate but grave resolve not to return to the homeland. Ebikefe said,

> There is no home to return to. Home has been destroyed by the selfishness and foolishness of legal and illegal stakeholders who have jettisoned the collective interest of the people for their private gains. Environmental pollution is constantly chasing us away from our communities, and nothing is being done by the government to alleviate the challenges of the coastal people. More so, the riverine area is abandoned, and even in the 21st century, no form of basic amenities has been taken to the people who give so much yet get almost nothing for their spoilage as compensation. I am one of the few lucky ones that have been able to wangle their way out of the unfortunate situation in the state. Having tasted both worlds, home is now in London (IDI/London/January 2020).

Ebikefe restates the critical situation of environmental pollution and its allied consequences, calling our attention to it as a major push factor for people in affected communities. The impact of the offending actions by the government and other stakeholders is reflected in the exhibition of ethnic ambivalence that ultimately challenges the diaspora's agency as developers of the homeland. The environmental dimension of his submission reiterates the projection that 80% of people from the Niger Delta will be displaced following climate change, and this change cannot be divorced from the oil exploration activities going on in the states that make up this region (Oniemola and Tasie 2019). Hönke (2014) opines that displacement from familiar surroundings is one of the most pervasive threats to everyday life, and this is in tandem with the views of this interviewee who has experienced the ills of a complex web of environmental activities and actions. The chances of such a diaspora who knows the realities in the homeland and the sharp contrast in the destination country returning with some kind of social and ideological remittance are slim.

His view about the non-existence of a homeland is largely borne out of the understanding that the condition of the home is a pathetic one because of the damage and injustice done to it. The situation is further exacerbated by the perceived nonchalance of the government, oil multinational companies, and other elite stakeholders who have continued to benefit from the spoils of the homeland (Oniemola and Tasie 2019). Oniemola and Tasie's (2019)

alarming projection of 80% displacement of Niger Delta indigenes and a closer deduction from Ebikefe's response highlight a possibility of ethnic cleansing in no distant future. As more people move out or are displaced from their destroyed homeland, the chances that they would seek a homeland elsewhere are high, and this poses a threat to cultural and ethnic stability and sustainability.

For better understanding, Omashola (itsekiri/41 years old/male/married/B.Engr.) an engineer, cited an example:

> No sign to show that oil is being produced in the state but look at Lekki road in Lagos; it has been transformed by Chevron—a lace that is not even contributing to the oil wealth of the nation; neither are the victims of environmental pollution. Whatever Lekki is today is credited to Chevron. How many mangroves does Lagos have that Chevron has established a mangrove conservation centre there, but here in Delta, where mangroves grow naturally and where they get their produce from, they have not deemed it fit to establish such? (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020)

The response above is suggestive of anger and frustration that despite its rich natural resources, the fate of Delta State is like that of the proverbial cow that is being milked by the farmer who cares less about the cow's pain. There is an obvious injustice to and disregard for the Delta people and their environment that informs a sense of irrelevance in Omashola's view above. The response implies the urgent need for the government to not only consider constructing developmental projects in the state but also site relevant industries that will harness other natural resources in the state. Closeness to raw materials is the first consideration for this interviewee. However, other factors like closeness to the market also define investors' decisions. For sure, such a response is not illogical because it also finds resonance with some foreign diaspora as Ebikefe quoted earlier. There is the prominence of environmentally informed frustration and anger and McConnell (2019) believes that such condition is volatile and dangerous. For this and some other people, disconnection from the homeland comes as a way to deal with the injustice being done to the state.

Another interesting environmental reason given by the diaspora as a put-off from the homeland is its unappealing appearance, not as a result of pollution from crude oil

exploration activities but about general and attitudinal cleanliness. However, this point is largely held by the foreign diaspora, and the reason again highlights the differentials apparent in environmental care in both locations: London/Delta State. Tega believes that life in Nigeria is pretty difficult and even worse in Delta State because of the dirty appearance of the environment. He thinks that the environment appears too dirty to live in, and a sharp contrast from what they have in London. Although many other diasporas referred to this issue, it was not considered a critical cause of ambivalence for them.

4.1.6.2 Natural Resource Phenomenon

Another dynamic to this ethnic ambivalence is the endowment of natural resources. Though it may sound ridiculous, many members of the diaspora hold the opinion that contributing to homeland development is irrelevant because of the capacity it has to cater to itself, courtesy of being one of the states that contribute immensely to the federal coffers of the country. In her response to the inquiry about her frail relationship with the homeland, Blessing, who showed distaste for the traditional way of greeting and found it slavish, said, “Home is rich and can fend for itself. I consider sending resources home as waste”.

Understanding this position cannot be dissociated from the type of society this interviewee lives in. Living in a society where resources are accounted for and used for development may have played a role in the view of this interviewee. Her host society is one where individuals do not need to directly contribute to infrastructural development since there is a system in place for the payment of tax and other levies. Asking such an individual to contribute to the drilling of a borehole as expected of the diaspora, for example, may be difficult as these are amenities they do not have to worry about. More importantly, this response is from a second-generation diaspora who already expresses dispassion for the homeland and its cultural practices. Perhaps, that sentiment is also a factor influencing her position concerning natural resource deposits in the state.

Interestingly, some other interviewees shared this view, thus indicating its importance. However, this position is clouded by sheer ignorance of the diaspora about homeland challenges. News about the environmental challenges in Nigeria’s Niger Delta region has featured prominently in global news and even on social media, which makes this view

rather unrealistic. Aside from that, countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, are identified as underdeveloped and also as sending countries. Hence the African Union sees the diaspora as its sixth region as a way of underscoring its strategic relevance in the development of the different countries of the continent (Kamei 2011). Nevertheless, how a person understands and views a phenomenon absolutely depends on them and even their experiences in total.

Protests, riots, and agitations are strategies by which aggrieved people register their displeasure about certain issues and occurrences in society. In Delta State, where environmental pollution is a huge challenge to the livelihood of the people, protests, both violent and peaceful, are a way to attract government and other stakeholders' attention to their plight. For instance, a peaceful protest carried out by indigenes of Ugborodo, an Itsekiri-speaking community, highlighted environmental degradation, marginalisation, and neglect of the community despite its enormous crude oil resources. Community leaders and representatives who spoke on the camera called attention to the different challenges confronting the people, which are not different from the plights of the Ijaw communities (Channels Television 2020). One will not be wrong to expect that there will be unity between the Ijaw and Itsekiri, especially because they share environmental similarities and political bonds by being under the same senatorial district, but the relationship between both appears to be the most volatile. This reality supports Hardt and Negri's view (cited in Laurie and Stark, 2017) that the demands by group actions are not always a preponderance of a coherent axiomatic foundation. That is to say, despite the similar challenges, the guiding principles of the warring groups are different and prejudiced by their different sentiments.

In these narratives for self-proclaimed freedom, environmental degradation, political marginalisation and infrastructural neglect of their regions were matters of concern that featured prominently in the Ijaw and Itsekiri narratives, even till the time of data collection for this study, and the reason is not farfetched—the two communities share similar experiences in the riverine terrain from which they hail.

4.1.7 Destination Country Pressure and the Politics of Survival

In this section, narratives are explored against the backdrop of pressure that the diaspora is confronted with in their host destinations. These narratives also contribute to the ethnic ambivalence the diaspora exhibit toward the homeland.

4.1.7.1 Socioeconomic Pressure

The realities in host locations have been established in the literature as a key factor in examining the diaspora's relationship with the homeland (Mensah 2014; Almutairi 2015). This study agrees with existing studies as it synthesises this position with data from the field. In London, just as it is in Lagos, the diaspora is challenged by many factors that inhibit their relationship with the homeland. For many interviewees, the challenges of survival in the host country and the inability to break even have greatly affected their relationship with the homeland. These challenges put them in a state of limbo for which a hybrid personality is consciously and/or unconsciously imbibed. In examining the discourse of hybrid-self, Marotta (2008) concludes that it is caused by the blend of two priority cultures and identity, and this is similar to Du Bois' (1903) "double consciousness" ideology. Misan (Itsekiri/50 years old/male/married/B.A./first-generation diaspora), a school administrator who has been in London since 2005, had this to say:

> …breaking-even here in London is not an easy task, especially when you deduct your expenditure from your income, you are left with very little. Having left home for a long, expectations back at home drive many of us into a state of solitude here because even the migrant needs as much help as the people at home. I decided to cut ties with the homeland not only because demands here are sometimes preposterous but also because I cannot handle the pressure from home (IDI/London/January 2020).

Just like many other members of the diaspora, Misan's resolve is situated within a psychological feeling of shame. This study draws upon Sieff's (2016) concept of shame in understanding why the diaspora will rather alienate him/herself to save his/her dignity. Shame potentially drives many migrants into separateness and constraining diaspora-homeland relationships. Thus, the inability to achieve appreciable financial freedom from which the homeland can benefit is a cause of ethnic ambivalence, especially for those who

left the homeland with the understanding that migrating abroad is the launch pad to achieving fortune. This view is further corroborated by those in the Delta State homeland. Some discussants said some of the diasporas would continue to shy away from the homeland because they never saw anything good in the homeland, but unfortunately, many of their mates whom they left behind are doing well in their various endeavours or even better than the diaspora. So, they do not want to connect with home because the homeland is not as unfavourable as they believed. Discussants went further to insinuate that many migrants are caught up with survival challenges and resort to menial jobs and are envious of the financial status of the home-based. According to Edema (Itsekiri/40 years old/male/married/BSc.) who is a contractor, "My friends practically live off me anytime I visit London as they can barely afford any luxury for themselves. They even tell me they wish they had not left the homeland because they scarcely have any meaningful saving after bills and taxes are settled."

In a similar narrative as Misan's, Kelvin (Urhobo/37 years old/male/single/BSc.), a commercial driver who moved to London in 2013, bemoaned the precarious situation that drives them into a state of ethnic ambivalence. His worries are in tandem with findings in previous studies ranging from bad housing, poor economic and social condition, absence of social cohesion and integration, and the hostility they face from the Whites in their Western destinations (Owen 2006; Cela and Barbiano di Belgiojoso 2019). He confessed that they are not living the best of life in London, but they are consoled by the fact that they enjoy the necessities of life even when they have to put up with some form of shame. His idea of shame, again, is a reflection of migrants' inability to excel in the host land, which in turn affects their financial freedom which could have reflected in the homeland in terms of remittances. The delay experienced in securing financial freedom, which is informed by overwhelming challenges, explains the rising case of aging people in the destination country (Cela and Barbiano di Belgiojoso 2019). Because some level of uncertainty plagues destination countries, it becomes logical to infer that achieving one's goal may seem as though a game of coincidence. While it may be easy for Plambech (2017) to suggest return for migrants when host land challenges are insurmountable, the high possibility of shame poses a greater challenge for migrants basically because it stirs a sense of inferiority in them (TenHouten 2017). According to Kelvin,

> Here, many of us live in council houses, low-income earners' neighbourhood, or even worse places. We just have a place to lay our heads so we will be able to think straight about the future; it is not befitting. The crime rate is high because more criminals live in these areas. How will someone ascend in social strata when the people within your social network are people on the lower rung of the social ladder? The lower your social status, the lower your income and invariably, the negative effect on the homeland (IDI/London/January 2020)

As a minority group in the homeland with an even smaller population in the host land, their integration, especially in the labour market, suffers a heavy blow because of the discrimination they experience, and that again is supported by Wimark *et al.* (2019). In dealing with some of the challenges confronting the diaspora, strategies like imbibing the host's culture and transnational marriages are deployed to assuage the pressure in the host land (Mushonga and Dzingirai 2020). Another important challenge bordering on host land pressure raised by most foreign diaspora, as seen from Kelvin's narrative, is good housing and shelter—one of the necessities of life. This necessity is not only justified because of the covering and security it offers but also because of the peace, confidence, assurance, and sense of security that it gives. It helps to maintain a level of sanity that encourages and enables the migrant to plan and strategize for optimum goal achievement.

Kelvin's revealing response gives an insight into some of the social conditions as well as the type of neighbourhood/community that many migrants settle into. Since many migrants live in neighbourhoods like government-laid-out areas, the assumptions are that they will be densely populated and by low-income earners. In such locations, there is a prevalence of drug crime, lawlessness, social exclusion, and other anti-social vices (Best 1996). Such a situation and condition of the neighbourhood are necessarily prioritised by the security apparatus of the state to contain lawlessness in those areas. Wright *et al.'s* (2005) segmented assimilation theory explains that migrants' integration is dependent on where they live, and that holds the ace for understanding the realities of people living under such conditions. In other words, living in a low-income area will most likely mean a person will belong to a lower social class and vice versa. Economic insufficiency, as evidenced by poor neighbourhood, challenges the migrant's capacity to connect with the homeland. Some local diaspora were unanimous in their submission on the

interrelationship between the neighbourhood and their socio-economic status, and they attributed its effect to their constrained relationship with the homeland. Therefore, housing quality is a determiner of the diaspora-homeland relationship.

4.1.7.2 Socio-cultural Pressure

Kaplan and Chacko's (2015) argument that identity is subject to the transformation that can threaten homeland culture following migration to new spaces is crucial in unpacking the socio-cultural pressure of diaspora in destination countries and the relationship with the homeland. Drawing from Du Bois, whose argument about the African-American double consciousness is a manifestation of the awareness of a "yes" and "no" condition, the authors report that migrants often adopt Western identity and culture. This adoption, which automatically relegates the homeland culture and identity, is a necessity that could provide them a soft landing through socialisation. Marotta (2008) helps us understand Du Bois by elaborating that in imbibing the host land's culture, the diaspora becomes an interpreter or intermediary of two races or cultures. This is because of the diaspora's consciousness to uphold his/her original culture and identity while concurrently embracing the host land's culture and identity.

Since the reason for the contemporary diasporic movement sharply departs from the historical one, as hinted in chapter 2, these reasons are critical in unpacking the double consciousness that Du Bois describes. With an eye on the reason for migration, the diaspora, according to Park (1974:376), becomes a "marginal man", who gradually slides from what Marotta (2008) describes as the warm security of the primary group, which is the homeland, to cold freedom of the host land. Perhaps, "sliding" is laced with and implicative of different circumstances and experiences that challenge the diaspora's ambition in the host land. These challenges and the need to negotiate their goal push the diaspora into a state of hybridity where "cold freedom" takes precedence over "warm security". The relegation of "warm security" is thus an intimidating cause of ethnic ambivalence. So, there is a tripartite connection between sociocultural pressure in the host land, hybridity, and ethnic ambivalence. Kate, whom we encountered above, maintains that achieving success may be difficult if one is dogmatic about shutting out the sociocultural realities of the destination country. She said,

> For you to integrate and begin to make the necessary network, you need to drop your Nigerian way of doing things. Sometimes, it is a wide departure from what you have always known how to do, and it may contradict your values, but you have to do what you have to do. For smooth living, you have to imbibe it. And before you know it, you have so assimilated the pattern here that it threatens your original values. And that is one of the causes of the disconnect from the homeland (IDI/London/January 2020).

Xiong *et al*. (2020) argue that social integration requires the active participation of the individual in the reproduction of their own life because people acquire and incorporate it into their socio-cultural life. The influence that comes with the social and cultural sophistication of city life elicits irritating gestures that imply the progress/backwardness contradiction of the diaspora. For most of the diaspora, the Delta State homeland is behind in the scheme of things around the country and globe, a reality they find uncomfortable and unacceptable, especially as obvious economic and social indices depict. Having had comparative experiences of the home and the host land, the diaspora, both foreign and local, were able to situate their ambivalence within the discontentment with the dystopian social patterns in the homeland.

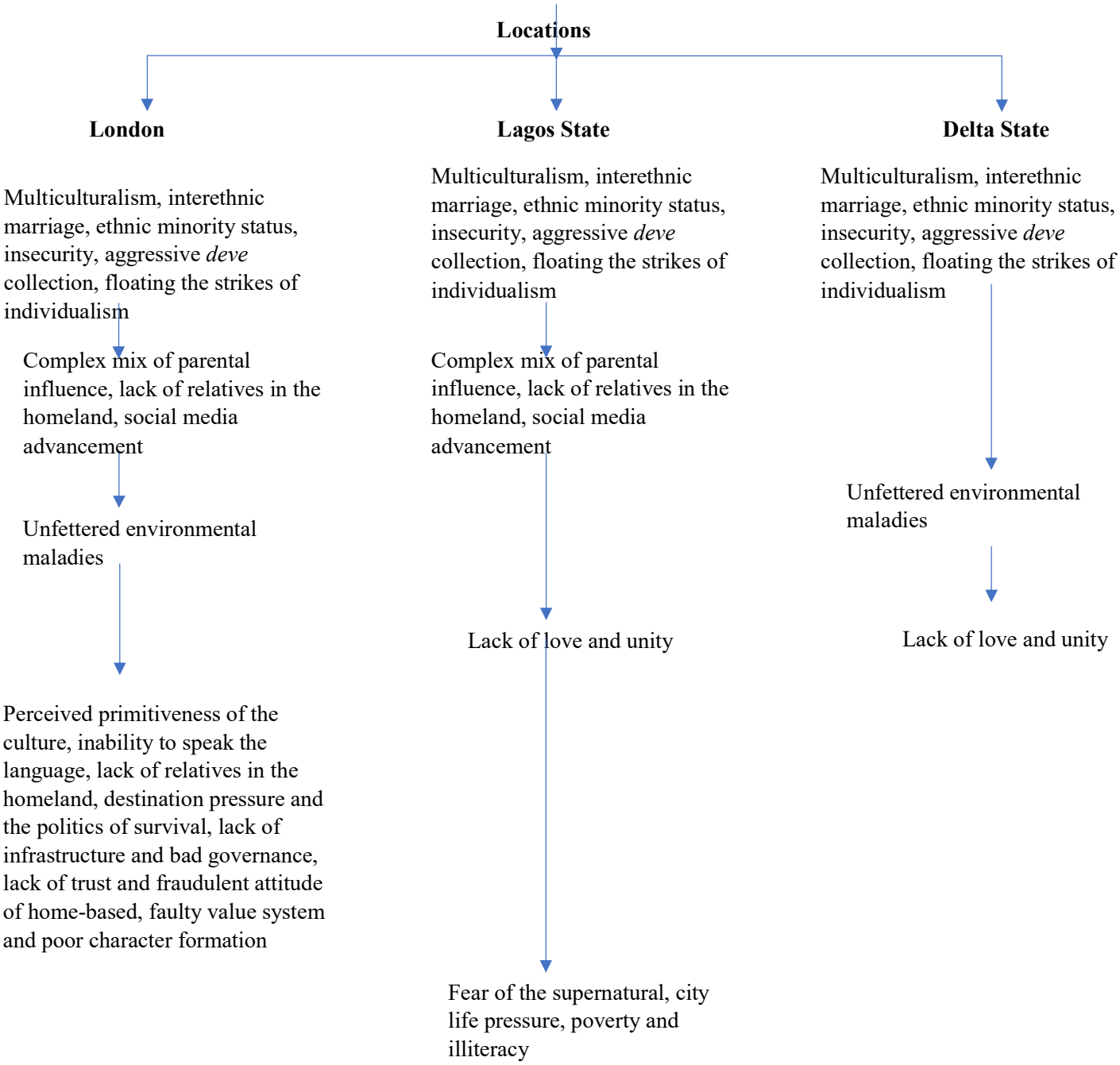
4.1.8 Social Media Advancement

Just as the advancement of social media has made connections easier and ushered in new modes of communication, it is not without its disadvantages basically because it has also pulled relationships apart. Although they possess the agency to bridge gaps, phones and social media, as indicated in the response below, have fatally affected family relationships, friends, and even the homelands. Rita shares both sentiments here:

> The advancement of technology and messaging platforms has eased as well as widened the gap in the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland. For one, WhatsApp has affected my connection with home, especially physical connection. I make video calls with my relatives at home, and I think it connects me to the homeland as much as it pulls me away (IDI/Lagos State/2019).

Social media have far-reaching effects on different aspects of human life. As deduced from Rita's view, the telephone and social media are drawn upon to fulfil different purposes and maintain a relationship (Wahlbeck 2002). Even though social media serve as a bridge and bonding agency, they have also altered the traditional connection of diaspora and homeland by digitalising diaspora (Ponzanesi 2020). Certain types of remittances can still be given with the maintenance of the relationship between the diaspora and his/her relatives via phone. However, social remittances have been greatly affected because of the absence of physical return from the diaspora. This strategy adopted by the diaspora allows us also to understand the gradual demise of the homeland because it progressively assumes more of a mental category than physical for many people in the diaspora (Ullah and Kumpoh 2019).

Overall, this objective has unpacked different causes of ethnic ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora. Because the study adopted a multi-sited ethnography for data collection, causes varied from place to place. There were also similar causes that ran through all three locations. For all 3 locations, multiculturalism, ethnic minority status, insecurity, and *deve* were found to be primary causes of ethnic ambivalence; lack of infrastructure and bad governance, poor value system, lack of trust and fraudulent attitude of the home-based, inability to speak the language, lack of friends and relatives in the homeland, social media advancement, and also destination's pressure and politics of survival were lead factors affecting foreign diaspora; fear of the supernatural, lack of love and unity and the challenges of city life weighed heavily on local diaspora's frail relationship with the homeland. As the home-based contested some of the views of the diaspora such as witchcraft and distrust, they lamented the poor state of the environment as responsible for the high level of poverty in the state. This did not come as a surprise because they are the primary victim of environmental pollution while the diaspora is only victims by proxy. Below is a diagrammatical representation of the causes of ethnic ambivalence exhibited by Delta State diaspora by locations. Except on a few occasions, sub-themes are used in the representation for a quick understanding at a glance. More importantly, some of the sub-themes under the broader heading do not apply to all locations.


Locations
London
Lagos State
Delta State
Multiculturalism, interethnic marriage, ethnic minority status, insecurity, aggressive *deve* collection, floating the strikes of individualism
Complex mix of parental influence, lack of relatives in the homeland, social media advancement
Unfettered environmental maladies
Perceived primitiveness of the culture, inability to speak the language, lack of relatives in the homeland, destination pressure and the politics of survival, lack of infrastructure and bad governance, lack of trust and fraudulent attitude of home-based, faulty value system and poor character formation
Multiculturalism, interethnic marriage, ethnic minority status, insecurity, aggressive *deve* collection, floating the strikes of individualism
Complex mix of parental influence, lack of relatives in the homeland, social media advancement
Lack of love and unity
Fear of the supernatural, city life pressure, poverty and illiteracy
Multiculturalism, interethnic marriage, ethnic minority status, insecurity, aggressive *deve* collection, floating the strikes of individualism
Unfettered environmental maladies
Lack of love and unity

4.2 The Peculiarities of Ethnic Ambivalence among the Identified Ethnic Groups

Considering that the research involved different ethnic groups, it became paramount to critically delineate the ethnic groups based on contrasting and/or similar values. Pertinent questions were asked to ascertain the peculiarities that define the diaspora's relationship with the homeland. These dynamics produce nuances that underscore the peculiarities of each of the ethnic groups studied. Participants' knowledge of this objective is relayed below.

4.2.1 Ijaw

One critical cause of ambivalence associated with the Ijaw ethnicity is the terrain of the homeland. As a people who practically live on the water, with little or no access to basic infrastructure, her diaspora members carry a burden of ambivalence towards the homeland as a result of the unfriendly terrain and the attendant lack of infrastructure. The shame that comes with hailing from a place where there are no infrastructural facilities in the present age shrinks the morale of the diaspora and prevents it from identifying with the homeland (Sieff 2016). In other words, there is a connection between ethnic ambivalence and infrastructural development or availability. This view, among others, is captured by George, one of the interviewees quoted earlier:

> I do not connect with home basically because home is still living in the forgone centuries. There is practically no infrastructure and no progress to date… As for the language, I only try to speak when I occasionally connect with home but not with my children (IDI/London/January 2020).

Interviewees from other ethnic groups corroborated this position by noting that of all the ethnic groups studied for this research, the Ijaw are the least educated. They said all they know how to do is fish. Chief Pere, the Ijaw key informant, agreed partially but also argued that the Ijaw were among the first set of educated people in the country. Indeed, the renowned historian, Tekena Tamuno, as well as the Clarks are some of the renowned Ijaw that embraced education early on. Somewhere along the line, the people lost continuity but are now beginning to embrace education in its full force because they know it is liberating. This gives further credence to the response of Tonbra (an interviewee) that

pupils and students have to paddle several miles to attend school in another community as one school practically serves about four communities. Without gainsaying, such a discouraging reality would have a huge effect on the educational level among the people, and that explains the high level of illiteracy too. The inferiority complex that may stem from this kind of reality causes people/kinsmen to not only exhibit timidity but also isolate themselves from socialising with others, whether from their own or other ethnicities.

However, despite the foregoing, the Ijaw diaspora is still rather passionate about the homeland. Passion for the homeland observed with the diaspora is explained by the generosity of the Ijaw which easily connects her diaspora with the homeland. The Ijaw tradition of generosity, according to one of the interviewees, is informed by their understanding of nature as being benevolent to them by giving them resources for survival. Against this ideology, an Ijaw indigene sees no reason to withhold favour from another, having been blessed by nature.

4.2.2 Isoko

Ethnic ambivalence, as exhibited by the Isoko, draws from their minority status. Widely regarded as an offshoot of the Urhobo because of the language and other cultural similarities, the Isoko identity has been challenged by this complexity. Veiled by the cultural, political, and numerical advantage of the Urhobo, this mentality and misconception have simultaneously smeared the identity of the Isoko, and in turn, afforded the Urhobo some level of domination and superiority over them (Isoko). So, for a long time, they lived in the shadow of the Urhobo until recently when their agitation and self-assertion received attention and they were politically separated from the Urhobo. Monday, the key informant from this ethnicity said,

> For centuries, we were subdued by the Urhobo, and that drowned our voices. We lived like slaves among them, and their opinions prevailed over ours in different public circumstances. But our persistence has forced the government to group us with Itsekiri and Ijaw under one senatorial district. Though culturally far but we feel more relevant being with these other ethnic groups than the Urhobo (KII/Emevor, Delta State/February 2020).

Kong and Yu's (2019) reflection on ethnic majority-minority status sheds light on the challenges of an ethnic minority. The article reveals that members of minority ethnic groups suffer subjugation, leading to an inferiority complex that often makes them shy away from identifying with their ethnic culture. Drawing from this logic, the Isoko experience no doubt stirred the inferiority complex that soon influenced their perception of the culture, people, and homeland. Their blurred identity not only affected them in the homeland but also transcended into the diaspora, as some foreign diaspora members confessed to the awkward and demeaning expressions of people when they ask about their origin. Mrs. Oloyede who earlier said she and her children are first and foremost from Ilorin, Kwara State said, "I practically felt non-existing and homeless when a Nigerian expressed in amazement the existence of the Isoko tribe when we met some years ago. The moment was uncomfortable!"

Surprisingly, a Nigerian showed his/her level of ignorance of the ethnicities in Nigeria. However, this action may have been borne from a plethora of factors including, but not limited to, the poor visibility of the Isoko culture and identity. Oloyede's experience may be a permissive one by the location, but a similar situation obtains in the home country—Nigeria—as some local diaspora recounted similar experiences. That is to say, the exhibition of ignorance or limited knowledge of some people regarding the existence of some ethnicities plays a significant role in the way people from the affected ethnicity behave towards their ethnicity, culture, people, and even homeland. This kind of situation sure demands sound emotional intelligence that would allow one, through tantrums and shades that are thrown at one, to manage the feeling of insecurity and inconsequentiality that may arise from such encounters

Unwillingness to speak the language found prominence among the people as both the diaspora and the homeland have drifted significantly from teaching and transferring the language and culture to their offspring and the younger generation. Again, the key informant for this ethnic group judged himself a "failure" for not teaching his children the language because he shared the view that English is an elitist language while his indigenous language is primitive. The consideration of himself as a "failure" is also connected to his academic exposure, knowledge, and experience, as he believes he should

have known better and acted differently. While this situation resonated with people across the board, regrets clouded their actions and positions. Unfortunately, reversing this cultural decay appears to be a herculean task.

4.2.3 Itsekiri

Despite having one culture, one throne, one monolithic language without dialects, and a visible bond of love, and passion for their homeland, the Itsekiri are not excused from this discussion. Even though many people from this group speak their language, there is a seeming decline in the number of people that speak the language. What this means is that, as is the case with the other ethnic groups in the state, training children in the Itsekiri language and culture has also diminished. Although the English language is not positioned as superior to their language, it has continued to gain more usage among the people. Because language fluency functions in a chain pattern, it demands a great measure of proficiency. An ingrained language lays the foundation for cultural sustainability. It allows thinking in it, and thinking in a language is what will inform one's eloquence, dexterity, and understanding, for which many of its diasporas showed potential. However, the language is experiencing its fair share of decline.

Ethnic ambivalence among the Itsekiri borders on city life exposure and influence. This finding did not come as a surprise following the history of the Itsekiri people. Literature has documented them as having had the first contact with foreigners who came to the region as they were slave merchants that dealt with the Europeans (Lloyd 1963). The historical contact and influence have since continued to expose them to elitism, socialisation, literacy, style, and modernity. In the view of Rita, a local diaspora interviewee, "my people have forgotten their culture because of Lagos influence. We practically behave like Yoruba in language, dressing, and behaviour even during our get-together parties".

In the homeland, discussants, as well as the key informant from the Itsekiri, shared their opinions on what they think is the cause of ethnic ambivalence found in the Itsekiri diaspora. According to Chief Ojoghor, the key informant for the Itsekiri,

> The Itsekiri express pride in the culture regardless of location. There is no Itsekiri person that is ashamed to

> identify as one outside the homeland. We are a united race! What may be the problem causing ethnic ambivalence for some of them is their shallow relationship with the homeland, especially when such a person either did not grow up in the homeland or is a second-generation diaspora (KII/Koko, Delta State/February 2020).

Even though there is a decline in the use of the language, the people overtly express pride in their cultural heritage and identity. Sharing that the level of relationship impacts the connection with the homeland also insinuates that diaspora knowledge of the homeland is superficial; so, the homeland does not have adequate agency to pull them in. As hinted by Rita, city life has continued to blur the existence of the homeland, a situation that finds resonance with Xiong *et al.*'s (2020) study of female migrant workers in urban China.

4.2.4 Urhobo

For the Urhobo ethnic group, ambivalence is reflected in their insecurity and swift withdrawal from interacting with members of their ethnic group, especially away from home. When asked to rate their interaction level with their kinsmen, Eseoghene said Urhobo people have poor engagements with themselves outside the homeland. They consciously refrain from identifying as an indigene. Her experience as a university undergraduate buttressed her position. Earlier, she had hinted that the elderly in the homeland are diabolical, and because of the modernity into which younger people are born, they portray a high sense of individualism. Her response below supports this position.

> As a university student back in the day, I went from room to room in my hostel to campaign because I was contesting for a post then. Once I called my name, "Eseoghene", to one Urhobo lady, she did not even act like she has an idea of where that name is coming from. I later learned she is from Urhobo. I don't blame her anyway; maybe she was ashamed of identifying as one because a lot of us are quick to withdraw in certain circumstances (IDI/Lagos State/December 2020).

Blessing's overwhelming detestation of the Urhobo culture, because she perceives it as primitive with practices that do not appeal to her, finds some support in Eseoghene's

submission. Their perception of home reeks of shame, poverty, disunity, animosity, and abhorrence, thereby informing the concealment of their identity (Sieff 2016).

Members of many ethnic groups form associations to keep themselves abreast of events in the homeland, relive their culture and possibly give back to their communities. The Urhobo Progressive Union (UPU) is one such association for Urhobo people living in the diaspora and even the homeland. It is the umbrella body recognised by the government as representative of the people. However, this association has failed on many fronts in advancing Urhobo interests. Critical to these interests is the language, which many of the interviewees agreed is fatally endangered. According to Tega, a member of the UPU,

> The language is more than 50% dead even in the homeland. The people do not speak it, how much more do the diaspora? Pidgin English has taken over everyone. The UPU that is supposed to advocate the revival and promotion of this language is also guilty of the same offence because their meetings are conducted in the English Language (IDI/London/January 2020).

Globally, language has been documented as critical to culture and identity (Yagmur 2011). Therefore, the perpetuity of culture is tied to its language being consciously spoken by its indigenes. Doing otherwise puts the language and ultimately the culture on the path of extinction. The situation with the Urhobo language synchronizes with Yamamoto *et al.*'s (2008) position that it is threatening to a language when its speakers are nonchalant by not speaking it and not teaching the younger generations to speak it. In the Urhobo ethnicity, the younger generation has considerably lost passion for speaking their language and/or even living their culture as they often consider it primitive.

The disunity that eventuates in ethnic ambivalence for the Urhobo is again captured in the narrative of Oshare, a one-time member of UPU, who later opted out because of the persistent challenge of reaching a consensus whenever there is a project to be carried out in the homeland. According to him,

> …you need to see the heated disagreement anytime you decide to give back to the homeland. That is when people from different communities would give a reason why the project should be sited in their communities. At the end of the day, no community benefits because we are always

> unable to reach a consensus. So, the money we donate monthly goes into the welfare of members and not any form of a developmental project. It is even worse at the community association level. There, you will see the same argument that a particular street needs it more than the other. Our disunity is shameful, and I do not feel comfortable associating with my people (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

As Kelvin furthered his engagement on issues peculiar to the Urhobo, he mentioned that

> Urhobo kings are as many as their communities. For goodness sake, the communities are merely poles apart. This is one of the crucial reasons they have different interests that cannot be harmonised for the progress of the Urhobo nation (IDI/London/January 2020).

Both views shed light on the prevalence of disunity, a cankerworm that has denied the people benefits from the diaspora. Oshare's response avails us with an explanation of the politics of remittances that plays out when there are proposals to sponsor developmental projects in the homeland. So, instead of remittances to assuage the sufferings of the home-based through beneficial projects that would improve the developmental level in the state, they create more problems for the diaspora and further compound the problem of ethnic ambivalence. As a minority ethnicity with twenty-four kings, expectations are that this arrangement will accelerate the negotiation and attraction of development to the region and her people; it has rather laid a foundation for unhealthy independence, selfishness, competition, and differences. This rulership pattern reverberates with the popular polygamous practice among the Urhobo people. Enmity, envy, disunity, and hatred are features that characterise polygamy, according to Pervez and Batool (2016). Thus, the unity, peace, and love that should drive the interest of a people are challenged by factions, segregation, and division, and this provides us with a better understanding of the prevalence of discord among the Urhobo people. Overall, the ethnic ambivalence of the Urhobo people is largely informed by disunity, hatred, and an unsupportive culture.

4.3 The Perception of Delta State Diaspora's Ethnic Ambivalence by the Home-based

Perceptions and opinions are formed from actions, experiences, and fictitious and non-fictitious events. Exploring the ethnic ambivalence among Delta State diaspora has revealed the cause-and-effect dichotomy in the actions of these groups. The reasons

diaspora give as a cause of their ambivalence have gone ahead to create an image of them by the home-based. Anger, disappointment, frustration, and ignorance cloud the narrative of the home-based. As they decried their displeasure with the diaspora, one home-based called them "predators". On further inquiry into the choice of such description of the diaspora, Akpojiete (Urhobo/33 years old/male/single/BSc.), a discussant who was the chief executive officer (CEO) of a company, said,

> They only contact you when they want to use you for running errands for them. Many times, these errands come with no compensation and might even cause your money and of course time. Even when you request financial help from them, they either avoid your call or make you feel like a pest (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

The theory of exploitation, as discussed by Wollner (2019), argues that exploiters take advantage of situations as well as the vulnerabilities of others to achieve their aims. The response above clearly indicates the diaspora as exploiters of the people at home, especially when connections are viewed in their entirety. If contacts are made more regularly when a project is ongoing and reduces or stops outright when the assistance of the home-based is not needed, then one may not discard the perceptions formed about the diaspora. Having such a view, whether by presumption or experience, puts the home-based on the defensive and distances them from the diaspora. Invariably, as relationships continue to experience such frictions, the home-based will continue to form impressions that the diaspora is inconsiderate, insensitive, wicked, exploitative, and stingy. The feeling of being a disturbance to the diaspora overtly and covertly stirred the anger and resentment of the home-based as they called the bluff of the diaspora. With an angry tone, Helena (Isoko/38 years old/female/married/HND), a seamstress, held that

> The diaspora thinks they are indispensable, and we cannot do without them. They are too commandeering in their approach to things as if people at home are foolish. I shunned my brother by not even turning up to see him when he managed to visit one certain time because he always thought himself a saviour of the family. They can go to hell! (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020)

Even though literature has explored migrants' challenges in host countries that more often than not impede their goals and elongate their breakeven (Wimark *et al.* 2019), the home-based seem to operate from the point of ignorance by presuming that the diaspora incapacity is borne out of sheer stinginess or wickedness, as the case may be. Their position is also not unconnected with the expectation that weighs heavily on not being at home. In other words, home is represented as a place of lack while the diaspora is one of plenty and abundance from which the home should be empowered. In many cases, the diaspora lacks the courage to disclose the realities they are living in for reasons known to them. The inability of the diaspora to meet the demands made by the home-based paints them as failures. Using such an angry tone to express their disappointment with the diaspora is an indication that many of the home-based do not bother about the diaspora's connection with the homeland, just as they do not see them as agents of homeland development anymore. For a majority of the home-based, they see them (diaspora) as predators, out to exploit their (home-based) vulnerabilities. Their annoyance insinuates that the diaspora sees them as wretched people who are unable to fend for themselves. The choice of the word "manage" by Helena also points to the argument of the thesis that there is a near absent interface between the diaspora and the homeland.

4.4 The Interpretation of Delta State as Homeland to its Diaspora

In the previous objective, we saw how Delta State diaspora's ethnic ambivalence is perceived by the home-based; their defence or counter-responses that fault the diaspora's claim; and also, their shared general opinions about the diaspora. This objective unpacks what the Delta State homeland means to the Delta State diaspora. With a plethora of reasons informing Delta State diaspora's ethnic ambivalence as discussed in the first objective, homeland has assumed several meanings as discussed hereafter.

4.4.1 Homeland as a Retirement Abode

Home comes off as a place to retire to when the diaspora has retired from active service in their host destinations. The critical question is whether the cause of ethnic ambivalence that initially pulled them away from the homeland has suddenly disappeared. Daniel said,

> You know when someone is getting old, it is better to be closer home. I can only return home later years after I retire. By that time, I will bother less about the anomalies in the state (IDI/London/January 2020).

This interviewee gives incredible insight into how aging informs decisions and also potentiates the capacity to alter a position. The phrase “by that time” helps us make sense of retirement as a stage that comes in the later part of an adult's life. This position is even made clearer with Daniel's intention of a return scheduled to take place a later year after retirement. Taking Nigeria for example where the retirement age falls within 65-70 depending on the sector in which the individual is engaged, it follows that while the active years have been spent pushing the frontiers and contributing to the development of destination locations, the diaspora returns home at a point when perhaps he or she is frail and too weak to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the homeland. Being displeased by the factors that instigated disconnection from the homeland in the first instance but remaining unperturbed is an indication that the homeland has lost its appeal, value, and relevance in the face of an advancing world.

The response by this interviewee who has developed a thick skin against pressing issues in the state shows an unwillingness to give back to their society. Giving back to society is proof of patriotism and having acquired experience from the destination, the homeland can be a beneficiary of such wealth as far as the individual's strength and health permits. Suddenly, the homeland that was once uninhabitable and subjected to various degrees of condemnation has become a place of rest and retirement though with a resolve that protects and secures returnees’ mental and psychological wellbeing. More importantly, the response shows that the diaspora's decision is not absolute, but can be influenced by other factors regardless of time.

4.4.2 Home as a Cemetery

For some interviewees, their perception of the home presents it as worthless, and good only as a tomb site. Some of the people in this category who have built a house in the homeland reveal that they built their houses so they can have a decent place to be buried when they pass on. As Ebikefe whom we encountered earlier shared his devastating experience of home and how environmental pollution is an underlying factor for his

disconnection from the homeland, he conceived of the homeland as a cemetery because according to him,

> I would want to be buried there. For one, I still want to be buried at home. No matter how well we claim London as home, somewhere deep in our hearts, we still know where the original homeland is. There is a complete sense of rest, belonging, and freedom the homeland gives its citizens or indigenes. Regardless of this balance, it still does not cut it for me because building in the homeland is just to satisfy a singular purpose of being buried there and decently (IDI/London/January 2020).

Many like Ebikefe abound, and this line of resolve was confirmed through observation from a tour around some of the communities in Delta State. Ebikefe's disgust about the homeland still leaves some reservations that point to the fact that there is still some level of attachment, though insignificant, to the homeland. His view reiterates Marotta's (2008) description of the homeland as warm, hospitable, comfortable, and receptive as against the cold freedom that the diaspora lives with at the destination. In all of the controversies about home, Ebikefe's passion never died. However, his commitment to the homeland comes off as a mere representation of the diaspora with little or no socioeconomic value to the homeland.

On observation, there were desolate houses littered around the communities, and most of these houses were confirmed from informal interaction with some indigenes to belong to the diaspora but they were under lock and key as nobody resided in them. Many of these houses have become hives for unscrupulous elements and even glorified homes for animals. Now, how does this type of diaspora commitment make any meaningful impact in the homeland? Do these houses have the temerity to add value to the communities where they are sited? As we confirm the diaspora's commitment to the homeland in the mainly residential houses, there is an immediate anti-thesis that aside from the aesthetics that some of these houses add to the communities in which they are built they bring no economic gain to the homeland.

4.4.3 Homeland as Transit

Some set of diasporas categorise the homeland as a transit where they do a brief stop-over either for a function in the homeland or for the continuation of their journeys in the case where the homeland is not the final destination. Maureen, like some other interviewees, said,

> I have only gone home once after my relocation to the UK to attend a very important function. The other time I went home I stopped briefly as I needed to continue my journey to Bayelsa State for an event by a close friend. It was dark so we could not continue. Aside from that, why should I connect with a homeland whose ethnic identity has caused me more shame than pride? (IDI/London/January 2020)

Here, we see that the situation beyond her control forced her to visit home even though this visit may not have any significant impact on the homeland. What, possibly, can a diaspora who is transiting in the homeland contribute to the growth and development of the homeland? Better still, how well can diaspora prove their agency as developers when their visit home is for ceremonies that are both important and compelling for them? From the tone of Maureen's response, such visits are snappy with only a couple of days spent. It also depicts a circumstance where they probably would have done things differently if not for the cordial relationship they (diaspora) strive to preserve.

4.4.4 Homeland as a Buffer and a Symbol of Pride

Under this sub-theme, Harry, who took us through the perceived egoistic nature of an average Urhobo person gave a robust view of his understanding of home.

> I built a house at home not because I am going to live there but basically because I can also earn my place of pride among my kinsmen. Aside from that, the building is like security covering for me and my household in the case of any unfortunate eventuality in this country because we are seeing the way things are going politically. A time might come when people will be made to return to their homelands (IDI/Lagos/December 2019).

Harry's understanding of home is multifaceted. His response subtly exposes the political situation in the country with a historical reminder of the civil war that saw the return of

people to the regions and states where they hailed from because that was where their safety could be guaranteed. During the civil war, many non-indigenes who had established themselves in destination locations and subconsciously promoted the unity of Nigeria by confidently and comfortably embracing the destination as home regardless of their ethnic origin counted losses that ranged from economic to social and even lives. Harry's concern in this light is underscored in the growing agitations for secession by different ethnic groups in the country. In the situation where these agitations degenerate into conflict and a semblance of the unfortunate incidents of the civil war occurs, there is a sense of security that the homeland provides. At least, there is a level of succour and freedom that one enjoys in the homeland more than anywhere else (Marotta 2008).

As he described earlier that egoism is one of the destructive attributes of the Urhobo person, Harry's response can be said to show elements of this, especially because owning a home comes off not as a necessity but as an index of achievement. His position helps us to decipher how kinsmen evaluate themselves and set standards that could be challenging, encouraging, and sometimes pressuring. So, to claim a place of worth among your kinsmen in the diaspora, you must earn it, mainly by having a physical structure in your name. Even though the real estate sector is being expanded in Nigeria by the diaspora (Vanguard Sept; 4 2018), particularly because it registers their presence in the homeland, the picture painted by Harry disregards the tangible presence of the diaspora and reduces it to a pseudo one, one that does not contribute meaningfully to the development of the homeland as expected of the diaspora.

In conclusion of this theme, the diaspora's commitment to the homeland mainly in the form of residential houses bears little or no value to the homeland. This is because more often than not, these houses are not inhabited and as such do not raise economic gains for the diaspora or even the government as it cannot draw taxes from it. The situation comes off as "deserted opulence", which, perhaps, adds aesthetics and urban growth but contributes insignificantly to the socioeconomic development of the homeland.

4.5 The Implications of the Ethnic Ambivalence of the Delta State Diaspora for Homeland Development

This segment examines the effect of the diaspora's ethnic ambivalence on the homeland. Discussions, interviews as well as observations during a tour around some of the communities in the state and at different times revealed grave implications of this attitude on the homeland and the people. From social to infrastructural decay, economic redundancy, gross underdevelopment, low information technology level, and culture loss, there abide unpleasant realities in Delta State. The succeeding sub-themes discuss the apparent implications of the diaspora's ethnic ambivalence.

4.5.1 Economic

A vibrant economy is one with myriads of thriving investments. The promises of a place are critical in consideration of it for investments. Speaking with the diaspora from Delta State made this point very apt because all but one settled for Lagos State as a place they would rather invest their resources in the eventuality of return. Irrespective of whether that has economic implications for their home state, the most important thing for an investor is profit, and that is what drives their decision. Kennedy said, "Return for me can only be in Lagos because that is where investment security can be better guaranteed with a good return on investment".

In his justification of Lagos State as his choice investment location rather than Delta, the management of risk played a fundamental role:

> I know this would affect my state's economy because setting up in Lagos is an automatic contribution to its IGR. Unfortunately, I cannot help my state's situation by taking my investment there. Investors invest in a place with less risk or risks they envisage they can manage. Lagos has been able to maintain its commercial hub status for years, and it is only wise for it to be the first point [*sic*] of call for me (IDI/London/January 2020).

The above explains why most investors have their headquarters in Lagos State while they open branches in other states for growth and expansion. Risks are important factors in any business consideration, and as Kennedy intimates and Yavan (2010) confirms, investments are set up in places with manageable security indices.

The unwillingness of the diaspora to connect with the homeland has left the economy of the state dampened, as no large-scale investment is found in Delta State. Because the resolve of most diaspora from Delta State is to invest in an economically driven society with operative, functional and viable infrastructure, the economy of the Delta State homeland is driven mainly by small and medium-scale ventures by the home-based. The most common investment is commercial transportation. Other common forms of businesses are basics like trade in food and clothing. Giving a better understanding of what the situation is, Chief Pere said,

> The display of repatriated goods like fairly used clothes, household materials, electronics, etc. by the diaspora in different parts of Lagos is a common sight. Such ventures are not commonly seen in the state, and it has grave economic implication for the state. When diaspora brings things to Nigeria to sell, they rather clear it off in Lagos because they think we do not have the economy here. They do not know that while they enrich Lagos's economy, they are killing their state. Lagos was built and not handed down from the skies (KII/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

The economic importance of diaspora remittances and investment has continued to reposition the economy of many countries that leveraged the resources of the diaspora. Today, China is regarded as one of the most powerful nations in the world because of its economic and technological growth, which has been massively credited to the brain gain of its diaspora (Lampert 2010). As this consequential benefit of the diaspora's commitment to the homeland has continued to position China‘s diaspora as agents of homeland development, the country now occupies an influential position in the global stage. On the reverse is a country like Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world. It has remained so because of a non-committing diaspora whose ambivalence is manifested austerely in socio-economic realities in the country (Ullah 2018), a pattern also seen in Delta State. Despite the disparity in comparison, the bottom line is that whether country or state, the consequences of diaspora disconnection from the homeland have remained constant. Aside from countries’ foreign incomes derived from the sale of their resources, diaspora remittances are another resource for the development of the state and its people (Akesson and Baaz 2015).

The economic deficit confronting the state is manifested again in a paradoxical situation of "ambivalence in connectedness". What this means is that even though some diaspora put up buildings, no remarkable economic effect is realized from such engagement. These projects have little or no economic effect on society because they neither serve commercial purposes nor are they inhabited privately. Even though these projects register the diaspora's presence, the economic effect expected to reflect in the socio-economic life of the people is absent. Modern houses may be available, but the state remains economically sleepy, which again validates the position of this study.

4.5.2 Social

The ambivalence of the diaspora is not without its social implication. To say culture is developed is to say culture is flexible enough to allow influence through contacts. These contacts are often manifest through visits of people of other cultures, wars, and conquest, temporary or permanent return of diaspora, trade, colonisation, and, more recently, social media. Since the economic and security challenges from the fall-out of the crisis that rocked the state in the 1990s, visits to the state have been severely hampered. For its diaspora, there has been a consistent drop in their connection with the homeland, resulting in a poor social life for the people. Notwithstanding the rapid pace of social media influence, it is apparent that the absence of physical contact with people of different exposure, experiences, and ideas harmed their social life. Below is the opinion of Sunny, the Urhobo key informant.

> In the period before the crisis broke out, there was a relative interface between the diaspora and the homeland. International footballers from the state visited regularly and brought honour to the state. The likes of Wilson Oruma, Jay Jay Okocha, and Stephen Keshi were people who made the state proud. I remember Oruma even invested in grooming youngsters who wanted to be footballers. That gesture not only helped families but brightened the social life of the state as new patterns and ways of life was emulated from them (KII/Abraka/Delta State/February 2020).

As with many other professionals in the diaspora, some who had a relationship with the homeland have suddenly downplayed their interaction while some others repatriated their

connection to other viable, hospitable, and attractive states in the country. Sunny hints above that during the days of footballers like Wilson Oruma social remittances and temporary returns were evident; now, even though many of them are still in the diaspora, their engagement with the homeland is near absent. The situation affords a better understanding of the discourse of brain drain that Pande (2014) considers a loss to the country of origin. This brain drain has its advantages regardless when considered against the backdrop of the diaspora's remittances to their country of origin. On that note, the author argues that brain gain, which is a function of brain drain, is a necessary element for the advancement of a country because the beneficiary will be able to speed up the global ways of doing things. The case study of footballers as used by this informant shows that some of them were honoured and regarded as mentors and role models. Even though the brain drain argument may not fit in appropriately here because soccer is not necessarily about intellect but skill, it does not take away the critical point of the migration of human resources from the homeland. Return, albeit temporary, as captured by this informant, exemplifies a good source of social remittances for homeland development. Just as there is a huge decline in social remittance by the diaspora because there is a shortage of visits, so also have aspirations by the home-based to be like their returnee role model shrunk.

Also observed and confirmed by discussants and informants, is the dying nightlife of the state. Once a state, known for a bubbly social life, the state now assumes a new identity and restructures the lifestyle of the people. There is an evident passing of nightlife as residents retire as early as even 8 pm. Unlike the social activities that are frequently held in states like Lagos, Rivers, and other relatively secure states, relaxation spots, ceremonies, clubbing, comedy shows, pageants, exhibitions, and fanfares, among others, have all been subjected to modification so they can fit into the changing lifestyle in Warri. It is no news that these are some of the ways social remittances are made. Interviewees fear that the dying social life situation in Delta State may be irreversible. Unfortunately, this modification comes as a constriction that douses the potential of human and natural resources that could have translated into the advancement of the state.

4.5.3 Cultural

As established with data from the field, ethnic ambivalence by Delta State diaspora also has a cultural implication that has continued to fetter the development of the state. Cultures around the world are catalysts for development, hence the submission that no culture is pure (Hassi and Storti 2012). This position is reviewed against the backdrop of cultural contacts, interaction, and assimilation, thus implying that surviving cultures are open or flexible cultures. That is not to say flexible cultures are randomly or indiscriminately influenced; in fact, the core of flexible cultures is maintained because, as Ritzer (2010) argues, therein lies the original identity. Inversely, threatened cultures are rigid as much as they are closed, not allowing for modifications and influences.

Despite the multicultural nature of the state, cultural dilemma resonates with all four ethnic groups that constitute the scope of this study. Participants from all four ethnic groups agreed that their different cultures are under threat. This situation is exacerbated by a diaspora that reneges on homeland culture. For the most, the diaspora who should replicate the culture and serve as a transmission tool to highlight the culture to the world are indifferent about it. According to Matthew,

> Culture thrives when indigenes speak the language; basically, because it is the most critical element of culture. Alas, indigenes of Delta State, especially those in the diaspora who should promote the language, and create awareness and feasibility, are swayed by a plethora of internal and external reasons (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

Further to the threatened status of the cultures, another strand of cultural endangerment is the relegation of cultural practices of marital rites due to disregard for culture stemming from the influence of city life. Oshare revealed that:

> The diaspora has failed the culture of the homeland in many ways. For instance, marriage, which is a vital part of the culture, has been compromised on many fronts, such as religion and modernity. Because the diaspora holds the opinion that some of the cultural practices that are carried out during marriages are fetish, most of them prefer to boycott these practices, hence killing the core marital culture of the state. Again, many of them have

> been swallowed up by a contemporary culture that they do not see the need to travel home to conduct traditional marriages like the way the Ibo do. Some go as far as renting parents for the event (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

Eunice's view on cultural endangerment supports Matthew and Oshare's stance. She believed that:

> Being in Lagos affects the culture because some cultural norms are being rebuffed and adulterated because of city life's influence and appropriation. Women are promiscuous in the city. Such cannot happen at home. For instance, if my wrapper falls from my waist in my village, and a man crosses the wrapper, I cannot pick it up because it is considered a sacrilege. It will take a member of my husband's relatives to cross it; only then will I be free to pick it up… but in Lagos, women no longer have regard and respect for their marriages (IDI/Lagos State/December 2019).

Traces of gradual cultural extinction are foregrounded in these realities. However, a worrisome implication or concern is envisaged by some diaspora members who expressed their worry over the struggle of ownership in generations to come. Here is how Tosan shared his concern on the likely implication of cultural erosion in the state:

> I see strangers coming to take the Delta land from the people because the elements that keep people connected to a place are fading. Since there is a huge cultural lacuna among the people, sooner or later, they will become strangers in their land because the practices and values that connect them to their space would have been eroded (Interview/London/January 2020).

Here, the blame for cultural extinction is placed on the diaspora because not only do they not return home, many of them do not engage in cultural practices in their destination cities or countries, as the case may be, while crucial cultural practices to be observed by the home-based have been thwarted by environmental pollution from oil exploration activities and insecurity. For instance, the Oyekuru festival that requires a part of it to be done on water has been modified, and that in itself has cultural implications in the long run. In an already congested space like Delta State owing to its cultural diversity, concerns such as Tosan's should not be trivialised but rather accorded the needed attention.

4.5.5 Moral Decadence

Based on views from the field, this study has been able to establish moral decadence as one of the turn-offs of the diaspora. For many, morals and values have been eroded from the character of the Delta State person, especially the home-based. Just as the disconnection of the diaspora from the homeland has been reflected in many instances, social morals and values are not left behind. Emiko's response below is an indication that the perceived lack of morals and values may be bridled if the diaspora interfaces more with the homeland. Hear her:

> I saw a younger cousin of mine insult someone older than me, and I was shocked. Apart from the fact that rudeness and disrespect are common traits with most of our people at home, what I saw was also a sheer manifestation of ignorance and lack of exposure. I am saying this because when I called him and counselled him, he obliged and apologised to the person he insulted. One thing that struck me was the statement he made that all his life, he had seen his character as being expressive and bold, not disrespectful (IDI/Lagos State/December 2020).

Some home-based who recognised the moral decadence in the homeland also blamed it on the diaspora. Tonfawei (Ijaw/29 years old/male/single/BSc.), a technician, put it thus:

> The truth is that most of us are rude and disrespectful. The 'how' of speaking is very important, and that is one shortcoming of the Delta person. The situation is made worse by our chronic display of ignorance which we consider smartness. So, even when they are right, they end up sounding rude because they lack speaking and behavioural manners. Peradventure, the diaspora's regular interface with the homeland may influence people, at least within the family settings; that could also transcend into the larger society (FGD/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

Tonfawei's response above helps us understand the diaspora as a social resource, having been presumed to have acquired more exposure, enlightenment, and even standards and ethics of doing and responding to people and issues. The moral benefits of a diaspora's temporary or permanent return advance remoulding of the character and behavioural

pattern of the home-based. We would recall that in this chapter, poor character display was a factor that was repeatedly mentioned by the diaspora and vehemently despised. Be it chastisement or advice, the response of Emiko above shows that the diaspora interface and interaction with the homeland have the potential of building a sane, orderly, amicable, and morally viable society.

4.5.6 Health

The health implication of the diaspora's absence from the homeland has been extensively explored against the backdrop of nostalgia, emotions, and experiences. By way of memorialising experiences from the homeland, some diaspora experience mental and psychological breakdowns. However, the diaspora's absence from home also leaves the home-based with some medical predicaments like high blood pressure, stroke, mental disorder, and/or even death. Mrs. Erigha (Isoko/60 years old/widow/female/retiree) said:

> I cannot explain the torment my daughter's absence is causing me. As you can see, I have a partial stroke developed from excessive thinking. Ever since she went, not once has she thought of coming to Nigeria to at least see me. Her husband, who visits regularly, hardly ever comes to see me whenever he does. For the 12 years that she has been away, I can count the number of times she has extended help to me, her mother (IDI/Warri, Delta State/February 2020).

With three other discussants across other ethnic groups validating this effect, it challenges the often-concerted effort of a unilateral discourse of nostalgic feeling by the diaspora. Indeed, the diaspora's ambivalence and dysfunctional relationship with the homeland have a plethora of adverse health implications for the home-based. Mrs. Erigha's response is an indication that the discourse of diaspora's absence from home needs to have a balanced examination by also exploring the effect on the home-based.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Diaspora is important for the development of different countries, especially sending states. Their critical and strategic position as agents of development informed their recognition by the African Union as its sixth region in 2005. This is because they give back to their counties of origin through different forms like remittances(whether household or investments), social remittances, brain gain, and circulation, among others, thus making them agents of development. On the other hand, it has been argued that the diaspora's connection with the homeland has caused more harm than good for the homeland because of their involvement in political matters, which are often contentious. However, there are some diaspora whose connections with the homeland are complicated for all manner of reasons, and as a result, they are indifferent to the homeland. Their indifference, otherwise engaged here as ethnic ambivalence adversely affects the homeland on many fronts. This study focused on ethnic ambivalence, which has been established to be a global phenomenon predominantly exhibited by minority ethnic groups, using four ethnic groups in Delta State, a minority ethnic state, as the case study.

Unlike the familiar topics of resource control and militant agitations that have dominated research on the region in recent years, the study underscores the inadequacies of the oil wealth by focusing on the resource of the diaspora for the attainment of development indices in the region. To this end, this study examined the ramifications of ethnic ambivalence of the Delta State diaspora on the homeland. It interrogated the underlying causes of ethnic ambivalence often exhibited by Delta State diaspora that has hitherto undermined their agency as developers of the homeland. In doing so, this study was situated within the theoretical framework of ethnic ambivalence to foreground the discourse. For validation of the research problem, an ethnographical research design was

used for data collection. Because of the categorisation of diaspora, the study employed the snowballing technique for sourcing interviewees in the two locations identified in the study for diaspora contact. In the Delta State homeland, the study utilized Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews for data gathering.

The causes of ethnic ambivalence established in the study not only align with existing literature but also reinforce the peculiarities that define the people, their ideologies, and their realities. From ethnicity to ethnicity, there are differentiating dynamics, as there are similarities among them. While Urhobo and Isoko narratives are dominated mainly by minority status and witchcraft, Itsekiri and Ijaw hinge on infrastructural provision and environmental degradation. The cause of ethnic ambivalence also varied based on the locations that make up this study. For the foreign diaspora, their reason is precipitated by underdevelopment, poor character formation, polygamy, lawlessness, bad governance, and distrust of the home-based. The local diaspora, on the other hand, ties their ethnic ambivalence to city-life pressure, witchcraft, lack of accommodation, and intertribal marriage. As for the home-based, the diaspora is inconsiderate, insensitive, proud, exploitative, and manipulative. Although the study intended to interview generations of diaspora up to the third, available interviewees fell within the first and second-generation diaspora. So, causes were also divided along generational lines. As for the first-generation diaspora, multiculturalism, *deve*, insecurity, bad governance, and lawlessness were major factors constraining them from building a healthy relationship with their homeland, while language incompetence, ethnic minority status, insecurity, lack of family and friends, destination lifestyle and culture, and intertribal marriage, topped second generation's causes of disconnect from their homeland.

Delta State, being a minority ethnic state with different ethnic groups, first and foremost, grapples with its ethnic minority status and the blind spots of multiculturalism. The struggle for superiority among the different ethnicities has, over the years, heated the polity in the state to an extent where insecurity pervades it. Irrespective of the absence of physical war, this insecurity has birthed a plethora of other connected concerns. This insecurity spans the economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of lives in the state. It is also identified in the study that, despite the state's huge natural endowments and its rich

contributions derived from the exploration of crude oil to the coffers of the federal government, there has not been correlated development and economic provision made for the people as a reliable alternative for the ruins of their environment—their main source of survival. This has continued to make the state a sending one, culminating in pockets of diaspora around the world. However, ethnic ambivalence exhibited by this diaspora has persistently challenged their agency of influence in the homeland.

In addition to the themes of multiculturalism and ethnic minority status, a critical examination of other themes that emanated from the field also validates the dominant characteristics of intertribal marriage, cultural hybridity, individualism, and language endangerment, among others. Consequently, these issues have informed the prevailing actions of the diaspora in a manner that puts the homeland in a disadvantageous position. Today, the Delta State homeland, with all its wealth and a long history of diaspora, is one of the poorest states in the country.

5.2 Conclusion

Delta State, Nigeria's leading source of wealth, owing to its rich deposits of crude oil and gas, ranks among the poorest and most underdeveloped states in the country. This irony has informed research about the state in no small measure. While most research about the state is centred on natural resources, environmental pollution, arts and culture, militancy, etc., this study has focused on the Delta State diaspora and their relationship with the homeland. Her diaspora has been used as a case study to validate the theoretical framework of ethnic ambivalence as the cause of disconnection from the homeland. In doing so, the study brought to the fore the ramifications of ethnic ambivalence by probing into the immediate and remote causes of its exhibition by Delta State citizens in the diaspora while not undermining the perspectives of those in the homeland.

The Delta State diaspora has not lived up to the expectation of their status as developers of the homeland, thereby contesting the development agency often credited to the diaspora. In addition to the identified causes of ethnic ambivalence established in the literature, this study revealed nuances that are dynamically peculiar to the different ethnic groups, as well as different locations that make up the scope of this research. These dynamics were profound, indicating a deep-seated disconnect from the homeland in its entirety. The

resultant effect is manifested in an unattractive economic environment, culture and language endangerment, unhealthy political competition, social engagement, and relationship decline, among others in the state. Thus, lessons can be drawn from this study in understanding the related global phenomena of diaspora, ethnic ambivalence, and (under)development from a peculiar and local perspective within the remit of ethnic relationships, engagements, and perspectives. Following the analysis, details of ethnic ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora are documented with valuable recommendations that can be engaged to address the unhealthy relationship between the diaspora and the homeland.

5.3 Recommendations

For any development plan to thrive, it is important to take into cognizance the peculiar circumstances that define places. Whilst it is commendable to appreciate practices in advanced countries, reproduction of the same at home should be properly evaluated, especially when contexts and other variables are considered. Having reported the concerns from the field, it is clear that development should be all-encompassing, taking into consideration economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors, among others. Policies and actions should be pragmatic and fitting for all times. In other words, policies should be sustainable, protecting the "now" while also securing the "future" and accommodating and recognising everyone as a stakeholder in the process of building the state.

5.3.1 Expanding Security Services

Based on findings, this study puts forward various suggestions for policy formulations that can reposition the state for optimum benefits from the diaspora. For instance, the security apparatus in the state should have wider coverage even in rural and littoral communities.

Aside from physical security, there is an urgent need for an abstract yet important security that spans other areas of society, especially the economy. This is critical because of the negative, mutating capacity of its absence. To get the diaspora on board to commit and live up to its responsibility as agents of development, this giant problem that has assumed the status of a new normal in the state needs to be addressed socially, economically,

culturally, and politically. What this means is that a multi-disciplinary approach should be considered with ample focus on punitive and reversal policies that are holistically designed to positively tackle the problem in both the long and short terms. Peace and security at all levels must be consciously institutionalised

5.3.2 Harnessing the Beauty and Opportunities of Multiculturalism

Since multiculturalism is a delicate reality that must be handled carefully and strategically, especially because fragmented identity may lead to divided loyalty, multicultural education that promotes cultural diversity should be encouraged in the state. Well-articulated cultural diversity has the potential to unify, respect, and tolerate other ethnic groups while keeping own cultural identity and ethnicity afloat.

Where attempts at harnessing the beauty of multiculturalism are challenged by conflicting interests, the concept of citizenship, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, could be encouraged above sectionalism. Perhaps it will help to deconstruct and dissolve the dominance versus recessive, superior versus inferior, and us versus them dichotomy in the state, and also cater for the shifting and fluid identification that people take up to secure social gain.

5.3.3 Embrace Cultural Equity

To address this issue, active policies detailing how ethnic groups can operate on an equal pedestal, with a deliberate development plan along a linear path, should be implemented. This way, the sentiments of ethnic or cultural hegemony will be checked. Better still, all languages should be made available, and students given the prerogative of choice. This will show a responsive government, one that appreciates and respects the cultural and linguistic diversity present in the state. This study also suggests that while formulating these educational policies, conscientious efforts be made to promote selfless understanding of others' cultural practices such that issues are not only viewed via one's cultural lens but also through the lens of other cultures, to create a healthy atmosphere of understanding the behavioural patterns of other people. It will not only guarantee confidence in one's culture but also ensure that other cultures are accorded appreciable respect and tolerance.

The development of ethnic minorities just as the ethnic majority should be given priority, whether at the state or federal level because every section of the economy is important for the growth and development of the state. Marginalising any section of the populace is setting the foundation for animosity and division. Therefore, the government should endeavour that all-inclusive governance with fair benefits is instituted to bring normalcy to the state. This will enhance a new stereotypical social construction that will reflect a good image of the state and a promising attraction of the diaspora and other people to the state.

5.3.4 Prioritise Cultural Revival

To revive and elevate culture, all hands must be on deck because it is not the responsibility of the government only. All media should be employed in the course of reviving the eroding cultures of the people. Basic learning should be encouraged via different media. Dictionary and other books written in indigenous languages would facilitate learning and enhance language proficiency. Because timidity in one's language is also caused by language incompetence, a factor which has been established in the analysis chapter as an underlining cause of ethnic ambivalence, cultural and language revival can foster cordial diaspora-homeland relationships.

5.3.5 Rebirth and/or Modify Cultural Festivals

The world is not stagnant, so at each point in time, there should be room for slight modifications so that the people will not abandon the culture because it is closed and has refused to advance with modernity. Since most of the festivals that brought the diaspora together are now regarded as a fetish, perhaps, a slight modification that would be more reflective of aesthetics could reignite and appeal to the social, religious, and ideological dispositions of attendees—diaspora, home-based, and other ethnic visitors.

5.3.6 Track the Root Cause of Conflict

One salient question that anyone who wants to pursue the goal of unity in the state has to answer is how and why has the peace once enjoyed in the state become elusive. To reverse the stalled development and disunity that have made the state unattractive, consideration should be given to its formation to understand the root causes of the ethnic strife and

crisis. With the apparent exploitation of multiculturalism which has brought sectionalism and disunity to the state, it is important to factor in each ethnicity's distinct peculiarities and grievances. The careful but slow application of strategies with an intensive focus on joint activities of the people should be of utmost priority to the government. By so doing, gradual but detailed changes will be noticeable for either further continuation and/or support, especially when tribal moralities and autonomies are not infringed upon andefforts are not withdrawn so that the intended result becomes a farce.

5.3.7 Adopt a Deliberate, Proactive, and Resourceful Strategy

The government needs to step up its game in addressing the issues militating against development in the state.

5.3.7.1 Diversification of the Economy

Since natural resources have not translated into meaningful development of the state despite its enormous contribution to federal coffers, this study suggests initiatives that support boosting the quality of human capital. This can be conceived as economic diversification because of its potential commercial value, and it will attract investments from within and outside the state.

5.3.7.2 Develop Quality Hospitality Sector

Putting the quality hospitality sector in place will attract diaspora as well as visitors to the state. It will help the diaspora whose disconnection from the homeland is tied to accommodation in the homeland. Even though the government will not invest in this sector, policies that will encourage private investors to channel their resources in this direction are needed for this recommendation to thrive.

5.3.7.3 Create a Diaspora Agency

Just like NIDCOM, the commission saddled with the responsibility of overseeing the activities of Nigeria's diaspora, one thing the Delta State government should do is set up an agency that will negotiate a cordial and productive commitment of the diaspora as well as strengthen the diaspora's confidence in sustaining this commitment. Having recognised the diaspora as a veritable partner in the development of the homeland, any government in

the state should place a premium on getting the buy-in of its diaspora populace in driving the socio-economic and cultural renaissance in the state. This agency will give them a sense of relevance that will propel them to interface creatively with the homeland.

5.3.7.4 Invest in Corporate Housing

This endeavour is a strategic way the government and real estate managers can pull the resource of the diaspora for the development of the state. What this action will do is cater to the many diasporas whose experiences or the experience of others from whom they have taken lessons have been one of exploitation by the people at home. All the government needs to do is invest in housing projects at different locations in the state and encourage the diaspora to purchase from the government. Assurance is not only guaranteed, but such an environment will most likely be an elite one with the necessary infrastructure for comfort.

5.3.8 Develop Enlightenment, Advocacy, and Rehabilitation Programmes for the Youth

Of the many causes of ethnic ambivalence, *deve* levy was vehemently frowned upon and considered a leading cause by many in the diaspora. In other words, a lot of diaspora members will give back if the youths refrain from these anti-development extortions. To this end, there is no better time to introduce policies aimed at reversing this trend than now. The government should develop enlightenment, awareness, and rehabilitation programmes for the large army of unemployed youths who are dreaded in many quarters and have held the state to ransom. As the government embarks on this exercise, jobs to engage the youths should be available for achieving the needed goal. The jobs that will be created should be secure and permanent, not temporary. Even if the government provides tools/equipment, they should also set up a monitoring team to ensure that the tools and equipment are not pilfered, vandalised, or sold.

5.3.9 Consider Education as Problem and Solution

Submitting that education is the problem and also the solution implies on the one hand that illiteracy, as reflected in the analysis chapter, is a cankerworm, just as education is the solution on the other. In this wise, the government, as well as other stakeholders in the education sector, should be committed to providing quality education for the people.

Education that delivers exposure, enlightenment, as well as modernity is critical to reversing the challenges identified as causes of ethnic ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora.

In conclusion, the development of the state should be a collective effort of the government and the citizens, hence the call for the collaboration of all stakeholders. To achieve this, sensitisation and advocacy, beginning with top government personnel down to households at the grass root levels, should be adequately done. Development plans touching on different sectors in the state should be promoted in phases with strict timelines and strong evaluation and measurements. Growth and development blueprints covering key areas such as industrialisation, economic diversification, agriculture, social and physical infrastructure, employment, security, culture, and social justice should be developed and conscientiously followed by the state government. The essence of this blueprint is to ensure deliberate continuity so that change of government does not abort the process.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

The most important contribution of this study is the expanded and more detailed understanding of the extrinsic and intrinsic causes of ethnic ambivalence. This study offered insight into the lacuna in the burgeoning studies on Niger Delta, particularly Delta State. By positing that the diaspora-homeland relationship is fragile, this study offers a nuanced insight into the empirical challenges causing ethnic ambivalence of the diaspora and deterring them from interfacing with the homeland. The ingenuity is in categorising the diaspora (local and foreign) representations. The understanding that these two should be contextually different is justified by the field data which shows that they both have a relatively dynamic disposition towards the homeland. Given the different spaces they find themselves in, their experiences and realities are diverse and are predicting influences on their relationships with the homeland and, by extension, its development. More importantly, the study offers a disruptive insight into the agency of the diaspora as developers of the homeland using Delta State diaspora as a case study.

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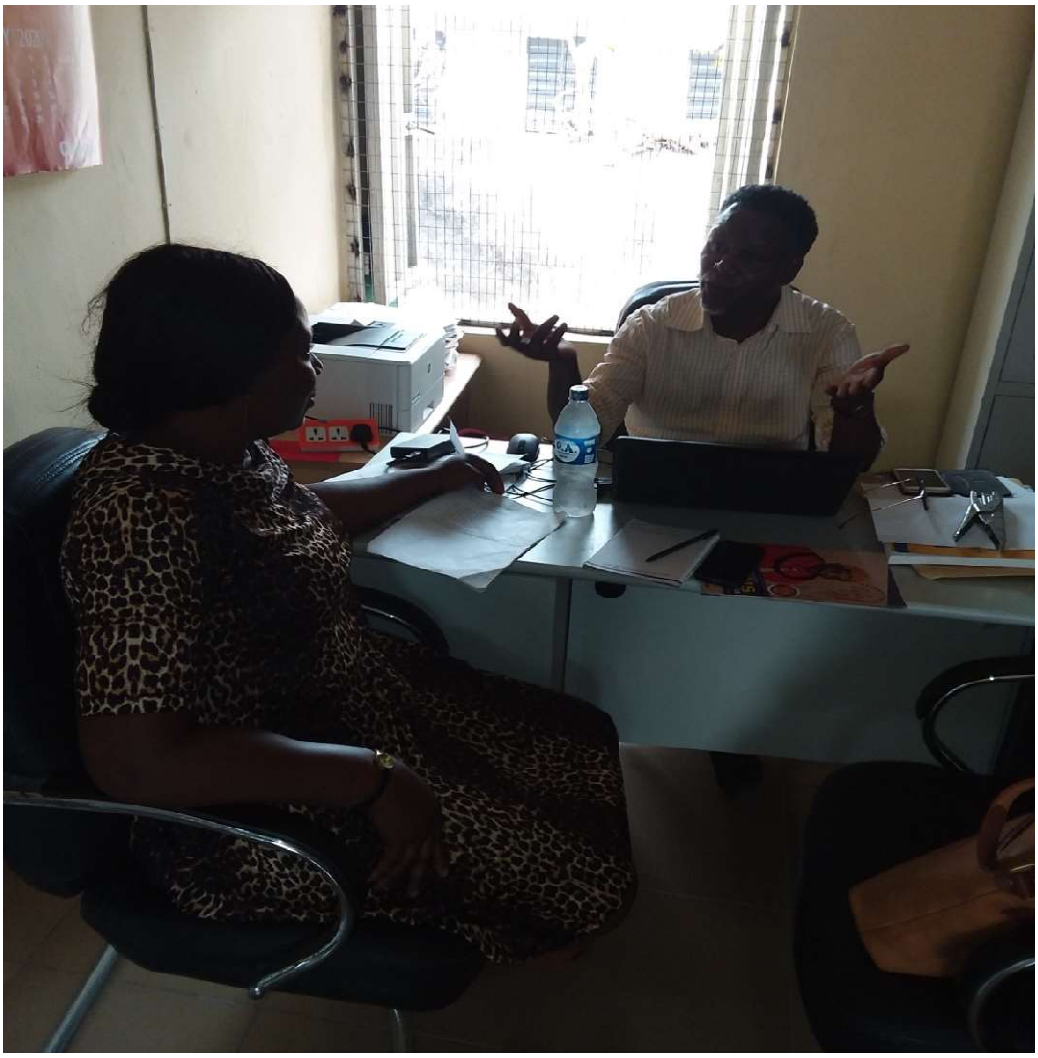
Appendix

Researcher and the key informant for Urhobo at the Headquarters of Urhobo Historical Society in Isiokolo, Delta State

Researcher and an interviewee in an interview session in Lagos State.

Researcher conducting interview with an interviewee in London

Researcher holding a focus group discussion session with Itsekiri discussants in Warri Delta State



Researcher in an interview session with key informant for Isoko in Emevor, Delta State

Researcher and an interviewee after an interview session in London

Focus Group Discussion with researcher and discussants of Urhobo ethnic group in Warri, Delta State.

Researcher and a local diaspora interviewee in an interview session

Researcher and an interviewee during an interview session in Lagos State.

Researcher in Focus Group Discussion with Ijaw discussants in Warri, Delta State.

Interview Guide

Dear Sir/Ma

My name is Henrietta Omo Eshalomi, a doctoral candidate at the Diaspora and Transnational Studies in the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. I will need your permission to have a short interview with you about the phenomenon I am

interrogating. Open-ended questions have been designed for this research on Delta State Diaspora and the Ramifications of Ethnic Ambivalence for Homeland Development. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for this research purpose. Thank you for your cooperation and time.

Respondents' information

- Can I meet you sir/ma? (Probe for age; place of birth; gender; marital status; educational level)
- What generation diaspora are you? (for interviewees)
- What year did you leave the homeland (relevant for first-generation diaspora)?
- What were your reasons for migration (probe for personal intention, structural as in economic, political, social, etc. reasons for destination choice; past attempts if any)
- Is your migration short or long-term intended (probe for initial plans of stay time, reasons for a plan change, a new target of planned stay, etc)
- What is your employment status? (probe for job satisfaction here, job satisfaction back at home for first-generation diaspora who were economically engaged before migration, observed differentials, intentions, and plans).
- Do you have plans of leaving the state in the future? (Probe for reasons and planned time of departure) (for discussants and informants).

Objective 1

To identify the factors responsible for the ethnic ambivalence of Delta State diaspora towards their homeland

- Do you feel a sense of attachment toward your homeland?
- What is your position about your homeland, its development, and return plans (probe for initial position before migration as well as current position about same)?
- What can you say is responsible for your position about the homeland (probe for social; family; political, security, economic, civic, etc. reasons)?
- Have you always held this position? If yes, why? If not, at what point did you notice the detachment from the homeland?
- Do you maintain any form of connection with your homeland (probe for: social; cultural; political; or economic remittance)?
- How frequently do any of the above-mentioned ties happen (probe for the method of connection)?
- Do you speak or encourage your children to speak your indigenous language? How would you rate your/their eloquence (low, medium, high)?
- What is your opinion about the Nigerian diaspora, the Delta State diaspora, and your ethnic diaspora (probe for why such opinion and what can be done differently)?
- Do you feel more attached to other ethnic groups or nationalities other than yours? If yes, why (probe for the medium of attachment or resentment, responsible factors, etc.)?

Objective 2

To ascertain the peculiarities of ethnic ambivalence that exist among the identified ethnic groups.

- Do you identify with other Delta State indigene(s)? why or why not (probe for the medium of attachment/interaction, length of attachment)?
- How would you rate your level of interaction in comparison to what you witness from other ethnic groups (probe for low medium high cooperation)?
- Is there an organisation or association for your ethnic group or the entire Delta State diaspora? If yes, (probe for when organisation was formed; objectives of the association, organisational structure; the condition for membership; year of membership; role/position in the organisation.
- How well does the organisation function, its relationship with the homeland, and the welfare of its members?
- What strategies are deployed to maintain unity and peace among members, as well as the commitment to the homeland?

Objective 3
To examine the perception of Delta State diaspora's ethnic ambivalence by the home-based.

- What is your opinion about the Nigerian, Delta State, and your ethnic diaspora (probe for reason for such opinion, what can be done differently)?
- Do you think your opinion affects your understanding of the diaspora?
- Do you have anyone in the diaspora?
- What is your relationship with them (probe for the type of relationship, level of cordiality)?
- How would you rate the diaspora's commitment to the homeland (probe for remittance level or rate, communication rate)?
- Do you have any suggestion/advice for the diaspora?

Objective 4
To establish what Delta State homeland means to the Delta State diaspora.

- How often do you visit the homeland?
- Is there a plan for eventual return to the homeland? if not, why? If yes, what are your plans to ensure a comfortable stay?
- What does homeland mean to you?
- What informed your meaning of homeland?
- Do you see a reversal of the ethnic ambivalence exhibited by the Delta State diaspora? if not, why? If yes, what factors would influence or inform the change?

Objective 5
To discuss the implications of the ethnic ambivalence of the Delta State diaspora for homeland development.

- Do you consider yourself an agent of homeland development? If not, why? If yes, how have you demonstrated your agency in this regard?
- Do you have an investment in the homeland?
- Is your investment cited in Delta State? If not, why? If yes, how do you manage its affairs considering your absence?
- Will you be interested in investing in Delta State?

- What consequences does the diaspora's ethnic ambivalence have on the development of Delta State (probe for forms of development like economic, social, cultural; technological consequences)?

KII Guide

- Can you share your understanding of or experience with the Delta State diaspora?
- What in your opinion do you think are the causes of ethnic ambivalence that is often exhibited by the Delta State diaspora?
- What implications does this have on the cultural heritage of the state?
- How has this ethnic ambivalence affected development in the homeland?
- What should be done to get the commitment of the diaspora for homeland development?
- What is the role of the government in securing the commitment of the diaspora?