



A Cultural Perspective to the Cycle of Violent Conflicts in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study examined how conflicts in the guise of the 'Niger Delta struggle' created new cultural norms manifest in material and non-material cultural production which incentivizes violent behaviour.

Objective of the Study

The objective is to demonstrate how the creation of a culture of violence sustains the cycle of violent conflicts in the Niger Delta.

Materials and Methods

The study was anchored on a qualitative research approach with Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Observations and analysis of material and non-material cultural production such as popular music, artefacts, and societal reward systems as data sources which were thematically analysed.

Findings

The study revealed that the collective approval of militancy resulted in emergence of new cultural norms that are permissible to violent behaviour in the Niger Delta. The heroization and veneration of the personae of the 'militant' as freedom fighter reinforces the permissive culture of violence which is internalized through cultural production such as:

a. Material Artefacts



Plate 1: Sculpture depicting an armed militant as a freedom fighter

b. Popular Music

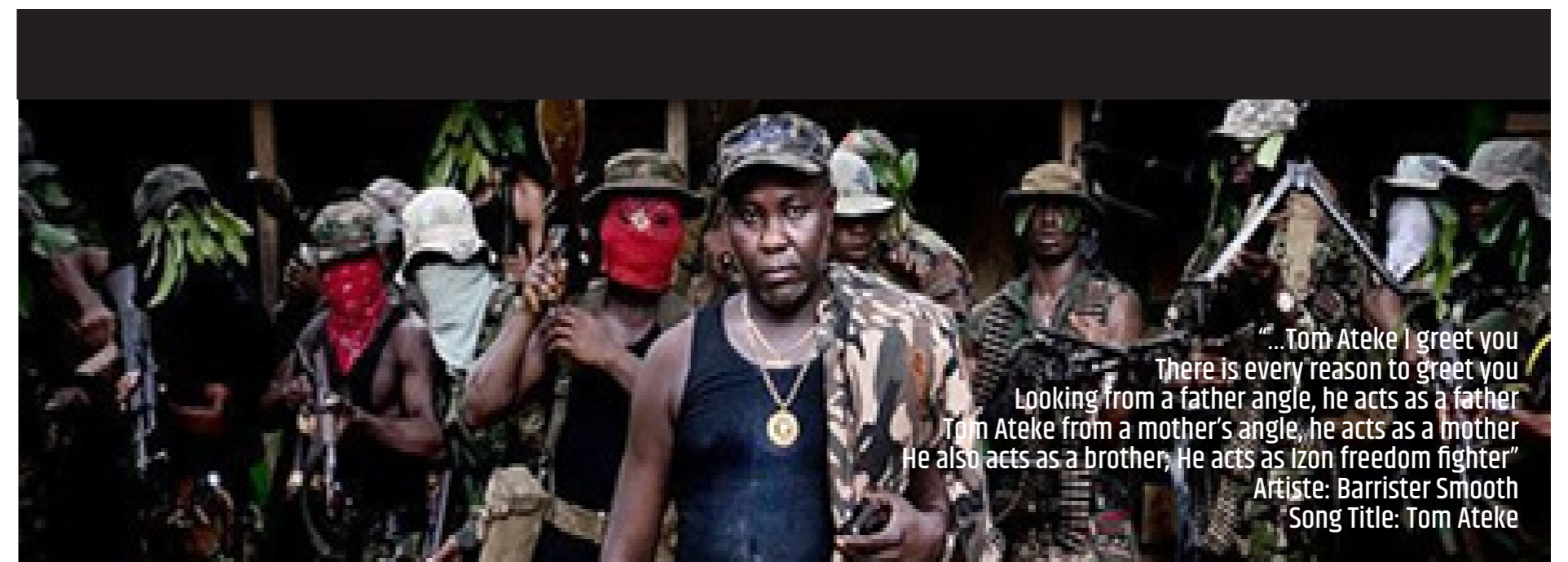


Plate 2: HRM King Ateke Tom as a Militant Leader in Pre-Amnesty Era

Table 1: Rewarding Violence: From Political Economy of Violence to a Culture of Violence

Militant Agitators	Economic Rewards	Political Rewards	Socio-Cultural Rewards
Alhaji Asari Dokubo	Despite openly rejecting the PAP deal in 2009, he was awarded a pipeline security contract in Rivers State worth \$US 10 million a year by the Federal Government (Hinshaw, 2012).		Currently holds the traditional title of Edi Abali 1 of Kalabari Kingdom.
King Ateke Tom	The NDDC in 2010 awarded his company Se-Kuro Nig Ltd the internal road contracts in Okochiri and in 2011 the Ilamooku road in Okrika and in 2012 the Chief Alex Wele/Isi-Apa Ogologo in Obio Akpor LGA. Also received pipeline security contract worth N250 million.		Amayanabo of Okochiri Kingdom, Rivers State. Sekuro 1 of the Niger Delta.
Hon. Farah Dagogo	Secured oil and gas pipeline surveillance and security contracts worth N500 million at the Cawthorne channel in Rivers state.	Member representing Degema/Bonny constituency at the Federal House of Representatives	
Selky Torughedi (Young Shall Grow)	The NDDC in 2012 awarded his company S.S Selky Nig Ltd a contract to construct Obeakpu internal road in Ohaji/Egbema LGA, Imo State.		Paramount Ruler of Azuzuama Kingdom, Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa State.
Ebikabowei Victor Ben (Boy loaf)	The NDDC in 2010 awarded the G-Tek road in Yenagoa LGA to his company Bensam Nig Ltd.		
Sobomabo Jackrich (Egberipapa)	Secured oil and gas pipeline surveillance and security contracts worth N90 million at the Cawthorne channel in Rivers state.	Active politician and former Caretaker Committee Chairman of Asari Toru LGA, Rivers State.	Currently a High Chief in his native Kalabari Kingdom. Convener of the Kengema Unity Forum (KUF).
Hon. Granville Tekenari Wellington	The NDDC in 2010 awarded him two road contracts in Borikiri, Port Harcourt through his company Teksharries Global Servicers Ltd.	A serving State House of Assembly Member representing Asari-Toru 1 constituency (PDP), Rivers State.	
Joshua Mcaiver		Active politician and former Caretaker Committee Chairman of Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa State.	
Tonye Adoki Smart	The NDDC in 2012 awarded his company T-Mie Adoki Nigeria Ltd a contract for one kilometre of the Mikikwu/Omuaria/Omunwei link road, in Ikwerre LGA, Rivers State.	A serving State House of Assembly Member representing Port Harcourt 2 constituency (PDP), Rivers State.	
Solomon Ndigbara (Osama Bin Laden)	The NDDC awarded a one-kilometre stretch of Bori Road in 2010 and Kono Road in 2012 both in Khana LGA, Rivers state to his company Gbenesolos Nigeria Ltd. Also received pipeline security contract worth N250 million.		Currently a High Chief in his native Ogoni land

Conclusion

The era of militancy deepened violent conflicts in the Niger Delta region which unintendedly created a culture of violence that provides the required supportive social contexts and legitimacy for violent behaviour through economic, political and social rewards of militants thereby providing the incentives for new entrants into the unending cycle of violence.



Key References

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