

# Anyiam-Osigwe's (Holistic) Political Philosophy and the Niger Delta Post-Amnesty Programme

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## ABSTRACT

This paper adopts the basic tenets of Anyam-Osigwe's holistic philosophy to examine the problems embedded in Niger-Delta's post-amnesty programme and events. The Niger Delta area of Nigeria was a major boiling cauldron that threatened the nation's peace, security, unity and sustenance until the militants from the region accepted the Federal Government's conditions for post-amnesty. Up till that point, the gains of the nation were marred and it experienced plummeting local and international recognition and exacerbating economy, which added to its many problems that were compounded by high level institutional corruption and decadent leadership structure. Though the offer of amnesty constitutes a great step in achieving national development and promoting human rights, the modes of integrating the militants have been fraught with problems and irregularities. Thus, this paper contends that the defects of the Nigerian post-amnesty programme and some other methods of addressing insurgence in the Niger Delta region could fuel a resurgence of the conflict in the area, leading ultimately to negative consequences relative to the Nigerian State. As such, the paper advocates that giving adequate consideration to Osigwe's holistic philosophy to human existence may create lasting peace in the region and other parts of the Nigerian State.

**Key words:** development, group-mind, marginalization, post-amnesty, self-mastery, social justice.

## I. Introduction

The problems in the Niger Delta (ND) area of Nigeria started with the pre-independence discovery and exploitation of crude oil in the region. As typical of many settlements in Nigeria, up until this period, the area was peaceful and constituted no threats to the nation's security as the people focused on agrarian farming. The boom in oil altered the nation's focus from agriculture, which once constituted the main source of her livelihood and economic upkeep, to dependence on oil proceeds and earnings in petrodollars. As a result of this, there is a strange and undiscerning abandonment of other important aspects of production, in goods and services, that are necessary and of equal significance as crude oil in the nation's economic growth and sustenance (Library of Congress, 2008:12). This was occasioned by at least two factors: the citizen's loss of interest in real national development and pressures from the transnational oil corporations and certain global oil regulating agencies (Watts, 2004: 1-19). Apart from resulting in an endemic institutional corruption, these have adversely affected the peace status of the ND region (Watts et al, 2004:1-14).<sup>1</sup> Sadly, as Nigeria daily gains more international relevance, the activities of the aforementioned organisations lay huge production and price demands on her and compounded her retinue of domestic and socio-economic problems, the most threatening of which is the ND crisis.

This paper is divided into six sections. Section I is the introductory aspect of the paper; Section II gives a synopsis of the Niger Delta crisis; Section III examines the Amnesty programme; Section IV discusses the post-Amnesty scenario; Section V looks at the theoretical framework of Osigwe's philosophy, and Section VI applies the holistic philosophy of Osigwe to addressing the issue of lasting peace in the Niger Delta region. Section VII is the conclusion.

## II. The Niger Delta Crisis

The ND crisis is an offshoot the people's agitation for social justice. In the previous years, the events of oil explorations have damaged the prospects of farming in the region, with the land and waters polluted. Apart from the fact that the activities focused on oil exploration raised environmental concerns, there are various social and health hazards to which the people are subjected (Ibaba and Opukri, 2008: 179-189). For instance, the possibilities of crime are high and the region witnesses untold hardships resulting from the widespread poverty that followed their inability to fashion out alternative means of survival other than dependence on oil. The people feel more cheated with the proceeds from petroleum derived from their region being used to develop other areas of the nation. This is why the ND region was considered the neglected "golden goose that lays the golden egg." All these made the people to press home their demands for improved condition of living (Saliu et al, 2007: 281-

287). The efforts towards getting justice continued for decades, with the militants fighting against what they considered heavy marginalization from the Nigerian State. Over the decades, issues grew from a relatively benign approach to securing justice to a severely crude and violent one, which invariably, apart from the local concern, drew the attention of the international community. According to Kenneth Omeje (2006: 477-478), the ND crisis reached its climax in the 1990s with:

local militias frequently using violent protests to subvert and obstruct oil activities resulting into what scholars like Karl (1997) have described as 'petro-violence.' Besides petro-violence, there are a number of less violent protests measures and exogenous forces in the Niger Delta, which potentially pose security threats to petrobusiness given the contemporary volatility of the oil region and increase fluidity of non-violent protests. Consequently, because of the peculiar nature of Nigeria's political economy and an oil dependent neopatrimonial state, oil resources and oil rents are central in shaping national political discourses and broad rhythms of accumulation of social conflicts, including security threats in oil-producing regions

Reacting to the activities of the militants, the Federal Government of Nigeria killed and maimed some of their members and sacked their settlements through military expeditions. These military activities show violent state actions in places like Umuechem, Ogoniland, Odi, Opia, Ikenyan, Odioma and Agge (Courson and Niger Delta University, 2006). These began a spate of violent attacks and counter attacks that made the ND an extremely dangerous zone for peoples to operate. The most violent of these groups was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). In expressing their grievances, the ND militants resulted to unparalleled destruction of oil pipelines, kidnapping of oil company expatriates, and other unimaginable violent protests. The oil companies did not help matters by being insensitive to the people's plight. Some of their activities were antagonistic to the welfare of the people. In bids to checkmate the activities of the militants, as part of the means of fostering their business interests, they sometimes exhibit covert or overt actions that further anger the people and work against their interests. As a result, the people avowed to drop their last blood to fight for justice (Courson, 2007: 1-51).

### **III. The Amnesty Programme of the Federal Government**

Though the Federal Government initially adopted tough measures to curb the activities of the people of the ND, the waves of concerns and dusts raised by the protests in the region forced her to adopt ways of solving the lingering ND crisis. These were responsible for creation of organisations such as the *OMPADEC*, *DESOMPADEC* and *NDDC*, to study the ND situation and proffer lasting solutions to the crisis (Osaghae et al, 2007). Moreover, the Federal Government of Nigeria released huge sums of money to the ND under a "derivation formula" that allowed a minimum of 13 percent of the proceeds from crude oil to be given back to states of the oil's production (*Human Rights Watch*, 2002: 2). However, the problems of the ND were compounded by certain factors. First, the insincerity of those entrusted with administering justice in the region who were bent on promoting their selfish interests than the interests of the region (*Human Rights Watch*, 2002: 3). Second, the activities of the militants whose concerns shifted from getting justice for the region to personally enriching themselves, by perpetrating violent kidnappings and all other illicit affairs. Some militants, however, argued that those involved in kidnapping were not true militants fighting for justice in the ND but self-seeking persons who have no real concern about the cause of justice in the region. Third, the relentless assaults of the ND communities by the Nigerian military delegated to quench violence in the region that further bred serious bitterness and the urge for revenge at the slightest provocation (Douglas et al., 2007:1-13). Fourth, the continuous pursuits of private interests by some well placed people in Nigeria who showed little concerns for the traumatic experiences of the people in the region so long as their interests were guaranteed (Asuni, 2009: 1-5).

The crime rates from the ND area and the militants sweeping influences on Nigeria provoked joint actions and reactions from the corridors of power within and outside Nigeria. This was largely because no one was really sure of who was to be the unfortunate victim of such untoward activities. Part of these joint actions motivated the creation of the Niger Delta Ministry, which was geared towards giving maximum attention to the ND problems. However, this did not assuage the problem of ethnic militia in the region. Many of the militants that were already engrossed in crimes found it unreasonable to stop the criminal acts that had so much benefited them. As time

went on, the Government once again thought it wise to expedite military actions against the militants. In the attempts to fish out the criminals, the military resulted to an indiscriminate bombing of the regions of the Gbaramatu clan that they thought harboured the criminals.<sup>2</sup> The aftermath of this was that the community was dislodged and there were loss of lives and properties. Various reactions to this military attack on Gbaramatu is one of the things that occasioned a rethinking of the ND situation by the government and, consequently, the granting of amnesty to the militants. Many of the militants embraced the amnesty and decided to accept the post-amnesty programme (*The Economist*, 2010). This programme, essentially, focuses on the reformation and reintegration of the militants. These will ensure that they develop a good sense of value and cultivate the virtues necessary for the sustenance and peace of Nigeria and the ND communities.

#### **IV. Wither Post-amnesty?**

Since its inception, the post-amnesty programme has not been free of complaints. Part of the complaints from the militants has been that the money promised them was not paid by the agencies saddled with the responsibilities of disbursing the funds. Recently, some of those who felt marginalised by the post amnesty programme protested their exclusion from the programme. As such they accused the government of insincerity. Before this period, according to the *The Economist* (2010), feelings of hostility, mistrust and uneasiness mount as the promises made to the militants by the government are left unimplemented. This violates the post-amnesty agreements. There were agreements that led to the militants' surrendering of their arms. Even though the expectations of the militants are high, because of the promises, the monthly allowance, a sum of sixty five thousand naira, about four hundred and thirty dollars, are not paid as at when due. The militants are of the view that the operators of the amnesty programme have embezzled the funds due to them. Though one may not really ascertain the true situation of things as far as the programme executors' activities are concerned, they may not have helped matters by failing to present a complete and transparent update of the finances and events of the post-amnesty events. The happenings of the post-amnesty programme seem to follow a general characteristic of the ND region's lack of leadership transparency. Dimeji Bankole (*Trade and Investment*, 2010), the erstwhile speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, speaking about the bad management of the leaders of the Niger Delta, said:

The Nigerian budget this year was around N3 trillion (US\$20 billion). However, by the time you add the budgets of the Niger Delta States alone, it is over 1.5 trillion (\$10 billion). Those are the facts that ten/twenty years from now, people are going to ask me, people are going to ask the governor of Bayelsa, people are going to ask all of us that what did we do when those facts were put on the table. These figures may not be completely accurate but I know it is not far from the truth. Now we have an opportunity. With the funds there must be a difference. Because people of the Niger Delta would begin to ask questions from their leaders on how these monies were spent. We may have excuses in the past that we were unfair to the Niger Delta, but today those excuses are no longer tenable. Because when they ask me I will say go and ask them, they are the ones. What did they do with the money? Nobody will come from Abeokuta to tell you what to do with your money. You will ask yourselves about how your money was spent.

The corrupt leadership of the region and somehow shady execution of the post-amnesty programme may have posed the much more serious concern of what the real future gains of the amnesty programme will be. Will this programme justify the militants laying down of arms and equally help leave lasting legacies for the communities in the ND region? As is obvious, the present provisions of

the amnesty does not guarantee jobs for the militants as alternative sources of income and activity. It certainly will not give work to the rest of the Delta's jobless masses, who could yet become fighters. Opportunities are scarce in a country where, according to official data, half of young people in urban areas have no job. For another thing, traditional types of employment, such as farming and fishing, have been badly hit by the dreadful pollution caused by oil over the past few decades (*The Economist*, 2010).

As the days pass by, as there were fears among the citizens there were also fears among the people. What now seems pockets of tension in the region clearly indicate that the militants are fast registering their grievances. Previously, this manifested in their planting of explosive devices in government arenas where conferences on amnesty were holding. With the events of the 2010 independence bombings in Abuja for which Henry Orkah the alleged mastermind of the bombing was brought to justice, people were afraid that the groups were reverting to

firearms (*The Economist*, 2010). There were also alarms that signal resurgence of violence in some parts of the places where the militants camped. In these areas, allegations persisted that they were often seen trying to satisfy their urges for food and other needs. As such, some of the people were said to have been raped and victimized, with their properties forcefully taken away, which necessitated the people's cry for help against the activities of the militants. These issues posed serious concerns, not just the communities but the entire nation (Odiegwu, 2010).

The situation in the Niger Delta has now assumed a new dimension with the award of contracts by the Nigerian government to some ex-militant leaders to keep peace in the region. According to Drew Hinshaw (2012), since 2011, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has awarded contracts worth between three and half million dollars to about thirty million dollars for security in the region. These contracts were awarded to ex-militants Asari Dokubo, Ebikabowei "Boyloaf" Victor Ben, Ateke Tom and Government "Tompolo" Ekpumopolo. By these payments, each militant leader is to recruit former militants under him to protect the pipelines from bunkers and pipeline vandals. Highlighting the benefits of each ex-militant, Hinshaw further stated:

Last year, Nigeria's state oil company began paying him, \$9 million a year, by Mr Dokubo Asari's account, to pay his 4, 000 former foot soldiers to protect the pipelines they once attacked...General Ebikawbowei "Boyloaf" Victor Ben and General Ateke Tom were said to collect \$3.5 million apiece annually to protect the same pipeline they used to destroy in the past whilst General Government "Tompolo" Ekpumopolo earlier this year received a \$22.9 million contract.

Hinshaw (2012) noted that this situation has prompted critics to assert that the amnesty programme only "sent young men a different message: that militancy promises more rewards than risks." Unfortunately, as he noted, in a statement credited to the Royal Dutch Shell PLC, rather than the contracts eliminating oil theft, more than 150, 000 barrels are still stolen per day. At this point, there are some fundamental questions: Has the amnesty programme not been financially counter-productive after all, given that the Federal Government has to spend that much to calm the militants and that oil thefts have not abated in the region? Does the huge money really trickle down to the intended recipients from the former militant warlords? Also, has the government really been able to succeed at the reorientation of the militants to pick other vocations than crime and imbibe requisite moral disciplines for living well with others? What happens if or when the government stops the payments to these militants?

The above strongly suggests that the same old traits that fostered high brigandage in the ND are very much allowed by the current system. The nation may be sitting on a keg of gun powder if the present arrangements are well considered. Certainly, there is great danger lurking if the post-amnesty agreements are eventually executed wrongly. As at now, great doubts exist as to the number of militants that are still landlocked in the creeks and are eagerly awaiting resumption of violence at the slightest provocation. Many of them who are discontent with the allowances and benefits of the current post-amnesty events may perpetrate new insurgencies. At the same time, many of them who still jealously keep their weapons may be waiting to use them in the future, whether to perpetrate crime or to once again fight the nation. Worst still, the present spate of violent crimes and kidnappings that are sweeping across states other than the ND where nothing of such were ever heard may be connected with the actions of those who still have the weapons in their custody. Having such life-threatening cases as these and allowing wrong implementation of the post-amnesty programme may make the nation see the militants reverting to a worse level of onslaught against the state that may once again threaten our interests globally. To forestall this, we need a new philosophy that can offer a new orientation in the direction of a more beneficial national development and progress in the ND region. We believe that Osigwe's philosophy will be of tremendous help to this end.

## **V. Osigwe's Philosophy**

Though it is difficult to totally agree with all of Anyiam-Osigwe's views, I have considered some ideas from his works as very useful in facilitating development and peace in our nation. Osigwe's views show a conception of man that is a mix of the spiritual and physical components. By this, he sees man as possessing certain attributes that will make him imitate God. As such, human aspiration should be to be one with God. He thinks this is a better way to follow the path of self-mastery. He believes that self-mastery is the most basic pillar of human

existence. The “development of personal values” and “personal awareness” (Ekanola, 2009:135) are built on this. Along with other pillars, these are very essential for the complete development of the person and the human society.

To attain self-mastery, develop important values and cultivate sound virtues, Osigwe thinks that man ought to thoughtfully and deeply reflect on certain vital questions. These are: Who am I? From whence am I? What am I here for? Whither goal from? What is my place in the cosmic eternal scheme of things? What is life? What is death? These soul-searching questions portray the need for every man to ascertain his true identity in the world, understand this and chart better pathways to purposeful life-endavours. At the same time, he must let his reflection enable him to develop a profound depth of insight into a good assessment of his true life values and how to live a morally good and satisfying life.

Osigwe believes that man is inherently morally good. To develop this innate goodness and manifest traits that can help the development of man and his environment, Osigwe thinks that some good understanding of what things are true and what things are just hold a fundamental place in the way human life runs. His conception of what holds true occupies a vital place in man’s understanding of the universe and his role in it. It is an idea that reflects human understanding of the laws directing the universe and the nature and realities of divine beings (Anyiam-Osigwe et al 2004: 33).<sup>3</sup> Osigwe’s position on justice shows that he has in mind a condition of fairness in which each person or people in the society get fair share of what belongs to them and are treated well without leaving them with feelings of cheating or dissatisfaction.

Apart from the pillars identified above, Osigwe highlighted four other pillars upon which human life ought to be built. As made clear by Oladipo, they are the fraternal relations of all men, humble use of power in manners that can benefit all and eliminate all possibilities of oppression, making meaning of the significance of justice in the society and giving attention to sound education (Oladipo, 2009: 28-31).<sup>4</sup> The attainment of self mastery is important in the realisation of these pillars. We shall start with the last one.

As earlier noted, Osigwe’s view is that man has good things inherent in him from birth. However, one of the important means of helping him do what is good is to give him sound education. It should not be assumed that man will ever have room to do good. Man has an enormous potential for goodness and should be allowed to acquire the knowledge that can help him to better realise this. Osigwe thinks that sound education should not be undermined in Nigeria’s national development and must first be encouraged within the family. This “education (and effective at that) should emphasize self-realization; and should engender a program that incorporates an all embracing development of the individual’s inherent capabilities” (Anyiam-Osigwe et al, 2002: 29). As such, the individual that emanates from the process is an improved one who consequently improves the society. We may deduce from this that what counts as sound education may not be a one off event but a situation of constant training and retraining until individuals improve and attain self-mastery.

The failure of education may either promote or discourage fellow feeling in any nation. This brotherhood relation is one of the pillars of Osigwe’s philosophy. Osigwe expects all men to recognise the role of joint efforts in the development of the human community. This understanding is what is mostly missing in interrelations between tribes in Nigeria (Akunneto, 2010). As a matter of fact, it seems an understatement to affirm that this deficiency has affected our national unity and the way we perceive ourselves. As such, each tribe thinks about its interests before considering the others’. Sometimes, some tribes do not consider the others and the ones that feel cheated or marginalised are forced to press for the actualization of their interests.

The idea of the universal brotherhood of all men as it relates to the ND militants may be fostered by Osigwe’s conception of the group mind. M.C. Osigwe, trying to capture Anyam Osigwe’s idea, said, “The group mind, according to Anyiam-Osigwe, refers to an expansive resource, a well-spring of ideas and thought process that is created when people of a particular group or society blend their respective ideas, perspectives, aspirations, knowledge and experience in relation to specific goals or issues...as the sum total of everyone’s positions and concerns, the group mind is a synthesis in which the defining elements of the fundamental interest of the respective participants within the Group is preserved in the resultant Commonwealth whose legitimacy and mutuality is subscribed by all” (Osigwe, 2003: 5-6). In other words, the group mind shows an intensive cooperation among different individuals who set their hearts on achieving a common goal beneficial to them all.

For instance, where members of a nation bind and work together to achieve peace, security and stability, there is bound to be national development.

Lack of a good understanding of what the group mind is did great damage to our national vision and mission. This shows in our great lack of synergy and will to pursue national development with utmost distinction and determination. Our lack of synergy did not allow us to gain true perspective concerning what a sense of community is. As such, we suffer high institutional decay that affects every strata of our national life. The failures and national decadence have dire consequences for our nation. Those who ought to help the nation gain perspective either defiantly pursue their personal objectives or wallow in the messy mud of their own mischievous activities (Ojogbede, 2010: 12).

Osigwe decries our predicament as a general problem of the African societies when he said that the “fulcrum of the traditional African societies has been obliterated by a new and amorphous senses of the community and a value system that reflects survivalist trend that is essentially Machiavellian” (Anyiam-Osigwe et al, 2002: 34). What this means is that the problems we face as a nation emanated from and are further compounded by the fact of lack of a sense of community and our refusal to actually learn what it takes to operate as a community of peoples bound by one national goal and are eager to pursue real national development. There are bound to be problems against the community and individuals in it when its members lack this sense of community. As is deducible from Osigwe’s views, such problems as these worsen when “high incidence of poverty has weakened the celebrated cohesion in a community and commitment to core values” (Anyiam-Osigwe et al, 2002: 37). Thus, our ethos becomes ridiculed because of our violation of the core values necessary for nation-building and sustenance. This makes obvious the main problems with the ND militias, our leaders and majority of Nigerian tribes. As members of these groups fail to perceive the nation as a common community and only pursue individual objectives that grossly elicit a bane of corrupt and defiant practices, there is flagrant violation of the salient values that guarantee national cohesion.

Having considered the above pillars by Osigwe, it seems doubtful that Osigwe’s pillar concerning humble use of power in manners capable of profiting all and eliminate all possibilities of oppression can be realised without the others. This pillar focuses on the use of power that puts others into consideration without taking undue advantage of them or afflicting them. Osigwe explains this in relation to the cosmological order of the world. We can affirm here that there are different levels of power, ranging from the individual’s power of choice, which determines what happens to other individuals in the community, to governmental controls stemming from the decisions of political office holders. By Osigwe’s expectation, power is supposed to be wielded “for the greater good of humanity and only those who have developed the humility derived from spiritual enlightenment into the nature of the cosmos can fulfil this condition.” (Oladipo, 2009: 31). If our leaders understand this they will not use power in questionable ways and will ensure that their subjects get fair share in the joint national properties. By this and other things considered, we can realise Osigwe’s pillar on the need for a conscious understanding of what justice is and how to promote it in the society. The problem of the ND that brought about agitation is a question of social and distributive justice. Taken together, all these pillars can lead to satisfying the criteria for justice in our nation.

## **VI. Osigwe’s Philosophy and Lasting Peace in the Niger Delta**

Though the initiative for post-amnesty was laudable, our concern in this work has been that the events involved in the implementation of the post-amnesty programme can lead us back to the state of anarchy that preceded the amnesty. To avert this, we need to give good attention to the nitty-gritty of Osigwe’s philosophy. His pillar of education will help the (ex-)militants and other stakeholders of national politics to gain self-mastery and act in ways that are not inimical to our national agenda. The major part of what the post-amnesty programme incorporates is the retraining and reorientation of the militants. If this is done well, the militants may certainly have a reorientation that may facilitate national development. There are more threats to our national unity because the sound education and teachings of vital moral values that once dominated our systems are being neglected in national policies and within families (Awe, 2000: 83-84). As a substitute, the kind of education we now propagate has at its focus the determination to benefit with little attention to national benefits and unity.

Part of the education we lack is that of how true democracy works and its role in conflict management and resolution. According to Osigwe, “conflicts ranging on Africa’s continent such as Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Algeria, Sierra Leone, and the June 12 1993 election saga in Nigeria are rooted in ignorance -

ignorance amongst the masses of the people – of the workings and facilitatory role of the democratic process in conflict resolution and fostering of lasting national peace and stability as well as economic and social wellbeing of the people” (Anyiam-Osigwe et al, 1999: 86). To fill this lacuna, the agencies of government responsible for educating the ND militants need to educate the citizens as well to guard against imbibing the culture of militancy by those who do not presently manifest it. Nigerians need a new type of education that has our national concerns as one of its main focuses. As at now, a lot of things are wrong about the way we educate Nigerians from childhood to adulthood. This shows in the operations of the ND youths who prosecute the ND communities’ agenda for justice.

To foster lasting peace in Nigeria, most especially in the ND region, we also need a new education towards stronger brotherhood ties. We must practically encourage the cultivation of values that will make us downplay disdain among ourselves. On many occasions, regions within Nigeria feel threatened when others show little or no concern about their welfare. This is the real issue with the ND communities. This circumstance, among other factors, drove them to abandon orientation towards nation building and embrace brigandage. To avert a reversal of the undone process of the heavily violent days of militancy, they need to be encouraged to re-cultivate and internalise the ideals of brotherhood with their fellow Nigerians and devise better and more dialogical approaches to solving their problems. Osigwe expects people to learn to broker peace through dialogues. He considers conflicts as potentially destructive when left unresolved thorough dialogues (Anyiam-Osigwe et al, 1999: 35).

To show the significance of the idea of group mind, we can reinterpret the questions Osigwe gave us to reflect upon for self-realisation and self-mastery in the following ways: Who are we? From whence are we? What are we here for? Whither goal from? What is our place in the cosmic eternal scheme of things? What is life? What is death? These questions, if carefully considered, will help us to understand our national identity - our collective identity. In fact, asking these collective questions can foster the understanding of who we are as a people. One of the problems with Nigeria is that we have not properly defined who we are. As such, we have not gained self-mastery as a nation. Thus, our conflict of identity is one of the major conflicts we experience as a nation that reverberates across all areas of our national life politically, morally, socially and culturally. The fact that the ND militants and many people from the ND area as well as the other stakeholders of our national polity act in ways inimical to our national ethos and corporate identity depicts that this crisis of identity underlies the ND crisis. As such, the ND militants are as much guilty as these stakeholders and some of their accolades who most times purposely jeopardise our national interests. The value of patriotism, nationalism, other-regarding virtues and shared identity needs to be well understood to manage our crisis well so as to guarantee a win-win situation for all. This is why the idea of a really sovereign national conference, a rapport of our progressive and well-meaning national minds, will help the nation to articulate ways to resolve its many national challenges and identity conflicts (Gbadegeshin, 1998: 292-293).<sup>5</sup> This national conference should be different from the teleguided and government-controlled national conferences held in the nation since independence that have not assuaged the nation’s problems.

The significance of having a genuinely independent national conference will promote the idea of group mind and the nation will have a better grasp of what true patriotism is while also developing the right mindset. These will enable Nigeria to give attention to defining a collective identity that will engineer real national development. If the problem emanating from Nigeria’s crisis of identity is resolved through a dialogue we will be able to handle the aftermath of the ND crisis. To tackle Nigeria’s problem of identity that has obviously degenerated to other forms of crisis, every individual from each tribe needs to first be made aware of his place in nation building and the importance of gaining self-mastery and defining his relationship with other nationals. As a matter of fact, people’s inability to master the self is what worsens the situation of self-centredness, weaknesses in relationships and wrong perception of other persons’ image, which underlie the lack of trust and greed in Nigeria. The self can thus be mastered by a conscious decision to do what is morally and intellectually satisfying, hamper human behavioural excesses and lead to societal peace. Taking this route can make everyone involved in the ND crisis act wisely and in ways morally appealing to resolve the ND crisis. Besides, this situation will not only foster good rapport but will eventuate in reliable non-sentimental discussions that are geared towards the overall interest of all Nigerians and by implication, the ND people.

Much has not been achieved in Nigeria as far as national dialogue for attaining national consensus for real citizens’ interest in nation building is concerned. This is because of the unfortunate void created by lack of

synergy, which the group mind advocates. Osigwe is of the view that Nigeria is yet to entrench herself in the consciousness of her nationals. By this, he means that Nigeria is yet to be seen as a national project facilitated by the synergy of her citizens. This shows that the nation has not attained what the understanding of nationhood and national development is. This, thus granted, there will always be possibilities of violent demonstrations that underplay national unity and are insensitive to national development. Apart from this, Nigeria's lack of synergy may be said to be responsible for why there are crimes and all sorts of vices that plague the nation.

In actual fact, the void created by lack of synergy in nationhood and an absence of joint action towards real national development creates a rift in our tenacity to be individually committed to the cause of having a virile and functional nation. What we often take for granted is that individual's determination to ensure national development will motivate collective national action. There cannot be any group action without the individual (Daly, 1994: 1-10). One of the ideals which the group mind incorporates is patriotism. Patriotism starts with individual motivation to fervently love ones country and even be ready to sacrifice for it at any length and to whatever extent to ensure that national interests override personal agenda. We need to develop personalities that understand what it means to contribute to national development. As Osigwe said, "personality survives what is clinically referred to as death" (Anyiam-Osigwe et al, 1999: 35). This says nothing other than that an individual ought to live a life of impact. We can positively impact national development in an unparalleled way by being consciously patriotic. The failures of the tendencies to be patriotic are due to a lack of in-depth understanding of what it means to be patriotic and be persons of impact who can drive great change towards national peace and development (Anyiam-Osigwe et al, 1999: 88).<sup>6</sup> We must seek this understanding to foster deep allegiance to our nation and solve our national problems.

## VII. Conclusion

Following from the above considerations, Osigwe's pillars relate well to the ND crisis. That the idea of group mind elicits in us the idea of patriotism and consciousness towards promoting public interest show that we need to take these seriously in the ND area. The sense of individual commitment that warranted the efforts of the ND militants to better their lots without actually giving thought to or being bothered about national allegiance should be allowed to give way to commitment to national allegiance. This is when we can really lead lives that are purposeful. Militants from the ND cannot lead purposeful lives with a situation that bases on self-centred pursuit of interest.

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## Notes

Note 1. Apart from the conflict against the state, there are also internal conflicts in the ND.

Note 2. See Courson, "The Burden of Oil". Going by Courson's description and the events culminating in the acceptance of amnesty, Gbaramantu clan may have had a notorious history of protracted conflict with the Nigerian State. Part of the allegations of the state against the clan was that it harboured the notable militants,

which necessitated the heavy state military actions the world witnessed. Counter positions to this hinge on the fact that the government only cooked up stories to embark on a punitive expedition against the clan.

Note 3. Olusegun Oladipo's analysis made these clear to me.

Note 4. Having no direct access to Anyiam-Osigwe's notebooks, I had to depend on Oladipo for the highlights of these ideas in Oladipo, Olusegun (2009), "Holistic Approach to Existence and Development," in *The Development Philosophy of Emmanuel Onyechere Anyiam Osigwe Anyiam, vol. 1*, Olusegun Oladipo and Adebola B. Ekanola (eds.), Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Note 5. The problem of identity in African societies became more pronounced with the infusion of colonial culture into their systems. What Osigwe advocate under "group mind" is not alien to the African culture. It manifested at almost all levels of the pre-colonial African society, from the family to the government. It was the dominant way of prosecuting wars, handling conflicts and solving most community problems before colonialism. In the past, people often thought that African kings made all the major decisions. This was not always the case. They used to voice out their minds through their subjects, most especially by allowing their chiefs with whom they confer in such important cases to address their people or situation.

Note 6. Osigwe said, "I have resolved that one of the important ways in which I can contribute positively to our political development and the democratisation process is through the propagation of what I termed "the KUAIPTEd approach to democratization"; i.e an approach to democratisation which takes into account the imparting of Knowledge, Understanding, Appreciation of the Implications and Practise of True and Enduring Democracy on the citizens of the country being democratised." This approach may be necessary if Nigeria will raise people who will make her democratic experiment work.

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