

University of Wroclaw

Institute Of Philosophy

Doctoral Dissertation

Moral Questions Regarding Amnesty Program for Terrorists

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Wroclaw 2024

Preface

Some parts of this dissertation have been published in a journal, while others are being reviewed. Part of Chapter 1 is used for a manuscript titled "Between Terror and Justice: Ethical Problems Arising from Amnesty Implementation in Post-Traumatic Societies," which is currently under review in African Identities Journals.

Some sections of Chapter 2 have been published in the International Journal of Afro-Eurasian Research (IJAR) under the title "Rethinking Reintegration Program for Ex-Boko Haram Fighters: A Utilitarian Approach."

Sections of Chapter 2 are being used to draft a manuscript titled "Resolving Concerns of Boko Haram Victims: A Moral Approach," and sections of Chapter 4 are being used to draft a manuscript titled "The Nigeria Amnesty Program for Ex-Terrorists & Victims Opinions." Both manuscripts are currently under review in Peace and Conflict Studies Journals.

Acknowledgement

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to God Almighty who initiated and guided me through this academic journey to its completion. I am indebted to the late Chief Festus Osuala, late Prof. Anthony Onweagba, and late Prof. Vincent Okeke for their unwavering belief in me and for providing invaluable insights and encouragement. Their support has been instrumental in my academic pursuits, and for that, I am truly grateful.

I extend my gratitude to the Doctoral College of Philosophy at the University of Wroclaw for granting me a full guaranteed scholarship, and to the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange for their support through research grants, which greatly facilitated my academic pursuits. Special thanks to my academic supervisor, Professor Mariusz Turowski, for his exceptional guidance, mentorship, and constructive feedback throughout the research process. I am also grateful to Dr. Urszula Lisowski, Prof. Adam Chmielewski, Prof. Maria Sibylla Lotter, Prof. Buket Raptis, Prof. Kadir Cucen, Prof. Vogt Theodore and Prof. Eli Kramer for their mentorship and support. I would like to thank my friends, Abubakar Yushawu and Colenia Nyeduroh, for their valuable feedback and suggestions on my dissertation. Their input has been immensely valuable in shaping my research.

To my lovely wife, Marycynthia, and my kids, thank you for your prayers and love. To my lovely father, Nnaoma CNC Agbanero, thank you for your prayers, financial support, and advice. And to my mother, Eucharia, thank you for your love. Njie, my sister, thank you so much for your unwavering support and care. Ifeoma, Doris, and Amaka, my beloved sisters, your care and prayers have meant the world to me.

To my esteemed in-laws, John Umunnakwe Nonso Anyanwu, Emenike Igwe, Dr. Ifeanyi Onuoha, Martin Iheanacho, and Ngozi Anyanwu, your kindness and understanding have been a source of great comfort. To my dear friends, Paul Onyenaucheya, Christian Esomeonu, Awurafua Amponsah, Ifeanyi Okwuigbo and all others who have extended their good wishes, I am deeply grateful for your friendship and well-wishes. Your support has truly lifted my spirits during this time.

Abstract

This research examined the plethora of perceptions that victims of Boko Haram attacks have regarding amnesty granted to ex-Boko Haram terrorists with the aim of providing philosophical insights. In other words, this research was designed to unpack how the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty and reintegration program for repentant Boko Haram terrorists shape victims' perception of justice and fairness. Understanding how victims of Boko Haram attack view justice and fair treatment holds significant importance for two reasons: it shapes victims' perceptions of Boko Haram terrorists and determines whether victims and reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists can coexist peacefully in the aftermath of conflict. While numerous studies have explored the Nigeria amnesty program for former Boko Haram terrorists, victims' perception of justice and fairness were understudied. To address this gap, this research utilized philosophical concepts of justice and fairness, specifically through normative ethical frameworks, to theoretically analyse these perceptions. The research utilized semi-structured interviews to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of victims regarding justice and fair treatment based on their encounters with Boko Haram terrorists. 25 victims of a Boko Haram attack at the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Borno State, Nigeria, willingly participated in the interview. The findings indicate that the majority feel that the outcome of the amnesty program failed to meet their expectations of justice and fairness. They perceived the process as being unfair. The research findings addressed ethical questions raised by the victims and navigated moral dilemmas in Nigeria amnesty proceedings. Additionally, the research provided empirical insights into the relationship between the Nigeria amnesty program and considerations of restorative justice, fairness, and reconciliation. Drawing from these findings, the research proposed recommendations suitable for both policymaking and guiding future research directions.

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General Introduction

Background of the study

This research aims to give voice to the victims of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria. Its motivation is based on several unanswered questions surrounding the moral justification of granting amnesty to ex-Boko Haram terrorists while denying victims access to justice. For state actors, offering amnesty to ex-terrorists could serve as a more effective means of preventing terrorism and facilitating the rehabilitation of ex-terrorists. The dilemma around such attempts may be pervasive, as offenders may be expected to be reintegrated into the same society where families of victims are still grappling with their pain. This present research is specifically driven by the moral concern surrounding the granting of amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists and their subsequent reintegration into communities where victims of their attacks still grapple with unresolved trauma.

Boko Haram terrorists are Islamic militants who view Western education as sinful and seek to establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. Their actions, including abductions, destruction of property, and displacement of millions of people, are aimed at achieving this goal.

In response to the threat posed by Boko Haram terrorists, the government implemented an amnesty program. In this context, amnesty involves refraining from punishing perpetrators in order to prevent the spread of violent acts and promote peace. Specifically, under Nigeria amnesty program for Boko Haram terrorists, Boko Haram terrorists who voluntarily surrender to the government will undergo rehabilitation and reintegration into society without facing punishment.

However, the hypothesis that granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists would help prevent the spread of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria failed on two fronts: firstly, it did not curb the spread of Boko Haram terrorism, and secondly, it did not address the victims' sense of justice. Aside from the failure of amnesty program to stop the spread of Boko Haram terrorism and resolve victims concerns about justice, it also generates the question of moral responsibilities. Some argue it's unjust to neglect victims' grievances and prioritize reintegrating former Boko Haram terrorists (Atta, 2013). Others question the justification of granting amnesty while the government has not defeated Boko Haram terrorists (Owonikoko, 2022).

Research on the justification of amnesty program as a means to restore peace between offenders and victims in the aftermath of wrongdoing has recently attracted the attention of philosophers, especially political and moral philosophers (see: Radzik and Murphy, 2023).

Their interest in the amnesty process is motivated by the question of whether amnesty program is capable of addressing the moral questions of justice and fairness, as well as repairing broken relationships caused by acts of wrongdoing. This concern is not surprising, as granting amnesty to perpetrators often involves waiving punishment for perpetrators in order to promote peaceful coexistence between them and those they wronged. What this means is that offenders can evade punishment and will be free from accountability from their offences if granted amnesty by the government.

This raises the question of whether it is morally defensible to prioritize reconciliation between victims and their offenders over the pursuit of justice. This question arises from the perspective that placing a higher priority on reconciliation between offenders and victims than on justice is at odds with the commonly held understanding of justice. It is widely believed that justice entails rewarding good deeds and imposing punishment for wrongdoing (Mill, 2016). Therefore, allowing offenders to avoid consequences and denying victims access to justice is generally seen as unfair, based on this claim. Despite common conviction that those who commit crimes should suffer punishment proportionate to their actions, there have been situations where perpetrators dodge punishment by gaining official amnesty, leaving victims of such crimes angry and depressed.

For instance, the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (TRC) in South Africa, a form of amnesty program established to investigate human rights violations during the apartheid era and to address the concerns of victims of these violations, was unable to allay the concerns of victims because the TRC's design and implementation seemed to have "extended impunity to most perpetrators of apartheid" (Mamdani, 2007, p. 326). In Mozambique, amnesty programs established to help ensure a successful peace and reintegration process for reintegrated offenders was unfairly implemented as it failed "to screen former perpetrators out of the UN-run demobilization programs" (Cobban, 2007, p. 5). In Rwanda amnesty, moral concerns about justice and fairness were not addressed because some of the offenders who fled to neighbouring countries were not apprehended, and the likelihood of holding them accountable for the crimes they committed appears to be very remote. And because of this, victims had doubts about ever receiving justice (Tasamba, 2021). Hence, ethical questions arising from amnesty implementations have not been adequately addressed. For this reason, victims of violent conflicts often perceived unfair

treatment in the amnesty proceedings. Chiefly are issues of justice consideration and what fairness entails in victims' perceptions.

Justification of the research

The amnesty program for Boko Haram terrorists in Nigeria failed to consider the perspectives of victims regarding justice, as victims were excluded from the process, resulting in limited understanding of their needs and concerns. To support this assertion, Nwozor (2013, p.10) highlighted moral issues associated with granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists, arguing that rationale behind “the proposal to grant amnesty to the Boko Haram insurgents is patently deficient as it does not appear to address the issues of justice, morality and ethicalness...”. In addition, citing a Channels television report in 2013, Nwozor disclosed that the government formed a group to develop amnesty procedures without a similar commission to examine the effects of Boko Haram attacks on its victims (Channels television 2013 cited in Nwozor, 2013, p.10). It was further revealed that complex issues relating to deradicalization, and reintegration of ex-Boko Haram terrorists were not properly addressed (Clubb & Tapley, 2018).

Nwozor (2013) pointed out that the rationale behind implementing amnesty for ex-Boko Haram terrorists fails to adequately address issues of justice and morality. However, Nwozor did not sufficiently explore the perspectives of victims regarding justice and morality stemming from their encounters with Boko Haram terrorists. The current research is motivated by these moral issues. The need to understand victims' perception of justice and fair treatment in the Nigeria amnesty proceedings is of immense importance for two reasons: It influences how victims perceive their offenders and determines if victims and offenders will co-exist peacefully in the aftermath of conflict.

Though many studies have been conducted on the issue of the Nigerian amnesty for ex-Boko Haram terrorists; however, these significant elements of the reintegration process and victims' concerns are not captured in these studies. This research aims to fill in this gap by inquiring victims' perception of the amnesty program and some moral questions that victims asked.

Purpose of the study

Previous studies connected to this area of research skipped to examine victims' perception of justice and fairness regarding the amnesty granted to ex-BH terrorists. The need to fill this gap has become increasingly important because of ethical issues arising from the exclusion of victims' interest in the Nigeria amnesty proceedings. This research aims to fill in this gap by inquiring victims' perception of the amnesty program and some moral questions that victims asked. It also examines amnesty proceedings and outcomes in some post conflict states with the aim of discovering resemblance and differences with the Nigeria amnesty program.

In broad terms, this research aims to generate both theoretical insights and qualitative-empirical data to examine moral discussions concerning concepts such as moral justice, fairness, and the ethical justification of punishment. The specific focus is on addressing ethical complexities linked to the amnesty program within the Nigerian context, while also contributing novel perspectives to address gaps in existing literature.

Research questions and hypotheses.

To understand how the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty and reintegration program shape victims' perception of justice and fairness, this study will address the following questions:

What is victims' perception of the amnesty program? And how does it influence fairness assessment of the Nigeria amnesty program? Attempts will be made in this study to evaluate victims concerns and examine if they were addressed in the amnesty proceedings.

How does the Nigeria amnesty program generate reconciliation dilemmas? And what are the implications on reintegrated offenders? To answer this question, this research will examine causes of reconciliation dilemmas and its implications when not resolved. The aim is to broaden knowledge and understanding of these concepts in order to determine foreseeable issues with the Boko Haram terrorists' reintegration in the Nigeria context.

What ethical and political arguments can be formulated for the questions of restorative justice, forgiveness and reconciliation, which can contribute to debates on and policies of reconciling the victims and the offenders? Could restorative justice satisfy victims' needs? If yes, will it pave way for peaceful co-existence? This research relying on secondary data argues that the

exclusion of restorative justice in the Nigeria amnesty program leads to victims taking revenge against rehabilitated offenders. This argument is based on the assumption that victims were unfairly treated in the amnesty procedure and this marginalization is likely to invoke unforeseeable consequences.

Three hypotheses are proposed (not as propositions to be tested in a standardised way but as directions of philosophical inquiry informed by the qualitative data analysis).

(H1) Ignoring victims' experiences in the amnesty proceedings influences their perceived unfairness of the Nigeria amnesty program. This hypothesis relates to the first research question above in that victims have not been represented in the amnesty proceedings and their concerns were neglected while those that inflicted pain on them were empowered by the government, and this made victims to feel they were treated unfairly.

(H2) Victims' unfair perception of the amnesty leads to retaliation against reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists. This hypothesis relates to the second research question above in that this project assumes that unfair perception of the amnesty leads to retaliation against reintegrated members of Boko Haram. The dilemma in the amnesty program is that if the government punish ex-Boko Haram members it will result to more killing of victims by their member that are still committed to the objective of Boko Haram terrorism and neglecting justice for the victims make victims to be chronically angry. Hence victims in a bid to get justice may decide to revenge or take justice into their hands.

(H3) The lack of restorative justice process in the amnesty proceedings shapes victims' perceptions towards unforgiven. The hypothesis is based on the precedence that restorative justice process facilitates the interaction between offenders and victims through which victims may forgive offenders. Therefore, without such process, the current study postulates that victims may dwell in social harms that offenders inflict on them. As such, victims may retaliate against reintegrated ex-terrorists.

Significance of the study

Some ethical questions arising from amnesty implementations have not been adequately addressed. Hence, victims of violent conflicts often perceived unfair treatment in the amnesty proceedings. Chiefly are issues of justice consideration and what fairness entails in victims' perceptions (Gibson, 2002). The findings of this research will be useful in providing answers to some ethical questions asked by victims and moral dilemmas confronting amnesty proceedings. Furthermore, the study will provide empirical information in the interplay between the Nigeria amnesty program and questions of restorative justice, fairness, and reconciliation for potential researchers interested in this area of research as well as help governments experiencing similar situation to design better policies.

Scope and Limitations

This research investigated the perspectives of victims of Boko Haram attacks concerning the amnesty provided to victims of BH terrorists and how this amnesty affects their perceptions of justice and fairness. However, one limitation is its sole focus on the viewpoints of victims, disregarding the perspectives of reintegrated ex-BH members. Many reintegrated individuals, including women, children, and the elderly forced to join Boko Haram group, face discrimination despite being victims themselves. Additionally, the research only focused on one of the camps housing Boko Haram attack victims. Lastly, the interviewed victims were limited to those who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Definition of Terms

Amnesty- Amnesty is derived from the Greek word " amnestia." It is the act of granting pardon or forgiveness to violent offenders by state actors without the imposition of punishment with the goal of restoring order in society in the aftermath of conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence between victims and offenders (see: Fort, 2005).

Reintegration program- The process of returning rehabilitated offenders into their communities, providing them with resources and assistance to help them survive on their own, discourage them from committing crimes again, and help them become law-abiding citizens.

Boko Haram- The Boko Haram group adopted "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" as its official name, which is the English translation of "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad" (Ntamu & Ekpenyong, 2014).

Structure of the dissertation

This research is structured into six chapters, each meticulously examining the implementation of amnesty as a counterterrorism strategy and the complex moral issues it entails.

Chapter one explores the current literature on the concept of terrorism, counter-terrorism strategies, and the controversial role of amnesty within these frameworks. It investigates the rationale behind amnesty programs, scrutinizing their outcomes in some post-conflict societies in Africa. Findings from these studies underscore the moral dilemmas associated with granting amnesty to perpetrators of violent crimes, particularly concerning the question of justice for the victims. Additionally, an examination of the literature on Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria reveals governmental efforts to combat its spread, including the hypothesis that amnesty would quell the insurgency—an approach that ultimately proved unsuccessful. Moreover, attention is drawn to the disproportionate focus on the reintegration of ex-Boko Haram militants, often at the expense of addressing the needs of both direct and indirect victims of their attacks.

As the review progresses, existing philosophical discourse on the moral permissibility of punishment is explored, offering insights into the ethical considerations surrounding amnesty decisions. Furthermore, a synthesis of the literature uncovers a notable gap in scholarly research: the perspectives of victims of Boko Haram attacks on notions of justice and fairness remain largely understudied.

Chapter two of this research presents ethical theories such as utilitarianism and the concept of making amends by Linda Radzik, aiming to highlight the relevance of ethical decision-making models in philosophy for addressing moral issues pertaining to justice and fair treatment. By examining what moral philosophers consider when making decisions with moral implications, the research aims to elucidate why the amnesty program for BH terrorists failed to adequately address issues related to moral justice and fairness.

Utilitarianism is specifically chosen for its capacity to assist policymakers in evaluating whether actions with moral implications contribute to or diminish societal happiness. For instance,

when assessing the justification for an amnesty program for Boko Haram terrorists, a utilitarian perspective assesses whether the program can effectively mitigate the spread of Boko Haram terrorism and restore happiness to victims and affected communities. The justification for the Nigeria amnesty program appears to correspond with utilitarian goals, as state actors regard granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists as the most efficient strategy to curb the proliferation of Boko Haram terrorism, given the limited effectiveness of military interventions. Utilitarians prioritize decisions that promote societal happiness and seek the best alternative measure when punishment alone fails to deter crime. Utilizing utilitarianism, the dissertation aims to demonstrate why, despite aligning with utilitarian principles, the outcomes of the amnesty program failed to meet the standard of justice and fairness.

This analysis highlights the interconnectedness between justice and happiness in the utilitarian perspective, supporting the argument of this dissertation that the exclusion of victims' concerns in the amnesty process influences their perception of unfair treatment. Linda Radzik's concept of making amends is employed to illustrate how the amnesty program's outcomes create a reconciliation dilemma, leading to resentment towards reintegrated former Boko Haram members. These normative moral theories and relevant moral discourse on justice and punishment are utilized to formulate interview questions for this research and interpret victims' responses regarding justice and fairness.

Chapter three constitutes the methodology section. Within this chapter, the research outlines the approaches employed to gather data relevant to the research questions guiding this research. In order to grasp how the outcomes of the Nigerian amnesty program influence victims' perceptions of justice and fairness, the research adopts a dual methodology, incorporating both secondary and primary sources data sources. The chapter outlines the collections of secondary data such as Google scholar and Scopus. Throughout the chapter, the research outline how primary data was collected and analysed, including how the participants were selected for the interview process. In the concluding section of the chapter, the ethical considerations maintained during the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the results are outlined.

Chapter four provides a comprehensive overview of the research findings. It commences by reiterating that the moral normative ethical theories adopted in this research were utilized to shape the interview questions and interpret the outcomes of the primary research sources, which

consist of the opinions gathered from victims interviewed at Saint Hilary IDP camp. This was followed by the results of the primary data or interviews. The combination of both secondary and primary data provided a comprehensive understanding of the topic under investigation. Throughout the chapter, the thesis structured the findings around thematic analysis. The first theme presents the responses of victims to the question of fairness in the amnesty procedure. Through this theme, the researcher gain insight into what fairness means to victims and the diverse moral arguments they use to validate their claims. The second theme uncovers the victims' insistence on Diya payment, a restitution form in Islamic law. It elucidates the factors influencing this demand and explains why they view Diya payment as synonymous with fairness. The third theme reveals victims' insistence on punishment for reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members. It delves into their perspective on justifying punishment and their belief that punishment should be proportional to the crime. The last theme illustrates victims' desire for revenge. It explores the factors driving this desire and examines their responses to the moral implications of rejecting their demand.

Chapter five of this research presents the interpretation of themes that emerged from the field interview. It also shows how findings of existing literature validates the qualitative interview. Utilizing moral discussions on justice and fairness as a guiding framework, this section underscores the importance of such discussions in shaping policymakers' comprehension of why amnesty programs frequently fail to meet victims' expectations regarding justice and fairness. Additionally, it underscores the moral implications arising from either acceding to or disregarding victims' demands. By drawing insights from philosophical debates on justice, the research aims to illuminate the profound moral considerations that underpin the effectiveness of amnesty initiatives.

Chapter six serves as the conclusion, providing a comprehensive summary and interpretation of the research's principal findings through the lens of philosophical discourse on justice, reparation, and fairness. It explores the broader implications of these findings within societal contexts, shedding light on their significance. Furthermore, the conclusion acknowledges any limitations inherent in the research and offers recommendations for future research endeavours to deepen our understanding of the subject matter.

Chapter One: Terrorism And Amnesty Through Time

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher delves into the intricate aspects of terrorism and amnesty programs, covering their historical roots to their modern-day manifestations. The researcher scrutinizes the fundamental conceptual frameworks shaping our understanding of these phenomena and the ethical questions they raise. Furthermore, the chapter investigates philosophical ideas of punishment, addressing the contentious ethical question of whether it is morally permissible to forgive perpetrators in order to achieve peace, even if doing so may deprive victims of the justice they deserve.

1.0 A Historical Perspective, Definitions, And Countermeasures

Although the fear of terrorism intensified after the September 11, 2001, attack on the US (see: Toohey & Taylor, 2023; Marshall, 2002), it's important to explain that terrorism is not a recent phenomenon (Laqueur, 2017; Grisard, 2014; Das, 2022), despite limited academic research on its history. Scholars interested in terrorism often discuss its connection to the French Revolution. However, they may overlook the fact that terrorism existed before that period and persisted as a societal problem (Chaliand & Blin, 2007). Chaliand & Blin (2007) traced instances of terror from ancient times, such as the terror caused by the "Mongols and their sudden rise in the thirteenth century," to instances of terror in modern times, including "Nazism and the Stalinist terror", "the Rwanda genocide", "Jews and Gypsies", among others (Chaliand & Blin, 2007, p.5).

According to Laqueur (2017), terrorist activities have been documented as far back as the 19th century. He points out that "One of the earliest known examples of a terrorist movement is the sicarii, a highly organized religious sect consisting of men of lower orders active in the Zealot struggle in Palestine (A.D. 66-73)" (ibid, p.7). Laqueur (2017) further emphasized that it is implausible for any single definition of terrorism to encapsulate the diverse array of manifestations of terrorism witnessed throughout history. The presence of a myriad of definitions of terrorism among scholars highlights the intricate and challenging nature of devising a comprehensive definition of terrorism, thereby lending support to Laqueur's argument.

Scholars have extensively examined the definition of terrorism and the types of acts that qualify as terrorism (Shanahan, 2016; Richards, 2014). Primoratz, (1990, p.129) defines terrorism as "the deliberate use of violence, or threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating them, or other people, into a course of action they otherwise would not take.". This research deems the provided definition significant to its inquiry, as it highlights the ethical considerations regarding the exploitation of innocent individuals by terrorists to advance their harmful agendas.

Magstadt (1993), as cited in Dapo (2022, p. 133), defines terrorism as a strategic instrument used to accomplish specific objectives. These objectives are achieved by diminishing "a state of fear in its potential victims and a proclivity toward repressive actions by the government." Terrorism, inherently violent, disregards fundamental moral and human rights principles. Additionally, public attention plays a crucial role in aiding terrorists in achieving their goals. Terrorists are typically viewed as enemies of the state by those in power who see their agitations as a threat against the interests of the state (Turk, 2004).

Most terrorist organizations rely on weapons and ammunition to fulfil their objectives, and innocent civilians are usually victims of these deadly attacks (Crenshaw, 1981). Crenshaw has offered valuable insights into the tactics employed by terrorists to advance their agenda or attract the attention of state actors to their demands. One such method, which is particularly relevant to the focus of this dissertation, is the exploitation of innocent individuals as a means to accomplish their objectives.

1.1 Innocents as Prey: Victims of Terrorism

It has been argued that terrorists aim to instil fear in their audience in order to capture the government's attention. Innocent people are often used to evoke this fear. While these innocent individuals are not the main targets of terrorists, they are instrumental in attracting the attention of state actors. To effectively draw the attention of state actors, the victims chosen must not only be random but must also have their deaths or abductions incite panic within the state, highlighting the government's perceived weakness in providing adequate security (Le Vine, 1997). This suggests that terrorists carefully select individuals and strategic locations that will effectively serve their purpose of drawing attention to their cause. This statement confirms the

earlier claim that the 2001 attack on the United States prompted governments worldwide to prioritize the prevention of terrorism attacks. The World Trade Center holds strategic importance as a global commercial hub. It is not surprising that the "spectacular attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11 served as a wake-up call, and the 'war on terrorism,' focusing on international mass terrorism, became one of the most important public issues in the United States" (Shichor, 2007, p. 270).

People who are in locations targeted by terrorists often become victims of terrorist attacks (Smith, 2008; Arrighi & Charlot, 2020). Furthermore, terrorists also target individuals who do not support their ideology. They justify their attacks on these individuals based on their refusal to accept the ideology that the terrorists aim to achieve (Drake, 2017; Gloria, 2023). While terrorists may engage in indiscriminate attacks, they often target individuals whose abduction or killing they know will draw global attention or quickly capture the interest of their intended audience (Shearlaw, 2015; Moxon-Browne, 2019). The reality is that regardless of the motives behind terrorist actions, the consequences are often catastrophic. Therefore, preventing terrorist acts is now considered a top priority for most governments (Martini, 2021).

1.2 Halting Terrorism: Utilizing Both Military and Non-Military Tactics

Methods used by the government to prevent terrorism, or its spread is called counterterrorism or anti-terrorism. Wazzer elucidates that the methods of counterterrorism encompass both a "Military approach" and a "Soft non-military approach."

Wazeer explains:

The military approach to counterterrorism focuses on the actual deployment of military assets to fight terrorist organizations. Contrarily, the non-military approach focuses on non-violent engagement of terrorists by adopting non-overly military measures that appeal to them and seek to persuade terrorist groups to avoid continuous violence as well address the underlying motivation for terrorism through steps like dialogues, negotiations or other forms of concession (Wazeer, 2020, p. 42).

The quotation above suggests that the military often engages in direct conflict with terrorist groups as part of its counterterrorism strategy. State actors typically employ this approach when

dealing with particularly dangerous terrorist organizations. This aligns with Sandler's (2015, p. 13) characterization of "Proactive measures," which involve targeting and dismantling terrorists' resources, such as "training camps, disrupting their finances, eliminating safe havens, and capturing or eliminating their members". The ethical ramifications of military counterterrorism have been extensively deliberated upon, largely owing to the regrettable reality that armed confrontations between terrorists and military personnel frequently result in the loss of innocent civilian lives within the affected communities (Thiam, 2022).

Nevertheless, certain moral theories offer justifications for employing military force against individuals whose actions pose a threat to peace within a state. For example, the just war theory provides rationale for violent intervention against the activities of non-state actors that jeopardize a nation's security. This moral theory finds its roots in the writings of medieval philosophers such as Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (Langan, 1984; Lazar, 2017; Reichberg, 2017). Aquinas posits that a war requires authorization from a recognized government, must serve a noble purpose, and must be motivated by righteous intentions to be deemed justified (Walzer, 2006). This suggests that military counterterrorism finds justification when instigated by the incumbent government, intending to combat terrorists who have inflicted suffering on others, with the exclusive aim of advancing societal well-being and alleviating suffering.

While the utilization of military force against terrorists may be considered imperative due to the grave repercussions of their actions, such as loss of life and property destruction (Lyman & Stephen Morrison, 2004; Okpaga et al., 2012), the sorrowful loss of innocent lives during clashes between soldiers and terrorists underscores the importance of exploring dialogue-based methods, particularly in addressing terrorism linked with religious extremists.

A non-military approach, on the other hand, comprises a negotiating process. It involves a non-violent tactics taken to stop terrorism through dialogue and these methods are frequently used when military counter-terrorism strategy achieved insignificant results (Mbagwu & Mavalla, 2016). The interest of this research is on non-military approach to resolving violent conflicts and maintaining peace both during and after such conflicts. One of these methods that will form primary focus of this study is the amnesty program (Kapon, 2022). Additionally, there will be efforts to examine the effectiveness of these programs in ensuring peace and justice for victims of violent conflicts in the areas where they have been implemented.

1.3 Amnesty: A Non-Military Approach to Counterterrorism

The term "amnesty" is derived from the Greek word "amnestia," which translates as "forgetfulness" in English. Amnesty is used to deal with past atrocities perpetrated by groups or individuals in order to foster peace, particularly in the aftermath of violent conflicts, and as the name implies, if given, it erases the offender's crime (Omadjohwoefe, 2011). In other words, amnesty is a procedure for fostering peace and reconciliation rather than a means of punishing perpetrators or securing justice for their victims (Jeffery, 2014). Many people have come to the conclusion that implementing amnesty contradicts justice because justice is often not adequately considered in the amnesty process.

Jeffery Explains:

this assessment rests on two assumptions, about the nature of amnesties and the nature of justice. First, conventional understandings have long assumed that amnesty necessarily entails some form of prescribed amnesia regarding wrongs committed in the past. Second, they have also assumed that justice is predominantly retributive on nature, operationalized through the practices of prosecutions and punishment (Jeffery 2014, p.5).

Jeffery (2014) added that in recent times, amnesty programs have also encompassed the process of assessing the roles offenders played in the committed atrocities, along with addressing the concerns of victims. Nonetheless, there often exist discrepancies between the intended objectives of amnesty and its actual implementation (Roche, 2005). This is because multiple amnesty programs have been instituted for a variety of reasons and implemented in different ways (Mallinder, 2018).

In ancient times, amnesty served as a tool to reconcile established governments and opposition groups, aiming to foster peace and societal order (O'Shea, 2002; Lévy, 2007). However, in contemporary times, the concept of amnesty has evolved beyond merely facilitating peace between the government and opposition factions to include seeking justice for individuals whose human rights have been violated (Ballesteros et al, 2007). Scholars have made significant progress in defining amnesty, understanding its goals, historical uses, and effects (Frulli, 2009; Nwankpa, 2014). Parker (2001, p. 72) explains that the aim of amnesty is to erase a specific wrongdoing, thereby eliminating the possibility of imposing punishment on the perpetrators. It is

granted solely by the government and not by non-state actors. Furthermore, it is extended to groups of offenders who have committed similar offenses. In conclusion, amnesty is granted prior to any "conviction," presumably in an effort to spare the parties concerned from a trial and consequent punishment. This indicates that the government holds exclusive authority to grant amnesty to perpetrators, and once granted, the amnesty program immediately absolves the offenders of their offenses. It is noteworthy to emphasize that while amnesty is a form of forgiveness, it differs from a pardon (Zadran & Mandozai, 2022; Ntoubandi, 2007).

Krapp (2005) elucidates that amnesty effectively wipes out an offender's past once it is granted. In essence, an offender who receives amnesty is absolved of all charges because their transgression is no longer remembered. Conversely, in the case of pardon, the offense committed, even if forgiven, is revisited during the process of granting the offender pardon. Amnesty involves overlooking the offender's past without imposing punishment. However, pardons are awarded to individuals who have been convicted, and their past crimes and penalties, even if nullified, are brought up during the process (Ntoubandi, 2007). While it's essential to clarify the distinction between amnesty and pardon to avoid misconceptions about their meanings, it's pertinent to note that the primary focus of this research is on the moral justification of granting amnesty to offenders, rather than engaging in a philosophical discussion about the differences between amnesty and pardon. The core emphasis lies on the amnesty program and its moral implications.

Scholars who are interested in the morality of the amnesty program argue that one of the moral concerns associated with granting amnesty to perpetrators of violent crimes is that it deprives victims of their rights and access to justice (Beigbeder, 2005). It has also been argued that most governments mainly focus on the benefits of amnesty program and neglect ethical concerns arising from its implementation which is morally unjust (Whelan, 2022). Another moral concern is the efficacy of amnesty programs in restoring peace in the aftermath of conflict, it hasn't been able to adequately address moral issues such as why violent criminals should be spared (Roht-Arriaza & Gibson, 1998), and why victims should forgive those who have caused them so much pain. Despite the arguments against amnesty program, particularly regarding its failure to address victims' concerns about justice, many governments in post-conflict societies in Africa and beyond still prefer amnesty programs as a means to establish peace and reconciliation (see: Hadden, 2004).

It is argued that amnesty, if implemented effectively, can facilitate peaceful coexistence in the aftermath of conflicts (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012).

From the preceding discussion, it can be inferred that scholars hold divergent views on the justification of granting amnesty to perpetrators of crimes. Some argue that it is morally unacceptable to deny victims justice, while others emphasize its role in preventing violent conflicts. The critical question that arises is whether amnesty has effectively addressed moral questions concerning justice and fairness in places where it has been implemented. To investigate this, this research will briefly examine amnesty programs in some African countries and outcomes of their implementations.

1.4 Amnesty Implementation in Post-Conflict Societies: Victims' Justice Concerns

This section thoroughly explores the complexities of various amnesty programs across African countries, including those in South Africa (TRC), Rwanda, Mozambique, and Nigeria (prior to the Boko Haram amnesty program). Furthermore, it conducts a comparative analysis between the outcomes of these amnesty programs and that of the Boko Haram amnesty, aiming to highlight both differences and similarities.

1.4.1 The South African Context: Perspectives on Amnesty Implementation

In 1995, the newly established South African government instituted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to foster national healing and reconciliation by uncovering the truth regarding human rights violations during apartheid. The commission prioritized gathering evidence and disclosing information from both victims and perpetrators, rather than pursuing legal action against individuals for past offenses (Tutu, 2023). The TRC is generally regarded as being better implemented than most post-conflict amnesty programs, despite its inherent limitation.

However, whether the TRC succeeded in restoring justice and fostering reconciliation between perpetrators of crimes and victims, whether the concerns of all victims whose rights were violated were adequately addressed, and whether all living offenders participated in the reconciliation process are complex questions that require comprehensive analysis and consideration of various factors. The success of the TRC in achieving its objectives may vary

depending on different perspectives and interpretations of its outcomes. The following quotation provides useful information for assessing its strength:

Firstly, it promoted a contentious period in the history of South Africa, namely the apartheid years, to be recorded as truthfully as possible, notwithstanding the fact that not all people were willing to come forward and testify at the commission. It nevertheless gave many individuals the opportunity to do so. Secondly the process of establishing the truth is an important aspect in any country's history, and the Commission aimed at this process, again notwithstanding that the process followed by the Commission was flawed. Lastly, it was an exercise to prevent any future gross human rights violations (Jardine, 2008, p. 2).

While the TRC has notable successes compared to some other amnesty programs, it also has weaknesses. For example, not all offenders participated in the process, and the commission's inability to hold many offenders accountable for their crimes or bring them to justice has led some victims to doubt the fairness of the process (Wilson, 2001). In other words, victims concern for justice and fairness was not adequately addressed by the commission.

Mamdani (2002, p. 1) highlighted the weaknesses in the TRC processes, noting the commission's inability to hold numerous perpetrators of apartheid accountable. The TRC's incomplete disclosure of truth resulted in the intended individual amnesties evolving into blanket amnesties for entire groups. Perpetrators not expressly named were thus granted immunity from punishment. Furthermore, the commission's findings regarding criminals' responsibilities appeared to be prejudiced because the report lays a major emphasis on atrocities committed by black offenders, raising the question of whether the amnesty program was primarily designed for only black perpetrators.

In terms of fairness, many contend that the amnesty process did nothing more than highlight previous injustices without taking any further action (Llewellyn & Howse, 1999). Lastly, the greatest challenge to reconciliation in South Africa persists in the disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished, a divide that often mirrors the racial distinction between white and black. As long as these inequalities endure and continue to fragment society, the likelihood of reconciliation remains exceedingly slim (Hendricks, 2003, p. 28). In other words, the South

African amnesty program failed to sufficiently meet victims' concerns about justice. It also failed to keep its initial promise of eliminating any type of prejudice in its execution (Adam & Adam, 2020).

1.4.2. Evaluating the Implementation of Amnesty in Rwanda

The Rwanda genocide resulted in the deaths of millions of people, displacement of many, and the rape of thousands of women, leaving victims of this violent conflict with traumatic memories (Brannigan & Jones, 2009). The genocide in Rwanda specifically targeted the Tutsi tribe, resulting in the abduction and sexual exploitation of Tutsi women, girls, and other women accused of not supporting the genocide (Sharlach, 1999).

To address the concerns of victims of the Rwanda genocide the government-initiated amnesty program. The new leadership intended to use an amnesty program to reconcile victim-offenders while simultaneously exploring ways to address victims' concerns for justice. The panel sought to achieve these objectives without the support of any nation. Brannigan & Jones further explain that the commission addressed some of the victims' concerns, but moral concerns about justice and fairness were not addressed because some of the offenders who fled to neighbouring countries were not apprehended, and the likelihood of holding them accountable for the crimes they committed appears to be very remote.

1.4.3. Exploring Amnesty Implementation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

For decades, violent warfare has raged in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Moffett, 2009), and millions of people have died since the conflict began in 1996 (Carayannis, 2013). Unresolved concerns originating from the Rwanda genocide, notably criminals who fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have been highlighted as one of the causes of the conflict (“Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1996–Present,” 2021), while other aspects include economic and ethnicity issues (Onyango, 2010). Moffett (2009) says that attempts to bring peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have shown negligible results because concerns about justice and fairness have not received the due consideration.

Moffett (2009, p.472) further revealed that the attempt made by the “Lusaka commission” to ensure that the government and opposition resolve their differences through dialogue and accept peace in order to usher in a peaceful regime, failed because such goals “were ignored as foreign

militias were not demobilised, due mainly to the inability of the army to carry out such a function and the continued presence of the foreign armies of Rwanda and Uganda on Congolese territory''. Finally, Moffett, argued that lasting peace is possible in DRC if attention should be given to the remote causes of conflicts in DRC and ways to address them.

1.4.4. Insights into Amnesty Implementation in Mozambique

Mozambique's peace process, which was intended to address violent confrontations between the government and opposition factions, failed to achieve long-term peace (Igreja, 2015). This failure was caused by a lack of focus to bring perpetrators accountable during the amnesty process. Igreja (2015, p. 239) explains that "two decades after the negotiated peace accord and amnesty law that ended the civil war (1976-1992) between the Frelimo government and the rebel group Renamo, an armed conflict (2013-2014) broke out between Frelimo and Renamo military forces". After examining the factors contributing to the recurrence of the conflict, Igreja (2015) proposed that the amnesty program could have been successful if concerns regarding justice and fairness had been addressed. In essence, the fairness issues were not sufficiently tackled in the Mozambique amnesty proceedings.

From the preceding discussions, it becomes evident that the utilization of amnesty programs to address the needs of victims or survivors of past atrocities raises ethical concerns. While some scholars view the implementation of amnesty as a method to foster peace in post-conflict societies, such a stance prompts us to question whether it is ethically acceptable for institutions to overlook past grievances and move forward as a pragmatic approach to reinstating order and stability (Freeman, 2009). The absence of measures within amnesty procedures to tackle these ethical concerns has prompted many to doubt the effectiveness of amnesty programs in aiding victims' recovery and facilitating reconciliation with offenders.

1.5. A Historical Overview of Amnesty Implementations in Nigeria

The British colonial era in Nigeria came to an end when Nigeria attained independence in 1960. There were enormous expectations for a new Nigeria that would safeguard the interests of all Nigerians. Unfortunately, the country has been plagued by terrible conflicts since its

independence (Dapo Thomas, 2022), and efforts to reconcile aggrieved parties and promote peaceful coexistence have resulted in the implementation of several amnesty programs.

1.5.1 Amnesty at the End of the Nigeria Civil War

Over a million people were killed during Nigeria's three-year civil war, which lasted from 1967 to 1970 (Aguoru, 2022). This war was fought between the people of Southeast Nigeria, Biafran soldiers, and the Nigerian government. Various factors contributed to the onset of this armed conflict, with tribalism in politics and political instability resulting from the forced amalgamation of diverse tribes with unique cultures by colonial administrators emerging as prominent contributors to the Nigerian civil war and the ongoing political unrest in Nigeria. After the end of the Nigeria civil war, an amnesty program was initiated under the slogan "no-victor, no-vanquished."

This program was designed not only to alleviate the suffering of victims but also to facilitate the reintegration of Biafrans who had participated in the secessionist movement back into Nigerian society. Chidiebere (2016) gives more context for why Yakubu Gowon, the military head of state at the time, considered implementing an amnesty program and what he planned to accomplish with it. The then-president utilized this peace process as a platform to reassure the people of the Southeast and the entirety of Nigeria of his unwavering commitment to safeguarding the safety of all Nigerians, emphasizing that no individual would be excluded based on tribe or class. While Gowon's promise aimed to alleviate the pain of victims, there arises the crucial question of whether this pledge was honoured.

In response to this question, Chidiebere (2016. P. 32) responds to this question by stating that the former president denied aid from specific countries, particularly those he accused of fuelling the civil war "...as a result of these bluff to foreign assistance many Igbo's died of diseases and starvation that otherwise would had been saved if aids were available. More so, the seriousness of the reconstruction of Igbo land was too herculean for the region to pretend it would tackle alone, indeed, there was vanquish". Omaka (2016) added that in the days and weeks following the end of the war, it became evident that the Nigerian government was not genuinely committed to establishing comprehensive peace and reintegration with former Biafran citizens. Rather, its

declarations of reconciliation appeared to be a purposeful move to shift public attention away from the atrocities taking place in Nigeria.

1.5.2 Niger Delta Amnesty

The Niger Delta region, located in Southern Nigeria, is widely recognized as the oil region owing to its vast crude oil reserves. The inhabitants of the Niger Delta region hold high expectations from the government, considering that earnings from oil sales constitute the primary source of income for the country. However, these expectations have been severely disappointed, as the people of the Niger Delta endure deplorable living conditions and an unhealthy environment due to the exploitation of oil extraction in their territory. Some indigenous individuals from the area-initiated conflict against oil-producing companies due to the environmental hazards caused by their mining activities. Among these aggrieved individuals was Ken Saro-Wiwa, a prominent human rights activist.

Ken Saro-Wiwa and others who opposed the activities of a petroleum firm in their area for the destruction of their environment, as well as the government for disregarding the dire situation of the Ogoni people, were unjustly convicted and executed in 1995.

As Campbell (2002, p.42) puts it:

Ten days after sentence was passed and without the verdict having been upheld by any civilian authority, Saro-Wiwa and his co-accused were executed in Port Harcourt gaol, while across the world in Auckland delegates to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (including representatives of the military government of Nigeria) dithered over the most effective means to save their lives. There was an enormous amount of publicity worldwide, but the haste and secrecy with which the government acted indicated that it did not intend to be deflected from its chosen course of action; its strategy was to eliminate Saro-Wiwa as expeditiously and completely as possible. He was executed in secret inside the gaol and his body either destroyed or buried in an unmarked grave.

Following the death of Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists, the sense of marginalization among the Ogoni people persisted, fueling ongoing agitation. Consequently, militant groups emerged (Iaccino, 2015), which resulted in the destruction of oil facilities in the

region, increased incidents of kidnapping, and frequent clashes between Nigerian soldiers and militants (Asuni, 2009).

In order to address the concerns of the militant organizations while also bringing peace and order to the Niger Delta region, the Federal government offered amnesty to the militant groups in 2009 (Davidheiser & Nyiayaana, 2011). Although it has been argued that the amnesty program established by the government to stop militancy in Niger Delta region helped minimized militancy among the youths, ethical issues arising from amnesty implementation in this region are still unresolved (Aghedo, 2013; Omokhoa & Ikelegbe, 2016; Ering et al., 2013).

1.6 Boko Haram: Examining Their Actions and Consequences

Boko Haram is an Islamist militant group that opposes Western education and views its teachings as inconsistent with Islamic teachings (Peters, 2014). The exact start date of the group is unclear, but its activities came to light around 2002 under the leadership of Yusuf Mohammed (Iyekekpolo, 2016). Aside their commitment to replace western education with Islamic teachings mostly in Northern Nigeria, the group also has other missions which include “opposition to the modern nation-state of Nigeria; the desire to establish an Islamic caliphate; and the use of violence (military jihad) to effect change” (Azumah, 2015, p. 34). Many reasons have been given for this sentiment against Western education and one of them is “that western-styled government systems, especially the school system, which is perceived as heavily influenced by Christianity, contradict the Quran and are a colonial imposition intended to permanently subjugate Muslim society and values” (Osasona, 2022, p. 4). However, some scholars have argued that Boko Haram's grievances against western education are connected to the education policy initiated by British colonial administrators in colonial Nigeria.

Akinola (2015, pp. 5–6) explains:

To understand the import of British rule on fundamentalist Islam in Nigeria on one hand and the agitations of Boko Haram for a Salafi inspired caliphate system governed by sharia law on the other, two main points are necessary. First, having conquered the Sokoto caliphate in 1903, the British introduced indirect rule—that is, rather than dismantle the existing caliphate structure the British adapted it to their own needs and preferences. A major aspect of this included placing a colonial governor on top of the structure the newly installed

sultan supervised. Second, sharia law was not entirely outlawed but significantly curtailed.

Factors such as poverty, inter-religious tensions, and the perceived erosion of the traditional Islamic system are cited as the primary motivations driving individuals, especially youth, to join Boko Haram terrorism (Lenshie et al., 2022). In addition, poor governance has also been cited as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria, and scholars have urged the government to focus more on the general well-being of the people in order to establish good governance in the country. For Boko Haram members the only way to establish an effective government is by advocating for a version of Islam that prohibits Muslims from engaging in any political or social activities associated with Western society (Ogomegbunam & David, 2014). This sect arrived at this conclusion because of the alleged notion that Western civilization breeds corrupt practices (Adegbulu, 2013).

However, several attempts to made by the BH sect to achieve the sect's goal have led to the death of many Nigerians. It has also made thousands of people to be displaced. Starting from 2009 when the founder of Boko Haram died in police custody, the group became more hostile in their attacks. Ntneh (2021, p. 1) citing a report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), discloses that the conflict in northeast Nigeria involving Islamist insurgents resulted in the deaths of over "350,000" individuals by the end of 2020. This figure is ten times higher than earlier estimates from 2019, which had pegged the death toll at around "35,000" people. The assaults carried out by the Boko Haram sect since 2009 have forced millions of individuals to evacuate their residences in pursuit of safety, resulting in their displacement within their own nation (Gomment, 2019). In 2014 the sect kidnapped 276 female students (Adu-Atwere, 2015).

1.7 Examining BH Amnesty designs & Scholars' Criticisms

To mitigate the impact of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, especially in the Northeastern region, the government enacted several counterterrorism strategies aimed at limiting its spread. According to Ogunnubi & Aja (2022), these strategies include initiatives such as the prison program, the yellow ribbon program, and operation safe corridor. "The Prison Program was established in 2014 and is located at the Kuje Prison, Abuja. It aims to rehabilitate convicted individuals and those awaiting trial" (Ogunnubi & Aja, 2022, p.7). Additionally, it provides vocational training to equip these offenders with skills that can benefit both themselves and the

community upon completion of their prison sentences. The Yellow Ribbon Initiative targets women and children affiliated with Boko Haram terrorists, providing counselling and emotional support to facilitate their rehabilitation and recovery. Operation Safe Corridor is specifically designed for terrorists who have shown remorse and surrendered to the authorities.

Many Boko Haram members have taken up the government's offer and surrendered, subsequently undergoing rehabilitation and skill acquisition training. The aim of these initiatives is to reintegrate them into society as productive members, thereby enhancing the welfare of the community. However, the manner in which the amnesty was granted has faced criticism from scholars. Research findings suggest that the structure and implementation of the Nigeria amnesty program have flaws that hinder the effectiveness of both the amnesty and reintegration efforts (Asuquo et al., 2012; Ejeh & Popoola, 2023).

For instance, the Operation Safe Corridor, a prison-based deradicalization program, has faced substantial criticism from many who perceive it as an ineffective strategy in countering BH terrorism (Salihu, 2021, p. 31). de Montclos (2018, p. 865) asserts that the war against Boko Haram raises three primary critiques regarding deradicalization efforts. Firstly, there's an overemphasis on "Quranic" interpretation in attempts to "deradicalize jihadi terrorists". Secondly, these efforts are often deemed impractical and ineffective. Lastly, they divert attention away from more crucial priorities in combating extremism. Examining similar programs implemented in post-conflict societies could offer insights into structural differences and reasons why the amnesty for former Boko Haram members has not yielded significant results (see: Ike et al., 2021).

1.8 Comparing Boko Haram Amnesty with Other Amnesty Programs

Nwankpa (2014) in the paper titled "The Politics of Amnesty in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis of the Boko Haram and Niger Delta Insurgencies," conducted a comparison between the amnesty granted to BH terrorists and that provided to Niger Delta militants. Some elites, primarily from Northern Nigeria, argue that it is justifiable to extend the same amnesty program offered to Niger Delta militants to Boko Haram terrorists. They argue that since both groups resorted to violence to highlight their grievances to the government, they should receive similar treatment. Nwankpa draws a comparison between amnesty program for BH terrorists and Niger Delta militants, revealing the differences in the objectives of the two groups.

While Niger Delta militants protest the government's marginalization of the region, Boko Haram terrorists seek to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria. It is critical to recognize that, while the amnesty did not fully address the Niger Delta insurgents' issues, its implementation reduced militancy in the region. This is due to the Niger Delta people's clearly defined demands. The Niger Delta people need basic infrastructure, and this demand falls under the responsibilities of the government to the citizens; but the demands of the Boko Haram terrorists are distinct and harder to meet because they seek to form their own state.

Nwakpa (2014) appears to argue that the demands of the Niger Delta Militants are justified due to the region's significant contribution to the state's revenue through crude oil deposits. However, despite this contribution, the Niger Delta people lack basic amenities (Afinotan, L. A., & Ojakorotu, 2009). On the other hand, the desires of Boko Haram members are incompatible with the government's obligations to its citizens, as they seek to establish a different form of governance (Omenma, J. T., Onyishi, I. E., & Okolie, 2023). Ekanem et al. (2012) share similar perspectives. They argue that the demands of Niger Delta militants are justified because the Nigerian constitution mandates the government to ensure citizens live in an unpolluted environment. The government's failure to halt activities of petroleum companies, causing pollution in the Niger Delta region, is a major grievance of the militants.

Therefore, offering amnesty was a positive step in addressing their grievances. Additionally, the decision to offer amnesty to Boko Haram members was not reached through a consensual agreement between the state and the members of the Boko Haram terrorist group. These shortcomings distinguish the amnesty and reintegration program for repentant Boko Haram terrorists from the Niger Delta amnesty. This is because Boko Haram terrorists' goal of establishing a Sharia state poses a demand that, if met, could potentially result in the disintegration of the state.

When comparing the amnesty program for Boko Haram with similar initiatives in South Africa and other African countries, a notable disparity is evident. While some of these programs were established post-conflict and involved the inclusion of victims in the amnesty procedures, the Boko Haram amnesty is granted despite the government not having achieved victory in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism. Additionally, victims of Boko Haram attacks were not consulted prior to and during the implementation of the amnesty procedure.

1.9 Amnesty Goals and Justice Demands: Conflicting Objectives

The criticism against the amnesty program often stems from victims' perception of its lack of accountability, effectively pardoning offenders of their crimes (Brock, 1974). This concern is not surprising, as the common understanding of justice asserts that those who commit crimes should not be allowed to go unpunished. It further underscores questions about the inconsistency in punishment, wherein individuals committing minor offenses like theft at a grocery store face penalty, while the government may opt to forego punishment for violent offenders whose actions result in the deaths of millions.

Despite these questions and criticisms, policymakers often adopt amnesty as a strategy to halt violent conflicts that punishment alone could not prevent. Additionally, it is commonly implemented in the aftermath of conflict to initiate a reconciliation process between victims and perpetrators. This further prompts the question of whether it is morally right to reconcile victims, whose calls for justice have been neglected, with perpetrators whose actions have been pardoned without any form of punishment.

Responses to these moral questions may be shaped by individuals' moral beliefs, religious convictions, cultural influences, and political backgrounds. However, one undeniable aspect these moral questions explore is whether it is morally acceptable to let go of justice in order to reconcile victims and their offenders. Rotberg & Thompson (2003) why examining moral discussions associated with the South African amnesty program suggests that drawing lessons from philosophical discussions on morality can help in understanding moral questions related to amnesty for perpetrators of violent acts, as well as defining what it entails to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes. Hayes (2019, p. 19) proposes that when specialists in different areas begin to question the fundamental concepts they use, they're starting to think like philosophers. This indicates that utilizing insights from philosophical discussions on what defines the moral rightness of an action or decision can be beneficial in addressing the moral questions posed above.

This research supports the idea that learning from philosophy, particularly discussions about how we decide what is right and wrong, can help us understand moral questions better. For instance, the moral philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) explains that actions are usually not considered wrong unless their consequences break the law or go against the moral views of observers, including the moral judgments of the person performing the action (Mill, 2016a). He

also adds that there is a widely shared understanding of justice that usually includes recognizing good deeds and punishing wrongful behaviour. Therefore, allowing offenders to avoid consequences and denying victims access to justice is generally seen as unfair, based on these claims.

As Mill puts it:

it is universally considered just that each person should obtain that (whether good or evil which he deserves; and unjust that he should obtain a good, or be made to undergo an evil, which he does not deserve. This is, perhaps, the clearest and most emphatic form in which the idea of justice is conceived by the general mind (Mill, 2016, p.59).

In other words, if the government fails to hold wrongdoers accountable, victims of crimes may perceive a miscarriage justice. Allowing those responsible for their suffering to escape punishment could be interpreted to mean that their value is not prioritized in society. Mill's arguments are valuable in showing how we understand justice and how people perceive fairness or unfairness, as well as what is morally acceptable or unacceptable. This perspective aligns with the ethical position of retributivism (Anant, 2021). This could also imply that denying victims justice and granting perpetrators amnesty in the pursuit of peace could be tantamount to using victims as a means to achieve societal happiness.

Retributivists argue against using individuals as means to an end. They contend that actions deemed morally wrong and warranting punishment should attract punishment, even if punishing the perpetrator is not the most favourable option. For them, the purpose of punishment is to make the perpetrators aware that they have committed offense, and justice demands that punishment should ensue accordingly. For instance, Immanuel Kant argues that it is fundamentally unethical to treat individuals merely as tools for personal gain or as a means to an end (Kemp, 1958).

This means that using someone as means to an end is universally condemned regardless of an individual's religious, political, or cultural background. For example, unethical behaviours like racism, slavery, and warfare receive widespread condemnation globally, highlighting the principle that individuals, regardless of their geographic location, should not be exploited as mere tools to fulfil selfish objectives (Kleingeld, 2020). Second, it demonstrates that most people find retribution more relevant in explaining why society punishes rather than basing moral judgments solely on the consequences of an action (see: Carlsmith, 2006).

This implies that some actions are inherently unethical, regardless of personal interpretations of morality. For instance, exploiting individuals to advance the agenda of a terrorist group is inherently wrong, regardless of any justifications the terrorists may claim. In other words, terrorism is universally denounced as evil act, regardless of any moral justifications' terrorists may try to provide. Additionally, there's a widespread expectation that victims of terrorist attacks should have access to justice when perpetrators are captured by state authorities (Jupp, 2022;Koto et al., 2022). This brings up the question of whether victims of crimes have a moral right to seek their perpetrators punished. It also raises the question of whether it is both lawful and morally justified for the state to intervene and punish every act of wrongdoing.

Moral theorists such as Jeremy Bentham argue that the primary role of government is to safeguard individuals from harm and advance their well-being. This means that government has a legal and moral commitment to ensure the safety and well-being of its citizens. Additionally, he argues that imposing penalties provides an avenue for the personal growth and rehabilitation of offenders (see: Draper, 2002).

Bentham's argument appears to address the question of whether victims of crimes have a right to seek their perpetrators punished. For if the government's principal responsibility is to protect citizens from harm by punishing perpetrators as Bentham claimed, then victims' demand for punishment of their perpetrators becomes a right. If the claim is deemed valid, it is important to consider the legal implications of the crime being committed because victims' rights to justice also hinge on whether the action in question is prohibited by law. This is crucial because only crimes that are punishable by law may grant victims access to the legal system.

Alm (2019) presents valuable perspectives on the rights of victims regarding the punishment of perpetrators. Alm (2019) delineates that the state has dual obligations that could be of interest to individuals concerned with victims' rights in the context of penalizing offenders. One obligation entail identifying certain actions as punishable wrongdoings, while the other involves administering punishment to those who commit such acts. Victims who feel aggrieved by a particular incident of wrongdoing may articulate their discontent in two ways: either by contending that the state has not categorized similar wrongs to the one they experienced as illegal, or by asserting that despite the relevant category being criminalized, the state has not adequately penalized the same action.

Alm has contributed valuable insights regarding victims' rights to justice and the punishment of their perpetrators. The notion that governments may opt to forego punishment for punishable offenses in pursuit of other objectives often contradicts what most people perceive as justice. As mentioned elsewhere in this research, many individuals associate justice with the punishment of wrongdoing. However, when policymakers grant amnesty as a means of justly ending certain crimes that punishment alone cannot prevent, it raises the fundamental question: what exactly constitutes justice?

Political philosophers have devoted substantial effort to understanding justice and its application. A prevailing notion is that justice is crucial for promoting happiness and peaceful coexistence within society, utilizing punishment as a means to deter wrongdoing (Parry, 1996). This implies a link between justice and the prevention of wrongdoing through punishment. Therefore, to ensure the realization of both the state's interests and those of individuals, the government must ensure that actions undermining justice are not tolerated within society (Godwin, 1842).

1.9.1 The permissibility of punishment: A Retributive Approach

Victims of wrongdoing often advocate for punishment for their offenders, rather than allowing them to evade consequences. They seek punishment of offenders for various reasons(Orth, 2003), which is why granting amnesty to perpetrators can evoke chronic anger among them. The retributive theory of punishment supports the argument that offenders must face consequences to restore justice for victims of crimes.

The question at hand is: How can the government ensure that individuals who have committed crimes are held responsible for their actions? This inquiry will be explored by drawing up on existing philosophical discourse on retributive justification of punishment. Advocates of retributive justice argue that fairness dictates that perpetrators of crimes should experience the same degree of harm they deliberately inflicted on their victims. The retribution theory of punishment justifies the punishment of offenders because they have caused harm to others. Advocates of this theory argue that if offenders are not punished by the government, it may lead the individuals they harmed to seek revenge or feel betrayed by society.

Retributive theory often aligns with the desires of victims, as it is reasonable to expect that criminals should be held accountable for their action (Altman, 2021). Individuals who engage in wrongful behaviours, especially serious crimes, are deemed to merit a punishment that corresponds to the severity of their actions. It is seen as morally praiseworthy, possessing inherent goodness, when a legitimate authority metes out the appropriate punishment. Nevertheless, intentionally punishing the innocent or inflicting excessively harsh penalties on wrongdoers is morally impermissible (Walen, 2021).

In the context of addressing issues related to Boko Haram terrorism, amnesty, which permits offenders to avoid punishment, does not align with the moral justification provided by the retributive perspective. For instance, granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists can be viewed as unjust from a retributive perspective. This theory of punishment posits that inflicting pain on an individual as retribution for causing harm to another is justified, as administering proportional suffering is considered the appropriate response to injustice (Behan & Stark, 2023).

Retributive punishment does not waive the imposition of punishment, even if doing so may lead to further complications. This principle suggests that the rationale for punishment should not be based on the benefits it may yield, but rather on the principle that every crime warrants a level of suffering commensurate with its severity. Put differently, proponents of retributive justice believe that justice entails recognizing crime as inherently immoral, and any attempt to pardon those who have committed crimes is unjust or morally objectionable.

The victims' perception of justice, often characterized by a desire for those who caused them harm to experience similar consequences, resonates with the concept of retribution in punishment (see: Lacey & Pickard, 2015). This suggests that the amnesty program diverges from the principles of justice in the retributive tradition by allowing perpetrators of crimes to evade punishment, thereby depriving victims of their right to justice. Lacey and Pickard tend to explain that individuals often assume offenders deserve punishment because they attribute to them rationality and an understanding of moral principles, along with a deliberate choice to engage in unjust actions. While some philosophers adhere to this viewpoint, others argue that this assumption should not be universally applied, as various factors can influence human behaviours act unjustly (Norrie, 1984).

1.9.2 Do Victims Have the Right to Punishment? A Philosophical Evaluation

Determining whether victims have the right to demand punishment for their offenders necessitates an inquiry into the meanings' victims attribute to the actions of the offenders and the primary role of government. Zaibert (2022) highlights insights from philosophers like Aristotle, who suggested that individuals may intentionally denigrate others when they fail to recognize their value. Zaibert further posited that individuals who are insulted by others have a legitimate right to feel upset. In essence, anger emerges as a response to a desire for retribution following an act of wrongdoing.

This perspective aligns with Kant's moral philosophy, which argues against using individuals or objects as mere means to achieve their selfish aims (Misselbrook, 2013). Kant supports this argument by asserting that every individual possesses inherent value that deserves recognition and respect. However, terrorists often fail to recognize the value of their victims, instead viewing them merely as tools to advance their own objectives (Oludotun, 2020), even within democratic nations (Eubank & Weinberg, 2001). This raises the question of whether the amnesty program is in alignment with the state's responsibility to ensure the safety of its citizens from harm. To explore this question, an examination of social contract theory will be undertaken, as it explicitly delineates the moral obligations of both the state and individuals in promoting the common good for all.

Social contract theorists, recognize the crucial roles that both individuals and governments play in fostering peace and happiness (Riley, 1982). According to Hobbes, prior to the establishment of organized governance, humanity lived in a state of perpetual conflict, as everyone opposed one another (Moehler, 2009). This condition, termed the "state of nature", was characterized by a lack of law and order—a state where individuals lived in constant fear due to the absence of regulations to restrain actions that cause harm in society. Hobbes posits that overcoming the state of nature is achievable if individuals collectively agree to submit to a single authority tasked with safeguarding lives and property. In essence, establishing a government is the key to averting this undesirable state.

The purpose of the state's creation is to safeguard the interests of all individuals, with its primary obligation being the protection of citizens from harm. This duty takes precedence over all other obligations. However, in the Nigerian context, despite the constitutional prioritization of life

and property protection by the government, incidents of killings, embezzlement of funds, and destruction of both public and private properties have become a tradition. Omekara, E. M & Aja (2022) analysis of Hobbes' social contract theory in the Nigerian context reveals that the fundamental goal of the state's creation—to deter actions that endanger the common good—and the government's moral duty to shield citizens from such harm, have not been realized.

Once we establish that the primary objective of government is to uphold social peace and order, no other obligation should supersede this fundamental duty. If we agree with Kant's moral principle that individuals should not be treated merely as a means to an end, we are prompted to question the moral justification of the amnesty program.

While some argue that the government may have the prerogative to grant amnesty if it is deemed necessary to ensure social peace, this argument fails to address Kant's inquiry regarding the possibility of universally applying the maxim that all individuals who commit crimes should be pardoned in order to maintain peace.

At this stage, it can be inferred that safeguarding individuals from harm and preventing actions that impede happiness within the state are significant obligations of the government. Achieving these objectives plays a crucial role in maintaining the public's trust in the government. It is widely believed that a just society is characterized by government policies that prioritize the common good (Rawls, 2020). If we accept that the government bears a moral responsibility to safeguard the safety and happiness of those whose rights have been violated, then granting pardon to perpetrators of crimes contradicts that duty. In cases of victim-offender reconciliation, it is vital to grasp the concerns of crime victims regarding appropriate punishment that aligns with their needs for justice. However, these concerns have often been insufficiently addressed, particularly in the formulation of laws pertaining to criminal punishment (Fletcher, 1999).

1.9.3 Moral Dilemmas in Retributive Punishment: Boko Haram Terrorists

In the case of reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists, should the government proceed with punishment regardless of the potential consequences? Retributive theorists may argue that because terrorists are viewed as a threat to the welfare of the broader public, it is morally right for the government to use military force against them without taking the potential consequences into account. Some policymakers argue that while it is reasonable for perpetrators of crimes to face

punishment, employing punishment may not be suitable in combatting Boko Haram terrorism due to other sensitive considerations. Addaney (2016) seems to suggest that before deciding the appropriate measure that will help resolve victims' concerns, there is need to trace the remote cause of Boko Haram terrorism and there is also need for the government to seek international assistance in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria.

Imposing punishment on rehabilitated Boko Haram terrorists could exacerbate security situations in communities where Boko Haram terrorists have their stronghold (see: Oluwasanjo, 2021). This is due to the government's failure to effectively prevent the spread of Boko Haram terrorism. Consequently, relying solely on retributive justice to address the grievances of victims of terrorism in Nigeria might lead to additional complications. It is essential to examine arguments against retributive justice to understand why it might not be suitable in this context.

In Meyer (2014) analysis, critics have worries about retributive punishment. First, they say that seeking revenge is old-fashioned. Second, as society gets more civilized, some think we need less punishment. Third, focusing only on punishing offenders for their crimes might ignore other things that caused their behaviour. Also, punishment might not be the best way for some offenders to get better; they might do better with rehabilitation. Ellis (2003) raises the question of whether sanctions for self-defence are morally justifiable. Another question to consider is whether retributive punishment is justified when Boko Haram members have not been defeated. The study aims to emphasize that the government has not achieved victory in the battle against Boko Haram terrorism. Implementing retributive punishment may potentially incentivize terrorists to target additional non-combatant civilians.

This does not imply that individuals who have committed crimes should not face punishment. However, in this scenario, retribution would have been considered appropriate if the punishment imposed on those captured by the government had proven effective in deterring others from engaging in comparable actions (Johnbosco, 2021). In other words, punishment won't work until all the members of Boko Haram group are either apprehended or agree to end their involvement in terrorism. On some occasions, it was alleged that Boko Haram members who were arrested escaped from prison with the aid of their members outside (Ndahi, 2013).

Another point raised by critics of retributive justice that will be useful in understanding the delicate nature of the Boko Haram terrorism is the concerns about the circumstances that

compelled offenders to commit crime. This is very important as most reintegrated offenders may not have joined the group intentionally. Scholars have suggested that studying the factors that lead to offenders joining the group (Botha & Abdile, 2019), is essential because it will assist policymakers in understanding the remote causes of Boko Haram terrorism (Alimba & Salihu, 2020).

Retributive justice or punishment might effectively deter violent acts such as Boko Haram terrorism. However, its implementation within the context of Boko Haram may not achieve the desired outcome due to the complex nature of the phenomenon. Penalizing reintegrated Boko Haram could potentially provoke remaining Boko Haram members to carry out further attacks on innocent civilians. This is because previous attempts to combat Boko Haram have not produced the intended results. Additionally, it has not been conclusively demonstrated that all reintegrated Boko Haram members and their families have caused suffering to Boko Haram victims. While perpetrators of crimes should face consequences, implementing this in the context of Nigeria's amnesty program proves challenging because some Boko Haram members remain committed to the group's objectives and continue acts of terrorism. Consequently, rejecting or punishing those willing to surrender could undermine government efforts to counter terrorism and exacerbate suffering for victims.

In other words, retributive punishment might not be the right approach for addressing Boko Haram terrorism because it creates moral dilemmas. A moral dilemma is a tough situation where someone has to make a decision, realizing that any choice they make would be ethically wrong (Slote, 1985). Governor Zulum of Borno State highlighted the ethical dilemma surrounding the Nigeria amnesty program, emphasizing that failing to provide victims with the justice they deserve risks causing feelings of unfair treatment. He noted that accepting Boko Haram members into the society could offend victims and potentially lead to civil rebellion. Conversely, rejecting willing surrenderers might prompt them to join ISWAP, thereby exacerbating the conflict and narrowing the path to peace (Kingsley, 2021). This ethical quandary, as noted by (Figar & Đorđević, 2016) makes the Nigeria amnesty for Boko Haram terrorists' delicate case.

1.9.4 Deterrence theory of punishment

Researchers investigating the reasoning behind punishment (Arini et al., 2023) have examined the objectives of deterrence punishment and how it differs from retributive punishment. Deterrence theory helps to prevent harmful behaviours in society (Lee, 2017). However, unlike retribution, which appears to endorse the notion of making an offender experience an equal level of suffering as the victim (Byrd, 1989), deterrence theory aims to prevent a perpetrator from committing a similar offense again in the future (Geerken & Gove, 1974). For instance, within the framework of deterrence punishment, choosing a lengthy prison sentence over the death penalty can serve as a form of punishment for murder. The discussion underscores that both deterrence and retribution share the objective of preventing crime.

However, deterrence primarily focuses on the societal benefits that punishment can yield, whereas retribution sees punishment as a way to ensure that the offender undergoes a level of suffering proportional to the harm they caused intentionally. To put it succinctly, deterrence examines the positive effects of punishment on promoting societal welfare. This viewpoint aligns with consequentialism, a normative theory that evaluates the extent to which an action's consequences can improve happiness and diminish suffering. Deterrence also aligns with utilitarian punishment theory. In this context, the government's decision to forego retribution punishment for repentant Boko Haram terrorists can be seen as somehow aligning with deterrence or utilitarian arguments for the justification of punishment (Mason, 2009), in the sense that the government concerns are for the best alternative measure that will stop BH terrorism.

Policymakers tend to favour deterrence because it aligns with the principle of evaluating the consequences or assessing the benefits that punishment brings. Essentially, there's a continuous examination of the type of punishment that would be most effective in preventing crime (Lempert, 1981). For instance, policymakers might assess the advantages and disadvantages of introducing capital punishment for severe crimes. If capital punishment hasn't demonstrated effectiveness in deterring such offenses, they might choose extended prison sentences for individuals found guilty of murder instead. Proponents of utilitarianism seem to endorse this notion, as they ground their moral argument on the consequences of actions (Bentham, 1830).

1.10 Reintegration Process and Questions Asked By Victims

Reintegration program concerns the support given to convicts upon their release from prison and their reintegration into society (Griffiths, Dandurand & Murdoch, 2007). This process also entails aiding offenders in modifying their behaviour and facilitating positive contributions to both their new communities and them (Fortune et al., 2012). It has been stated that the ethical justification for reintegrating convicts into society is based on the notion that persons should cohabit amicably. Furthermore, when there is a lack of harmony and community, proactive actions should be taken to find and promote them (Muntingh 2001 :5 cited in Chanakira & Chikadzi, 2017, p. 289).

The primary concern regarding the reintegration process is not primarily centred on its definition, but rather on whether it can effectively decrease recidivism (Griffiths et al., 2007). Victims often express dissatisfaction with the reintegration process, as it often falls short of meeting their needs for justice and fails to offer practical means for reintegrated offenders to demonstrate genuine repentance (see: Radzik, 2004). Victims require assurance that offenders have sincerely repented. These doubts should not be dismissed as mere emotions, as records indicate that reintegrated offenders may indeed reoffend in the future (James, 2014).

While the literature on the reintegration of convicts offers valuable insights into the challenges they encounter upon reintegration and how victims perceive this process, the perspective of victims of Boko Haram attacks regarding the reintegration of former Boko Haram terrorists may differ. For instance, individuals who have served their prison sentences may be seen as having atoned for their wrongdoing, leading victims to consider forgiveness. However, the reaction of victims to the reintegration of Boko Haram terrorists who have not faced punishment may not be the same.

Scholars have conducted interviews with residents of communities where Boko Haram terrorism is prevalent, seeking their opinions on the reintegration of former Boko Haram terrorists into their communities. The findings reveal that community members express dissatisfaction with the process because they were not consulted or involved in it.

“We have been having feelings that one of the notorious Boko Haram members that killed many people in our community will be brought back but we did not

believe until when we saw him accompanied by soldiers to our community. They told us he has now repented, and he wants to come back to the community but they did not seek our opinion as to whether we want him back or not. And we could not even protest because the soldiers that accompanied him are well armed. Who knows what they would do if we protest? (Interviewee 10, traditional ruler, 67, December 2020, Maiduguri, Borno State cited in Owonikoko, 2022, p. 15). ”

“Boko Haram killed my father. The trauma of my father’s death killed my mother. So Boko Haram killed my father and my mother and since their death, life has been difficult for me as a person and government has not come to my aid other than supports that non- governmental organisations give me. Everybody in our community has one story or the other to tell about what they suffered from Boko Haram attack against our community. And now government wants to bring them back to our community because they believe they have deradicalised them. If they bring anyone to our community, we will kill him” (Interviewee 14, Community Youth Leader, 35, Madagali, Adamawa State, August 2021 cited in Owonikoko, *ibid*, P. 19).”

Owonikoko (2022) argues that the views expressed above suggest a failure to consult or seek input from community members before reintegrating former Boko Haram terrorists. The second excerpt highlights the trauma experienced by victims of Boko Haram attacks, particularly those who lost loved ones to the terrorists. Some of these deceased relatives were primary breadwinners, and their deaths have plunged their dependents into severe poverty. Reconciling these individuals with reintegrated former Boko Haram terrorists may prove to be a challenging task.

Bulama (2019) suggests that, before proceeding with the reintegration of repentant Boko Haram members, the government should address community concerns regarding the process. This is because victims of BH attacks express dissatisfaction with the amnesty process and seek moral justification for it. Additionally, Bulama proposes that victims should receive financial assistance to aid in their recovery from losses incurred. The fact is that considerable effort has been invested in ensuring a successful amnesty and reintegration process for ex-Boko Haram terrorists. However, less focus has been directed towards understanding the challenging conditions faced by various communities affected by BH terrorism and how this oversight impacts the success of the reintegration process (Ike et al., 2022).

1.11 Conclusion

The primary focus of this dissertation is on the amnesty granted to former Boko Haram terrorists. Literature related to this area of study has given limited attention to the experiences of victims and ways to address their concerns (Tade & Onwuanaegbule, 2020). This current research acknowledges that these studies have highlighted a significant aspect of the debate regarding the moral justification of granting amnesty to perpetrators, which revolves around considerations of justice. However, a notable gap in this research is the lack of effort to understand how the outcomes of amnesty programs impact victims' perceptions of justice and fairness.

To fill this void, the next chapter of this dissertation will introduce existing moral theories that can enhance our understanding of the relevance of normative moral theories in addressing issues pertaining to justice. The overarching aim is to address this gap by delving into the concept of justice and fairness from the standpoint of victims of Boko Haram attack. It will integrate philosophical debates on justice and fairness to gain insights into the specific form of justice that would most effectively serve victims of Boko Haram attacks.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction

Two moral theories, utilitarianism and Linda Radzik's concept of “Making Amends”, are employed to address the research questions in this study. Utilitarianism guides decision-making by considering what actions lead to the greatest overall benefit. Additionally, it illustrates the connection between disregarding victims' concerns and their perception of unfair treatment within the amnesty process. The concept of making amends is used to explore why the outcomes of the amnesty program create a reconciliation dilemma, leading to resentment towards reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members.

2.1 Significance of Normative Ethical Theory On Justice And Fairness

A fundamental concern regarding amnesty for Boko Haram members (BH) is its alignment with principles of justice and fairness. Throughout history, philosophers have diligently examined ethical dilemmas inherent in human actions and developed concepts to enhance comprehension of justice and fairness. This research recognizes normative ethical theories as valuable tools for grappling with moral complexities arising from the amnesty program extended to former Boko Haram terrorists. Prominent normative ethical theories encompass utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics.

The utilitarian moral theory evaluates the morality of an action by considering its consequences. It posits that an action is morally right if it maximizes happiness or well-being for the largest number of individuals. Moral theories like utilitarianism can provide valuable guidance to policymakers in formulating policies aimed at enhancing happiness and fostering peaceful coexistence within society. Gibson (2020) suggested that adopting a utilitarian perspective, which involves considering the broader picture and aiming to maximize overall happiness, might bring about beneficial changes in the United States criminal justice system. Similarly, this normative ethical theory could be applied to tackle ethical issues surrounding fairness in the administration of justice. The objective would involve assessing how our decisions should prioritize not only the total well-being they produce but also the extent to which they ensure equality and fairness in distribution (Scanlon, 1978 cited in Hooker, 1990). When addressing unfair treatment in the

implementation of amnesty, a utilitarian perspective argues that justice is achieved when the outcome of amnesty proceedings maximizes the happiness of the greatest number of individuals. Essentially, decision-making should prioritize the well-being of the majority.

Deontology maintains that actions possess inherent moral worth, regardless of their outcomes (Isenberg, 1964). This implies that an action deemed wrong remains so even if undertaken with noble intentions. If an action is punishable by law, regardless of the motive behind it, the individual responsible must face the prescribed punishment. Considering this theory's relevance to the matter of amnesty implementation, one might contend that perpetrators should face punishment regardless of the potential outcomes. If justice demands accountability for the harm inflicted upon both individuals and society, a deontologist would assert that punishment is imperative for fairness, regardless of any ethical complexities it might entail. This standpoint is intricate and multifaceted. However, when pondering the potential for additional violence by Boko Haram terrorists who have not surrendered to the authorities, it may not be prudent to strictly adhere to this theory, as it could lead to further attacks on civilians.

Virtue ethics, a subset of normative ethics, argues that developing and cultivating virtuous character traits is essential for guiding moral behaviour. Virtue ethics proponents do not base their decisions simply on legislation or the consequences of their actions. Instead, they focus on establishing whether actions are consistent with virtuous behaviour in morally significant contexts. For example, if a virtue ethicist is asked to determine whether to pardon convicts, they will not rely on established rules or analyse the consequences of their decision but will make judgments based on their perspective of what a virtuous person should say in such situation (Hursthouse, 2023). When exploring the response of a virtue ethicist to a moral dilemma, it's proposed that virtuous individuals aim to manifest and cultivate their inherent qualities through their conduct Van Hooft (2014). Faced with difficulties like speaking the truth in challenging circumstances, the virtuous agent doesn't solely rely on a universal principle mandating honesty in all scenarios. Instead, they reflect on actions that align with virtues like honesty and integrity.

Their motivation springs from a desire to synchronize their actions with the traits they seek to exemplify, such as honesty, rather than merely following abstract principles. This aspect of normative ethics may be useful in detecting what a moral agent ought to do when confronted with ethical challenges but focusing on the motive of the moral agent may mean that what constitutes a

just or unfair act depends on what the moral agent perceives as right or wrong. While various theories hold relevance to ethical inquiries concerning amnesty implementations, they may not provide sufficient solutions for the ethical and moral dilemmas arising from the Nigeria amnesty program for repentant Boko Haram terrorists. However, the utilitarian theory seems to be the most suitable framework for this research, given the delicate nature of Boko Haram terrorism.

2.2 Rationale for Using Utilitarianism

In ethical decision-making, utilitarians aim to choose the most beneficial policy that will increase the overall happiness of the greatest number of people involved. This implies that the rightness of a decision is judged by how much happiness it generates for the largest number of individuals. This implies that policymakers should prioritize decisions they believe will most effectively increase overall happiness within society. Consequently, a decision aimed at enhancing happiness may not necessarily align with what some individuals perceive as morally right.

In the context of granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists, the decision to extend amnesty to these individuals may provoke dissent among many, yet policymakers view it as the most effective choice for enhancing overall happiness. Through this lens, utilitarianism emerges as a moral theory closely resonant with the rationale behind the government's implementation of the amnesty program. The adoption of this theory aims not only to highlight its likeness to the decision on amnesty but also to explore whether the outcome of the amnesty aligns with the objectives utilitarians seek to accomplish in decision-making by prioritizing the consequences of actions.

In other words, the aim of incorporating this theory into the research is to utilize its principles to demonstrate why the outcomes of the amnesty granted to ex-Boko Haram members give rise to moral dilemmas and to propose strategies for addressing them. Additionally, employing utilitarian moral theory will assist the researcher in formulating appropriate questions to be posed to victims during the field interviews and in interpreting their responses. While utilitarianism serves as the primary theoretical framework in this research, other moral arguments are also examined to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives and address research problems that prompted this research.

2.2.1 Examining BH Amnesty: A Utilitarian Analysis

The implementation of the Amnesty program as a way of promoting peace in the aftermath of violence in Nigeria did not begin with the rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant BH members. Previous administrations have also used similar counterterrorism approach (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012). While past amnesty initiatives didn't entirely address the grievances of affected parties who perceived governmental policies and initiatives as unjust, they did contribute to mitigating militant activities in the regions where they were enacted. A clear illustration can be seen in the amnesty offered to Niger Delta Militants in Nigeria. The government's shift from employing military counterterrorism to engaging in dialogue resulted in a decrease in militant activities. Essentially, this initiative addressed the grievances of the militants. It was achieved through thorough government examination of various strategies to effectively curb militancy in the region, ultimately opting for dialogue, which proved to be the most effective choice. This aligns with a utilitarian perspective, as granting amnesty to former Niger Delta insurgents has contributed to the reduction of violence in the area (Ajayi & Adesote, 2013).

The decision to grant amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists in Northern Nigeria followed a similar trajectory. However, instead of preventing BH terrorism, it sparked moral dilemmas and faced severe criticism from both victims of Boko Haram attacks and community members. In essence, the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty program for ex-Boko Haram terrorists diverged from utilitarian objective, despite the government's careful deliberation and selection of what policymakers believed to be the optimal decision. The policy's inability to enhance the well-being of both direct and indirect victims of Boko Haram attacks indicates that it fell short of fulfilling the core objective of utilitarian philosophy (Agbanero, 2024). Policymakers overlooked the crucial link between justice and victims' perceptions of fair treatment when implementing the amnesty program.

2.3 Utilitarianism: An Overview

Utilitarians believe that when we judge if something is morally right, it's important to think about how it affects everyone involved. A good action makes most people happier, while a bad one makes them less happy. So, according to utilitarianism, doing the right thing means making

as many people as possible happy. Utilitarianism has two parts: one part is about judging actions by their results, and the other part is about believing pleasure is good and pain is bad (Quinton, 1974). Jeremy Bentham, a prominent proponent of this theory, posited that pleasure is the sole intrinsic good, and that the measure for determining a correct decision should be its capacity to augment happiness and diminish suffering or pain. Additionally, he stressed that the paramount objective in decision-making should be the maximization of happiness for the largest number of individuals possible (Bentham & Mill, 2004).

This implies that it's crucial to consider potential outcomes before making a decision. Bentham also highlights what he sees as the main responsibility of government. According to Bentham, government should use its policies to minimize actions that decrease happiness in society. This objective can be realized by evaluating how our actions contribute to enhancing not only our individual happiness but also that of the entire community. Bentham argued that enforcing punishment may effectively prevent people from doing harm to other people. People would be deterred from participating in such behaviour if punishments were applied to those who cause suffering or lessen the happiness of others (see: Draper, 2002).

Taking inspiration from Bentham's belief that punishment is crucial for preventing actions that harm society, the researcher will ask victims for their opinions on the government's choice not to punish former terrorists. The goal is to understand how this decision affects their perceptions of justice and fairness regarding the amnesty process. Bentham also offers valuable insights into how and when punishment should be applied effectively. He argues that punishment should only be administered when an offense has been committed (see: Sverdlik, 2022). This means it's illogical to apply punishment when no offense has been committed.

Utilitarianism offers insightful perspectives on a number of issues, such as the intention behind punishment, standards for judging what constitutes right and wrong behaviour, and the measures that legislators should take to make sure that their choices advance the well-being of the majority of society. When it comes to punishing offenders, utilitarianism bases its case on the idea that their deeds make society as a whole less happy. The main thesis is that the punishment of offenders reassures the victims and the community at large about the government's commitment to keep them safe.

Utilitarianism is chosen as the ethical framework for this research because it offers valuable insights into the impact of human actions on societal well-being. It is particularly relevant as it allows policymakers to comprehensively assess the moral implications of granting amnesty to BH terrorists. Likewise, the study evaluates the repercussions of BH members' actions to determine if they merit punishment, taking into account their effects on the overall happiness in Nigerian society. Moreover, the perspectives of victims of BH attacks are integrated into the study to demonstrate how the actions of terrorists and the decision to reintegrate them into society shape victims' perceptions of fairness.

2.4 The Relationship Between Moral Actions and Utility

The preceding discussion suggests, according to the utilitarian perspective, that actions are justified if they result in an increase in societal happiness. Morality, therefore, is closely tied to utility or happiness, where morally right actions prioritize the happiness of the greatest number while minimizing pain for all involved. Bentham (1996) expands on this concept by noting that actions that harm the community reduce overall happiness, while governmental efforts to address community concerns enhance collective happiness. In this research, utilitarian moral arguments are employed to stress the importance of considering the happiness of victims and communities impacted by Boko Haram terrorism. It argues that if the government aims to utilize the amnesty program to enhance the overall happiness of the broader Nigerian population, prioritizing the happiness of these affected individuals and communities is crucial. Without doing so, achieving widespread happiness for all would be significantly challenging.

Many scholars and policymakers continue to be intrigued by the utilitarian principle, as it highlights the idea that human nature naturally seeks happiness and avoids pain. However, utilitarian moral philosophy has faced significant criticism, particularly concerning the challenge of accurately measuring happiness for a large population. Additionally, there is a concern regarding whether it is justifiable to deny happiness to a minority if it conflicts with the happiness of the majority, given that utilitarianism often prioritizes maximizing happiness for the greatest number of people. This criticism is significant and should not be overlooked. It suggests that if we adopt Bentham's stance that the happiness of the majority should determine the morality of an

action, some may interpret this as justifying sacrificing the happiness of a minority for the sake of the majority.

In this research, it's crucial to address critics' arguments because they suggest that utilitarian moral theory may prioritize the interests of the majority over those of the minority. This interpretation could imply that programs like the Nigerian amnesty program for ex-Boko Haram members, which aim to prevent terrorism and protect innocent people, justify sacrificing victims' interests for the greater good of society. This raises the question of whether utilitarian morality truly considers the happiness of a smaller number of people.

Mill (1806-1873) defends utilitarian morality by asserting that the standard of what is morally right, according to utilitarianism, is not solely the happiness of the individual, but rather the happiness of all affected parties (see: Hall, 1968). Additionally, Mill delves into the relationship between justice and utility, addressing critics' concerns that utilitarianism may sometimes overlook justice for certain individuals. He argues that our understanding of justice encompasses two aspects: adherence to rules and alignment with our emotional sentiments. However, Mill's perception of justice differs from these understandings. In the former understanding, justice is achieved when someone who violates the law is punished according to the law, whereas in the latter, it pertains to the feelings we experience when someone's rights are infringed upon. Mill argued against the strict adherence to rules in all circumstances. For example, he questioned what should be done in cases where a law is unjust or when someone undeservedly enjoys a right (ibid).

The criticism raised by critics about utilitarianism favouring the majority's interests over those of the minority is indeed a valid point for discussion. However, when assessing whether victims of Boko Haram attacks constitute a minority, this study argues otherwise. Despite the fact that a larger portion of Nigerians may not directly experience such attacks, this research suggests that victims are not a minority. Previous literature, as indicated in the literature review of this study, underscores widespread criticism surrounding the implementation of amnesty programs for Boko Haram terrorists. Furthermore, victims of Boko Haram attacks encompass various groups, including security personnel who have lost their lives combating Boko Haram terrorism, their dependents, individuals who have been abducted, and the thousands who have been displaced due

to Boko Haram terrorism. Considering these factors, it becomes evident that the number of victims of Boko Haram attacks is significant.

In his analysis of the relationship between rights and justice, Mill highlighted that certain rights enjoyed by individuals may not always align with the law, while justice is connected to one's legal rights (Rosen, 2005). Rosen further elaborates that Mill provided additional insight into our perceptions of justice by explaining that legal rights are inherently linked to justice, as giving people what rightfully belongs to them is considered just, whereas denying them such rights is unjust. Additionally, Mill introduced several other factors relevant to our understanding of justice. These include the right to pursue one's objectives, meeting expectations, and considerations of fairness.

This research employs the assertion that individuals perceive justice as aligning with what rightfully belongs to them under the law to explain why offering amnesty to perpetrators of harm is interpreted as a deliberate effort to deprive victims of access to justice. Punishment, functioning as a mechanism to reinstate justice in society and reassure victims of the government's dedication to protecting everyone, is perceived by people as their entitlement for adhering to the laws of the state. It is this comprehension that leads to the argument in this study that victims of Boko Haram attack may retaliate if their demands for justice, which they consider their right, are disregarded by the government.

This assertion aligns with previous literature discussing the shortcomings of the amnesty process, which suggests that the program's design and implementation contain structural flaws that could worsen the issue of violent extremism (Onapajo & Ozden, 2020). Moreover, Mill offers insightful perspectives on the factors influencing human perceptions of just and unjust actions. He argues that there are two main viewpoints on justice: one that considers justice as a matter of law, and the other that views it as a matter of emotion. Regarding its relationship with the law, Mill suggests that individuals typically do not see any wrongdoing in conduct unless it violates societal norms, goes against the will of the people, or is deemed evil and deserving of punishment by our conscience (Mill, 2004).

This viewpoint is employed in the study to illustrate that, beyond legal regulations, individuals are influenced by various sources of morality when making moral judgments. While it is acknowledged that the government possesses the authority to establish an amnesty program for

Boko Haram (BH) members, it cannot be assumed that victims will automatically endorse the decision to pardon reintegrated BH members as an appropriate one. This is because, alongside legal considerations, victims and community members draw upon their traditions, religious beliefs, and personal moral principles to determine what constitutes justice. In situations where their religion, culture, and individual understanding of morality dictate punishment for BH members, they will perceive amnesty for reintegrated BH members as unjust.

2.4.1 The Relationship Between Justice and Moral Rights

When considering whether the utilitarian principle aligns with justice, Mill argues that skepticism arises because many view happiness alone as insufficient to determine the morality of an action. This doubt stems from the belief that justice is inherent and distinct from utility. Throughout history, Mill notes, a significant challenge in accepting the notion that utility or happiness serves as the standard for moral judgment has been the concept of justice (Mill, 2016a). Mill posits that moral rights are intricately tied to the concept of justice. When we perceive that a society's rules or norms adversely affect or curtail a person's fundamental rights, we assert that the individual's moral right has been infringed upon.

A person's moral rights encompass essential entitlements such as the right to life, the right to be free from harm by others, and protection against attacks. According to Mill, any endeavor to deprive someone of these fundamental rights is considered unjust, and such actions are likely to provoke criticism from others. Mill elucidates that justice encompasses actions that are not only morally obligatory but also actions for which an individual can legitimately demand acknowledgment of their moral entitlements from others (Mill, 2016). Mill links justice closely with an individual's moral rights, asserting that these rights are inherent and cannot be taken away. When these moral rights are infringed upon, the individual whose rights are violated naturally feels a sense of injustice, and their claim of unfair treatment is justified. This concept is pertinent to the focus of this research, as it aims to illustrate why victims perceived injustice during the amnesty proceedings.

The victims of Boko Haram attacks, who have suffered the loss of their happiness and comfort due to terrorism, might perceive the amnesty program as unfair because their efforts to regain what they lost were not taken into account during the process. This viewpoint resonates

with Mill's argument that moral rights are connected to what rightfully belongs to individuals, and it is unjust to deprive them of these rights.

Mill explains:

To have a right, then, is, I conceive, to have something which society ought to defend me in possession of. If the objector goes to ask why it ought, I can give him no other reason than general utility. If that expression does not seem to convey a sufficient feeling of the strength of the obligation, nor to account for the peculiar energy of the feeling, it is because there goes to the composition of the sentiment, not a rational only but also an animal element-the thirst for retaliation; and this thirst derives its intensity, as well as its moral justification, from the extraordinary important and impressive kind of utility which is concerned. The interest involved is that of security to everyone's feelings the most vital of all interests (Mill, 1868, p. 54).

The quoted passage implies that individual rights should remain intact unless their actions jeopardize societal well-being. From this standpoint, victims' grievances of injustice can be rooted in the belief that they have a moral entitlement to be free from harm by others, and no rationale is satisfactory to deny them access to justice when this entitlement is violated. Mill further expanded on the necessity for the state to guarantee individuals' security and give precedence to safeguarding them against harm.

In his examination of the connection between moral rights and security, Mill argues that while many earthly delights can be willingly surrendered or replaced with alternatives if needed, safety stands out as a fundamental requirement for every individual. While people may assign varying levels of importance to worldly rewards, security is universally essential. It serves as the foundation upon which we depend for protection against harm and the overall value of all that is good. Security is the “most indispensable of all necessities, after physical nutriment” (Berger, pp. 40-4 cited in (Hoag, 1986, p. 193).

2.4.2 Utilitarian Moral Justification and The Nigeria Amnesty Program

The utilitarian moral theory is utilized to explicitly illustrate why victims of Boko Haram attacks might view the amnesty and reintegration program for former Boko Haram terrorists as unjust. The aim is to evaluate whether the moral grievances of these victims can be justified from a utilitarian perspective.

To start, it is crucial to examine the state's responsibility in preventing human actions that affect societal happiness. Bentham asserted that the foremost duty of the government is to advance happiness for all by prohibiting actions that hinder this objective. Typically, every nation's constitution contains provisions outlining legal measures against behaviors that threaten the safety, security, and overall well-being of its citizens. It falls upon the government to guarantee that these legal sanctions are implemented when there are violations of these provisions of the law.

For example, in the Nigerian constitution, Sections 33 and 34 prioritize safeguarding life from harm. Section 33 states that every citizen possesses the inherent right to life and should not have this right taken away unless they have transgressed the law, and it has been proven that they are genuinely guilty of such an offense. Furthermore, Section 34 declares that no individual should be subjected to deliberate torture, emphasizing the importance of upholding the dignity of every human being. These provisions of the Nigerian constitution align with Mill's moral argument regarding individuals' moral rights. Mill asserts that depriving someone of their moral rights constitutes an injustice, although he acknowledges certain exceptions, such as when individuals are enjoying liberties they do not rightfully deserve.

The Nigerian constitution clearly satisfies both criteria. Firstly, the government is morally bound to protect individuals' rights. Secondly, this moral right may only be encroached upon if it is proven that an individual has committed an offense or engaged in activities that hinder the happiness of others. This indicates that the government has the authority to contravene this clause of the constitution when it has been established that someone is no longer entitled to enjoy such freedoms due to their actions. Essentially, this aspect of the Nigerian constitution allows for punishment or offers punishment as a deterrent to anyone who breaches this section of the constitution.

However, the moral rights of victims of Boko Haram have been infringed upon, and the government's moral and legal obligations as outlined in this part of the constitution have not been fulfilled. This could be one of the reasons why the amnesty program faced criticism from the public. This brings us back to Mill's perspective that we often perceive injustice in actions that contravene the law. In other words, it is deemed unfair if acts that violate the law go unpunished. Scholars have questioned the morality of the Amnesty program as a result of these observations.

Previous literature indicates that some scholars have raised questions about the moral justification of granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists. For instance, Onikepo (2021) appears to question why terrorists who have committed crimes should be allowed to escape punishment while individuals who have committed minor offenses are punished by the government. Although amnesty has been employed by many governments as a means to prevent violent activities and initiate peace, this does not negate the possibility that its implementation may contradict common understandings of justice. This also prompts consideration of Mill's argument, which, in my interpretation, suggests that if justice is defined solely by what the law dictates, what happens when such laws conflict with societal norms?

The moral principle of utilitarianism is considered suitable for this research because it emphasizes that the government's main duty is to improve societal well-being by penalizing actions that endanger it. Additionally, utilitarianism advocates for the punishment of wrongdoing to prevent future offenses. Regarding moral rights, the theory underscores that individuals have inherent rights as members of society, including security and happiness, and it is unjust to deny them these rights. Justice is closely linked to the government's fulfilment of these responsibilities.

Given that this study aims to inquire about how the outcome of the amnesty program affects victims' perception of justice and fairness, this moral framework is employed to understand victims' views on what the government should aim for in the amnesty process to meet their sense of fairness and justice.

Another aspect of utilitarianism emphasizing the importance of considering victims' concerns in the amnesty process is Mill's concept of utility. Here, utility refers to well-being, happiness, or the common good. Mill specifically defines utility as individual happiness and argues that the government is justified in limiting individuals' rights to happiness when it infringes upon the happiness of others. Justice, in this framework, is closely linked to punishing offenders, ensuring that no individual's pursuit of happiness or interest undermines another's. When it becomes clear that someone's actions harm others, it is the government's responsibility to punish the wrongdoer.

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that utilitarians like Bentham and Mill associated justice with government decision that will lead to the greater happiness in society (Shaw, 1998).

In this perspective, justice implies that both the government and citizens should focus on choices or decisions that contribute to increasing happiness in society.

In discussions about balancing individual freedoms and government authority, Mill explains that governments are primarily established to protect the vulnerable from the powerful. Aware of the risk of political leaders abusing their power to oppress the people, steps should be taken to limit government actions that unfairly restrict individual liberties (Brown, 1972). Mill examines the historical perception of liberty and suggests that while governments aim to shield the weak from oppression by the strong, it's more practical to enact laws regulating both government actions and those capable of causing harm to others. From this, we can infer that justice, for both Mill and Bentham, serves two purposes: ensuring societal happiness and empowering the government to prevent behaviors that cause pain in society.

The Nigerian government's amnesty program for former members of Boko Haram has been analyzed through utilitarian principles to determine its effectiveness and goals. In essence, policymakers should have assessed the program's outcomes based on its utility, meaning the extent to which it produces better results compared to alternatives. Furthermore, this perspective emphasizes that individuals have the right to pursue their happiness, as long as their actions do not cause harm to others.

2.5 Conclusion

Policy makers justified refraining from punishing these individuals, fearing it would worsen societal harm due to the sensitive nature of Boko Haram terrorism. However, research examining existing literature found that the amnesty program's outcome failed to achieve the utilitarian objective, as it did not improve the well-being of both direct and indirect victims of Boko Haram attacks. According to utilitarian principles, policymakers should prioritize evaluating whether their decisions will inflict suffering or foster happiness for the greatest number of people affected by the circumstance. From a utilitarian standpoint, justice can be seen as actions that promote the happiness of the majority or advance the common good. Applying this to the Nigeria amnesty issue, justice entails making decisions that deter the spread of Boko Haram terrorism while simultaneously increasing societal happiness.

However, before implementing the amnesty, there was no consideration given to this goal. No attempt made to inquire from the majority who would be affected by that decision on how their concerns about perceived injustice could be addressed through the procedures of the amnesty program. The lesson to be learned from the utilitarian moral theory in this context is that there is a link between justice and happiness. In simpler terms, we should judge whether a government policy is morally right or wrong in this situation based on how much happiness the outcome of the amnesty program created.

2.6 Linda Radzik on Making Amends

This section introduces Linda Radzik's idea of "making amends" and discusses how the processes of atonement and reconciliation outlined in her work might assist in altering the negative perceptions of victims of BH towards reintegrated former BH terrorists. Previous literature has highlighted dissatisfaction among many community members with the amnesty program, often due to their exclusion from the process. Drawing from strategies for initiating the atonement process in Radzik's work, this research aims to explore how victim-offender reconciliation could be promoted in the aftermath of conflict. Specifically, it seeks to inquire from victims of Boko Haram attacks whether they would be willing to forgive reintegrated former Boko Haram members and what steps these reintegrated individuals should take to earn their forgiveness.

2.7 Making Amends: A Form of Restorative Justice

The exclusion of justice, evident from the literature review, stands out as a significant weakness of the amnesty program. The failure to hold offenders' accountable results in victims perceiving unfairness within the amnesty process. This aligns with the research's assertion that without restorative justice, victims may retaliate against reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists.

Restorative justice has been defined in multiple ways, but its essence lies in the process of "restoring victims, a more victim-centered criminal justice system. as well as restoring offenders and restoring community" (Braithwaite, 1998, p. 328). From a philosophical perspective, it initiates inquiries into the goals of justice in the aftermath of wrongdoing and who should ascertain what comprises fair justice for both direct and indirect victims. Essentially, it hinges on the

interpretations that those impacted by the perpetrator's actions attribute to the wrongdoing (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). This research focused on a form of restorative justice that revolves around the offenders have to play to help bring about reconciliation between them and offenders.

Linda Radzik's concept of "Making Amends," explored in this research, delves into restorative justice principles. The aim is to emphasize the importance of incorporating strategies that facilitate understanding the meanings victims of Boko Haram attacks attribute to their experiences. This understanding is crucial for addressing victims' concerns, a mediation process overlooked in the Nigeria amnesty program.

2.7.1 The Meaning and Consequences of Wrongdoing

Human beings abhor pain. This is why it is normal for people to show anger when they are harmed by others (Luo, 2023; Silva, 2021). Although the imposition of punishment serves to restore justice to victims, some scholars argue that punishment theories have not given enough attention to victims' concerns (Katz, 2023). It has become imperative to understand victims' perception or meanings victims attached to offenders' behaviours in order to better understand how to help them heal. And, because understanding wrongdoing and the meanings victims attach to wrongdoing is essential components of the reconciliation process, such discussions have gotten a lot of attention in the scholarly circle (Fletcher, 1996; Randa et al., 2022).

What emotions do victims experience regarding the actions of offenders? Radzik, referencing Murphy (1988), reveals that when someone intentionally harms another individual, they convey a message indicating superiority over the victim or that the victim is insignificant in comparison to the offender (Radzik, 2004). Radzik suggests that wrongdoing conveys the message of the victim's inferiority to the offender, and the victim's anger serves as a means to challenge this perception. She also asserts that acts of wrongdoing harm social connections. She further argues that "if past wrongs persist as present threats, people will be separated from one another by fear and distrust" (Radzik, 2004, p. 142).

In other words, victims might think that offenders' actions show they're not respected or are seen as less important. Seeking revenge could be a way for victims to prove to the abuser that they're not physically weak (Scheiter, 2010). This is why attending to victims' concerns after wrongdoing is seen in this work to be a crucial component of victim-offender reconciliation.

In Nigeria, comprehending the perspectives of victims of Boko Haram attacks regarding their bitter experiences with Boko Haram terrorists is crucial for the government to achieve peaceful coexistence between reintegrated Boko Haram members and victims.

Previous literature has offered insights into the thoughts of victims regarding their encounters with the terrorists. These experiences have led to this study asserting that understanding victims' experiences and meanings they attribute to these experiences are essential elements of reintegration programs.

The issue of granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists and the associated moral dilemmas has garnered significant interest in academic circles (Okoro, 2014; Onapajo & Ozden, 2020; Pieri & Zenn, 2016). Scholars have consulted victims to gather their perspectives on the amnesty provided to Boko Haram members and the process of reintegrating repentant terrorists into society. Below are excerpts reflecting some of their viewpoints.

“...How do you expect us to live with the killers of our parents? Those who attacked us and burnt down our houses?” “It is fine if the authorities are so magnanimous to forgive their heinous crime and it is also fine for the victims who they wreak a monumental havoc to not forgive them. Therefore, the government should integrate them into government houses and the villa but not our society.”

“It should be a two-way thing; while these people are being deradicalised, what is being done to the members of the societies who have been the victims? As you are working on the terrorists, you also work on those affected” (Source: Owolabi, 2020).

Such painful memories are difficult to overcome, and victims may be unwilling to reconcile with reintegrated ex-BH members if these issues are not addressed.

2.7.2 Atonement as Repentance

In religious terms, atonement signifies the process by which we remove all barriers to our reconciliation with God (Britannica, 2023). In non-religious terms, it could entail repairing or restoring a relationship that has been damaged due to an act of wrongdoing (Radzik, 2009). In other words, atonement involves reconciliation, either between a person and divine beings or

between humans (Thurrow,2023). Repentance, on the other hand, means a change of heart or attitude.

Radzik acknowledged that repentance comprises a change of heart and entails expressing regret for one's wrongdoing and taking responsibility for it, but she questioned whether this attitude change satisfies the criteria for atonement. She stated that although repentance expresses an offender's sincere regret for wronging the victim, it is not adequate for atonement because it cannot take away the terrible experience the victim had as a result of the offender's actions.

What Radzik means is that when someone offends another person the act itself goes beyond the control of the offender, even if the offender repents and regret his actions such a change of heart is not enough to restore the victims or wipe out bitter experiences victim faced. We have often heard criminals apologize to their victims for the agony they have caused them. But this apology, while received by the victims, does not remove the unpleasant experiences the victim has had as a result of the offender's wrongdoing.

Radzik also addressed the subject of when a victim should forgive an offender, explaining that it is often thought to be when the wrongdoer asks for forgiveness. She did, however, point out that simply requesting forgiveness or expressing regret for one's actions does not imply that the offender has done everything morally required to gain the victims' forgiveness. Victims may opt to forgive the wrongdoer for reasons other than the wrongdoer's display of repentance.

In Nigeria, some reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members have publicly apologized to victims and sworn not to ever engage in terrorist activities again (Chima, 2023). Whether or not this apology was accepted is determined by the attitude of victims of BH members to the reintegration of ex-BH members. Research suggests that victims of the BH attack and some community members are willing to forgive reintegrated BH who were forced to join the terrorists' group but are unwilling to forgive others who intentionally joined the terrorists' group (Langer, 2023). This means that forgiveness is important in the reconciliation of reintegrated BH members and victims of Boko Haram; however, victims' acceptance of offenders' forgiveness (as Radzik stated: forgiveness may arise from factors beyond the apology of the offenders) is dependent on the circumstances that led reintegrated Boko Haram members to join Boko Haram terrorism.

Radzik has demonstrated that victims have the right to accept or reject the apologies of offenders. Victims of the BH attack may be unable to forgive because of their losses. Reintegrated

ex-BH apologies may be rejected for a variety of reasons, including the fact that an apology would not bring victims loved ones who were killed back to life. However, when an offender's apology is rejected by victims, the offender may feel rejected and regret making the apology, which may impede victim-offender reconciliation (Thai et al., 2023).

This demonstrates how crucial it is for Nigeria government to design reintegration programs with two objectives in mind. First, this program ought to teach reintegrated former BH members how to convince victims of BH attack that they are truly sorry for the pain they have inflicted on them. Second, is to educate victims of BH attack about the role forgiveness plays in offenders' reformation (see: Wenzel et al., 2023). Additionally, it will aid BH members who were compelled to join the terrorists, particularly women returnees, in getting over painful experiences. This study utilizes Radzik's concept of atonement and reconciliation to inquire from victims about their opinions on apologies from reintegrated BH members.

2.7.3 Atonement as Reconciliation

The terms "atonement and reconciliation" have gotten a lot of attention in the scholarly circle (see: Stump, 2018; Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004). Radzik admits that atonement is required in the reconciliation process and goes on to say that the type of reconciliation for which atonement is ethically required is a relationship in which both sides consider each other as morally equal. The aim of this study is not to focus on the relationship that once existed between victims of Boko Haram terrorism and reintegrated Boko Haram members, but rather on whether victims will ever trust reintegrated former BH or perceive them as changed people after what terrorists did to them.

It seems that Radzik is suggesting that even if a previous relationship between victims and offenders is restored, it might not be exactly the same. Radzik also pointed out that reconciliation may not be easy to apply when resolving certain offences. Sometimes it reopens healed wounds or reminds the victim painful experience he/she has struggled so hard to forget. For example, suppose one of the reintegrated offenders reaches out to a victim to beg for forgiveness, assuming the victim's only child was slain by the terrorists', and she has only recently recovered from the shock. How would the perpetrator responsible for her child's death reconcile with the victim without bringing up the matter of her deceased child?

This is not to argue that atonement and reconciliation are not feasible in victim-offender mediation. Certainly, an offender's apology will draw the victim's mind back to his or her loss, but that does not mean that offenders should not seek victim's forgiveness. The reality is that what happened to victims cannot be undone, even if they forgive, which is why reintegrated BH members should recognize that their wrongdoings have left a hole in victims' minds that their apologies may not fill. This is why convincing victims of BH attack that they are truly sorry for the pain they have caused them is vital. It is also important that the apologies of reintegrated BH members go beyond verbal apology.

Radzik also draws attention to another crucial aspect of atonement that is pertinent to the current investigation. She thinks that effective atonement, as a reconciliation process, should assist in shifting the victim's perspective of themselves as having no worth or dignity as a result of what offenders did to them.

In this study, Radzik has highlighted an essential component of the atonement and reconciliation process that is crucial because many female BH attack victims who experienced sexual assault also suffered from low self-esteem (Sieff, 2016; Searcey, 2016). As Radzik (2004, p. 147) puts it: “The victim will be reconciled with himself when his sense of himself as an equally valuable moral person is restored”. This suggests that to assist victims in overcoming their worries, the Nigerian amnesty and reintegration program include initiatives that will assist victims in regaining their self-confidence. On the part of offenders, because of the crime they committed and the negative reputation they have among the public, offenders, according to Radzik, may also have negative opinions of themselves.

In addition to making amends with the individuals they offended, Radzik advises offenders to also make amends with themselves in order to free themselves of these negative feelings. Radzik's argument here can be used in the Nigeria amnesty and reintegration program for ex-BH members to assure successful reintegration of ex-BH members. On the part of reintegrated ex-BH members who have asked for forgiveness and committed to changing their ways, the government needs to involve professionals in peace negotiations to show them how to overcome self-pity. Regrettably, in the Nigerian context, this component of the amnesty and reintegration program has received little consideration (Musa et al., 2023).

Musa, H. S., Yerima, H. M., & Musalli, p. (2023, p. 39) reveals that:

...there is low community involvement in overall reintegration program, although few Non-governmental organizations have engaged in community dialogue to promote peace and facilitate the acceptance of repentant Boko-Haram members, there's also inadequate commitment from the government even when the residents were optimistic that the involvement of religious leaders and community leaders will go a long way in considering the acceptance of the repentant Boko-Haram Members.

While comprehending the perspectives of reintegrated former BH members regarding their reintegration into the community and the challenges they face due to their past association with the terrorists is crucial for ensuring a successful reintegration program, this research primarily focuses on the victims of BH attacks.

2.7.4 The Process of Atonement

Atonement as reconciliation is elaborated upon in the preceding section, and according to Radzik's perspective, it transcends the act of repairing a fractured relationship. Instead, it encompasses the restoration of the dignity lost by the victim, the offender, and the community as a consequence of the offender's wrongdoing. At this point, it is important to understand the steps an offender should take to make amends for his wrongs.

This paper finds this atonement process relevant to the aim of this study. According to these scholars the process of atonement entails that a wrongdoers should "feel guilt, repent, apologize, make reparations (i.e., restitution or compensation for harm), and undergo penance or self-punishment" (as cited in Radzik, p. 148). Attempts will be made to interpret what these processes mean, as described in Radzik's work. What does it mean to feel sorry as a wrongdoer? To them, it means offenders accepting responsibility for the grief they have caused their victims and expresses regret for their acts.

To show genuine repentance, the offender must make an attempt to cultivate moral character traits. By doing so, the offender affirms his commitment to change his ways and demonstrate that he has transformed into a trustworthy individual. Offenders' apology conveys the message that he accepts responsibility for the victim's bitter experiences as a result of his actions. As the offender apologizes to the victim in front of many others, particularly those who are aware

of the offender's wrongdoings, it helps the person who he offends regain his worth and also mend broken ties between the victim and the community, as well as between the offender and the community. Lastly, the payment of “reparation” restores the “material damage” caused by the act of wrongdoing. And reparation can help resolve both victims and community concerns that that are responsible for the feeling of anger.

Offender restitution payment also shows victims and indirect victims that the offender realizes he/she done something wrong and is really sorry for it. Radzik's assessment of these atonement procedures raised a number of issues worth mentioning. She states that not all atonement needs restitution, especially when the damage cannot be repaid with money. She also mentioned that apologies from an offender might be deemed ineffective if the victim has passed away (Radzik, 2004, p. 149).

In this research, the researcher actively engaged victims to determine what actions the government could take to assist them in overcoming their traumatic experiences. The aim is to gain insight into how the government can meet their expectations of justice and fairness.

2.7.5 Discussions on Radzik Making Amend

The atonement processes discussed in Radzik's paper are necessary in rebuilding the relationship that existed between the offender, victim, and community in the aftermath of conflict. These steps could be utilized by the Nigeria government in reconciling former Boko Haram members with victims and with community where they are reintegrated into. Let us look at some of her ideas that are most pertinent to the purpose of this research. Radzik (2004, p. 146) proposes that the ideal outcome of reconciliation facilitated by atonement is a relationship that one feels morally obligated to maintain. In other words, the relationship in which atonement is most suitable is one in which we have a moral obligation to obey its norms, lose our membership as a result of breaking them, and then have a moral obligation to make amends in order to regain membership. Think about the moral obligation that marriage entails.

If these moral norms are violated, the relationship will suffer, and the offender will be held accountable. In order to repair the relationship, the offender is required to make amends. It could imply that when a relationship we have a moral commitment to sustain is broken, it will require

atonement to be repaired. Is it morally obligatory for reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members to rebuild relationships with victims of BH attacks?

This raises the question of whether reintegrated ex-BH members had past relationships with victims before they joined the terrorists. This question is not within the scope of this study. However, this research explains that, while reintegrated BH members may not be required to rebuild relationships with their victims (if any), they do have a moral responsibility to reinstate and uphold the rules governing relationships (in the form of peaceful coexistence) that are already in place in the community where they were reintegrated.

Of course, every community has rules that promote peaceful coexistence, and being a member implies having the moral responsibility to follow such norms (Bicchieri et al., 2014). And if a member of a community violates social norms, it is expected that he or she make amends in order to be welcomed back into the society. The type of atonement necessary is determined by the established norms of the society in question. In this sense, reintegrated BH members are ethically obligated to make amends for their wrongs and once accepted, are expected to adhere to the standards that govern the community into which they have been reintegrated.

Radzik (2004, p. 147) argues that atonement should aim at encouraging the community “to see both the victim and the wrongdoer as equally valuable moral person”. Who is a moral person? Wagner (1983) emphasizes that what it means to be a moral person has been a subject of debate among philosophers. He went on to explain that what it means to be a moral person may be viewed in two ways: first from a broad perspective, and then from a more specific sense. The phrase “moral person” is commonly employed in its broadest sense to depict individuals perceived to possess commendable moral qualities.

Wagner appears to define a moral person broadly as someone who demonstrates the moral attributes typically associated with ethical individuals. However, in a narrower context, Wagner seems to refer to the underlying, perhaps less apparent qualities that contribute to the moral aspects observed in a person's behaviour. While Wagner's focus may be on a specific interpretation of a moral person, this study endorses the concept of a moral person in broader, more general terms.

Radzik presented two distinct examples of morally upright individuals. Firstly, according to Immanuel Kant's perspective, a moral person is someone capable of discerning between right and wrong actions. Secondly, it refers to someone who acknowledges the distinction between right

and wrong deeds and employs this understanding to guide their behaviour. The latter notion aligns more closely with the intended outcome of atonement in terms of reconciling reintegrated former BH members and victims of BH attacks.

Firstly, reintegrated ex-BH members who have undergone atonement for their misdeeds should actively avoid participating in activities that perpetuate evil within society. Secondly, the community ought not to discriminate against victims based on their encounters with terrorists; instead, they should regard both victims and BH members who have sought redemption as individuals who have committed to upholding established moral principles, akin to themselves. This reflects Radzik's argument regarding what atonement should achieve in the reconciliation between victims and offenders.

In the context of reintegrated BH and victim of BH reconciliation, atonement may not accomplish this goal. The reason for this is that victims and the community have not recovered from their traumatic experiences, and efforts to address their concerns have not been made. Furthermore, what happened to victims will be difficult to erase from their memories, even if they forgive. Finally, children born to terrorists may face discrimination from other children acting on their parents' orders. The government should address victim-community concerns, and see that effort is made to prevent actions that promote prejudice against reintegrated BH, particularly returnee women and their children.

2.7.6 Reparation and Apology

Radzik suggests that not all forms of atonement demand financial compensation, particularly if the outcome of the offense doesn't warrant such compensation, and an apology from the offender might not be essential if the victim is deceased. This study acknowledges that compensation isn't always obligatory, particularly when a simple apology suffices for the wrongdoing. However, it argues that an apology remains a crucial aspect of atonement regardless of the victim's status, whether deceased or alive. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of restitution, especially in cases where financial compensation is necessary, even if the victim has passed away.

For example, reparations for black descendants of American slaves are still being debated today (Darity Jr, et al., 2022). Financial compensation for victims of BH attacks should receive

more emphasis in Nigeria's amnesty and reintegration program for ex-BH members, because the vast majority of victims of BH and community members are currently displaced, and those living in IDP camps require money in order to survive (Muhammad & Danladi, 2023; Nwazue, 2023).

Radzik appears to explain that when perpetrators apologize to the victim in front of many others, particularly those who are aware of the victim's experience, it will assist rebuild relationship between victim and the community. This method should be employed in Nigeria's reintegration and reconciliation program for ex-BH to help reshape negative perceptions some community members have about returnee women and children who were abducted by terrorists (Malefakis, 2022).

2.8 Conclusion

This section has shown that understanding what victims of violent conflicts feel about the reintegration of offenders into the same community they live is essential in the reintegration and reconciliation process. Lessons from Radzik's paper, moral repair has also shown that focusing more on what offenders should do to help change victims and community ill perceptions about their reintegration could help reduce victims' resentment towards them.

However, her ideas on the steps offenders should take in the aftermath of wrongdoing in order to right their wrongs and the extent to which it will address victims' concerns may not achieve the same results in every society. Factors such as the nature of the crime committed, religion, law, and cultural norms of a given society can influence perpetrator, victim, and community perceptions of what atonement and reconciliation should achieve in the aftermath of conflict. Lennon (2013) explains that there are considerable cultural differences in how people view and respond to retribution and forgiveness. These differences could have a big impact on how they resolve conflicts and promote reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict.

This research applied Radzik's concept of atonement and reconciliation within the Nigerian context by advocating for the inclusion of victims' concerns in reintegration programs. It emphasized that such programs should not solely focus on the successful reintegration of former Boko Haram terrorists but should also address the needs and concerns of the victims. It is used to

show that for reconciliation to effectively address this particular situation, the government should strive to establish equal justice through an amnesty program.

This assertion resonates with Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative, which emphasizes the importance of treating humanity, whether in oneself or in others, as an end in itself and never merely as a means to an end (Kant, 2015). Essentially, this means treating everyone with equal respect and recognizing and upholding their fundamental rights, regardless of their strength or weakness, wealth or poverty, or their race, religion, or cultural background. It involves recognizing that acts of injustice are fundamentally inhumane (see: Sangiovanni, 2017)

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.0. Introduction

This section presents the methodologies employed by the researcher to investigate the perceptions of victims of Boko Haram attacks regarding the amnesty granted to Boko Haram terrorists and their subsequent reintegration into society, as well as how these perceptions influence their judgments of justice and fairness. To achieve these goals, the research adopts both secondary and primary research methods.

3.1 Thorough Literature Review and Moral Contemplation

The research commenced with a comprehensive review of existing literature pertaining to the phenomenon of Boko Haram terrorism. Findings from existing literature reveal significant flaws in the design and structure of the amnesty program for Boko Haram terrorists. However, a critical gap identified in the existing literature was the absence of insights into what justice and fairness mean to victims of Boko Haram attacks, based on their direct encounters with the terrorists. Consequently, the researcher adopted the normative ethical theory of utilitarianism and the concept of making amends as guiding frameworks for this research. These frameworks not only facilitated the framing of pertinent moral questions but also enabled the collection of information from victims regarding their perspectives on justice and fairness, elucidating the factors influencing their responses.

By adopting a primary data approach, the researcher contributes to the body of knowledge by employing qualitative interview techniques to gather firsthand accounts from victims. This methodological approach is instrumental in providing nuanced insights into the moral complexities surrounding amnesty programs and their implications for victims of BH attacks. The findings of existing literature and normative philosophical theories, which serve as guiding principles for the analysis of this research, have been previously addressed in chapters one and two of this dissertation or research. These discussions establish a framework for interpreting the findings obtained from primary sources in subsequent chapters.

3.2 Unveiling Victim Perspectives: Primary Data Methods

This section presents the primary research approach employed in this research. The principal objective is to collect firsthand data from victims to comprehend how their perception of justice and fairness is influenced by the outcomes of the amnesty program. The decision to employ primary research is further motivated by the phenomenological framework, which involves "bracketing" or temporarily suspending preconceptions about the subject under examination. To fill the existing void in the literature regarding the Boko Haram amnesty program, the researcher chose qualitative interview techniques to directly collect data from victims. Below, the methods employed by the researcher are outlined.

3.3 Qualitative Method: A Suitable Research Methodology

Upon reviewing existing literature pertaining to the outcomes of the Nigeria amnesty program and the moral issues arising from its implementation, it became apparent that qualitative research methodology was predominantly favoured in these studies. The reason for this is because understanding how the outcome of amnesty affects the opinion of people requires understanding peoples' perception and qualitative method focus on understanding human experiences. Another reason is that qualitative research is commonly used for investigations of phenomenon that generates non-numerical data and perceptions are influenced by factors such as religious, socioeconomic, and political circumstances, and they cannot be quantified numerically. Given this complexity, the researcher has chosen a qualitative research design to explore the diverse range of perceptions among victims.

The decision to use qualitative research methodology in this research stems from its suitability for examining the exploratory and subjective components of human perception. As a result, this research takes a qualitative approach to investigate the complex societal perspectives that victims have regarding amnesty for Boko Haram terrorists. Qualitative research entails utilizing "unstructured" data collection methods such as "interviews and observations, with an emphasis on verbal descriptions and explanations rather than quantitative measurement and statistical analysis"(Hammersley, 1989, p. 1). In other words, qualitative methodology is most suitable for research that doesn't yield numerical data (See, Reich, 1994). Furthermore, qualitative

research enables a researcher to explore the perceptions of a topic under investigation as they occur to respondents, rather than being influenced by the researcher's own perceptions (Prosek & Gibson, 2021).

The qualitative method is well-suited to address the central research question of this study, which explores how victims perceive the outcomes of amnesty programs and the subsequent influence on their perceptions of justice and fairness. This approach is particularly appropriate as it aims to facilitate an in-depth investigation into respondents' viewpoints on the subject matter at hand. It also offers rich descriptions of phenomena and facilitate a deeper understanding of the contextual intricacies surrounding phenomena under investigation. Through the utilization of this method, the researcher delved into how victims conceptualized notions of justice and fairness in relation to the amnesty granted to former members of Boko Haram terrorists.

Qualitative method as a suitable method for this nature of research can also be validated by examining how previous research connected to this area of study utilized it to provide insightful views about the strength and weakness of the amnesty program. For example, Ike et al. (2022) employed this method to investigate public perceptions regarding reintegrated Boko Haram members, uncovering widespread scepticism about the likelihood of these individuals refraining from further offenses. Ziradzo & Netangaheni (2022) utilized a qualitative research design to explore the impact of Boko Haram terrorism on a minority ethnic group in Borno State.

Through this approach, their findings revealed that the terrorism has compelled numerous community members, especially women, to seek refuge in neighbouring communities for safety. The gap in these studies is the lack of focus on the perspectives of victims of Boko Haram attacks regarding justice and fairness. This present study aims to fill this void by employing qualitative methods to gather data on victims' views regarding justice and fairness, particularly exploring why they perceive unfair treatment with the amnesty program procedure.

Through the adoption of qualitative research design, researchers have access to a range of methodologies to explore their research questions. In the present study, operating within the framework of qualitative research design, the researcher embraces phenomenological traditions to delve into the perceptions of victims.

3.4 Edmund Husserl's Philosophy of Phenomenology

Phenomenology research is a qualitative research design. This research employs phenomenology because it aims to understand and describe phenomena as they are experienced by people, without relying on theories to explain their occurrence. The goal is to minimize the influence of preconceived ideas or assumptions (Spiegelberg Biemel, 2024). The aim of phenomenology is to investigate the lived experience and the manner in which an individual comprehends and attributes significance to those experiences (Ayton, 2023). It accomplishes this goal by illuminating the inherent essence of a phenomenon, analysing it from the perspective of individuals who have directly confronted it, aiming to reveal both the phenomena experienced and the way it was experienced by them. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, the researcher explores and defines how victims of Boko Haram attacks interpret moral concepts such as justice and fairness, conscientiously avoiding the imposition of personal biases onto the victims.

3.4.1 Background

"Phenomenology," means "something appearing or showing up" (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Phenomenology, emerged from the 20th-century philosophical traditions of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger (Giorgi, 2007). Prior to the contributions of Husserl and Heidegger, philosophers have extensively explored the themes associated with phenomenology, particularly its intersection with epistemology (Rockmore, 2011). Although Husserl claimed to have discovered phenomenology, it is important to recognize that the concept had broader implications predating his work. Therefore, if phenomenology is understood within a broader context, considering earlier thinkers such as "Lambert, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel", it can be argued that Husserl, at most, introduced specific manifestations or variations of phenomenological inquiry (ibid, p.2). For instance, Immanuel Kant used phenomenology in his book *Critique of Pure Reason* to explain how our mental images of things are different from what we see in reality. Kant pointed out that some things we know without direct experience (a priori), while others we know through experience (a posteriori or empirical knowledge) (Parodi, 2008, cited in Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

Phenomenology has two main forms: Edmund Husserl's descriptive approach and Martin Heidegger's interpretative perspective. While both Husserl and his student Heidegger incorporated

phenomenology into their philosophical frameworks, their methodologies diverged. Husserl's emphasis lay in meticulously describing and analysing human experiences as they present themselves, whereas Heidegger delved into interpreting the ontological significance of existence itself (Giorgi, 2007). This study centres on Husserl's phenomenology, as it aligns with the study's objective of probing the subjective interpretations of justice and fairness among victims of Boko Haram attacks, influenced by their direct encounters with the terrorists.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is primarily associated with phenomenology in contemporary discourse. His aim was to encourage philosophers to direct their attention towards the actual objects themselves. Neubauer et al. (2019) elaborate on the ontological and epistemological foundations of Phenomenology design. The ontological proposition posits that reality is essentially dependent on the subjective perceptions of the observer, while its epistemological standpoint asserts that detachment from worldly influences, including one's own physical presence, is necessary to attain a transcendent state. This transcendence, in turn, facilitates an impartial comprehension of the phenomena under investigation, thereby reducing bias. Husserl articulated a methodological approach crucial for philosophers to adopt in their examination of phenomena, which he termed the "phenomenological reduction" or "bracketing". This method entails the deliberate suspension of all preconceived assumptions regarding the phenomena under investigation, thereby enabling the apprehension of the phenomenon in its pure, unadulterated form (Spencer, 2021).

Using phenomenology as described by Husserl, this study while gathering data focused on the meaning respondents or victims attached to moral concepts of justice and fairness based on what happened to them. The researcher withholds preconceived notion of how justice and fairness are defined in moral philosophy or by the general public. In other words, utilizing phenomenological design this research delved into the subjective experiences of victims concerning their perceptions of justice and fairness. By focusing on the victims' viewpoints on justice and fairness, shaped by their own comprehension, the study captured nuanced and insightful data reflecting how victims perceive the outcome of the amnesty program based on what the terrorists did to them, and their interpretation of justice and fairness based on their encounter with Boko Haram terrorists.

In this research, the concept of 'bracketing' as proposed by Husserl was employed, requiring the deliberate suspension of any preconceived notions or biases that the researcher may hold regarding the phenomenon under investigation. This approach aimed to ensure that the interpretations of justice and fairness by victims were rooted solely in their subjective perspectives. To accomplish this objective, qualitative interviews were conducted utilizing semi-structured interview techniques. Through these methodological tools, the researcher posed inquiries about the victims' understanding of justice and fairness, gathering their subjective responses based on their own interpretations of these concepts.

3.4.2 Withholding Preconceived notions of Justice and Fairness

The researcher incorporated moral questions to shape the questions posed to victims during the interview phase, as the focus of this research revolves around moral considerations of justice and fairness. During the formulation of these questions, the researcher drew upon existing philosophical interpretations of concepts such as justice and fairness. However, it's important to note that phenomenological research design prohibits researchers from imposing their preconceived notions of the phenomenon under investigation onto the participants who directly experience it. This principle is known as "Bracketing," where researchers set aside their own biases and assumptions to allow for an unbiased exploration of participants' lived experiences and perspectives.

Bracketing, a foundational tenet of phenomenological research, requires researchers to intentionally set aside their preconceived notions when investigating a phenomenon (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013). Nevertheless, in practice, fully disengaging from preconceived notion a researcher has about the phenomena under investigation can prove challenging, particularly when delving into topics that researchers already possess strong opinions about (Kochi 1995 cited in Chan et al.,2013). Chan et al (2013) propose that researchers can address the difficulties associated with imposing preconceived notions on respondents by ensuring they cultivate the habit of setting aside any beliefs they hold about the topic during interviews. If researchers are confident in their ability to do so, they can utilize bracketing techniques in data collection.

The researcher adopted this suggestion offered by Chan et al (2013) throughout the interview process with victims. The researcher achieved this task by asking Victims open-ended

questions, encouraging participants to express their own interpretations of justice and fairness. Throughout the interviews, the researcher remained committed to actively listening, refraining from interjecting or imposing his own understanding, even when confronted with responses that diverged from his perspective on these moral concepts. Additionally, the researcher refrained from passing judgment on the accuracy or validity of participants' responses based on the researcher's viewpoint, instead underscoring the significance of their personal encounters with the terrorists in shaping their comprehension of justice and fairness.

3.5 Accessing Maiduguri: Boko Haram Birthplace

The chosen research site is Maiduguri, the primary urban hub of Borno State located in north-eastern Nigeria. Before delving into the reasons for selecting this location, it is crucial to provide a historical background of Maiduguri. A comprehensive depiction of this locale was delineated within a report issued by the African Cities Research Consortium. The report elucidated that Borno State stands as the most ancient settlement in North-eastern Nigeria (Marissa, B and Katja, 2021, p. 2). The predominant language spoken in Maiduguri is Kanuri, with the majority of its residents adhering to the Islamic faith.

This research focuses on this location due to its significance as the primary base for Boko Haram terrorists (Iyekekpolo, 2016). Additionally, the city and its surrounding areas have been targeted by several Boko Haram attacks. Moreover, the presence of camps for internally displaced people fleeing Boko Haram attacks adds to the relevance of this location. According to Marissa & Katja (2021, p.3), the city of Maiduguri has shouldered the heaviest burden of supporting “those displaced by the conflict, accommodating over 800,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) at the peak of the crisis, with more than 88% residing outside of camps”.

Scholars have highlighted the plight of Maiduguri residents. Awodola and Oboshi (2015, p. 11) focused on the issue of insufficient food supply, contending that this matter has not received adequate attention. Boko Haram terrorism has negatively impacted every sector critical to the welfare of the population, particularly the security sector. This is evident in the abundance of literature addressing security challenges stemming from the emergence of Boko Haram terrorism. Nevertheless, these scholars contend that while security-related issues are crucial, equal attention

should be directed towards the food insecurity problems induced by Boko Haram terrorism. Failure to address these issues could exacerbate security challenges in the country.

3.6 Focusing on Victims of BH Attack

The researcher's choice to exclusively interview victims of Boko Haram attacks is rooted in the selected research design. The phenomenological approach aims to comprehend the experiences of individuals who have directly encountered the phenomenon being studied. In relation to the research questions driving this research, this necessitates that only those who have experienced Boko Haram attacks firsthand can provide meaningful insights into their perceptions of justice and fairness, considering their direct encounters with the terrorists. The thoughts of direct victims regarding their encounters with terrorists have not been adequately addressed. This assertion has been supported by previous literature, which has indicated that insufficient attention has been given to the perspectives of victims regarding the reintegration of repentant Boko Haram members (Ike et al., 2021).

Hence, understanding the perspectives of victims of Boko Haram attacks on justice and fairness, based on their encounters with the terrorists, is necessary for formulating effective policies to address their concerns about the amnesty and reintegration program for former Boko Haram terrorists. In other words, inquiring about what victims think about justice and fairness entails visiting the site where such victims may be found. This is the rationale for choosing Maiduguri, because the city contains many IDP camps where individuals fleeing Boko Haram attacks seek safety (International Amnesty, 2021). However, it is important to note that Maiduguri is not the only location with such camps (Olowojolu & Ettang, 2021).

The point here is that covering the entire population of victims of Boko Haram attacks, which numbers in the millions and includes individuals in locations outside Maiduguri and Nigeria (Olowojolu & Ettang, 2021), is not feasible for the researcher. The researcher focused on an IDP camp in Maiduguri where individuals who could provide relevant information were located. This was done because reaching all victims of Boko Haram attacks was not possible. The main goal was to understand how the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty program affects victims' views on justice and fairness. This approach, known as purposive sampling in research method, aims to

identify participants who can provide the most insightful answers to the research questions the researcher aims to address (Nikolopoulou, 2023).

Purposive sampling is recommended in research aimed at understanding participants' experiences and the relevance they attach to a specific phenomenon. This strategy helps researchers pick participants with extensive knowledge of the topic under investigation. Furthermore, they propose that sample size be determined depending on the information needed to fully understand the phenomenon under examination. Purposive sampling is a research method that involves choosing individuals with specific qualities deemed relevant to the study's inquiry and guiding research objectives.

Purposive sampling represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques. Also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, purposive sampling relies on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units (e.g., people, cases/organisations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied (Rai & Thapa, 2019, p. 5).

3.6.1 Victims of Boko Haram Attack At Saint Hilary IDP Camp

The researcher opted to focus on victims who could be easily accessed. This is because victims of Boko Haram attack as mentioned earlier are dispersed across various locations within and outside Maiduguri. This decision led to the selection of St. Hilary Camp, situated in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. Before delving into the historical background of this IDP camp, it's crucial to mention other reasons for selecting the Saint Hilary IDP camp. The researcher is not a native of Borno State. Additionally, the researcher's religion is not the predominant one practiced in Maiduguri, nor is the researcher's native language commonly spoken there.

These and other factors initially posed challenges to the researcher's objective of conducting these interviews. Hence, it necessitated the need for the researcher to hire a native to serve as a research assistant. Saint Hilary IDP camp was selected because it was the camp that was easily accessible to the research assistant. Selecting victims in a location that is conveniently accessible to the researcher is a process in research methodology known as a convenience sample. This method is used to collect “data from whoever is willing to partake in a study, is the most approachable or is, in other ways, conveniently accessible to the researcher” (Wienclaw, 2019 cited in Scholtz, 2021, p. 2).

Saint Hilary IDP camp is located in Maiduguri in Borno State and “is the state worst-affected by the humanitarian crisis. The site was previously built to be an administrative building of a local church before the start of the conflict in Borno. The bare concrete structure now provides refuge for 295 individuals” (International Organization for Migration, 2021). Furthermore, this decision was motivated by the fact that the camp housed individuals whose experiences with the terrorists were crucial for addressing the objectives and research questions of this dissertation.

3.6.2 Identifying and Recruiting Victims of Boko Haram Attack

Rai & Thapa (2019) state that researchers choose participants based on a purposive design that best fits the research question and helps gather needed data. This suggests that there exist various types of purposive sampling methods (see: Etikan, 2017). This study employed expert sampling, a form of purposive sampling, to recruit participants. Expert sampling, a purposive sampling method, is utilized when a research study seeks insights from individuals with specialized knowledge. This technique can unveil new areas of interest or ease access to relevant participants. Alternatively, research may target individuals with specific expertise, requiring a focused approach. Expert sampling is especially beneficial in domains lacking empirical evidence and marked by significant uncertainty (ibid).

Expert sampling is employed in this study for two primary reasons. Firstly, it allows the researcher to engage with victims who possess the specific information needed to uncover the research objectives. Secondly, it is recommended for topics that have been underexplored. Saint Hilary camp was one of the locations where victims of Boko Haram attacks were sheltered. In essence, this camp is chosen because it housed victims who had firsthand experiences with Boko Haram terrorists. Rai & Thapa (2015) assert that the initial phase of the sampling process involves identifying individuals capable of providing the specific information sought by the researcher.

Utilizing expert sampling techniques, the researcher approached victims of Boko Haram attacks at the Saint Hilary IDP camps, where they were accommodated. The researcher initiated the respondent selection process by explicating the purpose of the interview, outlining the researcher's intentions concerning the utilization of the collected data, and finally, informing them of their right to either accept or decline participation in the interview. Consequently, 25 victims willingly volunteered to take part in the interview. These participants consisted of men, women,

and adults falling within specified age brackets: 36-45 for men, 26-35 for women, and 15-25 for young adults.

3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Qualitative In-Depth Interview

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research method that involves conducting detailed one-on-one interviews with a small number of participants to gather data on a given topic, initiative, or issue. This technique provides a full grasp of an individual's views and behaviours, as well as new issues, leading to a deeper knowledge of the phenomenon under inquiry and the rationale for respondents' viewpoints (see: Boyce & Neale, 2006). Boyce & Neale further explain that the process of conducting is to ask open-ended questions. An open-ended question simply means question that cannot be answered with a static response (Reja et al.,2003).

In this research, qualitative in-depth interviews were utilized to explore the perceptions of victims regarding the Nigeria amnesty program. Open-ended questions were utilized to enable victims to provide comprehensive answers to questions on how the outcomes of the amnesty program influenced their perceptions of justice and fairness. Moral questions regarding the Nigeria amnesty implementation were asked to victims. Questions such as: Can you tell me about your experience with Boko Haram terrorism? What do you understand as justice? Do you think it is morally permissible to grant amnesty to ex-terrorists? Why do you think it is not right to grant them amnesty? Can you forgive ex-terrorists? The aim is to understand the data and see how it answers the research questions.

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews allow for the formulation of open-ended questions using pronouns such as "what" or "how," facilitating broad and generative responses from participants (Bearman, 2019, p. 5). Hence, this study utilized a combined methodology of in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews to inquire about victims or respondents' perception of justice and fairness. A purposive sample of 25 adults (15 females and 10 males) was selected based on their willingness to provide insights regarding their perceptions of the amnesty program extended to

former members of Boko Haram, particularly in terms of justice and fairness. The initial segment of the interview took place between November 2022 and January 2023, while the subsequent segment occurred from October 2023 to December 2023.

The interview process began in a conversational manner, with participants being asked moral questions such as: "Could you describe your experiences with Boko Haram terrorism?" "How do you define justice?" "Do you believe it is morally justifiable to grant amnesty to former terrorists?" "What are your reasons for opposing amnesty for them?" "Do you think forgiveness is possible for former terrorists?" These questions were directed towards victims. The primary aim was to analyse the gathered data to address the study's research questions. The collected data is expected to enhance understanding of the experiences of Boko Haram victims concerning the Nigeria amnesty program and aid the government in formulating measures to address victims' needs effectively.

3.8 Thematic and Narrative Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

While there are many strategies for analysing qualitative data, thematic analysis is notably the most commonly employed approach (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Riger et al (2016, p. 34) defines "thematic analysis involves proceeding through a series of steps that focus on the identification of recurring themes or ideas in a textual data set". Thematic analysis is particularly well-suited for analysing qualitative research that yields descriptive insights. More importantly, thematic analysis aids researchers in pinpointing factors that impact any issues raised by the participants (Alhojailan & Ibrahim, 2012). Utilizing this method, the current study identified ideas in victims' responses that are relevant in understanding how the outcome of the amnesty program influence their perception of justice and fairness.

Thematic analysis involves two methods: deductive and inductive. In the inductive approach, themes or patterns are derived from collected data without the influence of any preconceived theoretical framework. Conversely, the deductive method utilizes existing theories to guide the analysis of data generated from participants, aligning them with the theory adopted. The study is aligned with a deductive approach, as it employs the utilitarian moral theory and Radzik's concept of "making amends" to direct the analysis of the victims' opinions obtained from qualitative interviews. A thematic analysis involves identifying and collecting patterns in a set of data, which are then interpreted to reveal their intrinsic significance (Naeem et al., 2023).

Understanding the phrases used by participants can often lead to the identification of these patterns. This method is used in this research to locate the major keywords used by victims.

To gain a thorough understanding of the process involved in employing thematic analysis for data analysis, researchers typically undertake six key steps. These steps include: This process entails familiarizing oneself with the data, creating codes, establishing themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and assigning names to themes, and ultimately, compiling the report.

The victim's responses to questions were recorded on audio files, which the researcher translated into written form to help understand victims' comments. After that, the researcher attentively examined the texts in order to identify themes and meaning. Finally, the researcher read the transcripts several times in order to thoroughly understand the data. During this stage, the researcher examine text, selecting insightful excerpts from the findings and applying the relevant code to them. To have a better grasp of the code, victims' responses with similar meanings are put together. The codes are then group into themes. These themes serve as the main keywords, which are subsequently analysed in the discussion section of this research using moral theories adopted in this study as a guide.

3.9 Existing Data on Boko Haram Terrorism and Moral issues

Fylan (2005) underscores the significance of reviewing relevant literature as a fundamental step in utilizing semi-structured interviews. This process enables researchers to grasp the arguments posited by scholars and ascertain the existence of pertinent theories that could inform their research inquiries. Furthermore, examining previous literature offers an alternative to solely relying on primary data collection, often affording researchers access to a broader spectrum of information than what might be available in primary datasets (see: Var-tanian, 2010).

The literature review conducted in this research reveals that the primary ethical dilemma stemming from the implementation of amnesty programs for perpetrators of violent crimes, both in Nigeria and other jurisdictions where similar initiatives have been introduced, pertains to considerations of justice. This assertion is supported by an examination of amnesty proceedings in Nigeria and analogous programs in other African countries grappling with comparable circumstances. Arguments made by scholars in this area of study were scrutinized for strengths and weakness as well as the gaps in literature.

3.9.1 Philosophical Normative Analysis

Qualitative interviews serve as a valuable tool for researchers aiming to utilize existing theories to provide a comprehensive and explicit explanation of the topic under investigation to audience (Dunwoodie et al., 2023). Undoubtedly, theory plays a pivotal role in research, as it highlights the relevance of the chosen topic and the knowledge it contributes. As Nhan (2020, p. 1) aptly states, "A theoretical framework is the use of a theory (or theories) in a study that simultaneously conveys the deepest values of the researcher(s) and provides an articulated signpost or lens for how the study will process new knowledge."

In this research, the adoption of utilitarian theory and the concept of moral repair serves to elucidate why victims of Boko Haram attacks perceive unfair treatment within the amnesty procedure. Moreover, by employing these theories, the study aims to advance knowledge by broadening the understanding of how victims of violent crimes interpret the actions of perpetrators and the significance of justice and fairness to such individuals.

3.9.2 Limitations of the Study

This research did not address the concerns of reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists. Instead, it focused solely on the concerns of victims of BH attacks, overlooking the perspectives and challenges faced by reintegrated members. This gap is significant for further research because some of these reintegrated members were coerced into joining the BH group, indicating that they too deserve attention as victims. Future research should address this oversight to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics.

3.9.3 Limited Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy was restricted to one internally displaced person (IDP) camp, neglecting the experiences and perspectives of BH attack victims in other camps. Drawing conclusions solely from the opinions of victims in a single camp, such as Saint Hilary camp, does not accurately represent the broader spectrum of views among victims of BH attacks across various locations. Therefore, the findings may lack generalizability and fail to capture the diversity of experiences.

3.9.4 Language Barrier and Researcher Positionality

A language barrier was encountered during data collection, as some victims did not speak English. This necessitated the hiring of a native research assistant to facilitate communication and interpretation of responses. Additionally, the researcher's Christian background and differing community affiliation from the victims may have influenced their willingness to participate in the interviews, potentially resulting in a biased sample.

These factors could have impacted the depth and breadth of data collected, potentially limiting the study's validity and reliability. In conclusion, while this study provides valuable insights into the concerns of victims of BH attacks, it is essential to acknowledge and address these limitations to ensure a more inclusive and representative understanding of the conflict dynamics and the experiences of all affected parties. Future research endeavours should strive to adopt more comprehensive sampling strategies, overcome language barriers, and mitigate researcher biases to enhance the rigor and applicability of findings.

3.9.5 Ethical Considerations

Participants in research are entitled to four types of rights, which researchers are obligated to safeguard: “the right to maintain privacy, guaranteed anonymity, guaranteed confidentiality, and protection from harm, betrayal, or deception” (Govil, 2013, p. 18). In order to ensure that the rights of participants are respected, the researcher undertakes the following steps:

The purpose of the interview was well explained to participants, and their participation was voluntary. The participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time was made clear to them by the researcher. The participants' anonymity was respected, and the research data was kept confidential throughout the study. Measures were implemented to ensure data security and confidentiality, including secure storage and limited access to information. Additionally, the respondents' wellbeing and dignity were always protected, taking into account the delicate nature of the phenomenon under investigation. Careful consideration was given to the potential impact of the research on participants, and steps were taken to mitigate any potential harm. Open lines of communication were maintained with participants to address any concerns or discomfort they may have experienced during the research process.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology used by the researcher to explore the viewpoints of victims regarding the outcomes of the amnesty program for BH terrorists and how these viewpoints shape their perceptions of justice and fairness based on their encounters with the terrorists. The methodology commenced with an in-depth critical review of existing literature, which facilitated the identification of gaps in previous research. It then discussed the rationale for selecting philosophical normative ethical theories as the research guide to enhance the understanding of justice and fairness.

Additionally, it emphasized the importance of employing primary research methods and outlined the process of collecting and analyzing primary data, as well as the criteria for participant selection. Furthermore, the chapter addressed the research ethics maintained throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting of results.

Chapter Four: Insights from the Field Interview

4.0 Introduction

In this section, the viewpoints of 25 victims residing at Saint Hilary camp, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria, are presented. The researcher employed philosophical normative ethical theories to frame interview questions aimed at gathering data on the victims' perceptions of justice and fairness, drawing from their experiences with Boko Haram terrorists. The semi-structured interview method is employed to allow the researcher to comprehend the experiences of the victims and their perspectives on justice and fairness. Victims were asked about their perspectives on the amnesty and reintegration program for former Boko Haram members, and whether the outcomes of the amnesty program align with their definition of justice and fairness. The objective is to analyse the data, establish connections to the research questions, and validate the hypothesis.

The research findings revealed the following themes: (1) Victims expressed a perception of unjust treatment regarding both the concept and outcomes of the amnesty program. (2) Victims insisted on the punishment of reintegrated Boko Haram members, expressing their traumatic experiences with terrorists. They emphasized that justice and fairness, in this context, entail proportional punishment for the offenses committed. (3) Victims linked retaliation to imprisonment. (4) Victims assert that it is the government's responsibility to provide them with "Diya," payment- a form of restitution in Islamic law. (5) Victims opposed the idea of reconciling with reintegrated Boko Haram members, expressing doubts about the genuine repentance of the reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists. The findings are consolidated into four major themes, as outlined below:

4.1 The Amnesty and Reintegration Program is Unfair

Unfairness emerged as a key theme in the research findings. Victims consistently expressed their view that the Nigeria amnesty program for repentant Boko Haram members and their reintegration into society was unfair to them. The gathered data indicated that many victims defined unfairness in terms of both equal and unequal treatment. They contended that the amnesty

process was unjust as they did not receive the same level of attention as reintegrated Boko Haram members.

According to their perspective, the fairness of the amnesty program should have involved an inquiry into the actions of the terrorists towards them. They argued that incorporating their concerns and addressing their worries would have been a fair approach. Instead, the government, they claimed, neglected their distressing situation and focused solely on ensuring the successful reintegration of former Boko Haram members. In an interview with a man who identified himself as a victim of a Boko Haram attack, his understanding of fairness and unfairness is highlighted in the following excerpt:

“I am not happy with the outcome of the amnesty program. I expected the government to focus on how to make us forget our losses, but the government focused on how to resolve concerns of those who caused us pain. We have lost so many things because of boko haram terrorism. We are homeless and we lack so many things here at the IDP camp” (Interviewee 1, Maiduguri Bornu State, Dec 2022).

The victim's perception of unfairness regarding the outcome of the amnesty program appears to be rooted in disparities in the attention received by victims compared to reintegrated Boko Haram members. Furthermore, victims stress that they perceive the outcome of the amnesty as unjust because the government has disregarded their dire circumstances.

This excerpt below offers additional insights into what justice and fairness mean to another victim interviewed. He interprets fairness as directing attention and support towards victims of Boko Haram attacks rather than towards reintegrated Boko Haram members. He also perceives unfairness as the government's failure to provide essential amenities at the IDP camp. For him, fairness entails prioritizing the needs of victims.

“Neglecting us at this juncture is unjust. As victims, we deserve to be acknowledged and supported. We have lost everything. As you can witness here at the IDP camp, our conditions are far from satisfactory. In my view, fairness entails the government prioritizing attention towards us, rather than towards those who forced us into becoming refugees in our own country” (Interviewee 2, Maiduguri, Bornu State, Dec 2022).

As highlighted in the preceding excerpt, victims expect government aid to help them recover from their losses and aid in their healing process. They articulate that the circumstances at the IDP camp worsen their distress because of the absence of many necessities crucial for their well-being. They attribute this sense of injustice to the government's lack of responsiveness to their plight and a lack of empathy.

The passage below provides insights into the complaints expressed by an individual who felt misled by the amnesty process and a widow who suffered the loss of a loved one in a Boko Haram attack.

“How can you design a program that will take care of the needs of the Boko Haram terrorists and forget the needs of people who were displaced by Boko Haram terrorism? The answer is that the outcome of the amnesty is not fair to us. I am not happy with the process. I feel cheated. The government were fast to grant them amnesty because they are not victims. That is wrong for the government to do, in my opinion. Those in government have no idea how we feel about our loved ones because many of their loved ones are not victims of Boko Haram attacks” (Interviewee 3, Maiduguri, Bornu State, Jan 2023).

The victim's argument suggests that the government's inadequacy in offering support is linked to the absence of direct family connections to individuals in positions of authority. They contend that if victims had close familial ties to those in power, the government would prioritize attention towards them. Essentially, unfairness in this scenario denotes a lack of empathy for those in need because of the absence of familial relationships.

The idea of family reunification surfaced in the research findings. A minority of victims perceived the amnesty process as a method to reunite forcibly recruited Boko Haram members with their families. They argue that it facilitates the reunion of those abducted by the terrorists with their loved ones. Furthermore, they argue that considering the life-threatening consequences of rejecting the terrorists' demands, many individuals would feel compelled to comply. From this perspective, some victims' express empathy for those coerced into joining Boko Haram. For example, in an interview, a woman shared her views on why she believes reintegrating these individuals into society is morally justifiable.

“Some of the reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists are members of this community. I mean some of them are our relatives. Amnesty program is good

thinking in the sense that it afforded some of them that were forced to join Boko Haram group the opportunity to see their family members again. It is good because most of the ex-Boko Haram members are people from the same family with the victims, so they are family members and amnesty helped them reunite with them” (Interviewee 4, Maiduguri, Bornu State, Jan 2023).

Individuals coerced into joining terrorist groups sometimes experience family rejection because of their association with Boko Haram. For example, a particular woman who fled from the terrorist camp and returned home experienced rejection from her husband.

The woman's experience of rejection from her husband highlights that not all family members see the rejection of forcibly recruited Boko Haram members as unjust. This suggests that the moral assessment of how to address such situations goes beyond acknowledging that individuals like her were compelled to join the terrorist group. Some individuals may have shunned their relatives abducted by the terrorists due to the negative perception that community members hold about those associated with the Boko Haram sect.

In summary, most victims express feeling unfairly treated in the amnesty and reintegration processes. They argue that it's unjust to prioritize facilitating the successful reintegration of repentant Boko Haram members over addressing victims' concerns. Victims define fairness as giving attention to deserving individuals and perceive unfairness as favouring those who do not merit it. It can be inferred that victims associate the concept of unfairness with a sense of partiality in the administration of justice.

This statement directly addresses Research Question 1, which investigates victims' perceptions of the amnesty program and its impact on their fairness assessment of the Nigerian amnesty program. It also supports the first hypothesis (H1), indicating that neglecting victims' experiences in amnesty proceedings influences their perception of the fairness of the Nigerian amnesty program.

4.1.1 We Desire Punishment

Victims' responses regarding their perspectives on justice and fairness reveal that they connect these concepts to the punishment of reintegrated former Boko Haram terrorists. They advocate for the punishment of reintegrated Boko Haram members, particularly those who

willingly joined the terrorist group. According to some victims, punishing these individuals would satisfy their sense of justice.

As per the research findings, victims' perspectives on punishment and injustice are intimately tied to the equilibrium between reward and retribution. They contend that actions benefiting society warrant recognition and reward as a form of justice, whereas actions leading to suffering necessitate appropriate punishment. Essentially, victims view it as unfair to punish individuals who contribute to societal well-being, while failing to penalize those who cause harm is deemed unjust.

Victims' perspectives on punishment and injustice are intricately connected to the interplay of reward and retribution. Through this lens, victims argue that Boko Haram members should be punished, particularly those who willingly joined the terrorist group, as they have contributed to societal suffering. In an interview with a woman who lost her family to a Boko Haram attack, she sheds light on her understanding of justice and punishment, as depicted in the following excerpt.

"Punishment is what wrongdoers should get for doing something wrong and that is what justice is. And reward should be given to a person who does what the community approves and that is justice. Boko Haram terrorists know that we did not do anything to them. They know that our community rules forbid inflicting harm to someone who is innocent. But they inflicted pain on us even when we did not do anything to deserve such treatment from them. They should be punished because what they did to us is wrong" (Interviewee 5, Maiduguri, Borno State November 2023).

This victim perceives justice as a response to commendable actions and punishment as appropriate for wrongdoing. Her understanding of the rightness and wrongness of actions, as seen in the above passage, is influenced by cultural norms that prescribe acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in their community. This indicates that laws are not the only factors influencing human moral judgments. Other factors such as religious beliefs and societal norms also play a role in our understanding of justice and fairness.

Discussions with victims regarding the objectives of punishment have revealed their perspectives on the role of punishment in society. It is evident from their views that the aim of punishment aligns with the retribution justification of punishment. The majority assert that acts of terrorism should not be rewarded, and terrorists should not be allowed to evade punishment, even

if the government believes that punishing terrorists will not improve the situation. Additionally, they question the necessity of punishment if it cannot be utilized when a crime is committed.

Victims' perception of justice is closely tied to the role of punishment in restoring justice for both victims and society. They also view injustice as having moral implications for society when wrongdoers go unpunished. Victims argue that the failure to punish reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists could potentially inspire individuals with similar ideologies to form terrorist organizations. Many victims advocate for punishing reintegrated Boko Haram members instead of offering amnesty, as they believe amnesty could encourage further violence. They argue that such punishment would demonstrate the government's commitment to combating Boko Haram terrorism. Furthermore, they justify this stance by emphasizing that violent crimes are punishable by law and condemned in Islamic teachings.

Interviews with victims provide significant insights into their views on the relationship between justice and punishment.

“Punishing them is what I want from the government. Even if their punishment will not make me forget what Boko Haram did to my family, I still want government to impose harsh punishment. I want to see them experience the same pain I feel in my heart. This people can never repent.” If they are not punished, other sect will commit similar crimes and expect amnesty from the government. The law says that those who committed crime should be punished, and now Boko Haram terrorists committed offence, but they are not punished. What then is the meaning of law and punishment if they government cannot utilize them to stop Boko Haram terrorism” (Interviewee 5, Maiduguri, Bornu State November 2023).

These victims perceive punishment as a response to wrongdoing, viewing it as an obligation that the state owes to victims. In this context, punishment is regarded as a form of retributive justice, as victims desire for reintegrated Boko Haram members to experience the same pain they endure. They also argue that amnesty for Boko Haram will not deter them from committing further offenses. However, some victims seek punishment in the hope that it will aid in their healing process. For them, punishing reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists will bring a sense of closure and emotional relief.

The opinions on the effectiveness of punishing Boko Haram terrorists in aiding victims' healing process vary among victims. A few victims hold divergent views on the role of punishment

in alleviating the suffering caused by the perpetrators. For instance, in an interview with a woman who had a bitter experience with the Boko Haram sect, she shed light on this perspective. She emphasizes that punishment is crucial if it aids victims in their recovery process, prompting questions about the ability of punishment of the perpetrator to help victims forget their concerns.

“There’s no amount of punishment that will make me forget what they did to me and my children. The government can punish them if others want them punished. For me, I can’t take laws into my hand. Punishment in my view, will not change anything. Some of them have been indoctrinated” (Interviewee 6, Maiduguri, Bornu State Dec 2023).

The woman's justification for punishment focuses on its effectiveness in deterring wrongdoing. She argues that punishing offenders is pointless if it cannot restore victims to their pre-perpetration state. She maintains that punishing Boko Haram members is inappropriate because it cannot undo the harm they have caused. Moreover, she questions the potential of punishment to change the mindset of indoctrinated terrorists. This raises doubts about whether amnesty programs can effectively discourage terrorism driven by religious ideology.

4.1.2 Retaliation is Justifiable

Retribution emerged as a theme in the interview findings. Discussions with victims revealed that some hold a desire for revenge. Those that seek for revenge want to ensure that reintegrated members of the Boko Haram group, who were previously involved in terrorist activities, experience the same level of suffering they inflicted on their victims.

Some victims assert that rehabilitation efforts might not successfully reform these reintegrated Boko Haram members into law-abiding citizens, thus legitimizing their desire for revenge. Retaliation is also perceived as an objective that the government can help victims achieve.

According to victims' interpretation of retaliation, seeking revenge is not just a personal prerogative, but also a governmental responsibility to assist them in attaining retaliation.

One of the Victims assert that if the government fails to assist them in seeking revenge, then it becomes their right to take matters into their own hands.

Interviews with respondents support this perspective.

“Jungle justice as it is written in the sharia law, and eye for an eye, is what justice is in this situation. The terrorists should face the wrath of what they did. If they are allowed to go without punishment, it will encourage another violent group to start terrorism. I don’t want to take laws into my hands. Government should send them to prison. That is where they belong. My reason is because, these people cannot change. I want to take revenge, but I cannot because the government will arrest me if I do. Government should send them to where those who harm innocent people should be. Government should help us to get revenge and way to achieve this is to send them to prison. If they government fails to do that, the community should do it, if the community fails then, we can then do it” (Interviewee 6, Maiduguri, Bornu State Dec 2023).

A large majority of victims believe that it is the government's duty to administer punishment to reintegrated Boko Haram members. Some victims perceive revenge as imposing hard labour on reintegrated Boko Haram members while they are in prison, while others view it as relocating them to areas where they cannot come into contact with victims.

To summarize, the majority of victims express a preference to avoid contact with reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists, irrespective of whether they endorse retaliation or not. These results align with the second hypothesis, suggesting that victims' perception of the amnesty as unjust contributes to their retaliation against reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists.

4.1.3 “Diya” Pleases Us

The outcome of the amnesty program prompts the payment of 'Diya'. The researcher inquired about the significance of Diya and the reasoning behind its payment from victims. The findings revealed that Diya functions as a form of restitution in Islamic law. The rationale for paying Diya is based on two perspectives. Firstly, it aligns with the Islamic normative approach to addressing crimes and restitution. Secondly, it stems from the government's duty to protect its citizens. From an Islamic viewpoint, victims assert that Diya acts as compensation that wrongdoers are obligated to pay to the victims or their families in cases where the victims lose their lives due to the offenders' misconduct.

In accordance with Islamic law, victims argue that it is the wrongdoers who should bear the responsibility of paying Diya. Nevertheless, they assert that if the government neglects its

obligation to safeguard citizens, the citizens possess the right to demand this compensation from the government. In essence, victims have reinterpreted the payment of Diya as restitution they are entitled to due to the government's failure to ensure their safety and that of their families.

The provided victims' opinions below serve as evidence supporting the claims made by victims, who further justified the payment of Diya by highlighting that Boko Haram terrorism led to the loss of their valuable properties and businesses. They argue that compensation is crucial, especially for those who lost breadwinners in their families during Boko Haram attacks, as this compensation is deemed necessary to aid in their recovery from the incurred losses. Monetary assistance is viewed as a critical means to assist them in rebuilding and regaining stability.

"The responsibility for the payment of Diya traditionally falls upon anyone who unlawfully takes another human life. However, in this instance, the government has pledged to assume this responsibility to maintain peace and prevent retaliation for the wrongs committed against us. Therefore, the government is accountable for the payment of Diya in these circumstances."

"We anticipate that the government will provide us with 'Diya' to aid us in meeting our financial requirements. However, instead of fulfilling this expectation, the government has supported those who have caused us suffering. We perceive the government's actions as unjust towards us."

"Diya is not a government law but a tenet of Islamic law practiced in Muslim or Sharia states. It is not inherently the duty of the government to pay Diya. However, since the government has failed in its duty to protect us from harm, it now becomes the government's responsibility to provide Diya compensation to us" (Interviewee 6, Maiduguri Bornu State, Dec 2023).

This indicates that victims interpret Diya payment as a form of fairness. It signifies that to satisfy victims' sense of fairness, the outcome of the amnesty program should entail the government paying Diya to them. The rationale for the payment of Diya is not rooted in the Islamic argument regarding who is responsible for the payment, but rather in what the government is morally expected to do in order to appease victims for failing to protect them from harm.

4.1.4 Would Diya Make You Forgive?

The data suggests that victims view reconciliation and forgiveness as processes aimed at bringing together reintegrated former Boko Haram members to promote peace and harmony within

the community. Their readiness to forgive and reconcile is contingent upon the government meeting their demands. Some argue that receiving compensation from the government might prompt them to consider forgiveness but will not make them to accept ex-Boko Haram terrorists. This assertion is backed by interviews with a victim.

“Receiving Diya would lead me to forgive them and prevent me from seeking revenge. But not accepting them. What I’m suggesting is that the government should compensate us with Diya to prevent any retaliatory actions. While Diya cannot bring our loved ones back to life, out of respect for my religion, which teaches forgiveness, I may consider forgiving them if Diya is paid to me.”

This victim views the payment of Diya as essential to prevent retaliation. The excerpt also illustrates how religious beliefs influence the victims' comprehension of the reconciliation process, emphasizing the role of religious beliefs in fostering reconciliation between victims and offenders. Additionally, it indicates a distinction between forgiveness and acceptance.

One of the victims offers a distinct viewpoint on retaliation and the "Diya" payment. She believes that neither retaliation nor receiving Diya alone can undo the effects of her experiences. She has openly expressed her readiness to forgive and move past the atrocities inflicted upon her by Boko Haram terrorists, letting go of any desire for retaliation or compensation. An interview with a woman who was a victim of a Boko Haram attack provides further insight into this perspective.

“I am not willing to revenge anything or care about “Diya” payment because it won’t bring my husband back to life. Although I am yet to recover from the pain, but I have chosen to forgive them because unforgiveness is not helping me. I leave everything to God. I don’t need reconciliation because I have forgiving them. Beside I will get greater reward from God if forgive them” (Interviewee 7 Maiduguri Bornu State, Jan 2024).

The victim's response suggests that the willingness to forgive is not solely contingent on receiving compensation. It also underscores the notion that victims may forgive in anticipation of receiving greater rewards from God. This further underscores the role of religion in initiating the forgiveness and peace process between victims and their perpetrators. In this instance, the victim believes that forgiving reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists will result in a reward from God, which she considers more significant than Diya. The choice to forgive without receiving Diya is shared

by only two victims. This raises the question of why only a few victims' decision to forgive without receiving Diya is influenced by this religious teaching, even though almost all victims share the same faith.

Diya payments address research question three, which explores the ethical and political justifications for restorative justice. Hypothesis 3 suggests that without restorative justice, victims would seek revenge against reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists. This hypothesis proved true for most victims who perceived the lack of accountability on the part of reintegrated ex-terrorists as unfairness in the amnesty program. However, this does not hold true for all victims, as some are willing to forgive and refrain from retaliation regardless of whether offenders are held accountable, due to their religious beliefs. This indicates that without restorative justice, victims may choose not to retaliate against perpetrators because of their religious convictions.

4.2 Summary of Findings & Link to Previous Literature

This section examines how the aforementioned findings address the research questions presented in this dissertation and juxtaposes the results with the hypotheses to determine their alignment or contradiction. Furthermore, it seeks to establish the connection between the findings and prior research conducted in this specific field of study.

Regarding Question 1, which delves into the victims' perceptions of the outcome of the amnesty program, the results indicated that a considerable majority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the program's outcomes, citing that they were not involved in the amnesty process hence their concerns were neglected.

These findings directly tackle the primary research question and confirm the first hypothesis (H1), which posited that disregarding victims' perspectives in amnesty procedures affects their perception of unfairness regarding the Nigerian amnesty program. The previous literature findings supporting this assertion are presented below:

“...there is low community involvement in overall reintegration program, although few Non-governmental organizations have engages in community dialogue to promote peace and facilitate the acceptance of repentant Boko-Haram members, there’s also inadequate commitment from the government even when the resident were optimistic that the involvement of religious leaders and community leaders will go a long way in considering the

acceptance of the repentant Boko-Haram Members” (source: Musa, H. S., Yerima, H. M., & Musalli, 2023, p. 39).

“The logic associated with the proposal to grant amnesty to the Boko Haram insurgents is patently deficient as it does not appear to address the issues of justice, morality and ethicalness contingent upon the extension of amnesty to the sect. The federal government set up a committee with its attention directed to working out modalities for amnesty without a corresponding committee to evaluate the effects of the Boko Haram violence on their victims” (Channels Television 2013 cited in Nwozor 2013, p. 10).

Regarding research question 2, victims' requests for compensation from the government and their reluctance to interact with reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members contribute to a reconciliation dilemma. Furthermore, some individuals expressed a readiness to retaliate if the government fails to provide them with Diya payments, demonstrating a desire for retribution against reintegrated BH members if this condition is not met.

These results are consistent with hypothesis number two, which suggests that victims' perception of the amnesty as unfair may result in retaliation against reintegrated Boko Haram members. The findings of previous literature that validates victims demand for retaliation is presented below:

“Boko Haram killed my father. The trauma of my father's death killed my mother. So Boko Haram killed my father and my mother and since their death, life has been difficult for me as a person and government has not come to my aid other than supports that non- governmental organisations give me. Everybody in our community has one story or the other to tell about what they suffered from Boko Haram attack against our community. And now government wants to bring them back to our community because they believe they have deradicalised them. If they bring anyone to our community, we will kill him!” (Interviewee 14, Community Youth Leader, 35, Madagali, Adamawa State, August 2021). Extracted from (Owonikoko, 2022c, p. 19).

Regarding Question 3, which investigates the ethical and political issues surrounding restorative justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation, the findings indicate that Diya payments to victims might encourage some victims to forgive reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members who were forced to join the Boko Haram sect. As a result, Hypothesis H3, which proposes that the absence of restorative justice in the Nigeria amnesty program leads to victims pursuing revenge on rehabilitated

perpetrators, holds true for the majority of victims. Though few victims declare that they would not retaliate against reintegrated ex-Boko Haram and would forgive them without demanding Diya payment or punishment because of their religious beliefs.

Chapter Five: Turning Victims Voice into Philosophy

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a thorough examination and interpretation of the key research findings presented in the preceding chapter. These themes include victims' perceptions of unfairness regarding the amnesty and reintegration program, their calls for the punishment of reintegrated former Boko Haram members (BH), demands for Diya payments, and their desire for retaliation. Employing utilitarian moral principles and the concept of making amends as guiding frameworks, it interprets these findings, highlighting the nexus between victims' responses to perceived injustice and the neglect of their concerns in the amnesty process. Furthermore, it demonstrates how these findings align with the existing body of literature on amnesty program for BH and moral issues it generates. Finally, it reveals the moral implications inherent in either heeding or disregarding victims' demands.

5.1. Scholars Intake on Victims' Voice

The findings of the current study contribute to a plethora of research that has attempted to understand the issue of Boko Haram (BH) terrorism in Nigeria. For instance, Clubb and Tapley (2018) highlighted the insufficient attention given to the connection between deradicalization and reintegration within scholarly discourse. While Ike et al. (2021) recognized Clubb and Tapley's significant insights into the flaws in the Nigeria amnesty process, they also noted a crucial oversight. Specifically, Clubb and Tapley neglected to analyse the perspectives of religious groups in Nigeria regarding the reintegration of former terrorists into society. Ike et al. revealed that communities are sceptical about the genuine repentance of reintegrated Boko Haram members, leading to resentment toward their reintegration into society.

The research findings by Onapajo and Ozden (2020) suggest that flaws in the implementation and structure of amnesty programs have the potential to worsen violent conflicts within the regions where these programs are implemented. Their observations resonate with the findings of this current research, which reveals that certain victims of the BH attack seek retribution and advocate for reintegrated former members of Boko Haram (BH) to get punishment that fits the crime they committed. Consequently, Onapajo and Ozden's insights emphasize the

critical importance for the government to fully grasp the grievances of individuals affected by BH terrorism and to effectively address these concerns. Such actions are imperative in reshaping the negative perceptions held by victims and community members regarding the reintegration of former BH members. Godefroidt & Langer (2023) investigated the potential for forgiveness among community members towards reintegrated BH (Boko Haram) members.

Their study indicates that some community members may forgive reintegrated BH members who were coerced into joining the sect. Godefroidt & Langer's findings show that victims may prefer to pardon reintegrated BH members based on the view that it was not their intention to join the sect. This finding resonates with the opinions of few victims in this present study who argued that punishing reintegrated ex-BH members who were forced to join the terrorists' group is not justified.

While acknowledging the insightful and valuable contributions of the literature reviewed in this study towards a deeper understanding of the dynamics between the outcomes of the amnesty program and community perceptions thereof, it is noted that there is a gap in addressing how the outcomes of the amnesty program affects victims' perceptions of justice and fairness. Viewed through the perspective of normative ethical theories in philosophy, this research provides significant insights into the ethical intricacies associated with granting amnesty to members of Boko Haram (BH). It delves into themes such as justice and fairness on one hand, and punishment on the other, shedding light on the intricate dynamics at play.

5.2. Victims Perceived Unfair Treatment with The Amnesty Program

This section delves into the victims' assertion that the outcome of the amnesty program is unjust towards them. It establishes a link between this assertion and the research question, which inquire about the victims' perception of the amnesty program and its impact on their assessment of fairness. By employing the utilitarian moral theory, it aims to interpret the concept of unfairness and demonstrate that the victims' perception of unfairness is indeed valid.

The study's primary finding indicates that a majority of victims perceived the outcome of the amnesty program as unfair. Victims equate unfairness to unequal treatment, arguing that the amnesty process was unjust because they did not receive the same level of attention that

reintegrated BH terrorists received from the government. This study employed utilitarian moral theory to interpret the assertion made by the victims to show how it answered the study's research questions and to determine whether this claim by victims is justified.

Utilitarianism posits that the moral evaluation of an action or decision should be based on whether the outcome promotes the happiness of those affected by it. Victims' assertion that the outcome of amnesty program is unfair to them because their concerns were neglected in the amnesty process can be justified from a utilitarian perspective. This is because utilitarianism advocates for happiness of all and overall happiness cannot be achieved without incorporating the well-being or happiness of the victims. By addressing the existing disparity and ensuring that victims receive fair attention and support, the overall happiness and well-being of all affected individuals are likely to be maximized. This aligns with the utilitarian principle of promoting happiness for the greatest number of people.

The government's decision to provide amnesty to reintegrated members of Boko Haram (BH) could be interpreted as an application of utilitarian principles, as the aim of the action is to stop BH terrorism from spreading throughout the nation. And if amnesty guarantees this, then it is a fair decision. What this means is that if by implementing amnesty program, greatest number of Nigerians are protected, it means amnesty is fair in the utilitarian perspective (Hooker, 2014)examines whether utilitarianism and fairness clash. Hooker argued that we must understand the different types of utilitarianism and fairness ideas to address this question. To do this, we need to recognize the different ways people think about fairness and the various forms of utilitarianism. By looking closely at these differences, we can better understand how utilitarian principles and fairness ideas work together. This helps us see how they might agree or disagree more clearly.

Hooker delved into both act and rule utilitarianism, emphasizing their distinctions. He contended that fairness prohibits unequal treatment based on appearance or gender. When examining victims' assertions of injustice, it is imperative to investigate whether they were subjected to unfair treatment throughout the amnesty procedure. Furthermore, it is essential to evaluate whether the amnesty program's outcome led to maximizing the collective happiness of the largest number of individuals impacted by the government's decision to grant amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists(Agbanero, 2024).

The answer to the question whether victims were treated unfairly can be answered by asking whether victims' concerns were incorporated in the amnesty procedure. Victims' complaints about perceived injustice in the amnesty program is supported by a Channels Television report, which claims that while the government established a committee to develop amnesty strategies, it failed to establish a complementary committee to assess the impact of Boko Haram violence on victims (Channel television 2013 cited in Nwozor, 2013).

Victims perceived unfairness in policymaking, suggesting that policymakers showed disregard for their suffering because none of their children were victims of attacks by the terrorist group. It was argued that if policymakers had personal connections to the victims, their approach might have been different, possibly by refusing amnesty to those who harmed their own children or being less inclined to forgive them.

Understanding this victim's viewpoint on bias and unfairness in decision-making, one can refer to John Rawls' idea of the veil of ignorance. This concept illuminates what policymakers should prioritize to prevent unfairness. Rawls suggested that by imagining a society where individuals are unaware of their own position within it, they would be more inclined to support principles that uphold justice and equality (Vermeule, 2001). Although it is outside the scope of this study to inquire if policymakers' family members are victims of BH attack but understanding what influences victims' moral judgement is essential in reintegration process.

The victim's statement emphasizes how important it is to understand how victims make sense of the suffering that their perpetrator caused them. This means comprehending not only what the victims think happened, but also the reasons why the perpetrator chooses them and not others. In addition, this underlines how crucial it is to take into account the victim's point of view in order to understand how they see the perpetrator's actions (Radzik, 2004) and how that affects their sense of justice and fairness. Victims of wrongdoing may interpret the perpetrators' action to mean that they are inferior to the offender (ibid).

5.3 Analysis of Victims Perceived Unfair Treatment with The Amnesty Program

The exclusion of victims from the amnesty implementation raises the question of its fairness. Mill suggested that justice entails giving what is deserved and avoiding rewarding the undeserving. Should victims of Boko Haram attacks be omitted from amnesty while including

those who caused their suffering? Does this align with the general public's notion of fairness? Moreover, who deserves inclusion, and who should be excluded? Applying Rawls' concept of the veil of ignorance, would policymakers exclude themselves or their relatives from the amnesty process if they were victims? Rawls argues that individuals tasked with making decisions for society are more likely to make fair choices when they are unaware of how those decisions will personally affect them (Vermeule, 2001). Answers to these questions will help understand why a certain victim criticized the government for swiftly initiating amnesty, arguing that those in power are not directly affected. Although this research did not verify this claim, people generally feel unfairly treated when their concerns are overlooked in situations that warrant attention.

5.4 Punishment for Reintegrated Boko Haram Terrorists

This section explores victims' assertion that reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists deserve punishment. The objective is to demonstrate why the majority of victims associate justice with the punishment of reintegrated Boko Haram members. Additionally, it aims to analyse the moral implications that may arise from the government's acknowledgment or rejection of this demand. Furthermore, this research primarily derives insights from utilitarian moral theories advocated by Jeremy Bentham and J.S. Mill, Linda Radzik's notion of "making amends" where relevant, and retributive punishment theory. This aims to deepen our understanding of the philosophical debates surrounding these moral concepts and their relevance in informing policymakers about the possible consequences of either fulfilling or disregarding victims' requests for the punishment of reintegrated BH members.

5.4.1 Philosophical Angle of Punishment of Offenders

The research findings of this study highlight punishment as a central theme, suggesting that victims' perspectives on punishment and injustice are intricately linked to the equilibrium between reward and punishment. Victims generally believe that justice implies wrongdoers facing repercussions for causing harm to others, whereas incentives should be given to persons who follow the law and refrain from causing harm. However, in this case, members of BH were not punished, which is seen as an injustice. They further asked what the need for punishment is if those that cause harm on others should go unpunished.

In essence, the idea that punishing those who contribute positively to society is unjust, while failing to punish those who cause suffering to others is injustice. From this standpoint, victims argue that members of Boko Haram should face punishment due to their role in promoting violence in society. Their claim that reintegrated ex-BH terrorists deserve punishment and not amnesty is influenced by their understanding of justice and interpretation of punishment.

To find out if victims' interpretation of justice and punishment are justified, it is appropriate to explore utilitarian concept of punishment. What influences people judgement of what actions deserves punishment and the one that deserve reward has been extensively discussed by utilitarians. For example, J.S. Mill contends that across diverse political, social, and religious landscapes, there is a prevailing belief that justice involves rewarding those who demonstrate kindness towards others, while injustice entails rewarding those who inflict harm upon others.

While Mill did not explicitly assert the universality of this phenomenon across cultural, religious, and political spectrums, his use of the term "universal" to describe this sentiment as habitual affirms the idea that it persists regardless of geographical locations. Mill explains that the general consensus is that it is fair for individuals to receive what they deserve, whether it be positive or negative outcomes, and unfair for them to receive positive outcomes or endure negative ones that they do not deserve.

This statement embodies one of the most straightforward and definitive expressions of the concept of justice as perceived by society at large (Henry, 2006). Certainly, Mill's argument resonates with a common sentiment inherent in human nature. There is a widespread belief that punishment serves to restore justice by inflicting suffering on people who have committed crimes. When punishment successfully accomplishes this goal, it is regarded as justice being served. On the other hand, if wrongdoers escape punishment, it is viewed as an injustice.

Linking this to the statement made by one of the respondents that BH members should be subjected to punishment instead of being granted amnesty appears to align with our common inclination to believe that wrongdoing demands punishment rather than forgiveness. In essence, this respondent's view of justice reflects the prevalent notion that individuals who cause harm should be held accountable through punishment to uphold fairness. However, the idea of reintegrating offenders into society without punishment, as promoted by amnesty programs, runs counter to the conventional understanding of justice. Therefore, the use of amnesty programs to

facilitate reconciliation between victims and perpetrators is frequently criticized, particularly by those who have been wronged (Freeman, 2009b; Lenta, 2023).

In examining the connection between justice and punishment, Mill offers additional insights into the factors that shape our perceptions of what punishment should seek to achieve in restoring justice within society. He contends that individuals typically do not view something as morally wrong unless they believe that the person responsible for it should experience consequences, whether through legal penalties, societal disapproval, or their own sense of guilt (Mill, 2016).

Mill has contributed to a better understanding of justice and punishment. He appears to imply that people do not perceive an activity as deserving punishment until its consequences accord to their perception of activities that justify punishment. This concept emphasizes the subjective aspect of justice and the significance of individual perceptions in establishing what action deserves to be punished. Furthermore, he asserts that the criteria for determining whether an action warrants punishment involve reflecting on whether the act is punishable by law and what the prescribed punishment for committing such an act is, as well as considering the moral judgments of observers regarding the rightness or wrongness of such an act.

In light of the amnesty provided to BH members, Mill's point of view raises three questions: To begin, is terrorism punishable in Nigeria constitution? Second, does the constitution provide amnesty for terrorists? Third, how does the public feel about the amnesty provided to BH members? Finally, how do state actors interpret their choice to give amnesty to BH members? These questions give insight on the legal, public, and governmental considerations behind the granting of amnesty to terrorists. Aside from victims claims that it is not justified for the government to forgo punishment for reintegrated BH terrorists, previous literatures also showed that granting amnesty to BH terrorists generates moral concerns.

For instance, Ekanem et al (2012) conducted an inquiry to determine whether amnesty for the BH group is justifiable from both legal and moral standpoints. While accepting that the Nigerian constitution allows state actors to provide amnesty to specific violent offenders, they challenge the rationale of providing such amnesty to the BH group. Given the serious threat to Nigerian unity posed by the BH group's ideology, they challenge the moral grounds for granting

amnesty to their members. This analysis emphasizes the complicated ethical and legal issues that go into amnesty choices, especially when dealing with risks to national unity and security.

Ekanem et al. argue that granting amnesty to Boko Haram members could exacerbate security challenges in Nigeria. They posit this because extending amnesty may incentivize the emergence of additional violent groups that would also seek amnesty. They advocate for direct government confrontation with terrorist groups rather than relying on amnesty as a counterterrorism measure. Nonetheless, they suggest studying how other nations have addressed terrorist groups for insights.

Their central argument is that terrorists inherently resort to violence, making negotiation or appeasement illogical. Ekanem et al.'s viewpoint is consistent with respondents' calls for ex-Boko Haram members to suffer punishment commensurate with their misdeeds. Respondents further endorse this stance, arguing that failing to punish Boko Haram terrorists may encourage other religious groups to engage in terrorism. However, scholars like (Hassan & Olugbuo, 2017) point out that while some victims advocate for punishment for Boko Haram members, others are open to the idea of reconciliation and reintegration for former members. They argue that while some victims seek justice, others are willing to reconcile with perpetrators. Therefore, defining the relationship between justice and reconciliation isn't straightforward. Some believe they are fundamentally opposed, while others argue they must collaborate to advance a nation.

The findings from Hassan & Olugbuo (2017) resonate with views of few victims who argues that punishment won't change what has happened to them. However, from the utilitarian perspective, the purpose of punishment is not to alter what the offender did to the victims but rather to deter the offender from committing further offenses. It is in this context that many victims of Boko Haram argue that not punishing reintegrated BH terrorists will encourage other sects with similar ideologies as Boko Haram to commit similar crimes and expect amnesty.

Victims have also argued that holding reintegrated BH members accountable is a responsibility owed to them by the government. They argue that when an offense is committed against someone, the government is obligated to restore justice to that individual through the imposition of punishment. Bentham, a utilitarian, highlights the reasons why the state should penalize individuals who commit particularly violent crimes. He tends to argue that it is justified to punish such serious offenses, firstly for the protection of society against those who have

demonstrated a tendency to offend, and secondly, for the benefit of the offenders themselves, as it is believed to offer them the chance for rehabilitation (Draper, 2002). Bentham not only presents arguments supporting victims' contention that the government bears the obligation to punish individuals involved in violent crimes but also asserts that punishment can function as a mechanism for rehabilitating offenders.

In the Nigeria context, it implies that the government can also incorporate punishment in the rehabilitation of repentant BH fighters. However, this study refrains from exploring the methodologies for integrating punishment into the amnesty process to address victims' justice demands. Nonetheless, Bentham's insights may illuminate why victims perceive amnesty and reintegration processes for ex-Boko Haram combatants as unjust, as they lack punitive measures.

5.4.2 Proportionality of Punishment

A crucial aspect highlighted in the research findings is the assertion by victims that reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members should receive punishment commensurate with the severity of the crimes they committed. The issue of determining appropriate punishment to match a specific crime has been a subject of debate among utilitarians and retributivists. This study examines retribution punishment because the rationale behind most victims' calls for punishing reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists aligns with the principles of retributive justification for punishment.

It is important to have a thorough grasp of the definition of punishment and the justification for its use before exploring how punishment should correspond with the seriousness of a crime from both a utilitarian and retribution standpoint. A precise definition of punishment would help to understand why victims of Boko Haram who were interviewed claimed that reintegrated members of the group should face punishment rather than amnesty. In an attempt to show what punishment consists of, Davis (1983a) clarifies the concept of punishment in the following manner. In every society, there exist regulations aimed at directing human behavior towards the advancement of the common good. Individuals have the liberty to determine whether they will comply with these regulations. To ensure adherence to these regulations, the government establishes a system for imposing repercussions on those who violate them. The rationale behind

imposing these repercussions is grounded in the prevailing understanding that individuals who break these rules are aware of the consequences but deliberately choose not to follow them.

This definition provides valuable insights into whether BH terrorism constitutes a punishable offense under Nigerian law. Terrorism is universally punishable due to its exacerbation of societal suffering. Perpetrators of terrorism are aware that their actions violate state regulations and understand the potential consequences. Therefore, the state responsible for punishing those involved in acts of terrorism, is justified in imposing penalties, as individuals engaging in terrorism knowingly disregard the potential repercussions. Having confirmed that acts of terrorism warrant severe punishment in Nigeria, it is reasonable to expect that this punishment should be enforced on those who have engaged in such acts.

This perspective resonates with Bentham's belief that the purpose of punishment is not solely to specify the consequences of a particular wrongdoing, but rather to execute it promptly once the offense is committed. Bentham further expounded on the relationship between the government's enforcement of punishment for wrongdoing and the public's confidence in the government's capacity to safeguard them from harm. As Bentham puts it: "a punishment produces an evil of the first order. It inflicts suffering upon an individual who has incurred it voluntarily, and in its secondary effects it produces only good, it intimidates the ill-disposed, it re-assures the innocent, and becomes the safeguard of society" (Bentham, 1830, p. 18). This viewpoint is essential for understanding why victims perceive injustice in the government's decision to provide amnesty to BH members. This explains why some victims questioned the meaning of the law and punishment if they are not implemented when a crime is committed.

Utilitarians hold that punishment should align with the severity of the crime committed, with Bentham advocating for harsher penalties for actions causing greater harm. However, utilitarians prioritize the consequences of actions over their inherent moral nature. They argue that when evaluating the moral rightness of an action, the outcomes for those affected should be considered. A morally right action maximizes the overall happiness of the greatest number of individuals involved, whereas a morally wrong action diminishes it. In essence, proponents of utilitarianism associate moral rightness with the promotion of happiness for the greatest number of people.

Utilitarians, including Bentham, argue that punishment should be geared towards enhancing societal happiness. Bentham suggests that punishment is warranted if it leads to a net increase in overall happiness and discourages behaviours that reduce happiness. Despite recognizing that punishment involves causing suffering, Bentham contends that it can be justified if it helps eradicate societal wrongs. However, he also maintains that punishment is not always necessary in all cases of wrongdoing. Bentham articulated several utilitarian justifications for punishment. These encompass the notion that punishment becomes unnecessary if it fails to deter crime effectively. Additionally, when one intentionally inflicts harm upon another, punishment serves as a necessary penalty. The primary objective of punishment, according to Bentham, is to enhance societal happiness by deterring behaviors that diminish overall well-being. Lastly, punishment plays a crucial role in reinstating victims' trust in the state's capacity to safeguard them from future harm, thus bolstering the overall safety of society (Bentham, 2003).

What this means is that utilitarians even though admit that punishment be proportionate to the crime committed by an offender, they also consider if such harsh punishment in the case of a serious crime will produce happiness of the greater number of people. In other words, utilitarians would opt not to impose punishment for certain crimes if it's determined that punishment doesn't effectively prevent such offenses, or if there exists a best alternative method for preventing those crimes than punishment.

This idea supports the government's argument that punishing reintegrated ex-BH terrorists could make security problems worse in the country. However, research shows that victims tend to agree more with retribution punishment than utilitarianism. In a retributive context, punishment serves to demonstrate to the wrongdoer that they have violated societal norms and therefore deserve punishment, rather than aiming for any other potential benefits that punishment might bring (Carlsmith, 2006). Analysing these punishment theories in light of victims' perspectives, it may be inferred that utilitarianism aligns with the decision to grant amnesty to BH terrorists if it's the most effective way to prevent further harm to innocent people. In essence, if punishing reintegrated BH terrorists would result in more innocent lives being lost, then it's considered unnecessary to pursue punishment.

The research findings regarding victims' demands for the punishment of reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists align with the principles of retribution punishment theory. Victims strongly

advocate for severe penalties for former members of Boko Haram who willingly joined the terrorist group. They argue that imposing punishment on reintegrated Boko Haram members who willingly joined the group will satisfy their sense of justice, regardless of whether it exacerbates security challenges in Nigeria. Their argument is rooted in the principle that acts of wrongdoing that is punishable by the law must be punished.

One might argue that the respondents' insistence on punishing reintegrated BH members indicates a stronger preference for the retributive rationale of punishment over utilitarian or consequentialist perspectives. Retribution prioritizes restoring justice to both the victim and society through punishment, rather than solely focusing on the outcomes of an action. This doesn't dismiss the relevance of utilitarian justifications for punishment or imply that the state should overlook consequences that punishing reintegrated BH members should generate in society. Instead, it underscores the need for punishment to be administered while also considering its impact on societal happiness or well-being. In this scenario, the majority of victims' viewpoints more closely align with retribution, as they advocate for punishment regardless of whether it may lead to increased security challenges in Nigeria.

Examining the idea of appropriate punishment from a retributive standpoint is essential, particularly in light of the claim made by victims that reintegrated BH terrorists should be punished according to the severity of their crimes. This entails looking at ways to make sure that the penalty reflects the values of justice and accountability and is commensurate with the seriousness of the crimes committed.

5.4.3 Punishment-Crime Nexus in Retribution

The prevailing sentiment among most victims is that reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists should face punishments that correspond to the severity of their crimes. These victims are indifferent to whether such punishment might exacerbate security challenges in their community. Their primary concern is for the perpetrators to experience the same level of suffering that they themselves endured due to the actions of the Boko Haram terrorists. These assertions align with the principles of retribution punishment, which critique the idea of evaluating whether a wrongful action deserves punishment solely based on the outcomes it might produce. Retributivists argue

that the focus should be on ensuring that the punishment is proportional to the specific offense committed, regardless of its broader consequences.

The concept of retribution as a method of punishment has been recognized for its efficacy in deterring crime. Nevertheless, the mechanisms by which it achieves this goal and the reasoning behind its implementation have sparked considerable debate. Such discourse has reached a point where it's difficult to encounter a retributive doctrine that hasn't been subject to criticism (Bedau, 1978). Bedau (1978) conducted a detailed examination of the concept of retributive punishment as articulated by H.L.A. Hart, an esteemed English legal philosopher. Despite Hart's substantial contributions to the advancement of retribution theory, Bedau (1978) noted a lack of adequate attention given to these contributions in philosophical discourse regarding the notion of punishment aligning with the crime within retributive punishment theory.

Bedau highlighted that, according to Hart, the theory of retributive punishment is built upon three core principles. Firstly, punishment is justified when it is proven that an individual intentionally caused harm to another person. Secondly, the severity of the punishment should be proportional to the seriousness of the offense committed. Lastly, the suffering or penalty imposed upon an individual for their transgression must be morally justified (see: Bedau 1978, p. 602). Determining the appropriate punishment for reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members presents a significant challenge, as emphasized by Bedau. While there's recognition that wrongdoing warrants punishment, aligning the severity of punishment with the nature of the crimes committed remains a complex issue within the framework of retributive punishment. The challenge arises because many of these individuals may not have directly harmed anyone. Therefore, the government must determine suitable punishment that corresponds to the level of involvement and responsibility of each reintegrated ex-Boko Haram member.

Davis (1983, p. 726) provided additional insight into the challenge retributivists encounter when attempting to match punishment to the severity of the crime. He explained that retributivists aim for the crime itself to determine the appropriate punishment. However, achieving this requires establishing a scale of crimes and penalties beforehand. Davis raised doubts about the principles guiding the establishment of such a scale and the process of accommodating new offenses within it. To address this issue, Davis proposed considering the expected outcomes of punishments with

different levels of severity, essentially adopting a utilitarian perspective. He argued that without a utilitarian scale of crimes and penalties, retributivism lacks meaningful substance or significance.

This research aims to assess the justification and reasonableness of imposing punishment on reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members by examining philosophical debates on punishment. Victims' calls for punishment rather than amnesty for reintegrated Boko Haram members may find support when considering justifications for punishment from both retribution and utilitarian punishment theories. Punishment is seen from a utilitarian perspective as a means to enhance overall societal well-being and discourage misconduct. Given that Boko Haram's actions are considered criminal, punishment is viewed as necessary to dissuade both current and potential members of the group, thus deterring further terrorist acts. This indicates that if the Nigerian amnesty program for Boko Haram terrorists is viewed as the most effective strategy for tackling terrorism, as the government claims, the total well-being of all individuals harmed by Boko Haram attacks should come first. Ignoring victims' concerns caused victims to feel injustice in the process.

The retribution punishment theory posits that individuals involved in criminal acts should be punished to uphold accountability for their wrongdoing, as mandated by justice. In light of this, victims expect that this law, recognized both constitutionally and morally, should be enforced regardless of the perpetrator's motives. Thus, victims' demand for punishment is justified from the perspective of retribution punishment. Many people question the selective nature of justice when punishment for Boko Haram members is overlooked. They wonder why individuals who committed similar crimes are punished while Boko Haram terrorists are not.

5.5 Punishment and Ethical Implications

This section intends to scrutinize the rationale behind the amnesty program for Boko Haram terrorists and the reintegration of repentant former members into society. Policymakers often cite the potential exacerbation of security challenges as a primary reason for opting for amnesty instead of punishment for reintegrated Boko Haram members. However, the validity of this claim is debatable. The incorporation of existing moral theories in philosophy into this research aims to elucidate the factors that may influence victims' decisions and, more significantly, to highlight the moral implications of both accepting and denying the demands of victims.

Notwithstanding agreement between utilitarian and retributive punishment theories on the necessity of punishment, this research argues that punishing reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members could end up resulting in increased social harm due to the moral complexity connected with BH terrorism. To emphasize this, the research examines the possible consequences of punishing reintegrated former Boko Haram (BH) members.

Retributivists argue for punishments that match the seriousness of the offense, maintaining that punishment serves the sole purpose of holding offenders accountable for their actions. Immanuel Kant, an advocate of this viewpoint, suggests that punishment should aim to rectify the breach of justice caused by the offender's violation of moral norms, even if this entails further moral implications (Koritansky, 2005). Kant's insights shed light on the goals of punishment concerning the severity of the crime. Firstly, he posits that punishment should align with the nature of the offense. Secondly, he stresses that the primary objective of punishing offenders is to reinstate justice within society.

Kant's contributions deepen our understanding of the rationale behind punishment from a retributive standpoint, the core motivations driving the widespread belief in holding perpetrators accountable, and the potential consequences of neglecting this obligation. Within the retributive framework, punishment entails imposing rigorous measures on offenders in response to, and in proportion with, their level of "desert" or moral culpability (Lacey & Pickard, 2015b, p. 666). The research findings suggest that victims expect the government to take on the responsibility of retributive punishment, given that their notion of justice is in line with this approach. Conversely, utilitarians, though they lean towards alternative solutions aimed at maximizing overall happiness, still recognize punishment as a necessary evil with the potential to deter offenders from repeating their actions.

Nonetheless, while fulfilling victims' demands for punishing reintegrated former Boko Haram (BH) members might not be inherently unjust, it does raise considerable moral implications due to the intricate nature of BH terrorism. Various dilemmas deter the straightforward application of punishment in this scenario. Some reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists were coerced or abducted. Punishing these individuals would constitute a moral injustice. Furthermore, punishment alone cannot ensure the prevention of Boko Haram (BH) terrorism, as the government has not adequately addressed the root causes or effectively countered the insurgency. Imposing

punishment may deter willing surrenders, potentially resulting in escalated violence against innocent civilians. Ideally, punishment would be effective once the government has defeated and apprehended the terrorists. Additionally, punishment may not effectively deter terrorism driven by religious ideology.

Bentham argued that punishment is justified when it maximizes the overall happiness of society. However, applying punishment to reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members, whether voluntary or coerced, presents challenges as many reside in communities affected by BH attacks, and some are relatives of both direct and indirect victims. This complicates the use of punishment to achieve Bentham's goal. Additionally, Bentham contended that punishment is ineffective if it cannot prevent harm. Previous research has indicated that punishment imposed on BH members did not effectively deter others from engaging in terrorism (Allen, 2019).

5.6 Analysis of Punishment for Reintegrated Boko Haram Terrorists

This research investigated two primary punishment theories, utilitarian and retribution punishment, to assess the appropriateness of the argument favouring punishment over granting amnesty to reintegrated BH members. Both theories underscored the necessity of punishment to safeguard society from crime. Given the pain inflicted by Boko Haram terrorism on victims, communities, and the state in Nigeria, proponents of these punishment theories argue that perpetrators merit punishment based on the justifications outlined in this research.

Nonetheless, this research highlighted the reasons why, given the complexities surrounding Boko Haram (BH) terrorism, imposing punishment in this context may not be suitable. Among these complexities is the fact that some reintegrated BH members have themselves been victims of BH attacks. Moreover, the ongoing struggle against BH terrorism remains unresolved, casting doubt on the effectiveness of punishment as a deterrent. Additionally, there persists the notion that punishment may not effectively deter terrorist activities driven by religious ideology, underscoring the challenges of addressing extremism.

5.7 Victims Demand For “Diya” Payment

Victims perceive the payment of 'Diya' as synonymous with fairness, as it is recognized as a form of restitution in Islamic law. They assert that the payment of 'Diya' is a moral entitlement.

This section explores the concept of 'Diya' from an Islamic perspective and analyses it through the lens of utilitarian arguments and other pertinent normative considerations. The goal is to assess whether the majority of victims' claim regarding 'Diya' as their moral right aligns with philosophical principles of moral rights.

5.7.1 Diya: A Peaceful Alternative to Act of Revenge

In order to grasp why victims', view the application of "Diya" as comparable to what amnesty should accomplish in terms of fairness, it's essential to briefly delve into the historical context of the relationship between crime, punishment, and the concept of Diya. Diya payment, originally part of “pre-Islamic tribal” practices, became integrated into the Islamic legal system as a means of addressing moral issues arising from the pursuit of individual retribution (Pascoe, 2016, p. 152). “During the pre-Islamic era in Arabia,” tribal interactions were marked by enmity, which was fuelled mostly by a desire for vengeance for killings. This thirst for vengeance did not only target the individual culpable, but also their tribal allies. Diya, which is often presented as material compensation originated as an administrative solution to tribes' violent acts of retribution (Pascoe, 2016, p. 153).

Pascoe (2016) examined the implementation of Diya across thirteen countries where this form of compensation is practiced. Among these nations are northern Nigeria, various African countries, and several Middle Eastern nations. Pascoe (2016) added that in each of these thirteen jurisdictions, the death penalty serves as a judicial sanction for murder. Nevertheless, they also afford murderers the choice to offer Diya to the “victim’s next of kin” as a means to avoid death penalty (ibid, p. 158). This suggests a connection between Diya and capital punishment, with Diya acting as a mechanism to restore justice for victims. In cases where the victim has died due to the actions of the perpetrator, Diya serves to bring justice to the victim's family.

Islamic law divides crimes into three categories: "Hadd (or Hudud) Crimes," which are the most serious offenses; "Tazir Crimes," which are less serious; and "Qesas Crimes," which include compensation or revenge (Wiechman et al., 1996). In accordance with the research conducted by Wiechman et al., the concept of Qesas crimes holds relevance to the subject matter of this study due to its association with the notion of "Diya." The study elucidates the correlation between Qesas crimes and Diya, emphasizing that a Qesas crime is intricately tied to the concept of retaliation. It

delineates that Qesas punishment encompasses various forms, one of which involves the payment of Diya by the perpetrator to the victim or their family as compensation. Therefore, the findings of this study underscore the significance of understanding the relationship between Qesas crimes and Diya within the context of the research focus. In Islamic law, Diya is compensation paid by the perpetrator to the victim or, in cases of murder, to the victim's family.

Kamali (2019) elaborates on the criteria for crimes deserving the payment of Diya. According to Kamali, Diya is mandated for offenses committed unintentionally, as well as culpable crimes where the perpetrator deliberately inflicts harm on the victim without intending to cause death, but the resulting harm ultimately leads to the victim's demise. Kamali (2019, p. 203) delves deeper into the concept, explaining that retaliation is associated with Qisas, which is applicable to crimes where the perpetrator intends to kill the victim, thereby resulting in the victim's death. On the other hand, Diya applies to situations where harm leads to the victim's death, despite the perpetrator having no intention to kill.

However, in interviews, victims express the expectation that the government, rather than the offenders, should provide this restitution. While acknowledging the Islamic principle that perpetrators are responsible for paying Diya, victims argue that if the government fails in its duty to protect citizens, they have the right to seek compensation from the government. In essence, victims redefine the payment of Diya as compensation entitled to them due to the government's failure to ensure the safety of themselves and their family members.

Victims' also justified Diya's payment, pointing out that Boko Haram attacks resulted in the destruction of their houses and businesses. For those that lost breadwinners in their families as a result of Boko Haram attacks, such compensation is deemed vital to aid in their recovery from the incurred losses. Monetary support is viewed as a vital tool to help them rebuild and regain stability. An element worth assessing is the assertion made by victims that the payment of Diya is their moral entitlement. For the purposes of this study, Diya is designated as restitution. In other words, this study seeks to explore whether victims have a moral entitlement to restitution. It will analyse moral theories that guide this study to support this inquiry and incorporate additional moral arguments as needed.

The idea of restitution is really simple. It views crime as an infringement on a person's rights by another. A loss is suffered by the victim, and justice requires that the accountable criminal

make amends for this loss (Randy, 1977). This demonstrates a link between restitution and justice, suggesting that victims' requests for restitution or Diya can be seen as a means to restore justice. It also indicates that the payment of Diya or restitution assists victims in recovering their losses resulting from the actions of offenders. This holds significance for the study, as the research question and purpose revolve around victims' perceptions of injustice within the amnesty program.

5.7.2 The Link Between Diya and Punishment

Based on the preceding information, it can be inferred that Diya payment functions as a form of punishment with a dual purpose: it contributes to restoring justice and specifies what offenders must do to address the harm they have caused through their actions.

Lollar (2014) illustrates the link between restitution and punishment. Punishment encompasses depriving an individual of something they highly cherish, such as their freedom, peace of mind, property, or fundamental rights. In this context, restitution aligns with the definition of punishment as it entails depriving the offender of something they deeply value and would prefer to retain indefinitely.

This echoes the sentiments of victims seeking restitution from the government to redress their losses. However, one might question whether these victims have a legal basis to demand restitution from the government, given that it was not the government that caused them harm. It also revisits the concept that, according to Islamic law, perpetrators should be the ones to pay Diya, not the government. Nonetheless, this study concentrates on moral considerations rather than legal ones. Its objective is to ascertain whether victims possess a moral entitlement to restitution and whether the government holds a moral obligation to address such demands. Alternatively, can the payment of Diya to victims of BH attacks by the government be considered a moral obligation? On what ethical basis might victims perceive the receipt of Diya from the government as a moral entitlement?

One could argue that victims' moral claims for the government to pay them Diya may not align with Islamic religious precepts. As indicated in the findings section, victims themselves acknowledged that it is the offender who is responsible for paying Diya to the victims. Hence, the government may not have a moral obligation to pay Diya in accordance with Islamic principles.

However, it's worth noting that moral philosophy, while sharing some common ground with religion, does not solely rely on religious precepts to assess what is morally right or wrong. Instead, it often relies on moral theories as guides for evaluating judgments of morality.

As Pojman (1997, p. 12) puts it:

moral behaviour, as defined by a given religion, is often held to be essential to the practice of that religion. But neither the practices nor the precepts of morality should be identified with religion. The practice of morality need not be motivated by religious considerations. And moral precepts need not be grounded in revelation or divine authority-as religious teachings invariably are.

This pivot to moral philosophy becomes significant in assessing the victims' argument that the Payment of Diya constitutes their moral entitlement, stemming from the government's failure to safeguard them against harm—an obligation they assert rests with the government.

Before delving into moral rights in philosophy, it's pertinent to briefly examine what constitutes the government's duty to individuals or its primary obligation within the state.

Utilitarians like Mill and Bentham prioritize security as a top objective of the government, with the sole duty being to promote happiness within the state (Clark & Elliott, 2001). The role of government and why people choose to obey government policies and programs can be better understood through the explanations of social contract theorists, who argue that the state exists to ensure security and protection against harm (Elahi, 2014). In this regard, victims' assertion that the right to security is their moral entitlement could be duly considered.

5.7.3 Diya and Moral Right

Discussions surrounding the existence and nature of moral rights are subjects of ongoing debate within philosophy, as highlighted by scholars such as Raz (1984) and Brandt (1983). Decew (1988) appears to explain that rights are distinct from typical moral reasons guiding how individuals are treated; they hold significant weight in moral discourse because they cannot be simply weighed against other factors. Furthermore, individuals maintain their rights to some extent, even when these rights are legitimately violated or disregarded. However, the validity of these assertions is undermined by the reality that rights frequently clash with each other and may be superseded by considerations unrelated to rights.

Decew aimed to illustrate in this paper how individuals perceive moral rights, along with the competing arguments that emerge from these interpretations, and potential methods for reconciling them. While this study does not seek to engage directly in these debates, its focus is to establish the existence of moral rights and to emphasize that not all rights are inherently moral rights. However, according to Raz (1984) in the paper titled "Hart on Moral Rights and Legal Duties," Jeremy Bentham, a supporter of utilitarianism, contended that every right can be categorized as a legal right, dismissing discussions on moral rights as lacking coherence. "Yet he allowed that sometimes people refer to moral rights when they mean to say that there ought to be legal rights, thus implicitly conceding that at least sometimes a coherent sense can be attributed to discourse about moral rights" (Raz, 1984, p. 124).

It is crucial at this juncture to elucidate what moral claims signify for a utilitarian such as John Stuart Mill. This approach will provide further insight into moral claims and whether victims possess the right to assert and uphold them. Mill initially links moral rights to justice. He expresses the idea that justice encompasses actions that are not only morally obligatory but also entail a right that individuals can legitimately demand from others (ibid). Mill directs our focus towards philosophical discussions regarding individuals and their moral assertions.

Philosophical debates about justice often highlight how individuals' treatment shapes their understanding of justice (Miller, 2021). It is frequently observed that people tend to equate justice with the availability of basic human rights, including the right to life and freedom of expression. This aligns with the victims' demand for Diya payment from the government, especially if it can be established that the security of life and property is their entitlement, and the government bears the responsibility to safeguard it.

Regardless of the perspective from which it is argued whether moral or legal, it remains indisputable that the government has the duty to protect individuals from harm. Critics might argue that utilizing a utilitarian moral framework to assess the legitimacy of victims' demands for Diya payment or restitution might not be valid if offering amnesty proves to be the most effective method of preventing reintegrated Boko Haram members from rejoining the terrorist organization. Critics could posit that utilitarians, including Mill, who strongly advocate for this moral theory, define justice as that which promotes the happiness of the greatest number of people.

Harsanyi (1985, p. 117) examines some of the difficulties inherent in using utilitarianism to resolve issues related to individuals' rights and obligations of the government and explain that act utilitarianism, which asserts that the best course of action is the one that maximizes overall happiness, may not be the most effective approach to address complex moral dilemmas regarding justice and related issues. This is because act utilitarianism often struggles to adequately account for the concepts of "moral rights and obligations", which are crucial aspects of ethical considerations. Harsanyi (1985) provides an example of how act utilitarianism fails to appropriately address the questions of individual rights and government responsibility.

Harsanyi raises a pertinent question about whether the government's decision to take someone's home to create a road for the greater benefit of many can be considered morally justified. According to the principles of act utilitarianism, the answer is yes if a greater number of people stand to benefit from this government goal. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that to the owners of the property, this action represents a deprivation of their property and their obligation to provide shelter for their family. This highlights a tension between the broader societal utility and the individual rights and obligations implicated by such actions. While act utilitarianism may justify the government's decision based on overall utility, it does not fully address the moral complexities and individual grievances involved in such situations. This case demonstrates the limitations of act utilitarianism in resolving opposing interests and moral considerations in certain situations.

The situation described mirrors the complexities surrounding the government's decision to grant amnesty to Boko Haram (BH) members and reintegrate repentant individuals into society, juxtaposed with the grievances of victims who have suffered losses due to BH attacks. The government asserts that reintegrating former BH members will enhance the security of Nigerians, which is a fundamental obligation of the government. Conversely, victims, particularly heads of families whose homes and businesses have been destroyed by BH attacks, also have an obligation to provide for their families and ensure their safety.

In essence, both the government and victims are bound by moral obligations in this scenario. It's essential to emphasize that the focus here is on moral rights rather than constitutional rights, as the argument may not fully hold if the emphasis shifts solely to the constitutional rights

of the government. This underscores the intricate interplay of moral considerations and individual obligations in addressing complex societal challenges like those posed by the BH terrorism.

The argument outlined suggests that for critics, if an amnesty program successfully prevents Boko Haram members from launching attacks against the majority of Nigerians, then amnesty could be considered morally justified, even if it means disregarding the happiness of a few victims. In essence, if sacrificing the happiness of a minority is necessary to safeguard the happiness of the majority, then granting amnesty to ex-terrorists may be justified based on utilitarian principles, which prioritize the happiness of the greater number of people.

However, it's crucial to note that utilitarians like Mill have discussed what justice entails and he asserts that it “implies something which it is not only right to do, and wrong not to do, but which some individual person can claim from us as his moral right” (Mill, 1962, p. 32). It would be erroneous to interpret "some people" as meaning everyone. Therefore, the rights of a few individuals are just as significant as the rights of everyone else. This underscores the importance of considering individual rights and balancing them with the overall welfare of society when making moral judgments.

Philosophers interested in human rights also perceived such rights as the very reason for establishing a government. For instance, Brown explains that while certain rights, such as the right to keep promises, can be waived, however, during the "seventeenth and eighteenth centuries", a significant number of philosophers and common individuals came to the consensus that certain fundamental rights, such as those pertaining to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, cannot be morally or logically relinquished, transferred, or nullified. Given that the term "alienable" denotes the transferability or nullifiable of rights, these particular rights were termed "inalienable" to underscore the moral and logical impossibility of their transfer or nullification (Brown, 1955, p. 192).

If there is consensus that safeguarding individuals from harm is an obligation owed by the Nigerian government to every citizen, then addressing this right when infringed upon by Boko Haram terrorists becomes a matter of the victims' rights. This is because protection against harm is considered an inalienable right in moral discourse. Critics may also question the justification of restitution as a means of restoring justice to victims.

Holmgren (1983) explains that when restitution is used, it is reasonable to say that the perpetrator is repaying the victims for the losses incurred as a result of the perpetrator's harm. In this way, the perpetrator is not used as a tool to establish a crime-free society. In other words, the goal is to mitigate the negative consequences of his own wrongdoings. And, by using restitution as a form of punishment, it allows victims to recover what they have lost as a result of the offender's actions. Holmgren's assertion is that community members have moral justification to employ legal punishment as a means of seeking restitution for the harm caused by the actions of criminals.

The above statements assert that victims of Boko Haram terrorism are justified in seeking restitution. While restitution, also known as 'Diya', in this context, is typically expected to be paid by offenders rather than the government, the government's obligation to protect victims from harm complicates the situation. Since reintegrated offenders may be unable to pay this "Diya," it may not be morally inappropriate for the government to provide compensation to victims as a means of making amends for failing to protect them against terrorists. Restitution is generally employed to recover losses, often quantifiable ones (Benson, 1996).

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that there is indeed a connection between restitution and justice. Victims who pursue restitution often view it as a means to aid in their healing process from the harm caused by the offender. To put it another way, if the essence of justice is to assist victims in healing, then restitution is consistent with justice because it assists a victim in recovering from his or her loss. However, this raises the philosophical question of what kind of "justice theory" is compatible with restitution (Barnett, 1980). Barnett elucidates that restitution entails the provision of monetary compensation from perpetrators to victims. The author further argue that it constitutes a legitimate theory of justice by virtue of its capacity to facilitate the recovery of losses incurred by victims due to the misconduct of offenders.

The author's analysis of restitution highlights its role in assisting victims in recovering from their financial losses. The question of whether it is the responsibility of the government or reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members to pay Diya should not arise if amnesty is to be utilized to prevent BH terrorism and address obstacles that could impede their successful reintegration into society. Victims are concerned about financial restitution. It simply means that victims are concerned about their financial needs or lost possessions, which monetary compensation can alleviate. It is morally justified for victims who have lost their possessions due to the actions of

perpetrators to pursue restitution. To effectively fulfil its purpose, restitution is believed to be aimed at aiding victims in returning to their previous financial standing before the harm caused by the perpetrators (Meyer, 2022).

This brings up the inquiry of what losses suffered by victims can be alleviated through the payment of Diya. Victims contend that their properties and businesses were demolished by the terrorists, asserting that they have no means of livelihood to return to. Past research has demonstrated that economic loss represents another facet of terrorist activities that detrimentally affects both victims and communities affected by Boko Haram terrorism (Babajo & Jarimi, 2022; Jacob et al., 2016). Awojobi (2014) and Ovaga (2012) disclose that Boko Haram terrorism has severely disrupted economic activities in regions of northeast Nigeria where the violent conflict is widespread. Financial institutions, business owners, and markets operate with significant limitations, often refraining from full-time operations due to the fear of terrorist attacks.

5.8 Analysis of Victims Demand For Diya

Victims rely on Diya to address their financial needs. Previous amnesties in Nigeria have recognized the significance of offering reintegrated offenders a monthly salary to prevent recidivism (see: Aghedo, 2013), this implies that providing financial compensation is beneficial in addressing offenders' grievances. Extending or adopting this strategy to assist victims of Boko Haram terrorist attacks can also be advantageous. This aspect holds particular importance if the government aims to achieve an effective reintegration process.

Everyone expects to be treated fairly, and when this is not the case, the question of justice naturally arises. This aligns with Mill's assertion that showing partiality or granting advantages to one individual over another in situations where favouritism is unwarranted is inherently incompatible with justice (Mill, 2016). This statement reflects the sentiment of unfairness expressed by victims. To fully grasp the emotions experienced by victims, one must personally experience unfair treatment, as underscored by one of the victims (Rawls, 1971).

This study has illustrated that when individuals moral claim is infringed upon, they will naturally experience anger, and it is the responsibility of the government to address and resolve their grievances rather than dismiss them. The victims' right to protection was breached, justifying

their pursuit of Diya payment as a means of aiding in their recovery from financial losses inflicted by Boko Haram terrorists. Providing financial assistance to victims should be regarded as a government responsibility in advancing the common good.

5.9 Revenge and Imprisonment At Play

The study's findings highlighted revenge or retaliation as a major topic. Most victims relate revenge with the prolonged incarceration of rehabilitated BH terrorists who had participated in the act of terrorism. They claim that seeing reintegrated BH terrorists is a painful reminder of their own experiences, provoking thoughts of pursuing revenge in them. They justified their assertions by referencing instances of revenge found in Islamic scriptures. Some assert that if their grievances are not addressed by the government, they will seek revenge on their own accord. This section links these victim perspectives with philosophical discourse on revenge. It aims to explore the factors that influence revenge, its moral implications, and whether the act of seeking vengeance would truly quench victims' thirst for retribution. The objective is not to validate or invalidate victims' claims, but rather to deepen the understanding of the concept of revenge within philosophical discussions and to elucidate policymakers on the motivations behind victims' assertions.

Hurting someone in retaliation for harm he did to you is known as taking revenge. It is an act of vengeance entails purposefully inflicting harm upon another individual, driven by feelings of resentment stemming from an injurious act or acts committed by that individual against the retaliator, or against others whose suffering the retaliator also resent (Rosebury, 2009, p. 4). This definition aligns with the motivations articulated by victims for pursuing revenge against reintegrated BH members. The desire for revenge among victims of BH attack stems from the atrocities inflicted upon them by BH terrorists. Some argue that granting amnesty does not serve as adequate punishment, and they doubt the sincerity of repentance among reintegrated BH members. Victims seeking revenge perceive all reintegrated BH members as perpetrators of their suffering, particularly those who willingly joined the terrorist group.

Victims of violent crimes often have a desire for revenge. And when victims of wrongdoing seek revenge, they have a specific goal in mind. The question is, what do victims of BH attack hope to achieve through revenge? The answer is that they are looking for something to lessen the

burden of grief caused by the terrorists and they hope that incarcerating reintegrated BH members would help them achieve this goal. For example, when asked about accepting reintegrated former BH members, one victim expressed skepticism, stating that the government hastily granted amnesty without fully understanding the extent of their suffering. Some individuals expressed a desire for the terrorists to experience the same pain they currently endure.

5.9.1 Imprisonment and Victims' Desire for Revenge

Scholars have explored whether seeking revenge provides relief for victims, but research suggests that while harsh punishment of offenders may momentarily alleviate victims' anger, it cannot completely fulfil their desire for revenge (Orth, 2004; Marsh, 2015). Price (2009) notes that studies in this area have highlighted the costs associated with vengeance. Rather than facilitating the process of overcoming painful experiences, seeking revenge may lead individuals to dwell on them, ultimately leaving them unsatisfied. This perspective resonates with the views of some victims who argue that revenge or punishment cannot alter the past events they have experienced.

Philosophers have delved into the moral implications of revenge and the underlying factors that drive victims to pursue it (Uniacke, 2000). It's essential to consider that seeking vengeance may be perceived as contrary to moral principles, yet for the individual pursuing it, it represents the attainment of a personal objective. Gert (2020, p. 972) explains that the assertion that getting revenge is a good can be understood in various ways. In this context, it suggests that seeking revenge always provides an individual with a reason—although not necessarily a fully justifiable one—for taking action. In this regard, revenge shares similarities with pursuits like pleasure, knowledge, and freedom, in that it motivates individuals to act. It's important to clarify that describing revenge as a basic good does not imply moral endorsement.

Victims expressing a desire for revenge have voiced their preference for the government to take action on their behalf. This indicates their acknowledgment that it falls upon the government, rather than the victims themselves, to administer punishment to offenders. In the realm of philosophical discourse surrounding revenge, a consensus among many philosophers is that it represents irrational conduct. Francis Bacon, for example, contends that seeking revenge is devoid of meaning because legal systems exist to address wrongdoing. Bacon asserts that pursuing

revenge would amount to a violation of the law, as justice for the victim is already prescribed within legal frameworks.

Additionally, he argues that the most acceptable form of revenge pertains to injustices for which there is no legal recourse (Bacon, 1901). In simpler terms, seeking revenge against someone in a location where there are established laws governing punishment for such offenses is unlawful because it is the responsibility of the government to administer such punishment, not the victims themselves.

Based on Bacon's argument, one could infer that seeking vengeance by victims of the Boko Haram attack may be considered both morally and legally unacceptable. This is because there are specific sections within Nigerian laws outlining the actions the government must take in such circumstances. It implies that victims of Boko Haram attacks are not permitted to retaliate against reintegrated Boko Haram members but must instead depend on the government to ensure justice. As previously mentioned, victims acknowledge that seeking revenge could lead to vigilantism, which is why they seek governmental assistance in attaining justice.

In Nigeria, terrorism is deemed a punishable offense, carrying severe penalties. However, the legislation aimed at preventing acts of terrorism exhibits a noticeable "lack of precision and clarity regarding its terms and definitions" (Nwosu, 2018, p. 90), hindering its smooth implementation. Victims perceive the replacement of the severe penalties linked to acts of terrorism with amnesty as unjust, leading them to feel that reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists are not receiving the deserved punishment.

The justification for punishing perpetrators of violent crimes is supported by both utilitarian and retribution punishment theories (see, Lee, 2023;Rehrn & Zisman, 2022). However, these punishment theories do not inherently advocate for victims to determine the manner in which offenders should be punished or grant them the authority to dictate to the government how offenders should be punished to satisfy their desires.

A utilitarian might propose imprisonment for perpetrators of crime if keeping them in prison would promote the interests of the vast majority of people, including the offender. In other words, if a victim desires the execution of an offender but doing so would negatively impact the overall happiness of society, a utilitarian will not entertain this request. Utilitarians prioritize

outcomes that promote the common good and collective interests over individual desires or preferences.

The findings of this study, however, align more closely with retributive punishment than utilitarian punishment. This is because victims express a preference for punishment without considering whether it would exacerbate the security situation, indicating a focus on retribution rather than on the overall consequences for societal well-being. While retributivists may not endorse the concept of victims personally seeking revenge, they may entertain the notion of the government imposing severe penalties on offenders if that is prescribed by law. If the law mandates that individuals who intentionally cause harm to innocent persons should be imprisoned, justice dictates that the government should enforce this without regard to the potential consequences their imprisonment might bring about (see: Isenbrg, 1964).

Retribution maintains that justice must prevail irrespective of the consequences. If the prescribed punishment for murder is the death sentence, then justice mandates that the death sentence should be implemented, regardless of any potential repercussions. However, it's crucial to clarify that this study does not endorse revenge. Rather, it shows that victims' calls for retribution may stem from the perception that the government neglected its duty to ensure justice in this situation, leading them to feel betrayed. This interpretation could explain why a victim assert that he feels compelled to seek revenge if the government fails to administer punishments fitting the crimes committed by reintegrated BH members. (Gert, 2020) appears to share a similar viewpoint, indicating that because of the intimate connection between revenge, retribution, and justice, some acts of revenge might be morally justifiable.

Applying this theory to the amnesty implementation issue, one might advocate for the punishment of reintegrated BH members implicated in terrorism, regardless of potential repercussions for Nigerian society. However, this stance is delicate as overlooking certain consequences could exacerbate problems for both the state and victims. The question to reflect on is why these victims, despite understanding that revenge is morally wrong and being aware that the government could punish them for seeking revenge, still insist that they will pursue it if the government fails to meet their sense of justice.

The question to reflect on is why this victim, despite understanding that revenge is morally wrong and being aware that the government could punish them for seeking revenge, still insist that

he will pursue it if the government fails to meet his sense of justice. One element that can impact this decision hinges on the victims' perceptions of the perpetrators' actions. Referring to Murphy (1988), Radzik (2004) suggests that deliberate harm towards another individual conveys messages to the victim, including the notions that they are insignificant, exploitable for personal gain, or inferior to the perpetrator. Victims of wrongdoing may seek revenge with the objective of asserting to the perpetrator that they are not as weak or powerless as the perpetrator assumed.

In the context of Boko Haram's activities, victims have frequently been exploited as a means to achieve the group's goals. Many victims have suffered bitter experiences, and the memories of such trauma can be incredibly difficult to manage. It's unrealistic to expect these victims to peacefully coexist with those who have caused them such pain. As Radzik argues, wrongful acts create divisions among people, rupturing social bonds and trust. When past wrongs continue to loom as present threats, fear and distrust further separate individuals from one another.

To deepen our comprehension of the rationale behind victims' desire for revenge, it would be beneficial to consider Aristotle's perspective on the subject. According to (Scheiter, 2010), the primary objective of revenge is not to reclaim one's dignity or derive pleasure from witnessing the offender suffer similarly to the victim. Instead, it is about rectifying a wrongdoing and ensuring that we are not subjected to injustice in the future.

Victims advocating for the government to impose stricter sentences on reintegrated BH terrorists could indicate two underlying beliefs. Firstly, they may view imprisonment as a means of ensuring their protection and alleviating the fear of the reintegrated offenders re-offending. Secondly, by advocating for harsher punishments, they may perceive such severity as proportional to the seriousness of the offenses committed, equating it with a fair and just response to the crimes perpetrated. The second reason, seeking harsher punishment to make reintegrated BH terrorists experience a level of pain akin to what victims endure, aligns with the concept of revenge. While punishment theories such as retribution may justify this as a means to restore justice, the challenge lies in determining the appropriate level of punishment that satisfies victims' sense of justice and fairness.

The utilitarian perspective on punishment indeed aligns with the first aim, which involves imprisoning reintegrated BH terrorists to prevent them from repeating the same crimes and to safeguard victims from harm. For utilitarians like Bentham, punishment is justified if it contributes

to reducing overall pain in society. In other words, the primary objective of punishment should be to deter offenders from committing similar offenses in the future. Additionally, imprisoning offenders is considered one effective method for preventing them from engaging in further criminal activities (Rodman, 1968).

Applying this reasoning to the issue of why some victims of BH attacks desire revenge, one could argue that, while revenge is morally wrong, it may make sense to a victim who thinks that amnesty fails to fulfil his sense of justice. Second, the desire for revenge may be an attempt to demonstrate to the offender that they are capable of inflicting the same level of pain on perpetrators as they inflicted on them. This may explain why some victims claim that any attempt to reconcile them reintegrated BH terrorists will result in retaliation.

This study argues that seeking revenge is unlawful because it is prohibited by law and is considered an immoral act. Some respondents admit these claims, others argue that the government should sentence reintegrated BH members who perpetrate BH terrorism. They feel that imprisonment will satisfy their desire for revenge. This raises the question of whether there is a link between imprisonment and retaliation. Scheiter pointed out Aristotle's distinction between punishment and revenge, stating to the fact that revenge is carried out by the victim to enhance his own interests, whereas punishment is carried out for the advantage of the offender. According to Scheiter, punishing an offender has two functions. First, it restores justice and assists the perpetrator in recognizing his wrongdoing and make amends. However, revenge differs in that its purpose is to satisfy the victim's need for vengeance or fury rather than transform perpetrators into better persons. In addition to being rehabilitated in the hopes that they would change after serving their sentence, the goal of keeping offenders in prison is to stop them from committing future crimes.

Philosophical discussions on the concepts of punishment and revenge appear to show that there is a distinction between punishment and revenge. Zaibert (2006, p. 81) explains that the prevailing view among most philosophers is that there exists a clear distinction between punishment and revenge. Those who choose to punish rationally do not focus on the past offense but rather aim to prevent its recurrence in the future. The rationale behind rational punishment is not to dwell on past transgressions, but to ensure that the wrongdoing is not repeated, either by the offender or by those who witness the punishment.

In essence, the distinction between revenge and punishment lies in their underlying motivations. The avenger seeks to inflict pain upon the perpetrator in return for the suffering endured, which, according to Protagoras, is considered irrational. Conversely, punishment, as inferred from this analysis, is rational because its aim is to deter the perpetrator from repeating similar offenses in the future. Revenge is driven solely by the desire to retaliate with the same level of pain inflicted by the perpetrator, whereas punishment serves the purpose of preventing future wrongdoing.

However, it can still be argued that both punishment and revenge share something in common as both aim to achieve a certain purpose. Zaibert (2022) further delves into this concept by highlighting that the similarity between punishment and revenge lies primarily in their motives. Both the individual administering punishment and the one seeking revenge are driven by the desire to respond to wrongs inflicted upon them.

The author acknowledges that individuals seeking revenge may do so to advance their own personal interests and could potentially cause more harm than the initial wrongdoing inflicted upon them. Consequently, the state is compelled to administer punishment to prevent such extreme reactions. However, this argument falls short in sufficiently distinguishing between punishment and revenge. This becomes evident when we consider that the avenger aims for revenge that is proportional to the wrongdoing committed by the perpetrator. Similarly, in legal punishment, it is expected that the punishment inflicted upon the perpetrator corresponds proportionately to the offense committed.

Relating Zaibert's (2022) analysis to the issue of victims' responses advocating for the imprisonment of reintegrated BH members to fulfil their desire for revenge, one may question whether the victims' demand is justified. This is because while the government aims to achieve a specific purpose with the implementation of amnesty, victims also seek to accomplish a purpose when they pursue revenge. It's important to note that Zaibert (2022) does not argue that revenge is morally justified. Instead, the author aims to illustrate the similarities between revenge and punishment, contrary to the popular view held by some philosophers who argue that there is a significant distinction between revenge and punishment. Zaibert (2022) after scrutinizing philosophical debates regarding the differentiation between punishment and revenge, employs the

philosophical concept of the problem of dirty hands to provide additional insight into what might be perceived as a subtle difference between punishment and revenge.

The concept of dirty hands elucidates that in certain circumstances, there are conflicting moral dilemmas that may compel state actors to engage in actions that are considered morally wrong in order to achieve what is deemed morally right.

Zaibert (2022) aims to show that even if one could have the justification to overlook dilemma that occurs when we do wrong in order to achieve something moral there is possibility of feeling of regret in us for doing what is considered immoral even though we aim to achieve something moral. Zaibert's (2022) argument suggests that punishment aligns with the problem of dirty hands, as it involves inflicting pain (which is morally wrong) on someone in order to achieve justice (which is morally right). However, Zaibert (2022) emphasizes that individuals are expected to feel regret for causing suffering, even if it is deemed justified that the person deserves it. This sense of regret is a key distinction from the actions of a revenger, who typically does not experience such remorse when inflicting pain. It is on this basis that punishment differs from revenge.

5.10 Analysis of Victims Demand for Revenge

The philosophical discourse surrounding the moral justification of revenge generally reflects the perspective that the majority of philosophers consider revenge to be an immoral act. Bacon's assertion aligns with this notion, suggesting that revenge is unnecessary in the presence of established laws to punish offenders. Essentially, Bacon implies that where there is a legal system in place, seeking revenge becomes redundant. Applied to the context of victims seeking revenge, Bacon's argument implies that their desire for retribution is unlawful due to the existence of laws that prescribe penalties for individuals involved in terrorist acts.

This raises the question of whether the punishment for terrorism stipulated by Nigerian law is effectively employed to restore justice. Violent offenses in Nigeria typically carry harsh penalties such as imprisonment, and the demands of victims that reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists should be incarcerated could serve as a reminder to the government of its obligation to uphold the law. In other words, Bacon's argument may not be entirely applicable in this context. Zaibert provides a more fitting argument by suggesting that both the revenger and the punisher

aim to achieve a purpose when inflicting pain or punishment on the perpetrator. Regarding the issue of victims' desire for revenge, both victims seeking revenge and the government granting amnesty to Boko Haram terrorists aim to achieve a purpose. The distinction lies in the government viewing amnesty as the most effective alternative to prevent Boko Haram terrorism, while victims perceive it as an inadequate punishment for violent offenders, considering what the law stipulates.

The two philosophical theories of punishment, utilitarianism and retribution, examined in this study both advocate for the principle that punishment should be proportionate to the crime. Utilitarian punishment suggests that the severity of the punishment should increase with the severity of the crime, with the primary goal being to deter perpetrators from committing further offenses. Retribution punishment, on the other hand, argues that punishment should be commensurate with the crime because an offense has been committed, and imposing a punishment proportional to the crime is considered a fair way to restore justice. From a moral standpoint, the demands of victims are justified based on religious scriptures that recognize the concept of revenge or retaliation.

This research has established a correlation between victims' demands for the punishment of reintegrated BH members and the pursuit of justice, with retribution punishment theory serving as a guiding framework. However, it is essential to address prevalent misconceptions regarding retribution. There is a common belief that retribution is synonymous with revenge. However, retribution differs from revenge in that while a victim of wrongdoing may seek revenge independently, retribution involves the victim seeking justice through governmental channels. Therefore, retribution or retributive justice, as a normative principle, does not condone victims taking justice into their own hands (Gendin, 1970).

5.11 Religion and Unconditional Forgiveness

The assumption made in this research was that in the absence of the concept of restorative justice, victims would seek retaliation against reintegrated former members of Boko Haram. This assumption stemmed from the widespread belief that justice mandates the punishment of wrongdoers. The validity of this claim is supported by the assertions of many victims of Boko Haram, who insist that justice involves the punishment rather than the rewarding of those who commit crimes.

Restorative justice aids in understanding methods to assist victims in their healing process and incorporates approaches for rehabilitating offenders. Among victims of Boko Haram attacks, concerns such as the punishment of reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists, seeking revenge, and the payment of Diya are significant. These are expectations they hold for the government to fulfil. It also means that reconciliation between them and reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists may remain unattainable unless these demands are addressed.

This suggests that acts of wrongdoing not only cause pain to the victims but also convey a message that the victim's worth is lesser than that of the perpetrator. This dynamic often makes it challenging for victims to reconcile or forgive in the absence of justice. This aligns with Radzik's argument (2004, p. 150) that "the problem with a wrong committed against another person is not merely that a norm or rule has been violated, but that a valuable being, a being who deserves respect, has been harmed or demeaned."

However, a small number of victims have chosen to forgive unconditionally due to their religious beliefs. Although this perspective is not widely held among the majority, it highlights that religious convictions can lead people to forgive without insisting on holding the perpetrator accountable or addressing the concerns of victims. This suggests that without restorative justice (understood in this research as what offenders can do to help victims forgive them), victims may forgive or even reconcile with their offenders solely because of religious teachings.

5.12 Conclusion

This chapter extensively demonstrates the relevance of philosophical discourse in understanding victims' demands from the government, which they argue will address their concerns regarding the amnesty program granted to former Boko Haram terrorists. It also illustrates why their demands could be justified based on arguments presented by both utilitarians and retributivists regarding the justification of punishment. For instance, when considering the retribution rationale of punishment, it may be morally acceptable to equate retribution with the imprisonment of reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists who willingly joined the Boko Haram sect.

This explanation is based on the concept that wrongdoers must be held accountable for their actions and that punishment should be proportionate to the gravity of their crimes. These

ideas of accountability and equitable punishment are frequently cited as values of justice and fairness in retribution punishment systems.

Furthermore, the concept of punishment appropriate to the crime done is recognized in most religion practiced in Nigeria, and this influenced victims' justice consideration. For instance, in interviews with victims, it's notable that many practice the Islamic faith, where the concept of "lex talionis," or the law of retaliation, is recognized. This principle also finds resonance in Christian teachings.

However, the challenge in implementing retribution arises from the difficulty in determining an appropriate punishment that matches the severity of the crimes committed by reintegrated BH members. Given that many of these individuals were themselves abducted by the terrorists, and considering the diverse demographics of returnees, including women, men, and children of various ages, it becomes increasingly complex to identify those directly responsible for inflicting pain upon the victims. The dilemma hinders the implementation of retributive punishment on reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.0 Lessons at Glance

The dissertation examined how the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty program for ex-Boko Haram (BH) terrorists shaped victims' perception of justice and fairness. The research argued that exclusion of victims' perception of justice and fairness leads to dilemma of reconciliation between victims and reintegrated BH terrorists. It further argued that should the government neglect the grievances of victims regarding justice and fair treatment, victims could retaliate against reintegrated ex-BH members.

To establish the link between victims' perceived unjust treatment and resentment towards reintegrated ex-BH members, the research proposed the following claims: (i) Ignoring victims' concerns contributed to their perception of unfair treatment in the amnesty procedure; (ii) victims' perceived unfair treatment will lead to retaliation against reintegrated former BH members; and (iii) incorporating restorative justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation into the amnesty program will not only help prevent retaliation against reintegrated ex-BH members, but will lead to successful reintegration of offenders into the society.

To position this research within the scholarly discourse concerning the Nigeria amnesty program and the concerns of victims, an exhaustive analysis of previous research was conducted, focusing on themes related to the amnesty program for former BH terrorists, their societal reintegration, and the ethical dilemmas inherent in such decisions. The findings highlighted widespread dissatisfaction among victims and community members regarding both the outcomes and structure of the amnesty program. Furthermore, it highlighted a significant flaw in the program's implementation. This major flaw is the government's failure to involve community members or seek the opinions of those directly affected before granting amnesty to former Boko Haram terrorists.

The research also investigated previous amnesty program implemented in Nigeria, alongside similar programs implemented in other African countries encountering similar situations. It revealed that the primary concerns of victims predominantly revolve around issues of

justice. While these studies offer valuable insights into the public's responses to the reintegration program, they do not thoroughly explore the dynamic interplay between the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty program and how it influenced victims' perceptions of justice and fairness.

To fill this gap, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 25 individuals who were victims of Boko Haram attacks at Saint Hilary IDP camp in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The objective was to determine if the outcome of the Nigeria amnesty program for repentant former Boko Haram terrorists aligned with victims' perceptions of justice and fairness. Victims were asked for their opinions on the amnesty granted to Boko Haram members and their reintegration into society.

The researcher employed philosophical concepts of justice and fairness, alongside normative ethical perspectives, to theoretically analyse how victims perceive the amnesty and reintegration program for former Boko Haram terrorists. Thematic analysis was utilized to scrutinize the data from victims, enabling a comprehensive investigation that revealed a myriad of perspectives. This approach facilitated a deep interpretation and dialogue, establishing a strong groundwork for insightful discussions and analysis.

The findings reveal that a significant majority of victims perceive the outcome of the amnesty program as unfair. Some victims express the sentiment that it is unjust for the government to prioritize addressing the needs of reintegrated Boko Haram members while overlooking the concerns of the victims. This finding aligns with existing literature connected to this area of study. For instance, Nwozor (2013) argues that amnesty, although utilized by state actors to address issues beyond military action, should not neglect principles of justice. Nwozor further suggests that the rationale behind Nigeria's amnesty and reintegration program for former Boko Haram members appears to disregard considerations of justice and morality. Nwozor underscores the significance of addressing the concerns of victims, highlighting that failing to do so could exacerbate insecurity issues in the country.

Channels Television's 2013 report, as cited in Nwozor's work, corroborates this argument by highlighting that while the government established a body to oversee the creation of an amnesty program for repentant Boko Haram members, it neglected to institute a corresponding body to investigate the situations of victims affected by Boko Haram attacks. Ike et al. (2022) elucidate that substantial efforts have been directed towards ensuring the success of the amnesty and

reintegration program for repentant Boko Haram members. However, they raise concerns regarding the limited attention devoted to understanding the challenges faced by community members in areas affected by Boko Haram terrorism. They appear to imply that understanding the perspectives of community members is essential for a successful reintegration program. Burkati (2019) acknowledges that community concerns about the reintegration of former BH members need to be addressed by the government prior to their reintegration.

The research findings of this dissertation reveal that the majority of victims feel a sense of injustice regarding the outcomes of the Nigeria amnesty program. This addresses the primary research question, which investigates how victims of Boko Haram attacks perceive the amnesty program. Additionally, it substantiates the argument of this research, which posits that overlooking victims' experiences during amnesty proceedings leads to their perception of unfair treatment in the amnesty program.

During the interview, a common view among victims was that former members of Boko Haram, particularly those who joined the group voluntarily, should face punishment. The victims' desire for punishment reflects the idea of retribution. They are not concerned about whether punishing reintegrated Boko Haram members might increase insecurity in their community. They vast majority of victims argued that it is morally justifiable for wrongdoers to face consequences, as this aligns with the principles of justice rather than being rewarded. Furthermore, they argued that foregoing punishment for reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members indicates that the government do not prioritize their worth in society.

The victims' viewpoints align with previous literature findings, suggesting that not imposing sanctions on former Boko Haram members might imply that some individuals are more privileged or above the law compared to others who faced punishment for minor offenses. Most victims interviewed believe that justice means punishing reintegrated former Boko Haram members. However, a minority of victims think differently. They believe that punishment won't undo the harm caused by the terrorists. For them, justice would only be meaningful if it could change the past and erase their painful memories, which punishment cannot do.

The victims also believe that reintegrated former Boko Haram members should either be put in prison or moved to places where they won't be seen by victims. Seeing them freely moving around the community makes victims feel like seeking revenge or retaliation. Many victims

commonly expressed the idea that imprisoning reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists, especially those who joined the group willingly, is a way to equate justice with the suffering they caused. They acknowledge that taking the law into their own hands is illegal but insist that the government should apply severe punishment to reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists. Some victims even suggest they would seek revenge themselves if their demands were ignored by the government or community. Most of these victims are Muslims and they reference specific verses from Islamic religious texts to justify retribution as a means of restoring justice in society.

However, a minority of victims assert that granting amnesty to reintegrated Boko Haram members who were coerced into joining the terrorist group is a commendable decision by the government, as it gives them the opportunity to reunite with their families. They argue that since this specific group of reintegrated members were forced to join the terrorist group, it is not morally justifiable to punish them. This small group of victims, citing verses from Islamic scriptures that preach about forgiveness, argue that God will reward them even more if they choose to forgive. However, this perspective was not shared by the vast majority of victims.

Many victims of Boko Haram want former members who joined willingly to be punished. They also want revenge against them. This matches the second research question, which asks how the Nigeria amnesty program generates a dilemma of reconciliation. Also, the idea that these offenders should be put in prison or moved somewhere else to avoid more conflicts with victims supports the second hypothesis of this research, which argues that victims' negative feelings about the amnesty program leads to retaliation against reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists.

The request for the government to compensate victims with Diya stands out as a major demand voiced by most victims or interview participants. Diya, as described by victims, symbolizes a type of financial compensation that perpetrators of violent crimes are obligated to provide to their victims. This request resonates with Islamic teachings that advocate for financial restitution as a way to restore justice after wrongdoing. Instead of seeking Diya payments from reintegrated Boko Haram members, victims insist that the government should bear the responsibility for such compensation. They argue that reintegrated Boko Haram members or their families may not have the financial means to fulfil these obligations.

Their concept of fairness in this regard centres on the government providing Diya payments to help them address their financial needs. They justify this stance by asserting that it is the

government's duty to protect citizens from harm, and therefore, they are morally entitled to Diya payments from the government due to the government's failure to ensure their safety.

The assertions cast doubt on the relevance of the research question, which investigates the viability of restorative justice and forgiveness in promoting reconciliation between reintegrated former Boko Haram members and victims. However, most respondents expressed a preference for receiving "Diya" compensation for their losses rather than pursuing reconciliation. This indicates that the likelihood of reconciliation between respondents and reintegrated Boko Haram members is slim unless "Diya" is provided to the victims.

In essence, the study's third hypothesis, suggesting that restorative justice would facilitate reconciliation between victims and reintegrated former Boko Haram members, did not prove to be true. It became apparent that the effectiveness of restorative justice in this scenario relies on the payment of "Diya" to the victims.

6.1 Research Contributions

Earlier studies on the Boko Haram amnesty program overlooked the viewpoints of victims concerning justice and fairness. This research addressed this gap by integrating existing philosophical discussions on justice, fairness, and the concept of moral repair. The aim was not to alter victims' understanding of justice and fairness based on philosophical standards of right or wrong. Instead, it aimed to offer insights that will deepen policymakers' understanding of the factors they may consider when deciding whether to address or dismiss the demands of victims.

The reasoning behind incorporating moral discussions to illustrate the factors influencing victims' demands and the moral consequences of granting or denying them is well-founded. This approach is appropriate because moral philosophy, such as utilitarianism, can help lawmakers understand how ethical decisions either increase or decrease happiness in society. For example, a utilitarian analyzing why victims perceive unfair treatment with the amnesty program would assess whether the outcome of the amnesty program contributes to the common good in society.

This research utilizes utilitarian moral principles alongside concepts of moral repair and relevant discussions on justice and fairness to uncover potential reasons for victims' perceptions of unfair treatment within the amnesty program. Additionally, it delves into the moral

consequences that could result from either granting or denying the demands outlined by victims in this research.

6. 2 Research Findings and Moral Interpretations

6.2.1 Victims Perceived Unfair Treatment in The Amnesty Procedure

The research primary finding indicates that a majority of victims perceived the outcome of the amnesty program as unfair. Victims equate unfairness to unequal treatment, arguing that the amnesty process was unjust because they did not receive the same level of attention that reintegrated BH terrorists received from the government. This research employed utilitarian moral theory to interpret the assertion made by the victims to show how it answered the research questions and to determine whether this claim by victims is justified.

The research delved into the perceived unfair treatment of victims, guided by a utilitarian perspective on fairness and unfairness. It contends that excluding victims from amnesty prompts questions about its fairness. Mill posited that justice entails giving what is deserved and avoiding rewarding the undeserving. Should victims of Boko Haram attacks be omitted from amnesty while including those responsible for their suffering? Does this align with the public's sense of fairness? Additionally, who merits inclusion, and who should be excluded?

Applying Rawls' veil of ignorance, would policymakers exempt themselves or their relatives from the amnesty process if they were victims? Rawls argues that individuals tasked with making decisions for society are more likely to make fair choices when they are unaware of how those decisions will personally affect them. Answers to these inquiries will shed light on why a particular victim criticized the swift initiation of amnesty, arguing that those in power are not directly affected. While this research did not verify this assertion, there is a widespread perception of unfair treatment when individuals' concerns are disregarded in warranted situations.

6.2.2 Punishment of Reintegrated Ex-Boko Haram Terrorists

The question of whether it is morally acceptable to impose punishment on reintegrated Boko Haram members raises ethical considerations. This study, which adopts a philosophical

approach to ethical issues related to the implementation of the amnesty program, focuses on philosophical discussions regarding the justification of punishment. Its goal is to determine whether punishing reintegrated former Boko Haram members will generate moral implications.

The starting point is that victims perceived injustice in their treatment, expecting the government to prioritize their needs and address their grievances before considering amnesty for Boko Haram members. They believe that justice or proper action entails holding accountable those who have broken the law and restoring justice to those who have been harmed by offenders. Moral philosophers have examined the factors influencing our moral judgments of both morally right and wrong actions, as well as just and unjust actions.

As mentioned earlier in this research, philosophers like Mill explain that it is a common tendency for people to expect rewards for virtuous deeds and punishment for wrongful acts. The assertion that victims of Boko Haram attacks advocate for the punishment of reintegrated BH members as a crucial aspect of justice suggests that their decision is influenced by their expectation that those involved in Boko Haram terrorism, or affiliated with the terrorists, should not evade punishment. This perspective aligns with two philosophical viewpoints on punishment: utilitarianism and retribution.

For instance, Jeremy Bentham proposed that the primary role of government is to maximize societal happiness by discouraging individuals from engaging in actions that lead to wrongdoing. Punishing offenders is viewed as a method through which governments fulfil this duty. Bentham argues that promoting societal happiness, achieved through the punishment of wrongdoers, is crucial for ensuring citizen security, emphasizing the government's primary function (Schofield, 2023). However, when perpetrators escape punishment, victims perceive an injustice, sparking moral inquiries into the effectiveness and purpose of punishment within the legal system.

In the Nigerian context, the lack of punishment for reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members has raised ethical concerns. Victims of Boko Haram attacks have voiced their disapproval of granting amnesty to reintegrated Boko Haram members, especially those who joined the terrorist organization willingly. The majority of victims interviewed linked justice with the punishment of reintegrated former BH members, as outlined in the findings section. This assertion aligns with the perspectives of two philosophical theories of punishment—retribution and utilitarian punishment—that have been explored in this research.

Scholars have explored the legal and moral dimensions of implementing amnesty programs for reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members (Irede, 2021; Nathaniel, 2021). Many have acknowledged that it is constitutionally permissible for the government to grant amnesty to offenders if it is deemed necessary for peace and stability in the country. However, on moral grounds, some have questioned the appropriateness of granting them amnesty, given that the mission of Boko Haram is to overthrow the existing government (see: Ekanem et al.,2012).

The main aim of this research is to explore the potential moral consequences of punishing reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members. The research argues that given the intricate nature of Boko Haram terrorism, administering punishment in this context may not be appropriate. To support this argument, the study references Jeremy Bentham's theory, which proposes that punishment is most effective when it acts as a deterrent to future criminal activity. It raises the question of whether imposing punishment on reintegrated Boko Haram terrorists would effectively stop Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that some reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members themselves have been victims of BH attacks. Additionally, the government's persistent struggle to definitively overcome BH highlights the complexities of the situation, casting doubt on the efficacy of punishment as a deterrent, particularly in the case of acts of terrorism driven by religious ideology.

6.2.3 Victims Demand For “Diya” Payment

The research findings shows that victims of BH attack associate the concept of fairness with the payment of Diya. A large majority of these victims contend that for the Nigeria amnesty program to meet their sense of fairness, the government should provide them with compensation in the form of "Diya" to address their losses. They argue that such compensation is in accordance with Islamic law and is considered a means of atonement. In other words, victims derive their moral justification for the payment of Diya from their religious beliefs. Considering the objective of this research, which aims to elucidate the factors influencing victims' sense of justice, it is relevant to question the justification of basing moral judgments solely on religious beliefs.

Some philosophers from the Western tradition argue that there is a correlation between morality and religion, and this idea remains prevalent among many individuals in contemporary times (Iwuagwu, 2018). In Northern Nigeria, where many victims originate, Islamic education is the predominant form of religious instruction. From childhood, individuals in this region are immersed in the teachings and moral values inherent in Islam. Therefore, it is unsurprising that their moral judgments are significantly influenced by Islamic moral values. In Islamic law, the payment of Diya serves a dual purpose: it acts as both a deterrent to crime and a means of addressing the concerns of victims of violent crimes.

To question the moral justification of the payment of Diya is to inquire into the moral significance attributed to this practice. The payment of Diya fulfils the dual roles of restitution and the act of making amends. Beyond simply prompting the wrongdoer to acknowledge their actions, it plays a crucial role in restoring justice for both the victims and society. Additionally, it serves as a means of repairing the ruptured relationships caused by the wrongful acts. In this sense, the payment of Diya is justified as it addresses multiple facets of the aftermath of wrongdoing.

The research delved into moral arguments surrounding concepts of fairness and moral entitlements, addressing whether it is morally obligatory for the government to offer restitution to victims of Boko Haram attacks. Victims assert their moral entitlement to receive Diya payment from the government, seeing it as synonymous with fairness. They argue that the amnesty program should prioritize fairness by providing them with Diya, emphasizing that fairness dictates the government should offer Diya to them instead of expecting perpetrators to do so.

From a utilitarian perspective, fairness can be interpreted as the action that produces the greatest good for the greatest number of individuals. Jeremy Bentham, a prominent advocate of this moral framework, often argues that the morality of actions should be evaluated based on the outcomes they produce. Bentham posits that an action is morally right if it results in happiness for the greatest number of individuals. Therefore, evaluating the moral justification of paying Diya involves determining whether it would increase the happiness of the majority of victims of Boko Haram attacks. Based on previous literature, victims of Boko Haram attacks and other violent crimes across the nation often lack necessities. Therefore, providing Diya payments could help address some of their fundamental needs that can be met with monetary assistance.

The question arises: Should the payment of Diya be regarded as a moral entitlement for victims of Boko Haram attacks? This inquiry prompts an exploration into the perspectives of philosophers regarding moral rights or entitlements. Throughout history, individuals have often associated moral rights with what they perceive as their due, drawing upon both legal frameworks and social norms as the basis for such moral claims. Moral philosophers have engaged in extensive debates regarding the nature of moral rights and their validity as claims (Raz, 1984; Archard, 2011). While some argue that only legal rights exist and not moral claims, others acknowledge the existence of moral claims.

This research delves into the inquiry of whether individuals possess moral rights within the state, examining Bentham's viewpoint on the primary function of government. Bentham argues that the foremost duty of government is to increase happiness in society. As a result, individuals within the state have a moral entitlement to be shielded from harm, thereby making it the government's responsibility to ensure their protection. Victims have the right to be protected by the government, and the government fulfils this duty by preventing actions that endanger peace in society.

This research argues that moral rights are inherent entitlements individuals possess by being members of the state, and protection against harm is among these entitlements. While some philosophers argue that only legal rights exist, this research maintains that even if only legal rights are considered moral rights, victims of Boko Haram still deserve this legal protection. An important concept drawn from Bentham's utilitarian principle is the idea that the moral evaluation of actions can be assessed by determining whether their outcomes contribute to the overall happiness of those impacted by them. When it comes to victims' requests for Diya payment, the critical question to address is whether such compensation is deemed a moral entitlement.

Defining moral rights based on recognized rights such as the right to life and freedom, as outlined in the Nigerian constitution and in line with prevailing moral values in Nigeria, indicates that victims' rights to security are indeed moral rights. Consequently, the government holds both a legal and moral obligation to protect individuals from actions that jeopardize this right. Accepting this premise implies that citizens are justified in expressing anger when the state fails to meet these responsibilities. Moreover, if granting Diya payment would increase the well-being of victims

whose rights were violated by Boko Haram members, then accommodating this request aligns with ethical standards within the utilitarian tradition.

Victims' demand for Diya payment from the government, grounded in the government's failure to protect them, resulting in the loss of their property and the death of their loved ones, should not be disregarded as irrational. It is also reasonable to argue that when someone breaches an agreement, it is necessary for them to compensate for damages. Mill connects moral entitlements with the concept of justice, asserting that justice entails an obligation for individuals to uphold certain rights that others can legitimately demand from them as moral entitlements. Mill directs attention to philosophical discourse surrounding individuals and their moral claims. Within these discussions on justice, it is argued that how individuals are treated significantly influences their understanding of justice. The consensus is that justice encompasses safeguarding fundamental human rights, including the rights to life and freedom of expression. However, when disputes arise over these rights, Mill clarifies that individuals' resort to the concept of justice to resolve such disagreements by determining the specific entitlements each person holds.

This research has uncovered that when an individual's legally recognized moral entitlement, which the state is bound to protect, is violated, it can evoke a natural response of anger. In such cases, it becomes the duty of the government or community to acknowledge and resolve the grievances of the affected individual rather than dismissing them. The infringement upon victims' rights to protection demands a justified means of seeking restitution. In this regard, the provision of Diya payments serves as a mechanism to aid victims in recovering from the financial losses inflicted by the crimes committed by Boko Haram terrorists.

Mill's moral arguments demonstrate that utilitarianism does not entirely overlook the welfare of a minority of individuals. Mill contends that moral assertions incorporate rights that certain individuals are entitled to, and if he refers to 'some individuals' as a minority, then it suggests that the rights of this minority are just as significant as those of the majority.

It is widely recognized that one of the core functions of the state is to protect individuals from harm by dissuading actions that cause harm in society through punitive measures. If we agree with this assertion, it logically follows that the preservation of life is a moral entitlement of every person. Therefore, when the state fulfils its responsibility to safeguard its citizens from harm, it

indicates that justice has been upheld. Furthermore, when individuals who have inflicted pain on others through their actions are subjected to punishment, justice is also deemed to be served.

This prompts the question of whether Diya or restitution can fulfil the roles of punishment and justice. Holmgren (1983) argues that restitution serves both functions. When restitution is employed, it can be seen as the perpetrator repaying the victims for the losses incurred due to the harm caused by the perpetrator. Thus, the perpetrator is not utilized merely as a means to establish a crime-free society; rather, the aim is to alleviate the adverse consequences of their own wrongdoing. Employing restitution as a form of punishment enables victims to recover what they have lost as a result of the offender's actions.

The request for Diya payment is morally justifiable when considering the losses suffered by victims of the Boko Haram attack. These victims are currently displaced, with their homes destroyed by the terrorists. Sadly, some heads of families who provided for their financial needs were killed in these attacks. Many of the victims are dependents who relied on these family members for their daily necessities. It would be reasonable for the government to provide them with Diya as a means to address these pressing financial needs.

While Diya in this scenario is traditionally intended to be paid by BH terrorists rather than the government, it's crucial to acknowledge that victims may not have suffered the loss of their homes, property, and family breadwinners if the government had effectively protected them from harm. Therefore, demanding Diya from the government can be seen as a means to help victims restore their confidence in the government's ability to protect them. Furthermore, reintegrated ex-BH terrorists may lack the financial means to pay Diya, and some of them may not have directly caused harm to the victims. Hence, requesting this compensation from them may not be appropriate in all instances. It's important to consider the purpose of Diya, which is not only to restore justice but also to provide victims with a means to recover from their financial losses.

It can be inferred that there is a correlation between Diya payment and the concept of justice. When victims request Diya, their aim is to recover some of their financial losses, which can facilitate their recovery process. Justice seeks to provide victims with what they are owed, and in this context, Diya payment aligns with justice as victims deserve compensation to address their financial needs. Moreover, there is a connection between restitution and justice, as victims seeking restitution believe it will help them heal from the pain caused by the offender's actions. Essentially,

if the goal of justice is to assist victims in their healing process, then restitution is consistent with this objective.

6.2.4 Why Victims Demand for Diya Is Justified

To comprehend the justification for paying Diya to victims of BH attacks, it's crucial to regard Diya as a form of restitution. This perspective becomes evident when considering the purpose of restitution. Victims interviewed have emphasized their requirement for financial assistance to meet their daily needs, and restitution aims to assist them in recovering from their financial losses. However, the question of whether restitution can fully restore victims to their pre-harm financial stability raises philosophical inquiries about whether victims of Boko Haram attacks can realistically return to their previous condition before the attack.

While compensation cannot change the past, it can assist victims in dealing with the ongoing economic difficulties resulting from Boko Haram terrorism. Previous studies have demonstrated significant economic losses due to Boko Haram activities, particularly in regions where the group is active. In the northeastern part of the country, businesses have been negatively impacted as traders face challenges conducting their operations regularly due to the persistent threat of terrorist attacks. Victims of Boko Haram attacks in various IDP camps in northern Nigeria are facing severe shortages of food and adequate medical care. Despite the efforts made by the current government to address these issues, the outcomes have been minimal.

The research argues that to help victims cope with their present economic challenges, it is suitable for the state to take on the responsibility of paying Diya to these individuals. This is justified by the fact that reintegrated former Boko Haram terrorists often do not have the financial means to meet this substantial obligation. The study highlights the importance of the government offering Diya, or restitution, to victims of Boko Haram attacks to ease their financial burdens. The research emphasizes how restitution effectively addresses the grievances of militant groups like the Niger-Delta militants. Additionally, reintegrated former Boko Haram members have been provided assistance to support their survival in their reintegrated communities. Extending this approach to victims of terrorist attacks could yield similar positive outcomes.

The expectation of fair treatment is universal, and when fairness is absent in situations that demand equal treatment, concerns about justice naturally arise (Follesdal, 2014). This aligns with

Mill's argument that it is widely acknowledged that showing partiality and granting undue advantages to one person over another, especially when favouritism is unwarranted, violates principles of justice (Mill, 1863). Hence, it is reasonable for victims of BH attacks to receive Diya, given that the state's primary responsibility is to protect its citizens from harm. The current plight of the victims can be attributed to the state's failure to safeguard their means of livelihood.

The research posits that when an individual's moral claim, acknowledged by the law and which the state is bound to safeguard, is breached, it naturally evokes anger. It underscores that it is the responsibility of the government or community to address and rectify the grievances of the aggrieved individual rather than dismissing them. The victims' entitlement to protection was violated, thereby justifying their pursuit of restitution. Financial restitution serves as a means to assist them in recovering from the financial losses incurred as a result of offenders' crimes.

6.2.5 Victims Seek Revenge or Retaliation

Some victims want to get back at reintegrated Boko Haram (BH) members, especially those who willingly joined the terrorist group. Some of them use the "eye for an eye" principle from religious teachings to explain their desire for revenge. These victims wish for reintegrated BH members to go through the same pain they endured. While revenge is usually sought by individual victims, in this situation, victims want the government to seek revenge against reintegrated BH members on their behalf. Some philosophers argue that revenge is not the right way to achieve justice. However, after violent conflicts, victims of violent crimes often seek revenge to ensure that their offenders face suitable consequences for the harm they caused.

Some victims of Boko Haram attacks argue that imprisoning reintegrated BH members who participated in terrorist acts for an extended period and subjecting them to harsh treatment will satisfy their sense of justice. However, these victims may not consider whether seeking revenge will truly bring them a sense of justice or satisfaction. Research suggests that while revenge may temporarily alleviate a victim's suffering, it may not completely erase the pain inflicted by the perpetrator.

This research aims to investigate the factors that shape victims' expectations from the government, with a particular emphasis on understanding why victims may seek revenge. When victims express a desire for revenge despite the government offering amnesty, it implies that they

perceive the government's chosen strategy as inadequate in delivering the justice they deem suitable. This discontent with the government's actions may prompt victims to contemplate seeking revenge, as evidenced by a respondent who expressed a willingness to take matters into his own hands if reintegrated Boko Haram members are not sufficiently punished according to his viewpoint.

Instead of debating whether victims' desire for revenge is morally valid or if they have the authority to determine the punishment of reintegrated BH members, it's crucial to consider the meanings victims attribute to the actions of Boko Haram terrorists. Some philosophers argue that focusing on how victims perceive acts of wrongdoing is essential, as this understanding can trigger a desire for revenge. Therefore, this research emphasizes the importance of examining victims' interpretations of offenders' actions to understand their desire for revenge.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that policymakers formulate strategies to initiate a reconciliation process between victims of Boko Haram attacks and reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists. This is imperative to mitigate the risk of retaliatory actions against reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members. A constructive approach to initiating this peace-building process involves considering the victims' requests for Diya payments.

The primary limitation of this research lies in its omission of the perspectives and experiences of reintegrated Boko Haram members, particularly those who were forcibly recruited or abducted. The study suggests future research to explore measures aimed at assisting reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members in overcoming community stigma and discrimination. Additionally, it recommends launching awareness campaigns to educate community members about the conditions of those who were forced to join the terrorist group, especially female returnees, emphasizing the importance of compassion and support over stigmatization. Such positive treatment may encourage others who have not yet surrendered to do so.

This research, based on its findings, suggests the need for further investigation into the role of religion in facilitating reconciliation between victims of Boko Haram attacks and reintegrated ex-Boko Haram terrorists. While only a minority of victims assert that they would forgive reintegrated ex-Boko Haram members without seeking punishment or Diya payment due to their

religious beliefs, it indicates that religious beliefs might enable victim-offender reconciliation even without punishment or restitution.

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