THE OIL WAR IN NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA

An Analysis over the Niger Delta Conflict and the Country's Media Presentation of the Conflict

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Abbreviations

UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
EIA	United States Energy Information Agency
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
NDPVF	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
NDDB	Niger Delta Development Board
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDAP	Niger Delta Action Plan
NPC	National Planning Commission
OERA	Ogoni Environmental Restoration Authority
PIC	Presidential Implementation Committee
JTF	Joint Task Force
UNP	United Party of Nigeria
NNPC	Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company

Abstract

  The Niger Delta in Nigeria has suffered from more than 7000 oil spills since 1970. Niger Delta communities have lost their basic human needs, health, access to food and clean water and the ability to work. The Niger Delta is today one of the "most fragile ecosystems and the most endangered delta in the world".[1] In the last decade, the Niger Delta has been overwhelmed by militant activities. Today, it is mainly an issue of having local resistance, violent and non violent, against state institutions and oil corporations.

  Academics refer to this conflict as an "oil war". There is a broad consensus that this issue is rooted in grievance regarding the unequal distribution of wealth from oil business and the lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making process regarding oil production.[2] In addition, local people complain over the government's lack of interest in responding to the crisis. The predominant frames in which this conflict is discussed in literature are: corporate behavior, government behavior, local activity and the legal system. Main problems discussed within these frames are unequal share of oil wealth, lack of shared decision-making, lack of government interest in developing welfare facilities in Niger Delta, lack of human and social rights, environmental degradation and exploitation. Solutions discussed in previous literature claim transparency, social welfare programmes, diplomacy and restorative justice as the best alternatives to solve the issue.

  Framing theory suggests that the choices people make is influenced by the way something is presented; therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore how Nigerian media present the main actors in the Niger Delta crisis within the last year.[3] Results from this media analysis show that Nigerian media do discuss the Niger Delta crisis in similar frames as the literature in the field do. There are, however, major differences in the way media presents the main actors, the causes for and solutions to the conflict in Niger Delta. The "gap" discovered when analyzing the literature discussion and the media presentation tells us that media is a key player in this conflict and this is a vital factor to consider in the creation of potential conflict management approaches.

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[1] Agbiboa E. D (2013) Have we heard the last? Oil, environmental insecurity, and the impact of the amnesty programme on the Niger Delta resistance movement. *Review of African Political Economy*. 40:137, 447-465. P. 448.
[2] Ibeanu, O. (2000) Oiling the Friction: Environmental Conflict Management in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Environmental Change & Security Project Report*, Issue 6 Summer 2000.
[3] Vreese, C. (2005) News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design* 13(1), 51-62. Benjamin Publishing Company.

1. Introduction and Research Question

1.1 *Introduction*

Since 1958, when oil drilling first started in Nigeria, the Niger Delta region in Nigeria has suffered from more than 10 million barrels of spilled oil.[4] With a harmful combination of corruption, violence, lack of interest and inclusiveness and weak regulations, these pipelines have spilled oil for more than 50 years. Oil now clogs fertile land and rich mangrove forests, fish and birds have disappeared, and millions of Nigerian people have choked from the polluted air. In 2009, Amnesty International Report claimed, "the Nigerian government estimates that 7,000 'spills, large and small, occurred between 1970 and 2000."[5] In addition, the United Nations states "the environmental restoration of Ogoniland could prove to be the world's most wide-ranging and long term oil clean-up exercise ever undertaken if contaminated drinking water, land, creeks and important ecosystems such as mangroves are to be brought back to full, productive health".[6] The consequences of the crisis have caused many people to lose their basic human rights, health, access to food, clean water, and the ability to work. The vast majority of Niger Delta's 31 million people is impoverished and remains unemployed even if the regions oil production contributes more than $80 billion in government revenues.[7]

This conflict is mainly a struggle for the power over oil resources and the benefits from oil production. The Niger Delta conflict is today a major security concern for the Nigerian state and its people. In the last decade, the Niger Delta has been overwhelmed by militant activities, in the form of government forces, local armed resistance and private militias hired by oil corporations.[8] Government responds to the conflict by mainly increase its military forces. Local people protest violently and non-violent against oil corporations mismanagement, lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making process regarding oil production and the unequal distribution of oil wealth provided by the government. Oil corporations in Niger Delta respond to

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[4] Kadafa, A. (2012) Oil Exploration and Spillage in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. *Civil and Environmental Research* Vol 2, No.3. P. 41.

[5] Amnesty International. (2009) "It's sickening stuff". *Amnesty International Report*. www.thereport.amnesty.org P. 9.

[6] United Nations Environmental Programme (Aug 4th, 2011) UNEP Ogoniland Oil Assessment Reveals Extent of Environmental Contamination and Threats to Human Health. The United Nations. Retrieved from: http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/Portals/155/countries/nigeria/press_release_ogoniland_en.pdf Para 1

[7] Ibid.

[8] Aron, K and Patrick, J. (2013) "Corporate social responsibility patterns and conflicts in Nigeria's oil-rich region" *International Area Studies Review* 16(4) 341-356. University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Sage

the instability and violence by hiring military forces from private companies due to the government lack of protection of oil facilities and oil workers.[9] People in this conflict are situated with violence in the form of kidnapping, murder, electoral violence, militant activities and criminality. The Niger Delta proves a very unsafe and damaged zone to live in.

The main actors identified in this conflict are the local Niger Delta people, oil corporations and the Nigerian federal government. The root causes for this conflict regards the unequal distribution of wealth from oil production and the lack of inclusion in the decision-making process regarding oil production. Drivers to the conflict are, for example, corruption, violence, unemployment, lack of social welfare facilities and programmes and lack of genuine and fair general elections.[10] [11] [12] There have been some efforts to resolve the issue made by the government and international organizations. Instances of attempts are the Independent Evaluation on the health concerns and the environmental degradation conducted by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in 2011. In addition, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established in 2000 by the government with the aim of developing Niger Delta into an economically prosperous, ecologically regenerative, socially stable and politically peaceful place. The medical services was also established by the NDDC and Global Hands Medical Foundation to provide few days of free healthcare for people in communities host to oil production. However, these attempts have not been enough since the violence and instability have escalated dramatically. This conflict is linked to Nigeria's history, political system, its economic structure, the balance of power in decision-making processes and environmental and social development. The situation has caused the Nigerian nation a lot of human lives and financial resources.

It is essential to end this conflict in order to save lives and restore the environment. For any conflict management to take place it is necessary to study the conflict in detail. A detailed analysis over the components of the conflict will enable us to build a platform for a potential conflict management discussion. One major building block in the creation of a conflict

[9] Iskauakaite, R. (2014) 9: Kidnapping Business and Penalties for Kidnapping as a Part of Niger Delta Conflict. In Falola, T. and Thomas, C. (Eds.) Securing Africa: Local Crisis and Foreign Interventions. 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Routledge African Studies

[10] Ibeanu, O. (2000) Oiling the Friction: Environmental Conflict Management in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Environmental Change & Security Project Report*, Issue 6 Summer 2000.

[11] Akonye, J, E. (2014) Kidnapping The Terror of the 21st Century? Lessons from Southeast Nigeria". *Securing Africa Local Crisis and Foreign Interventions.* 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 100017. Routledge

[12] United States Institute for Peace (2009) "Crisis in the Niger Delta" *USIPEACE BRIEFING*: David Smock

management approach is to find out how main actors understand themselves and each other in the conflict. In addition to, for example, experience, news media is a key channel for spreading information about a conflict and its main actors involved. To discover how individuals are led to focus on certain considerations of the conflict by the Nigerian media is in the core of this paper because that will enable us to investigate one major component of this conflict in order to better understand how to deal with the problems in Niger Delta.

The methodological approach chosen for this research is framing. Framing is often used in news media research and it will help me explore *how* Nigerian media present the Niger Delta conflict and the main actors involved. This paper will build a framework based on the main frames discovered in the academic research. This framework will later be used in the media analysis in order to analyze the predominant frames in which this conflict is being presented in the largest newspaper in Nigeria. This analysis will help us understand which aspects of reality that the newspaper chose to highlight and which aspects the newspaper chose to exclude.

Results from this research shows that Nigerian media do discuss the Niger Delta crisis within the frames discussed in literature, except from, the context of the legal system. However, the way the newspaper discusses the causes and solutions and the main actors are very different from what the literature in the field discusses. This "gap" is a vital tool to consider in the creation of a conflict management approach.

1.2 *Structure of the Paper*
The *first* part of the paper introduces the topic, the structure of the paper and the research questions. The *second* section provides a detailed description of the conflict in order to present the complexity and the contours of the problem. The *third* section provides a discussion of framing theory. The *fourth* section will discuss previous literature studying the relationship between Nigerian media and the Niger Delta conflict and the role of news media in conflicts in general. The *fifth* section describes the more components of the problem at a higher level of abstraction, and these components will be used in structuring the analytical framework for the media analysis. The *sixth* section discusses the methodological approach chosen for this research, the data collection and limitations of the research and the methodological approach of framing. The *seventh* section then provides a media analysis. Section *eight* discusses the empirical finding

from the media analysis and describes the main results that have been found throughout this study. The last part, section *nine*, will conclude the overall findings made in this study.

1.3 *Research question*

The crisis in Niger Delta is obviously a complex matter. Due to the complexity of the problem, conflict management has been very difficult. However, the complexity of problems should not stop us from creating new approaches with the aim of solving conflicts. In order to create any form of conflict management suited for the Niger Delta conflict, we need to be open-minded, creative, realistic and optimistic.

The first step in any form of conflict management is to find a common ground among main participating actors in the issue. Without a common understanding, any attempts to solve the root issue/s will fail. Attempts to solve the Niger Delta crisis have been made, yet, so far the conflict is still ongoing. John Paul Lederach states that "conflicts also transforms perception, of self, others, and the issue in question, usually with the consequences of less accurate understanding of the other's intention and decreased ability to clearly articulate one's own intention".[13] The work of creating a common understanding of the conflict is essential in the Niger Delta crisis since the main actors presumably understand and perceive this issue in different ways. This work is a key element in transforming the conflict into a conflict management or cooperation among actors involved in the conflict.

Before the work of a common platform can start it is essential to investigate all components of the problem in hand. There are many different forms, such as experience, that do shape each other's and one selves understanding of the problem and the values, needs and interests of the participating actors in the conflict. Media is obviously one major way in which information and the presentation of the conflicts itself and the involved parties is being spread. According to framing theory, people tend to make choices depending on how something is presented.[14] Therefore it is necessary to study how Nigerian media present this issue and especially how Nigerian media present the main actors in this conflict since a miss-presentation

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[13] Lederach, J, P. (1995) Pursuing an Adequate Language. Preparing for Peace: CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION ACROSS CULTURES. Syracruse University Press, Syracruse, New York, 13244-5160. P. 18
[14] Vreese, C. (2005) News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design* 13(1), 51-62.

of the conflict and its involved actors might leads people further away from a common understanding of the problem.

Due to limitation in time, this research will only look at news publications within the last year. Results from this research will help us recognize how the different actors understand the issue and realize what part media plays in this conflict. As for that, the research question for this study is,

- *How does the major newspaper in Nigeria present the Niger Delta conflict and the main actor involved within the last year?*

2. **Niger Delta Conflict - Background**

This section will provide a detailed description of the conflict in order to present the complexity and the contours of the problem.

2.1 *Location*

Nigeria is located in West Africa. It is a federal republic with 36 state governments, 774 local governments and more than 250 different ethnic groups. The country gained its independence from British rule in October, 1960, and its political structure is similar to the one in the United States. Nigeria was ruled by the military between 1960 and 1999, when it transferred into civilian rule. Nigeria is Africa's most populated country, with a population over 177 million people. The main religions are; Muslim (50 percent), Christian (40 percent), and indigenous (10 percent). [15]

The Niger Delta region is located I southern Nigeria. The Niger Delta comprises nine states out of Nigeria's 36 states. The Niger Delta states are: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. The Niger Delta population is almost 31 million people. The state has a "unicameral legislature i.e. the House of Assembly with elected members from different constituencies working together to determines the laws of the state."[16] Administrative affairs in Niger Delta are vested in the elected Governor, the Deputy Governor and a cabinet of appointed Commissioners. The local government can make by-laws; nonetheless, laws regarding the distribution of resources are decided in the federal government. "Under section 16 of the 1999 constitution, all revenues of the Federation are paid into the Federation Account. Among the principles for the distribution of the funds in the Federation Account are derivation (not less than 13%), equality of states, internal revenue generation, landmass, terrain, population density and ecological damage."[17] No change has been approved in the revenue allocation formula since the military rule.

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[15] The Central Intelligence Agency (2015) Africa: Nigeria. The World Factbook. Retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html
[16] Niger Delta Development Commission (2010) "Chapter 1: The Niger Delta Region: Land and People". The Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan. Retrieved from: http://www.nddc.gov.ng/NDRMP%20Chapter%201.pdf P. 6
[17] Ibid.

2.2 *Causes of Conflict*

The Niger Delta conflict was originally a struggle over land rights and palm oil resources. The conflict is embedded in a long history of struggles and has its roots in the socio-economic impacts of the transatlantic slave trade. However, since 1958, when the oil was discovered; it has evolved into a struggle for power over oil and access to the benefits of oil production. The Niger Delta oil conflict is a problem embedded in political, social, economical, and environmental concerns and the complexity of this situation has made conflict resolution and even conflict management very difficult. The main causes for this problem are the lack of inclusiveness in decision-making regarding oil production, corporations' lack of responsibility in oil production, and the government's lack of interest in developing Niger Delta and distributing equal share of wealth from oil production.[18] [19] [20]

2.3 *Drivers to the Conflict*

Since 1958, the Delta State region in Nigeria has suffered from more than 10 million barrels of spilled oil.[21] In 2009, Amnesty International Report claimed, "the Nigerian government estimates that 7,000 'spills, large and small, occurred between 1970 and 2000."[22] Many people have lost their basic human rights, health, access to food, clean water, and the ability to work. "Locals complain of sore eyes, breathing problems, and lesions on their skin."[23] The Niger Delta region proves a very dangerous zone to live in.

The Niger Delta remains one of West Africa's poorest regions, although it provides the country's $20 billion in annual exports.[24] Nigeria represents Africa's richest oil-producing nation, with an estimated "37.2 billion barrels of proven oil reserves as of January 2011."[25] Since

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[18] Ibeanu, O. (2000) Oiling the Friction: Environmental Conflict Management in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Environmental Change & Security Project Report*, Issue 6 Summer 2000.

[19] Akonye, J, E. (2014) Kidnapping the Terror of the 21st Century? Lessons from Southeast Nigeria". *Securing Africa Local Crisis and Foreign Interventions*. 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 100017. Routledge

[20] United States Institute for Peace (2009) "Crisis in the Niger Delta" *USIPEACE BRIEFING*: David Smock

[21] Kadafa, A. (2012) Oil Exploration and Spillage in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. *Civil and Environmental Research* Vol 2, No.3. P. 41.

[22] Amnesty International. (2009) "It's sickening stuff". *Amnesty International Report*. P. 9. Retrieved from: www.thereport.amnesty.org

[23] Ibid., 8

[24] United States Department of State. (2011) *Background Note: Nigeria*. Retrieved from: www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2836.htm#foreign

[25] United States Energy Information Administration. (2011) *Background Note: Nigeria, Exports*. Retrieved from: www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=NI

2005, the country has seen an increase in vandalism, kidnapping, and militant takeovers. The United States Energy Information Administration (EIA) "estimates. Nigeria's nameplate oil production capacity to have been close to 2.9 million barrels per day (bbl/d) at the end of 2010 but as a result of attacks on oil infrastructure, daily crude oil production ranged between 1.7 million and 2.1 million barrels."[26] Niger Delta is the largest wet-land in Africa and the vast majority of Niger Delta people is impoverished and remains unemployed. The drivers to this conflict are linked to Nigerian history and the nature of integration of people of all levels of society into the political and economical system, especially the oil business in Niger Delta. Cyril Obi and Siri Aas Rustad claim that, "oil business have simultaneously enriched international oil companies and their partners - national and local elites – and contributed to the disempowerment and impoverishment of local peoples, through direct dispossession, repression and the pollution of the air, land and waters of the region".[27] Nigeria also suffers from severe corruption and problems with the centralist form of federalism. Obi and Rustad explain that "oil politics in Nigeria has been defined by the high stakes involved in controlling power at any cost, by the tension in the country's fiscal federalism between hegemonic federal elites that dominate the control of oil rents derived from oil production in the Niger Delta and the ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta who are marginalized in the distribution of those rents".[28] People in Niger Delta share the desire to win back the control over their resources. Local people seek control over land, resources and their local affairs and they see a need for fare and just general election. Niger Delta is oil rich but an impoverished region with vicious cycles of repression, resistance, criminality, exploitation and militarization.[29]

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[26] United States Energy Information Administration. (2011) *Background Note: Nigeria, Exports*. Retrieved from: www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=NI

[27] Obi, C and Rustad, S (2011) "Introduction: Petro-violence in the Niger Delta – the complex politics of an insurgency. *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta*. Nordic Africa Institute. Uppsala, Sweden. P 2

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

2.4 *Actors*

The three main actors in the Niger Delta conflict are the Niger Delta local people, the Nigerian government and oil corporations.[30] Local people believe oil corporations exploit their land and its resources in the region since they are excluded from employment and economic influence in the oil business. The local people argue for a greater share of the wealth coming from oil production since the oil production is extracted on their land. Also, the people see an immediate need for development to do away with poverty, environmental degradation and medical hazards. There are both violent groups, such as the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and non-violent groups, such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) and women's protests, protesting against oil corporations and the unjust politics in the federal government. Most groups are formed by young, unemployed, educated and uneducated people.

Oil corporations believe that the government fails in supplying police and providing equipment and funds to secure oil production. Therefore, there has been a massive increase in privatization of security forces by oil companies. Many oil corporations chose to occasionally fund and deploy arms and military protection from private organizations to protect their business against local militants, such as rebels, criminals, and former soldiers. Employees in oil corporations are often the target of kidnapping. Since, 2004 the sophistication and frequency in kidnapping and oil bunkering have increased dramatically. Oil corporations sees MEND, the notorious and biggest armed group in Niger Delta, as specialists in oil bunkering and kidnapping. Yet, more and more small movements are using the same tactics to fight oil companies. To fight the protesters, oil companies are "deploying divide-and-rule tactics, and using military personnel to intimidate and molest innocent and defenseless communities".[31] Oil companies do fuel the conflict with impunity and violence and armed groups and militias seek to disrupt oil production with counter attacks. Oil corporations have also made cash payments to youth groups and armed groups as award for surveillance.

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[30] Iskauakaite, R. (2014) 9: Kidnapping Business and Penalties for Kidnapping as a Part of Niger Delta Conflict. In Falola, T. and Thomas, C. (Eds.) Securing Africa: Local Crisis and Foreign Interventions. 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Routledge African Studies

[31] Ikelegbe, A. (2011) Popular and criminal violence as instrument of the struggle in the Niger Delta region. In Obi, C and Rustad, S (Eds.) *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta*. P. 129. PO Box 1703, Uppsala, Sweden. Nordic Africa Institute.

To react to the instability and the increasing violence in Niger Delta the government has increased its militaristic response. The Nigerian security forces have taken extreme measures in trying to settle fractions between oil corporations and local people, where, for example, the army has conducted massacres and massive attacks. It is also a tendency of Nigerian security forces to act independently and the administration of former president Olusegun Obasanjo has received critique for not holding back the military. In addition to the disputes between the oil corporations and local people, the Nigerian state and its alliances have been accused of deploying armed groups, militants and criminals with weaponry to terrorize opponents to the government. Because of the high level of kidnapping in Niger Delta the government is embarrassed and is considering the death penalty for those people who kidnap. The Nigerian government, especially the ruling elite, is regarded as the architect of the conflict and the misfortune in Niger Delta.[32]

The alliance between the state and oil companies allows oil business to exploit the land and manage irresponsible activities to benefit enormous money. With the level of wealth that the oil produces, the Niger Delta should be a region without poverty, unemployment, health hazards and environmental degradation. To better understand the way in which the main actors in this conflict frame this issue I created a chart. Table 1 below illustrates the framing gap between the main actors in this conflict.

2.5 *History*

This conflict is embedded in a long history of struggle for self determination. The local people have for long strived autonomy over the region and the regions resources.
The Nigerian Federation gained its independence in 1960, after more than 40 years of British colonial rule. Before Nigeria became a British colonial government the Europeans had for more than 400 years an interest in the region due to the regions richness in natural resources.

It was not until the 1960 that the oil in Niger Delta began to attract political attention. Before then, the industry was dominated by Shell and other multinational corporations. Protests against oil corporations started in the early 1960s and since then there have been violent and non-violent protests against the unequal distribution of oil wealth. One of these movements led to the Nigerian civil war in 1967. The civil war had brought structural changes in Nigeria's federalism.

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[32] Iskauakaite, R. (2014) 9: Kidnapping Business and Penalties for Kidnapping as a Part of Niger Delta Conflict. In Falola, T. and Thomas, C. (Eds.) Securing Africa: Local Crisis and Foreign Interventions. 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Routledge African Studies

Example of these changes was the shift of power from regions into the federal government, especially the power over oil resources. This brought feelings of disappointment, exclusion and dispossession. The federal allocation to oil producing states shifted from 50 percent in 1966 to 3 percent during the 1990s. Due to protests from the oil producing region and the legitimacy in the new democratic government, the allocation was raised to 13 percent in 1999. Niger Delta minorities are still fighting for greater control over their land and its resources, and a greater share of the oil wealth, a cleaner environment and a stop to the exploitation, since the 13 percent funds rarely reach people on the ground.

2.6 *Accomplishments*

The first board established with the aim of meeting the particular development needs of the Niger Delta people was the Niger Delta Development Board (N.D.D.B). This board was created in 1960 by the government and the the two factors actualized the boards were the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewas, sincerely will to improve the region and recommendations from the Nigerian Constitutional Conference that was held in 1958. The Board saw the immense economic enterprise opportunities that Niger Delta held and instructed N.D.D.B experts to examine measures to promote the physical development in the region. Instances of development plans were communication network, water-way, seaports, civil aviation, railway, postal services and telecommunication constructions. In addition, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was also established by the government in 2000 with the aim of developing Niger Delta into an economically prosperous, ecologically regenerative, socially stable and politically peaceful place. The NDDC's Master Plan is designed to integrate all levels of society and to offer stakeholders to participate in decision-making process and planning of Niger Delta development projects.[33]

Because of the social, environmental and political concerns in Delta State, the United Nations initiated the Civil Society Support Initiative on Political Marginalization in the Niger Delta in January 2011. The project describes itself as an international project providing education, advocacy, and community workshops. The organization promotes social justice

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[33] Niger Delta Development Commission (2010) "Chapter 1: The Niger Delta Region: Land and People". The Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan. Retrieved from: http://www.nddc.gov.ng/NDRMP%20Chapter%201.pdf

gender equality, environmental justice, democracy, and good governance. It was funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF).[34]

In 2010, the United States and Nigeria initiated the US-Nigeria Binational Commission. The main aim of the commission is to create partnership and a platform for cooperation regarding binational and global challenges. "United States establishes such commons with the valued and strategic partners. Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation, its largest contributor of peacekeepers, its largest producer of oil and a significant partner for the United States."[35] The commissions four working groups include: "Good Governance, Transparency, and Integrity; Energy and Investment; Food Security and Agriculture; and, Niger Delta and Regional Security Cooperation".[36] The Nigerian ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the United States Under Secretary for Political Affairs signed an agreement on August 15th, 2013, that promised security cooperation and good governance. The agreement claims, "Recognizing the importance of a peaceful and prosperous Nigeria, the United States Government and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria reiterated their commitment to advancing good governance and civil security in order to lead to lasting peace, democracy, and prosperity for all Nigerian citizens."[37] The U.S. –Nigeria Binational Commission is a major step in order to create cooperation and to promote diplomacy internationally. Overall, there have been attempts to move forward and start a process of sustainable development in Niger Delta. Yet, many challenges still exist in this complex matter and lots of people are still unhappy with the destructive situation.

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[34] United Nations Environmental Programme (Aug 4th, 2011) UNEP Ogoniland Oil Assessment Reveals Extent of Environmental Contamination and Threats to Human Health. The United Nations. Retrieved from: http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/Portals/155/countries/nigeria/press_release_ogoniland_en.pdf Para 1

[35] United States Department of State. (2010) "U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission" Office of the Spokesman. Retrieved from: http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/04/139562.htm

[36] Ibid

[37] Sherman, W and Yaki, B (August 15, 2013) "Joint Communiqué of The Regional Security Cooperation Working Group" U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission meeting. Abudja, Nigeria. P. 1

3. Framing Theory

3.1 *Framing*

Framing theory claims that "an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations".[38] The theory suggests that the choices people make is influenced by the way something is presented.[39] Framing theory is the opposite of the rational choice theory. The word "frame" can be used as a noun or a verb. The word "frame" (as a noun) refers to the boundary in which the picture is displayed and the word "framing" (as a verb) denotes to the creation of a frame. "Frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of communication, thereby elevating them in salience".[40] Salience here refers to the idea of "making a piece of information more noticeably, meaningful, or memorable to audiences".[41] Communicators, such as news papers, can make unconscious and conscious framing judgments when communicating their message and this can be organized and guided by different frames. Frames often identify the problem, diagnose the causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies.[42] Within the framing concept is the notion of *dominant meaning.* Within the framing perspective, dominant meaning consists of "the problem, causal, evaluative, and treatment interpretations with the highest probability of being notices, processed, and accepted by the most people."[43] Robert Entman claims that "to identify a meaning as dominant or preferred is to suggest a particular framing of the situation that is most heavily supported by text and is congruent with most common audience schemata".[44]An example of a commonly known frame is the "Cold War" frame.[45]

The methodological approach of framing is important because it "directs our attention to the details of just how a communicated text exerts its power".[46] One common argument within

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[38] Chong, D & Druckman, J (2007) Framing Theory. *The Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 103-26. P. 104
[39] Vreese, C. (2005) News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design* 13(1), 51-62. Benjamin Publishing Company.
[40] Entman, B, M. (2004) "Framing: towards clarification of a fractured paradigm". *McQuail's Reader in Masscommunication Theory.* Olivier's Yard, 55 City Road London ECIY ISP. SAGE Publications Ltd P. 394
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Entman, B, M. (2004) "Framing: towards clarification of a fractured paradigm". In McQuail, D (Eds.) *McQuail's Reader in Masscommunication Theory.* Olivier's Yard, 55 City Road London ECIY ISP. SAGE Publications Ltd P. 395
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., 393
[46] Ibid., 395

framing theory suggests that framing do influences peoples' responses to communication, especially within social or political interest, since people in general are not so "well informed and cognitive active".[47] As a result, media influences the distribution of power.[48] Another point of view claims that, due to the misuse of the term framing, the approach has been used to label similar but distinctly different approaches. The reason for is partly due to the "lack of a commonly shared theoretical model underlying the framing research.[49]

The framing theory can, for instance, be used in studying political science, social psychology, cultural studies and sociology. Within the psychological field, researchers study, for example, how "different emphasis on various considerations about a subject" affects an individual's evaluation of that subject. When discussing framing in communication it will be described as a process that serves to organize and structure social meaning.[50]

3.2 *News Media Framing*

Media framing can be explained as the process by which an issue is portrayed in news media. Frames in news media are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse".[51] The decision of what to include in a story and what to leave out is a process that can be culture-bond, instinctive or conscious. "Framing involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue' and is today one of the most common research approaches in the field of media and communication studies.[52] It "helps people organize what they see in everyday life" and "[makes] an otherwise meaningless succession of events into something meaningful".[53] Frames in news media are "devises that facilitate how journalists organize enormous amounts of information and package them effectively for their audiences".[54] There is a huge body of literature examining the relationship between news framing and decision making.

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Scheufele, D. (1999) "Framing as a Theory of Media Effects". Journal of Communication. Vol. 49 (1) 103-122.
[50] Chong, D & Druckman, J (2007) Framing Theory. *The Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 103-26. polisci P. 106
[51] Vreese, C. (2005) News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design* 13(1), 51-62. Benjamin Publishing Company. P. 52
[52] Ibid., 51.
[53] Borah, P. (2011) Conceptual Issues in Framing Theory: A Systematic Examination of Decade's Literature" *Journal of Communication* Vol. 61 (246-263) International Communication Association. P. 248.
[54] Ibid.

Much of this research demonstrate that news framing do influence information processing and the process of decision making. In addition, lots of research looks at the relationship between media and power. "Those who rule the dominant institutions secure their power in larger measure directly *and indirectly*, by impressing their definitions of the situation upon those they rule, and, if not usurping the whole of ideological space, still significantly limiting what is thought throughout society".[55] In other words, the way an issue is portrayed in media does influence the audience. News are distributed daily to millions of people, and those in power of news presentation do have the power to inform their audience and defining situations out of their own reality. The next section will discuss the role of media in the Niger Delta conflict and in conflicts in general.

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[55] Reese, S., Gandy, O., Grant, E. (2008)" CHAPTER 6 Breaching Powerful Boundaries: A Postmodern Critique of Framing". *Framing Public Life – Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*. 10 Industrial Avenue Mahwah. New Jersey 07430. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Inc. Publishers P. 126

4**. News Media and Conflicts**

This section discusses previous literature studying the relationship between Nigerian news media and the Niger Delta conflict. It also provides a literature review of studies looking at the role of news media in conflicts.

4.1 *News Media and the Niger Delta Conflict*

      The body of literature studying the relationship between Nigerian media and the Niger Delta crisis is not extensive. The few academic papers in this field do state that Nigerian media do play an important role in the conflict since the partnership between media, the government and the public sphere could be a platform for impartial information and conflict transformation. Since the body of literature is so small, I will go into detail of each and every article found within this field of study.

      One small body of literary examines the direct relationship between Nigeria's media coverage and the Niger Delta conflict. This string of literature argues that Nigerian press misinforms their audience about the identities and activities of the main actors in the conflict. Innocent Chiluwa has published two articles discussing media's role in the Niger Delta conflict. In 2010, he published the article, "The Media and Militants: Constructing the Niger Delta Crisis" and claims that the Nigerian government and Nigerian media are indeed responsible for the negative representation of the people in Niger Delta. Through a combination of a Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics methods, Chiluwa did mainly look at the choice of particular vocabulary that the Nigerian press uses to present the local people and militias in Niger Delta. His study reviles that "the negative representations of the ethnic militia are an ideological strategy used to shift attention from the real issues of ethnic marginalization and exploitation of the Niger Delta – a region solely responsible for Nigeria's oil-based economy".[56] Chiluwa argues that the media and the government in Nigeria succeeded in creating suspicion towards activities taken by the general people and militia in Niger Delta. To understand the power of words and how words shape perceptions, Chiluwa explains that language can work ideologically and the ideological work of media affects the way individuals or groups and their activities are presented. Misinformation about certain individuals or groups often occurs when

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[56] Chiluwa, I (2010) "The Media and Militants: Constructing the Niger Delta Crisis". *RASK: International Journal of Language and Communication*. Vol. 32, 41-78, University of Southern Denmark. P .41.

those in power cite their opinions. The five most frequent lexical items that Nigerian magazines used to describe the local people and militia in Niger Delta were: Militants, Kidnappers, Criminals, Robbers and Hoodlums. Chiluwa states that by using terms, such as militants or hoodlums, media portray Niger Delta people as criminal groups, social outcasts and people not to be taken seriously.[57] Results from his research show that the government uses and the press portray local people in Niger Delta as criminal and violent in order to focus the attention away from the governments' actions.

In 2011, Chiluwa published his second article "Media Representation of Nigeria's Joint Military Task Force in the Niger Delta Crisis". He examines the role of Nigerian media in manipulating people's perception of the Joint Military Task Force in the crisis. Nigeria's Joint Military Task Force (JMTF) was deployed by the Nigerian army in 2009 to restore and protect oil installations and pipelines. However, destructions of property, attacks on, and indiscriminate killings of civilians were carried out by one of the divisions in the JMTF. It is also reported that government's military occupations began already in 1994, and actions taken by the army have resulted in, for example, killing and raping of thousands of people. One of the worst reports came after the massive killing of all male youths in the town of Odi area of Beyelsa state in 1999. Chiluwa claims that the findings from his study revealed that "the Nigerian press was sympathetic of the activities of the JMTF in spite of obvious condemnable killings of the insurgents and attacks on civilians".[58] Chiluwa states that the Niger Delta people and militias in the region were often labeled as the aggressor while the JMTF were attributed with positive actions and as the victim. He also claims that the media at one point exclusively focused their attention on the violence, the war and the security situation in Niger Delta and did not report anything about the JMTF's cruel actions."JMTF was then positively represented as national heroes on a rescue mission in spite of indiscriminate killings of the insurgents and civilians".[59] The popular feelings towards the civilians became negative and the JMTF was presented as heroes responding to the crisis. As Chiluwa states, "representation of actors or victims in news

[57] Ibid.

[58] Chiluwa, I. (2011) "Media Presentation of Nigeria's Joint Military Task Force in the Niger Delta Crisis". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 1 No. 9 [Special Issue – July 2011] P. 207.

[59] Ibid.

texts are not value-free; they present point of views that may portray the subject negatively or positively depending on the purpose of the reporters".[60]

Another thread of literature examines the relationship between media and conflict resolution in Niger Delta. Authors in this field do state that media is a vital tool in the creation of conflict management approaches *if* media is treated as an impartial platform for communication, the spread of information and conflict management discussion. This body of literature does, however, look at media's coverage of the Niger Delta crisis from the grassroots level of society and not just the news channels closely tied to the government. In the article, "The Nigerian Press, the Public Sphere and Sustainable Development: Engaging the Post Amnesty Deal in the Niger Delta" Uzoechi Nwagbara, looks at what role grassroots media plays in the creation of conflict management and resolution in Niger Delta. Nwagbara states that "the media could be a tool for change, a transformation that could be expressed in the modified way the people and the major actors in the politics of the Niger Delta crisis see the issue of governance through the media's involvement and expanded the public sphere". [61] Nwagbara does not agree with Chiluwa since he presents a more positive aspect of the media in the Amnesty deal. He states that grassroots media has played a significant role in the amnesty deal since it helped bring sentiment of community, confidence and hope during the conflict. He also state that " the media reports the actions of the government as well as the activities of those who speak in favor of the government…it also criticizes the policies and performances of the government by suggesting alternative courses of action".[62] However, to create lasting peace it is necessary to have an effective media that benefit the Niger Delta people and Nigerians in general. Also, effective media can contribute to change the region in the wake of the amnesty deal.

Chigozi Ijeomah Eti published in 2009 the article "Objectivity and Balance in Conflict Reporting: Imperatives for the Niger Delta Press". He concludes that, "the virtue of a democracy is that there is a considerable measure of access to the public space and freedom to participate in public discourse…and [there] is the need to frame the issues involved in conflict in such way that

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Nwagbarta, U. (2011) "The Nigerian Press, the Public Sphere and Sustainable Development: Engaging the Post Amnesty Deal in the Niger Delta" *Africana:* 5.1 : 140-163. P. 150

[62] Ibid., 157

they become more susceptible to management".[63] Eti argues that media should work to provide warning signals and minimize the violence in a conflict instead of creating more instability. This paper does, however, mainly look at the Niger Delta Press. This press works much more locally than other major newspapers in Nigeria. Etis states that factors affecting objective discourse of conflicts issues are, such as, the very nature of conflict, the challenge of geography, time, prevailing culture of corruption and patronage and partiality in the conflict discourse. Due to the critical role media can play in conflict, such as the conflict in Niger Delta, it is necessary that media avoid the "risk of oversimplification of conflict by classifying opposing views into the two extremes of good and bad, inferior or superior".[64] Eti also argues that the higher number of media channels the higher the number of plurality in outlets and also divergent voices. As for that, the Niger Delta Press is incapable of articulating the voice of all people in Niger Delta. Therefore, it is necessary to have another press system that can add an alternative voice and challenge the press system that already exists. Although, for this argument to work, it requires that there are no gate-keeping function or institutional structure that regulate media information and access.[65]

A third author looks at the relationship between the Nigerian press and peace in Niger Delta. In the article, "The Niger Delta crisis and advocacy for peace BY THE Nigerian press: A content analysisi of three Nigerian newspapers", Godwin Bassey Okon claims that the three main newspapers in Nigeria, The Guardian, The Punch and the Niger Delta Standard, did report more of the macabre and drama of the situation than advocacy for peace in the Niger Delta crisis. He recommends that the newspapers do embrace the ideology of advocacy for problems and solutions in crisis, since media is an important link between coverage and cognition. Therefore, it is essential that media do embrace the idea of conflict transformation and peace. Findings from this research show that the local newspaper in Niger Delta devoted 28% of its space for advocacy for peace while The Punch and The Guardian devoted zero editorial space for advocacy for peace and focused their attention straightly on the drama, the killings and violence in the region. Okon recommends that the newspapers should "drive to serve as the people's parliament where opinion and ideology and be projected for adoption", "shake of the docility conditioned by

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[63] Eti, C. I. (2009) "Objectivity and Balance in Conflict Reporting: Imperatives for the Niger Delta Press". *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September. P. 102
[64] Ibid., 99
[65] Ibid.

protracted military rule in the country and embrace the liberty occasioned by our emerging democracy sponsor", and Nigerian journalists should "embrace the ideology of advocacy" for peace and solutions to the problems in conflicts, such as the one in Niger Delta.[66]

The few articles discussing the relationship between Nigerian media and the Niger Delta crisis do state that media is an important player in the Niger Delta conflict since it works strategically with the Nigerian government to negatively represent the people in Niger Delta. In addition, research also state that Nigerian media could work as a platform for conflict transformation if the media channel is objective and works on grassroots levels and aims to benefit the general public in Nigeria.

4.2 *The Role of News Media in Conflicts*

The body of literature studying the role of news media in conflicts clams that the way a newspaper reports about a certain conflict can influence the conflict in many ways. News media's role in conflicts has gained public interest in recent years and journalists, scientists and policy makers refer to news media's central role in conflicts, such as, the war in Bosnia, the Gulf war, and the conflicts in Somalia.[67] Ellen Gardner states that, "though the media's conflict-resolution potential is largely underutilized, it has in many instances played an important role in conflict resolution or helping to rebuild a society after the conflict has passed".[68] She also states that, "media coverage can strongly influence how the parties, both inside and outside, relate to a conflict and the 'players' within it by the choice of stories that are covered or omitted, the sources used, and the stand that is taken toward ethical reporting".[69] Therefore, many international organizations working with conflict resolution and conflict transformation use media as a tool in their problem solving approaches. However, due to increased competition and economic constrains media often involve in conflicts when they are already out of control or "at high points of public interest".[70]

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[66] Okon, G, B. (2013) "The Niger Delta crisis and advocacy for peace by the Nigerian press: A content analysis of the three Nigerian newspapers". *New Media and Mass Communication*. Vol. 14. P. 17

[67] Wolfsfield, G. (1997) Introduction. *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East*. Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom. Cambridge University Press. P. 2

[68] Gardner, E. (2001) Chapter 11: The Role of Media in Conflicts. In Reychler, L & Paffenholz, T (Eds.) *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*. Boulder, Colorado. Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc. P. 301

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.. P. 302.

Another argument states that media's role in conflicts can take two different forms. "Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has a responsibility for increased violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence". [71] Because of the complexity of conflicts and due to news media's important role in conflicts, especially local news media, humanitarian organizations, peacekeeping forces, donors, and the international community must carefully study and consider how to interact with the media community before establishing conflict resolution approaches.

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[71] Puddephatt, A. (2006) "Introduction". Voices of War: Conflict and the role of the media. I*nternational Media Support.*

5. **Dimensions of the Conflict: Causes and Solutions (Literature)**

This part will describes the more predominant components of the problem at a higher level of abstraction, and these components will be used in structuring the framing analysis.

All literature in this field does state that the crisis in Niger Delta is a very complex conflict. Since this conflict is in a violent form, the majority concludes that this is a security problem for the Nigerian state and its people. The predominant frames in which this issue is being discussed in literature are: corporate behavior, government behavior, local activity, and the legal system. However, the main components identified as the problem in the Niger Delta conflict are, for instance, lack of inclusiveness in decision-making process regarding oil production, environmental degradation, unjust politics/corruption, ineffective legal system, lack of human rights and irresponsible corporate behavior. These four predominant frames and the cause/s for and solution/s to the problem within each frame will be discussed more carefully in this section.

Corporate Behavior

The body of literature that discusses corporate behavior focuses on environmental degradation, exploitation, the lack of a shared decision making-process, the lack of human rights and the lack of corporate-community engagement and corporate responsibility as the main problems of the conflict. There are different theoretical strands on the relationship between Niger Delta crisis and oil corporations work. Some scholars argue that multinational corporation does contribute in a positive way since foreign direct investment increase the local development and enhance the level of, for example, technology, economic production, employment and opportunities.[72] This view however, is greatly debated against and is not shared with the people of Niger Delta. Another strand of perspective believe that multinational corporations have negative consequences because they invest capital and so operates in ways that creates enclaves, exploitation of labor and un-integration into the economy.[73] To some extent an allowance to manage production without the influence of hosts economic, political and social structure. A third point of view argue that no matter the negative impacts of the oil business, oil corporations

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[72] Ekenedirichukwu, G. (2009) Understanding the Niger Delta Crisis within the Framework of Structural Conflicts in the International System: An Explosion. *The African Journal of Contemporary Issues*., Vol. 9, No. 2. October University of Buea, Cameroon . P. 3
[73] Ibid., 4

exploit resources but provide investment capital and technology which positively enhance the industrialization and development in Niger Delta. In additions, this view claims that "there is a key challenge in curbing the excesses, minimizing perverseness, maximizing benefits, influencing policies and regulating conduct in such way that it generates more healthy and concrete contributions to the overall growth and development of the region".[74]

According to the United Nations Environmental Programme, the Niger Delta is one of the most endangered delta and ecosystems in the world and it is essential to start clean ups of oil spills and restore the mangrove forest as soon as possible. It is obvious that these hazardous consequences of the environmental degradation affect the health and the basic needs of people living in oil bearing communities. As for that, the environmental concerns are combined with the issue of human rights. The UNEP is conducting an independent evaluation on the many health and environmental concerns due to the crisis in Niger Delta. In 2011, the UN states, "the environmental restoration of Ogoniland could prove to be the world's most wide-ranging and long term oil clean-up exercise ever undertaken if contaminated drinking water, land, creeks and important ecosystems such as mangroves are to be brought back to full, productive health".[75] According to UNEP, oil exploitation started in 1950 when oil was first discovered in Nigeria. Findings in the report also state that UN scientists found "8cm layer of refined oil floating on the groundwater which serves the wells" and that "families are drinking water from wells that is contaminated with benzene… at levels over 900 times above the World Health Organizations guidelines".[76] According to the UN, the root of the problem lies within the unbalance of power regarding decision making in Niger Delta and the lack of corporate responsibility in communities host to oil production. The UNEP recommends oil companies drilling in the area to improve their control and their maintenance of their facilities. In addition, the UN recommends the Federal Government of Nigeria to establish an 'Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority' (OERA) that would include "the mandate to follow up and oversee implementation of recommendations made in [the UNEP's] report". Key elements of the OERA would be to achieve restoration of environment and establish stronger environmental institution. The

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[74] Ibid.

[75] United Nations Environmental Programme (Aug 4th, 2011) UNEP Ogoniland Oil Assessment Reveals Extent of Environmental Contamination and Threats to Human Health. The United Nations. Retrieved from: http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/Portals/155/countries/nigeria/press_release_ogoniland_en.pdf Para 1

[76] Ibid.

Authority will work under the Federal Ministry of Environment and the OERA budget will be separated from the state budget and occur from the Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Fund. In addition to the focus on environmental restoration, the OERA will have a full "team of communication experts to ensure ongoing engagement and dialogue with the Ogoni community and continue the educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the issues arising from oil spills, whether they are from operational failure or illegal activities".[77] The Authority "will have an oversight mechanism which could be equivalent to the current Presidential Implementation Committee (PIC)".[78] The UN does argue for changes in the balance of power regarding decision making in Ogoniland in the Niger Delta and recommends oil corporations to extract oil without destroying the environment and its communities.

In addition to the UNEP, academics refer to the crisis as a security threat to the Nigerian people and a problem caused by the uninterrupted oil production no matter the environmental degradation and social impacts. For locals living in the Niger Delta the petroleum exploitation is a threat to their livelihood and human rights since it devastates the environment and causes sickness. "The failure of violent final solution to the community resistance, a tactic favored by successive military dictatorships, inevitably led to calls for a reassessment of the petroleum industry in Nigeria, and particularly the need for a new conflict management regime in Nigeria's oil belt". Solution discussed is for the oil business to share decision-making with local people and not exclude locals from the "petrobusiness". This is something that cannot be done by having locals fight the state or the opposite. To achieve this there has to be a fundamental change within the federation regarding fiscal control and exclusion of minorities together with a national transformation into good governance and democracy.

Another strand of literature within the corporate behavior discussion studies the relationship between oil corporations and communities in Niger Delta. Some studies focus on corporate-community relations in Niger Delta by looking at policies and practices by Shell, Total and Agip. Findings show that Shell has more enduring and damaging conflicts than Agipe and

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[77] Ibid.

[78] United Nations Environmental Programme (2011) "Ogoniland's Path to Sustanability" Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland. Retrieved from: http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/OEA/07_ch07_UNEP_OEA.pdf P. 225-226.

Total.[79] In addition, Shells community projects do not serve the needs of the local people host to oil bearing communities because they are poorly completed.[80] Also, projects in communities host to Agipe and Total are "products of consultations initiated by community people that resulted in the signing of Memoranda of Understanding".[81] Findings claims that "the intensity and scale of the conflict in corporate-community relations in the Niger Delta region are a function of the [corporate social responsibility] pattern of the operating oil [transnational corporations]… specifically, communities whose concern are incorporated into [corporate social responsibility] policies at the initial stage of corporate-community engagement tend to have more cordial relations with the operating companies, as the examples of Agip and Total have shown ".[82] However, it is important to remember that these success stories are not always the case. Some suggestions discussed are, for instance, community cohesion, especially in the form of elite cohesion, but especially, responsible and inclusive corporate social responsibility. This is definitely needed in order to gain sustainable corporate-community relations.[83]

Government Behavior

Another body of literature discussing the Niger Delta crisis does that within the frame of government behavior. This literature claims that the root of the problem is poor governance, corruption and political leaders lack of interest in a social welfare system. Problems discussed are hunger, unemployment, underdevelopment, diseases and poverty. All of them are negative effects out of poor governance and political leaders' lack of interest in welfare facilities. This conflict is a political issue that can be solved through political actions.[84] "The demands of the population in the Niger Delta to enjoy greater benefit from the oil produced in the region continue to go unanswered".[85] Leader's lack of interest in a genuine political process and the high level of corruption in the federal government are two factors driving the unrest and this creates quarrels in Niger Delta. Most observers believe that the president is willing to change; however, there have been no committed actions so far. The government has also remained silent

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[79] Aron, K and Patrick, J. (2013) "Corporate social responsibility patterns and conflicts in Nigeria's oil-rich region" *International Area Studies Review* 16(4) 341-356. University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Sage Publications
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., P. 353.
[82] Ibid., P. 354-355.
[83] Ibid.
[84] United States Institute for Peace (2009) "Crisis in the Niger Delta" *USIPEACE BRIEFING*: David Smock
[85] Ibid., P. 1.

when the Technical Committee has highlighted the Niger Delta issues publicly. Arguments claim that oil production would benefit greatly if peace were initiated in the region.[86] "In 2006-2007 the federal government's portion of oil revenues dropped by $10-$14 billion a year because of disruption in production, which in turn is an amount that did not go to any of the states."[87] The Niger Delta crisis do minimize the oil production, however, the corruption in the federal government still accounts for the lack of development and welfare in the country. "The long-term prospects for peace and prosperity in the Delta depend upon true electoral reform and the development of popular political parties and institutions through which popular will can be expressed and protected."[88] This string of literature view this problem to be rooted in poor governance practiced by the Nigerian state and therefore claim focus on the practice of good governance and social welfare facilities in Niger Delta as potential solutions to the problem.

Local Behavior

A third body of literature discusses this issue within the frame of local behavior. This string of literature defines the crisis in Niger Delta as an issue of having violent local activity in the form of electoral violence and kidnapping. Niger Delta people argue that oil money should go directly to oil producing communities in the form of trust funds where the community members could determine the expenditures.[89] However, due to corruption and leaders' lack of interest, kidnapping has become a social voice practiced by local militias to a great extent in the last decade. Kidnapping by locals are often done in attempt to protest against governments oppression and oil corporation exploitation. On January 15th, in 2006, nineteen persons were killed, "including soldier in the Military Joint Task Force (JTF) deployed by the federal government to the Niger Delta region", in October the same year, five soldiers were killed by some militants along the oil rich channels and on January 25, 2007, it was reported that "nine Chinese expatriates had been kidnapped in Bayelsa state and after being held by militants for eleven days…they were released by militants on compromise".[90] Findings state that good

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[86] United States Institute for Peace (2009) "Crisis in the Niger Delta" *USIPEACE BRIEFING*: David Smock
[87] Ibid., P. 4.
[88] Ibid., P. 5.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Akonye, J, E. (2014) Kidnapping The Terror of the 21st Century? Lessons from Southeast Nigeria". *Securing Africa Local Crisis and Foreign Interventions.* 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 100017. Routledge P. 141.

governance is the key driver to effectively control kidnapping.[91] "When jobs are created for youths or university graduates, state security apparatuses are adequately provided, and social amenities are provided for the tax payers, the social vice will be significantly reduced."[92] Electoral violence becomes a major security issue in the country due to the political unrest in Niger Delta. Continued protracted electoral violence will further the crisis in Niger Delta. Recommendations would be for the Nigerian military to restrain militant activity in Niger Delta. Diplomatic means and conflict resolution strategies should be a priority in this crisis.[93] Solution to this conflict lies within the diplomatic work of cooperation between Nigeria and United States and for the Niger Delta people to use the international community to push for political leadership that is focused on a clear agenda of equity and justice.

Legal System

A forth body of literature discusses the issue within the context of the Nigerian legal system. Academics in this discussion view the conflict as a collection of many conflicts and explore the possible application of restorative justice. Findings states, "in 1998, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) Nigeria had about 500 cases pending in Nigerian law court. About 350 or 70% of these cases were related to oil spill compensation claims".[94] The SPDC had alone 1426 oil spills between 1999 and 2003, and in 2003 the SPDC paid out US$3.2 millions in compensation.[95] In trying to resolve this issue, academics shift the attention from implementing effective development programs to working on the issue of inclusiveness. "In the Niger Delta, this dilemma of what constitutes justice is at heart of the conflicts between the oil companies and communities. There are many laws regulating the oil industry…but the people of the Niger Delta do not recognize the institutions that made these laws…and they have issues with the process of making these laws".[96] In 1914, the British colonial government passed the Mineral Oil Ordinance whose aim was to reserve the monopoly of oil licenses to British oil firms only. This

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[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., P. 146.
[93] United States Institute for Peace (2009) "Crisis in the Niger Delta" *USIPEACE BRIEFING*: David Smock
[94] Onuoha, A. (2005) Chapter 4 - The Dilemma of Restorative Justice when 'All Are Guilty': A Case Study of the Conflicts in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *From Conflicts to Collaboration: Building Peace in Nigerian Oil-Producing Communities*, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers. P. 64
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., P. 67

was a first signal that the local Nigerians had no influence in the oil business. For example, the locals had no say in whom to exploit and how oil is exploited. In addition, this law ensured oil companies to receive government protection at all time, that the locals will be mere watchers to what happens in the oil industry and the oil companies are only accountable to the government alone and not to the people living in the Niger Delta.[97] As a result, the local people are ignored by their needs, concerns and interest of their own communities. In 1937, another law was passed that granted oil companies more benefits. "Whenever there is a misunderstanding between oil companies and communities, government is almost always on the side of the companies."[98] In 1969 however, the Nigerian government enacted the Oil Mineral Decree which was a part of the response to the civil war. This gave the government total control over all oil reserves, of oil revenue and the oil industry. Since then, the government has made judicial efforts to include the interest of oil states in oil production. However, locals still call for the need of being compensated for all environmental damage and mass-unemployment and the court system still seems "incapable of satisfactorily adjudicating the issue".[99] Restorative justice might not lead to a restorative outcome; yet, it will provide a mechanism for addressing the increasing intractability of the conflicts in the Niger Delta. Restorative justice will offer an alternative way to address the issues affecting the relationship between local people and oil companies.[100]

When reflecting over the different authors' arguments, some core concepts have been discovered. All authors in this field agree that this is a security concern, yet, every author argues for different cause/s for the problem and different solution/s to this conflict. Literature discussing corporate behavior as the predominant context views lack of corporate responsibility and corporate-community engagement, environmental degradation, exploitation, lack of human rights and lack of inclusiveness in decision-making process as the predominant cause/s to the conflict. The UN recommends an improvement of the control and maintenance of oil facilities through an Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority. The OERA will restore the environment and establish a balance of power in the decision-making process in Niger Delta. Other academics recommend oil corporations to share the decision-making process with the local people and create a sentiment of inclusiveness between oil corporations, the state and local

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[97] Ibid., P. 68
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., P. 73
[100]Ibid.

people. Literature discussing this issue within the frame of government behavior view poor governance, leader's lack of interest in welfare facilities and corruption as the main problem in the conflict. Recommendations discussed are for the government to increase interest in the Niger Delta issue and start development of welfare facilities in the country. The strand of literature discussing the Niger Delta within the frame of local behavior view political unrest and violent local activity as the cause to the conflict. These factors do prolong the conflict academics recommends the local people to use, for example, the US to push for diplomatic means through the US-Nigeria Binational Commission. The fourth predominant frame in which this conflict is being discussed is the Nigerian legal system. The present legal system is viewed as unfair since the system directly ignore local people their rights to oil benefits. There is the need for inclusiveness since the system is not capable of satisfying all people. Rrestorative justice is a solution discussed since it is viewed as an alternative approach to address the issue of inclusiveness in the relationship between oil corporations and Niger Delta communities.

Throughout the body of research main problems have been discussed within the four predominant contexts: corporate behavior, government behavior, local behavior and the legal system. The chart in Table 1, illustrates the dimensions of the conflict by describing the causes and solutions to the problem within each frame. The same chart, (yet, with different results) will be used in media analysis. I created two columns for the cause/s for the problem with the intention to capture both the negative and positive faces of the problem. The few academics discussing the positive effects of the problem highlight oil corporations' responsible development projects and the Nigerian government cooperation with the United States as positive sides of the conflict. Except that, no positive discussion is found throughout the academic research about the Niger Delta crisis.

1: Dimensions of the Conflict: Causes and Solutions (Literature)

Categories of the Predominant Frames	Positive faces of the problem	Negative faces of the problem	Solutions to the Problem
Corporate Behavior	CSR Foreign direct investment. Local development	Unequal share of oil wealth. Lack of shared decision-making. Environmental degradation and exploitation. Lack of HR, health concerns. Lack of corporate responsibility. Lack of corporate-community integration.	Maintenance and regulations. Establish an Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority. Shared decision-making. Niger Delta elite cohesion. Responsible corporate behavior.
Government Behavior	Cooperative relationship with the international community, such as, with the US through the US-Nigeria Binational Commission.	Poor governance. Corruption. Lack of interest in Niger Delta. Lack of social welfare programs and facilities in Niger Delta. Military actions in Niger Delta Lack of genuine and fare general elections.	Transparency and good governance. True and fare election reforms. Social welfare programs and facilities. Militant restrain.
Local Activity	.	Electoral violence. Violent protests against oil corp. for ex, destruction of pipelines, oil facilities and kidnapping.	Use the international community to push for just and equitable leadership in the Nigerian government.
Legal System		Ineffective legal system. Lack of inclusiveness → Unjust legal system.	Restorative justice. Inclusiveness

6. Methodological Approach and Design

6.1 *Design*

Many different contexts help shape each other's and one selves understanding of the problem and the values, needs and interests of the participating actors in the conflict. One major way information and the presentation of a conflict and its main actors is spread is through news media. News media framing suggests that the presentation of a conflict in news do influence the conflict and its main actors involved in the conflict. As stated above, Gardner argues that "media coverage can strongly influence how the parties, both inside and outside, relate to a conflict and the 'players' within it by the choice of stories that are covered or omitted, the sources used, and the stand that is taken toward ethical reporting".[101] For that reason, the aim of this paper is to explore how the major newspaper in Nigeria presents the Niger Delta conflict and the main actors involved in the conflict within the last year. I intend to identify and analyze the predominant frames in which this conflict is being presented in academic research and build a framework that will be used in analyzing the Nigerian news presentation of the conflict. The analysis over the academic research and media will help me discover if there is a "gap" or "miss-presentation" in the information that the media publishes about the Niger Delta conflict and the main actors involved. For these reasons, I chose to use the methodological approach of framing.

6.2 *Data Collection Approach*

In addition to the notion that the approach of framing is a common tool used in the investigation of media content, my advisor recommended me to apply this method.[102] Since this is a media analysis and he aim of this paper is to find out how the major newspaper in Nigeria presents the Niger Delta conflict and its involved actors by analyzing the predominant contexts in which this issue is discussed in literature and media, I needed to, first of all, capture the main frames that academics use to discuss this issue. With the methodological approach of framing, I discovered some core frames throughout the literature review. These four frames will be explained and defined in the next section. With guidance from my advisor I searched for the cause/s for and solution/s to the Niger Delta crisis in order to discover the predominant

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[101] Gardner, E. (2001) Chapter 11: The Role of Media in Conflicts. In Reychler, L & Paffenholz, T (Eds.) *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide*. Boulder, Colorado. Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc. P. 301

[102] Vreese, C. (2005) News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design* 13(1), 51-62. Benjamin Publishing Company.

discourses/frames used to discuss this issue. These frames are the major building stones for this specific subject; therefore I chose to use this predominant contexts as building blocks to create an analytical framework that can be used to analyze how the major newspaper in Nigeria presents the conflict and its involved parties.

Then, I needed to get the wider scope of Nigeria's media presentation of the Niger Delta conflict. Because of this, I simply picked the most widely read news paper in Nigeria, the Punch. The Punch is a family owned news paper in English and distributed daily. This newspaper prints more than 80 000 copies daily and is available online through the punchng.com website. It was founded in 1976 and has topics within politics, sports, education and health, and so forth. Due to limitation in time and space and recommendations from my super visor I picked only one newspaper.

In the media analysis, I started to browse through the newspaper and searched for articles related to the "Niger Delta" in the search field. For the selection of articles, I tried different words in the search field in the Punch newspaper website. Words used in the search field were, "Niger Delta", "Niger Delta crisis" or "the crisis in Niger Delta". The result of the first word choice gave me 25 articles with topics all related to the Niger Delta crisis. The results of the other two word choices gave me nothing in particular that relates to the conflicts. Since Nigeria is a country with many different problems, such as, ethnic conflict, corruption, and so forth, I wanted o be specific in the words in the search field so that I did not end up mixing in new concepts of other problems in the discussion. I could have used, for example, "Shell" or other oil companies, yet if I did, then I would have had articles mainly relating to "Shell" and that was not the point of this essay since the aim was to capture the broader scope of the conflict and explore how the newspaper present the different actors in the conflict. I, therefore, decided to use the "Niger Delta" as the word choice in the search field.

Since this is an issue extensively covered in Punch newspaper and in Nigerian media in general and due to the limited time frame used for this research I choose to use the approach of theoretical saturation by starting to go back one year in the news timeline. I continued to go back further in time, but I soon realized that the contexts in which these articles where discussed did not change so much if I went back six more months or a year in addition to the first year. Therefore, I decided to go back one year in time. Between May 2014 and April 2015 there were 25 articles with the headline about the Niger Delta conflict.

The approach used to organize the different articles was to use the framework I created in the literature review as a lens over the articles and then scan for the cause/s for the problem and the solution/s to the problem in each article. In other words, I looked for how Nigerian media presented the different actors in the form of a "problem – solution" approach. All 25 articles were surprisingly straight forward in the presentation of the conflict and the different actors. Some articles discuss more than one actor. If that was the case, then I looked for the cause of problem and solutions to the problem for each actor in the article. Most articles were short, direct and one-sided. The findings from the academic texts and from the media analysis are summed up in "problem/s – solution/s" charts.

After having read all 25 articles I needed to sort them up into their belonged contexts. With a pen and four papers I created a paper for each context. Then, I wrote down each article that belonged to the context of corporate behavior and then the articles that belonged to government behavior, and so forth. I also discovered one new context in which I added one new paper for.

6.3 *Conceptual Frames*

Throughout this research I have used the approach of looking for the cause/s for and solutions/s to the problem in all academic research and news articles. By doing this I discovered five main frames in the academic texts and the news articles. The intention with this study and the research question is to explore what part Punch Newspaper plays in the Niger Delta conflict. These frames are the predominant concepts and the main building blocks in the academic discussion and in Punch newspapers discussion regarding the Niger Delta crisis. The five frames discovered are:

Government Behavior: Government behavior is referred to as the interest, values and needs and the actions taken by the Nigerian government. The Nigerian federal government and local Niger Delta government are referred to as the same for the reason that local government are under direct control of the federal government in relation to oil resources. I, therefore, discuss local Niger Delta government in relation to the federal government.

Corporate Behavior: Corporate Behavior is referred to as the interests, values and needs and the actions taken by oil corporations in this conflict.

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Local Activity: Local activity is referred to as the interests, values and needs and the actions taken by the local people in Niger Delta.

Legal System: As discussed in the literature review, the legal system is referred to as the whole legislative system. (However, it is important to explain that the empirical findings from this research state that there is a lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making process regarding oil production. In this case, lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making process does not necessarily refer to the whole legal system in the sense that there is a lack of inclusiveness in government attempt to respond to the issue with, for example, military forces, development programs, jobs in oil business sector, and so forth. No results pointed specifically and directly at the entire legal system, rather the overall lack of inclusiveness in government attempts to solve the issue.)

International Behavior: International behavior is referred to as the interest, values and needs and actions taken by the international community. (International behavior was something that academic research did discuss, however, not to the same extent as the other frames; therefore I did not create a separate frame for that context. The news articles did discuss this frame much more in dept; therefore I created a separate frame for this issue in the media analysis table.

6.4 *Limitations*

The methodological approach of framing is not a straight forward task and each frame created in this research totally depends on how I as a writer interpret the academic research and news articles I pick up in my hand. Therefore, the framing analysis can be bias and one-sided. However, the intention in this paper is trying to openly discover what part Nigerian media plays in this conflict. Durham states that "by treating news frames as evidence of system that defines what we know and how we know it, it is possible to consider the mass mediated practice of framing as a social process that enables society to function".[103] However, it all depends upon the

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[103] Reese, S., Gandy, O., Grant, E. (2008)" CHAPTER 6 Breaching Powerful Boundaries: A Postmodern Critique of Framing". *Framing Public Life – Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*.. 10 Industrial Avenue Mahwah. New Jersey 07430. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Inc. Publishers. P 123

up existing culture, ideology, norms and the arena in which the empirical process of framing is being created.[104]

Another problem with the framing approach is the danger of over-simplification when the researcher minimizes a complex structure into a set of simple frames of classifying measures. On the other hand, the researcher can also lack the effectiveness and produce too much information to an already meaningful and readily demonstrated theme.

A third problem lies within the limitation to address the reason for medias skew presentation of the conflict. This research will *not* address the root causes behind the inaccurate news coverage of the Niger Delta conflict and its main actors. To do this, it is necessary to look into the forces that shape the news coverage and the structure and balance of power of the news making process in Nigeria. This essay will *only* discover what part media plays in this conflict and results from this research will *only* serve as a starting point in the creation of a platform for future conflict resolution dialogue by investigating the role of Punch newspaper in the Niger Delta crisis.

A fourth point is the issue of not being able to look at the consequences of Punch newspaper's presentation of the conflict. This study will not go further in discussing *how* the incorrect presenting the conflict and its main actors affect the conflict itself and main actors involved.

Also, due to the lack in time and space, this paper only looks at how the newspaper presents the different actors in the crisis within the last year. With more time and space, it would have been interesting to look at the dynamics of the relationship between media presentation and the different Nigerian government administrations. In other words, to explore how the different presidency in Nigeria have affected the media coverage regarding the Niger Delta crisis since the Nigerian independence. This could potentially be a research that is able to find the root problem of the inaccurate presentation of the conflict I media.

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[104] Ibid.

7. **Dynamics of the Conflict: Causes and Solutions (News Media)**

Findings from the media analysis show that most articles discuss this issue within the contexts of corporate behavior, government behavior and local activity. Findings show that two out of the 25 articles discuss this issue within the corporate behavior frame, 14 articles falls into the frame of government behavior, six falls into the local activity frame and non discuss the matter of the legal system. One new frame was discovered throughout the media analysis, namely: international behavior. The frame "international behavior" had three belonged articles. To describe the results more in dept, I will discuss each frame and its articles in detail below. Also, a table of the organization of the articles and a table of the media analysis is presented at the end of this section.

Corporate Behavior

The two articles discussing corporate behavior do so in two different ways. One of these two articles highlight the underdevelopment as the cause of problem and finds solutions in development projects carried out by Shell. The other article discusses the plans for Nigerian oil producers to expand in Niger Delta. On April 27th, 2015, On April 27[th,] 2015, Punch published the article, "Shell trains 60 Niger Delta youths in crafts".[105] This article describes the two week training program that is a partnership between Bruce Onobrakpeya Foundation and Shell Petroleum Development Company Joint Venture. This is a training program that focuses on arts and crafts and has workshops in metal construction, ceramics and leather works. Niger Delta's Sustainable Development and Community Relations Manager states that this is an effort to empower youths in the region and to promote sustainable development. This is an article trying to present Shell development projects and cooperation with the Niger Delta communities. This article discusses Shells responsible corporate behavior. This is an article that highlights the positive impacts of Shells business in Niger Delta.

The other article published on September 18th, 2015, mainly describes the expanding plans of Nigerian oil production companies. The article claims that, through the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Shell, Chevron, Total and Exxon Mobile are pumping 90 percent of Nigeria's oil today. However, due to the violence and the crude theft in

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[105] (2015 , April 27th) Shell trains 60 Niger Delta youths in crafts. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/business/business-economy/shell-trains-60-niger-delta-youths-in-crafts/

the region, some international oil corporation will scale back operation. This shift gives rise to smaller Nigerian oil producers to expand operations in Niger Delta. "The company, based in Lagos, is planning a 'public offer or special placement of shares,' the first tranche of $200m will be raised before the end of 2014,"[106] according to Chief Executive Officer Layi Fatona. This article state that there is a problem of the ongoing violence and that international oil corporation "scale back amid unrest".[107] None of these two articles talk about exploitation or the lack of inclusiveness in decision-making processes. The first highlight Shell's community development plans and the second one refer to Nigerian oil corporations expanding plans. Both articles argue for positive consequences of oil corporations.

Government Behavior

Results also state that 14 articles did discuss the issue within the context of government behavior. These articles do not discuss the same matter within the frame, but they do describe the different ways in which government behavior takes place, such as, in natural resource control, government development programmes, employment issues and the 2015 general election. I will not discuss all of these 14 articles separately; only bring up those who can best illustrate the presentation of this context in Nigerian media. The predominant causes to the problem lies within this frame are unjust politics, the lack of regulations and the lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making process regarding oil production and oil revenues. In addition, these articles also highlight the government's good behavior and its many tries to develop Niger Delta through, for example, educational programmes for youths and employment programmes. On January 1st, 2015, Punch published an article titled "Changing tide for the Niger Delta". This article is a summary of all governmental attempts to solve the issue. It states, "These attempts may not have been satisfactory to the people of the region though, but that is not to say that the leaders had not tried at all."[108] The article highlights the year 1960 when the Niger Delta Development Board was established and the year 1967, when Chief Obafemi Awolowo made an historic speech advocating for the "creation of two states in the Eastern Region of Nigeria as a

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[106] (2015, September 18th) Niger Delta Exploration plans $450m stock sale. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/business/capital-market/niger-delta-exploration-plans-450m-stock-sale/
[107] Ibid.
[108] Teniola, E (2015, January 1st) Changing tide for the Niger Delta. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/opinion/changing-tide-for-the-niger-delta/

way of solving the then political crisis in the country".[109] The article also highlights Babangidas creation of the Oil Minerals Production Areas Development Commission in 1992. "It was the commission that gave the first job to the present President as assistant director, a position he held before he became the deputy governor of Bayelsa State in 1999."[110] Many more examples are highlighted, such as establishment of the NDDC in 2000 and the NNDC Act that "stipulates that 15 per cent of the Federal Government budget must go to NDDC" and Yar'Adua's creation of the President Amnesty Programme in 2009 in which pardoned all militants in the Niger Delta. This article argues that the cause of the problem is not so much the governments fault since the government has tried several times to develop programmes and created a commission that aims to benefit the Niger Delta communities, but rather the criminal activities and the electoral violence taking place in Niger Delta.

On November 5th and 7th, 2014, two articles were published to describe the Minister of Niger Delta Affair's commitment to "empower youths in Niger Delta".[111] The Minister had evolved a system to create employment for non-militant youths. This system was a five step programme, called iTrens that focuses on careers within communication technology sector and each one who completed the programme and demonstrated proficiency will be employed in the company, said the Minister.

Punch published an article titled "Niger Delta deserves 100% oil revenue – Falae" on July 20th, 2014, which claim that "owners of lands where oil is being explored and produced deserve to take all the profits as a result of oil companies' operations on their land."[112] The former Secretary to the Government of the Federation and Delegate to the National Conference, Chief Oluyemisi Falae believe that the approval process of oil business should include people from the Niger Delta. He states, "before any exploration, owners of the resource should be involved for authorization…therefore, the approval process should include people from the Niger Delta…We have identified that process at the national conference."[113] This idea is, however, discussed against in the Nigerian government and elsewhere.

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[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] (2014, November 5th) FG'll continue Niger Delta youths training – Minister. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/fgll-continue-niger-delta-youths-training-minister/
[112] Akinloye, B (2014, July 20th) Niger Delta deserves 100% oil revenue – Falae. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/niger-delta-deserves-100-oil-revenue-falae/
[113] Ibid.

On December 19, 2014, the article "UPN picks Niger Delta woman as presidential candidate" which discusses the upcoming presidential election. The United Party of Nigeria (UPN) has chosen Helen Godswill from Delta State as its presidential candidate. "We want to assure the generality of Nigerians at home and the diaspora that the UPN is on a rescue mission to salvage Nigeria from the state of precipice of crisis of monumental dimension caused by misrule at all levels of government controlled by the presence of mechanist politicians".[114] The party explain that they would do everything possible "to preserve the legacy and achievement of its founding father" and win the upcoming election.[115] Other articles discussing the presidential candidates and the general election do so in similar ways as this article.

Another way in which the governmental behavior is discussed is within the problem of lack of employment and the problem of having companies that do not pay out wages as they should. On March 2nd, 2015, the article "Niger Delta ministry workers protest unpaid wages" was published.[116] Punch states that contact workers for the Cross River State office protested against the nonpayment of salaries. One of the workers said "we have been working since 2009 in this state office at the ministry. Most of us are graduates but because of lack of job, we decided to stick to this one. We are initially owed seven months but they paid three months out of it last year's". [117] The nonpayment of wages is something which happens in all nine states where the ministry operates. However, the ministry replied by saying that the message was received and that necessary action was going to be made by the state government. On March 2nd and 12th, two other articles also described the unemployment issues and the lack of state funding in Niger Delta development programmes.

On May 13, 2015, the article, "FG awards N31bn Niger Delta road contracts". This article describes the amount of money that the local Niger Delta government was awarded in order to construct roads in the region. Four different roads are being discussed: the Bayelsa, Ondo and two in Delta State. "The minister said the construction of Zaram-Okida Isem road in Yenagoa Local Government Area in Bayelsa State was awarded in the sum of 5.923billion while the construction of Amasoma-Egbedi Road in Kolokuma Okpokuma Local Government of

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[114] Olokor, F (2014, December 19th) UPN picks Niger Delta woman as presidential candidate. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/upn-picks-niger-delta-female-as-presidential-candidate/
[115] Ibid.
[116] Calabar, M (2015, March 2nd) Niger Delta ministry workers protest unpaid wages. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/niger-delta-ministry-workers-protest-unpaid-wages/
[117] Ibid.

Bayelsa was awarded in the sum of N2.767billion with a completion period of 18 months".[118] Articles discussing government behavior do so in different ways. Many articles highlight good governance, fair elections and the many development programmes initiated by the government to develop the region and solve the issue. However, some point to the underdevelopment, the lack of employment, exploitation and the lack of inclusion of people from all levels of society in the decision-making process regarding oil production and the distribution of oil wealth. solutions discussed have been, for instance, governmental programs that focus on development, education and employment.

Local Activity

The six articles discussing the context of local activity do so by describing the many threats and militant activities, such as violent political protests, destruction on pipelines and oil facilities and kidnapping, taking place in Niger Delta as the problem in the conflict. On April 4th, 2015, the newspaper published a short article titled, "Niger Delta militants blow up pipelines".[119] The Punch states that Niger Delta militant group, Urhobo Gbagbako, claimed responsibility for the pipeline bombing of Nigeria Petroleum Development Corporation in an email to journalists. Punch states that the militant Urhobo group planned to shut down the production of all oil fields in Urhobo and Isoko areas and by doing this it will draw government's attention not to neglect Urhobo militants' pipeline protection contracts. There have been cases in which the government has offered other ex-militants protection contracts to other ethnic groups and this is what the Urhobo group protested against. No direct solutions were discussed except that the government should practice fare and just politics.

On March 22nd, 2015, the newspaper published, "Ex-Niger Delta militants endorse Buhari, Emerhor, carpet Jonathan".[120] Punch states that former militants believe the president Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party "had failed the people in Niger Delta region

[118] Adetayo, O (2015, May 13th) FG awards N31bn Niger Delta road contracts. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/fg-awards-n31bn-niger-delta-road-contracts/
[119] (2015, April 4th) Niger Delta militants blow up pipelines. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/niger-delta-militants-blow-up-pipelines/
[120] Asaba, E. O. (2015, March 22nd) Ex-Niger Delta militants endorse Buhari, Emerhor, carpet Jonathan. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/ex-niger-delta-militants-endorse-buhari-emerhor-carpet-jonathan/

in particular and the nation in general". [121] General Israel Apkodero, which is the National President of the group Coalition of Association of Ex-Agitators, said that Goodluck Jonathan only empower certain ethnic groups in Niger Delta. He argue that Nigerian youth must defend democracy by standing up and say "no" to all forms of electoral violence. According to Akpodero, the president had, under the amnesty programme, made exclusively beneficiaries only to Ijaw people and not the whole Niger Delta community. The Amnesty programme could work if it benefitted all people in Niger Delta. This article discuss the issue of having local unrest and solutions to that would be for the government to carry out programmes that intends to target all ethnic groups equally and not favor one over the other.

On February 1st, 2015, Punch published the article, "Threats: Ohanaeze, MASSOB, OPC back Niger Delta militants". This article discusses the electoral violence in Niger Delta and the unjust politics in the Nigerian government. Many people are tired of unfair and not credible elections. Militant leaders from the MEND and the NDPVF had threaten unrest of this election is not fare and credible and if Jonathan loses then. The National Publicity Secretary of Ohanaeze, Mr. Osita Ogariah, agreed with the militants, saying that "we the Igbo are in support of what the militants have said to the extent that they're putting Independent National Electoral Commission under pressure. Their comments should move the INEC to do its best so that every would-be voter gets his or her Permanent Voter Card. Nobody must be disenfranchised". [122]The Progressive Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra said the militants were right by arguing for fare and credible election. On the other hand, the former Ministry of Defense and ex-Chief of Army Staff did not agree with the above statement. He described their threats as "unguarded and reckless" and had called for the arrest of the militants. Local people are asking for a fare election as a solution to the electoral violence in Niger Delta.

On January 25th, 2015, the article, "Niger Delta militants threaten war if Jonathan loses" also expresses people's unhappiness with the election process and need for fare and credible elections in Nigeria. It also highlights the power relations regarding oil resources. The leader of Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force met with Bayelsa State Governor and Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta Affairs to discuss the upcoming election. The NDPVF threatens to

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Baiyewu, L., Akinloye, B. and Aworinde, T. (2-15, February 1st) Threats: Ohanaeze, MASSOB, OPC back Niger Delta militants. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/threats-ohanaeze-massob-opc-back-niger-delta-militants/

take up arms if Goodluck Jonathan does not win the election. The leader of NDPVF also states that "if the North out of desperation for power took power from their kinsman, the people of the Niger Delta would take their oil back".[123] He also state that we are all Nigerians but not one people. "What brings us together is oil", the leader said.[124] This article presents the same message as the articles above. People are tired of the government's unjust politics and seek fare and credible elections.

Only one article that discussed local activity in a positive way did so by describing the development initiative from the Foundation for Partnership. This article was difficult to map into the right frame because it did not clearly state what type of programme and initiative is was. After having researched this initiative, I found out that it is a partnership initiative organized in the form of a network with people among different levels of society in Niger Delta and is therefore an article that fits into the frame of local activity. The article state that, "stakeholders from nine states in the Niger Delta region have deliberated on the need to urgently shift focus on oil production to the agricultural sector".[125] The network stresses the needs for jobs in the region and claim that "44.2 per cent of jobs in the Niger Delta region were created by the agricultural sector".[126] The executive director of the network believe that this forum "would create a chance for participants to build cross-regional initiatives" and build agricultural jobs that can benefit all Nigerians.[127] A solution to the underdevelopment in Niger Delta is to create more jobs within the agricultural sector.

Legal Framework

Surprisingly, no article discussed the frame of the legal system. To some extent, the article talking about lack of paid wages could relate to the ineffectiveness of the legal system in the way that employees do not have the power to fight back if employers chose not to pay their salaries. However, this case regards to the local minister office, which is indirectly ruled by the

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[123] Simon, U. (2015, January 25th) Niger Delta militants threaten war if Jonathan loses. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/niger-delta-militants-threaten-war-if-jonathan-loses/
[124] Ibid.
[125] Mudiagaaffe, C (2014, December 11th) Niger Delta Stakeholders target agric. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/niger-delta-stakeholders-target-agric/
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.

state government, and is therefore a discussion that relates to the government behavior since this is a negative consequence resulting out of poor governance.

International Behavior

The new frame discovered throughout this media analysis is international assistance. Three articles discuss the Niger Delta conflict in the context of United Nation funding of Niger Delta development program, the United States and the NGO Waltz Environmental Solution. On December 21, 2014, the Punch published an article that described the creation of "one million jobs for youths in Niger Delta…in the next ten years". [128] The NGO is called Waltz Environmental Solution and the director of the organization described the future jobs as technical employments within the oil and gas industry. The director states that "we have a structure in place for job creation for the youths in Niger Delta region in general and our target is one million jobs…we are also creating awareness on how to tackle environmental challenges, especially in oil producing communities in the region"[129]There are no real problems discussed in this article but it refer to the underdevelopment and the needs for jobs in the region. The whole article rather discuss the solution to the problem by creating more jobs in the region

The article, "UNDP to provide N1.68trn for Niger Delta development" mainly discuss the UNDP's funding of the Niger Delta Action Plan (NDAP). The NDAP was created by the National Planning Commission (NPC) and will take place over the next five years. The Minister of NPC, Dr Abubakar Sulaiman describes this development program as "the road map to achieve sustainable and positive change in the region to radically stem the wave of youth restiveness" and "a landmark achievement in addressing the problem of the Niger Delta region. He adds that the "era of contractors abandoning construction sites after collecting money has come to an end, as effective monitoring and accountability will be ensured by the Commission".[130] The Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Staphen Oru claimed that, "the plights of the people of Niger Delta region is fast receiving the much needed international attention it deserves" and stresses that "the

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[128] (2014, December 21st) NGO plans 1million jobs for the Niger Delta youths. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/ngo-plans-1million-jobs-for-niger-delta-youths/
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ifeanyi, O (2014, December 2nd) UNDP to provide N1.68trn for Niger Delta development. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from: http://www.punchng.com/news/undp-to-provide-n1-68trn-for-niger-delta-development/

federal government cannot do it alone".[131] This article describes the ineffective monitoring systems and the lack of social and infrastructural development in Niger Delta. The solution to this problem is the Niger Delta Action Plan in which is being supported and funded by the UNDP.

The third article discussing this matter within the context of international behavior was published on July 23rd, 2014 and is titled "Film for peace: US, Amata to train Niger Delta youths". The United States Consul General, Jeff Hawkins is working on a peace project among youths in the Niger Delta. "The United States is working with those in the Niger Delta region to promote non-violence in the area. We have decided to employ media through series of television programmes and our target audience is the youth", Hawkins declared. He also state that he grew up in Niger Delta himself and he did always experience violence and he saw a need to promote positive attitude among youths in the region. The motive behind this was to penetrate and inculcate norms of non-violence among youths. This article clearly discusses violence as the cause of the problem and views the introduction of non-violent forms of attitudes as the solution to the problem.

This media analysis has showed some interesting results. To conclude the main components in this section I have used the same chart that I used in the literature discussion and filled it with the findings from the media analysis. The two articles talking about corporate behavior do so in a positive way. One article states the needed development programmes initiated and funded by oil corporations, such as Shell. The other article discusses the expansion of Nigerian oil corporation in Niger Delta. Both articles refer to the underdevelopment and the violence among local people as the cause of the problem in Niger Delta. Solutions discussed are educational development programmes and expansion of Nigerian oil companies.

The majority of articles published in Punch newspaper discuss the issue of government behavior. Out of the 14 articles, 11 discussed government behavior in a positive form. Examples of this would be infrastructure and social development projects, employment and education programmes and sustainable development in general in Niger Delta, while three discusses the negative impacts of poor governance and unjust politics.

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[131] Ibid.

Within the frame of local activity, five articles discuss local activities as violent and destructive. They claim the electoral violence in forms of threats by ex-militants and the destruction on oil facilities and pipelines by local violent gangs as the cause of the problem. Solutions discussed in this context are an Amnesty programme that works to benefit all ethnic groups equally and fair and credible general elections. One article discusses the positive side of the local activity in the form of the Foundation for Partnership Initiative. This initiative seeks to shift jobs from oil business into the agricultural sector as a solution to the underdevelopment in the region.

I found no article discussing the issue of the legal system. I did, however, find three articles that talk about international behavior on the form of UNDP funding, United State peaceful development project and the international NGO: Walts Environmental Solution. These three article s discuss the positive impacts of international assistance.

Table: 2 below illustrates the results from the organization of the different news articles in the media analysis. I created a "page" for each frame and wrote down each article to its belonged context.

Table: 3 illustrates the predominant frames in which the Niger Delta conflict is discussed in Nigerian media. I use the chart that was created in the literature discussion. Throughout the media analysis one new frame was discovered. To illustrate the causes and solutions within that frame I created a row at the bottom of this chart called International Behavior.

Table 2: Mapping of Articles.

Corporate Behavior	Government Behavior	Local Activity	Legal Framework	New Context: International Behavior
• April 27, 2015 • Sept 18, 2014	• May 13, 2015 • March 12, 2015 • March 2, 2015 • Jan 1, 2014 • Dec 19, 2014 • Nov 7, 2014 • Nov 5, 2014 • Oct 7, 2014 • Jul 20, 2014 • Jul 2, 2014 • Jun 25 2014 • Jun 23, 2014 • May 27, 2014 • April 25, 2014	• May 12, 2015 • April 4, 2015 • March 22, 2015 • Feb 1, 2015 • Jan 25, 2015 • Dec 11, 2014		• Dec 21, 2014 • Dec 2, 2014 • Jul 23, 2014

Table 3. Dimensions of the Conflict: Causes and Solutions (Media)

The Predominant Frames in Media	Positive faces of the problem	Negative faces of the problem	Solutions to the Problem
Corporate Behavior	Investment. CSR Foreign direct investment. Technology Community development. Responsible oil production.	Underdevelopment. Violence and criminality	Development projects: crafts. Expansion of Nigerian oil corporations.
Government Behavior	Government attempts to develop Niger Delta, such as, educational, employment and development programmes. Fair general elections with a push for women in the state government.	Lack of inclusiveness in decision-making process regarding oil. Lack or regulations on oil prod. Unequal distribution of oil wealth. Unjust politics. Exploitation. Lack of employment and wages not being paid. No state funding → Underdevelopment.	Government responding to Niger Delta crisis with development programmes and education and employment programmes. Just politics and fare elections. 100% revenue to oil bearing communities.
Local Activity	Local political engagement.	Electoral violence. Criminal activities.	Fare and credible elections. Democracy and just politics. Governmental programmes intended to target ethnic groups equally.
Legal System			
International Behavior	International interest in Niger Delta	Lack of monitoring system. Lack of social and infrastructure development. Lack of jobs. Violence.	The Niger Delta Action Plan (National Planning Commission and UNDP) Peace movie (introduce non-violent forms of attitudes) Waltz Environmental Solution.

8. Results

This section will discuss the main findings from this research and discuss what findings from this research can do for other studies involved in this subject.

8.1 *Results*

Findings from this research tell us that news media do play an important role in conflicts in general. Answer to this study's research question also state that Punch newspaper do play a vital role in the conflict in Niger Delta. The overall results from the analysis of Nigerian media and academic research show that Nigerian media uses the same frames of corporate behavior, government behavior and local activity to present the Niger Delta crisis as the literature in the field use to discuss the issue. The predominant discussions in media about the cause/s for and solution/s to the problem were, however, very different from what academics discuss. Results show that media do play a vital part in this conflict. Media do present this conflict and its main actors in a skew way.

Throughout the media analysis, findings state that both oil corporations and the government are presented as two actors that respond to the crisis in the form of responsible development projects or employment programmes. Academics do, however, refer to oil corporations in Niger Delta as irresponsible and greedy. Academics discuss exploitation, environmental degradation and health concerns as the causes for the problem. Surprisingly, Punch did not publish one singe article discussing the negative impacts of oil corporations in Niger Delta. The newspaper claimed underdevelopment as the main cause for the problem and saw the corporations work, in the form of development programmes, as the solution to the problem. Punch newspaper publishes a positive attitude of both the government and oil corporations in Niger Delta. This is definitely not the way academic research discuss the government and oil corporations. The literature has a far more negative attitude towards these two actors. Punch also presents the local people as a major problem to the conflict since it often illustrates the local people as being violent and criminal. The local electoral violence and the criminality, in the form of kidnapping and bunkering, is discussed in literature but in a combination with governments lack of interest in Niger Delta development and oil corporations exploitation of Niger Delta oil resources.

Within the frame of government behavior, the vast majority of studies in this field do discuss corruption and poor governance and lack of interest in social welfare programmes as the main causes for this crisis. Therefore, they recommend the government to start practicing just politics, good governance and to establish social welfare programs. These changes could potentially solve the issue. On the other hand, the majority of articles published in Punch do state that the government has interest in developing Niger Delta and that the government has responded to the crisis in several attempts. The majority of articles also describe the many employment programmes that both the government and oil corporations have established in communities host to oil production. In addition, Punch newspaper highlights the focus on fair and equitable general election by describing the projects of having women running as candidates for the presidential election.

Media do shift the focus from poor governance to the problems of violence among local Niger Delta people. Punch often describes the many threats, the electoral violence and the criminality as the main causes for the crisis in Niger Delta. Five out of six articles did discuss the issue of violence among local people as the main problem for the crisis. Only one did discuss a peaceful initiative established by the local people. No article did describe the local peaceful women movement or other forms of non-violent local protests as activities taking place among people in the local communities.

The new frame discovered in media was international behavior. Articles within this frame did also mention the violence and the underdevelopment as causes to the problem and they saw different forms of international assistance as potential solutions to the crisis. International assistance was mentioned as a potential solution in the literature, but, not to the same extent as the media do.

There are many ways in which information about the conflict and its main actor's values, interests and needs are being spread. However, news media is one way information of the conflict itself and the involved parties is being spread. This research demonstrates that Punch newspaper do emphasize on a certain part of the conflict. This emphasis is something that can lead main actors misunderstand and prejudge each other. Also, this emphasis is something that needs to be taken seriously in the creation of future conflict management approaches since this causes the main actors to become more isolated and further away from a common understanding of the problem. As a consequence, conflict management becomes extremely difficult.

8.2 *Generalisability*

Conflicts in general, but especially, conflicts over natural resources, are extremely complex matters. Natural resource conflicts are embedded in many different contexts and have their own structure and form, therefore each conflict deserve its own conflict management approach.

The first step in creating any form of conflict management is to build a platform of a common understanding of the problem between the main actors in the conflict. Without a common understanding, efficient conflict management approaches will be difficult to create. Findings from this research will be useful in the work for Niger Delta conflict management approaches since it provides the first main step in the finding out where and how information about the conflict might lead main actors and general people to be misinformed about the conflict itself and its involved actors.

I believe the most valuable lesson throughout this research is that, no matter the complexity of the problem, the work and creation of conflict management should still be prioritized. It is essential to work on forms of conflict management suited for the Niger Delta conflict and for other conflicts in general. We know that the Niger Delta conflict is not a conflict that will end soon. However, that is not a reason enough for not trying. This, I believe is something that could be taken in consideration when planning for conflict management implementations for other conflicts regarding oil and other forms of natural resources.

9. **Conclusion**

Previous research and this study clearly state that the Niger Delta crisis is a complex matter. Due to the complexity of the problem the creation of possible conflict management approaches have been very difficult. In order to create and apply any possible form of conflict management approach it is necessary to study the conflict in detail. Academics in the field refer to the Niger Delta crisis as an oil war. The conflict is in a violent form and therefore a security concern for the Nigerian state and its people. Consequences of this conflict have destroyed the environment and the livelihood for the people in Niger Delta. Non- violent protests, in forms of social protests against oil corporations, and violent protests, in forms of kidnapping, criminal activities and electoral violence, are taking place regularly due to the lack of regulations on oil extraction and the lack of inclusiveness in the decision-making process regarding oil production.

Findings from the analysis over the academic research show that this conflict is deliberated over in four main frames. These predominant frames are: corporate behavior, government behavior, local activities and the legal system. Most literature agrees that the close relationship between the Nigerian government and oil corporations are a major problem in this conflict and the lack of inclusiveness in the decision making process is a main driver in the crisis.

Previous research studying the relationship between the Nigerian media and the conflict in Niger Delta do state that newspapers tied to the government do portray the local people and their activities in a criminal and violent way while the government is often victimized and the actions taken by the Nigerian government are portrayed as heroic. Research devoted to study the relationship between media presentation and conflict management in Niger Delta states that media is a potential tool to use in trying to find possible ways to solve the conflict *if* media is treated as an impartial platform for communication, information and an advocacy for conflict management discussion. The few present newspapers that could potentially imply this is found on the grassroots level in society and are not tied or controlled by the Nigerian government.

Findings from the media analysis show that Punch newspaper does discuss this issue within the frame of corporate behavior, government behavior, local activity and international behavior. A major result in this study states that Punch newspaper presents the government and oil corporations in a positive and responsible. This is something academics in the field do not do. Punch also describes the local people to be violent and criminal and much of the peaceful protests taking place in Niger Delta are left out. Findings from this study add to what previous

research states regarding news media's role in conflicts in general but also in the Niger Delta crisis. Punch newspaper publishes information about the government and oil corporations that is manly positive while the local people in Niger Delta are portrayed as violent and criminal. Punch newspaper is not a major advocate for resolution or peace since the newspaper chooses to leave out much of the conflict management discussion and tend to focus their articles on the criminal activities taking place in Niger Delta by the local people. The answer to this study's research question claims that Punch newspaper do present the Niger Delta conflict and its involved actors, to a certain, extent, incorrectly.

Results from this research have hopefully provided a detailed description of the Niger Delta conflict. I also hope that this research has identified media's role in this conflict and that findings from this study can contribute with building blocks in the construction of future conflict management approaches suited for the Niger Delta crisis.

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