

## MEDIA DISCOURSE AS A CATALYST FOR ENDURING PEACE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA AND NIGERIA AT LARGE

Ikoro, Onyinyechi Stella, PhD\*

### Abstract

The media, through strategic use of language, plays a pivotal role in shaping ideologies, revealing worldviews, and influencing public sentiment—thereby contributing meaningfully to societal progress. By controlling or challenging power structures, media discourse becomes a critical tool in addressing issues of peace, conflict, and national cohesion. This study adopts an eclectic methodological framework, integrating Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Grammar—specifically the ideational (experiential), interpersonal, and textual meta-functions—to examine the ideological underpinnings of media narratives surrounding the Niger Delta crisis. Drawing from two editorials published in *New Waves* and *The Pointer* newspapers, the research analyzes lexical choices to uncover embedded ideologies and communicative intentions. Findings reveal that both texts display convergent ideological patterns through the use of material and relational process types, participant roles (Actors, Goals, Beneficiaries), and mental processes (Sensors, Mental states, Phenomena). Nominalization is deployed as a rhetorical strategy in both texts, while *The Pointer* exhibits a higher degree of ‘name-calling’ to frame its ideological stance. While the editorial in *New Waves* adopts a populist tone advocating for inclusive dialogue and reform, *The Pointer* aligns more closely with state authority, portraying dissenting actors as threats. The study recommends enhanced stakeholder investment in the media as a vehicle for promoting peace, mitigating insecurity, and fostering sustainable development across Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Media Discourse, Ideology, Language, Editorials, Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Grammar, Niger Delta, National Development

### Introduction

The influence of media discourse in any society is undeniable. It is widely accepted that the mass media serves as a powerful tool for shaping social influence and power relations within communities. This belief is supported by various theoretical frameworks, particularly within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The term *media discourse* can be understood as the language forms, structures, and semiotic codes that are unique to the media landscape. In this context, media language is not just another form of communication, but a distinct mode of expression, differing from everyday speech. This distinction suggests that media discourse often embodies specialized and idiosyncratic compositions, conveying messages tailored to specific audience groups within society.

Van Dijk (2012) draws attention to the relationship between media discourse and social power, stating that "the patterns of access to public discourse are generally an interesting criterion of social power" (p. 31). He further asserts, "Freedom of the press should, therefore, also be understood as power of the press" (Van Dijk, 2012). In this view, the media's power extends beyond simply disseminating information—it is also a tool for persuasion and social influence. This aligns with Fairclough's (1995) assertion that media discourse holds the power to shape public beliefs, values, social relations, and identities.

From a communication perspective, media discourse can also be seen as a set of diverse channels—newspapers, radio, television, the internet, and even billboards—through which the public receives

information. These platforms, through their specific forms of language, aim to elicit particular responses from target audiences. Language in the media, thus, becomes an instrument for conveying information with the intent of influencing societal views and responses.

### **Language, Ideology, and Editorials**

Language, as a reflection of human thought and action, holds immense power in shaping social realities. It is a multifaceted tool capable of expressing complex ideas, emotions, and intentions (Udofot, 2004). Language's versatility allows it to be examined from various perspectives, especially its role in the exercise of power. As a communicative tool, language functions to convey the ideologies, beliefs, and desires of its users. According to Akmajian, Demers, and Harnish (2003), language use is closely tied to human intentions, purposes, and beliefs. Language is never neutral; rather, it serves to create, normalize, and reinforce particular worldviews while excluding and delegitimizing alternative perspectives.

Language used at any given moment privileges certain viewpoints, making them appear rational while marginalizing others as nonsensical (p. 19). In this sense, language is a framing device that constructs ideologies and power relations in society. Ideology, in turn, is a central force in organizing and maintaining power structures. It is understood as a system of ideas and values shared by members of a society, often serving as the guiding principles of their actions. From a Marxist perspective, ideology is an instrument of social reproduction, often controlled by the ruling class to perpetuate its dominance.

The media plays a crucial role in disseminating information and unmasking the hidden agendas of the ruling elite. Ekwueme and Obayi (2012) contend that the Frame Theory of mass media posits that the way an issue is framed influences its public perception and the choices people make regarding it. The media, by exposing the public to particular narratives, helps shape ideological beliefs concerning social, economic, and political matters. In turn, this influences whether people accept or resist the prevailing power structures, often through protest or other forms of dissent. As Van Dijk (1993, 2006) notes, those who are dominated are often made to feel that they are in control of their own fate, while in reality, the dominant groups maintain control. Through media discourse, the dominant ideology is presented as the natural and correct order of things, helping to sustain the status quo.

### **The Editorial as an Ideological Tool**

Editorials serve as a primary site for examining the ideological role of media. Defined as opinion pieces that aim to inform and guide public opinion on current events, editorials reflect the editorial stance of a publication. They are typically framed around specific issues, presenting a viewpoint that aligns with the newspaper's or magazine's broader ideological orientation. According to Henry and Tator (2002), editorials are "expressions of the broader ideological stance of the newspaper's owners and managers" (p. 93). Van Dijk (1988) further explains that editorials often present opinions that are explicit and dominant, formulated from the perspective of the media outlet or its editor.

Importantly, editorials possess the power to shape public discourse by coercing readers into adopting certain political or ideological stances. As Chilton and Schaffner (1997) note, editorials legitimize or presume the legitimacy of specific viewpoints, reinforcing the communicative power of the media. By shaping how readers understand events and issues, editorials play a central role in framing ideological perspectives, thus influencing public perception and action.

This revised **Introduction** integrates the key concepts from your original text, while presenting them in a more scholarly and fluid manner. The references to theorists and scholars are maintained to preserve the academic rigor, while the structure is streamlined for clarity. Let me know if you'd like to continue working on the next section, or if there are any further changes you'd like to make!

## Theoretical Framework

### Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

This study employs **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** to examine the ideological representations of Nigerian government policies regarding the Niger Delta region. Specifically, it focuses on the government's response to local agitations related to marginalization, the militarization tactics used to suppress dissent, and the corresponding acts of terrorism committed by militants in retaliation. Additionally, the role of corporate organizations, whose activities have contributed to the region's environmental degradation, is also scrutinized.

Wardhaugh (2006) classifies CDA as a branch of critical sociolinguistics, with roots in the critical tradition of Antonio Gramsci. CDA investigates texts within their social context to reveal underlying ideologies, identities, and power structures. It uncovers the hidden factors embedded in texts—such as values, power relations, and belief systems—that shape discourse (Bayram, 2010). CDA invites us to look beyond the surface of texts to understand what is backgrounded or obscured in the communication process.

Scholars like Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, and Wardhaugh have contributed significantly to the development of CDA, making it a multidisciplinary approach. **Fairclough** (1989, 1995) conceptualizes discourse as a social practice, seeing it as a method to investigate the social and cultural changes that govern power dynamics. His model, known as the **Dialectical-Relational Approach** or **Functional Systemic Grammatical Approach**, examines discourse at three levels: the micro-level (syntax and linguistic structure), the meso-level (power relations), and the macro-level (interpretation).

In contrast, **Van Dijk** (1993, 2006) frames discourse within a socio-cognitive perspective, proposing that discourse is shaped by both the cognitive structures of the participants and the social context in which it occurs. His model introduces the concepts of **context models** and **event models**, which respectively govern the pragmatic and semantic aspects of discourse. These models emphasize the role of mental representations in how people produce and interpret discourse.

**Wodak** (2001) offers a historical perspective on discourse analysis, asserting that context is primarily historical. Her approach integrates linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions to analyze how language reflects societal conflicts and serves as a tool of power, enabling social control and the maintenance of dominant social structures (Cutting, 2002).

This study incorporates **Wodak's sociological approach** to CDA, which combines linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural analyses within specific contexts. This framework will be applied through Halliday's (1978, 1985) **socio-semiotic model of language**, which includes **Field**, **Tenor**, and **Mode**—three key components that help analyze the relationship between language function and form. The framework allows for a nuanced exploration of the editorials selected for this study, focusing on their immediate social and political contexts.

## Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual Meanings

Halliday (1978) introduced the concepts of **Field**, **Tenor**, and **Mode** as essential components of discourse analysis. These categories provide a way of linking language variation to social contexts, helping to uncover the meanings embedded in texts.

- **Field** (Ideational Meaning) refers to the content or subject matter of discourse. It is concerned with the "what" of discourse—what is happening, who is involved, and what is being described. In a meta-functional sense, **Field** reflects the ways in which texts organize, represent, and interpret the world. Halliday (1978) argues that the ideational component of discourse represents our perceptions, beliefs, and ideologies, and is reflected in patterns of **transitivity**—processes, participants, and circumstances within the text.
- **Tenor** (Interpersonal Meaning) focuses on the participants in the discourse and their roles. It addresses how power, solidarity, and social relations are enacted through language. The **Tenor** reflects the relationships between discourse participants, revealing how they negotiate roles, authority, and control.
- **Mode** (Textual Meaning) concerns the organization of the discourse itself. It explores how language is used to create coherence and cohesion in the text, focusing on the thematic structure and the flow of information. **Mode** looks at how language facilitates interaction, highlighting the texture of the text and its communicative functions.

These three variables—**Field**, **Tenor**, and **Mode**—interact to shape the way language functions in different social contexts. By examining these dimensions, the study aims to uncover the ideologies and power structures embedded in the selected editorials.

## Applications of CDA in Media Discourse

Several studies have applied CDA to media discourse, revealing how language functions to maintain or challenge hegemonic power structures. For instance, **Koller (2004)** uses CDA to analyze metaphors in business media, showing how hegemonic masculinity is reinforced through metaphors that marginalize women in corporate environments. Similarly, **Omolara (2011)** employs CDA to examine the pictorial misrepresentation of women in Nigerian newspapers, arguing that such representations help sustain male-dominated social structures.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on CDA by analyzing the ideological content in media texts related to the Niger Delta crisis. It will specifically explore the **subjectivity** and **objectivity** conveyed through lexical choices and how the selected editorials frame the crisis. The focus will be on identifying and analyzing key terms, concepts, and contextual features to uncover how language shapes perceptions of the conflict.

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## Conclusion

By adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis framework and integrating Halliday's socio-semiotic model, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of media discourses surrounding the Niger Delta crisis. The insights gained will contribute to a deeper understanding of how language constructs ideologies, influences public opinion, and reflects power dynamics within Nigerian society.

## Analysis

According to Kotein (2011), Niger Delta sprawls at the southern extremity of Nigeria in the west coast of Africa. With an area of about 70,000 square kilometers, it boasts “the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest contiguous mangrove forest in the world”. Onukaogu and Onyerionwu (2011) opine that the crises rocking the Niger Delta region emanated from dissatisfaction of the citizens of the region over a number of issues that are associated with oil exploration and exploitation, and can be said to be as old as the trade itself.

This section deals with the analysis of the select editorials. The select editorial for analysis are: Towards Enduring Peace in the Niger Delta (*New Waves*, Wednesday June 24 – Sunday, June 28, 2009), otherwise tagged TEXT A, and Vandals at it Again (*The Pointer*, Tuesday March 25, 2003), tagged Text B.

TEXT A creates awareness on how to surmount the challenges surrounding the clash of interest between the government, the co-operate organizations and the people of Niger Delta. On one hand, the government sees the militants as anti-government since they keep destroying oil facilities and collateral state of insecurity has continued. On the other hand, the people (militants – fighters in the creeks) see the government, its agents (JTF) as well as the co-operate organization (oil companies) in their place as pollutants, destroying the flora and fauna of their vegetation through oil spillage, heavy militarization, widespread destruction and displacement of whole communities.

TEXT B sensitizes the people on the ills going on in the society as a result of the activities of vandals, instigating the masses, through indicting statements and language of protest, to rise up and result the unpardonable and destructive activities of the vandals.

## Process Types

Text A and B illustrate a convergent ideological patterns in process types they both deployed. In Text A, we have a linguistic representation of numerous human actions. So, examining these imaginary events and the people/things involved will follow the process and participant process, which centers on the part of the clause that is realized by the verbal group – what ‘goings-on’ while the participants are the entities involved in the process (Bloor and Bloor, 2004). In the case of this text, the participants are mostly human being; they happen to be male, adults and may not necessarily be from the region in question. Some of them are Nigerians while others are expatriates. They are animate. They include; the Federal, State government represented by the Military under the aegis of the Joint Task Force (JTF), armed militia, freedom fighters, all parties, traditional institutions, elders, the people, stakeholders, President Umar, Musa YarAdua, interest groups, cooperate organization, Ledum Mitee-led Technical Committee on Niger Delta, staff of the cooperate organization, Nigerians, communities and expatriate. The inanimate participants include; helicopter gunships, naval gunboats, creeks, prescription and proposals, negotiating table, dialogue, 7-point agenda, fresh initiatives, the budgetary provision, armaments, terms of Amnesty, 2009 budget. The pronoun, ‘We’, in paragraph 2 represents the editorial while ‘it’s’ represents the Ministry in paragraph 7 as participants too.

In Text B, the participants are human beings, material and non-material. These include; vandals, miscreants, the monsters, who, Imo State, South-east/South-west, Delta State, Nigerians, customers of NITEL, NITEL, NEPA, Water Boards or Corporation, Communities, market, the government, the people, staff of NITEL, consumers, masses, Obasanjo administration, the patronizers, ex-staff of different organizations, we, they.

Of course, in some instances, the same individuals are referred to by different forms. For example, ‘they’ refers to the vandals in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 as well as the government and the people in paragraph 8. ‘We’ refers to the editorial in paragraphs 4 and 6.

## Material Process

Process: Material

Material process identified from Text A are as follows:

- (1) Similarly, the continuous onslaught by the Military ...has  
led to greater militarization... (para 8).
- (2) Though the reduction of petroleum production levels, occasioned  
by incessant attacks by armed militia... (para 11).
- (3) Already, by making the Niger Delta issue one of his 7-point agenda,  
President Umar Musa YarÁdua has shown his recognition... (para 5).

From the above examples, Text A construes the world more in terms of actions and happenings and as such, a heavy deployment of Material and Relational processes. The implication of this is that the editorial goes beyond mere exposition. Rather, they condemn the activities of the government as well as the militants in the Niger Delta since such actions are undemocratic and capable of increasing the pangs of suffering on the impoverished masses through Relational Process. They condemn the lure of pursuing purely military victory without addressing the mistakes of the past (para 13). The government begins an initiative and abandons same half-way because of insensitivity to the plight of the people, and corruption too (para 6, 7). Their actions have further aggravated than alleviate the sufferings of the people, who they sabotage by robbing them of secured environment. Text A uses more of mental and verbal processes to appeal to the readers' psyche. These processes convey the ideology that the moves of the government and the people to ensure enduring peace are insincere. This is revealed in Paragraph 2 (For one, prescription and proposals...conditions for peace are as varied and different as the various stakeholders and the interests they stand for or have sworn to defend; Paragraph 3 (...for all parties to be willing to bring these to the negotiating table for dialogue unconditionally.); Paragraph 12 (...we urge total cessation of hostilities to take place for genuine talks and action....); Paragraph 15 (This is why the terms of the Amnesty...should be hinged on fool-proof and genuine reconciliation, accompanied by a commitment to restructure the polity on the path to true and fiscal federalism).

### Participant Types

Participant types identified in Text A are exemplified in the table below:

| Actor | Stakeholders (para 1 and 2) | All parties (para 3) | All interest groups (para. 4) | Umar Musa YarÁdua (para 5) | The government (para 6) | The Military under Joint Task Force (JTF) (para 8) | The Ministry of Niger Delta and the Ledum Mitee-led Technical Committee (para 6) | Armed militia (para 11) | The Federal, State government, traditional institutions, elders, the people and the fighters (para 14) |
|-------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Go    | Prescri                     | Variou               | Build                         | 7-                         | Initiati                | Greater                                            | armam                                                                            | reducti                 | Stop                                                                                                   |

|    |                           |                  |                                         |                 |     |                                                                                            |      |                                            |                |
|----|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------|----------------|
| al | ption<br>and<br>proposals | s<br>standpoints | confidence<br>and<br>reduce<br>mistrust | point<br>agenda | ves | militarisation,<br>wide-spread<br>destruction and<br>displacement of<br>whole<br>community | ents | on of<br>petroleum<br>production<br>levels | the<br>carnage |
|----|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------|----------------|

### From the Table: Actor Identification and Goals

In **Text A**, the **actors** identified include the **military (Joint Task Force, JTF)**, **armed militia**, and **government agents**. The **goals** of these actors primarily involve the **destruction of oil facilities** and the **disruption of the environment**—in particular, the **flora and fauna**. **Nigerians** and **expatriates** are central human participants, while **corporate organizations** and local **communities** are indirect beneficiaries. The **inanimate actors**—such as **helicopter gunships** and **naval gunboats**—serve to highlight the violent physical effects of military intervention on the environment, further exacerbating the crisis in the Niger Delta. Another critical **non-material actor** is **President Yar'Adua**, whose role in granting **amnesty** to certain groups signifies an attempt to address the suffering and incarceration of militants.

In **Text B**, the **vandals** and **miscreants** are the primary **actors**. Their **goals** focus on the **destruction of infrastructure**, specifically targeting entities like **NEPA**, **NITEL**, and various **Water Boards/Corporations**. The **beneficiaries** of these actions are often **indirect**, including **geo-political zones** such as **Imo State**, **Delta**, and other **South-East/South-West regions**. These vandals aim to disrupt services such as telecommunications and utilities, impacting local **communities** and **customers of NITEL**. In contrast to **Text A**, where the destruction is framed within the context of military and political conflict, **Text B** emphasizes how these activities by **miscreants** serve to worsen the quality of life for local Nigerians.

### Mental Processes in the Texts

**Mental processes** refer to non-material actions, typically describing states of mind or psychological events. In **Text A**, we observe several **mental processes** where the editorial urges action and reflects on the social and political environment:

- **"We urge total cessation..."** (Paragraph 12) – The **Senser** is "we" (the editorial), the **mental process** is "urge", and the **phenomenon** is "cessation of hostilities."
- **"To all being incarcerated or prosecuted..."** (Paragraph 15) – Here, "all" represents the **Senser**, while "being incarcerated" and "prosecuted" are the **phenomena**.

These mental processes reflect the editorial's emphasis on emotional and psychological appeals to both the government and the public, urging cessation of violence and the restoration of peace. It also highlights the **internal state** of those involved, notably the incarcerated individuals and those seeking reconciliation.

In **Text B**, the mental processes serve a different function. They are used to convey the editor's frustration and moral outrage regarding the actions of the vandals:

- **"Only God knows what could have happened..."** (Paragraph 4) – The **Senser** is "God", while the **mental process** "knows" reflects uncertainty about the consequences.
- **"We see them every day..."** (Paragraph 6) – The **Senser** here is "we" (the editorial team), and "see" is the **mental process**, describing the visible and frequent presence of the vandals.

In this case, the mental processes are employed to express a sense of bewilderment and concern, reinforcing the public's growing awareness of the problem and urging collective action against the vandals.

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## Relational Processes

**Relational processes** involve the attribution of characteristics to participants, often establishing a **relationship** between **attributes** and **carriers**. In **Text A**, we find that the **government** and **militants** are characterized by their actions, creating a **relational link** to the ongoing issues. For example:

- **"What seems to be..."** (Paragraph 1) – The **relational process** here implies a perceived or subjective view of the situation in the Niger Delta.
- **"The government's initiatives are mere palliative measures..."** (Paragraphs 5, 6, 7, and 15) – The **attribute** here is "mere palliative measures", and the **carrier** is the government's efforts, thus criticizing their lack of commitment.

This **relational process** reveals the editorial's critical stance on the government's superficial handling of the crisis, which does not adequately address the root causes of the conflict.

In **Text B**, a similar **relational process** is employed in describing the negative attributes of the vandals:

- **"Nigerians and especially customers of NITEL are out to vent their anger on the company..."** (Paragraph 3) – The **attribute** is "anger", and the **carriers** are "Nigerians" and "NITEL customers".

Here, the **relational process** emphasizes the emotional and collective response of the public, attributing their anger to the vandalism that has disrupted services.

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## Nominalisation Process

The **Nominalisation Process** refers to turning verbs or adjectives into nouns, thus creating a sense of abstraction or formality in the language. In **Text A**, nominalisation is frequently used to highlight ongoing or persistent actions:

- **"The continuous onslaught by the Military..."** (Paragraph 8) – "Onslaught" is a **nominalised form** of the verb "to assault".

- **"Incessant attacks by armed militia..."** (Paragraph 11) – "Attacks" is a **nominalisation** of the verb "to attack".

This use of nominalisation conveys a sense of ongoing, continuous action that frames the conflict as something that has persisted over time, emphasizing its enduring nature.

In **Text B**, **nominalisation** similarly highlights the ongoing nature of the crisis:

- **"NEPA raised alarm over the activities of vandals..."** (Paragraph 2) – "Activities" is a **nominalised** form of the verb "to act".
- **"The dangers of vandalisation are monumental..."** (Paragraph 5) – "Dangers" is **nominalised** from the verb "to endanger".

By nominalising actions, both editorials shift focus from individual events to generalized, larger-scale processes, reinforcing the severity of the crisis.

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### Thematic and Lexical Choices

In terms of **thematic presentation**, **Text A** introduces the issue of the Niger Delta crisis by directly discussing the stakeholders and their roles in the conflict. The editorial emphasizes the environmental destruction, militarization, and failure of government initiatives. The **mode of discourse** is factual and investigative, presenting the issues with an air of urgency and frustration.

Conversely, **Text B** begins with a **sad and sudden tone**, using words like "suddenly" and "sadly" to set the mood. This **mode of discourse** is emotional, immediately placing the focus on the severity of the vandalism. It aims to stir up a sense of collective outrage in the reader, positioning the vandals as enemies to national progress.

### Interpersonal Meaning and Modality

Both editorials employ **modality** to establish their **interpersonal roles**. In **Text A**, the editor's **role** is to critique the government's failure to properly address the crisis and the military's violent responses. The **modal verbs** such as "urge" and "should" reflect the editorial's desire for action and change, showing a firm position on the need for peace and reconciliation.

In **Text B**, the editor uses **rhetorical questions** to engage the reader emotionally and mentally:

- **"Who are the vandals?"**
- **"Are they not human beings?"**

These questions challenge the audience to think critically about the motivations behind vandalism, while simultaneously condemning the actions of the vandals and calling for action against them.

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In conclusion, both **Text A** and **Text B** use **linguistic processes** such as **material**, **mental**, **relational**, and **nominalisation** processes to shape their portrayal of the Niger Delta conflict. **Text A** critiques the

actions of both the government and the militants, positioning the editorial as a call for genuine dialogue and peace. In contrast, **Text B** focuses on the destructive activities of the vandals and miscreants, urging the government and the public to take a stand against them. Both texts leverage **modality**, **rhetorical questions**, and **nominalisation** to convey urgency, emotional appeal, and a critique of the ongoing socio-political and economic crises.

## Conclusion

Language serves as a powerful tool for conveying worldviews, ideologies, beliefs, sentiments, and even prejudices. Through their editorials, newspapers not only express their own perspectives but also reflect the concerns, values, and opinions of their readers. The two editorials analyzed here, *Towards Enduring Peace in the Niger Delta* (Text A) and *Vandals at It Again* (Text B), offer distinct yet converging ideological patterns, particularly in the **Process Types** they employ.

Both texts make extensive use of **Material** and **Relational Processes**, depicting a world shaped by actions and events. The **Participant Process** in both editorials identifies a wide range of **actors**, whether human (e.g., government officials, militants, citizens) or inanimate (e.g., military equipment, oil facilities), and links them to their **goals** and **beneficiaries**. The use of **Mental Processes** further deepens the discourse, with participants reflecting on their beliefs, fears, and calls for action. In particular, **Nominalisation** is a shared strategy, abstracting actions into persistent issues and emphasizing the ongoing nature of the crises.

Notably, **Text B** employs a more direct '**name-calling**' strategy, labeling the vandals as "**monsters**" and "**enemies**" who threaten national stability. This contrasts with **Text A**, which, while critical of both government and militants, calls for dialogue and reconciliation, positioning itself as a **Populist editorial** aimed at advocating for the people. In contrast, **Text B** shields the government to some extent, focusing on the immediate need to combat the vandals as a collective societal threat.

The **tenor** of the discourse in both texts highlights issues of **oppression**, **marginalization**, and **socio-economic inequality**, particularly as they manifest in the Niger Delta. Through their tone and linguistic choices, both editorials underscore the deep-seated frustration and urgency surrounding the crisis. They ultimately call for a return to democratic values, urging a government that is responsive to the needs of its citizens, and advocating for a sense of **patriotism** among the populace.

Summarily, these media discourses play a crucial role in shaping public understanding and opinion, serving as a catalyst for **enduring peace** and **national development** in the Niger Delta region and beyond. By providing a platform for dialogue, these editorials push for a broader social change, advocating for peace, justice, and unity in the face of ongoing challenges.

**\*Ikoro, Onyinyechi Stella, PhD**

Languages and Communication Department

Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba

07068083732/starcharles01@gmail.com

Wednesday, June 24 - Sunday, June 28, 2009

# EDITORIAL

## Towards Enduring Peace In The Niger Delta

**T**he increasing clamour by all stakeholders for the prevalence of peace in the Niger Delta as sine qua non for development is simply to restate the obvious. What seems to be in contention however is what route the path to peace should take for it to be enduring.

For one, prescription and proposals for the minimum irreducible conditions for peace are as varied and different as the various stakeholders and the interests they stand for or are sworn to defend.

What is however important is the recognition of the various standpoints and for all parties to be willing to bring these to the negotiating table for dialogue unconditionally.

It is therefore necessary for utmost restraint to be exercised by all interest groups as a way of building confidence and reducing mistrust.

Already, by making the Niger Delta issue one of his 7-point agenda, President Umar Musa Yar'Adua has shown his recognition of peace in the region as vital and critical for political and economic stability.

Whereas the creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta and the appointment of the Ledum Mitee-led Technical Committee on Niger Delta are pointers to fresh initiatives in tackling the lingering and protracted crisis, consequent matters arising remain.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, the budgetary provision of over N400 billion for armaments in the 2009 budget, while the Ministry itself on whose platform, the development of the region lies has less than N100b to tackle its assigned portfolio, is quite remarkable.

Similarly, the continuous onslaught by the Military in the region under the aegis

of the Joint Task Force (JTF) has led to greater militarization, wide-spread destruction and displacement of whole communities while attacks on oil facilities and collateral state of insecurity has continued.

Without any iota of doubt, no criminal act, such as kidnapping, hostage-taking or willful and premeditated wastage of lives and property, should be condoned by any

attacks by armed militia have become worrisome, it is also true that no responsible corporate organization would be willing to continue to risk the lives of its staff, expatriate or Nigerians, in an unsafe and insecure environment, where helicopter gunships and naval gunboats continue to bombard.

Without holding brief for the government or those who claim to be freedom fighters, we urge total cessation of hostilities to take place for genuine talks and action, in redressing the root causes that gave rise to the continuing armed conflict, at the first instance, with a view to finding durable peace.

The lure of pursuing purely military victory without a corresponding recourse to redressing past injustice, neglect and marginalization of the region, no matter how tempting or strenuously rationalized, should be completely discountenanced.

All parties, the Federal, State government, traditional institutions, elders, the people and the fighters in the creeks need to accept that it is in everybody's interest to stop the carnage.

This is why the terms of the Amnesty yet to be announced by President Yar'Adua in addition to granting freedom to all being incarcerated or prosecuted, should be hinged on fool-proof and genuine reconciliation, accompanied by a commitment to restructure the polity on the path to true and fiscal federalism.

That is the indisputable path towards enduring peace and sustainable development in Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole.

### New Waves

| EDITORIAL TEAM            |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Thank God Ayibana Igwe    | Editor-in-Chief         |
| Frederick Donyefabor      | Editor                  |
| Dagha Flubode             | Deputy Editor           |
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| PRODUCTION                |                         |
| Millionaire Charles Okoto | Director, Production    |
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| W.E.J. Abasi              | Secretary               |
| Angela Isick              | Administration          |
| Yeladon Eki               | Internal Auditor        |
| Fred Fakongha Ogbobila    | Commercial              |
| Bomo Tons Fetepiji        | Legal Adviser           |
| AG. GENERAL MANAGER       |                         |
| Stanley Malpiah           |                         |

society or any responsible government.

However, it is important that wastage of lives of innocent, defenseless population, should be painstakingly reduced to the barest minimum, if not altogether avoided.

Though the reduction of petroleum production level, occasioned by incessant

### TalkBack

#### Work Place Victimization

**T**he word, victimise, according to the new International Webster Student's Dictionary, is to cause suffering to someone, to cheat or to dupe someone.

The question is, could someone be victimized at his or her place of employment? What are the benefits of those who victimize others? and what effects do victims suffer?

Today in our schools, students are being victimized for not "sorting" lecturers either in cash or in kind. There are cases of victimization even in the church. In politics, victimization could be found through blackmail and killings.

Victimization is everywhere, the office or workplace is not an exception. Some examples of workplace victimization in Nigeria are: wrongful dismissals, denial of promotions, bosses usurping their subordinate's rights and benefits and harassment of the opposite sex.

Victims are subjected to character assassination, verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour and cold shoulder treatment. Some workers are deliberately overworked or regularly singled out to do the most unpleasant tasks that no one else wants to perform. Colleagues could also sabotage the victim's efforts to work productively.

Victimization could be

carried out by one person, but more often it comes as an alliance of colleagues or put the victim under pressure by deliberately annoying or attacking him.

Working requires fitting in with a team of workers and helping the team to function smoothly as a unit. If colleagues are not well, the work benefits but where they do not, the work suffers and the risk of victimization increases. Sometimes, changes in personnel also make it difficult for bonds to be formed; new employments can slow down performance for the team, as these new people are not familiar with the routine. Growing workload also increases stress, especially if

there are no clear goals. This results to little sense of unity and leads to situations where you find a boss spending more of his time defending his position due to feelings of insecurity. A boss working under such a situation cannot lead and his inability to coordinate can lead staff under him to be at loggerheads.

Victimization, oftentimes have adverse effect, some victims suffer serious health problems such as depression, sleeping disorders, panics, mental disorders.

It could also affect one's marriage or family life for those who are married. Any one can be a target for victimization and as such, one needs to guard against it. To

do this, you need to learn how to pursue peace in the workplace even with the most difficult co-worker. It is always good to resolve conflicts between you and the next person without involving a third party who may turn to become a busybody, or those aiming to gain favour. Let there be room for free flow of communication. Every worker should try to get along with others as much as possible. That does not mean that female workers should see themselves as "men pleasers", agreeing to everything that is demanded of them and compromising of their principles. Workers, in general, should maintain peace, be warm and friendly.

Treat others with respect

and dignity, bearing in mind the golden rule "do unto others as you would want them do unto you." But, in situations where you cannot handle alone, seek counsel or support from others who can aptly handle the differences. Jobs are difficult to come by these days and so, many risk their lives and future stuck to unfavourable working conditions. But instead of risking lives, such victim could have a change of job; possible, go for resignation transfer or retirement if the case may be. The best of all options however, is for to seek peace and work harmony with fellow members of staff.

Beauty Adike-Lazarus  
Yungou

Letters to the Editor should be short, concise, typed, double-spaced, and addressed to The Editor, New Waves, P.M.B. 117, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Email: nwavesng@yahoo.com

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**S**UDDENLY and sadly enough, property belonging to the nation's public utilities such as the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), the Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), water boards or corporations to mention a few have started declining to their former shameful and scandalous status. Reason: The vandals are at work again.

Recently, NEPA raised alarm over the activities of vandals who attacked its facilities, and expressed fears that the vandalisation of its facilities could affect operations. Already, this has started. For more than five days running, Imo State was in the dark due to the handiwork of vandals. Imo State is not alone. In fact, most parts of the south-east and parts of south-west are in the same dilemma. In Delta State, more than 20 communities are in darkness.

In the same breadth, the telephone system is being hampered to a point of frustration by the activities of miscreants. Nigerians and especially customers of NITEL are wont to vent their anger on the company and staff for inefficiency not knowing that vandals are standing between the consumers and the efficient provision of services by NITEL.

Also, that most of the taps in this country are not running is traceable to the unscrupulous and callous activities of vandals. The consequence of these is that the vandals are fast eroding the gains already recorded so far in power

## EDITORIAL

### The POINTER

#### Vandals at it Again

generation and distribution, efficient telephone services and the provision of potable water for the masses. Take NEPA, for example, we give it to the Obasanjo administration that the Authority at a point in time recorded tremendous improvement in power generation and supply. But now it is stepping backwards due to evil machinations of vandals. Now to retain steady power supply for hours is a problem. Again, but for the breakthrough in GSM, only God knows what could have been happening to our telecommunications sector.

Clearly, the dangers of vandalisation are monumental. Apart from the outages and disruption of services, which directly affect the socio-economic life of Nigerians, the security implications cannot be underestimated.

However, pertinent questions arise. And that is, who are the vandals? Are they not human beings? Are they ordinary persons who just woke up one day to

learn the act of vandalisation of such sensitive and valuable equipment? Again, who patronises them? Without begging for answers, we state that the vandals are human beings and they live in our midst. We see them everyday and sometimes hide them. We also have reason to believe that the vandals are mainly those who have good technical knowledge in the different fields or versed with the trade.

They may be either staff or ex-staff of the different organisations. They must be collaborating or conspiring with serving staff to commit the havoc. Worse still, the thievery has continued to thrive because of ready market for the stolen goods. If there was no market, chances are that they should have stopped.

Truly, that the menace has continued to occur is worrisome. The government and the people are to blame. They have not done enough to tame the monsters. People do not want to report the vandals to the police and suspected vandals apprehended are treated with kid gloves. There are existing laws to take care of the vandals. They should be charged for economic sabotage because they are unpatriotic in their acts. There is also need for the various communities to be watchful and help arrest vandals.

Vandals are not friends. They ruin the economy. As such, they should not be allowed to exist in our midst.

Letter to the Editor

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