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THE MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING POLITICAL AGENDAS:

A STUDY OF MEDIA COVERAGE IN THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

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A thesis submitted to the School of the Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in International Relations.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of the media in the resource driven conflicts of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It examines the media strategies of the principal actors in an attempt to sway international sympathy to their political causes. It recognises the important role the media plays and interrogates the response of the local communities to the media.

The findings of this study show that the role of the media has hugely impacted the conflicts and the principal actors rely immensely on media-driven campaigns in pursuit of their political goals. However, the Nigerian media, due to the challenges it faces from its political economic structure, stands the risk of being manipulated by actors' public relations machinery and therefore, needs to focus on delivering to the Nigerian people and the Niger Delta citizens in particular, its corporate social responsibility role of public watchdog. While the media's impact on the conflict has generated both positive and negative effects, as the conflicts are still playing out, it is hoped that the media's role, would contribute to speeding up the conflict resolution process, which is still in its infancy.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work.

It is submitted for the partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters of Arts in the Graduate School of the Humanities (International Relations Department) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other University.

_____
(Name of Candidate)

____ Day of _____, 20_____

DEDICATION

To my Father Chief Moses H. Bassey Abasiubong III, my Mother Lady Iquo M. Bassey, my Siblings David, Emem, Emmanuel, Samuel and Utom-Obong; this was worth the wait, thanks for the love and prayers.

To Almighty God, whose blessings, love and protection I have continually enjoyed.

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To my friends, Ndianabasi Ukpe and Lisa, Tam George, Kwaku Asante-Darko, Ben Okolo and Dr Marcellin Zounmenou, who inspite of the problems with the post colony provided the support I needed to stay focused on the goal ahead. To all my other friends too numerous to mention, I acknowledge your love, help, prayers and support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIT	African Independent Television
ANA	Association of Nigerian Authors
APC	Arewa Peoples' Congress
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CASS	Centre for Advanced Social Science
CNN	Cable News Agency
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FCRN	Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria
GNP	Gross National Product
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INC	Ijaw National Congress
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IYC	Ijaw Youth Council
KKK	Klansmen Konfratanity
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MNC	Multinational Corporations
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
MP	Member of Parliament
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NDBDA	Niger Delta Basin Development Authority
NDDB	Niger Delta Development Board
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDP	Niger Delta Press

NDV	Niger Delta Volunteers
NDPVF	Niger Delta Peoples' Volunteer Force
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
NIIA	Nigerian Institute of International Affairs
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NTA	Nigerian Television Authority
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMPADEC	Oil Minerals Producing Areas development Commission
OPC	Oo'dua Peoples' Congress
PTF	Petroleum Trust Fund
PHCCIMA	Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture
RTML	Radio-Television Milles Collines
SALW	Small and Light Weapons
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SIPC	Shell International Petroleum Company Limited
SNDYCW	Supreme Niger Delta Youth Council Worldwide
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited
TCA	Thematic Content Analysis
TNC	Transnational Corporations
UCT	University of Cape town
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
SAPES	Southern African Political and Economic Series

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