APPLICATION OF FRAMING THEORY TO THE REPORTAGE OF RESOURCE CONTROL CONFLICT BETWEEN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA (FGN) AND PEOPLE OF NIGER DELTA

JULIANA OGARGARE OGBENI

Abstract

This paper sets out to identify propaganda framing techniques adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in tackling the resource control conflict in the Niger Delta. The technologies would be identified from the contents of selected Nigerian newspaper reports on the conflict. The research method adopted was qualitative analysis, specifically propaganda framing analysis of the contents of selected Nigerian newspapers. This comprised of 18 editions and 26 news items and features from 2006 to 2007. In the aspect of propaganda analysis, the study relied on Entman (1993) and Zhyvora (2017) framing figurative method. In the aspect of media narratives, discourse analysis method was adopted. The paper demonstrated the connection between framing, propaganda and media narratives as it shows framing as a propaganda tactics to influence public opinion, attitude, beliefs and actions, in that frames are created and can be identified in the newspapers reports. The paper found that FGN adopted literary figurative propaganda frames – hyperbole and irony to manipulate collective opinion and attitude of Niger Deltans, Nigeria and the international community in the resource control conflict.

Keywords: Propaganda Framing Technique, Media Narrative, Figurative Propaganda frames, Political Propaganda.

Introduction

The study is directed at efforts to expand the research in framing as an aspect of propaganda that is not obvious. The framing of conflict presents a basis to examine closely media contents to identify propaganda frames and the tactics adopted as well as the theories.

The resource control conflict between FGN and people of Niger Delta presents a ready opportunity to expand framing and propaganda research. This arises from the fact that research in framing is directed at mass media and less on individuals and groups. Obijiofor (2009), Okoro and Odoemlam (2013) and Okoro and Nwafor (2018). This study demonstrates the need for frame researchers to direct efforts at how governments, groups and individuals frame persons, issues, events or problems. In addition, this study provides materials for historical purposes on how FGN framed the resource control conflict and the people of Niger Delta including the media narratives involved in the reportage.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study is to identify the propaganda framing technique adopted by the FGN in tackling of the resource control conflict between it and people of the Niger Delta. The study adopted a content analysis of newspapers reports of selected five Nigerian newspapers; The Punch, Vanguard, Sun and Guardian on the conflict. The propaganda analysis of the contents was adopted to identify the propaganda frames.

The paper's objective is focused on identification of the propaganda frames showing the propaganda tactics adopted by the FGN. The paper is focused on identification of each frame and analyze each drawing from Entman (1995) and Zhyvora (2017) framing figurative method. The paper is aimed at identification of the media narrative form adopted by the newspapers in reportage of the conflict to further explain the propaganda frames and tactics.

In this regards, the paper examined the contents for traces of propaganda framing adopted by FGN including figurative frames. The paper identified reasons for FGN adoption of such propaganda frame, including successes and failures.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the propaganda framing technique adopted by FGN in tackling the conflict with people of the Niger Delta over petroleum and gas resources from 2000-2015.
- To identify the success and failure of framing propaganda techniques adopted by FGN.
- To identify the media narrative adopted by the newspapers in reportage of the conflict.

Research Questions: The following are research questions to guide the study.

- What are the propaganda framing techniques adopted by FGN in tackling of conflict with people of Niger Delta over oil and gas resources?
- What were the successes and failures of the propaganda framing techniques adopted by FGN?
- What were the media narratives adopted by newspapers in the reportage of the conflict?

Theoretical Perspective: Political Propaganda Theory

The theory relevant to this study is Harold Lasswell's Political Propaganda theory. Lasswell is an American Political Scientist and communication theorist. (Lasswell, 1927:627) defined political communication as "the management of collective attitude by the manipulation of significant symbols". This is relevant to this study as conflict arose from political conflict with specific reference to control of natural resources of Nigeria.

Lasswell opined that propaganda can be classified into many possible criteria and identified groups and individuals. This is relevant as FGN is identified as group of individuals involved in the governance of Nigeria, who then are party in the conflict. He identified specific aspects in which propaganda can be directed. He states thus: "Propaganda can be directed at organization of attitude towards people or groups" and 'promotion of a policy'. (Lasswell, 1927:629).

In this respect, FGN's motive of propaganda frame is directed towards attitude of Nigerians, international community and people of the Niger Delta. FGN propaganda is directed

towards a policy of ensuring that people of the Niger Delta maintain the status quo and cease hostilities/agitation. This is because FGN is the dominant party in the conflict. The manipulation of symbols Lasswell refers to is based on the use of language. These can be identified from frames and words utilized by parties in a conflict. Therefore, the study would identify frames and literary figurative frames adopted by FGN from contents of newspaper reports. These include comments and statements of FGN and agents. This is inspired by Lasswell's reference to strategy of propaganda as being phrased in cultural terms, implying the use of language to create stimuli to which people respond. This implies in propaganda framing of the conflict, FGN adopted the use of language and symbols which created the stimuli to which Nigerians, international community and the Niger Delta people responded to. Lasswell described it thus: that a propagandist is concerned about the "multiplication of those stimuli which are best calculated to evoke the desired response and with the multiplication of those stimuli which are likely to instigate the undesired responses. (Lasswell, 1927:630).

In line with Lasswell's description, it applies to FGN in the use of mass media, Nigerian Newspapers reports to multiply the stimuli which will elicit 'desired response' i.e. Niger Delta People should maintain the status quo.

However, another aspect of Lasswell's theory of political propaganda relevant to this study in war times involves an enemy or ally or neutral. (Lasswell, 1927:164). This conflict assumed a war dimension when Niger Delta agitators, resorted to armed struggle to make their demands. In fact, FGN deployed several hundreds of troops to protect oil and gas installations and maintain peace.

Notwithstanding that Lasswell's political propaganda was propounded in 1927, but it is relevant to current situations with specific reference to conflict over control of resources between FGN and people of the Niger Delta. The study expands Lasswell's political communication and propaganda to include figurative frames adopted by FGN.

Media Narrative Theory

The theory of media narrative is relevant to the study as it explains the way a story is told as narrative techniques adopted shapes media text. The important parts of narrative methods are: Aesthetics, exposition, argumentation, narration and descriptions according to Barthes (1966). Narration is the media term for storytelling. It refers to the way the different elements in a story are organized to make a meaningful story.

Roland Barthes a leading French structuralism thinker of the 20th originated the idea of narrative in 1966. The discourse on the power of narratives given by Fulton (2014) explains more about it with specific reference to print media. Fulton posits that journalist turn daily life into a story. But explaining further, Fulton opines that they are representatives historically and culturally positioned to turn information and events into structures that are meaningful to audience. She added that narrative theory is product of post-structuralism as meaning and process are socially and culturally produced and situated.

Therefore, according to Fulton (2014:2), narrative is a cultural product which is deliberately produced and sold as an economic commodity, hence media contents are product and

have an exchange value. This is hinged on economic function of the media which generates profit and so undermine the idea of narratives as a type of innate or universal structure common to humanity. (Fulton, 2014:3).

In this regard, the newspaper reports of the resource control conflict in Nigeria can be viewed from this perspective that they are products of deliberately created for sale and so frame adopted are for commercial reasons. This agrees with Fulton's stand that print media news as narrative are directed by market forces by exerting pressure on news outlets and so are more focused on profit (Fulton, 2014:28).

Notwithstanding, (Fulton, 2004:219) draws attention to ideological consequences of media narratives of constructing and reading print news and narrative, news is a construct. But professional and institutional values and standards are deployed notably to construct news and to create it. In line with Fulton's explanation, news reports of resource control conflict may have been constructed and created with economic motives. The frames adopted would be in the same line with construction.

According to Fulton, sources of information are crucial to journalists in media narratives. She opines that events come to their attention from sources and other media which they turn into news. They apply various professional and linguistics methods (Fulton, 2014:219). She mentioned determinants of news: use of source, application of news value, gatekeeping, agenda setting and economic factors. But of interest to the study is the economic factor. Another aspect of media narrative of interest to this study is the influence of ownership. Fulton (2014, 220-221) citing Whitaker (1981) source they can be individuals or organizations are major factors in construction of news. But there exists a gatekeeping process in construction of news directed by individual journalists, institutional and personal preferences, owners and editors and cultural factors. These are factors which determine which items of information become news (Fulton, 2004:221).

An important aspect which Fulton (2014,224) drew attention to was economic factor as determinant of news. Although she opined that mass media in Western countries are commercial and profit driven. Thus economic factors are among the most important consideration in collection, construction and presentation of news.

The same may apply to Nigerian newspapers as profit could be a major consideration in collection, selection or construction of news and framing. The most serious aspect is the consequence of economic consideration in news construction. Fulton observed that, market driven news would "characteristically conform to existing convention of news volume and agenda". The result is that minorities, issues and alternative views would be marginalized and public interest will be subordinated to economic imperative (Fulton, 2004;241-242).

In this regards the newspapers reports of the resource control conflict can be viewed from this perspective. Thus as minorities Niger Deltans interest would be subordinated to economic imperative of owners who will want to make profit and remain in business. In addition, (Fulton, 2004;242) posits that such an instance newspapers could have ideological consequences as the use of stereotypes would be in the news. It explains why the newspapers reports of the conflict contained stereotypes and sensational reports.

In conclusion, the consequence of media narratives which are market and profit driven are not proper. According to (Fulton, 2014;243), the public could be informed in a manner that

they can easily understand but are denied access to complex political, economic and cultural information that generated news events.

Literature Review

In Nigeria, studies of framing are limited to mostly mass media and not linked to propaganda. The paper is a departure from that stance in that FGN framing of the conflict will be linked to propaganda. That is the identification of frames adopted by FGN would be analyzed to show the propaganda tactics. The analysis drew inspiration from Murphy's (2010) study of framing propaganda Irish (print) media coverage of the Irish public service workers. Although Murphy focused his analysis on print media frames, this paper adopted his approach of frame identification method. In this regards, the paper followed Murphy's (2010) method to identify the propaganda frames. Murphy identified in Irish print media reports, that the Independent News Media motive was directed at maintaining the status quo, instead of challenging it. This study is aimed at identifying how propaganda frames were directed at maintaining status quo, by FGN not Nigerian newspapers.

Murphy (2001) citing Resse (2001), Iyengar (1991), Entman (1993) and Entman (2004) used the frame analysis approach. The study adopts the same approach, frame analysis but focusing only on identified FGN framing of the resource control conflict. The paper examined and analyzed four selected Nigerian newspapers reports on the conflict. But specifically, contents in which FGN and its agents made policy statements and commented on the resource control conflict. However, journalists and editors select the statements and comments in their reports. But the case is that if the comments and statements are properly examined, how issues are framed can be identified as demonstrated by Baalen (2013). He separated media framing of the 2012 Marikana Massacre in South Africa. This he ascribed to idea that news sources and mass media construct frames. Murphy (2010) is of the view that frames can be adopted to perpetuate the status quo, confirm dominant positions in some societies. However, Murphy's findings illustrated how frames were used to portray Irish public service workers. The interest of this study is directed at what frames FGN adopted in efforts to maintain the status quo.

Another aspect of frame analysis is how frames are used to portray an enemy. This is in line with Lasswell (1927) in which he stated that the propaganda in war situations involves an enemy, ally or neutral persons. Allendarfer and Herving (2015) in their study show how ISIS and U.S. government portrayed each other as enemies in contents of online video. The study showed the use of 'frames' in videos, they found both parties characterized each other as enemies. ISIS characterization of U.S. as enemies were described in frames of Christians, Shia, unbelievers, infidel and enemies of God. The U.S. government characterization of ISIS as enemies were frames of irreligious, heretical, hostile to Muslims and hypothetical. This implies in contents of video, words, symbols were used as bases to characterize as 'enemies'. This is in line with 'Lasswell's theory that words, symbols, implying frames were adopted to characterize each other as enemies. This equally refers to manipulation of stimuli to elicit desired responses. Zhyvora (2017) adopting discourse analysis in a study of propaganda of Soviet and U.S. media of the Korea (1945-1950), found that figurative frames; metaphor, hyperbole and irony were adopted. Zhyvora (2017). These can be identified from media frames. Metaphor is when a source and targets are described differently. Hyperbole refers to extreme exaggeration, may be negative or

positive, while Irony is an opposite evaluation. Zhyvora (2017). This she posits that these often occur in evaluations of newspapers contents. But this study is different in that it is not about how the newspapers framed the conflict but how FGN, a party to conflict framed it. The study aims to add to research effort in framing to separate media frames from individual or group frames by a more careful and detailed study of frames. This is as too often, mass media is blamed for framing issues or conflict while leaving out the key actors who hide behind the mass media.

In line with Zhyvora(2017), the study adopts figurative propaganda frames analysis utilized by FGN. Zhyvora found that figurative framing could be used to identify propaganda from text and that Russian newspapers used more of literacy frames. Zhyvora's study shows that propaganda can be identified from language and frames used – via figurative framing . Citing Burgess et al (2010). Fairclough's (1989) article analysis and discourse.

Ogbeni (2010), in a study of propaganda tactics adopted by FGN and Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) in conflict over control of oil and gas in the Niger Delta adopting Garth and O'Donnel (1992) model. The finding showed that FGN referred to Niger Delta agitators as enemies of the state, which were negative labels, stereotypes and by implication frames. They were referred to as economic saboteurs, miscreants, citing Vanguard report(24th October, 2009, p.11). This was evident in the statement of Colonel RabeAbubakar (Ogbeni, 2010:300). It is therefore in line with this finding that frames would be further identified in words, symbols, use of language that is literary figurative indicators. The policy statements and comments of FGN and agents reported by the newspapers examined by figurative analysis to identify the type of literacy propaganda frame adopted.

Manzaria and Bruck (year unstated) explained how media's use of propaganda are aimed at persuasion of people to create attitudes, beliefs and behavior in line with the interests of the propagandist . They identified 13 various ways, viz; creating an enemy by social proof by capitalizing on uncertainty and unknown. It includes linkage/association with other negative reasons, labelling, generalization, dehumanizing by tagging with others, faceless groups, reference to a faceless enemy as a barbarian threat to culture, among others. But of interest to this study, creating an enemy by social proof, capitalizing on uncertainty and the unknown, dehumanizing by tagging with other faceless groups, reference to faceless groups and enemy as barbarian a threat to culture are the focus of the study.

Media Narrative

The paper reviewed relevant research in media narratives. Rau (2017) in a study of how the Alternative for Germany (AFD) a political party adopting narrative analysis of the contents of its reports. Rau found that the use of narratives in online/social media demonstrated that media narrative theory overlap with framing theory. The study suggests that there is a link between the two theories as the narrative adopted follows the frame adopted. He found that the AFD used narratives to frame insecurity issues by setting up specific frames (Rau, 2017:33-38). He noted that impact of frames adopted by AFD party is the method used to highlight certain values and objects in the narrative. It was not a surprise then that the AFD a far right populist party which relied on social media advanced to a level of finding a voice in German's political space. But Rau did findings to show how mainstream German newspapers frame on the AFD party. But part in their reports were able to present a separate frame.

In a study of how Nigerian newspapers columnists narrate the power relations within Nigeria shows another dimension of media narratives (Onifade, 2015). He adopted a critical discourse analysis in examining how ownership and geographical environment in which the newspapers were published influenced the narrative adopted by the columnist. He worked on three newspapers: Vanguard which represented the status quo, Daily Trust opposing status quo and Tribune which provided a middle ground. Onifade findings suggested that political and economic elite use their ownership and control of newspapers to influence the narratives of their columnists. It is worthy to note that the study was conducted before 2015 election in which Dr. Jonathan Goodluck was president while the incumbent President Buhari was a candidate. Onifade found that the columnists used volatile concepts like religion and ethnicity in narratives thus dividing the Nigerian public and inducing them to take political decision in favour of political elites. In these framing, is the basis for the columnist opinion and views. Onifade's findings showed that media narratives and frames are directed by individuals.

Onifade findings suggested that columnists use their influence to generate support for political interest of their publishers and political candidates (Onifade, 2015:114). This finding shows that there exist an interplay among publishers, managers, columnists and politicians including newspapers reporters. Hence Onifade noted that politicians and media owners set agenda, media managers build discourse around the agenda and columnists narrate the discourse to win over the readers (Onifade, 2015:114). The narratives employed are ethnicity and religions, as means to ensure hold of power. Onifade observed that the newspapers are 'national' but are sectional in outlook. This implies that newspapers reports of the conflict are not only directed by market forces/economic/profit factors, ownership and political power are involved. Therefore, it is possible to identify them. This is in line with focus of the paper to identify how FGN framed the resource control issue.

In a study of violence in Plateau State Nigeria, Katu focusing on nature of communication behaviour of conflict audience. Katu (2016) adopted focus group discussion and indepth interview. Her findings showed that audience had a deep distrust for the media due to audience active involvement in individual framing of the conflict separately from media frames. The implication is that media narratives on the violence was not in line with audience perception. This Katu described as a defense communication strategy. She found that audience lacked trust for media both local, national and international. This arose from bias observed by the audience against their groups (Katu, 2016). But Katu did not mention these as media narrative on the violence as it should be. The same perspective can be applied to Resource Control reports, that as newspapers tend to report using narratives that favour owners, FGN and business elites that narrative are driven by economic motives. The Niger Delta people are likely to develop their own narratives and frames, thus escalating the conflict. Katu's study showed that individuals can frame issues differently from media. This is in line with focus of this paper to identify FGN framing of the resource control conflict.

This study is a contribution to research on conflict reporting viz a media narratives and framing. This specification in the aspect of separating media frames from those of individuals and groups.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the contents of four selected Nigerian national newspapers which covered the conflict. Vanguard, Guardian, Punch and the Sun. the newspapers published about the resource control conflict. FGN is a major party in the conflict with the people of Niger Delta. Therefore, only contents in which the FGN and its agencies made comments or policy statements were examined.

Methodology

The study sought to identify propaganda framing techniques adopted by FGN including the media narratives adopted by the newspaper in tackling of conflict with people of Niger Delta over control of petroleum and gas resources. The study adopted framing propaganda analysis utilizing Zhyvora (2017) figurative frames. In the aspect of media narratives a discourse analysis method was adopted. The research method adopted a content analysis of four selected Nigerian newspapers with national coverage. The *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Sun*, and *Vanguard*. This is justified as the four newspapers published reports about the resource control from 2006 to 2007. Therefore, propaganda frames and media narratives can be identified in the contents.

In addition, the contents of the newspapers contained official policy statements about resource control issues. There was sufficient grounds to identify contents in the reports, which show propaganda frame adopted by FGN including literary figurative frames.

Sampling Procedure

The sampling is random multi-stage sampling. The first stage is the random selection of four Nigerian newspapers with national coverage and which published much on the conflict. The second stage is the selection of editions based on published contents on the resource control conflict. The newspapers are the *Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Punch and Sun*, and they were selected randomly.

The third stage is the selection of contents. The content categories were the newspapers reports which specifically contained FGN and agents; government policy statements were carefully selected. In the 18 editions, a total of 26 news and features were selected for analysis. The study adopted Murphy (2010) framing analysis method in identification of frames and traces of propaganda therein. The study drew inspiration from Zhyvora (2017) study of propaganda in Russia and American media, discourse of Korea by the use of literary figurative indicators. The unit of analysis are specific contents which indicate frame adopted by FGN and its agents. These are specifically contents which show figurative indicators: metaphor, irony and hyperbole. A total of 26 news items and features were identified and selected for analysis.

The contents which connote literary figurative connotation of metaphor, irony and hyperbole used in framing of the conflict was used. In the contents, frame adopted by FGN are identified as propaganda figurative frames. In the aspect of media narrative, they were identified from the contents of the report by an interpretation of the contents.

Variables Measured: Framing as an independent variable is identified by dependent variables of types of literary figurative frames: Metaphor, Hyperbole and Irony, including propaganda figurative frames.

Data Analysis/Method and Presentation

In this aspect, conclusion was drawn upon the identified frames utilized by the FGN with specific reference to the people of Niger Delta, agitators and the conflict itself. These were based on analysis and interpretation of the 26 reports from 18 editions of the selected Nigerian newspapers. A unit count of one was ascribed to each occurrence of figurative frames. The analysis consists of two sections. The first section shows selected newspaper reports on the conflict comprised of 18 editions and a total of 26 reports from the four newspapers.

The second section deals with propaganda figurative frames and narratives identified from the reports of the newspapers which focused only on policy statements and comments of FGN. Government officials, army and police who are representatives of the FGN. The data were presented in tables.

Table 1: Propaganda and Figurative Framing Analysis

S/ N	Newspaper/Edition/Date	Name of FGN Official/Agent	Frame	Framing Indicators		
				Metaph or	Hyperb ole	Irony
1.	Punch, February 22 nd , 2006, p. 7	Chief James Ibori, Governor, Delta State	Crisis		√	
2.	Ibid	Dr. Ngozi Okonji-Iweala, Minister of Finance	Temporary Bleeding, crisis, national problem		√	
3.	Punch, September 26, 2006, p. 13	Sir Gabriel Toby, Deputy Governor, Rivers State	Hostility		√	
4.	Punch, September 3 rd , 2006, p. 13	Dr. Ebele Jonathan, Governor, Bayelsa State	Poverty			√
5.	Guardian, 16 th July, 2007, p.5	Senator David Brigidi, Chairman, Niger Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee	Militancy action			√
6.	Guardian, May 25 th , 2008, p.18, 19, 20	President Umaru Yar'Adua, President of Nigeria	Violence			√
7.	Ibid.	Chibuike	Menace of		√	

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		Amaechi, Governor, Rivers State	criminality confronting kidnapping			
8.	Ibid	Mr. TimiAliabe Chairman, NDDC	Lack of moral values, kidnapping, criminality problems			√
9.	Daily Sun, 30 th September, 2004	Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu	Asari, a rebel leader, maintenance of law and order			√
10.	Ibid	Spokesman for Rivers State Government	Asari a joke			√
11.	Vanguard, August 10 th , 2006, p.10	Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, Governor, Delta State	Neglect, deprivation, kidnapping and cultism problem			√
12.	Ibid, p.11	Mr. Adebayo Babalola, State Security Service	Challenging FGN authority			√
13.	Punch, February 21 st , 2006	Mohammed Yusuf, Army Spokesman for Joint Task Force (JTF)	Faceless gang			V
14.	Punch, September 26 th , 2006, p.13	Major Sagir Musa, Public Relation Officer for 2 nd Brigade Port Harcourt	Action of criminals			√
15.	Ibid	Brigadier-General SanuSalihu	FGN action against criminals, killings and kidnappings		√	√
16.	Punch, 27 th February, 2007, p.5	Brigadier-General Elias Zamani,	Criminality, stealing, action against illegal			√

		commandant J.T.F.	bunkering, stealing of crude oil hostility			
17.	Punch, January 1 st 2009, p. 26	Brigadier General WayepRimtip	War Against Illegal Bunkering in the Region			√
18.	Punch, September 3 rd , 2006, p. 13	Joint Task Force	Criminal war lords, breach of internal security, criminality, robbery, murder		√	
19.	Daily Sun, 11 th July, 2007	Brigadier General Lawrence Ngubane	Militant warned against criminality. Criminality to make money. Arms bearing, breaking the law. Actions of criminal gangs militancy		√	√
20.	Ibid	Colonel Obi Umahi, Commander, Army Task Force Group	Abduction of foreigners for demand for ransom			√
21.	Vanguard, February 21 st 2006, p.15	(Name not stated) Senior official of Nigerian Army, Operation Restore Home	Action of militants. Threat to the nation. FGN/Army action to protect oil and gas facilities			√
22.	Vanguard, October 8 th 2006	Brigadier- General Elais Zamani	Army action against bunkerers			√
23.	Vanguard, October 7 th 2006, p.9,10	Major Musa Sigar	Guerillas. Nigerian Army, military attacked by			√

			Guerrillas			
24.	Vanguard, August 15 th , 2007. p. 8	Major O. A. Ochiagwuba. J.T.F. in Niger Delta, Operation Restore Hope	Youths from Oben, Edo State described as 'invaders' and 'hoodlums'			√
25.	Vanguard, November 18 th , 2007	Mr. Felix Ogbaudu, Commissioner of Police, Rivers State	Criminality. Armed robbery, cultism			√
26.	Punch, September, 13 th , 2006, p. 13	Rivers State Police Command	High profile robberies and killings			√

Ogbeni, (2018). FGN Propaganda Figurative Framing of the Resource Control Conflict. Adaptation of Zhyvora (2017). Figurative Method

Table 1 shows the various persons who made policy statements and comments as representatives of FGN. These included: President of Nigeria, Governors of Niger Delta States, Ministers of the FGN, top ranking military and police officers of FGN. Their comments/policy statements which represent how FGN framed the conflict are contained in Table 1. The information in Table 1 shows a total of 25 persons representing FGN. Comments and statements were identified. In column one, the newspapers editions, Column two names and position in government. Their comments and statements about the conflict indicating how they framed the issue were also recorded in column three of Table 1. The figurative frame indicators are in fourth, fifth and sixth columns respectively; metaphor, hyperbole and irony.

Metaphoric: Column four statements and comments which showed metaphoric description of the conflict were recorded. It showed that none of the comments/statements had traces of figurative metaphor.

Hyperbolic: The fifth column indicated statements/comments which had figurative traces of hyperbole, which were a total of six. example, Chief Ibori, then Governor of Delta State in describing the conflict as a 'crisis' is an hyperbole. In essence, the situation in Niger Delta was not a crisis but a war situation. In a situation which involved arm struggle and bombings of oil facilities is war. The then Deputy Governor of Rivers State Sir Toby described the situation as hostility while the then Minister of Finance Dr. Okonji-Iweala described it as a temporary bleeding, a crisis and national problem. It was not a 'temporary bleeding', the conflict has been on since 1957. Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghanthen Secretary to Governor, Delta State, described it as 'youth restiveness and unemployment'. This too, figuratively is a hyperbole as the conflict is a matter of control over resources not just what he said it to be.

The description of Brigadier General Salihu is figuratively a hyperbole, when he said it was FGN action against criminals, killings and kidnappings. This isa hyperbole because the

conflict is about control of resources. The action of the agitators was in demand for control of resources in their land. It was a matter of conflict not criminality. The JTF described the conflict as case of robbery, murder, activities of war loads and breach of internal security. This is a negative exaggeration so anhyperbole, because the conflict is over control of resources not a matter of robbery and murder should be excluded completely. A criminal act is different from actions of agitators who are demanding for control of resources in their land.

In the same trend, Brigadier General Ngubane warned militants against criminality, stating that criminality was an avenue for them to make money, arm bearing was against the law. He described the situation on ground as actions of criminal gangs and militants. He exaggerated the situation as he did not mention freedom of people to demand for control of their resources in their land.

It is worthy to note that adoption of hyperbole figurative frame to describe the conflict is a propaganda framing technique which has exaggerated a conflict over control of resources to be a 'criminality', law breaking, hostility, violence, crisis, kidnapping menace. This study therefore confirms that the FGN adopted a figurative hyperbolic propaganda framing technique of the conflict with people of Niger Delta over demand for control of their resources. Thus by this, the FGN has exaggerated the conflict negatively to manipulate the collective attitude of Niger Deltans, Nigerians and the international community. Therefore, in line with Manzaria and Bruck (year unstated), the negative frame adopted by FGN are identified in this study, creating an enemy by social proof. This is indicated by the language used including the negative frames, confirming Lasswell (1927) propaganda tactics and Zhyvora (2017) hyperbolic propaganda frame.

Irony: There were several instances where FGN and Representatives' comments and policy statements showed traces of irony. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, then Governor of Bayelsa state claimed the conflict was caused by 'poverty'. This is an irony as in the first place, Niger Deltans cannot be described as poor, with reference to billions of naira worth of oil and gas in the region as well as revenue accruing to FGN without development of the region. The conflict arose from control of resources in Niger Delta. The abductions and criminality were a fallout of the conflict. The then Rivers State Police Command described the conflict as cases of high profile robberies and killings. That is the opposite as the conflict came from demand for control of resources is the contending issue and criminality is a fallout.

Senator David Brigidi described the conflict as actions of militants. It is an irony that people demanding for control of resource in their region could be said to be militants.

The military spokesman for JTF Mohammed Yusuf described agitators as a 'faceless gang' is an irony as it is an opposite evaluation of agitators. If they are Niger Delta agitators then, they are not a faceless gang. Major Musa description follows the same pattern, describing agitators actions as actions of criminals. It cannot be so as people agitating for control of resource in their land cannot be criminals. It is their right to demand for their resources. Brigadier General Salihu description is ironic – in that he justified FGN propaganda actions as actions against criminals, killings and kidnapping. There is a clear difference between a criminal act and human rights, the right to demand for control of resources in their land. Another FGN military personnel Brigadier General Zanni views the conflict as criminality, stealing of crude oil, illegal bunkering shows an opposite evaluation. A thief steals from other persons, agitators

are demanding for a control of their resources. Brigadier General Rimtip alluded conflict to be FGN war against illegal bunkering. This is ironic as demand for control of resources is different from his description. Another is Brigadier-General Ngubare's statement is ironic in that the conflict is viewed to be criminal acts, arms bearing, breaking the law and actions of criminal gangs. This is an opposite evaluation as it is the FGN that should be described as criminal minded for mining oil and gas from the region but fails to develop the area. Colonel Umahi equates the conflict to cases of abduction of foreigners and demand for ransoms.

It is worthy to note that adoption of figurative ironic frames adopted in description of the conflict is a propaganda framing technique which gave an opposite evaluation of the conflict to be war against criminals, illegal bunkering, criminal gangs, guerillas. An example of this is clear in Major Ochiagwaba description of youths from Oben, Edo State as "invaders and hoodlums" when they demanded for employment at the SPDC gas station in their land. This study confirms that FGN adopted a figurative ironic propaganda framing technique in conflict over control of resources with the people of the Niger Delta. Similarly, following Manzaria and Bruck's (year unstated) descriptions, the ironic frames imply the actions taken by Niger Deltas in demand for control of resources in the land portray them as barbarians who are a threat to culture, by implication Nigerian state. This confirms Lasswell's (1927) description of propaganda and Zhyvora's (2017) ironic propaganda frame.

Media Narrative Data / Analysis

In order to identify the media narratives adopted by the newspapers, framing of the conflict would reveal it.

The explanation is that the newspapers created and constructed the news and features in line with Fulton (2004). The contents were deliberately produced and sold as a commodity to generate profit. The Punch report of February 27th, 2006:5 edition frame when it drew similarities with other troubled areas of world – Columbia and Chechnya in a reported titled 'Delta of Illegal armed armouries'. The Guardian framed the conflict as human interest in (July 14th 2007:49-50) edition in a report titled 'Danger in the Niger Delta'. The incidents of kidnapping and hostage taking arose from resource control conflict. The media narrative here identified is human interest which directed the creation and construction of news and features.

The media narratives relied upon were violence and criminality. This confirms that the newspapers were tilted more in support of the dominant party FGN. This is in line with Fulton (2004:241-242) newspapers dwelling on the consequence of economic narrative, that minorities issues would be marginalized and subordinated for economic imperative. Examples: Punch edition of February 21st 2007:7 shows in a report where Chief Edwin Clark a leader in Niger Delta warned that militants should not be referred to as terrorists. The Punch report of (1st January 2009:4) contained bias materials as Niger Delta people were referred to as 'warlords' who engage in criminal activities, hoodlums and vandals. The Sun edition of (25th February 2006:54) showed bias against people of Niger Delta when agitators were referred to as armed militants. The Vanguard equally exhibited bias in the (August 15th 2007:8) report when Joint Task Force, Military PRO Major O. A. Ochaguuba in report referred to youths from Oben, Edo who demanded for employment at Shell Development Company (SPDC) gas flow station were

referred to as 'invaders' and 'hoodlums'. But the newspaper did not publish the comment/reaction from 1000 youths or those arrested.

The media narratives in the newspapers deliberately created and constructed news items following negative stereotypes. This is in favour of the dominant party FGN, which the owners of the newspapers would want to please and not to offend to remain in business and make profit. In addition, Fulton (2004:242) asserted that newspapers take ideological stance which results in the use of stereotypes in narratives to ensure they please owners and dominant party. This is equally in line with Onifade's (2015) findings that Nigerian newspapers, political and economic elites use the ownership and control of newspapers to influence the narratives of columnists in order to remain in power. Similarly the same can be observed here that in conflict over control of resource the people of Niger Delta can be described in negative stereotypes in media narratives. This shows according to Onifade (2015) an interplay among publishers, managers and politicians to produce such narratives employing negative stereotypes. Example: Punch described people of Niger Delta as 'faceless persons', oil bunkers (Punch February 1st, 2006:7) and as troublesome people in (September 26th 2006:13), Tom Ateke a leading agitator was said to be living in an 'Evil Forest' (September, 12th 2006:13) report. The Guardian followed the same pattern, Niger Delta agitators were referred to as militants (February 25th 2006:11) and the region as 'troubled' in July 16th 2007:15 report. The Sun in the (September 30th, 2004:4) report adopted negative stereotype by referring to actions of agitators AsariDakubo as insurrection and militia campaign. The Vanguard was not left out in its reports, negative stereotypes were observed in the narratives. The paper referred to agitators as 'kidnappers', Nigeria's water borne Guerillas, insurrection, and militants and a full blown reign of terror. The Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) was referred to as a notorious, violent and dreaded group. The region as crime prone, explosive, troubled creeks where gunmen hold sway. The incident of Oben in Edo State, where about 1,000 youths demanded for employment at SPDC gas flow station the newspaper referred to them as irate youths and rag-tag group.

The media narrative included sensationalism in the report of the conflict. Similarly, Fulton's (2004:242-243) refers to ideological stances newspapers apply. She opined that in such circumstances where media narratives are directed by economic and ownership factors, sensationalisms in reports would be found. But of interest to this paper is that a majority of the reports involved sensational narrative. Examples, Punch report of (February 27th, 2006:5) narrated the conflict to be that of illegal arms, actions of vandals and oil bunkers in (January 1st 2006:26) report. The Guardian narrated the conflict involves an Ijaw deity 'Egbesu'. The Vanguard reports showed sensational narrative to include Egbesu, the Ijaw deity (September 2nd, 2007:14-16). The Vanguard narrative included rival cult groups clash in Port Harcourt but narrated to include heavily armed gangsters who went berserk in the streets of River State whereas it was only in a section of Port Harcourt.

In conclusion, the narrative adopted by newspapers in the report of the resource control conflict were created and constructed in these narratives: negative stereotypes, slants and bias against the people of Niger Delta. The narratives were directed by ownership and control of mass media by FGN. On the other hand, the narratives were directed by economic/profit motives. Thus the reports of the newspapers on the conflict were deliberately created and constructed in the interest of the dominant party FGN and owners of the newspapers.

Answers to Research Questions

Question 1: What are the propaganda framing techniques adopted by FGN in tackling of conflict with the people of Niger Delta over control of petroleum and gas resources?

The answer is shown in Table 1. The comments and statements of FGN and representatives were published in the selected newspapers which gave sufficient room for identification of propaganda frames via framing analysis. These were literary figurative indicators. In the contents used for the analysis, news and features, hyperbolic and ironic figures of speech were identified. Therefore, the propaganda framing technique adopted by FGN in tackling the conflict were hyperbolic and ironic frames. These served as propaganda techniques for collective, manipulation of attitude and opinions of Niger Deltans, Nigerians and the international community. The underlying aim is the maintenance of 'status quo'.

Question 2: What are the successes and Failures?

It is difficult to allude to success in that the conflict has affected the Nigerian economy negatively, leading to deficit in budget. FGN had to rely on massive borrowing from countries like China to fund infrastructure and other expenditure in 2018.

In addition, oil companies recorded huge losses in billions of dollars on investment and consequently relocated to countries like Angola. The petroleum industry which is the main stay of Nigeria's economy recorded loses as some oil wells were shut down due to bombing of pipelines to date.

The refineries in Nigeria are not functioning, leading to massive importation of fuel and kerosene. Presently, many other armed groups have emerged, still demanding for control of resources in their land. The only aspect of success for FGN is the existence of Nigeria as a nation and the political structure.

Question 3: What are the media narratives adopted by the newspapers in the reportage of the conflict?

The narratives were deliberately created and constructed around negative stereotypes, slants, bias against the people of Niger Delta. The narratives were built around sensationalisation of cult gang clashes, criminality and troubled region. The frame adopted equally showed the narrative was built on human interest not conflict. This created a base for criminality as media narrative to thrive instead of freedom to demand for control of natural resources.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings show the existence of propaganda, in line with Lasswell's (1927) political communication theory in the use of language to promote a policy and manipulate collective attitudes and opinion. The study confirms the existence of propaganda frames utilizing literary figurative frames, specifically, hyperbole and irony. The findings showed that the FGN adopted literary, hyperbolic and ironic frames in framing the resource control conflict and people of Niger Delta. The comments and statements of FGN and its agents published in 18 editions comprising Guardian, Sun, Punch and Vanguard, 26 reports were analyzed. This revealed the propaganda framing techniques adopted for collective manipulation of attitude and opinions of

Niger Delta, Nigerians and international community to maintain the status quo. This study confirms Zhyvora (2017) descriptions of the use of literary, hyperbolic and ironic frames. Media narratives adopted by the newspapers were: bias, slants, negative, stereotypes and sensationalism. The media narratives were created and constructed based on negative stereotypes, slants, bias, sensationalism, cult gang clashes and criminality.

In conclusion, while FGN adopted literary, hyperbolic and ironic frames, media narratives by newspapers showed bias, slants and negative stereotypes against the people of Niger Delta, including sensationalism.

Recommendations

- The study of frame should include propaganda as shown in the study.
- The study of frame should include individuals, groups, government and media, especially in conflict situations to help resolve such conflicts.
- The FGN should reverse its stand on the conflict considering huge losses in oil and gas revenue.
- The propaganda frames adopted by FGN should be stopped as the people of Niger Delta are likely to harden their stand on the conflict and it will continue indefinitely.
- The newspapers should desist from media narratives which do not give the public complete information on the political and economic implication of the conflict. The conflict will remain with no end in sight.

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Author’s Profile

Ms. Ogbeni Juliana Ogaragare is a Lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. OgbeniJuliaan holds a B.A (Hons) in Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Postgraduate Diploma and Master’s Degree in Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Nigeria. She is presently a Phdstudent of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos. Her areas of interest and specialisations are: Propaganda, Strategies, Framing Studies, Public Relations, Niger Delta Studies, Conflict Reporting and Resolution Studies. In line with these, she has published several papers in Journals and Book Chapters in Political and Religious Propaganda, Framing, Public Relations Niger Delta Studies and Resource Control Agitation, Conflict Reporting and Resolution