

Title of Article: Labeling and Ideology in the Press: a critical discourse study of the Niger Delta Crisis.

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Abstract: This book examines the discursive construction of Nigeria's Niger Delta ethnic militias in the Nigerian press. Over time, certain lexical items have been noted to occur frequently in the Nigerian press in representing the militia groups and their activities. This pattern of labeling which is often viewed as capable of causing further disaffection and conflicts produces a highly negative characterization of the key players in the crisis by consistently referring to them as 'militants' 'thieves,' 'cultists,' 'criminals,' or 'terrorists'. While some of these labels may appear to correctly represent the activities of some of the insurgents, the systematic focus of the press on one aspect of the 'facts' at the expense of perhaps more important aspects of the Niger Delta situation bears the danger of outwardly factual reporting of news turning into a vehicle for spreading half-truths and even propaganda. The general negative labeling of the resistance groups in the region is crucial to the reading public's evaluation of the reports and their perception of the identity and intention of the key players in the conflicts. Media labels motivated by the intention to establish a cultural norm or social attitude around this group of social radicals or perhaps around the Niger Delta people in general, may therefore be viewed as evaluative judgement and ideological. Concordance and collocational tools are used to provide semantic profiles of the most frequently used labels in

the corpus and where appropriate to offer quantitative proof of the presence of potentially distorted value judgements in the discourses under investigation.