

# Chapter 7

## State Fragility and Stakeholder Engagement: New Media and Stakeholders' Voice Amplification in the Nigerian Petroleum Industry

**Uzoechi Nwagbara**  
GSM, UK

**Emeka Smart Oruh**  
Brunel University, UK

**Carlton Brown**  
Rathbone Results Ltd, UK

### ABSTRACT

*In situations where government functions are in short supply as with most developing countries particularly Nigeria, issues concerning stakeholder engagement and stakeholder voice are usually on the back burner as a consequence. In this chapter, the authors argue that such landscape is midwifed and sustained by state fragility, which is a situation where government is incapacitated to provide basic social goods as well as infrastructures and enabling institutions that can facilitate corporate-stakeholder engagement and stakeholders' voice amplification. In the Nigerian petroleum industry, this contentious issue are redoubled, given the controversial dynamics of the sector. As this chapter contends, new media (as opposed to old media) has the potentials to facilitate better engagement in corporate-stakeholder dialectics, which can be a harbinger of amplification of stakeholders' voice for sustainable relations and engagement in the industry. In a fragile state, traditional media has a monopoly of information dissemination and sharing, which traditionally limits stakeholder engagement/voice thereby frustrating efforts towards ensuring corporate-stakeholder engagement, corporate responsibility and accountability. Thus, this dilemma can be surmounted with the aid of new media as it is a communication/engagement tool that democratises the discursive space for deliberative corporate-stakeholder relations. It is hoped that this contention will help to illuminate perspectives on how the lingering corporate-stakeholder Catch-22 in Nigeria's petroleum sector can be better managed. Methodologically, literature on main issues in this chapter will be explored and a conceptual framework – stakeholder voice amplification method (SVAM) – will be developed that has the potential to advance knowledge on better corporate-stakeholder engagement in a fragile state such as Nigeria.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9776-8.ch007

## **INTRODUCTION: STATE FRAGILITY, NEW MEDIA, ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES, AND STAKEHOLDERS IN NIGERIA'S PETROLEUM INDUSTRY**

Nigeria is a major crude oil exporter with equally huge prospect to be a key player in the global marketplace (Okonta & Douglas, 2003; Okoh, 2005). Nevertheless, this is sadly not the case, as the nation is enmeshed in stakeholder engagement discontents, corporate-stakeholder malaise and deepening conflict following oil exploration and modus operandi of corporate-stakeholder relations. Concomitantly, the Niger delta, which is the economic mainstay of Nigeria, where over 90% of the nation's revenue is generated through oil exploration as well as 90% of gross national product, is paradoxically embroiled in muffling of stakeholders' voice (Obi, 2010; Idemudia, 2010). Part of the reasons for this landscape is the scramble for ownership of oil, the black gold, which has precipitated a deliberate attempt to silence voice of key stakeholders for strategic gains by corporation operating in this region of the world. In a similar view, the world-renowned photojournalist, Ed Kashi, in his graphic distillation of oil and its associated consequences in the region, considers the contradictions that oil engenders in the Niger delta as the "curse of the black gold" (2008, p. 1), a remarkable manifestation of state fragility. Beyond the politics of oil extraction and distribution, there has arisen scholarly contemplation and elucidation on another key reason for Nigeria's postcolonial condition, which is verged on state fragility (Okome, 2013). This is the hub of this chapter. Before explaining state fragility, it is reasonable to touch upon stakeholder engagement process in the Niger delta region and thereafter impact of new media will be addressed.

Stakeholder engagement process in the Niger delta has been described as exclusive of external stakeholders and undemocratic rather than inclusive and empowering. As this chapter contends, this can be blamed on state fragility, which is a function of incapacity of the state to provide good governance in light of poor institutional and governance framework. More on this shall be dealt with presently. Given the negative impact of this state of affairs, stakeholder engagement mechanisms are rather primed to take cognisance of corporate interests rather than external stakeholders (Chester, 2007; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This is the dilemma new media has come to confront as opposed to old media, which the state and the powers that be colonise to foreground discussions that will lead to their selfish interests as well as fulfilment of their strategic objectives particularly in the Nigerian petroleum industry with a history of narrowing of stakeholders' voice.

As a consequence, new media has come to the point of digital revolution which has essentially triggered freedom and easy flow of news and information dissemination from the technological constraints of old media (printing and broadcasting) (Aharony, 2009; Christensen, 2011). This revolution is reflected not only in the digitisation of networking, but also in the networking of data and information which are conveniently transformed into varieties of communication platforms between products and consumers (or communicator and the communicated) (Howard & Hussain, 2013). As a result, the shift in communication model of message execution has been drastically extended to recipient's amplified understanding and thereby impacting new media-customer relationship. This wave of innovation finds materiality in the dynamic and automated process of integrated communication, which essentially reinforces user's insight, cross-media amalgamation, multiple stakeholders' interactivity and overall efficiency in the management of global digital communication and relational engagement (Howard & Hussain, 2013; Mulheim, 2009). The urgency of this statement cannot be questioned, it does represent a bold call for new media to serve as platform within which future democracy and stakeholders' voice and engagement can be strengthened.

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/state-fragility-and-stakeholder-engagement/145707](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/state-fragility-and-stakeholder-engagement/145707)

## Related Content

---

### Analyzing Persian Social Networks: An Empirical Study

Leila Esmaeili, Mahdi Nasiriand Behrouz Minaei-Bidgoli (2011). *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking* (pp. 46-65).

[www.irma-international.org/article/analyzing-persian-social-networks/72311](http://www.irma-international.org/article/analyzing-persian-social-networks/72311)

### Trust Management Models for Digital Identities

Prasann Pradhanand Vikas Kumar (2016). *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking* (pp. 1-24).

[www.irma-international.org/article/trust-management-models-for-digital-identities/168625](http://www.irma-international.org/article/trust-management-models-for-digital-identities/168625)

### Beyond the Borders: Fashion Influencers Shaping Global Trends

Poornima Nairand Sunita Kumar (2024). *Global Perspectives on Social Media Influencers and Strategic Business Communication* (pp. 231-247).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/beyond-the-borders/347970](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/beyond-the-borders/347970)

### Gender, Power, and eDating

Celia Romm Livermoreand Toni M. Somers (2011). *International Journal of E-Politics* (pp. 74-88).

[www.irma-international.org/article/gender-power-edating/53540](http://www.irma-international.org/article/gender-power-edating/53540)

### Communicating Nation Brands through Mass and Social Media

Maria De Moyaand Rajul Jain (2016). *Social Media and Networking: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1985-2002).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/communicating-nation-brands-through-mass-and-social-media/130456](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/communicating-nation-brands-through-mass-and-social-media/130456)