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**Communication strategies  
for building better relationships  
between communities and corporations  

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in Nigeria's oil and gas adventure**

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# ToC\_1

- ❖ The idea of adventure
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- ❖ Nigeria's oil and gas adventure: Highlights of the storyline
  - ❖ Generic kinds of comm-corp relationship



# ToC\_2

- ❖ The idea of communication strategy

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- ❖ Why communication strategy affects “comm-corp” relationship
- ❖ Kinds of communication strategy used in Nigeria’s oil and gas adventure
- ❖ How the strategies probably determined the relationship

# ToC\_3

- ❖ “New” communication strategies
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- ❖ “New” “comm-corp” relationships
  - ❖ Why the “new” strategies will facilitate the “new” relationships
  - ❖ Possible “new” points in the storyline



# The idea of adventure

- ❖ “commercial speculation”

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- ❖ “daring and exciting activity calling for enterprise and enthusiasm”

- ❖ “an unusual and exciting, typically hazardous, experience or activity”

# Highlights of the storyline\_1

- ❖ Relinquishment 1938! – British/Dutch corporation

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- ❖ Discovery 1956!
- ❖ Partial recovery 1971 – joining OPEC
- ❖ Enter more & different corporations & communities (& cultures!) – American, French, Italian
- ❖ Elite international alliances – local & foreign business elites tango with traditional & modern civilian ruling elites



# Highlights of the storyline\_2

- ❖ Enter the military ruling elite
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- ❖ Inter-class confrontations – ethnic peoples/urban masses versus international elite alliances
  - ❖ Enter the militias
  - ❖ State-Militia rapprochement – “security contracts”

# Generic kinds of relationship\_1

- ❖ 1 – Indifferent community, indifferent corporation
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- ❖ 2 – Indifferent community, supportive corporation

- ❖ 3 – Indifferent community, hostile corporation

- ❖ 4 – Supportive community, indifferent corporation

- ❖ 5 – Hostile community, indifferent corporation



## Generic kinds of relationship\_2

- ❖ 6 – Supportive community, hostile corporation

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- ❖ 7 – Hostile community, supportive corporation
  
- 8 – Hostile community, hostile corporation
  
- ❖ 9 – Supportive community, supportive corporation

# The idea of comm.strat.

- ❖ “A communication strategy is a single, coherent narrative that describes a communication solution to a problem or bundle of problems”
- ❖ “A strategy provides answers to 'what?', 'why?' and 'who?', while a plan fills in more detail around 'when?' and 'how?' ”



# The idea of comm.strat\_2

- ❖ “... it sets out: the nature of the problem ... the key considerations in addressing it ... the choices that have been made ... the key drivers of those decisions ...”
- ❖ “... it considers the wider context ... tends to take a longer-term view ... avoids the details of individual activities”

# Why comm.strat affects relationship

- ❖ Communication strategy functions as a bridge between objectives of corporations/communities and the tactics/actions of corporations/communities
- ❖ It functions as a converter of objectives into actions



# The relationship problem

- ❖ The problem: a relationship of confrontation/distance/estrangement rather than intimacy/cordiality/friendliness between communities and corporations
- ❖ The solution: choice (and deployment) of contextually more appropriate (and hence more effective) communication strategies

# Kinds of comm.strat in the adventure\_1

- ❖ Option 1: CSR – one group (i.e. a corporation or a community) is obligated (on pain of suffering retribution) to fulfill a moral duty toward another different/alien group
- ❖ Option 2: CSI – one group (a corporation or a community) is obligated (in hope of making gain/profit) to make a capital/financial outlay on another different/alien group



# Kinds of comm.strat in the adventure\_2

- ❖ Option A: reputation – what does who think of us?  
Why does who think of us the way s/he does
- ❖ Option B: behavior – what does who do about us/to us? Why does who do what he does to us/about us?

## How the comm-strat determined the relationship

- ❖ One group constructed the other as different/alien. This construction was reflected in corporate objectives, in choice of communication strategy, and in tactics/actions.
- ❖ Tactics/actions became the constituents of relationships (i.e. “the way in which people regard and behave toward one another”).



## “New” comm.strat

- ❖ Option 1: “new” CSR – one group (i.e. a corporation or a community) is obligated (on pain of suffering retribution) to fulfill a moral duty toward another similar/familiar group
- ❖ Option 2: “new” CSI – one group (a corporation or a community) is obligated (in hope of making gain/profit) to make a capital/financial outlay on another similar/familiar group

## “New” comm.strat\_2

- ❖ What? – “new”/better relationship: communities and corporations become more supportive/facilitative of one another
- ❖ Who? – stakeholder inclusivity: a greater range of the spectrum/structure of communities and corporations become active in the comm-corp relationship (i.e. high/low status, male/female gender, young/old age groups, etc)
- ❖ Why? – holistic profitability & productivity: gain maximization & loss minimization for both corporations and communities



# “New” relationship

- ❖ Because communities and corporations come to “regard and behave toward” one another as similar and familiar groups,
- ❖ Their intercourse/relationship become more facilitative and supportive of one another.

# Why “new” comm.strat will facilitate “new” relationship

- ❖ One group constructs the other as similar/familiar. This construction is reflected in corporate objectives, in choice of communication strategy, and in tactics/actions.
- ❖ Tactics/actions become the constituents of relationships (i.e. “the way in which people regard and behave toward one another”).



# Possible “new” points in the storyline

- ❖ Enter the era of state-market-society partnership ...
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- ❖ Promoting the processes (i.e. policies and programs) of “similarization” & familiarization among communities and corporations in Nigeria’s oil and gas adventure.

- ❖ “Similarization” & familiarization: promotion of – perceptions of fundamental sameness between communities and corporations & behaviors of mutual facilitation/support between communities and corporations.

# Feedback

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Thank you!

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