

**CONFLICT-SENSITIVE REPORTING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF  
SELECT NEWSPAPER REPORTAGE**

**BY**

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**MA/ARTS/4781/2010/2011**

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA**

**MAY 2014**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU  
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**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS**

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**MAY 2014**

## DECLARATION

I, Bukar Maryam Umami hereby declare that this Thesis entitled “Conflict-Sensitive Reporting in Northern Nigeria: A Study of Select Newspaper Reportage” has been written by me in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts under the supervision of Professor Samuel Ayedime Kafewo and Professor Jenkeri Zakari Okwori. The information derived from other literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of reference provided. There is no part of this Thesis that was previously presented for another degree

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Name of Student

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Signature

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Date

## CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled “Conflict-Sensitive Reporting in Northern Nigeria: A Study of Select Newspaper Reportage” has been written by me Bukar Maryam Ummi in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of M.A (Development Communication) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation

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## **DEDICATION**

To the loving memories of

Abbas Bukar my dearest brother

Professor Sam Kafewo who believed in me so much and made me believe in myself

Professor Jenks Okwori who gave me the greatest gift ever: self-empowerment

Rest in peace

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I say a big thank you to my parents Lawan Bukar and Saádatu K. Bukar for always supporting me regardless of the circumstances. I could not have done this without your support, May Allah (SWT) continue to bless you abundantly

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To my technically savvy colleague Evelyn and my brother Nur, I say thank you for letting me pick your brains and for helping with all the technical stuff

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I have always considered myself an average student until I made many wonderful friends who have made me feel like I am ten feet tall and also made me feel like I am a genius. Faith, Sola,

Khant, Teni, Chiedu, Ferere, Kareem, Iliyasu and so many others, to them I am eternally grateful for the love and support

To Development Communication Class of 2011 I say thank you, you guys are the best, I am so proud to be counted among you and would not have it any other way

## ABSTRACT

This study “Conflict-sensitive Reporting in Northern Nigeria: A study of Select Newspaper Reportage” was carried out to discover how some newspapers report conflict in Northern Nigeria. The study examined how the nature of reporting conflict can either enhance or diminish the conflict. The media is a powerful tool for shaping public opinion. Because of the sensitive nature of conflicts, the media has to take certain considerations when reporting on conflicts. Media reports can have an impact on a brewing conflict positively or negatively. The major objectives of the study are to: examine the extent of newspaper coverage of the conflict in Northern Nigeria determine how the coverage of the protracted conflict has been framed by the print media, and investigate the level of compliance of Nigerian newspapers with conflict sensitive journalism practice. The study looked at reports on conflict and compared the different reports paper by paper to reveal bias, ideological leanings and emphasis given to reports on conflict in Northern Nigeria. With the content analysis and discourse analysis, the study discovered that the attempt at conflict-sensitive reporting by these newspapers is very poor. The interview revealed that all the newspapers under study see themselves as objective and balanced this was however disputed by the content analysis and discourse analysis. Another finding of this study is that the amount of coverage given to conflict in Northern Nigeria is determined by the location and ownership of these newspapers. The paper also discussed how the media should cover conflict in order to encourage newspapers to be conflict-sensitive in their reports and encourage peace journalism in Nigeria.



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Human beings as superior animals, claim to be the sole possessors of logic, rationale and conscience. Humans are expected to resolve their differences and establish justice for sustaining peace, harmony and tranquillity since they have brains that are superior to that of other animals. The potential for conflict occurs whenever two or more people have contact with each other. Conflicts occur within a family, a group a community within and between different groups and within and between nations.

Often people assume that conflict is abnormal and bad. However, conflict is a normal and unavoidable part of all relationships and societies. It is even essential for the healthy functioning of a relationship or social group, because conflict allows people to adapt to new situations and invent new approaches to problems. What makes a conflict destructive is the negative ways people commonly deal with conflicts

Conflict does not have to be destructive if handled effectively; conflict can actually contribute to stronger, deeper relationships and can help to address on-going problems and concerns. Human history is packed with conflict. Some conflicts crop up on a small level involving only a few people sometimes it occurs within a single person's mind. But other conflicts span regions and can stretch on for decades. Frequently conflicts stretch on, because of a problem in

communication, inadequate communication, often lead to protracted conflicts and more often than not make a conflict violent and destructive.

Communication is very important for coexistence of humanity and a defect in communication can lead to conflict even among two people or small groups. It is worthy to note that in situations of conflict, the communication channel does not work as efficiently as it should. Communication has a big role to play in conflict management and resolutions. It has been observed that poor communication always results in misunderstandings and eventually conflicts. The importance of communication in avoiding conflicts or resolving them cannot be over-emphasized as inadequate communication can lead to conflicts or frustrate conflict management and resolution efforts.

Prior to civilization, when all humans were tribal and at least somewhat nomadic it is likely that those tribes fought one another or that internal struggle within a tribe ended with a physical confrontation. Archaeologists have made discoveries that imply early civilizations had to fight off bands of raiders to protect their land. As these communities became better at repelling raiders, they began to develop the tools and techniques that would later serve the basis for warfare and as man developed in sophistication, so also he developed better weaponry for fighting and for information dissemination.

The mass media has been in existence reporting on conflicts all the while even before they were known as the media in modern form. Long before the invention of the printing press, or the electronic media there have been newspapers in existence in ancient Rome 57bc they were previously known as 'acta diurna' that is recording of the daily happenings. To do this, there

were record keepers who went about writing down daily happenings which they later pasted on designated places where they can be read by people. In Africa and some parts of Europe town criers were and still are responsible for keeping the populace up to date with the latest news and events, and for disseminating news from to the wider populace.

Therefore it goes that from the earliest records of man, there have been one form of media or the other informing and enlightening the people of happenings as well as keeping accounts of and reporting on conflicts like the Trojan war, the battles between Vikings, Celts, Welsh for supremacy, the battles for the Ottoman empire, the hundred years conflict between France and England, the constant conflicts in the middle east, world war one, world war two, the cold war and millions of other conflicts that have happened over time. It seems history is written around one conflict or the other.

It is a fact that each and every one of these conflicts has had immense impact on the cultural and socio-economic development of the societies involved. World War 1 and World War II for instance had impacted on the entire world, as the economic consequences were felt as most of the countries involved particularly in Europe were broke with crippling economies. “In recent times, the conflict in Africa has had thousands of people killed and displaced over nine million refugees”. (Anup 2010, p84)

However not every consequence of conflict is negative, conflict has also resulted in the development of nations considering that the two world wars had the effect of putting the United States of America in a position to become the number one economic and political power for a very long time not only as a result of the immense growth in strength and industry but also as a

result of abundant immigrants with valuable skills, knowledge and a zeal to succeed. Conflicts can also be said to have positive consequences especially in terms of technology, the need to have an edge over other possible rival nations has led to the invention of most of the technologies we have today. Technologies from the radio, telephones, to satellite and the internet were first invented for military purposes. The period of the cold war, when the two blocs; the western or capitalist bloc and the eastern bloc or communist bloc were living in constant fear that the rival bloc might have the upper hand in a full-fledged war led to several of the technologies we enjoy today

In today's world, the media's aim is often not to help people understand each other better, but rather, presenting the story to meet the media's own goals which is anything that will hold their audience interest or passion in order to sell more newspapers, or to support the publisher's or government's own interests and views. Violence usually results in the need to allocate blame and once a perpetrator is identified the process of building an enemy image begins. This does not bode well for conflict situations. This includes a process of dehumanization of the enemy in the process of controlling the conflict which is mostly where the mass media is used.

Mass media often plays a key role in today's conflict. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence. Which role the media takes in a given conflict, and in the phases before and after, depends on a complex set of factors, including the relationship the media has to actors in the conflict and the independence the media has to the power holders in society. (Puddephatt 2006, p4)

It can be said that media is both a protagonist and an antagonist to a peace process. Media can foster human security, and there is evidence that media can reinforce motives for fuelling wars. It

can be an instrument for peace and conflict management, which promotes messages and strategies that can lead to peaceful agreements and tolerant behaviour in a given society. Media can also be a weapon of violence that propagates biased information and manipulates societies or groups in conflict with divisive ideologies and harmful actions. Thus, the media have become pervasive and extremely influential in attitudes towards conflict. The influence of the media over conflicts has never been under doubt, the question is do the media actually have an impact on how the conflict progresses? As Anup Shah puts it, "Often, especially when covering conflicts, the media organizations are subject to various constraints by governments, military, corporate pressure, economic interests, etc. Sometimes, however, the media are more than willing to go along with what could be described as self-censorship" (Anup. 2005, p157) The media use in fighting wars is legendary. During World War I, British newspapers published casualty figures that were acceptable to the government but less than accurate. "British success in battles was emphasized as opposed to the minimal gains actually made. All countries were guilty of this, Parisians did not know about the danger Verdun was in during the initial stages of the German attack despite being just 150 miles from the city. The French authorities simply clamped down on the truth. Anybody caught spreading the truth regarding Verdun was liable for arrest" ("Propaganda and World War one", 2010)

The news presentations of Hitler, particularly after the start of World War II, usually showed him as a threat to world peace. The clear message was that Hitler needed to be stopped in order for democracy and freedom to be preserved. The Nazi also used propaganda, especially the radio to win a lot of ground in Europe. The United States of America is also guilty of using the media to portray their rivals as monsters like the case of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf, even though



Saddam was guilty of doing the same, he did not have access to much media as the United States which means that in cases of conflicts whoever has access to the media has a greater advantage. After the September 11 2001 terrorism/or terrorists attack on the World Trade Centre twin towers, the United States Government used the mass media to galvanize support in order to fight war in the Middle-East particularly Afghanistan and Iraq manipulating the horror of the attack to their advantage

With the advent of convergence media, that is the satellite and the internet in collaboration with conventional media like the television, radio, newspapers, magazines the role of the media in conflicts is even more glaring. Media owners also have certain interest to support one side of the conflict or the other for example in covering the various conflicts around the world, it can be observed that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Cable News Network (CNN) FOX NEWS, American Broadcasting Company (ABC) National Broadcasting Company (NBC) British Broadcasting Company (BBC) Commonwealth Broadcasting Network (CBN) Middle East Television Network (ALJAZEERA) etc. have various interests and so are reporting from those angles, the way and manner these media report on conflicts like the Israel/Palestine, the Iraqi war, conflicts between India and Pakistan gives a clear indication of the bias of the media

Specifically the Nigerian media has been blamed for its role in increasing of conflict in the country, due to weak observation and total disregard for the ethics of journalism or simply ignorance of conflict sensitive reporting, the media's tendency to identify some ethnic groups with a particular religion leads media reports and conflicts in the country to be classified as religious.

Even though it should be obvious to everyone that unchecked actions of media houses is affecting the unity of the country, government seems to be blind to this and it has done absolutely nothing to address the situation. There is no watchdog to police the activities of media house and censure them if the need arises. This will ensure that media houses realize that they have a very important role to play in the socio political affairs of the country and the way they help form the opinions of their readers.

The media must be seen to be very objective in the way they disseminate information because they have the power to create, recreate and maintain certain narratives, which could be either destructive or productive in the socio-political affairs of the country. Liman 2010

It has been said that the Nigerian media are more interested in emphasizing the existing ethnic/religious conflicts, rather than the common ties that strengthen the unity of the country; Bidmos gives some examples situations which the media in Nigeria have been guilty of this

A press report in the early 1980s concerning the alleged government subvention of ten million Naira to build the central mosque in Abuja, the new federal capital. It sounded as though the Christians were being snubbed whereas in reality they had received an equivalent sum, but were still in negotiations about how to build such an ecumenical centre. The press was reluctant to publish government explanations of the matter as compared to their earlier damaging speculations. Secondly the uneven reporting of the Kaduna State riots of 1987. There are claims that there was too much emphasis on the Muslim backlash rather than on the initial provocation by Christians in Kafanchan (Bidmos 1993, p 21)

Inaccurate media reports can have a catalytic function with regard to pre-existing tensions, and this goes against the social responsibility theory of the media which include:

- Media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to society

- Media can meet these obligations by setting high standards of professionalism, truth, accuracy and objectivity
- Media should be self-regulatory within the framework of the law
- Media should avoid disseminating material that may lead to crime, violence, civil disorder or that might offend minority groups
- The media as a whole should be pluralistic, reflect the diversity of the culture in which they operate and give access to various points of view and rights of reply
- The public has a right to expect high standards of performance, and official intervention can be justified to ensure the public good

Media professionals should be accountable to society as well as their employers and the market.  
(Baran 2002, p449)

Nigerian mass media is said to be divided along ethnic lines it can be observed that even the nationalists who fought for independence from colonial rule, were fighting on ethnic basis. Awolowo was for Western Nigeria, Sardauna for the North and Azikiwe for the East. It was with this polarized press, polarized along political party lines, with the parties themselves divided roughly along ethnic lines, that Nigeria entered independent nationhood in 1960. However it is no excuse to say this is how things have been and should remain so. The media has a certain responsibility to it audience and these responsibilities cannot be achieved by taking sides and aggravating existing conflicts. “The press in Nigeria has remained one of the most vilified, debated, and acclaimed institutions in recent time. Some have commended it for its

tenacity and doggedness especially in the struggle against colonialism and military misrule. Others have condemned it for irresponsible, reckless, and sensational journalism” (Kalejaiye 2009, p75) the Nigerian press though tenacious in the fight for independence from colonial rule were also responsible for fuelling the crisis of the sixties

Sadly, the media tended from 1960, to destroy that which they labour so hard for so many years to build. Having gain political independence, petty jealousies, occasioned by political and ethnic differences, beclouded the vision of media proprietors and media practitioners. Rather than promoting national integration and national consciousness, the media became sectional and a potent agent of disunity. They promoted inter-ethnic hatred as well as inter-ethnic distrust and acrimony that eventually led to the collapse of the first republic”. (Sobowale 2002, p23)

When reporting on conflict situations or situations of high tension, the media needs to be conflict sensitive this is particularly important given the history of Nigeria, it becomes more imperative for the media to give special care when reporting on conflict: According to Jacqueline Parks,

Journalists have seen first-hand how reporting everyday issues in multi-ethnic communities can either inflame or ease tensions. Violent conflict and political upheaval raise tempers and build barriers to understanding. However, it is not the job of journalists to be cheerleaders for one side or another. It is the media’s job, through reporting and through revealing the issues, to help people understand each other’s differences— cultural, religious, ethnic and otherwise. This does not mean concealing issues to paper over divisions. It means reporting with an understanding of their complexity It means looking beyond and behind the surface for the deeper, fuller story. It means looking for new sources, new ideas and new opportunities to build tolerance. Through providing an understanding of conflict, its impact on ordinary people, and by exploring possible solutions, there is a better chance of ending tensions. (Parks and Deshapriya 2004, p4)

Equally important is the need to frame the issues involved in conflict in such a way that they become more susceptible to management. The way to achieve this is to undertake a holistic approach to conflict discourse and not just scanty reportage of conflict behaviours exhibited by

the parties involved. “A holistic approach will include origin, dynamics, and options for resolution. Such an approach will be more beneficial to the course of resolving the conflict situation. Journalists should look to the common good, question inaccurate statements and avoid provocative or malicious language. Citizens in conflict need to know both sides of the story, and what the other side’s actually says and how it will affect them. Journalists need to be respected as trusted professionals who do not take sides”. (Howard. 2003, p17).

### **1.1.2 Conflicts in Northern Nigeria**

Since the Cold War, there has been a reduction of conflicts between states; yet internal conflicts have been on the rise all over the world. “There are two types of internal conflict; the first is conflict against the state or civil war. Examples of these kinds of conflict are terrorism, which is an extreme manifestation of conflict and reflects a certain degree of organization of conflict. It is carried out by a relatively organized group of non-state actors, and directed against the state. The second category includes people-to-people conflict, or ethnic conflict examples of this include localized land conflicts, religious and ethnic riots, homicides or other crimes” (Varshney 2002, p3).

This study is concerned with both types of internal conflicts, as fights in Nigeria often take on ethnic and religious dimensions although the conflicts in the country sometimes are terrorism against the state they still revert back to ethnic and religious factors.

Northern Nigeria has been experiencing various ethno-religious violence for a long time. However the advent of Boko Haram in 2008 and various election violence since then has put the region in chaos with different outbursts of terror attacks and ethnic/religious fights.

Conflicts of any kind are very expensive and destructive on society, as development is more or less at a standstill, human resources are depleted or rendered unavailable; structures get destroyed and financial resources which could have been used for development are used in the cause of the conflict in terms of repairs and rehabilitations. With the absence of peace, no constructive development can ever be achieved. As Goldstein puts it, “Wars are expensive (in money and other resources), destructive (of capital and human capital), and disruptive (of trade, resource availability, labour management). Large wars constitute severe shocks to the economies of participating countries. Notwithstanding some positive aspects of short-term stimulation and long-term destruction and rebuilding, war generally impedes economic development and undermines prosperity. Several specific economic effects of war recur across historical eras and locales”, (Goldstein 2003, p11).

The impact of conflict on any country and the implications for development cannot therefore be overemphasized. The implication of the various conflicts on the development of Nigeria is astounding

Nigeria has since the 1980s been experiencing growing religiosity and fundamentalism of alarming proportion. Although a multi-religious state, the long years of military authoritarianism and economic crisis and adjustment has resulted into deep transformation of religious identity and its politicization for political, economic and social gains. In this process, religious intolerance and conflicts have increased, with the Northern Nigeria as the epicentre of such conflicts (Abdu 2003, p23)

This can be traced back to how Nigeria came into being, before the amalgamation of the country in 1914 by the British colonials; Nigeria existed more or less as several groups who were mostly just within close geographical location, and though they were made into one country, the two parts were kept apart because it served the colonialists purpose better.

What is now known as Nigeria was and is in fact a deliberate colonial creation. It all began with the annexation of several areas and nations now contained within the geographical locale called Nigeria. Early European presence in the area now known as Nigeria dates back to the early 15th century, supposedly for trade in goods. This trade was later to transform into trade in humans, which in turn ran for about four hundred years... when this trade was no longer viable as a result of a combination of factors, the imperial powers changed tactics to annexing the lands and the people (Okwori. 2005, p1 )

Little wonder that Nigerians identify more with their various ethnic or religious groups than with their nationality. Consequently most discussions of Nigeria's religious problems of antagonism between Islam and Christianity dates back to pre-independence period when the British colonialist embarked on the policy of protecting the Muslim North from the Christian South but went ahead to amalgamate the two into one political entity.

“Identities have historically been significant in the Nigerian political process, under colonial rule as well as in the post-colonial dispensation. Under colonialism, administrative exigencies warranted the nurturing and exacerbation of an “us” versus “them” syndrome: Muslim versus Christian; Northerner versus Southerner... Thus, the differential impact of colonialism set the context of the regional educational, economic and political imbalances which later became significant in the mobilization or manipulation of identity consciousness in order to effectively divide and rule (Jega. 2000, p15)

Although the root cause for conflict can often be found in widespread feelings of frustration linked to, for example, relative deprivation related to needs and/or a legitimacy gap between the state and the populace. However, much like poverty, this alone is not a sufficient explanation. Key mobilising actors or events can play a determining role in transforming political tensions

into overtly violent conflict. It is important to note that religion has always been a background for most of the conflicts experienced in the world even if not the initial cause of the conflict. “Though there are many religions in the world, Christianity and Islam has become the most prominent religions that dominated and continues to dominate the world today. Apart from traditional religion that was demonized as being saturated in violence which formed the basis of its ironic violent decimation by the Christianizing and Islamizing missions especially in Africa,” (Okwori. 2007, p1) in Europe, middle east, most conflict have an element of religious difference and fear in them, a fear to be at the mercy of one religious ideology or the other, this can be understood better if consideration of the damages and injustice these religions have caused in the past.

The victory of the crusades and the destruction they unleashed were unforgettable to Muslims. When they took Jerusalem, the crusaders brutally exterminated the city’s inhabitants. It took another century before the Muslims could produce another strong leader, Saladin who was able to retake Jerusalem. This victory was so unacceptable to the Christians, that Pope Gregory the VIII charged believers to go after the Muslims and recover the Promised Land. The reward attached to the Pope’s charge drew most powerful Kings of Europe who could not resist the promise of salvation through violence and opportunity for earthly glory” (Okwori 2007, p2)

To this day the Middle East remains a contention ground for various groups struggle for identity. Conflicts that took place after the Second World War were mostly about identity. An important cause for conflict exists when a group feels excluded from being able to take an active part in a



political system or not having access to certain resources. Ethnic conflicts are often characterised by this aspect. In this case, the goals (or scarce resource) in question are also tied to dignity and identity. Having some access to political power is a means to secure the dignity, identity and security of a particular group.

It is note-worthy that most conflicts in Nigeria that are termed religious are not actually about difference in religion, as David Smock puts it “conflict identified as religious usually does not stem from disagreement over theological issues. Its impact usually results from the association of religious identity with ethnic division and economic factors” (David. 2005, p13) in the case of the boko haram conflicts for example, the initial terrorist attack on security officials to indiscriminate killings that even led to fights between Christians and Muslims in June 2012

All these have contributed in stunting the cultural and socio-cultural development of the region. Reducing conflict is a prerequisite to political and economic stability, which, in turn, is the prerequisite for implementing pro-growth policies.

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

The media coverage of a brewing conflict which is intended to clarify the problem can actually obscure and escalate it, due to Poor training, ignorance of media practitioners on conflict and conflict reporting, ownership, media involvement in the conflicts, inadequate gatekeeping and related events happening elsewhere. Often the media simply do not understand enough about conflict dynamics in general, the particular issues or people that they are writing about to avoid making conflict situations worse, rather than better. Furthermore, they usually work on tight

deadlines; this does not give them time to develop the deep understanding of an issue that is necessary to analyse it accurately and clearly for the public.

Studies have shown that the way conflicts are reported play a large part in the outcomes of the conflicts. It is no longer enough for journalist to stick to the ethics of journalism of balance, fairness, and equity, but also add to that, journalist should themselves be ethical beings, that is look at the implication of a particular story, and if that particular story has the potential of creating further conflict if reported in a particular way. Reports from conflicts should focus on human angle, which are stories that bind rather than those that divide. Journalist should not pick sides but rather try to avoid further conflicts from erupting.

The power of the media in shaping public opinion cannot be overemphasized; media reports on conflicts largely influence the outcome of the conflict either negatively or positively. Hence the media is a powerful tool which can be used for either good or bad. A media which does not divorce itself from sentiments in its report has the ability of causing further disparity by the choice of words used, the way headlines are written, placement of stories, columnist bias and general way the story is portrayed. When conflicts are reported using prejudice, it goes a long way in fuelling the conflict.

The media is a powerful tool in creating understanding and stopping conflicts, however there are indications that the Nigerian media is used to inadvertently to instigate conflicts due to its history of polarization .

### **1.3 Aim of the Study**

To analyse the ways in which the nature of conflict reporting can either enhance or diminish conflict and suggest ways for reporting peace.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- To do an analysis of some selected newspapers coverage of the conflict in northern Nigeria in a bid to discover if these newspapers by their placements, headlines, choice of words and general reportage encourage conflict in northern Nigeria
- To examine the kind of emphasis the various newspapers accorded the conflicts in their news presentations, comments and implications
- To suggest strategies necessary to avoid conflict and promote peace in newspaper reportage

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is justified on the grounds that it examines conflict reporting and peace reporting looking at the various implications for the society. Media can stress the advantages of peace building, promote individuals and groups involved in peace initiatives, and balance the view of the actors. Often, however, media conveys the opposite type of messages as media can also be a weapon of violence that propagates biased information and manipulates societies or groups in

conflict with divisive ideologies and harmful actions. Thus, the media have become pervasive and extremely influential in attitudes towards conflict.

The study underscores the special need for conflict-sensitive reporting amongst journalism practitioners. This will include their choice of words, avoiding bias and moving from reportage which inflames passions to reportage that builds unity and peace.

The study hopefully will bring out some perspective to conflict and conflict coverage in Nigeria which has been under examined thereby opening avenues for further studies especially in examining other media types like the electronic media.

## **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study will be limited to analysing only the coverage or reportage of conflict/crises in northern Nigeria from 2008 to July 2012 although the content analysis will focus on this timeframe but where necessary, referrals will be made back to earlier years in order to better understand the conflict situation; also the study will be limited to three Nigerian newspapers: The Nation newspaper, Daily Trust newspaper and The Sun Newspaper. The study draws only on the analysis of coverage or reportage as carried by the papers- by examining how they use language, headlines, story or news placements etc. it does not canvass the opinion of readers to determine if readers were influenced or not by the type, nature and coloration of reporting but where necessary, where there is evidence or correlations between coverage and actual conflict or action, it would be illustrated. This means that the analysis of the nature of reportage or coverage

determines the conclusions of the study, not actual evidences of how such coverage's have occasioned direct conflict or violence. Additionally, the analysis and conclusions are based on the selected papers which may not have been true of other papers or indeed reflect the reportage or coverage by other media platforms like radio and television. These newspapers were specially selected based on what newspapers were patronised most by people in the Northern part and Southern part of Nigeria, to ensure that newspapers that serve in shaping public opinion all over the country are adequately represented, also papers were selected based on papers most patronized by these regions so that a clear picture will be presented on the way each paper presents its reports to its audience so that a clear distinction or lack of can be seen.

### **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

**Media:** This is the plural of “medium” of communication and refers to the channels used to communicate to a large audience. This is a means of communication that reaches a large group of people. Media channels include television, radio, Newspaper, magazine and any other channel capable of reaching a large audience

**Journalism:** the activity of collecting, writing, and editing news stories for newspapers, magazines, television, or radio and other mass media

**Peace Journalism:** when editors and reporters make choices about what to report, and how to report it that create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent responses to conflict.

**Conflict-sensitive reporting:** this is the practice of writing news stories about conflict in a way that does not make the discord worse. It seeks out a wide range of opinions, avoids inflammatory language, and seeks out ideas about how the confrontation can be resolved.

**Reporter:** A person who writes or reports news stories on the radio, television newspaper and other mass media

**Reports:** the activity or job of collecting, writing, and editing news stories for newspapers, magazines, television, or radio

**Reporting:** This is an account or statement describing in detail an event, situation, or the like, usually as the result of observation, inquiry.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The advances in technology and expansion of the field of study has made a clear cut definition of journalism difficult, No matter how fluid or difficult it may have become to define journalism, journalists are guided by some basic ethics of journalism that serve as a guide though not a rule-book.

It is arguably correct that most journalists ascribe to a largely common set of values, and ethics. These ethics are objectivity, balance in reporting, fairness and equity, which guide journalist in their work. However some types of journalism try to achieve a specific purpose hence the difficulty in a specific definition of journalism. A basic assumption for this work is that a strong independent media devoid of sentiments contributes to the retention or creation of peace and stability in conflict affected areas and goes a long way in preventing conflicts from going on.

##### **2.1.1 Media and Conflicts**

Debates over the role of the media are not a new development, as the watch dog and the fourth estate of the realm, the media has duties and responsibilities that are clearly defined but the media also has roles it is expected to play which are not as clearly defined.

One of the most argued over terrain, is how the media should act in situations of conflict. Media coverage of conflict situation cannot be discussed without taking into consideration development in media technology, as new communications technologies such as mobile/video phones and laptop computers are allowing journalists to gather and disseminate information with ease from many parts of the world. The digitization of the news industry, which has led to a compression of time and space, making the world a global village means that audiences see news images of demonstrations, riots, fights, or coups within minutes of these occurring. These images not only inform global audiences, but may also instigate further campaigns of violence at other parts of the world as the journalist may not have had the time or patience to get the whole story, or even the time to consider the implications of such news stories.

“A BBC World Television News Service relayed an almost instant footage of violent clashes during an attack on a Hindu shrine by Muslim fundamentalists. The horrific scenes were seen by a large number of Indians and triggered widespread clashes around the country. As a result the media's reporting of a conflict became central to the unfolding of the conflict itself”. (UNESCO 2010, p1) Of course the media was simply doing its job, but this shows that media reports can have drastic consequences. This is why the media's role in reporting in a conflict situation is very sensitive thing indeed

It is necessary to point out the way international media report on conflict might be completely different from local media. “International media sources such as the British Broadcasting Corporation BBC, the Cable News Network CNN, Al Arabiya, and Al Jazeera have global reach, and as such have an "agenda-setting effect.”



The constructive role that the international media could play in raising public awareness of impending-conflict and post-conflict situations is too often subverted by the economics of the media business. Noticeably, the international media rarely reports successful conflict resolution and peace-building processes. This is partly understandable, due to time constraints and the magnitude of potential news in the world. Unfortunately however, these tendencies are just as much a result of a choice of certain news criteria above others, which have come to dominate the character of international media reporting to an increasing extent. In most situations of rising tension, before a conflict has passed the threshold to violence, international media has little interest or use for these news stories. “International media, as it works today, has a negligible or negative influence on violent conflicts in the pre- and post- violent conflict phases. Negligible effect, because in most cases internal conflicts do not get substantial media attention in these conflict phases. The negative influence, of the international media is closely related to its preference for sensationalist events and it’s increasingly “infotainment” orientated news reporting” (Wolfsfeld 1997, p7).

The media first and foremost is a profit making venture and therefore has to consider what avenue is most profitable. “The blood and guts of an actual conflict bring rating points and profit whereas programming that focuses on preventing conflict is often too abstract to attract public attention.’ NGOs, private foundations and media professionals, have to look for innovative projects that can begin to change the economics of electronic media”. (Greenberg 1997, p34)

According to many media studies, it may be wrong to assume that the media has a direct influence on opinion. On the other hand, there seems to be widespread agreement concerning the

media's agenda-setting influence. In other words, the media largely determines what issues are, and are not, treated in the public arena. However, determining what people think about may not be less important than influencing opinions, particularly in a situation of insecurity and limited information "confronted with the often horrific realities of conflict, any belief that the journalist can remain distant, remote, or unaffected by what is happening 'tends to go out the window' in a hurry" (Allan and Zelizer 2004, p124) the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq highlight the one-sided reporting that war journalism creates. Peace journalism uses a wider lens: why not report what caused the conflict, and how it might be resolved.

A crucial issue that must be put into consideration is the situation in which various media exist. This means the relationship between the media and the state where they operate. "The relationship between media and political structures is intricate and while owner and control issues play an important role, there are also more subtle influences that generally give authorities important advantages" (Wolfsfeld 1997, p2).

In internal conflicts, this gives the state undue advantage because state actors are usually considered more credible and, therefore, more newsworthy by the media. When asked about their choice of sources most journalists mention two criteria, namely, authority and credibility. "Credibility is very much based on the authority of an individual, given established actors such as political elites and decision-makers an advantage. There are many examples in the media that exemplify this. For example, journalists are usually reluctant to question validity of information and the credibility of state leaders, because decision-makers are often the most important sources of information, they have the ability to control the availability of information" (Van 1998, p14).

It should be noted however that the more independent media is the less prone it will be to manipulation from outside actors.

Scholars in Peace and Conflict research are well aware of the communications revolution and the media is often mentioned as an important factor. The media is either assumed to be all-powerful or irrelevant. There are relatively few systematic studies concerning the media and conflict, although interest and the number of publications concerning the issue continue to increase and accumulate. At one end of the spectrum, roughly the one that represents the more traditional school of thought, media and the communications revolution is mainly seen as a technological revolution with important implications for warfare technology and strategy.

In other words, having access to high-tech media equipment gives a military advantage, which may require strategic adjustments. But other than that armed conflicts are basically the same and if changes take place it is not due to the media itself, but rather, to changes in systemic power balances. Other scholars however are of the opinion that conflicts today are fundamentally different in nature and that these changes are directly related to the communications revolution and the media, therefore they see the media as very vital in conflicts however not enough attention is given to this area while the majority of the studies on conflict focus on international media and the role it plays on conflict and comparatively rarely focus on national media

Although international media are constantly involved in agenda-setting, by paying more attention to some conflicts at the expense of others, like the way conflicts in the middle-east takes up a lot of time on these media while conflicts in Africa is not usually given enough coverage. Conflicts in Africa are often reported by the International media after they have turned violent, enough

attention is not given to the root cause of the conflict and how they might be prevented or resolved. Local media should play a different role in conflict prevention and reporting. Often, local media can contribute to peace merely by restoring levels of trust and self-worth in a population on the brink of or emerging from conflict.

### **2.1.2 Peace Journalism and Conflict-Sensitive Reporting**

The central concept of conflict-sensitive reporting is that violent conflict attracts intense media attention that requires greater analytical depth and skills to report. This means conflict situations should be reported without further contributing to the violence or ignoring peace-building opportunities. The aim of conflict-sensitive reporting is to achieve peace journalism in the long run. In other words, conflict-sensitive reporting just like conflict-solution journalism and constructive-conflict coverage are sub-sections of the much broader peace journalism.

“The news media’s traditional role is often said to be to serve the public interest by being a reliable information provider, a forum for free speech and a watchdog of government.<sup>4</sup> In their hearts many journalists believe their work can help make the world a better place. But in environments where such roles seem to make little difference to the perpetual cycle of violence, there is understandable frustration and disillusionment among journalists and their supporters” (Ross, 2009 P4).

Peace journalism is a type of journalism practice that emerged in the 1970s. Norwegian sociologist, peace researcher and practitioner Johan Galtung proposed the idea of peace journalism for journalists to follow to show how a value bias towards violence can be avoided

when covering war and conflict. Developed by Galtung, and put into practice by Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick. The aim is to shed light on structural and cultural causes of violence as they impact upon the lives of people in a conflict arena as part of the explanation for violence. It aims to frame conflicts as consisting of many parties and pursuing many goals rather than a simple dichotomy. An explicit aim of peace journalism is to promote peace initiatives from whatever quarter and to allow the reader to distinguish between stated positions and real goals.

Peace Journalism model is a source of practical options for journalists; a lead in to media monitoring for peace activists and offers a firm basis for drawing distinctions in content analysis by academic researchers. Peace reporting is conflict oriented and explores how conflict is formed and focuses on invisible effects of violence making conflicts transparent by giving voice to all parties by humanizing all sides and proactive reporting. This type of reporting is truth oriented and emphasis is on violence on all sides and sheds light on suffering by all involved it focuses on peace-makers and highlights peace initiatives to prevent more conflict by focusing on promoting peace and is more concerned with resolution, reconstruction and reconciliation.

**Table 1 Reporting Conflict: The low and the high By Johan Galtung:**

| <b>VIOLENCE / WAR<br/>JOURNALISM</b>   | <b>CONFLICT / PEACE<br/>JOURNALISM</b>   |
|--|--|
| <p>I. Violence / War-oriented</p> <p>Focus on a conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum oriented</p> <p>Close space, close time; causes and effect in arena: who threw the first stone; poor in the con-text</p> <p>Focus only on visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)</p> <p>Making wars opaque/secret</p> <p>“us-them” journalism, propaganda, voice for “us”</p> <p>see “them” as the problem, focus on the two prevails in war</p> <p>dehumanisation of “them”; more so the worse the weapon</p> <p>reactive: waiting for violence to occur before re-orting</p> | <p>I. Conflict-oriented</p> <p>Explore conflict formation, x parties, y goals, x is-sues, general “win-win” orientation</p> <p>Open space, open time; causes and outcomes any-where, also in history/culture; rich in context</p> <p>Focus also on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture)</p> <p>Making conflicts transparent</p> <p>Giving voice to all parties: empathy, understanding</p> <p>See conflict/war as problem, focus on conflict creativity</p> <p>Humanization of all sides: more so the worse weapons</p> <p>proactive: reporting also before violence/war occurs</p> |
| <p>II. Propaganda-oriented</p> <p>expose “their” untruths</p> <p>help “our” cover-ups/lies</p>   | <p>I. Truth-oriented</p> <p>expose untruths on all sides</p> <p>uncover all cover-ups</p>  |
| <p>III. Elite-oriented</p> <p>Focus on “their” violence and “our”</p>  | <p>III. People-oriented</p> <p>Focus on violence by all sides and on suffering all over; also on women,</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| suffering; on able-bodied elites males<br>Give name to their evil-doer<br>Focus on elite peace-makers, being elite mouth- piece   | children, aged<br>Give name to all evil-doer<br>Focus on people peace makers, giving voice to the voiceless   |
| IV. Victory-oriented<br>Peace = victory and cease-fire<br>Conceal peace-initiative before victory is at head<br>Focus on treaty, institution the controlled society<br>Leaving for another war, return if the old flares up | IV. Solution-oriented<br>Peace = non-violence and creativity<br>Highlight peace initiatives also to prevent more war<br>Focus on structure, culture the peaceful society<br>Aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation |

*Culled from Lynch 2006*

Here, Galtung attempts to give the differences between war reporting and peace journalism, stressing that while war reporting inadvertently makes the conflict worse or even if the conflict is resolved another can crop up later since the root cause is neglected on the other hand peace journalism finds lasting solutions to the conflict. ‘the non-critical pedagogy of war journalism should be viewed as a perfected form of mind control that entraps almost every practicing journalist, most of these war journalists honestly believe that their objectivity makes them truth tellers and as such indispensable guardians of democracy’ (Lynch 2006, p1)

### **2.1.3 Peace journalism and Mainstream media:**

There is no consensus in the media on how to report conflicts; the right approach is yet to be agreed on amongst either the professionals who deal consistently with the issue, or the wider media community. Some who promote new concepts within the field of conflict coverage have

faced fierce resistance from the very media communities they are trying to assist, often because media practitioners feel that treasured values of their profession are now being questioned however there are yet those who feel that peace journalism is not different from the mainstream journalism practice.

It is assumed that conflict prevention is already boosted once there is a media in place which follows the ethics of journalism. However in areas where access to information is limited, providing any accurate, balanced information already constitutes a huge step towards promoting peace. Others argue that following the values and ethics of professional journalism can also lead to an acceleration of conflicts. Proponents of peace journalism see it as an expression of, and/or improvement upon, the best practices of actually-existing journalism, as well as a means of ameliorating conflicts and opening up new opportunities for their peaceful resolution. On the contrary, opponents of Peace Journalism raise a number of objections: “Peace Journalism is an unwanted departure from objectivity and towards a journalism of attachment; it mistakenly assumes powerful and linear media effects; it is a normative model, rooted in the discipline of peace research, that fails sufficiently to take into account the constraints imposed by the actual dynamics of news production (including professional values and organizational imperatives), and hence, may have little to offer journalists in practice” (Hanitzsch 2004, p23).

This is precisely what proponents of peace reporting say needs to be addressed, the time constraints of news reporting may lead to presentation of news stories that are not well rounded and may incite more violence. This was the basis of discussion at Copenhagen on conflict reporting in 2003 “One of the core questions is as simple as it is good: How can a reporter ever



remain independent, unbiased and faithful to the truth if she/he is also to promote peace, reconciliation or other such concepts? In answering, some will claim that a moral obligation rests on the modern conflict reporter to report in ways which take into account our accumulated knowledge on how reporting impacts on the war itself. If this causes the reporter to violate old-time standards, otherwise accepted as the cornerstones of professional journalism, so be it, any other approach would be immoral, since it could cost lives. Others argue that modern conflict reporting must at all times adhere to accepted standards of professional journalism — and only then add new qualities, like better understanding of the dynamics of conflict, more sophisticated selection of sources or other innocent ‘tools’. If the core standards of professional journalism are not respected, any chance of producing positive impact on the conflict through journalism is soon undermined”. (IMS 2003:3)

Critics of peace journalism see this type of journalism as idealistic and not practicable. Thomas Hanitzsch one of the fore critics of peace journalism says here “There are in fact many structural constraints which shape and limit the work of journalist: few personnel, time and material resources, editorial procedures and hierarchies, textual constraints, availability of sources, access to the scene and information in general just to name a few. Journalists consistently work under conditions of heavy time pressure limited resources and tight competition” (Hanitzsch 2007, p276)

However all this notwithstanding, first, and above all, media should be considered as a medium of communication in which various actors in society communicate with other groups. This includes political activists, decision-makers, journalists themselves and larger society level

audiences. When considering media, and particularly news media in tension areas, media structures usually reflect the political structures existent in the society at large. In other words, generally speaking, news media should be seen as an arena and journalists who are active in, and shape, that arena are themselves a product of a social context. An area that both proponents and opponents of peace journalism seem to agree on is the area of neutrality; both sides agree that the journalist cannot be neutral when reporting conflicts

Therefore, media are not neutral observers, endowed with the special capacity to view the world objectively. However, to avoid misinterpretations, it should be pointed out that stating this does not rule out impartiality and honesty in reporting. “There is no argument that violence should not be reported. But the first victim in a war is not truth - truth is only the second victim. The first victim is, of course, peace. Good reporting - low- or high-road - should obviously be truthful. But truth journalism alone is not peace journalism. And truth does not come easily, given the tendency to take sides once the 'who wins' perspective has been adopted. If one side is backed by one's own country, nation, class or paper/ station/ channel, the low road invites untruthfulness” (Galtung 1998, pp. 7- 4) this point was further supported by David Loyn, one of the most ardent critic of peace journalism where he says “These are inter-related as in that journalists are supposedly dispassionate and neutral so as not to let their own emotional responses and political alliances get in the way of reporting truthfully..... What they want to know is how people on the ground. Reporters are the channel for their passion –not players” (Loyn 2007, pp. 6- 2)

Though it sounds ideal, there are a lot of critics who take exception to this form of reporting “it is highly unlikely that all media will equally subscribe to the conduct of peace journalism,

mainstream audiences may ironically choose the media which contain the least amount of peace journalism and there is no indication in audiences research that would prefer peace journalism to traditional news” (Bird, 2000, p31) Proponents of peace reporting are of the opinion that the media has an obligation to present the human side by reporting human stories of conflicts in a balanced professional and non-exploitative manner. However others maintain that the media cannot be neutral towards peace: because the media are naturally attracted to conflict it is a widely acknowledged fact that the mass media plays a key role in shaping the public opinion, and while news journalists may react strongly against such a claim by holding their professional objectivity above everything else, they must realize that the way in which they report on and about a certain conflict can drastically affect the audience’s perception of the situation and thus may influence further developments.

Simply by being there and reporting on a conflict, the media alter the communication environment and are thus inherently involved in the conflict and non-neutral. Furthermore, there is a very fine line between discarding one’s objectivity and viewing events with a certain attitude towards conciliation. In other words, though the media are usually run for profit, and, moreover, conflict sells better than cooperation, journalists should ensure balanced reporting with a view to preventing the escalation of tensions. It is possible to move in this direction by covering peace initiatives - at the very least – in as much detail as renewed escalations, by choosing to counter hate speech, and thus reducing the negative potentials of the media in conflict situation (Melone et al 2002, p6).

Hence there is the need for the interpretation function of the mass media, which is fulfilled by editorials, commentaries and opinion articles. In fulfilling this essential responsibility to society, how does the journalist provide adequate, truthful and objective coverage of a conflict situation without escalating the situation? Being that it is impossible for the media to refrain from being part of conflict

Mass media often plays a key role in today's conflict. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence. Which role the media takes in a given conflict, and in the phases before and after, depends on a complex set of factors, including the relationship the media has to actors in the conflict and the independence the media has to the power holders in society. (Puddephatt 2006, p4)

Scholars who disagree with peace journalism simply do not want to endorse the idea that the news media may be controlled and used for specific purposes, even that of peace, and are of the opinion that the perception that journalists ought to be neutral needs to be overcome.

However, a growing number of professionals argue that the 'media and conflict' debate is not about taking sides in reporting conflict -except the side of peace and peace-building- but about journalists already being a third party in any conflict they are covering. "Consequently, the argument that there is a moral imperative to use that access constructively is steadily gaining ground. What role can the media play in helping prevent conflicts from escalating? Potentially a big one, agree both conflict mediators and journalists, but they disagree on how. Positive journalism is what we need, argues John Marks, president of the Washington-based NGO, Search for Common Ground. 'Asking questions like: Where do you agree? Instead of focusing only on the disagreements, most journalists react to statements like these by pointing to the importance of responsible coverage of conflict situations: 'That's a big contribution already'. (Netherlands report 1997, p7)

Peace journalism is one approach that can arguably make sense of any region that has become increasingly complex, politically strained and violent, yet the concept is generally eschewed by mainstream media as a threat to the core values of traditional journalism itself. It is the belief of a lot of scholars and journalists, that there is no need for the term "peace reporting" this school of thought believe that once the journalist adheres to the basic ethics of journalism of objectivity, balance reporting, accuracy, and fair-play, that journalist is already a peace reporter however to

term a type of reporting as peace reporting will make journalists to lose their credibility as it will be assumed that they are covering-up issues for peace to reign.

it is not even necessary to give such journalism a name like “peace journalism” many of the principles of peace journalism are the very essence of excellence in journalism and are deeply embedded in good and many-sided journalism: to make conflicts appear transparent through background information, to give voice to the views of all rivaling parties to expose lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on all sides and to report on the atrocities of war and the suffering of civilians. It seems that peace journalism oftentimes reinvents the wheel to the extent that it repeats a classic debate on quality in journalism that has a long tradition in communication and media research (Hanitzsch 2007, p7)

Advocates of peace journalism also made the linkage between these concepts and adherence to the basic professional standards of objectivity, reliability and impartiality. In this regard, it was argued that classical objective journalism and new methodologies for conflict reporting are not inherently contradictory, but rather compatible with one another, with the latter possibly being seen as a ‘Humanist.’ extension of the former.

For Peace Journalism advocates, conventional news reportage of conflict is tantamount to war journalism, vulnerable through its very routines of ‘objectivity’ to becoming propaganda conduits. Peace Journalism calls on journalists, instead, to distinguish between stated demands and underlying needs and objectives; to present conflict as a cat’s cradle of relationships between various stakeholders rather than a zero-sum dyadic tug of war; and to attend to voices working for creative and non-violent solutions, and to ways of transforming and transcending the hardened lines of conflict (Hackett 2006, pp.5-2).

Objectivity of the media has been given different assumptions by different scholars; Dennis McQuail highlights three basic features of objective journalism. One is that it adopts “a position of detachment and neutrality towards the object of reporting.” Secondly, there is a lack of partisanship, which he explains as “not taking sides in matters of dispute or showing bias.” Thirdly, objectivity “requires strict attachment to accuracy and truth. (McQuail 2005, p 200)

Based on McQuail's basic features of objective journalism, Loyn argues that no analyst of objectivity discard it as ruthlessly as the peace journalist, most others will rather see it put in its proper place, refined but not rejected as objectivity calls for of the reporter from the issue or story, he explained the other two components of objectivity as truthfulness/accuracy and neutrality.

A major ethical issue is whether conflict-reduction journalists are objective or impartial in their reporting. Some critics of conflict-reduction journalism feel that journalists cannot be impartial if their primary aim is to build social stability and promote peace. Objectivity will be compromised by the desire to reach certain social outcomes. They argue that conflict-reduction journalists will "pull their punches" when they criticize, omit controversial facts or overlook tough issues to avoid conflict. Will their primary attachment be to reporting the truth? David Loyn believes that peace journalism could compromise the integrity of journalist and confuse their role as neutral disseminators "our task is always to seek to find out what is going on not carrying any other baggage. If there is a conflict resolution we report on it in context, we do not engage in it" (Loyd 2003, p4) Surprisingly even proponents of peace journalism like Jake Lynch and Howard Ross are in agreement with Loyd, but they believe that certain measure have to be taken in place when reporting in conflict situations because journalist do not take a deliberate effort the impact of the conflict can distort their reports as conflicts distorts most things. "In essence, much of this is good practice in traditional journalism but in times of conflict journalists 'do not always scrupulously' follow such ideals" (Romano 2010, p27) most journalists are a little uncomfortable being termed as peace journalist, they are of the opinion that once journalism starts being classified it will take on different dimensions "If a journalist practices truth it will promote

peace. In the absence of truth-telling you have rumor-mongering and a lot of other problems. I am a little uncomfortable about peace being a direct aim of my work as journalist. If I allow that to be the driving force what will happen if someone else in our organization has another aim that I do not agree with? Papers should support organizations working for peace and be truthful about their work” (IMS 2003, p7)

Though Loyd and other contesters of peace journalism are of the opinion that journalistic principles are enough in reporting conflict situations, some agree that measure can be put in place to use communication to bring about peace without compromising the integrity of journalism

“These activists may consider using another field of public communication that by definition intends to serve a particular cause: public relations. In order to facilitate peace and non-violent conflict resolution by means of public communication a concept “peace PR” can effectively unfold its public potential if the communicated message sits consistently with the values and imperatives of those who produce news” (Spencer 2003, p64)

In contrast, the inherent danger of consciously choosing to achieve a purpose other than the practice of professional journalism as a goal unto itself was raised. It was felt by some that this could damage the role of the media as an impartial commentator. But it was also pointed out that professional journalism should by its very definition lead to the peaceful resolution of conflict, because it serves to diversify dialogue and broaden the range of opinions being heard” (IMS 2003, p4)

Peace journalism does essentially what journalists do anyway, keeping in mind a maximum number of items from the left-hand column. The eye for the essential; the devotion both to facts and to hope; the need to be a good writer; the need to work quickly and hence to be a good administrator of one's own time - all of that remains the same. But new types of knowledge would be needed, such as identifying the

conflict formation, the parties, their goals and the issues, without falling into the trap of believing that the key actors are where the action (violence, war) is. In medicine no physician would make the mistake of seeing a swollen ankle as an 'ankle disease'; s/he would be on the watch for possible disturbances in the cardio-vascular system and the heart. The problem is not necessarily where it shows up; that holds for the body as well as the conflict, for a 'race riot' and a case of mistreatment of children as well as for inter-nation and inter-state conflicts. (Galtung 1998, pp7-4)

Conflict reduction is not served by censoring voices, slanting the evidence, hiding uncomfortable facts, engaging in partisanship, or communicating uninformed spin. The aim is to build, slowly, a media system that reduces bias and other forms of subjectivity. The decline of impartial public journalism and the rise of a divisive partisan journalism usually signal that the society in question is spiraling downward into factions and violence. As the press becomes more and more partisan it loses credibility. Without some degree of impartial public journalism, the society fails to communicate effectively, and confidence-building measures falter.

In this regard, it was meant that regular professionally practiced journalism in a conflict environment opens channels for communication, educates people, builds confidence, frames conflicts, humanizes disputants, provides emotional outlets and notes solutions elsewhere. These are normal unintended outcomes of good reporting, where it is allowed to flourish. These are also the tools and objectives which professional conflict mediators intentionally use, often less publicly. Ultimately, the goal of conflict discourse in the media should be to provide early warning signals, especially when conflict has the potential of assuming a violent dimension, and as Galadima (2002) counsels, where there is violence already, the media should help to deescalate rather than increase the risk potential of the situation. According to Ross David it does not take a war correspondent to recognize that journalism and news media can incite violent conflict



A lot of journalists however argue that although peace journalism sound good in theory, in practice it is almost impossible; how do journalists cover all sides when they are restricted from one of the sides of the conflict? “The conducts of peace journalism also become difficult if not impossible when applied in certain conflict constellations for one thing, journalists reporting on conflicts in their neighborhoods do often belong to one of the groups involved in the violence. In these cases it is difficult to remain impartial and to deliver a balanced and comprehensive account of the conflict” (Hanitzsch 2007, p6)

According to Jake Lynch, journalist simply report facts and when all the facts have been reported, and those involved still engage in war, there is little the media can do to prevent it. He went on to say that journalist generally prefer official sources to anyone from the ‘grassroots.’ These preferences, or biases, hardened into industry conventions as journalism began to be sold as a mass-produced commodity in consumer societies, and faced pressure to present itself as all-things-to-all-people, capable of being marketed to potential readers, listeners and viewers of all political views and none.

Peace journalism is more realistic, in the sense of fidelity to a reality that already exists, independently of our knowledge or representation of it. To report violence without background or context is to misrepresent it, since any conflict is, at root, a relationship, of parties setting and pursuing incompatible goals. To omit any discussion of them is a distortion. At the same time; it acknowledges that there is no one correct version of this reality that everyone will agree upon. We understand the world around us by taking messages and images – including those served up by the news – and slotting them into codes we develop through our lives and carry in our heads. Meaning is not created solely at the point of production, or encoding; no act of representation is complete until it has been received, or decoded. Decoding is something we often do automatically, since so much of what we read, hear and see is familiar. This is what propaganda relies on – establish Saddam Hussein as a bad man’, or ‘weapons of mass destruction’ as a ‘threat’, and it forms a prism, through which all the reality, both subsequent and previous, tends to be viewed. (Lynch. 2008 p1)

To Keeble et al, “mainstream journalism is committed almost exclusively to the interest of power not people. The media has become the managerial arm of the establishment no matter its preferred disguise as a “fourth estate” and honorable exceptions. Turn the pages of any newspaper, watch or listen to the evening broadcast news and be assured that news opinions come from the top however circuitous, never from the bottom”(Keeble 2010:53)

Peace journalism can be said to be an extension of journalism to peace studies that seeks to offset the existing emphasis on war studies “this Galtungian perspective applied in journalism insists that journalists focus on root causes of conflict such as poverty or prior abuse and not merely report on the surface events associated with violent political encounters this helps readers understand the context of the conflict in ways that makes reliance on political violence seem both unimaginative and unethical” (Falk 2008) this notion was opposed by the critics as unrealistic. “it is difficult if not impossible to implement the values of peace journalism in traditional news formats where space and time constraints do not allow detailed elaboration of background and causes of violence as well as consequences.....the demands and for complexity reductions leads to the use of highly standardized narrative schemes which are often not compatible to the demands of peace journalism” (Hanitzsch 2007, p2) Loyd stresses this point where he says “ the peace journalism approach describes a participation that is simply not the role of a journalist and is based on a flawed notion that the world would be a better place if we reported wars in a certain prescribed way encouraging peace-makers rather than reporting warriors. This prescription is the more dangerous part of peace journalism as it tries to define itself as a new orthodoxy. The idea that most reporters currently look for the epicenter of violence or are somehow addicted to

conflict is absurd. If anything we under-report conflict in the world certainly failing often to expose it in the early days before a major violence breaks out (qtd in Hanitzsch 2007, p4)

According to Romano, peace journalism doesn't have to be as elaborate and time consuming as Hanitzsch seems to think drawing on Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick he argues that even the language format and focus of a report is likely to have impact on the audience

At the simplest level: Peace journalism relies on traditions of fact-based journalism, with close scrutiny of word and images. Journalists must avoid emotive and imprecise expressions, dichotomies of good versus bad, a focus on the victimhood and grievances or the abuses and misdemeanors of one side only, and the use of racial and cultural identities when they are not necessary. Journalists must attribute unsubstantiated claims to their sources rather than presenting them as facts, avoid focusing on the victimhood or causes of one party to the exclusion of [an] other, and seek diverse sources and viewpoints. (Romano 2010, p27)

Clearly the role of the journalist in reporting conflict is a sensitive area for media practitioners. Should the reporter be more concerned with the ethics of the profession strive to be an ethical human being? Whichever the reporter chooses, has an immense impact on the development of any society

### **2.1.5 Media and Development in Conflict Situations**

No society can develop while in the midst of violent conflict, violence devastates everything, people, crops, infrastructures and other material resources it destroys institutions, including education, and political will it annihilates hope, trust and serenity. Armed conflicts today, usually do not take place between two armies; the most devastating on-going conflicts are civil wars. Furthermore, this often takes place in countries undergoing major political changes, such as countries that have taken steps towards democratization. In other words, today's post-Cold War

world looks different from previous eras. Full-scale nuclear war seems like less of a threat today, but instead smaller, particularly vicious and more difficult to solve, conflicts that to a higher degree implicate civilians as combatants and as victims pose the biggest threat.

Armed conflicts are the root cause of poverty, which causes suffering, is disastrous for economic development and deprives people from basic needs and also leads to more conflicts as confirmed by studies by the United States Institute for Peace. “While poverty does not lead directly to conflict, history suggests that weak or negative economic growth raises the risk of conflict and that sharp economic shocks in already fragile societies can trigger outbreak of conflict. Paul Collier finds that a negative point of growth in a typical low-income country roughly equals an increase of one percentage point in that country’s risk of civil war over the next five years” (Woocher 2009, p16)

Africa is a continent engulfed with conflicts it is a place that has been the background and is still involved in various civil wars, ethnic crisis, political spates, and religious fights, based on Lacina and Gleditsch (2005), from 1960-2002 about 1.55 million people were killed in battle in Africa, that is about 40 per cent of the global total. This makes Africa the region with the highest total number of battle deaths. Calculating the average number of battle deaths it seems that wars in Africa were ‘deadlier’ than in other regions. Per year the average number of battle deaths is 3,350 in Africa while it is between 1,500 and 2,700 for all other regions. This has attributed to Africa countries being considered as the least developed in the world. Clearly no society can progress without peace, Conflict can affect the level of development in a country as most institutions do not function the way they are supposed to and there is a waste in terms of human and material resources. Malnutrition, illness, wounds, torture, harassment of specific groups

within the population, disappearances, extra-judicial executions and the forcible displacement of people are all found in many armed conflicts. Aside from their direct effect on the individuals concerned, the consequences of these tragedies for local systems must also be considered: the destruction of crops and places of cultural importance, the breakdown of economic infrastructure and of health-care facilities such as hospitals. According to UNICEF figures, whereas only 5 per cent of the casualties in the First World War were civilians, by the Second World War the proportion had been raised to 50 per cent, while ‘as the century ends, the civilian share is normally about 80 per cent

“The direct impact of armed conflict on people and on the systems essential to their survival is highly visible but it should not be forgotten that the priority for the warring parties is their military operations, not the smooth operation of economic and social structures. The result is a gradual deterioration of these structures, even in situations where they are not directly targeted by the combatants” (Pierra 1998, p323)

It has been said that African countries have the least independent media in the world, the right to credible information and freedom of expression are essential to ensure accountable and transparent governance and to make it possible for all parts of a population to have access to, and participate in, the political development of a country. These elements are also important in order to promote constructive communication, to decrease perceptions of threat and create more stable and sustainable political structures. Most importantly is the realization that any attempt to promote peace and prevent violent conflict requires active participation, including all societal actors, a many-sided approach and long-term commitments. Access to information fosters

economic growth as well as democracy. Societies are strengthened by the ability to make informed decisions about their future and their welfare. “Empirical analysis indicates that the states that are most likely to experience armed conflict are governed by regimes that are neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic, but of a mixed character termed “anocratic.”(Woocher 2009, p14) this can be said to be true of most African countries which are struggling with governments that are not quite democratic in practice

Effective and democratic media are an essential part of any culture of prevention, as well as being indispensable in societies in transition towards peace and democracy. At any stage of a conflict, lack of information can make people restless, desperate, and easy to manipulate.

“Lack of freedom of expression and political participation is a significant cause of conflict in the world. Experience shows that pluralistic and independent media, by providing a non-violent forum for debate, not only contribute to peaceful and democratic societies but are an essential factor in achieving durable economic development. On the other hand, when they are misused to amplify rumors, pump out propaganda and incite to hatred, they can have an extraordinary ability to stir up tension and create conflict”. (James 2004, p11)

This media provides a feedback avenue for the development process an informed press can translate economic development programs into terms understandable to the people; delve into the ground-level implications of those programs, then report also on how the public is reacting and how the programs are being put into practice. This can help in preventing further other armed conflict from arising

There is no doubt that states emerging from large-scale violence are at elevated risk of new or renewed conflict. This increased risk is typically expressed by citing the

percentage of states experiencing a civil war that relapses within five years of termination—about 25 percent since 1945 (not 50 percent, as is often mistakenly cited).<sup>20</sup> Another way of looking at the contribution of post-conflict recurrence to the overall universe of conflict onsets is to look at the percentage of all conflict onsets that are relapses. Since 1990, only a minority of conflict onsets could be considered relapses of recent conflicts (Woocher 2009, p5)

The media also can provide an independent assessment of any development process. Pointing out the shortcomings of particular programs can serve as an essential step toward making those programs more responsive to the true needs of the people being served.

“All too often, wars are self-perpetuating: conflicts generate more conflict and inevitably bring death, impoverishment and destruction in their wake. Independent and pluralistic media can make a significant contribution to breaking this vicious circle by enabling dialogue to replace armed conflict. Even when it is heated, dialogue is crucial for laying the ground for reconciliation and reconstruction. The media can provide a vital space in which different views are aired and information from different sources is openly available for public scrutiny.” (James 2004, p9)

### **2.1.6 Conflict Theories:**

There are so many schools of thoughts on the causes and impact of conflicts to the society; these theories help to explain why conflicts come up and what makes a conflict violent

### **Structural conflict theory:**

This theory proposes that conflict takes place when there is limited physical resource, authority or geographical constraint. According to this theory, conflict is usually caused by forces that are external to the people involved.

Propounded by Wright Mills, the main argument of this theory is that conflict is built into the way societies are structured and organized and exclusion of some members of society in certain aspects whether economic or political. Also according to the theory, the exposure of certain members of society to poverty, exploitation, injustice and inequity leads to conflict. The main emphasis of this theory is that competing interests of groups in a society will lead to conflicts particularly if there is stronger group and a weaker group.

This theory has two sub-orientations the radical structural theory and the liberal structuralism

- Radical structural theory: this school of thought consists mainly of Marxists and later extended to neo-Marxists. Those who fall under this school of thought include Samir Amir, Emanuel Wallerstein, Andre Gunder Frank Walter Rodney and Karl Marx. They blame capitalism as a system that will lead to conflict. They believe that capitalist conflict will be resolved through a revolution where the bourgeoisie will be overthrown by working people bringing about socialism.
- Liberal structuralists: Both radical and liberal structuralists believe that structural systems in the society and scarcity of material resources are the main cause of conflict. This



school of thought calls for elimination of structural defects with policy reforms rather than revolution. One of the most renowned Liberal structuralists is Johan Galtung

### **Realist Theories:**

This theory stresses that the starting point of any explanation on conflict is the individual level, thus it traces conflict to a flaw in human nature. It says that the conflicts in the world has its roots in the human nature Realists believe that the international system is governed by anarchy, meaning that there is no central authority. Therefore, international politics is a struggle for power between self-interested states. Realists believe that no other nation states can be relied upon to help guarantee the state's survival.

### **Biological Theories of Conflict:**

Like the realist, this school of thought propounds that conflicts occur due to the nature of mankind. According to this group of theorists mankind has always been violent and is driven by a natural instinct of self-preservation. These theorists believe that humans are animal's higher specie but still animals and would fight naturally over things. Other conflict theories that share this school of thoughts are the innate theory of conflict, the frustration aggression theory, physiological theory, the human needs theory, relative deprivation theory and the physiological theory.

### **Psycho-cultural conflict theory:**

This theory stresses that conflicts occur when some groups are discriminated against or deprived. It contents that identities based on people's ethnic origin and culture is one of the best ways of

explaining violent conflict, identity is seen as an important cause of long lasting social conflict. The need for self-esteem and other non-material needs are part of a sense of security that individuals need for development. The tendency to see other groups as threats is mostly due to past history of competition for scarce resources and subjugation. This theory is closely related to the structural conflict theories

### **Relationship Conflict theory:**

This type of conflict occurs because of the manifestation of negative emotions, misconception of stereotypes due to poor communication. This type of conflict often fuel dispute and lead to destructive conflict. In this case conflict occurs or involves sweeping generalizations about members of the other group. This theory stresses the need of communication. Relationship problems often fuel disputes and lead to an unnecessary escalating spiral of destructive conflict.

### **Data Conflict theory:**

This conflict occurs when there is unavailability of information necessary to make decisions. Most conflicts here are unnecessary and can be avoided if there is proper communication between those involved. Sometimes in this type of conflict, there is improper interpretation of data as a result of noise in the communication process. Like the data conflict theory, this theory also stresses the importance of communication

### **Interest Conflicts theory:**

Conflicts of interests occur when there is an assumption that in order to satisfy a certain need, the need or interest of an opponent must be sacrificed. This type of conflict takes place when

valuable resources are involved. The fear of running out of scarce materials and the protect self-interest leads to conflict. This theory harps on the selfish nature of man

### **Value Conflict theory:**

This theory submits that conflict occurs when people attempt to force a certain set of value over others as superior. This is caused by perceived incompatible belief systems. Because values and morals tend to be quite stable, people are often unwilling to negotiate or compromise with respect to these topics. Indeed, if the basic substantive issues of the conflict are deeply embedded in the participants' moral orders, these issues are likely to be quite intractable. Value conflicts are caused by perceived or actual incompatible belief systems. Values are beliefs that people use to give meaning to their lives. Values explain what is good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust.

Conflict erupts when people believe that certain cultural beliefs ideologies of religion are superior and everyone one must adhere to it. Examples of these kinds of conflict include religious conflicts and both World Wars.

### **2.1.7 Parties to conflict:**

There are two main categories of parties to any conflict; these are the primary and secondary parties. The primary parties are the parties involved in the conflict directly while the secondary parties or shadows like the mass media are not so active in the actual conflict. Shadows however complicate situations mostly because it is difficult to identify them and their roles in the conflict.

For there to be conflict there has to be an incompatibility and for it to be an armed conflict, the parties or actors involved have to be manifest and violent.

The basic components of a conflict as identified by Johan Galtung (1973) can be summarized to include four crucial components incompatibility, behaviour, attitudes and actors. In a conflict, even if the incompatibility itself seems solvable, the sustainability of any successful conflict management will depend on the attitudes and the behaviour of the actors. Actors in a conflict will only trust each other based on expectations and perceptions of behaviour and attitudes.

The media's role in conflicts is closely related to attitude, though it is often more difficult to pinpoint their exact effect. They either result or lie as a background to violent behaviour and violent behaviour alters attitudes and predispositions. The conflict component related to attitudes encapsulates the psychological aspects and those related to "soft power" resources such as the credibility of actors and the legitimacy of norms. This perhaps explains why in conflict situations, the media haves are seen to possess a greater advantage over the haves-not. However internal conflicts are usually more difficult to solve than conflicts between states, precisely because they involve whole societies and deep-rooted psychological effects and the role the media plays is more difficult to determine.

### **2.1.8 Stages of conflict:**

There are five stages of conflict as identified by Simon Fisher (2000)

- Pre-conflict stage: this is a period when goals between parties are incompatible, which could lead to open conflict. At this stage, the conflict is not well known because parties try to hide it to public view but communication is undermined between them.
- Confrontation stage: at this stage the conflict becomes open or manifest. This is characterized by occasional fighting, low levels of violence, and search for allies by parties, mobilization of resources, strained relations and polarization
- Crisis stage: this represent the peak of the conflict, in violent conflicts this is the stage of war and intense fighting, leading to killings, injuries, large scale population displacements, and the use of small arms
- Outcome stage: there is an assumption that all conflicts will pass through this stage, one way or the other. One side wins and the other loses or a ceasefire may be declared, one may surrender or intervening third party forces stronger than the warring forces intervene to impose a solution and stop the fighting. The critical issue at this stage is that the violence is decreased which allows room for discussion to commence or alternative means of settling the conflict.
- Post-conflict stage: at this stage violence has either ended or significantly reduced and the parties have gone past the crisis stage. This is the stage to address the underlying causes of the conflict, those incompatible goals that created the conflict in the first instance such as the needs and fears of the parties, if not tackled at this stage, the conflict cycle may be re-enacted and a return to the pre-conflict stage with consequent re-eruption of violence is possible. (Fisher 2000, p20)

From these conflict theories and parties to conflict, it can be seen that inadequate communication and lack of access to information plays a major role in conflicts. Although there are other factors that lead to conflict, lack of adequate information leads to conflict or results in violent conflict. Communication on an inter personal level or group level is vital to maintaining peace in the society however the mass media has channels that reach a mass audience, which is why the role of the mass media in alleviating conflict and promoting peace. As media initiatives in conflict and its management continue to increase so does the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the role of media in conflict situations.

At the post-conflict stage, the communication channels have to be utilized extensively and carefully so that a lasting solution to the conflict can be achieved. It has been said that almost all conflicts involve communication as both a cause and an effect. Misunderstandings, resulting from poor communication, can easily cause a conflict or make it worse. Once a conflict has started, communication problems often develop because people in conflict do not communicate with each other as frequently and openly, and as accurately as they do when relationships are not strained.

Thus communication whether interpersonal group or mass is central to most conflict situations. Also the communicator has an impact on the progress of the conflict, negatively or positively. Which is why in conflict resolution, importance is given to communication whether at the inter-personal, group or mass level. However when the communication channel is compromised or bias, the conflict would escalate

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

In line with the objective of the study, two theoretical frameworks were adopted namely; social responsibility theory and the agenda setting theory. These theories are useful for the study because they attempt to give an explanation to the dynamics relevant to the study

### **2.2.1 Agenda setting theory:**

This theory proposes that the media sets the stage as regards what is important or not. The theory stipulates that the media might not always tell the public what to think, but the media is often successful in telling its audience what to think about. The media achieves this by the amount of coverage given to an issue, and the way news stories are presented. The media helps the audience to decide what issues are most important.

The agenda-setting theory is important in this study, since the study seeks to look at how media reports on conflict situations impact on the conflict and whether the media can set the agenda for peace, prevent further conflicts from escalating or contribute to increasing the conflict. First developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their Chapel Hill study (1968), mass media sets the agenda for public opinion by highlighting certain topical issues. Studying the way political campaigns were covered in the media, Shaw and McCombs found that the main effect of news media was agenda-setting, that is telling people not what to think, but what to think about. Agenda setting is usually referred to as a function of mass media and not a theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

The theory explains the correlation between the rate at which media cover a story and the extent to which people think that this story is important. This correlation has been shown to occur repeatedly.

Agenda-setting is believed to occur because the press must be selective in reporting the news. News outlets act as gatekeepers of information and make choices about what to report and what not. What the public know and care about at any given time is mostly a by-product of media-gate keeping.

The agenda-setting function is a three part-process:

1. Media Agenda - issues discussed in the media
2. Public Agenda - issues discussed and personally relevant to the public as a result of media influence.
3. Policy Agenda - issues that policy makers consider important as a result of public/media response

One of the debates between researchers is the questions of causality: does the media agenda cause the public agenda, or vice-versa? Some researchers established causality with an experimental study where they identified that priming, vividness of presentation and position were all determinants of the importance given to a news story. However, the question of whether there is influence by the public agenda upon the media agenda is open to question. The main concept associated with the agenda setting theory is gate keeping. Gate keeping controls over the



selection of content discussed in the media. Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media.

Two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it and that the media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda-setting potential. Agenda-setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the media in conflict situations, as it is considered that the agenda setting power of the media resides more than the amount of time or space devoted to a story or its placements in broadcasts or on newspaper pages, also important is the fact that there is a great consistency between media sources across all media and the type of coverage an issue or event, the consistency or significance signals to people the importance of that issue.

### **2.2.2 Critique of the Agenda Setting Theory:**

The theory has limitations, such as media audiences or users may not be as ideal as the theory proclaims. Audiences are likely not to be well-informed, deeply engaged in public affairs, thoughtful and skeptical. Instead, there is the likelihood of paying only intermittent and casual attention to public issues or affairs and remain ignorant of the details. The effect of the media is weakened on the part of people who have made up their minds on issues and people who do not depend solely on the media for information.

Another limitation is the neglect of certain issues by the media. The media under this theory is challenged with concentrating more on few issues, subjects and stories for the public to consume.

Also this theory is critiqued on the basis that the media cannot change the mind-set of individuals or the media audience since people who are principled and have their minds made up on issues cannot be persuaded or convinced to change them. This could be due to past experiences or personal perceptions about somebody or an issue that has caused this mind-set so in this case, any means employed by the media to change this would prove futile.

Another critique is that in many cases, the media through its gate keeping and editing function takes out what they think should not be brought to the public and rather choose what the public should know. This could be for someone's parochial interest or for the public's own interest.

Finally The Agenda Setting theory uses a scientific approach, not humanistic, and therefore in practical terms it is not able to stand the test of scrutiny since human beings are known to be very unpredictable. The theory assumes that if people are exposed to the same media content they will react in the same way. This is not true as people are not predictable and might not react to information the same way. Nonetheless, it is a very useful theory in the effect tradition of the mass media.

### **2.2.3 Social Responsibility Theory:**

The social responsibility theory is relevant to this study as the theory emphasized the need for an independent press that scrutinizes other social institutions and provides objective, accurate news

report and expects that the media would be pluralist and encourage diversity within the society. Media operators are expected to be responsible and accountable to the society as a whole and not to a section of the society.

This theory came about as a direct criticism to the Libertarian theory of the press by Wilbur Schramm, Siebert and Theodore Paterson. The social Responsibility theory was initiated in the United States by the Commission of The Freedom of Press, 1949

This theory is imperative to the study because it gives an explanation of how the mass media ought to function; it is a normative press theory. The theory stipulates that media has certain obligations to the society it must show truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance and also it should be free but self-regulated (codes of conduct, and ethics). The media should also be pluralistic taking into consideration the diversity of society, various points of view, forum for idea; it requires that the journalist is accountable to his audience readers.

Interestingly, most of the arguments for and against peace reporting site the social responsibility theory as basis, while proponents of peace reporting are of the opinion that it is the duty of the journalist to be socially responsible to the people, by trying to report conflict-sensitive issues and giving reports in such a manner that will bring about peace. However the opponents of peace journalism are of the opinion that peace reporting goes against the social responsibility theory because it compromises the objectivity of the journalist; objectivity is one of the core recommendations of this theory.

#### **2.2.4 Critique of the Social Responsibility Theory:**

This theory is considered by its proponents to have been created to cover up the bias of the media rather than report all, it is seen by critics as a name that unscrupulous media overseers invented as a cover for their alien ideas.

This theory is also criticized for being too difficult to adhere to as newer technology emerge; the media now attempts to juggle professionalism and social responsibility all the while staying ethical. Television and new media have a harder time adjusting and finding this balance. Media professionals now have had to change in order to stay current and to vibe with the audience, but still performing their duties and staying true to traditional journalistic values.

Journalists have to constantly fight battles on ethical grounds, “the application of media ethics almost always involves finding the most morally defensible answer to a problem for which there is no single correct or even best answer....the grieving father, the reporter’s job is to get the story; but the man has a right to his privacy... the reporter has to decide whether to get the interview or leave the grief-stricken man in peace. The decision is guided by the reporters’ ethics” (Baran 2002, p448) when reporting conflict situation, the reporter has to decide whether to be an ethical journalist, or an ethical human being.

These two theories are relevant to this study because they deal with critical issues which have been raised in the research. The social responsibility theory is concerned with the ethics of the media, but peace reporting is taking ethics a step further by looking at implications of media ethics in conflict situations. The agenda setting theory looks at how media influence its

audiences. If the media has an effect on what people think, then the media should use this effect in conflict situations to bring about peace. But again this is interwoven with the question of ethics, is it ethical to do so by the media in a bid to resolve conflict?

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Methods:**

The research method applied is the qualitative approach as it allows for in-depth analysis. This research method allows for complex situation to be organised and observed thoroughly. Qualitative method of research uses subjective information and is not jeopardised by rigidly defined variables. Qualitative research expands the range of knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the researchers themselves. It often helps us see why something is the way it is, rather than just presenting a phenomenon. This type of research, account for the complexity of group behaviours; it reveal interrelationships among multifaceted dimensions of group interactions and provides context for observed behaviours.

Qualitative research is used to explore and understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interactions. Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population under study. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. It produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study. Because of close researcher involvement, the researcher gains an insider's view of the field. This allows the researcher to find issues that are often missed (such as subtleties and complexities) by the scientific, more positivistic enquiries. Qualitative descriptions can play the important role of suggesting possible relationships, causes, effects and

dynamic processes. Qualitative research uses a more descriptive, narrative style. This research method might be of particular benefit to the researcher as qualitative reports can be used in order to examine forms of knowledge that might otherwise be unavailable, thereby gaining new insight.

### **3.2 Description of study:**

The newspapers under study are the Daily Trust newspaper, the Daily Sun newspaper and the Nation newspapers. These newspapers are all national daily newspapers are post-military era newspapers. Daily Trust became a daily newspaper in 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001, the Daily Sun on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2003, while the Nation 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006. The latest survey conducted by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) and the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) shows the three newspapers to be the fastest growing newspapers in terms of circulation in different regions of the country. With 11,672 (6.2 per cent) Daily Trust has the highest circulation figure in Northern Nigeria, while the Daily Sun with selling 25,632 copies (13.5 per cent) daily is the fastest growing tabloid in South-South and South-Eastern Nigeria, beating the much older Vanguard which was previously the highest circulating newspaper in the two regions. The Nation on the other hand is seen to be the fastest growing Newspaper in Western Nigeria almost catching up with the Punch which had 34,264. The Nation is the second highest selling newspaper in the country with 30,578 copies representing 16% of daily sales, with a relatively lower cover price. The Nation is printed in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt.

### **3.3 Data Gathering Process:**

Data was collected using both primary and secondary sources;

### **3.4 Primary Data source:**

The primary data source will be content analysis, critical discourse analysis conducted on the three selected newspaper content as well as interviews with editors from the three newspapers.

### **3.5 Research Methods**

The research methods used is the Documentary Observation Method and the Interview Method. Under the Documentary Observation Method, Qualitative Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis were used for the research.

#### **3.5.1 Content Analysis:**

Content analysis is a set of procedures for transforming unstructured information into a format that allows analysis. It is a set of procedures for collecting and organizing information in a standardized format that allows analysts to make inferences about the characteristics and meaning of written and other recorded material. Simple formats can be developed for summarizing information or counting the frequency of statements. More complex formats can be created for analysing trends or detecting subtle differences in the intensity of statements. Content analysis can be used to study any recorded material as long as the information is available to be reanalysed for reliability checks.



This particular data collection method was chosen, because it is the best method of data collection when written or recorded events are investigated. Content analysis, reveals differences in communication content, detect the existence of propaganda or irregularities, it also helps to identify the intentions and focus or communication trends of an individual, group or institution, it aids to describe attitudinal and behavioural responses to communications, determine psychological or emotional state of persons or groups. Content analysis also provides valuable historical and cultural insights over time through analysis of texts. The unit of analysis is the whole story in the form of news, editorial, or commentary and even within a story, you can further break down your analysis to the sentences, phrases or words

### **3.5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):**

Stemming from Habermas's (1973) critical theory, CDA aims to help the analyst understand social problems that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships, all perpetuated by the use of written texts in daily and professional lives. The objective of CDA is to uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of our written text or oral speech in order to resist and overcome various forms of power over or to gain an appreciation that we are exercising power over. Discourse Analysis can be applied to any text, that is, to any problem or situation. Since Discourse Analysis is basically an interpretative and deconstructing reading, there are no specific guidelines to follow. CDA is a field of study which has paved the ways for the researcher to find out the hidden ideologies behind seemingly simple and plain words. Language is no longer seen as merely reflecting out reality, but as central to creating reality. Newspapers play a vital role in depicting social issues according to their own ideology.

“Newspapers are particularly known to lead in the initiation of discourse on the national issues by picking on statements or reactions of prominent national figures. Newspapers are a source of providing information to all. Discourse and language can be used to make unbalanced power relations and portrayals of social groups appear to be common sense, normal, and natural when in fact the reality is prejudice, injustice, and inequities” (Van 2001:359)

Thomas Huckin identified different techniques used to facilitate analysis in this area

- 1) Just as text can be framed, so can a sentence, called topicalization. In choosing what to put in the topic position, the writer creates a perspective or slant that influences the reader’s perception. For example, in a media piece about peace protestors, if 11 sentences refer to protestors and three refer to the officials, the text is clearly about the protestors’ actions but not about the issue that prompted the rally.
- 2) Sentences can also convey information about power relations! Who is depicted as in power and over whom? Who is depicted as powerless and passive? Who is exerting power and why? This property of the text is referred to as *agency* and can remain at the subconscious level unless made visible by the analyst or critical reader.
- 3) Again, as with the text in general, omission of information about agents of power can occur at the sentence level and is most often achieved by nominalization (converting a verb into a noun) and the use of passive verbs. A headline like “Massacre of 25 villagers reported” does not say who did the killing, thanks to the nominalization of massacre. A headline like “25 villagers massacred” is an example of a passive verb

conveying harshness. Both headlines are about the victims and not about who did the killing--a major omission of fact, done on purpose.

- 4) Many readers are reluctant to question statements that the author appears to be taking for granted; presupposition can also occur at the sentence level in the form of persuasive rhetoric that can be used to convey the impression that what an agent of power says carries more weight. Still with the peace/conflict example, a demonstrator sign that reads "give peace a chance" presupposes that the government is presently not doing so. A government spokesperson who says, "Some of the demonstrators were a bit more aggressive" conveys the impression that all demonstrators are aggressive to some degree.
  
- 5) Insinuations are another tool; these are slyly suggestive words that carry double meanings. When the facts, or the way the facts are presented, are challenged, the originator of the discourse can readily deny any culpability. This ability to deny any intention to mislead gives the originator of the discourse a lot of power. For example, imagine that a reporter writes that the turnout for the rally (2000 people) failed to match a former, larger turnout a few years earlier (5000). This wording conveys the message that the current rally failed somehow because the numbers are lower. This insinuation, suspicion, and unsuccessful undertone takes power away from those at the rally, when in fact the rally met all expectations of those who organized it, a success that could undermine the position of those they are demonstrating against.

- 6) Even one word can convey strong meaning—connotations! These connotations are not always, or seldom, in the dictionary, but often assigned on the basis of the cultural knowledge of the participants. Connotations associated with one word, or through metaphors and figures of speech, can turn the uncritical viewer's mind. As an example, the use of the word *protestor* instead of a *demonstrator* conveys a message. A *protestor* is against something while a *demonstrator* is trying to make something evident. The media conveys a negative image of those advocating for peace when it paints them as *protesting* against the government and corporate establishment.
- 7) The tone of the text is set with the use of specific words to convey the degree of certainty and authority (called modality). The tone of doubt or surety is introduced by using words such as *may*, *might*, *could*, *will*, *can*, *must*, *it seems to me*, *without a doubt*, *it's possible that*, *maybe*, or *probably*. Moods of heavy-handed authority (*don't challenge me*) or deference can be created simply by choice of verb or modal phrases, which assert or deny the possibility, impossibility, contingency, or necessity of something.
- 8) Finally, as with the full body of the text, single words can convey *register*--do the words spoken ring true? Writers can deceive readers by affecting a phony register, one that induces mistrust and scepticism. Register can be affected by choice of person—first person (*I*, *me*, *my*, *we*, *our*), second (*you* and *your*), and third (*he*, *she*, *they*, *their*, *his*, *hers*, *him*, *her*). For example, quoting directly from university spokesperson using first person, while using third person to refer to a student

challenging university policy, can convey the message that the university is more objective than the student, hence more legitimate

### **3.4.3 Interviews:**

Interviews was conducted with editors from The Nation Newspaper, Daily Trust Newspaper and The Daily Sun Newspaper. The result from these interviews will be compared with result from the Content Analysis.

### **3.5 Secondary data source:**

Studies conducted by others on similar subjects will be used; also books, journals, articles that cover this period will be perused. The period under study is June 2008 to July 2012 because there is a concentration of conflicts in Northern Nigeria within this period

### **3.6 Population and Sampling:**

Purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the population to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Some types of research design necessitate researchers taking a decision about the individual participants who would be most likely to contribute appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth. In this case the three newspapers of Daily Trust, The Nation, and the Daily Sun newspapers are selected by the researcher in a bid to include the most widely read newspapers in the South East, South West and Northern of Nigeria.

Cluster sampling method will be used in this study: this is a multi-stage process because it involves choosing samples from other samples through a methodological arrangement. The population is arranged into units and subunits. This method is appropriate for surveys which may cover a wide geographical area.

Mass media products often include cluster of content for example each newspaper edition is a cluster of many articles, usually divided into topic cluster of news, sports, editorials, adverts etc. cluster sampling can introduce additional sampling error compared to simple random sampling because of intra-class correlation.

The interval of conflict and its reporting that appear in the media only when there is a break-out of conflict is the justification of using cluster sampling as only reports on incidents of conflicts or relating to conflicts will be analysed. This sampling technique aims at documenting phenomenon with spiralling characteristics like violent outbreaks and media reports on them. Both have chain-reaction attributes which are hardly predictable which is why this sampling technique was chosen

### **3.7 Data Analysis:**

For the analysis of the data gathered a combination of qualitative and quantitative method of analysis was used. The information collected from the scrutiny was summarized by means of descriptive statistics. The description of data obtained would be illustrated with the aid of tables, charts, graphs and percentages for presentation of findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction:**

Nigeria since independence has witnessed a lot of conflicts. From the conflicts that led to the civil war, military coups, ethnic and religious clashes, election conflicts, land disputes and indigene- settler clashes, which have all been violent and resulted in deaths and destruction of property.

For the purpose of this research, the conflicts to be analyzed are conflicts that happened in Northern Nigeria. However even in northern Nigeria, the conflicts are so many and take different forms. To effectively study these conflicts, some particular types of conflicts were selected.

The conflicts selected were those that involved two parties or conflicts that resulted in retaliatory attacks or continued attacks which occurred from November 2008 to June 2012. These conflicts were so selected in order to examine how the three newspapers under study reported on these conflicts so as to understand the three newspapers' pattern in reporting conflict. This will enable us determine the differences in reportage, similarities as well as consequences of the nature and manner of reporting.

#### **4.1.1 Conflicts Studied:**

- 2008 local government elections in Jos North, which exploded into ethno-religious violence (November 2008)
- 2009 conflict between a religious sect Boko Haram and security agencies in the North

East of Nigeria (July 2009)

- 2011 general elections in Nigeria which resulted to conflict all over northern Nigeria (April 2011)
- Bomb blast of a church in Jos by the Islamist group Boko Haram which generated reprisal attacks (June 2012)
- Bomb blast of three churches in Zaria and Kaduna which generated reprisal attacks and later turned into ethno-religious conflict in Kaduna state (June 2012)
- Conflicts in Borno, Yobe, Zamfara and Bauchi which happened within this period (June 2012)

#### **Conflicts in plateau state:**

Plateau State has contended with a heterogeneous population due to its strategic location and role in mining activities. With the collapse of tin mining in Plateau, most artisans and traders remained in Plateau, and made it their permanent home. A major threshold for ethnic and religious activities began in 1980 with the Maitatsine uprising in Kano.

The creation of Jos North local government area in 1991 by the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida, former Nigeria's president, seems to have sown a seed of discord between the Hausa-Fulani and the indigenous population which has haunted Plateau till date. The introduction of Sharia law by twelve northern states and the subsequent violence that took place left Plateau extremely volatile.

With the reintroduction of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, there has been increased ethno



religious crisis in Nigeria particularly in Plateau State. This state experienced a crisis in 2001, and ever since then it has been a hot spot for religious, ethnic and political conflicts, however this study is focusing on the crisis that took place in Plateau state from November 2008. On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2008, plateau state held Local government elections, the result of the elections were announced on the 30<sup>th</sup> November. The result sparked off violence in Jos North Local government which resulted in the loss of several lives. The incident led the warring parties to build-up grudges leading to more violence and several clashes in a seemingly never-ending circle of attacks and retribution attacks. An attack by the Islamist group Boko Haram on a church, the Evangelical Church Winning All chapel in Plateau capital Jos on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 led to ethnic/religious fight in the state.

### **Boko Haram conflicts:**

Since 2009 Boko Haram has instigated widespread insecurity across Nigeria and has increased tensions among ethno-religious groups in the country. The sect has been responsible for a series of deadly attacks on strategic governmental agencies, religious centers, and innocent individuals. It has also attacked key Muslim clerics, politicians, and Christians. In late July 2009, Boko Haram waged destructive attacks on the ethnically mixed state of Bauchi. Several hundred Boko Haram militants attacked the police station in which many of their members were detained.

On 30 July 2009, following Mohammed Yusuf's declaration that democracy and Western education in Nigeria must change, military forces stormed the home of Boko Haram leader in Maiduguri and captured the sect leader Mohammed Yusuf. Yusuf was later found dead while still in police custody. The failure to prosecute those security personnel who were responsible for

the extra-judicial killing of the Boko Haram leader represents one of the primary grievances of the members of the sect, and can be seen as the major trigger of the Boko Haram terrorist campaign against Nigerian security forces and authorities.

Boko Haram resurfaced in September 2010 with a daring attack on a prison in Bauchi releasing about 700 prisoners, of whom more than 100 were members. Since then, there have been more attacks in the states in North-Eastern Nigeria gradually moving to North-Central state of Kogi and Abuja and North Western states like Kano, Sokoto and Kaduna where an attack by the sect on Christ Catholic Church (Sabo) Kaduna, ECWA (Wusasa, Zaria), and Shalom Church, Trikania Kaduna on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2012, instigated Muslim-Christian violence in Kaduna and Zaria. The attacks by Boko Haram sect are ongoing.

### **Post-election crisis in 2011:**

Three days of rioting in twelve Northern states in Nigeria after the 2011 election, led to the death of an estimated 800 people and the displacement of an estimated sixty five thousand others. The protests degenerated into violent riots or sectarian killings in the northern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara.

Though the April 2011 elections was heralded as fair it was also the most bloody as protests by the opposition parties quickly degenerated into religious killings, burning of worship places and people's homes and the destruction of property, these clashes although happened as a result of the election, they later took on religious and ethnic dimensions.

#### **4.1.2 Newspaper reports on the conflict:**

Comparing the news reports paper by paper will reveal the bias or balance in the reports, the deliberate act of incitement of violence through the use of language, placement, structure, headlines, pictures and all the other gimmicks employed by reporters. It may also reveal the accuracy and social responsibility of the newspaper. Moreover examining the headlines side by side will give an insight into how much importance the paper gives a particular report.

The placement of a story gives an insight into the type of bias if any used by the newspaper. Comparing the types of headlines, space and language used, gives an insight on any attempt at peace reporting, reconciliation or conflict reporting as the case may be.

**Table 2: Newspaper headlines of Jos Local Government Election Conflict December 2008:**

|                               | <i>The Nation</i>  | <i>The Daily Sun</i>  | <i>Daily Trust</i>  |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1/12/2008                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Security Agents on Alert in Kaduna, Bauchi, Nasarawa</li> <li>-Govt Puts Death Toll at 200: More Troops Arrive</li> <li>-Jos: Sultan Reacts</li> </ul> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Jos mayhem: IG Deploys More Troops</i></li> <li><i>-President Yaradu'a Orders Deployment of Soldiers to Quell the Mayhem</i></li> <li><i>-426 Victims Get Mass Burial</i></li> <li><i>-10 More People Killed</i></li> <li><i>-ACF Wants Culprits Unveiled</i></li> <li><i>-CAN Condemns Crisis: Sues for Calm"</i></li> <li><i>-Jos crisis: Arch Bishop Onaiyekan condemns attack calls for calm</i></li> <li><i>-Jos Mayhem: We all Saw it Coming</i></li> </ul> |
| 2/12/2008                     |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-my 2 brothers were hacked to death-woman</i></li> <li><i>-How I lost my daughter, belonging</i></li> <li><i>-Gov blames external forces</i></li> <li><i>-PPA chieftain condemns riot</i></li> <li><i>-ANPP calls for investigations of electoral bodies</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Don't swear in Jos LG boss</i></li> <li><i>-How crisis began by two sides</i></li> <li><i>-1000 cars burnt on Zaria road</i></li> <li><i>-We are still compiling figures says CAN</i></li> </ul>   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2008 |  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-The media and genocide</i></li> <li><i>-Ignoble, Condemnable Unspeakable"</i></li> </ul>   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2008 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Jos mayhem: Xtians, Muslim leaders demand judicial probe</i></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-NLC demands Gov Jang's resignation"</i></li> <li><i>-40 churches burnt in Jos crisis says PFN</i></li> </ul>   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2008 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Jos mayhem: Nigeria is sitting on a time bomb-Asari Dokubo</i></li> <li><i>-Jos crisis: Tension still high as relatives receive victims corpses</i></li> </ul>   |   |

All the newspapers under study, reported this conflict from different angles. No two reports were the same, or from the same angle; therefore a comparative analysis in this case would not be possible. However the choice of reports and prominence given to these reports are also subject to analysis. **Daily Trust** and **Daily Sun** reported consistently on the crises, even though the **Daily Sun** report started on the second day of the crisis. **The Nation** dropped the story after the first day. When compared with the other newspapers under study, the **Nation** clearly did not report much on this conflict. All of the reports carried by The **Nation** Newspaper were culled from news agencies. There is also an attempt to defend the Governments position on the death toll, even though the report from the paper indicates that the papers had no correspondents reporting on the conflict. As a national daily, depending on secondary sources implies echoing the idiosyncrasies of those sources. The manner of reporting depends very much on the manner of hearing and by using secondary sources means the process of cross checking facts and information has been jettisoned on the altar of the secondary.

### **The Nation Newspaper:**

1<sup>st</sup> December 2008: “*Security Agents on Alert In Kaduna, Bauchi, Nasarawa*” this headline appeared in very bold headlines and also “*Govt Puts Death Toll At 200: More Troops Arrive*”. Then “*Jos: Sultan Reacts*” in small headlines. In the this last report, there is a dispute from foreign media Agence France Presse (AFP) that puts the death toll at 350 also the report says that security has been beefed up in neighboring states to stop the crisis from escalating. In this report there is an indication that the death figures were exaggerated, the report also indicates that the conflict might spill into other states. The condemnation of the conflict by the Sultan was written

at the end of the paragraph.

### **The Daily Sun Newspaper:**

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008: *“My 2 Brothers Were Hacked To Death-Woman”*. This report describes how two brothers were killed on the same day by different attacks, leaving two wives and children who were then taken for shelter at the NDLEA camp. The report describes in gory detail how the attacks took place “Dimeji whose wife was nursing a two month old baby was clubbed severally on his head and shoulders as he pleaded for his life to be spared. Soon they set him ablaze “side-by-side with this story, is another one *“How I Lost My Daughter, Belongings-Civil servant”*. This report describes how a Muhammed Abdullahi managed to escape with his family as his house was set ablaze, only for one of the women he assisted to sit on and suffocate his daughter to death. The newspaper put these two human-interest stories side by side giving an indication to the readers that both sides suffer casualties from the conflict.

*“Gov Blames External Forces”* this report basically is on the Governor of plateau State commending NEMA for timely intervention while receiving the Director General of the National Emergency Management Agency, Air Vice-Marshal, Mohammed Audu-Bida. The whole page was dedicated to condemnation of the Jos conflict, condemnations and calls for a full probe of the conflict, from CAN, JNLC, ANPP, and some civil rights group *“Gov Blames External Forces”*

*“PPA Chieftain Condemns Riot”*. In this report, Chief Ben Onyechere condemns killing of corps members, while he condoles families who lost loved ones. *“ANPP Calls For Investigation, Blames Electoral Body”* *“Jos Mayhem: Xtians, Muslim Leaders Demand Judicial Probe”*. This

headline presents the call by the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) a body made up of Christian and Muslim leaders for a probe into the violence in Jos and that the perpetrators be brought to book

*“Jos mayhem: Nigeria is sitting on a time bomb-Asari Dokubo”* here Dokubo called for a sovereign National conference saying that is the only way for Nigerians to understand each other.

*“Jos crisis: Tension still high as relatives receive victims corpses”* In this report, the atmosphere is described as tense as when corpses of those died in Jos were taken to their various addresses. The paper alludes to the feeling of revenge among relatives. It creates the impression that trouble is not yet over and that more trouble is likely by illustrating that young men patrol their neighborhoods to protect them from attacks. When the report goes further to indicate that the crisis has affected business as queues are seen at banks and GSM network is poor and that the price of foodstuff also is said to have skyrocketed, it gives the impression of breakdown of society and more problems to come.

**Daily Trust Newspaper:**

1<sup>st</sup> December 2008

*“Jos mayhem (in bold headlines, followed by) IG deploys more troops”* (in smaller headlines) also *“President Yaradu’a orders for deployment of soldiers to quell the mayhem”* *“426 Victims get mass burial”* (also on the front page) in this report, the Muslim community said they received 462 corpses from the military which were given mass burial according to Islamic rites. Giving

this figure on the casualty of one fraction of the conflict on the front page of the newspaper could be inflammatory and lead to possible retaliation. This might contribute in stretching the conflict, because it indicates that one side is the victim while the other is the villain.

Inside the paper, “10 more people killed” in this report, there are reports that fighting is still going on in Plateau although the military says calm has been restored; the Muslim communities are still burying their dead while the Christian communities are counting their casualty. The report also indicates that some youths were arrested with arms who upon being questioned claimed that they were sent by politicians. Also in the reports doctors say they have treated a lot of gunshot and machete injuries. Though the reports indicates that all sides have suffered from the conflict, there is a subtle insinuation that the Muslim community might have suffered more, like from the reference that while the Muslim community buried a large number of dead, the Christian community was counting casualty.

“*ACF wants culprits unveiled*” in this report the ACF wants culprits behind the conflict unveiled and punished so that that reconciliation steps can be taken while investigations to unveil the circumstances that led to it can be handled.

“*CAN condemns crisis: Sues for calm*” CAN calls on all involved and those in neighboring states to peace saying “CAN is sick and tired of these kind of repetitive crisis that keep happening in Jos, Bauchi, Kano, Zangon Kataf, Kaduna and a host of other places in Nigeria with attendant losses of lives and properties. We are calling on all the people of the state for calm and also on the state government to promptly put a stop to the killings and burnings and find a way of addressing future issues before they degenerate into killings.



*“Jos crisis: Arch Bishop Onaiyekan condemns attack, calls for calm”* Here he was reported to have condemned the attack and said he is in contact with the Sultan and president Yaradu’a to jointly promote peace “more serious is the spiritual damage caused to our effort at mutual good relationships across lines of ethnic, political and religious differences there is a risk that the recent event might compromise or at least slacken these laudable efforts. This risk must be avoided by all means”. This report appeals to reason and indicates a synergy among religious leaders.

*“Jos mayhem: we all saw it coming”* an opinion column by Abubakar Shehu. This column is highly aggravating where he used a lot of inflammatory language. The column implies that the conflict is unavoidable. The writer focuses on what he calls hatred between the two factions while ignoring the politics which was what led to the conflict.

2<sup>nd</sup> December

*“Don’t swear in Jos LG boss”*. In this report, attempts to hurriedly swear in or inaugurate the LG chairman whose election sparked off an orgy of violence in which over 500 people died in Jos was recently halted by President Yaradu’a according to a government source in Abuja.

*“How crisis began by both sides”* “in this report, there are different versions as to the cause of the violence. The report has interviews with the Governor of the state, who attributed the violence to people who did not want to accept a loss at the election. According to him, there was a pre-planned move to disrupt the election. The commissioner of works said the violence was not as a result of the election, he said the election was conducted peacefully but the violence started before the completion of the counting of the votes. An ANPP member said after the votes were

counted the electoral officer saw that the ANPP won by a large margin at the ward Centre at Gada Biyu, they however refused to announce the result, saying they were awaiting other result. This led to the angry youths to protest and then the police started firing at them which led to them to start killing the police and the subsequent fight that took over Jos. The chairman of CNPP on his part said “when the PDP saw that the opposition ANPP gave them a wide gap, they tried to manipulate the election result.” A church elder said his church was set ablaze by Muslim rioters who also killed four of the church pastors; in retaliation his church members began attacking mosques and Muslims. The reports attempts to get to the root of the crisis.

“1000 cars burnt on Zaria road”. In this report, cars worth over a billion naira were burnt by rioters along Zaria road. The owners of Pama motors, Haske motors, Kega motors, Blue star motors and Sayak motors said they requested for security from the state but were denied.

“We are still compiling figures says CAN” the CAN of plateau state refused to give the numbers of their dead, saying that they do not have the records. According to the report, giving the number of the dead could be inflammatory also Christians bury their dead immediately and will need more time to get the figures.

3<sup>rd</sup> December “the media and genocide” back page column. Here, the columnist Mohammed Haruna condemns the plateau Governors deep hatred for the settler community in Jos. He quoted the State governor Jonah Jang on several occasions backing up his allegations. He called the conflict genocide against the Hausa/Fulani community living in Plateau and condemned the other media who called it something else.

The editorial at the back page “*Ignoble, condemnable unspeakable*” was a condemnation at how

a political election could lead to a religious and ethnic crisis where people killed each other burnt down homes, businesses and places of worship. The editorial blamed the Governor of the state.

4<sup>th</sup> December “*NIRECT demands judicial inquiry*” The Nigerian inter religious council NIRECT urged the federal government to immediately set up a judicial commission of inquiry to probe last weekend’s carnage in Jos. They urged followers of all religions either Christians or Muslims to exercise great restraint, be vigilant and be conscious of possible misinformation.

“*NLC demands Gov Jangs resignation*” in this report, the NLC calls for Jang’s resignation saying he is no longer fit to occupy the office. “it is a pointer that even if he has not promoted the crisis, he certainly did not discourage it either, indeed from the pronouncements and comments of the key plateau state actors, Governor Jang has not given the assurance that this is the last of the madness in the ancient tourist city. Such a governor needs not stay a day longer in office for presiding over a mass blood bath. As a matter of fact Jang’s display of insensitivity at the level of the polity is not different from the same highhandedness he exhibited on labour issues in the state”

“*40 churches burnt in Jos crisis says PFN*” here the state chairman of the Pentecostal Federation of Nigeria says some of the hoodlums were in military uniform and had weapons; he also alleged discrimination against Christians saying relief materials were distributed more to Muslims, he also said that security personnel were located more in the Muslim areas than the Christian areas where they equally suffered loss. According to him the media were biased in their reports on Jos conflicts when they say Muslims were being slaughtered.

**Table 3** *Newspaper headlines on Boko Haram conflict in 2009:*

| <i>Date</i>                        | <i>The Nation Newspaper</i> | <i>The Daily Sun Newspaper</i> | <i>Daily Trust Newspaper</i>   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>27<sup>th</sup><br/>/6/2009</i> |                             |                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Arrested members of the radical sect being paraded by police in Bauchi yesterday</i></li> <li><i>-Dozens killed in Bauchi: As police and sect clash....</i></li> <li><i>sect leader vows revenge</i></li> </ul>   |
| <i>28<sup>th</sup><br/>/6/2009</i> |                             |                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Sect violence spreads in North</i></li> <li><i>Death: Borno 100, Kano 3, Yobe 2</i></li> <li><i>-CAN blames security Agencies</i></li> <li><i>-Sectarian violence in the North</i></li> <li><i>-Why they attack police-AIG</i></li> <li><i>-Cleric disappears with 12 female students in Jos</i></li> <li><i>-More policemen deployed to troubled spots</i></li> <li><i>-Timeline of crisis</i></li> <li><i>-Islam approves western education-cleric</i></li> <li><i>-ACF condemns sect crisis</i></li> <li><i>-Police beef up security in Jos</i></li> <li><i>-Yaradu'a orders security agencies to rout Boko Haram</i></li> </ul> |
| <i>29<sup>th</sup><br/>/6/2009</i> |                             |                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>-Soldiers shell sects enclave</i></li> <li><i>-police nab five over planned attack in Sokoto</i></li> <li><i>-JNI disassociates Islam from sect</i></li> <li><i>-Boko Haram sect would have captured Bauchi-Yuguda</i></li> <li><i>-Boko Haram uprising un-Islamic-Reps</i></li> </ul>   |

|                                     |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>30<sup>th</sup> /6/<br/>2009</p> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sect leader at large: we have taken control-Army</li> <li>-33 Boko Haram followers killed</li> <li>-Kano demolishes Sect leaders mosque, house</li> <li>-Sultan warns against inciting comments</li> <li>-Boko Haram school closed in Jalingo</li> <li>-Maiduguri morgue brimming over</li> <li>-180 hostages freed in Maiduguri</li> <li>-Police detain Daily Trust reporter</li> </ul> |
| <p>31<sup>st</sup> /6/2009</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sect leader Yusuf dead</li> <li>-We knew about him say security agencies: Bauchi water wells poisoned</li> <li>-Nigeria long odds</li> <li>-Council boss three others arrested in Kano</li> <li>-MEND, NCIA, condemn killings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Boko Haram leader killed</li> <li>-Concern over killing of civilians</li> <li>-Northern Govs fly sectarian violence”</li> <li>-Police parade 18 members of sect</li> <li>-Ulama wants govts, JNI to meet Boko Haram</li> <li>-Don't sympathize with Boko Haram, Yaradu'a urges Muslim</li> <li>-Security agencies: Boko Haram exists for 14years</li> </ul>                              |

## **The Nation Newspaper:**

The Nation Newspaper only carried reports on the conflict on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July at the tail end of the conflict. “*Sect Leader Yusuf Dead*” in large headlines and “*We Knew About Him Say Security Agencies: Bauchi Water Wells Poisoned.*” This was accompanied by a picture of a burning mosque. This report is a very brief summary of the conflict in the North East. The report summarized the conflict, did not go into the reasons for the conflict, and it does not explain how it started. The report leaves a lot to the imagination of the reader and contained very little information.

“*Council Boss, Three Others Arrested in Kano*” (in bold headlines) in this report a Vice Chairman of Local Government and others were said to have been arrested over suspected links to Boko Haram

“*MEND NCIA Condemn Killings*” In this report MEND say the JTF should expend their energy in fighting Islamic terrorists instead of militants because they have more in common with each other. They said the North is more of a threat to the nation’s progress. In a small paragraph at the end of the story, the Nigerian Council for Islamic Affairs condemns the killing of innocents. These two were used to make up one news report, however by the placement a subtle bias can be detected while the MEND story was given prominence in the first paragraphs of the story, the reconciliatory appeal by the Nigerian Council for Islamic Affairs just had two paragraphs at the at the end of the story.

### **The Daily Sun Newspaper:**

The **Daily Sun** Newspaper did not carry any story on this conflict. For the **Daily Sun** not to have a single report on this conflict that took place for days and resulted in the loss of many lives is an indication that the newspaper did not consider the conflict as important enough to cover. **The Nation**'s only report on the conflict was at the end of the conflict. These national newspapers neglect in reporting on a conflict of this magnitude says a lot about the importance they attach to conflict in northern Nigeria.

### **Daily Trust Newspaper:**

July 27<sup>th</sup> 2009

The paper announces in its front page story with a very large picture of men with the captions: *“Arrested members of the radical sect being paraded by the police in Bauchi yesterday”* also in very bold headlines, there is *“Dozens killed in Bauchi”* and in smaller font as a rider, the report says, around 42 people including a soldier were said to be killed in clashes between police and sect members. According to the report, the incident was sparked off after a gang of around 60 men armed with guns attacked the Dutsen Tanshi police station but retreated after a gun battle with police according to a spokesman for the police. The police responded by raiding the group's neighborhoods and hideouts around Bauchi airstrip, arresting hundreds, however the report indicated that reporters were not allowed to talk to the victims of the clashes. The report clearly indicated that the only source of the report is the police. The police spokesman said the armed gang belonged to the Boko Haram group, a local group opposed to propagation of western form of education. A wounded gang member however told Reuters “the police have been arresting our

leaders that is why we decided to retaliate” members of the gang also said they were not allowed by the government to practice their religion.

“*As Police and Sect Clash.....Sect Leader Vows Revenge*” in this report, leader of the radical group opposed to western education, “Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf yesterday told *Daily Trust* over the phone, that his men were ready to die to ensure the institution of a strict Islamic society. He went on to indicate that his sect had a problem with the system of government and they had no quarrel with the general public only the authorities. He said that if he gave himself up the authorities will kill him. He also indicated that since about seventy of his members have been shot, it is the beginning of war.

July 28<sup>th</sup> 2009

“*Sect violence spreads in North*” in very bold headlines under it “*Deaths: Borno 100, Kano 3 Yobe 2*” along with a very large picture of several buildings set ablaze in Maiduguri all on the front page. This is a report that covers two pages. In the report “followers of the radical Boko Haram Islamic Sect yesterday expanded their attacks against agencies to three more states leaving more than a hundred people dead, including soldiers and policemen killed in neighboring Bauchi state. The sect members appeared to have regrouped, killing police officers in their homes and setting their houses ablaze and also attacks were carried out on police stations and Federal Road Safety Commission officers. Prisons were also attacked with prisoners set free. Eyewitnesses say the attackers arrived on several motorcycles. Some residents attributed the incidence to laxity of the police in the state for failing to be alert and beef up security in the state despite the tension in many parts of the North East.



*“CAN blames security agencies”* in this report Reverend Joseph John Hayab Kaduna state secretary general of CAN says the crisis occurred “because security agencies relish in labeling people who hold contrary views from the Government as security threats while people who are actual security threats are left” he said security agencies no longer have intelligence network, that they should not have allowed the sect to attack people before taking action. He added that the conflict is in no way religious but if not contained churches will be burnt and it will become religious.

*“Sectarian violence in the North”* this is about the fight between the sect and security officers in the North East, the report also gave an indication that the clash might spill to other parts of the country.

*“Why they attack police-AIG”*, the AIG Mr Anegbode claimed that since they were an anti-establishment group, they see police as the symbol of authority. He said that they are criminals masquerading in the name of religion and that the police had no option but to defend themselves by opening fire on the group.

*“Cleric disappears with 12 female students in Jos”* here an Islamic cleric suspected to be leader of Boko Haram was said to have fled with 12 female students in Jos and police learnt the kidnapped girls were in Maiduguri. However the cleric claimed that the girls followed him because they chose to participate in jihad, he promised to return them safely but refused to disclose their location. *More policemen deployed to troubled spots”* was also a headline on the paper. In this report, more policemen were deployed to Borno Bauchi Yobe and other states to help restore calm to these regions

### *Timeline of the crisis*

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009: 17 members of the sect shot and wounded by security men for alleged refusal to wear crash helmet

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2009: Sect leader threatens reprisal attack

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009: sect members arrested and paraded over suspicion of possession of 74 empty homemade bombshells and explosive devices

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July: bomb exploded in the residence of a follower Hassan Sani, blasting him to death

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2009: followers launched an attack in Bauchi leaving more than 50 persons most of them supporters of the group dead

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009: violence spreads to Borno and Yobe leaving more than a 100 dead. ***“Islam approves western education- cleric”*** in small headline. Here different Islamic clerics interviewed assert that Islam approves western education saying that the sect Boko Haram is anti-Islamic, said most of the followers have no basic knowledge of Islam and the problem of unemployment compounds the issue. However this report had a tiny headline and the story was buried deep inside the paper.

*“ACF condemns sect crisis”* in this report, the ACF calls for peace while condemning the sect.

*“police beef up security in Jos”* in this report, the Plateau state police has beefed up security following the clash in Bauchi a border state so that it does not spill into Plateau an already

sensitive state.

*“Yaradu’a orders security to rout Boko Haram”* in small headlines. Here President Yaradu’a orders security agencies to take all measures necessary to contain and repel the sad and shocking attacks by extremist on the police and public buildings in some states of the federation. The president deeply regrets the unnecessary loss of lives occasioned by wanton and unprovoked attacks on the police and other innocent Nigerians. Normally any report about the president, attracts large headlines however it is odd that a report like that was casted in small headlines.

July 29<sup>th</sup> *“Soldiers shell sects enclave”* in very large headlines. In this report following the presidents’ order to security agencies to take necessary action to contain the sect, soldiers moved into some areas in Maiduguri where they fired consistently on the sect members. NEMA had it there were about 4000 displaced persons in refugee camps who were being provided with relief materials. The report did a summary of past activities and the president was reported to have said that by the end of that day all members of the sect would have been apprehended he said his government has no tolerance of those who wish to impose their belief on others. The report also had it that most of the sect members were university dropouts. According to the report, they had come from all over the North to Maiduguri where they were getting ready to start a holy war. However that kind of headline is likely to provoke the sect members living elsewhere to further violence.

*“Police nab five over planned attack in Sokoto,”* here some people suspected to be members of Boko Haram were apprehended as they were allegedly planning to attack members of the public and security agencies *“JNI dissociates Islam from Sect”* in very small headlines. In this report,

the JNI called on Muslims to condemn the criminal activities of the sect and says they give maximum support to security agencies “we cannot and will not fold our arms and watch the carnage and madness that is going on in the country particularly in the name of Islam”

*“Boko Haram sect would have captured Bauchi –Yuguda”* in this report, the governor of the state commended security agencies saying the sect planned to take over the state if not for the prompt intervention of security

*“No church burnt in Bauchi-CAN chairman”* in this report the CAN chairman said contrary to speculations in some quarters, no church has been attacked or bombed in Bauchi. He added no single Christian has been killed in Bauchi during the sectarian crisis

30<sup>th</sup> July 2009; *“Sect leader at large,”* this is accompanied by two large pictures. One of a burning building tagged sect’s enclave in Maiduguri and another of tankers and military personnel. In this report, the military is said to have taken control of some parts of Maiduguri and will remain there until calm returns to the region. Over 100 followers of the sect were killed by shelling of Ibn Thaimays compound which is the home of their leader the enclave is divided into several parts; for making explosives, storage of arms, training field, clinic and food storage. The Daily Trust correspondent saw 50 bodies in the open hostel buildings while buildings were still on fire on fire. Soldiers also went from house to house searching for followers of Yusuf.

*“33 Boko Haram followers killed”* in this report, a combined collaboration of Army and Police launched a reprisal attacks in Yobe on members who attacked Potiskum on Monday and killed at least 5 people. In the counter attack, the armed personnel ambushed the extremists using sophisticated weapons. A lot of ammunition was recovered from them.

*“Kano demolishes sect leaders’ mosque”* in this report, the Kano state Government demolished the mosque and house of Malam Salisu Aljasawy, the Boko Haram sect leader in Wudil Kano state. According to the report, the sect leader had conscripted more than fifty youths in the town and had turned the mosque to a training academy.

*“Sultan warns against inciting comments”*. In this report while condemning the crisis in the North, the Sultan said any defamatory comment in any part of the country could be misinterpreted and lead to break down of law and order.

*“Maiduguri morgue brimming over”* a correspondent who visited the 500 capacity morgue reports that corpses of victims were dumped on the floor for lack of space after the conflict that took place in Maiduguri.

*“180 hostages freed in Maiduguri”* police freed more than 180 women and children from a house where they had been held as hostages by radical Islamic sect. They told BBC they were held for six days and lived on dates and water. They were held against their will.

*“police detain Daily Trust reporter”* a reporter with **Daily Trust** who interviewed the sect leader was arrested for suspected links with Boko Haram. Apart from the interview this reporter months earlier did a report on the sect and its potential for violence.

31<sup>st</sup> July 2009

A large picture of the corpses of the radical Boko Haram leader on the front page along with a bold headline, *“Boko Haram leader killed,”* the police claimed that Malam Yusuf was killed in a shoot-out but a BBC reporter in Maiduguri said Yusuf was arrested and paraded before

journalists with no apparent sign of injury. A Daily Trust reporter said the body had several bullets in it. Another report tagged “*Concern over killing of civilians*” on the front page but in smaller headlines. In this report about 300 people were said to have been killed in the fighting between security personnel and sect members.

*“Northern Governors flay sectarian violence” “police parade 18 members of the sect*

*“Ulama wants Governors, JNI to meet on Boko Haram,”* after an emergency meeting of Islamic clerics they called on governors, JNI, Ulama to meet and find lasting solutions to Boko Haram. All these were carried inside the paper.

*“Don’t sympathize with Boko Haram, Yaradu’a urges Muslims”* in large headlines. The president urged state governors to mobilize traditional rulers and religious leaders in their states to mount campaign against Boko Haram; he said they should use Jummat services to warn against the dangers of fraternizing with the sect

*“Security agencies: Boko Haram exists for 14 years”* the report from Director of defense information colonel Mohammed Yerima. He said the sect has been in existence since 1995 that they were being monitored.

**Daily Trust** covered more of this conflict than the other newspapers, and also used a lot of pictures. One of the reporters for **Daily Trust** was even held by security personnel first on suspicion of involvement with the sect and later for protection from the Islamic sect. **Daily Trust** also made an attempt to educate people on the sect, by using testimonies from renowned Muslim clerics to dissuade people from joining the sect or turning it into a religious fight. However all of

these types of reports and testimonies were buried inside the paper, none was placed on the front page where it matters most. And all of them had small headlines, which can easily be missed by the readers because when rated on the scale of newsworthiness these admonitions would not rate high, however it would have been useful towards the attainment of peace. Furthermore **Daily Trust** used a lot of gory pictures that could incite people to violence and most of these pictures were located on the front page. Some of the language used in the paper is not tactful, for example, in the report which was also carried by **The Nation** Newspaper as “Sect Leader Yusuf Dead,” **Daily Trust** reported it as “Boko Haram leader killed”. In situations of conflict this kind of headline could incite sect members to further violence because “killed” implies something violent, something to be revenged; however “Dead” as used by the **Nation** is neutral. Since death is natural, the news that their leader died might discourage them from fighting further as opposed to “killed” which infuriates.

**Table 4: Headlines on Pre-election violence in Bauchi 2011**

| Date                       | <i>The Daily Sun Newspaper</i> | <i>The Nation Newspaper</i>  | <i>Daily Trust Newspaper</i>   |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| 9 <sup>th</sup> April 2011 |                                | <p><i>-Untold story of election invasion of Bauchi communities: our voter cards were sized and burnt</i></p> | <p><i>-Tafawa Balewa crisis: Gunmen kill 10</i><br/> <i>-four killed in pre- election attack in Borno</i><br/> <i>-Election Bombings: Buhari blames Jonathan, police</i></p> |



### **The Nation Newspaper:**

The story of the attack in Bauchi prior to the election had this headline *“Untold story of election invasion of Bauchi communities”* the report indicates that a Christian community in Bauchi State was attacked by Muslims who burnt down their churches and killed them in an attempt to stop them from voting in the coming elections as a community member interviewed said “our voter cards were sized and burnt” this is a clear indication of how ethnicity is associated with religion as the village head was quoted as saying ”they were Fulanis because from a distance when they were coming they were shouting Allahu Akbar” Hausa/Fulani and Muslims were used interchangeably in the report

### **The Daily Sun:**

There was no report on this story in **The Daily Sun** Newspaper

### **Daily Trust:**

In the Daily Trust newspaper, the Bauchi attack was reported thus *“Tafawa Balewa crisis: gunmen kill 10”* the story was given as unknown gunmen attack a village, no mention was made of the churches that were burnt or the voter cards that were sized and burnt as reported by The Nation Newspaper. The story implied that security personnel in the area were in collaboration with the Hausa/Fulani in the killings, this report made no mention of religion. The attack in Borno state was reported as *“Four killed in pre-election attack in Borno”* the attackers were described as unknown gunmen and the reporter admitted that the report was sketchy because enough details had not been collected at the time of the report

The same story was reported differently by The Nation and Daily Trust, in the report carried by The Nation, Fulani was used interchangeably with Muslim. Showing how ethnicity is associated with religion this ethicizes the violence by placing the blame of the attack on a specific named group rather than members of the opposing political party for example. This could imply that the opposing party belongs to Hausa-Fulani and by extension the victims belong to non-Hausa-Fulani, non-Muslim and non- opposition party group

The report also indicated that the attackers' purpose was to prevent Christians from voting in the upcoming elections while Daily Trust simply described the incident as armed gunmen killed people in the community and went ahead to discuss the attack. The Nation made an effort to be thorough by interviewing members of the community who witnessed the attack "*Election bombings: Buhari blames Jonathan, police*" this report from **Daily Trust** indicates that the bomb blast was an attempt by PDP to discourage people from voting.

**Table 5 : Newspaper Headlines on the post-election conflict:**

| Dates                    | The Nation | The daily Sun   | Daily Trust   |
|--------------------------|------------|---|---|
| 16 <sup>th</sup><br>2011 | /4/        |   | -24 hours to presidential polls....2 killed and 7 injured in Maiduguri attack<br>-over 80died 90injured in bomb blast   |
| 17 <sup>th</sup><br>2011 | /4/        |   | “Violence, fraud mar presidential poll”(in screaming headlines on the front page)<br>-2 killed in Kaduna bomb blast: Lady in Jos<br>-Houses, cars destroyed in Jigawa, Adamawa, Bauchi states   |
| 18 <sup>th</sup><br>2011 | /4/        | -Presidential elections:<br>20killed in Bauchi, Gombe | “Violent protest in Yola, Mubi over Jonathan’s win”<br>“Curfew in Gombe after election riots”   |
| 19 <sup>th</sup><br>2011 | /4/        |   | “ Riots in North over results)<br>-Curfew as riots grinds Kaduna to a halt<br>-7 killed in Zaria<br>-Na’Abba, Tofa’s homes burnt in Kano riots<br>-Jonathan: Post election violence unnecessary<br>-Atiku condemns post-election violence<br>-PDP cautions supporters against retaliation<br>ACF condemns riots over presidential poll<br>-CPC asks supporters to shun violence prepare for |

|                             |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
|                             |   |  | <p><i>next polls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-3,500 displaced in Bauchi</li> <li>-CPC alleges shooting of supporters in Maiduguri</li> <li>-Curfew in Adamawa as violence spreads</li> <li>-Youths on rampage in Gombe</li> <li>-4 feared dead in Minna as Government imposes curfew</li> </ul>  |
| 20 <sup>th</sup><br>/4/2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Kaduna residents, Zaria Christians seek help: Food, water in short supply</li> <li>-Rioters lock in 50 NYSC members, set building on fire: Four others, two policemen killed in Bauchi</li> </ul> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Kaduna curfew still in place</li> <li>-over 15,000 people rendered homeless</li> <li>-Polls civil society says result collation still weak</li> <li>-UK urges politicians to pursue grievances' peacefully</li> <li>Jonathan: FG to compensate victims of post-election violence</li> <li>-FG condemns post-election</li> <li>-Violence, can't be Buhari, Shekarau, Ribadu's legacy: Bafarawa</li> <li>-Ex Niger-Delta militants plan response to electoral violence</li> <li>-Zaria riot: 189 suspects transferred to CID</li> <li>-Many killed in Zonkwa reprisals</li> </ul> |
| 21 <sup>st</sup><br>/4/2011 |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Fresh violence in Kano, 3 feared dead</li> <li>-Three feared dead, 20-hour curfew in Kaduna</li> <li>-59 killed in Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna</li> <li>-84 churches burnt CAN claims</li> </ul> |   |

|                              |  |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
|                              |  | <p><i>-Our ordeal by Corps members: Forced to thumbprint ballot papers, harassed, raped killed</i></p> <p><i>-As Southern Kaduna Natives want source of weapons probed</i></p> |  |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup><br>/4/2011  |  |  | <p><i>-Zaria residents panic over reprisals as COAS assures of safety</i></p> <p><i>-Riot: Soldier narrates how he killed Zaria residents</i></p> <p><i>-Uneasy calm in Kaduna as crisis rumours spreads</i></p>   |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> /4/<br>2011 |  |  | <p><i>-Explosion rocks ----Kaduna again bomber dead, 2 others nabbed</i></p> <p><i>-Why Northern masses rose against leaders ( all on the front page with a large pictures)</i></p> <p><i>-What we lost in the post-election crises (an in-depth analysis of the violence)</i></p> |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> /4/         | <p><i>-killings in the North planned says Soyinka</i></p> <p><i>-Jonathan rejects lobby to drop probe of riots</i></p> |  |  |

## **The Nation Newspaper:**

Prior to the 2011 elections, this newspaper had reports appealing for a peaceful elections, some of the headlines read “*Religious leaders appeal for peaceful elections*” and “*Police warns of violence during the election*” the reports in both stories warns of the possibility of some politicians using the people for violence during the elections and cautions against this.

However some stories carried by this paper prior to the elections were inflammatory in nature. Most of these inflammatory stories were about the incompetence of the INEC chairman: “*Nigeria struggles to salvage credible polls*” this story is a reminder of June 12 elections in 1993 as indicated in the story “Nigeria has in the past cancelled credible elections and endorsed bad ones” the story goes ahead to give hints that the postponement of the National Assembly elections gives the ruling party undue advantage while giving a lot of conspiracy theory on the matter.

Some headlines regarding the INEC chairman include “*Jega is confused*” which goes on to describe how he is going to butcher the elections as well as “*Jega apologia or performance*” and “*Let Jega be*”

A look at the stories carried by this newspaper on the 20<sup>th</sup> April indicates that most of the stories were of a reconciliatory nature, hoping to instill calm although stories posted by The Nation on the election crisis were a bit scanty and not very deep or thorough; the stories were mostly of a reconciliatory nature. Still subtle bias can be noticed in the reports for example on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 there was a story with this headline “*Kaduna residents, Zaria Christians seek help: Food supply, water in short supply*”

The headline indicates as the interview in the report did that Christians were under siege and prevented from getting food or water, the story does include in a paragraph towards the end of the report that the same is true in the Muslim community. However from the headline which is the most visible part of the paper, the bias is indicated. Though this story does show that both sects were suffering similar fates, the use of headline makes the report unbalanced and inflammatory. Also the placement of the story leads the reader to assume that a section is suffering more than the other.

On 29<sup>th</sup> of April, "*Killings in the north planned says Soyinka*" this story was carried on the front page of the newspaper in bold headlines. In the story he lamented the killings of youth corps members in some parts of Northern Nigeria which he says "affected the unity of the country" on the same page "*Jonathan rejects lobby to drop probe of riots*" indicating that some persons who had something to hide were lobbying to get the probe on the post-election violence, the reporting however did not give the names of the lobbyists. There are dangerous hints though the report was supposed to indicate that the panel was a bid by the Government to discover the cause of the violence and to heal wounds, there was a hint of mischief in the report.

It is worthy to note that almost all the reports carried by the Nation makes an attempt to be reconciliatory; however it puts a lot of focus on the religious intolerance while using every opportunity to indicate that both religions exist peacefully in the South West. The bias employed by this paper while covering the election conflict, were bias by labeling though other bias were employed, based on the research, this paper uses this type of bias most. Though this Newspaper made an attempt to prevent the conflict before it started, during the conflict, reports from this

paper were few. **The Nation Newspaper** however did not try to quench the embers of the conflict once it started.

### **The Daily Trust Newspaper:**

This newspaper had the most reports on the election violence prior to the 2011 elections, Daily Trust did not feature any report or appeal for peaceful elections but there were a lot of subtle references on how the elections were likely to be rigged by some candidates, the paper did not attempt to build a solid foundation for ensuring a peaceful election.

However even before the announcement of the results Daily Trust carried bold headlines like *“24 hours to presidential polls.... 2 killed 7 injured in Maiduguri attack”* in banner headlines and *“over 80 died, 90 injured in bomb blast”* along with a report of how the election has resulted in the loss of lives and the survivors had been neglected by the government with a lot of bold pictures of the injured and touching stories about the lives of the dead victims.

*“Violence, fraud mar presidential poll”* (in screaming headlines on the front page) this is accompanied by a report about how people took to violence to protest an election which was said to be rigged

*2 killed in Kaduna bomb blast: Lady in Jos and Houses, cars destroyed in Jigawa, Adamawa, Bauchi states* also *“Buhari leads in Adamawa, Katsina, Borno, Niger, and Kaduna, Jonathan ahead in Rivers, Bayelsa, Ogun, Kwara and Lagos* all these headlines were on the front page of the newspaper while the reports were inside the newspaper

These were accompanied with a Map of Nigeria divided along the middle, the report indicates



that the country was already split along the middle with the North voting for Buhari while the South vote for Jonathan, this was the root cause of the violence because when the result were later released showing that Jonathan won in some parts of the North, violence still erupted in the Northern part of the country.

As indicated in the table above, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, this paper was full of reports about the conflict and appeals for peace and condemnation of such violence by notable personalities. The report had several pictures of the violence, as well as politicians making accusations and counter accusations.

It is noteworthy that all these reports were in bold headlines, the only headlines that were not bold are the ones appealing for peace or condemning the violence, of those, only the appeals made by the president was in bold headlines.

April 20<sup>th</sup> reports on the election violence looks at life after the violence, *“Kaduna curfew still in place”* This report takes a look at the violence in Zonkowa where according to the report, most of the killings took place as well as Kafanchan, Gonin Gora where travellers were said to be killed and reports on soldiers who were said to have killed civilians. In the same paper *“Jonathan: FG to compensate victims of Post-election violence”* here President Goodluck attributed the post-election violence to unemployment and promised to provide jobs for the teeming jobless youths so that they would not be used as tools of violence by politicians saying “we have to make sure that in the next four years things like this will not lead to riot”

*“The triumph of sentiments”* an opinion column by guest columnist Anthony Akinola on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April is an extremely inflammatory column. The entire tone was aggravating as the columnist

indicated that the minorities of the country particularly from the South-South have been marginalized; the entire column was on ethnic bias indicating that every ethnic group must fight for relevance.

*“FG condemns post-election violence”* in this report FG condemns violence and called on politicians to call their people to order and also advised politicians who feel aggrieved to take their complains to the courts. All the calls for order in these reports indicate that some politicians are behind the violence but it does not go deeper than that.

*“Ex Niger Delta militants plans response to electoral violence”* in this report the militants in the Niger-Delta say they urge all Nigerians to accept Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as president irrespective of tribe or religion or else they will be forced to react. The message was supposed to be reconciliatory however the threat is clear “support a son of the South-South or we will be forced to retaliate”

The paper on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April is full of stories about the post-election violence and appeals for peace but none of the report looks at the root cause of the conflict or how to go about building bridges as the road map towards peace or steps to go about achieving, their focus is mainly on politicians trading blames and calling for peace

There were also a lot of reports on security agents, accusing them of killing and maltreating civilians like *“Zaria riot: 189 suspects transferred to CID”* this report went on to imply that civilians were being arrested indiscriminately by security operatives. It also indicated that some died in custody as a result of dehydration

*“Many killed in Zonkwa reprisals”* this report indicates that over 150 members of the Fulani community were killed and had their houses burnt down. The entire angle of this report is that the Hausa/Fulani are the victims of the crisis.

A report carried by Daily Trust on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2011 was highly inflammatory without adhering to the ethics of journalism of balance and fairness *“Zaria residents panic over reprisal as COAS assures of safety”* was the headline, and the report is about how Hausa/Fulani were being targeted by people in Zonkwa, Madakiya, Unguwan Rimi and Zako. Also in the report, that about 164 inmates escaped from prison was mentioned at the end of the report. Reports like that particularly in a conflict situation should not be buried in another report, particularly as the prisoners escaped from a maximum-security prison and are potentially dangerous.

*“Riot: Soldier Narrates How he Killed Zaria Residents”* (in very bold headlines) here the story is about a soldier who reportedly boasts about killing civilians indiscriminately “ he was telling the story with pride, saying that blood had soaked his uniform because of indiscriminate killing” he was reported in the paper as saying “ ...told his colleagues how he killed anyone he came across” this report was said to be unconfirmed by the commandant of the security depot who said he would look into it.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April **Weekly Trust Newspaper** did an in-depth report on the post-election violence. The front page of the paper had a large picture of angry protesters with the headline *“Explosion Rocks Kaduna Again, Bomber Dead, 2 Others Nabbed”*, *“Why Northern Masses Rose against Leaders”* this report started on the front cover page and goes on to cover about seven full pages. The report describes the plight of the people of Northern Nigeria, the insecurity,

poverty, illiteracy etc. The report carried interviews people from the grassroots, and the community members who gave reasons for violence. Most claimed to have “had enough of the current leadership” they felt this election was their chance to change their lot, and they also felt betrayed by their leaders both the political leaders as well as the traditional leaders who they felt sold them out as well as their fellow Northerners who sold their votes. Others felt scared when they heard about the violence and decided to attack before they are attacked, they also claimed to have reports of their brothers being killed by other ethnic groups and other religions and retaliated to even score. This is an example of how rumors peddled around by the media results to escalating of violence. Though a lot of those interviewed claimed to have gotten these reports from text messages going around, there were a lot who claimed to have seen it from online media reports.

Another report carried by the paper “*What we Lost in the Post-election Crisis*” this is another in-depth analysis of the loss encountered by people during the violence; it includes close-up stories of victims who have lost loved ones and their homes as well as their means of livelihood to the violence. This report indicates that there has been considerable loss on every side.

**Daily Trust** Newspaper also displayed its bias for the Hausa/Fulani community in its report on the post-election conflicts. By the way the news stories were placed, by the prominence given to some headlines over others; by the choice of sources and the deliberate use of inflammatory language. Although this newspaper did make a little effort to be balanced, it is barely noticeable. The paper did not at all attempt to engage in peace reporting during the conflict. However after the conflict, **Daily Trust** did a thorough analysis of the conflict. **Daily Trust** carried some well-

rounded reports that looked at the underlying cause of the conflict, and the bringing out ties that bind rather than divide by interviewing all sides. These reports were however carried out after the conflict had been curtailed, therefore for this particular conflict, though Daily Trust can be said to have fuelled the embers, it also contributed in quenching it.

### **The Daily Sun Newspaper**

Before the elections, **The Daily Sun** carried no stories about the situation or tension in the north but focused on the eastern Nigeria.

The first report carried by this newspaper on the election was 18<sup>th</sup> of April. The report which was located inside the newspaper *“Presidential Election: 20 killed in Bauchi, Gombe”* the report is one page long, and blames the killings on members of the CPC. It was indicated clearly in the report that CPC members killed, burnt alive people belonging to other parties as well as destroying their properties.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2011, the stories carried by The Daily Sun Newspaper include *“Fresh violence in Kano, 3 feared dead”* in this report, the use of mobile phone as a means of spreading dangerous rumours, also that the pro-Buhari protesters started the killing of Christians was another headline *“Three Feared Dead, 20-hour Curfew in Kaduna” “59 Killed in Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna” “84 Churches Burnt CAN Claims” “Our Ordeal by Corps Members: Forced to Thumbprint Ballot Papers, Harassed, Raped, Killed.”*

The reports carried by the Daily Sun were clearly sensational, and unprofessional. This can be seen from the reports which were largely one sided, the large font headlines that had very

provoking tones, the reports from this newspaper accused individuals of causing the conflict without any proof. Unfounded reports like that from the media is likely to incite violence This newspaper did not even attempt to be balanced and fair in its reports, the Daily Sun only reported incidents that affected a particular ethnic or religious group without trying to find a middle ground. This Newspaper, which has a wide readership in South South and South East regions of Nigeria, can be said to be responsible for some of the mistrust and hostility between the North and the South.

In all these reports, **The Daily Sun** Newspaper clearly takes on a religious angle like “houses and properties worth millions of Naira belonging to Christians in the state were targeted, attacked, set ablaze during and after the presidential poll” the report goes on to count the number of Christians that were killed in different states making no mention of the Muslim casualty, the report even goes on to quote a member of CAN who said “are all these happenings part of the Islamic jihad on Christians? Why are all these calculated and targeted at Christians” another report had this headline: “*As Southern Kaduna Natives Want Source of Weapons Probed*” here also the Southern Kaduna Christians were considered the victims and the main targets of the violence. For this conflict all the newspapers showed indications of picking sides, and getting themselves involved as part of the conflict. The media involvement as active members in any conflict is dangerous to the conflict process.

**Table 6: Newspaper Headlines for Jos, Biu and Zamfara Boko Haram Attacks:**

| Date                      | The Nation Newspaper  | The Daily Sun Newspaper   | Daily Trust Newspaper   |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| 11 <sup>th</sup> /6/ 2012 | <p><i>-Another bloody Sunday</i><br/> <i>-Five killed in attack on Jos church, reprisal</i></p> <p><i>-Two dead in Borno</i><br/> <i>-Pastor, wife, two children, 48 others injured in suicide bombings</i></p> | <p><i>-Again, blood flows in Jos</i><br/> <i>-3 killed, 51 wounded as suicide bombers hit another church</i><br/> <i>-Reprisal attack claim 7</i><br/> <i>-Blood flows in Jos</i><br/> <i>-Gunmen kill 2 worshippers in Borno</i></p> | <p><i>-3 die, 41 injured in Jos suicide bombing</i><br/> <i>-Jos blast: pastor, wife, children among 52 victims on admission</i><br/> <i>-Boko Haram claim responsibility for Biu attacks</i><br/> <i>-Biu attack: CAN sues for peace</i></p> |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> /6/2012  | <p><i>-Gunmen kill 27 in Zamfara</i><br/> <i>-Igbo traders flee Borno over Boko Haram attacks</i></p>   | <p><i>-Bombing of churches South East CAN issues last warning</i></p>   | <p><i>-Jos bombing: Archbishop Kwashi condemns reprisals attacks</i></p>  |

As can be seen in table 5 above, the three newspapers reported the attack differently. While The Nation lead headline read *“Another Bloody Sunday”* and The Daily Sun had a more sensational *“Again Blood Flows in Jos”*, (both in very bold headlines on the front pages) Daily Trust had a milder headline *“3 Die 41 injured in Jos Suicide Bombing”* also while the other newspapers used Killed in their headlines, Daily Trust opted for a much milder word “die” which is less likely to inflame the reader

### **The Nation Newspaper:**

*“Another bloody Sunday”* was the front page headline of this newspaper on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 in very bold print with *“Five Killed in Attack on Jos Church Reprisal”*, *“Two Dead in Borno”*, *“Pastor, Wife, Two Children, 48 Others Injured in Suicide bombings”* in smaller headlines all on the front page of the newspaper. The front page also contained pictures of the blast sites as well as a large picture of a man injured in the blast.

In the story on the first page inside the paper, the report looks at how a suicide bomber entered the church premises just after they concluded prayers and exploded his device, injuring about fifty people, which led to a reprisal attack in which about 10 people were killed. The report also says that no group had claimed responsibility for the attack, but a reprisal took place after the blast which left about ten people dead. Also in Borno state, two men on motorbike shot at a church that was holding its service, killing two people, while a suicide bomber attacked a security road block, killing security operatives.

*“Gun Men kill 27 in Zamfara”* this story which was located at the very last page inside the newspaper of June 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, says that 27 persons as well as a policeman were shot at in a town



about 100km from the capital Gusau also on the same page “*Igbo traders flee Borno over Boko Haram attacks*” the story is a very aggravated piece as it interviews an Igbo man who left Maiduguri for Anambra, who insinuated that that Boko Haram targeted Christians and Igbos as a church was attacked in Biu killing one person “though they are equally killing their people, their targets are Christians especially people of the Igbo extraction and the Yoruba”

### **The Daily Sun:**

“*Again blood flows in Jos*” in screaming headlines on the front cover of the Daily Sun on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 also on the front page, “*3 killed, 51 Wounded as Suicide Bombers hit another church*” “*Reprisal Attacks Claim 7*” “*2 killed Many Injured in Fresh Attacks on Worship Centre in Borno*” all on the front page.

In the top story, the report had it that after the suicide bombings of the church, “angry youths immediately took over the major Rukuba road, seized motorcyclists suspected to be from a particular ethnic group, pulling them down, dousing them with petrol before setting the victims ablaze, at least 7 of them were killed” Also “*Gunmen kill 2 worshippers in Borno*” this report says Boko Haram gunmen attacked the premises of a church in Biu while Sunday service was going on killing two including a woman.

June 12<sup>th</sup> “*Bombing of churches: South East CAN issues last warning*” this is a report from CAN South East where they threatened to attack mosques and places of Islamic leaders in the zone in retaliation of the incessant bombings of Christians and churches in the North by Boko Haram. They were quoted as saying “This act of Boko Haram is capable of causing another civil war” according to Bishop Rev Emmanuel Chukwuma: “we are giving the Islamic sect last

warning saying if they continue we would retaliate,, Christians are now ready for war and were ready to mobilize the MASSOB, the OPC and the militants will have no place ”

**Daily Trust:**

June 11<sup>th</sup> 2012 “3 die, 41 injured in Jos suicide bombing” this story was carried on the first page inside the paper and not on the cover as others are carried.

In the report, it is explained that although the aim of the bombers was to get into the church, they were unable to and the bomb exploded on the street, also though it killed two people that are yet to be identified, they were not members of the church. It also stated that though the bomb did not hit the church, the vibrations from the blast made part of the church to collapse. According to the report, “some angry youths went on rampage soon after the blast because of failure of the security agents to avert the blast, destroying four vehicles and a motorcycle”. The report ended with an appeal for peace and calm by the police commissioner who discouraged reprisal attacks.

*“Jos blast: Pastor, wife, children among 52 victims on admission”*

This reports claimed that 50 people were admitted even mentioning some of the families who are victims of the blast as well as a 6 year old girl whose mother said has been missing since the blast.

*“Boko Haram claim responsibility for Jos, Biu attacks”*

In this report, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attack, insisting that “this is a war between us and the Nigerian state and there is no going back” they claimed that they have proved the Nigerian security agency wrong when who claimed to have recorded 90% success

against the sect.

*“Biu attack: CAN sues for peace”*

This report is a call by CAN Biu, on Muslims and Christians in the country to intensify prayers for peace to return.

12<sup>th</sup> June 2012 *“Jos bombing: Arch Bishop Kwashi condemns reprisal attacks”* in this report, Archbishop of Jos Anglican church described as “Unfortunate the killing of 6 Okada riders in Jos following the attack on the church” he called on Christians to refrain from attacking Muslims after any bomb blast as this will affect the peace of the state, he said there was a need for religious and political leaders to educate their members saying those bringing bombs are not from Jos. Also reacting, Sheik Alhassan Said called on youths to refrain from mob actions and allow constituted authorities to investigate and punish culprits.

**Table 7: Boko Haram attacks in Kaduna, Zaria and Yobe:**

| Date                      | The Nation Newspaper   | The Daily Sun Newspaper  | Daily Trust  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| 18 <sup>th</sup> /6/ 2012 | <p>-Suicide bombers kill 16 in Kaduna, Zaria churches</p> <p>-Govt imposes 24 hours curfew</p> <p>-Jonathan sad</p> <p>-Killings not justification for grievances says ACF activist</p> <p>-Bombings of churches threatens National unity...Mark</p> | <p>-Dead bodies litter Kaduna, Zaria</p> <p>-Suicide bombers hit 3 churches in Kaduna, Zaria</p> <p>-Scores killed in reprisal attacks</p> <p>-Govt imposes 24hour curfew</p> <p>-Police move in to forestall counter reprisals</p> <p>-Jonathan regrets misapplication of talent</p> <p>-Mark, Tambuwal condemn attack, sue for peace</p> | <p>-Kaduna suicide bombings</p> <p>-34 feared dead in blasts, reprisals</p> <p>-24 hour curfew imposed</p> <p>-Mark: bombers out to cause war</p> <p>-Bombers kill 23 in Zaria</p> <p>-4 killed in Shalom church</p> <p>-Jonathan condemns blast asks God to intervene</p> <p>-Yakowa imposes 24hours curfew</p> <p>-7 killed in reprisals</p> <p>-we must not cave in to bombers</p> <p>-Kaduna blast: IG deploys DIG, more police units</p> <p>-Mark: Bombers out to cause religious war</p> <p>-Zazzau emir calls for calm</p> <p>-ACF urges dialogue</p> |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> /6/2012  | <p>-Kaduna: Death toll hits 52</p> <p>-we did it says Boko Haram</p> <p>-Govt relaxes 24hour curfew</p> <p>-IG vows to bring perpetrators of bombings to book</p> <p>-Kaduna youths: it's an</p>   |  | <p>-As JTF, Boko Haram battle rages...</p> <p>-Blast, gunfire rock Damaturu</p> <p>-Kaduna attacks: Death toll rises to 63</p> <p>-Life becoming cheap in Nigeria-Kukah</p> <p>-Yakowa relaxes curfew</p> <p>-CAN wants North to resolve lingering crisis</p> <p>-Another clash averted in Barnawa</p>   |

|                           |  |   |  |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
|                           | <p><i>assault on Christians</i><br/> <i>-Southern Christians ready to fight back</i><br/> <i>-Youths threaten mass protest</i><br/> <i>-PDP decries attacks</i><br/> <i>-minister calls on calm</i><br/> <i>-Kukah: Govt not serious in tackling Boko Haram menace</i><br/> <i>-Fear grips Hausa community in Onitsha over reprisals</i><br/> <i>-Confusion as bomb scare hits ABU</i><br/> <i>-JNI calls for punishment</i><br/> <i>-Damaturu under gun attacks</i><br/> <i>-Kaduna bombings reprisal death toll hits 52: victims of crisis recount</i></p> |   |  |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> /6/ 2012 | <p><i>-More suicide bombings coming, task force warns</i></p>  | <p><i>-30 killed in Yobe</i><br/> <i>-How 200 children escaped Kaduna attack</i><br/> <i>-Another suicide bombing foiled in Bauchi</i><br/> <i>-24 hour curfew re-imposed as Kaduna crisis escalates</i><br/> <i>-Senate rejects state-of-emergency option for Kaduna</i><br/> <i>-JNI condemns attacks, says</i></p> | <p><i>-Kaduna fresh violence claims more lives</i><br/> <i>-Sambo summons security chiefs over Kaduna, Yobe violence</i></p> |

|                           |   |  |   |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|
|                           |   | <i>they are meant to drag Muslims, Christians to war</i>   |   |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> /6/ 2012 | <i>-Curfew pains hit Kaduna, Yobe residents hard<br/>-Pope: end attacks</i> |  | <i>-Calm gradually returning to Kaduna as FG sends delegation</i>   |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> /6/2012  |   |  | <i>-We feel the pains inflicted on Christians... Muslim leaders<br/>-Damaturu carnage: 90 killed as Govt relaxes curfew</i> |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> /6/ 2012 |   |  | <i>-Four killed in fresh Kaduna attack<br/>-Insecurity: Jigawa, Rivers, Bayelsa evacuate students from ABU</i>              |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> /6/2012  |   | <i>-Religious war looms... Mark<br/>-Returning presidency to North won't solve the problem...Princewill<br/>-Jonathan warns against playing politics with security</i> |   |

All the three newspapers were unprofessional in their coverage of this conflict in various degrees. The use of graphic images and insinuations were evident in the various reports. However the Daily Sun still stood out by using the same story, on different days while trying to make the story, which was the statement by the senate president as sensational as possible. Sensational news stories might be able to sell the newspaper, however they have a serious implication to the conflict as they can undermine any conflict resolution attempt

### **The Nation Newspaper:**

*“Bloody Sunday”* was printed boldly on the front cover of the Nation on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 the headlines in very bold headline is *“Suicide bombers kill 16 in Kaduna, Zaria churches”* with a very large picture of dead people as well the injured and bleeding all on the front cover. This story takes three pages. Also on the front cover but in smaller headlines *“Govt imposes 24hours curfew”* and *“Jonathan sad”*

The top story *“Suicide bombers kill 16 in Kaduna, Zaria churches”* is a very graphic one, as it describes injuries in detail using words like *”smashed limbs, broken heads and torn human flesh”* as well as very graphic bloody pictures. The report takes on three pages and describes the three attacks which happened on the same day that left 16people dead as well as fifty people injured. The president who was reported to be in church service when he heard about the attack was reported to have been *“very sad”* over the attack but is taking solace in God *“God is capable of handling every situation”*

*“Killings not justification for grievances, say ACF activist”* The Northern socio-political organization ACF expressed shock over the bombings of worship places by suicide bombers, the

spokesman said he is in shock because it is coming in the wake of an offer of constructive engagement or dialogue by the Federal Government “the spokesman described the wave of violence that engulfed Kaduna and Zaria as unfortunate, it called on both religions to sheath their swords and called for peace” also in the paper *“Bombings of churches threatens National unity-David Mark”*, here is report where the senate president called on government to use all measures possible to ensure peace and urged victims not to engage in reprisal attacks.

On June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012 The Nation Newspaper carried this headline on its front cover *“Kaduna: death toll hits 52”* in very large headlines as well as *“We did it says Boko Haram-government relaxes 24hour curfew”* inside the paper, the headlines include *“IG vows to bring perpetrators of bombings to book”*, *“Kaduna youths: it’s an assault on Christians”* *“Southern Christians ready to fight back”*, *“Youths threaten mass protest”* *“PDP decries attacks”* *“Minister calls for calm”* *“Kukah: Govt not serious in tackling Boko Haram menace”* *“Fear grips Hausa community in Onitsha over reprisals”* *“Confusion as bomb scare hits ABU”* *“JNI calls for punishment”* *“Damaturu under attacks”* *“Kaduna bombings, reprisals death toll hits 52: victims of crisis recount”* in these report the Nation compiled accounts from survivors of the attacks, not focusing on a single ethnic or religious sect . Though it can be deduced from the reports that most of the killings were carried out by Southern Kaduna Christians however there were several accounts from Southern Kaduna residents and also Muslims alike on how each helped others from the other camp living among them to escape being killed by others of their tribe or faith. In the report also it was indicated that with the relaxation of the curfew some people who went out to buy food were targeted



June 21<sup>st</sup> 2012 “*more suicide bombings coming, task force warns*” Maiduguri residents were told yesterday to prepare for more suicide bombings by the JTF also in the same paper “*Curfew pains hit Kaduna, Yobe residents hard*” the report focuses on the struggle of the people of Yobe and Kaduna to return to normal after the gun battle and reprisal attacks in Damaturu and Kaduna respectively.

“*Pope: end attacks*” the pope expressed concern over attack targeted at Christians in Nigeria.

### **The Daily Sun Newspaper:**

June 18<sup>th</sup> 2012 “*Dead bodies litter Kaduna Zaria*” in very bold headlines on the front page, accompanied by an extremely graphic image of a man blown to pieces by the bomb, along with another picture of black smoke as the bomb exploded. Other headlines include “*Suicide bombers hit 3 churches in Kaduna, Zaria*”, after the attack two of the bombers attempted to flee but were intercepted and set ablaze by the people. The report also specified that the reprisal attacks left many dead with several motorcycles belonging to people from a particular ethnic group who were minorities in those areas set ablaze and burnt to death.

“*Govt imposes 24hour curfew*”, “*Police move to forestall counter reprisals.*” Inside the paper, there are several graphic pictures of the bomb blast and victims of reprisal attacks set ablaze.

“*Jonathan regrets misapplication of talents*” here GEJ was reported to be “sad” at the bomb blast.

“*Mark, Tambuwal condemn attack, sue for peace*” Mark describes the incessant bombings as a threat to national unity of the nation and urged that all measures be put in place to ensure peace.

Tambuwal flayed the bombings of churches and called for calm. He also was reported to have said that attacking innocent people who knew nothing about the blasts in the name of reprisals would worsen a complicated situation.

June 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 *"30 killed in Yobe"* in large headlines on the front page also on the front page but in smaller headline are: *"How 200 children escaped Kaduna attack"*, *"Another suicide bombing foiled in Bauchi"*, *"24hour curfew re-imposed as Kaduna escalates"*, *"Senate rejects state-of-emergency option for Kaduna"* and inside the newspaper *"JNI condemns attacks, says they are meant to drag Muslims, Christians to war"* here the JNI notes with pain and sadness the sporadic bombings of some churches in Kaduna and regrettably their immediate reprisal attacks that were carried out by Christian youths on the Muslim communities leading to the loss of lives.

June 26<sup>th</sup> 2012 *"Religious war looms-Mark"* in large headlines on the front page" in the report he accuses North of pushing Nigeria to the edge with Boko Haram (This is the same report carried on the 20<sup>th</sup> from another angle with a more catchy headline) Mark lamented that the region is killing itself with mindless violence, and appealed to the North and all those concerned to stop the cabal from bringing the North to its knees. Also on in the paper *"Returning presidency to the North won't solve the problem-Princewil"* and *"Jonathan warns against playing politics with security"*

### **Daily Trust Newspaper:**

June 18<sup>th</sup> 2012 *"Kaduna suicide bombings"* in very bold headlines on the front cover accompanied by a large picture of one of the churches after the blast. Still in bold headlines on the front cover are these headlines *"34 feared dead in blast, reprisals, "24 hour curfew*

*imposed” and “Mark: Bombers out to cause war”*

The report on the bomb blast that took place in Kaduna and Zaria is slightly different from those of the other two papers. Although the paper reports that 20 people were killed as a result of the blast in a church in Sabon Gari, however unlike the other two newspapers here the report indicated that among the dead include Muslims doing petty business around the church and those who went to patronize local food vendors. The report also says after the blast in Kaduna, Christian youths blocked the Kaduna-Abuja highway at Gonin Gora, pulling perceived Muslims out of cars and killing them, with similar attacks all over Kaduna. There was violence all over the state forcing the governor to enforce a 24hour curfew to prevent further escalations.

*“Bomber kill 23 in Zaria”* most of the victims were said to be children as well as people from both religion *“4 killed in shalom church”*, *“Jonathan condemns blast asks God to intervene”*, *“Yakowa imposes 24hour curfew”*, *“7 killed in reprisals”* *“We must not cave in to the bombers-Tambuwal”* here the speaker urged security agencies to ensure that targeted attacks be brought to an end, he condoled the families of those who lost their lives *“attacking innocent people who know nothing about the blast in the name of reprisals would worsen an already complicated situation”*

*“Kaduna blast: IG deploys DIG, more police units”* *“Mark: Bombers out to cause religious war”* here the Senate president called on perpetrators to have a rethink and accept a dialogue proposed by the FG, saying that these attacks were a threat to the unity of the country. Also in the paper, *“Zazzau emir calls for calm”*, and *“ACF urges dialogue”* in these reports there are appeals for peace and understanding between the warring parties.

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012 “*As JTF, Boko Haram battles rages: Blasts, gunfire rock Damaturu*” in bold headlines, in this report on the front page of the paper, many civilians were killed as JTF and Boko Haram engaged in a gun battle. “*Kaduna attacks: death toll rises to 63*” also on the front page with the report inside the paper some of the headlines inside the paper include “*Life becoming cheap in Nigeria-Kukah*” he was quoted as saying “Nigeria is running out of time, those who are pushing us are determined to have a war. Many of us who have been voices of restraint no longer know what to say” he urged the president to do something saying that he might not be responsible for the problem but the key lies with him. “*Yakowa relaxes curfew*”

“*CAN wants North to resolve lingering crisis*” here the chairman of CAN Kaduna state, described the bomb blast and reprisal attacks as horrible incidents. He said the North will be the biggest loser and that people irrespective of their faith should come together to fight the menace of Boko Haram. He urged the faithful to be guided by the teachings of the holy books.

“*Another clash averted in Barnawa*” there was a fight between youths of both faith but it was averted, no life lost.

20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 “*Kaduna fresh violence claims more levels*” reports indicate that both Christians and Muslims took advantage of the riot to attack each other. There were unconfirmed rumors of attacks all over Kaduna. Also inside the paper, “*Sambo Summons Security Chiefs over Kaduna Yobe violence.*”

21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 “*calm gradually returning to Kaduna as FG sends delegation*”;

June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012 “*we feel the pains inflicted on Christians-Muslim leaders*”, Muslim leaders in

Jos consoled Christians on the attack on their churches saying that even Muslims were also targets of Boko Haram. Also on the paper “*Damaturu Darnage: 90 killed as government relaxes curfew*” June 25<sup>th</sup> 2012”*Four killed in Fresh Kaduna attacks*” this reports on how residents of Gonin Gora killed travelers “*Insecurity: Jigawa, Rivers, Bayelsa, Evacuates Students From ABU*” this report on the evacuation is likely to be detrimental to the resolving of the conflict, as it indicates that more violence is expected.

## 4.2 Interview with Newspaper Editors

**Yomi Odunuga: Deputy Editor/Abuja Bureau Chief the Nation Newspaper:**

**Question:** Do the Nation's reporters undergo any training on conflict-sensitive reporting?

**Answer:** The Nation's reporters do not undergo any training on conflict reporting, but they must adhere to the general principles of journalism

**Question:** what is the procedure when reporting on a conflict situation?

**Answer:** When reporting on a conflict situation, a reporter is expected to do as much as he can on the field He must listen to the different parts of the conflict the different dimensions, listen to all views

**Question:** what if the report gotten is one sided?

**Answer:** If only one side of the story is gotten, it would be reflected that the other opinion wasn't gotten however if the other side comes back with their story, it would be reported as reaction and this will not attract the same space or size of headline

**Question:** what does the reporter do if the report is likely to generate more conflict?

**Answer:** No matter how touchy the story is, the reporter is expected to cover it and leave the decisions to the editorial department. For example, the case of the Kano bomb blast, we didn't publish pictures of the dead because it can cause conflict

When a story will have an effect on National cohesion, the story is usually dropped

It is our corporate social responsibility; we try and dissuade people from conflict when there is tension

At the editorial department, we consider the impact on peace and development, all these are editorial decisions like not to publish some images if it would attract violence

**Ikenna Emewu: Deputy Editor/Abuja bureau chief of the Daily Sun Newspaper:**

**Question:** What is the procedure when reporting on a conflict situation?

**Answer:** We try to send reporters to the scene of conflicts, but if we can't go to the scene, we rely on informed sources, eyewitness accounts. When we report, we report what we see on the spot and call people for further information

We send as many reports as possible then integrate all report

**Questions:** there seems to be some conflicts in the north where your paper doesn't cover

**Answer:** We cover where there is more conflict e.g. Niger Delta, kidnap in Abia that is where everybody is focused

**Questions:** what if the report is one sided?

**Answer:** We only report conflict in hard news when there is a news break; we report as hard news and later do a featured article or an analysis on it expounding the issue

**Question:** do your reporters undergo training in conflict-sensitive journalism?

**Answer:** There is no special training for conflict reporting. The special training is from the reporter what is acquired from experience

**Question:** what if a report has the potential of creating more conflict?

**Answer:** We don't write fiction we make sure what we report is accurate. When a report is reported with sentiments, it brings about more conflict but simply reporting will not do that. For example if 150 people were killed in Kano and we report it as 150 people were killed it will not result in escalation of conflict however when you say 150 Muslims were killed this can create more conflict

We expect our reporters to report in a mild way using wisdom

When a report is accurate but has the potential of creating more conflict, the Editor applies discretion and removes it. Our reports are not meant to create conflict.

**Abdulkareem Baba Aminu: Editor of weekly Trust newspaper:**

**Question:** what is the procedure for reporting on conflict?

**Answer:** We have reporters all over who cover reports; these same reporters cover cases of conflict. However some reporters who have been reporting for years and are experienced get sent to conflict prone areas, like Borno

**Question:** Do your reporters undergo any training on conflict-sensitive reporting.

**Answer:** Some of our reporters go back to school or get permissions to study courses relevant to



their field. And also like I said, it comes with experience

Questions: what if a report has the potential for causing further conflict

**Answer:** Then when such story gets to the editor or the editorial board, it is either re-written or withdrawn

Question: what if a report on conflict is one-sided?

**Answer:** We try to interview all parties involved in a conflict, but some people just won't talk to us. What we do in conflict situations is to report what we can get, then later do a featured article, explaining the background to the conflict, those affected, and finding a common ground. We would like to do that on all our reports on conflict, but we are working with time and some areas are not accessible to us when there is violent conflict

.

### 4.3 Content Analysis on Newspaper report on conflict in Northern Nigeria:

The placement of a report indicates the importance attached to it. Reports placed on the front page are considered the most important. While the deeper the story is located inside the newspaper the less pressing it is deemed. Reports located on the back page are also considered important although not as important those on the front page. These are the way reports on the conflicts under study were reported by the three newspapers.

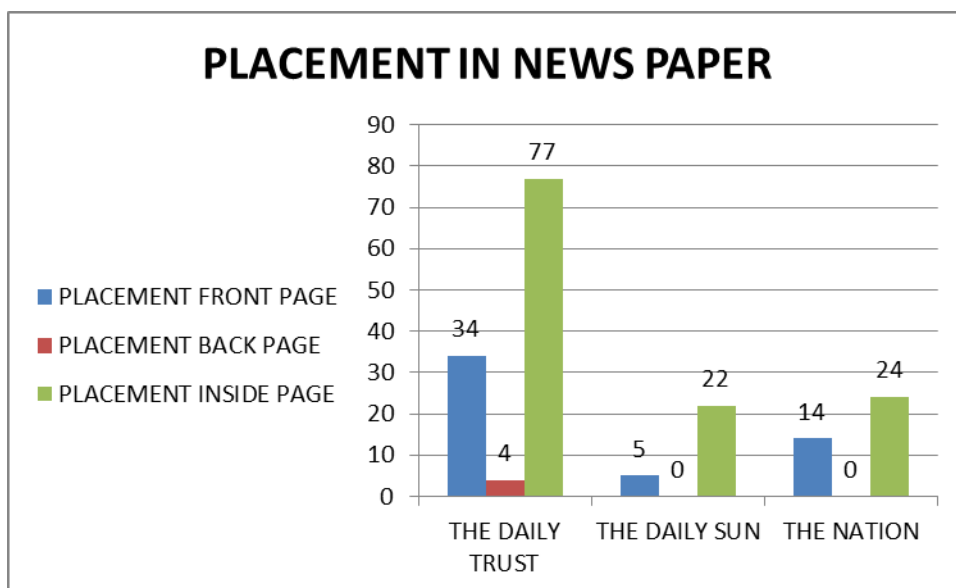


Figure 1: Placement in Newspaper

| NEWSPAPER             | NEWSPAPER       |               |            |                       |                 |               |            |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| PLACEMENT             | THE DAILY Trust | THE DAILY Sun | THE NATION | PLACEMENT             | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION |
| PLACEMENT FRONT PAGE  | 34              | 5             | 14         | PLACEMENT FRONT PAGE  | 30%             | 19%           | 37%        |
| PLACEMENT BACK PAGE   | 4               | 0             | 0          | PLACEMENT BACK PAGE   | 3%              | 0%            | 0%         |
| PLACEMENT INSIDE PAGE | 77              | 22            | 24         | PLACEMENT INSIDE PAGE | 67%             | 81%           | 63%        |

**Table 8:** *Placement in Newspaper*

From the table 7 and figure 1 a above, it is seen that all the three newspapers studied had a higher percentage of reports inside the newspaper. This is understandable because there are more pages inside the paper compared with the front and back page which are just single sheets. However it can also be an indication that news on conflicts are not given priority by these newspaper's because typically stories that are of the most importance are placed on front pages.

### **Type of Reports:**

The type of report is also important: an editorial is the stand the newspaper takes on issues, a news story, is a report of happenings as reported by a reporter with the newspaper, a feature is a spotlight thrown on a particular issue and involves a thorough analysis of the issue. An opinion column on the other hand is an opinion held by an outside source. Opinion columns also play an important role in a newspapers, it is understood that what appears on these columns are not the

views of the newspaper but that of the individual columnist, however by allowing these sometimes harmful opinions particularly in conflict situation, on the news pages the newspaper is responsible. The use of picture is also very important, particularly in conflict situations. Picture makes the story more believable. Sometimes particularly in conflict situations still pictures displayed by newspapers are gory and horrifying. However pictures can have two opposite effect on the audience, if used well, it can instill a sense of empathy and compassion in the audience, if not well used however it can also bring about extreme feelings of rage and escalation of conflicts. It is important to note that whatever the type of report, before its gets published it must pass through the newspaper's editor. This means the newspaper is eventually responsible for everything published.

| placement | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION | placement | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| NEW STORY | 82              | 26            | 27         | NEW STORY | 75%             | 96%           | 75%        |
| FEATURE   | 2               | 0             | 0          | FEATURE   | 2%              | 0%            | 0%         |
| EDITORIAL | 1               | 0             | 0          | EDITORIAL | 1%              | 0%            | 0%         |
| OPINION   | 6               | 0             | 3          | OPINION   | 5%              | 0%            | 8%         |
| PICTURE   | 19              | 1             | 6          | PICTURE   | 17%             | 4%            | 17%        |
| total     | 110             | 27            | 36         | total     |                 |               |            |

**Table 9: Type of News story**

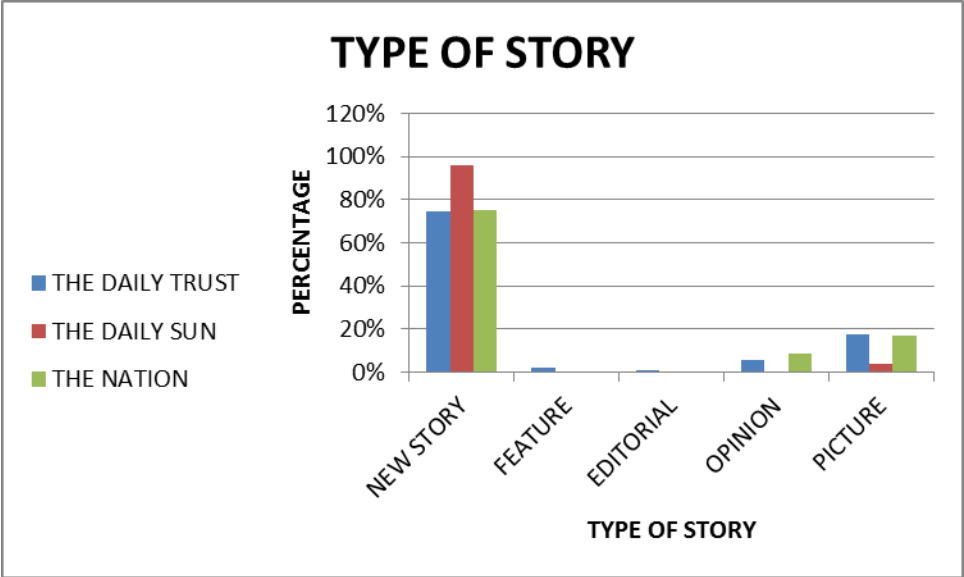


Figure 2: Type of Story

The table and chart above indicates that a higher percentage of the reports studied were news stories 95% Daily Sun and 75% Daily Trust and The Nation; after news story the next with a higher percentage are pictures, with 17% each for Daily Trust and The Nation and 8%. The chart indicates that only Daily trust newspaper had an editorial and a feature on the conflicts under study, while the Nation and Daily Sun had some opinion columns but no editorial or feature. The nature of a news story, does not give much room for in-depth analysis. News stories are short and straight to the point therefore there is not much room for writing about the background to the conflict or giving all parties equal representation. For a newspaper to have as much as 75%, (Daily Trust and The Nation) and 96% (Daily Sun) of its reports on conflict to be straight news stories is an indication there is minimal effort by these media to do contribute to the peace process. Responding to a question about balance in reporting a conflict, a Daily Sun editor Mr Ikeanna and a Daily Trust editor Mr Aminu both said they report what they get at the spot and

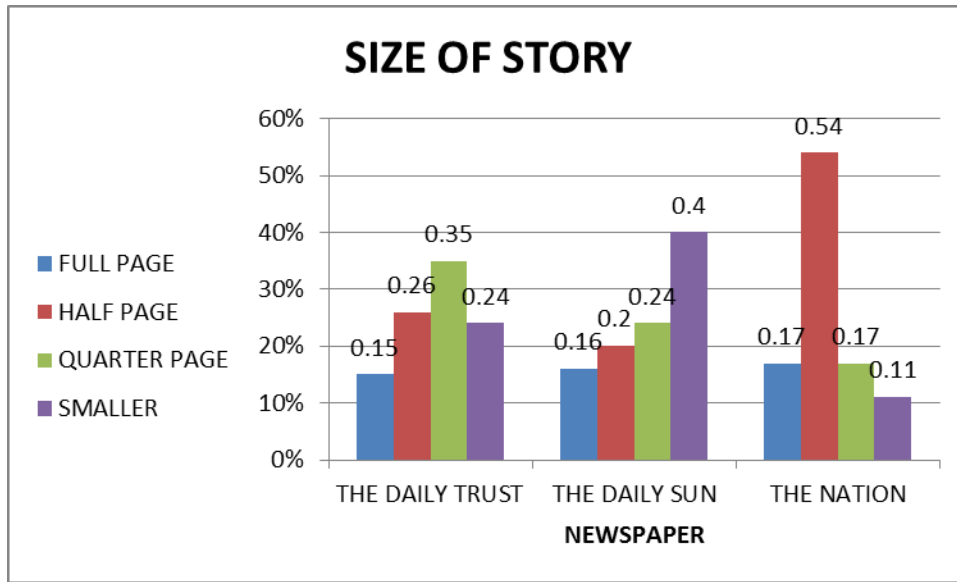
later do a featured report covering all sides of the story however based on all the conflicts and the coverage given by the newspaper, there was no such feature article by the Daily Sun unlike Daily Trust where such articles were found.

**Size of Story:**

The size of a story is also extremely important and goes hand in hand with placement and bias. In a conflict situation, a newspaper might give the appearance of balance by carrying reports that cover all factions however it is necessary to note how this is achieved. Does one faction get a full page while another gets a tiny space? Does one faction get front page while another gets a page deep in the paper. Within the same story, does one faction get the first seven paragraphs while another gets the last three? All these are important in determining the balance of a paper.

| SIZE OF STORIES | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION | SIZE OF STORIES | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| FULL PAGE       | 17              | 4             | 6          | FULL PAGE       | 15%             | 16%           | 17%        |
| HALF PAGE       | 29              | 5             | 19         | HALF PAGE       | 26%             | 20%           | 54%        |
| QUARTER PAGE    | 38              | 6             | 6          | QUARTER PAGE    | 35%             | 24%           | 17%        |
| SMALLER         | 26              | 10            | 4          | SMALLER         | 24%             | 40%           | 11%        |
|                 |                 |               |            |                 |                 |               |            |

**Table 10: Size of Story**



**Figure 3: Size of Story**

This chart shows the percentages of the size of the news reports for each newspaper. From this chart it can be observed that The Nation Newspaper gives more space for its reports on conflicts compared with the other newspapers studied, as 54% of its reports on conflict in the Northern Nigeria are half a page long while 17% are a full page long compared with The Daily Sun's 16% and Daily trust's 15%. With eleven percent, the Nation also had the least percent for small reports on conflicts.

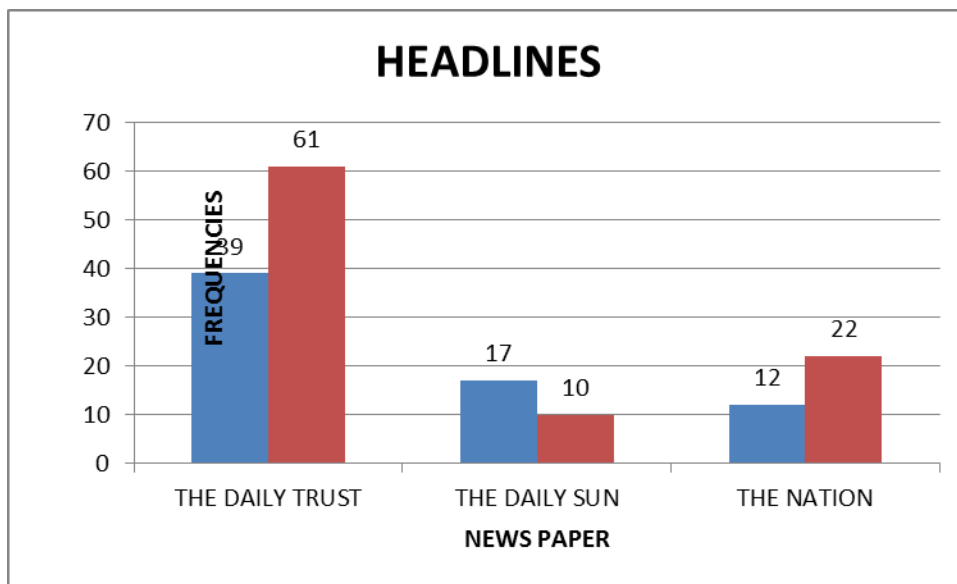
### **Size of Headlines:**

The headline is a very important tool of the newspaper. It is what reaches out and grabs the attention of its audience or readers. Headlines are usually used to assign degree of importance to a particular story, therefore the idea is that the larger the headline of a report, the more important it is. Apart from the size of the headline, the words used in the headlines are also important as, it

can be read from far. The use of large font headlines when the words are sensational can aggravate conflict situations; people who see these headlines might not bother to read the whole story.

| NEWSPAPER         |                 |               |            |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
|                   | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION |
| HEADLINE BELOW 35 | 39              | 17            | 12         |
| HEADLINE ABOVE 35 | 61              | 10            | 22         |

**Table 11:** *Size of Headline*



**Figure 4:** *Size of Headline*

The table and chart above show that all the newspapers under study mostly used headlines above 35mm font size when reporting on conflict situations in northern Nigeria. Large headlines is not a bad thing, however if this large headline is located on the front page and the tone is aggravating



and accompanied by a graphic picture then it becomes dangerous

**Source of Reports:**

The source of reports is very important in determining the objectivity of reports in the media. Also in conflict situation it is particularly important. The source indicates the orientation or bias or non-bias of a news report. Ideally in a conflict situation, news reports are supposed to include all fractions in a conflict.

|                        | NEWSPAPER       |               |            |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| SOURCE                 | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION |
| SOURCE GOVT            | 13              | 1             | 12         |
| SOURCE NGO             | 17              | 10            | 3          |
| SOURCE INDIVIDUAL      | 5               | 0             | 2          |
| SOURCE STRAIGHT REPORT | 76              | 16            | 28         |

**Table 12: Source of Report**

From Table 12 above it can be seen the a higher number of report are gotten from straight reports these reports can be from either the newspapers reporters on the scene of the report, News Agencies or press releases, regardless of the form it has to be re-written to suit house style.

**Time of Report:**

It is necessary before making the analysis to know at what stage of the conflict the report was made; this is necessary so as to understand the mind frame of the people interviewed. A person is likely to be more emotional in the midst of a conflict than after; the tone is likely also to be more aggressive in the midst of the conflict. If a report by a newspaper at the midst of a conflict is

inflammatory it is likely to be more harmful than at any other period. Conflict sensitive reporting implies that the media should report with discretion particularly in situations of high tension.

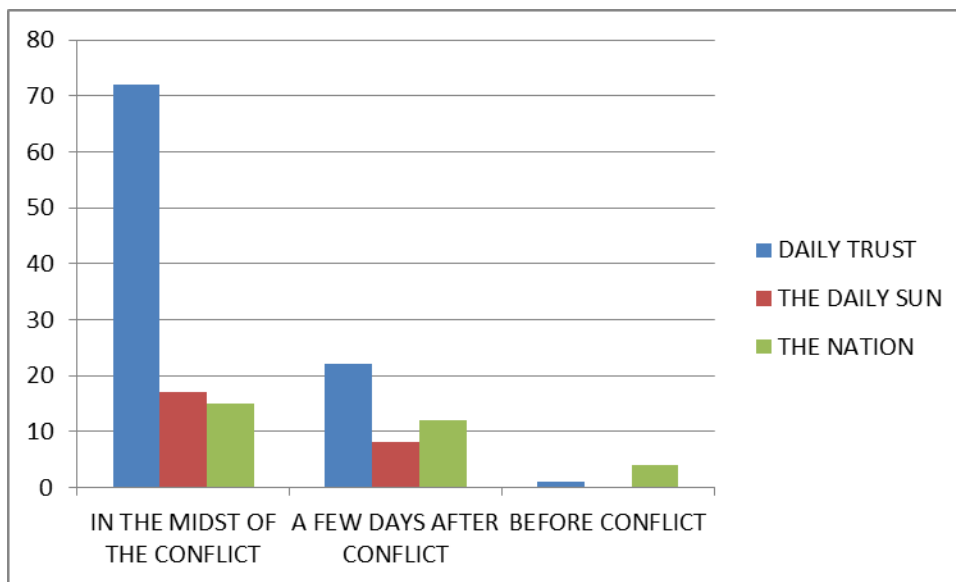
|  |  | TIME OF CONFLICT             | Total                     |                 |  |  |
|--|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
|  |  | IN THE MIDST OF THE CONFLICT | A FEW DAYS AFTER CONFLICT | BEFORE CONFLICT |  |  |

|           |             |    |    |   |    |  |
|-----------|-------------|----|----|---|----|--|
| NEWSPAPER | DAILY TRUST | 72 | 22 | 1 | 95 |  |
|-----------|-------------|----|----|---|----|--|

|               |    |   |   |    |  |  |
|---------------|----|---|---|----|--|--|
| THE DAILY SUN | 17 | 8 | 0 | 25 |  |  |
|---------------|----|---|---|----|--|--|

|            |     |    |   |     |  |  |
|------------|-----|----|---|-----|--|--|
| THE NATION | 17  | 13 | 0 | 30  |  |  |
| Total      | 106 | 43 | 1 | 150 |  |  |

Table 13: Time of Report



### Figure 5: Time of Report

From the table and chart above, it can be seen that most of the reports were reported in the midst of the conflict. The Nation and Daily Trust had few reports before the conflict began. The Daily Sun carried no reports prior to the conflicts. An editor with **The Nation** Mr Yomi when asked about this admitted that reports during conflicts are breaking news, as he said “No matter how touchy the story is, the reporter is expected to cover it and leave the decisions to the editorial department. For example, the case of the Kano bomb blast, we didn’t publish pictures of the dead because it can cause conflict. When a story will have an effect on National cohesion, the story is usually dropped”

### **Direction of Reports:**

The direction of the report shows how the different Newspapers report on conflict situations in Northern Nigeria. The direction includes the writing direction, and determines if the report is inflammatory in nature, whether it is aggravating or reconciliatory. The direction of the story also includes the evidence of bias and the type of bias used.

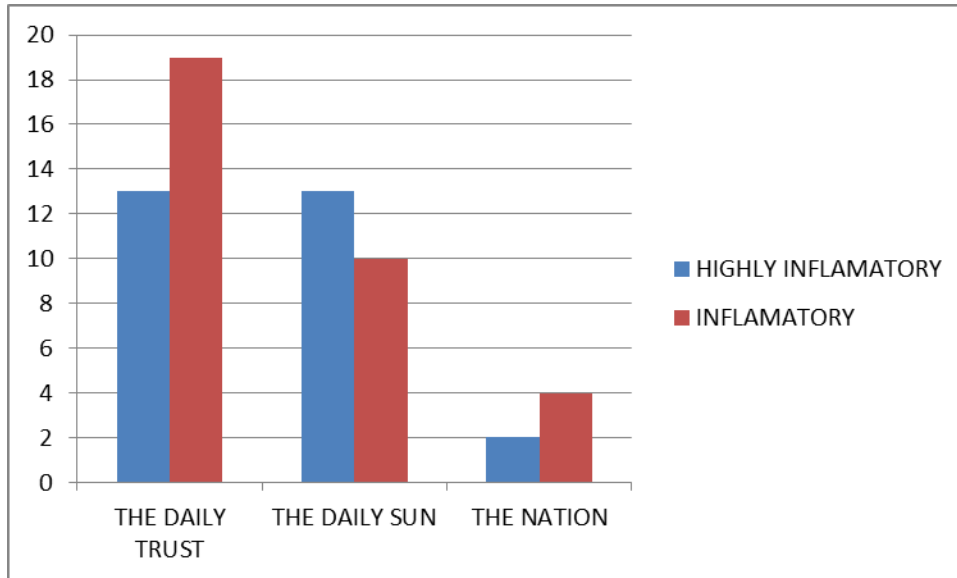
### **Inflammatory language:**

Inflammatory language is a form of speech used with the intent to stir emotions, elicit anger or invoke physical reaction. It is used to attack, oppress or denigrate groups of people to focus on hate or on something or someone. The use of inflammatory language in a newspaper can be very provocative in a conflict situation. Inflammatory language refers to a language that is deliberately meant to incite. The media’s role is to report the conflict, and not to raise ire. The

use of inflammatory language can go a long way in inciting violence. A report in this study is considered inflammatory if the tone of the report was designed to invoke emotional reaction without giving reliable information, also if the reports include the use of buzzwords like “Christian Agenda” “Islamic agenda” “ethnic cleansing” “dangerous tribe”. Also if the report includes the use of the most disturbing words to describe a situation when there are other words that could still pass the same information without the seeking sensational reaction, like using words like massacred, butchered, annihilated, slaughtered, instead of died, of loss of life. Another measure of inflammatory language is the phrasing of the report. Did one-faction “claim” while another faction “explain”? For the sake of this study inflammatory language was divided into two, highly inflammatory and inflammatory a report was tagged highly inflammatory if it contained more than ten of those buzzwords as well as all the above mentioned while it is termed inflammatory if it contains ten or less of the buzzwords.

| NEWSPAPER           |                 |               |            |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
|                     | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION |
| HIGHLY INFLAMMATORY | 13              | 13            | 2          |
| INFLAMMATORY        | 19              | 10            | 4          |

Table 14: Direction of the Report



**Figure 6: Direction of the Report**

As can be seen from the table and chart above, **Daily Trust** and the **Daily sun** are high on the scale of inflammatory tone in their reports on conflicts studied. It is worthy to note that though the Daily Trust is seen to be higher on the scale, **The Daily Sun**'s is much higher since the overall total number of reports for **Daily Trust** is 110 while that of **The Daily Sun** is 27 which makes the Daily Sun ahead in inflammatory tone. This figure on inflammatory use of inflammatory language can be detrimental to any peace as it can inflame emotions. When **The Daily Sun** editor was asked about this, he insisted that "We don't write fiction we make sure what we report is accurate. When a report is reported with sentiments, it brings about more conflict but simply reporting will not do that. For example if 150 people were killed in Kano and we report it as 150 people were killed it will not result in escalation of conflict however when you say 150 Muslims were killed this can create more conflict" However some reports from **The**

**Daily Sun**, contradicted this statement for example this report by **The Daily Sun** on 21<sup>st</sup> April

211: “84 Churches Burnt CAN: 59 Killed in Bauchi Gombe Kaduna” and in the story

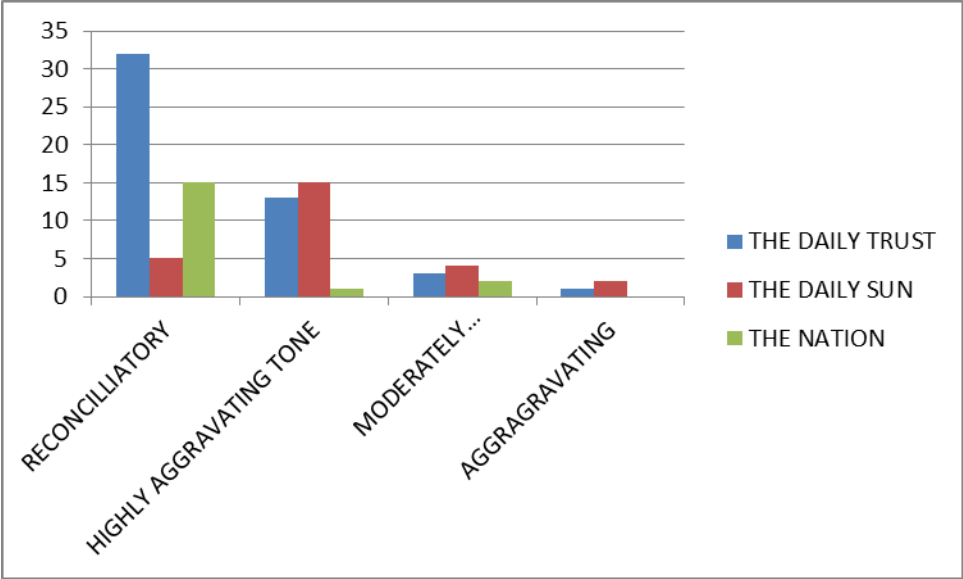
*“32 Christians were killed in Bauchi State 11 Christians were killed, several others wounded, four churches and many houses burnt while property worth millions of naira was destroyed. Alkali LGA: Nine Churches and several houses were burnt/destroyed and many Christians were badly wounded. Kirfi LGA: Two Churches were burnt in Bara village and several properties destroyed. In Toro LGA, two Churches were burnt while five were burnt in Magamau Gumau and one in Tilde Fulani. Darazo LGA: Two Christians were killed and nine Churches burnt/destroyed. Misau LGA: 13 Churches in and around Misau were burnt. Katagum LGA: Several Christians were killed, 18 churches and residential houses, vehicles and properties were burnt/destroyed. Jama’are LGA: 10 Churches and several properties were burnt or destroyed. Itas-Gadau LGA: Three Christians were killed (two corps members and one other), many wounded and property destroyed. Giade LGA: 16 Christians were brutally killed, including a Christian police woman and another whose hands were mutilated. Also, four Churches and many properties belonging to Christians were burnt or destroyed in the area. Churches were also burnt in Ningi, Gamawa and Dambam LGAs”*

**Aggravating and reconciliatory:**

In a conflict situation sometimes the reports are aggravating; this can be noticed when the report is full of accusations and condemnations of the activities of one faction of the conflict. When a report is reconciliatory on the other hand, it calls for peaceful resolution of issues, condemns violence, looks for ties that bind, and the cost of the conflict on both sides.

| DIRECTION                   | NEWSPAPER       |               |            |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
|                             | THE DAILY TRUST | THE DAILY SUN | THE NATION |
| RECONCILLIATORY             | 32              | 5             | 15         |
| HIGHLY AGGRAVATING TONE     | 13              | 15            | 1          |
| MODERATELY AGGRAVATING TONE | 3               | 4             | 2          |
| AGGRAGRAVATING              | 1               | 2             | 0          |

**Table 15: Direction of News Report**



**Figure 7: Direction of News Reports**

From the table and chart above, it can be seen that while **Daily Trust** had the highest on the scale in terms of reconciliatory reports, it also has high turnout for aggravating tone. This can be attributed to the fact that **Daily Trust** had the most report on the conflict Studied the total

number of reports from **Daily trust** is more than that of **The Nation** and **The Daily Sun** combined. From the chart it can be seen that the reconciliatory reports from **The Nation** is considerably high while its aggravating reports are significantly low. For newspapers to be aggravating in their reports on conflicts is very dangerous as it might lead to an escalation of the conflict and even start conflicts elsewhere. As people who are not involved in the conflict might get agitated from the report and spread the conflict to their location.

### **Evidence of Bias:**

Bias in a news report particularly in conflict situations is detrimental to the conflict. Bias indicates that the media organization is getting itself involved in the conflict and taking sides. For the sake of these studies, several forms of bias adopted by the media have been identified to use and study the three newspapers; these biases include;

**Bias by commission:** This is when a news story focuses more on a particular side while totally ignoring all others. The report will give excuses for everything this side does defending it and glorifying it.

**Bias by Omission:** This is when a report totally ignores a particular point of view, or a particular group in a report that should include it.

### **Bias by Placement:**

This is shown by how news reports are placed in the newspaper, while groups are allocated a full page on the front, some groups are only given a tiny space deep inside the paper. Even the way a story is arranged shows this kind of bias, using the pyramid style, some groups are given the first



paragraphs of a story while another is relegated to the last paragraphs. Studies have shown that people only read the first few paragraphs.

**Bias by Selection of Sources:**

Sources gives the report credence, some reports only select sources that will buttress a particular point of view. Also when only Government sources are given in news report while people at the grassroots are ignored, it is a bias on the side of the newspaper

**Bias by Labeling:**

This is where although there are several factions involved in the conflict; the newspaper however attaches labels to one group, in effect making that group responsible for the conflict.

| BAIS                 | Daily Trust | TOTAL | %   | The Daily Sun | TOTAL | %   | The Nation | TOTAL | %   |
|----------------------|-------------|-------|-----|---------------|-------|-----|------------|-------|-----|
| COMMISSION           | 5           | 107   | 5%  | 3             | 30    | 10% | 3          | 36    | 8%  |
| OMISSION             | 3           | 107   | 3%  | 4             | 30    | 13% | 2          | 36    | 6%  |
| PLACEMENT            | 8           | 107   | 7%  | 5             | 30    | 17% | 1          | 36    | 3%  |
| SELECTION OF SOURCES | 13          | 107   | 12% | 4             | 30    | 13% | 3          | 36    | 8%  |
| LABELLING            | 6           | 107   | 6%  | 4             | 30    | 13% | 3          | 36    | 8%  |
| Total                | 35          | 107   | 33% | 20            | 30    | 67% | 12         | 36    | 33% |

**Table 16: Evidence of Bias**

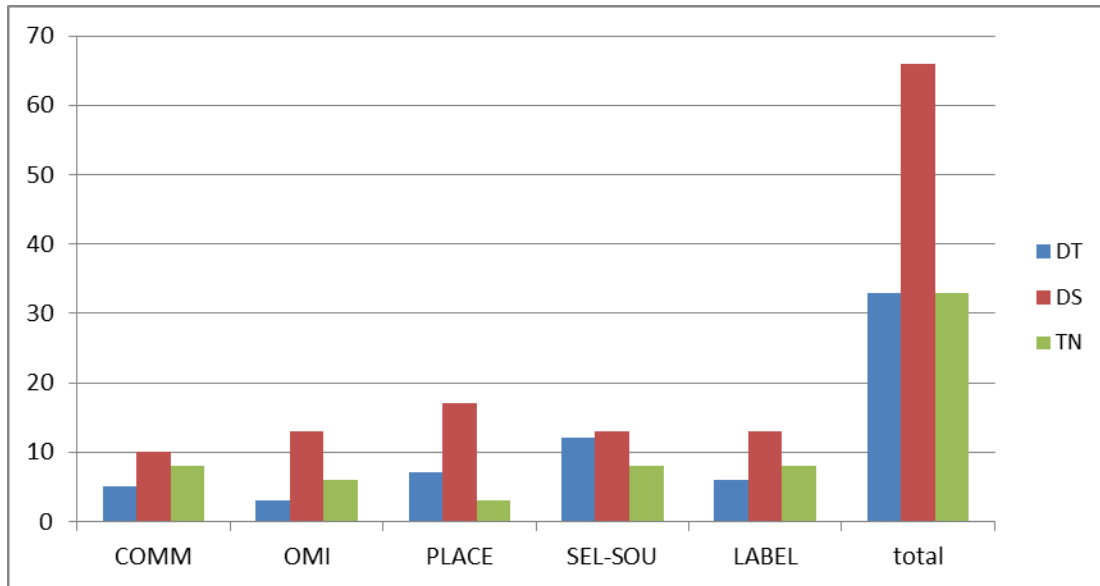


Figure 8: Evidence of Bias

From the table 16 and figure 10above, it can be seen that all the newspapers studied use to various degrees all the biases listed. The Daily Sun a had higher percentages in all forms of bias; a total of 67% bias however the type of bias used most by the Daily Sun, is bias by placement where it can be seen from table 10 that **The Daily Sun** has 17%. The bias which all the three newspapers employ in various degrees is bias by selection of sources, while **The Daily Sun** has 13% bias in selection of sources, **Daily Trust** had 12% while **The Nation** had 8% however as can be seen from Table 10, all newspapers are guilty of all the forms of bias in various degrees.

In an interview with an editor with The Nation Mr Yomi, he admitted that sometimes bias is unavoidable “If only one side of the story is gotten, it would be reflected that the other opinion wasn’t gotten however if the other side comes back with their story, it would be reported as reaction and this will not attract the same space or size of headline”

All the editors admit that their reporters do not get special training on peace reporting but that their reporters adhere to basic principles of objectivity, balance, accuracy and fairness however the content analysis indicates that this is not true of all the conflicts studied. The high level of bias discovered in this research is a contradiction to the editor's conviction that their reports are balanced and objective. An editor of **Daily Trust** Mr Aminu who responded to the question of one sided report by saying that some sect refused to talk to them, is a clear indication of bias in their news reports. No national newspaper should be seen as supporting any single ethnic or religious group. This would lead readers to question the papers' objectivity

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Summary:

Thus far we have explored in this study the reasons why conflicts occur. Conflict can happen as a result of competition for inadequate resources, unfairly distributed power, ethnic/religious intolerance, fear of domination and self-preservation. Conflict escalates into violence largely as a result of failure in communication. Rancour can occur as a result of communication; it can intensify through a gap in communication and can also be resolved with adequate communication. The news media is the medium through which communication to a large audience is achieved; this makes it a very delicate tool in conflict situations

Communication in a conflict situation when handled well, will lead to a resolution of the conflict or the conflict being transformed positively. However if not handled adequately or compromised in any way, it would lead to an escalation of the conflict.

Conflict as was discovered is not always negative as conflict has helped in development of nations. Conflict has also resulted in the development of nations considering that the two world wars had the effect of putting the United States of America in a position to become the number one economic and political power for a very long time not only as a result of the immense growth in strength and industry but also as a result of abundant immigrants with valuable skills, knowledge and a zeal to succeed.

Conflicts can also be said to have positive consequences especially in terms of technology, the need to have an edge over other possible rival nations has led to the invention of most of the

technologies we have today. Technologies from the radio, telephones, to satellite and the Internet were first invented for military purposes. The cold war, when the two blocs, the western or capitalist bloc and the eastern bloc or communist bloc were living in constant fear that the rival bloc might have the upper hand in a full-fledged war led to several of the technologies we enjoy today.

Conflict has been discovered to have two main parties, the primary parties which are the parties involved in the conflict directly while the secondary parties or shadows are not so visible in the conflict. Shadows complicate situations mostly because it is difficult to identify them and their roles in the conflict. For there to be conflict there has to be an incompatibility and for it to be an armed conflict, the parties or actors involved have to be manifest and violent and use arms. Conflicts have also been classified into five stages; the pre-conflict stage, the confrontation stage, crisis stage, outcome stage and post-conflict stage.

Most of the conflicts that have happened overtime have had to do with identity; conflicts that have been happening in the Middle-East have been about identity as well as the two world wars. Conflict in Northern Nigeria also has been about identity, having access to political power is a means to secure the dignity, identity and security of a particular group. No group wants to be overpowered by another. Therefore it was identified that most of the religious fights in Northern Nigeria are not actually about disagreements of religious ideologies but about the fear of one religion or tribe having too much power over another.

Rancour can occur as a result of communication; it can intensify through a gap in communication and can also be resolved with adequate communication. The news media is the

medium through which communication to a large audience is achieved; this makes it a very delicate tool in conflict situations

Reporting on any conflict is a sensitive thing to do. Although there is not a specific guideline on how conflict should be reported, the media has a social responsibility to its audience. This is particularly important as the news media, has over time been a target for distortion, manipulation or clampdown by interests seeking to profit from conflict.

The way the media reports on a conflict has an effect on how the conflict progresses and as is often the case, the media do not understand enough about conflict dynamics or the people involved to report adequately, and are often hindered by poor training, ownership and events happening elsewhere in the world. Working under tight deadlines often does not allow reporters to give the reports the attention it deserves.

The aim of the study was to examine the ways in which the nature of conflict reporting either enhances or diminishes conflict and suggest ways of reporting peace by doing an analysis of some selected media reports on conflict. The study also looked at the newspaper's general reportage on conflict situations by examining the emphasis the various newspapers accorded to conflicts and suggested strategies necessary to avoid conflict. The three newspapers studied, *The Daily Sun Newspaper*, *The Nation Newspaper* and *Daily Trust newspaper*, are the highest circulating newspapers in the different geo-political regions in the country.

Though it is agreed that the media has an impact on how a conflict progresses, the role of the media in conflict situations is a highly disputed one. Advances in technology have made reporting on conflict situations more complicated, as the digitization of news media has led to a

compression of time and space, therefore images of events that happen anywhere in the world are seen instantly. However the media often has little interest in a conflict in its pre-violent stage or conflict resolution stage, but focuses more on the violent stage largely due to time constraint and sensational nature of news.

The study has also highlighted the impact of conflicts on development and how the media can help in mitigating it. The study has also looked at peace Journalism and what differentiates peace reporting/conflict sensitive reporting from violence/war journalism.

While media scholars like Howard Ross, Jake Lynch, Annabel McGoldrick strongly propose that the media should be pro-peace in reports, others like Sandra Melone George Terzis, and several others opine that it is not the duty of the media to be pro-peace rather the media's role is a to report happenings to its audience. However despite the two sides of the debate, it is necessary to note that apart from deliberately being pro-peace or not, several other factors affect the media in conflict. Some of these factors include ownership, propaganda, state influence as well as the ideological leanings of the media.

The study furthermore explored various conflict theories like the structural conflict theory, realists' theories, biological theories, value conflict theory, data theory, interest conflict theory which all serve to explain why conflicts occur.

The media and development in conflict situations was also investigated. The media serves as an avenue in communicating progress; can serve as an independent assessment of any development process and enable dialogue.

The theoretical framework was also explored; this consists of the Agenda setting theory and the Social Responsibility theory. These two theories were studied to see how when combined can be used in conflict reporting to stop conflicts from escalating and to bring about peace.

The research method is qualitative utilizing content analysis of the reports, critical discuss analysis of the headlines, and interviews with representatives of the three newspapers. These research processes exposed the weakness of the media system in Nigeria. This can be seen in a situation where the *Daily Trust* newspaper had 67 per cent of the total reports on conflict in Northern Nigeria. This is an indication of ethnic bias in news worthiness which is manifest in the Nigerian media, and indicates the reality in the larger Nigerian society. All three newspapers are national dailies. A national newspaper is supposed to report based on news worthiness and not give special attention or neglect to any region. Therefore the wide disparity should not be ignored.

As was discovered in this research, though the *Daily Trust* had lots of reports on the various conflicts that were studied however most of these reports were straight news stories that displayed some level of bias and cannot be said to be comprehensive. *Daily Trust* newspaper also displayed some level of conflict-sensitive reporting in its news stories on some of the conflicts studied like the April 2011 post-election and the July 2012 bomb blast in Kaduna and Zaria churches. In these instances *Daily Trust* had reports that looked at the root causes of the conflict from all sides, the human angle, and the ties that bind. The language used was also mild and not accusatory however these reports were done at the tail end of the conflict. The effort at conflict-sensitive reporting by this newspaper at that stage of the conflict can be contradicted by



the inciting and bias reports that this newspaper displayed in the midst of the conflict which the content analysis and discourse analysis discovered to be quite high this was explained by the newspaper editor as due to inability to get across to the people affected while the conflict is violent and also lack of time as deadlines have to be met. Also the *Daily Trust* reports on the 2008 Local Government election conflict in Jos was discovered to be aggravating and bias

*The Nation* newspaper on the other hand made a little effort to look at the root causes of conflict and to dissuade the public from violence in situations of high tension. But this newspaper had very few reports on these conflicts. An editor with *The Nation* newspaper attributed poor report on conflict to editorial discretion, saying that *The Nation* does not allow stories which are a threat to national unity to be published he added that *The Nation* has a corporate social responsibility to consider when reporting. The *Nation* newspaper under this research was discovered to be the most conflict-sensitive in its reports, nevertheless this newspaper simply did not report enough on the various conflicts and in conflict situations, little information can be just as dangerous as aggravating information

*The Daily Sun* newspaper as this study discovered had no comprehensive report on any of the conflicts studied. This newspaper only had hard news and no feature news on any of the conflicts. This is contrary to the information gotten from an interview with an editor from *The Daily Sun*, who maintained that the newspaper reports news break on conflicts as hard news but later does a featured article which expounds on the conflict.

All the newspapers studied used religious and cultural identities in their reports, usually with very catchy headlines on the front pages even though all the editors agreed that the use of

religious and cultural identities is detrimental to the conflict. Editors of the three newspapers confirmed that their reporters do not undergo any training on conflict-sensitive reporting however their reporters adhere to the principles journalism.

The research uncovered a lot of bias by the three newspaper reports; this bias was confirmed by the editors of the newspapers who claim it is impossible not to be biased. *The Daily Sun* editor said though they send as many reporters as possible into the field, the reporters can only report what they see which might be unfair to the other parties involved. The editor of the *Daily Trust* newspaper on the other had maintained that their reporters can only report the sides of people who will speak with them; he maintained that sometimes the other party involved in the conflict is not willing to talk to their reporters. The editor of *The Nation* newspaper said that bias cannot be avoided because when there is a newsbreak, it usually gets front page coverage, and though the other party is allowed to give their own view, it is usually reactionary news and will not get the same prominence as the news break.

#### **5.1.1 Weaknesses of the study:**

The study was focused on print media; therefore the result of the research might not necessarily be true of other media like the broadcast and online media

The study was on *The Nation, Daily Trust* and *The Daily Sun* newspaper; therefore the result obtained might not be true of other newspapers

As discovered in the research, the way these newspapers covered each of the conflicts under study is different. Therefore it should be noted that this research was only concerned with

conflict in Northern Nigeria at the selected periods, the same research conducted on conflict in another part of the country might not yield the same result

Although the study discovered that in some conflict situations, some people reacted violently because of media reports which indicated that they may be targeted at or their ethnic or religious group was under attack, the study did not make an actual link that media reports lead to violence. The study only showed that the reports were inciting or not as the case may be.

Also all the reports were analysed based on their reportage of the violent conflict without looking at other events which occurred simultaneously within the period and the degree of importance that the media attaches to them.

## **5.2 Conclusion:**

Conflict-sensitive reporting contributes to reconciliation and peace-building. Therefore it is important that Nigerian media adopt conflict-sensitive reporting. Nigerian newspapers need to build the trust of their audience before they can be considered National in the true sense

When the media is seen to practice the use of sentiments in its report or it is perceived to be particularly sympathetic to a particular region, ethnic group or religion, it loses its credibility with readers. This may in some way explain why some people will not allow themselves to be interviewed by some of the newspapers. It may also explain the patronage of Nigerian newspapers along ethnic lines.

The intention of peace reporting is to make reports on conflict more insightful, more comprehensive and to ultimately pave the way for more understanding and less violence.

However making reports more comprehensive and insightful does not mean simply reporting more on the conflict, but looking at the root causes of the conflict in a bid to make those involved understand each other more. Being comprehensive includes making clearer the possibilities of resolving conflict rather than perpetuating it.

### **5.3 Recommendations:**

Reliable reporting, and responsible editing, creates communication among disputant parties, it corrects misperceptions by identify underlying interests and offering solutions. The media provides an outlet to achieving understanding and creating harmony. It can offer solutions, and build confidence.

- Journalists should undergo training on conflict sensitive reporting. It is prudent that apart from journalist training, journalist should be trained on how to report conflict situations, editors should also be more aware in the types of language, tone and emphasis they place on reports before it is allowed out to the audience
- Situations that show a potential for conflict, should not be ignored until the conflict becomes violent because conflict turns violent when no common ground or shared interest can be established. Therefore in situations like these, the media should endeavour to educate the public to ties that bound and also be pro-peace in their reports. It is assumed that the media has an agenda setting effect on its audience, therefore if the media carries reports that are pro-peace, it will encourage in diverting antagonistic thoughts.

- The media should avoid the unjustified use of cultural and religious identities in reports, particularly in areas where these labels are sensitive issues likely to raise ire and lead to violent reactions.
- When reporting on conflicts, the media should take note that conflicts are multi-faceted; therefore they should and seek commonalities as well as points of disagreement among disputants, and seek alternative perspectives and solutions to the conflict from the people involved.

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