

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The relationship between the mass media and society is such that the two mutually interact and mutually influence each other. Media text is therefore reflective of the beliefs, biases and interests embedded in society, and these beliefs, biases and interests are in turn reinforced by media text to create a media-society nexus (Lewis, 2005). This perspective subjects to serious scrutiny the traditional conceptualisation of media objectivity which, as it were, tends to sever the media from their political, economic and cultural circumstances (Bagdikian, 1983; Gilens & Hertzman, 2000; Petley, 2004).

Whenever the media report any issue in society, they inevitably as it were project certain ideologies and power interests. Hence, the media become implicated in what has been termed language-ideology-power nexus which, in this context, reflects the process whereby media's use of language generates certain ideological tendencies and promotes corresponding power interests. Thus, literature reveals that media reportage of the political institution and events in different parts of the world is coloured with ideological biases depending on factors such as ownership, political climate and culture and such biases naturally serve certain power interests (Hall, 1997c; Fairclough, 1989; Biernatzki, 2002; Yanich, 2004).

In Nigeria, ethnicity has become a major ideological issue which has naturally reflected in the language of reportage of her media. A plethora of empirical evidence exists to the effect that

media reportage of ethnicity-related issues has been visibly characterised by ideological biases (Jibo, 1981 cited in Ngwu, Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Medubi, 2002; Anim, 2007; Salawu, 2013; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Sule, 2015). This suggests that the media in Nigeria, instead of being channels for dissemination of “objective” messages about ethnicity-related issues, are indeed a site for ideological and power contestations. While studies (such as Medubi, 2002; Anim, 2007; Salawu, 2013; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Sule, 2015) have looked at how this pattern unfolds in regard to coverage of particular ethnicity-related issues and developments, this study undertook this inquiry in relation to the reportage of the overall activities of ethnic interest groups – who have been called the major organised voices of ethnicity in the country (Nnoli, 1978; Ebegbulem, 2001).

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

The landmark event of January 1, 1914, wherein Lord Frederick Lugard amalgamated what was then the Northern and Southern Protectorates with the Colony of Lagos to form the entity known as Nigeria marked the beginning of coexistence under one political roof of peoples of widely differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Ojo, 2014; Eric, 2016; Aghamelu & Aghamelu, n.d.). Thus began the long-running tale of tensions, frictions and bloody clashes that have become a recurring decimal in the Nigeria’s political journey (Ebegbulem, 2001; Edewor, Aluko & Folarin, 2014; Ojo, 2014), with the civil war of 1967 – 1970 arguably being the climax so far. The amalgamation had resulted in the emergence of a political entity that is unsettled and tension-soaked; in fact inscribed with what Umejiesi (2012) describes as “grievance dynamics” manifesting as “contestation for sovereignty” between the state and previously independent local (ethnic) communities (p.47).

Consequently, Nigeria, from the outset, became burdened with ethnic divisiveness which immediately inscribed its mark on every aspect of the life of the emerging nation. Hence, the

early socio-political institutions, including political parties and the press, became infected with the pervading ferment of ethnicity (Ebegbukem, 2011; Ojo 2014; Daramola, 2013; Nwafor, 2015).

However, it was in 1953 that ethnic contestation first exploded into physical violence in Nigeria when some disgruntled northern youths went wild in the streets of Kano in a bloody riot over what they saw as the humiliating treatment meted to their leaders by the southern leaders following their disagreement with the latter over the desirability of independence for Nigeria in 1956 (Sagay, 2009). The years 1964, 1965 and 1966 were to witness even worse uprisings in the western and northern parts of the country leading to hundreds of deaths and eventually landing the nation in a 30-month civil war (Ndujihe, 2011). Earlier, however, what was to mark the beginning of the perennial violent agitations in the Niger Delta had exploded when in 1966, a young lawyer and policeman, Isaac Adaka Boro, led his Niger Delta Volunteer Force in a bloody insurgency, apparently aimed at realizing a Niger Delta Republic (Ndujihe, 2011).

Since after the civil war, tens of ethnic crises have visited Nigeria, some of them purely ethnic while others appeared to have a mixture of ethnic and religious emotions. Prominent amongst them are the Maitatsine crisis of 1980 which began in Kano and subsequently spread to Yola, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Gombe in that order and ultimately sending over 6, 000 persons to their early graves. Others include the Ilorin religious riot (1986); Kafanchan crisis (1987) with its reverberations in Gusau, Kano, Zaria, Katsina and Funtua; Katsina crisis (1991) described as “the worst religious crisis the country has witnessed since 1984”; as well as the Kaduna crisis involving the indigenous Katafs and Hausas (1992, 1994 and 1995), among others (Ndujihe, 2011).

In the same vein, the fourth republic was fated to witness its own series of ethnic clashes, which include the clashes between the O’odua People’s Congress (OPC) and the Ijaw community and

between the former and the Hausa community both in Lagos in the early days of the fourth republic. Others include the Jos crisis of 2001 and 2004, the latter leading to declaration of a state of emergency in Plateau State; and the series of clashes among ethnic groups of Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri in Delta State. Meanwhile, throughout this period, the Niger Delta region was experiencing a wave of insurgency in the form of kidnapping, killing and destruction as perpetrated by groups like the Asari-Dokubo-led Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Henry Okah-led Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), all of which eventually compelled the government of late President Musa Yar'Adua to initiate an amnesty programme (Ndujihe, 2011).

More recently, in 2011, ethnic violence erupted in Northern Nigeria following the announcing of the result of the presidential election of that year, while the 2015 general election, like many elections before it, had a strong flavour of ethnicity around it (Batta, Batta & Mboho, 2015). Similarly, under the current administration, ethnic violence has made itself unmistakably felt particularly with the many instances of killings involving alleged Fulani herdsmen (Ezeonwuka & Igwe, 2016; Frank, 2016).

All these are evident of the position of ethnicity as a very powerful force shaping the socio-political landscape of Nigeria. This is notwithstanding the fact that ethnicity is not officially recognised in the political structure of the country. The country's political structure comprises a central government and component units which are states, while local governments lie in the third tier (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, sections 2[2] and 3[6]). The nearest ethnic groups came to being officially part of this structure was during the era of regional governments when the regional boundaries roughly corresponded with the three major ethnic groups; but the fact that none of the regions was completely ethnically homogenous meant that they could not be quite correctly tagged ethnic units.

Nonetheless, as already evident from the foregoing discussion, ethnicity and ethnic groups, notwithstanding their non-formal status in the nation's political set-up, have continued to exert a great deal of influence on the political set-up itself. The first instance of state creation in 1967 was in response to "fear" of ethnicity (Kasali, 2013). Subsequent state creations since the first one in 1967 have obviously not been unmindful of the ethnic imperative in structuring the country, nay have actually been inspired by ethnicity (Vande, 2012; Adetoye, 2016). Similarly, several policies of the country including notably the federal character principle and the derivation determinant in revenue sharing have been influenced wholly or partly by ethnicity (Ojie & Ewghrudjakpor, 2009).

Despite their earlier stated non-inclusion in the formalised socio-political structure of Nigeria, ethnic groups are far from not having any collective voice. This is given the presence of interest groups whose ultimate objective is to project and fight for the interest of the respective ethnic groups they seek to represent. These groups, whose presence has been felt since the pre-independence era (Nnoli, 1978), now serve as the only organised corporate voice of ethnicity and ethnic groups in the country. Some of them such as ACF, Ohanaeze, Afenifere and Ibibio People's Union are more conservative and conformist, while others such as MASSOB, MOSOP, IPOB and OPC are more radical and tend towards self-determination. These bodies are informal entities in that they have no formal place in the politico-legal set-up of the country. Unlike other political groupings (such as state and local governments), their existence and activities are *permitted* and not *commanded* by law.

Nevertheless, since ethnicity is very influential, ethnic interest groups are consequently very influential in spite of their non-formal status within the political structure. Their invitation to the national conferences of 2004 and 2014 is strong evidence of their status as the corporate voice of

ethnic groups in the country. Besides, the role of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in influencing policies related to petroleum exploration as it affects the Niger Delta, and the role of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Arewa Consultative Forum, Afenifere and others as the voices of their respective ethnic groups before the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (Oputa Panel) in 2001 are a testimony to the position of these groups as shapers of public discourse and policies (Kukah, 2012).

Consequently, understanding the ethnic interest groups is important to appreciating the dynamics of ethnicity and ethnic politics in Nigeria (Nnoli, 1978). In the same vein, understanding how the media represent these groups will be important to appreciating how ethnicity is generally represented in the media.

These ethnic interest groups operate and communicate within a very vast geographic and cultural space known as Nigeria; and so, like other political actors and interests, they require the mass media to be able to assert a presence within this huge space. This underscores the necessary relationship between them and the media; the mass media must project them for them to be relevant – the implication of which is that what will be generally known of these groups (i.e. people's impression of them) will largely be as represented by the media. And in representing any phenomenon, the media ultimately reflect the ideological and power contestations in society as realised in and through language (Taiwo, 2007; Zaidi, 2012).

Hence, in reporting ethnic interest groups, the media would not be a detached messenger passively receiving and relaying messages, but will actually be creating meanings as determined by the cultural environment in which they operate (Lewis, 2005). Media text cannot be separated from the overall cultural discourse in society. This discourse embodies the beliefs and prejudices of society regarding social phenomena including ethnicity, and these find their way into the

media directly through the gatekeepers (including the owner) and indirectly through government regulators, advertisers, politicians and all whose patronages keep the media running (Bagdikian, 1983; Gilens & Hertzman, 2000; Petley, 2004).

Therefore, the text generated by the media on ethnic interest groups would be a product of the interaction among these interests; i.e. the gatekeepers (media owner, reporters and editors) who, of course, belong to definite ethnic groups and have their respective ethnic persuasions; the government which through law and other institutional tools seeks to assert the primacy of the state sovereignty over ethnic claims; the advertisers (politicians and businesses) whose money oils the engine of the media; and the audience whose patronage must be sought through content that respects their taste and sentiments. The interaction of these interests constitutes the sphere of media discourse; this discourse shapes media text and is in turn shaped by media text (Lewis, 2005). However, it is important to point out that these interests are not of equal influence on text generation; the extent of influence wielded by each could vary depending on the circumstances of a given moment of discourse.

While the above analysis is true of all phenomena that come under media reportage, there arises greater concern when what is involved is a divisive and ideologically charged phenomenon like ethnicity, race, religion, etc. In reporting such issues, the media often tend to be more vulnerable to ideological influences; they tend to be entrapped in the middle of ideological contestations entailed by such divisive phenomena. And whatever decision they may take in this circumstance is potentially of serious consequences. Besides, there is also the pressure to sensationalise these issues i.e. represent them in a dramatic manner to strengthen audience patronage; a pressure which unfortunately the media have many a time been found to succumb to (Jenkins, 1981; Biernatzki, 2002; Yanich, 2004; Akin, 2005; Lewis, 2005).

In view of the foregoing and the earlier noted position of ethnicity and ethnic interest groups in the Nigeria's sphere of political relations, there arguably arose the need for a study that would scrutinise newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups from the perspective of the discourse of language, ideology and power.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Communication, once viewed from the framework of the language-ideology-power nexus, poses the problem of whether any message could be relied on as objective and truthful (Taiwo, 2007; Zaidi, 2012). This is based on the view that communication can only materialise in language, and language is intrinsically permeated by ideological and power manipulations; language cannot be innocent for it always conveys meaning, a perspective, a certain way of looking at reality (Fairclough, 1989; Hall, 1997a; Hall, 1997b). Consequently, the media (including newspapers) are trapped in some sort of "objectivity" and "truth" dilemma as they try to communicate via language. Arguably, this dilemma would become more pronounced when it comes to a sphere like ethnicity with its inherent ideological and political tensions.

In Nigeria, ethnicity has been identified as a major bane. It has been blamed for all sorts of counter-developmental tendencies in the country including strife, violence, nepotism and corruption (Ayatse & Akuva, 2013; Ebegbulem, 2011). In fact, Ayatse and Akuva (2013) claim that ethnicity "has been discovered to have been responsible for most of the political, administrative, economic, social and cultural maladies in Nigeria" (p.178). Hence, ethnic interest groups, who champion ethnic claims, maintain an uneasy presence in the polity – as their activities often bear the potential for inciting tensions and conflicts (Ayatse & Akuva, 2013). With the media thrown into the middle of these tensions and disputes, they arguably walk a tight ethical rope as their professionalism is brought under pressure.

Importantly, the reality of the language-ideology-power dynamics that lies beneath the gatekeeping process makes the task of “objectively” and “fairly” reporting the activities of these interest groups even more complex given the possible influence of societal prejudices and contestations in regard to ethnicity. Could this mean that Nigerian newspapers, as against their perceived traditional role of reporting *things as they are*, would become a site for ethnic contestations? This question may have become instructive given the unsavoury experience which ethnic relations in Nigeria has become and the fact that results of previous studies (such as Omenugha & Ukwueze, 2011; Ngwu, Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Nwafor, 2015) have suggested that the media (including newspapers) have sometimes become an instigator and/or catalyst of ethnic tensions.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to examine the representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers from the perspective of the mutual relationship between language, ideology and power as it relates to the media. In other words, the study was a language-based analysis of content of newspapers vis-a-vis the activities of the ethnic interest groups with the view to establishing the ideological tendencies and power interests linked to the language of the reportage. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study were as follows:

- i. To assess the extent newspapers gave frequent and prominent coverage to ethnic interest groups in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the ideologies and power interests embedded in the language of representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers.

- iii. To determine how the owners' ethnic background affected the representation of ethnic interest groups in the Nigerian newspapers.
- iv. To examine the dominant discourses of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria newspapers.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to address the above objectives of study:

1. To what extent did newspapers give frequent and prominent coverage to ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?
2. What ideologies and power interests were embedded in the language of representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers?
3. In what ways did the ethnicity of the owner influence the language of representation of ethnic interest groups?
4. What were the dominant discourses of ethnic interest groups in these newspapers?

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

Studies on media and ethnicity in the country have predominantly focused on specific ethnicity-related issues and events (see for instance Medubi, 2002; Anim, 2007; Salawu, 2013; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Sule, 2015). This study however focused on the overall activities of all ethnic interest groups in the country in order to have a more holistic picture. This approach was significant given that these groups have been described as the major organised voices of ethnicity in the country (Nnoli, 1978; Ebegbulem, 2001), hence their activities and communications offer a vital understanding of ethnic relations and discourses in Nigeria. By

focusing on their reportage, therefore, this study arguably added some depth to the extant empirical literature in the area of ethnicity and media.

The study also added to theoretical understanding of the relationship between the media and ethnicity in Nigeria by examining this within the context of the language-ideology-power nexus; an approach that views media text from the perspective of its political, economic and cultural context, thus enabling a more holistic understanding (Fairclough, 1989; Hall, 1997b; Lewis, 2005). None of the studies found on media reportage of ethnicity-related issues adopted this approach. Relatedly, this study further validated theories (such as representation, framing and constructivism) which understand media gatekeeping to go beyond mere passive reporting of events and issues to include active creation of meanings and perspectives (i.e. discourses) by the media. Precisely, the study showed that this theoretical perspective is valid in respect to newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian, just the same way as it has been proven to be in other instances.

Newspapers (and perhaps other forms of mass media such as TV and radio) in Nigeria could benefit from this study by way of gaining some form of feedback on their performance in reporting ethnic interest groups and ethnicity in general. In other words, these newspaper houses could find the data to be generated by the research useful for self-assessment and possible improvement in their reportage of ethnicity.

Similarly, the government and other stakeholders in Nigeria's sphere of political relations could find the data to be generated by this research useful for enhancing ethnic cohesion and national unity. Since the mass media play a dominant role in how ethnic consciousness and ethnic relations are generated and shaped (Brooks & Hébert, 2006), understanding how newspapers in Nigeria represent ethnicity could offer some useful insight to government and other stakeholders

towards better management of ethnic relations in the country. This improved management is required at this time the nation is experiencing an upsurge in the activities of secessionist groups such as MASSOB and IPOB.

### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The study focused on language, ideology and power in newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. While this subject encompasses a lot of issues, this study investigated only the selected variables as reflected in the research objectives above i.e. frequency and prominence of coverage; ideologies and power interests embedded in the language of representation; influence of the ethnicity of ownership on language of representation; and dominant discourses of ethnic groups in the selected newspapers.

Although there were other categories of newspapers in Nigeria in terms of geographic coverage and frequency, the study restricted itself to only national dailies being that they constitute the mainstream in the nation's newspaper industry (Adedeji, 2009; Eze, 2017). Also, data collection was confined to only four newspapers; however, they were selected in such a way that they would represent the ethnic spread of ownership and readership of newspapers in Nigeria. Similarly, the study was delimited to a two-year period.

### **1.7. Definition of Terms**

Key terms that featured in the study were defined as follows:

**Dominant Discourses:** This means perspectives or points of view in regard to an issue. In the context of this study, it precisely referred to those perspectives, judgments or viewpoints embedded in newspaper coverage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria.

**Ethnic Interest Groups:** These are groups whose aim is to project or fight for the interest of their respective ethnic groups in Nigeria. They include groups like Afenifere, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Ijay Monitoring Group (IMG), O’odua People’s Congress and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) among others.

**Ethnicity:** This refers to attribution of identity based on membership of an ethnic group. In the context of this study, it precisely referred to membership and identity of any of the numerous ethnic groups in Nigeria such as Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, Efik, Ibibio, Kanuri, Ijaw, Itsekiri, etc.

**Ideology:** This is a set of beliefs or viewpoints held by a person or group regarding any phenomenon and which shape their actions and reactions in the social sphere. In the context of this study, it precisely referred to a set of beliefs held in regard to one’s ethnic group and those of others and which influence actions and reactions within the sphere of ethnic relations.

**Language:** Thus is anything that can communicate meaning; a system of signs including words, symbols, pictures, sounds, colours, flags, gestures etc through which a message can be passed. In the context of this study, it precisely referred to the sign systems including text, picture, sketches (cartoons), colour etc employed by newspapers in conveying their message.

**Language-Ideology-Power Nexus:** This means the complex relationship among language, ideology and power in which they mutually interact and shape each other. In the context of this study, it refers precisely to the correlation between the language of newspaper communication and certain ideological and power interests in society.

**Nigerian Newspapers:** These are unbound publications in Nigeria issued at regular intervals (daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly etc) carrying news, features, pictures, editorials and other materials. In the context of this study, it precisely refers to such publications which are issued daily and which circulate nationally.

**Power:** This refers to influence or control which a person, group or institution tends to exercise over other persons, groups or institutions in the course of social interaction. It also means ability and capacity to represent oneself and other people. More precisely, in the context of this study, it refers to the capacity to influence beliefs and practices (i.e. discourses) regarding ethnicity via representation.

**Representation:** This is the process and manner in which the idea of a person, group or thing is constructed and which usually influences beliefs and practices regarding such persons, groups or things. In the context of this study, it more precisely refers to the images and ideas constructed of ethnicity and ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter engaged the concepts, empirical studies and theories related to the subject of the study i.e. conceptual, empirical and theoretical reviews. The conceptual review covered concepts relevant to the subject of study while the empirical review examined studies on media coverage of ethnicity-related developments and those on influence of ethnicity on reportage generally. The theoretical review, on the other hand, engaged theories related to the subject of study before anchoring the study on one of them by way of theoretical framework. Sources of review materials are mainly journal articles while textbooks, conference papers, news periodicals and other online sources were equally found useful.

#### **2.1. CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE**

The conceptual literature looked at newspaper readership and political culture in Nigeria, ethnicity, ethnic interest groups, representation, identity construction, and media and ethnicity. Lastly, it examined the concept of language-ideology-power nexus and which was employed in systematically unifying all the other concepts.

##### **2.1.1. Newspaper Readership and Political Culture in Nigeria**

Any inquiry into newspaper representation of political institutions and actors (such as ethnic interest groups) would ideally derive its justifiability from the assumption that newspapers are an important mass communication channel with significant influence in the social realm. Such assumption would imply that newspapers are read by a critical number or segment of society – or at least are an indirect source of information for many via the two-step flow dynamics. The foregoing underscores the need to examine newspaper readership in Nigeria and its role in the nation's political culture.

Historically newspaper has played an important role in the Nigeria's political sphere. This trend started from the colonial era when the nation's first newspaper, *Iwe Irohin*, was politically active by way of speaking against what it saw as unjust colonial policies on the people of Egba land. Incidentally, it was in the combustible atmosphere of this colonial politics that the paper was eventually consumed in 1867 when its press was burnt by a mob (Ojobor, 2002; Daramola, 2003). The era of the nationalist press which commenced in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked a very significant phase in the role of newspaper in Nigerian politics. At this time, the nationalists established newspaper houses which became very vocal against "unjust" colonial policies and in their pressing for independence. Such combative journalism led to clashes between the newspapers and the colonial government and which led to trial and imprisonment of some of their editors and reporters (Ojobor, 2002; Daramola, 2003). The post-independence press saw continuation of the political role of the press. The newspapers of the early independence era became a veritable political weapon in the hands of the political elite who used them to consolidate their political positions (Umechukwu, 2003). For instance, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's emergence as the Premier of the Eastern Region following his unsuccessful attempt in the Western Region in 1953 is said to have been achieved partly through the instrumentality of his newspapers including the much influential *West African Pilot* (Achebe, 1983). The long struggle against military dictatorship also saw Nigerian newspapers assuming a significant political role. They became an important platform for public discussion and debate, and their power to this effect is evident in the fact that the military regimes were agitated by their activities leading to proscriptions, arrests, detentions, trials and other legal and extralegal punitive measures (Igbokwe, 2001; Layefa, Johnson & Taiwo, 2016).

The early years of newspapers in Nigeria saw them exist as the only modern channel of mass communication available to the people. Consequently, the people had no other choice than to seek for political information via newspapers or at least hear from those who had read the papers.

However, the entry into the Nigerian mass communication space of the electronic media particularly from the late 1950s and early 1960s saw the monopoly of the newspapers being broken (Chukwu, 2014). However, it was the advent of the new media that has apparently presented the most formidable challenge for newspapers (Eze, 2017; Hassan, Azmi & Nasidi, 2018).

Globally, this new media challenge has been felt and prominently discussed in scholarship and among the industry players. In the United States, for instance, many newspaper establishments have been struggling due to revenue shortfalls and circulation declines across the industry. Over the last couple of years, weekday circulation has fallen by 17% and advertising revenue by more than 50%. In 2014 alone, three different media houses had to sacrifice more than 100 newspaper properties to strengthen their broadcast or digital divisions that were performing much better. Major newspaper houses have equally been sold recently with details of the sales showing “dramatic devaluation” (Mitchell & Matsa, 2015). Generally, since the early 2000s, the circulation and revenue fortunes of the newspaper industry in the US have been in steady decline. In 2017, the estimated combined total circulation of print and digital newspapers in the country was 31 million for weekdays and 34 million for Sundays representing 11% and 10% reductions respectively from the previous year. However, the decline has affected print circulation more than digital circulation (Pew Research Centre, 2018).

In Nigeria, the decline in newspaper readership has been quite deep, such that *Daily Times*, at the peak of its glory, sold more copies than all newspapers in Nigeria today combined despite the larger population and higher literacy rate currently in the country (Chukwu, 2014; Ikechukwu, 2015; Eze, 2017). Care must be taken, however, to avoid the error of exaggerating the role of the new media in this decline by paying attention to the fact that the decline had commenced long before the entry and popularisation of new media in the country and the fact that hardcopy

readership is still far much higher in developed countries despite their vast superiority in new media penetration, sophistication and affordability (Ganiyu, 2014; Chukwu, 2014; Mitchell & Matsa, 2015; Pew Research Centre, 2018). Hence, the submission by scholars like Chukwu (2014) and Eze (2017) that decline in newspaper readership in Nigeria stems from a combination of factors including poor reading culture, poverty, high cost of printing materials (leading to high cover prices) and of course new media penetration becomes plausible.

Like their counterparts the world over, Nigerian newspapers have responded to the new media challenge by taking their activities to the Internet and exploiting a variety of digital platforms including websites, social media and SMS news alert. This migration to the web has resulted in the corresponding migration of newspaper audience to the same platforms. This new culture has ensured that newspapers have moved beyond the old linear routine of merely feeding news to readers to the more dynamic two-way system that enables audience feedback, citizen journalism, news search and opinion polls (Chukwu, 2014).

Logically, while the advent of the new media may adversely affect hardcopy newspaper circulation, it will not necessarily affect online readership. In fact, it has the potential to increase readership as it to a great degree mitigates the barrier of poverty known to have hampered hardcopy readership (Ganiyu, 2014) as well as offers other motivations such as convenience, flexibility and interactivity which the offline copies lack (Ganiyu, 2014; Nkemdilim, 2015). Again, online technologies potentially induce readership even amongst people who are not ordinarily inclined to newspaper as news materials are shared on platforms like Facebooks and WhatsApp, hence possibly encouraging even the not-too-enthusiastic to read, even if only a few sentences or the headlines (Ikechukwu, 2015; Layefa *et al.*, 2016).

Interestingly, however, recent studies (such as Alamu, 2010; Edegoh, Ezech & Aniebo, 2015; Nkemdilim, 2015; and Layefa *et al.*, 2016) indicate that newspapers are still being read by a significant proportion of the population. In fact, Layefa *et al.* (2016) found “that a greater percent of Ekiti residents (94.73%) read newspapers” (p.71). But the study fails to indicate whether this readership is only hardcopy-based or includes softcopy consumers. An earlier study by Ganiyu (2014), nevertheless, revealed that readers preferred on-line to off-line newspapers even as sale of hardcopies had drastically reduced. Some other studies (such as Edegoh *et al.*, 2015; Nkemdilim, 2015) have found online newspapers to be more attractive to readers particularly the youth. Also, men (as against women) have been found to constitute the larger chunk of newspaper readers in the country (Ikechukwu, 2015; Layefa *et al.*, 2016).

Importantly, newspaper is viewed to be a mass medium of the elite, meaning that its appeal is typically found more among persons of this class (Daramola, 2003). Hence in Nigeria, readership is likely to be more vibrant among the political class (politicians and government officials), other political actors (including leaders of ethnic interest groups), leaders of public institutions, religious leaders, traditional leaders and elite professionals such as lawyers, bankers, auditors, doctors among others (Eyiuche, 2003; Adedeji, 2009; Eze, 2018). And being that these people generally constitute the opinion leaders, their readership of newspaper would imply that newspapers remain a powerful agenda setter and influencer of public opinion in the country. Against this backdrop, it becomes safe to assume that notwithstanding whatever seeming evidence to the contrary, newspapers, to whatever extent, could still be assumed to have some significant influence in the Nigeria’s sphere of political culture.

### **2.1.2. The Concept of Ethnicity**

Ethnicity, etymologically, came from the Greek word “ethnikos” meaning “heathen”; an adjective that implicitly refers to the origin of a person (Njoroge, Kimani & Kikech, 2011). Like other forms

of social identity, ethnicity is not easily definable. But basically, ethnic identity is ascribed to persons based on their membership of a certain form of collective known as ethnic group. Defining ethnic groups, Ukiwo (2005) opines that they are groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always founded “on claims or myths of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory.” Although these factors need not necessarily be present before a group is identified as an ethnic group, the basic thing is that such a group is attributed with a common identity that differentiates it from others.

Ethnicity is a very complex and fluid form of identity generated via interpenetration of all or some of the following variables: history, race, language, culture, religion and geography (Nnoli, 1978). Among these variables, culture and language have been identified as an especially important element of ethnicity but they however need not be present all the time for ethnic identity to be established. In Africa, nonetheless, language has been identified as the most common variable in ascribing ethnicity (Ademola, 2009).

Chávez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) suggest that ethnic identity is most often “a frame in which individuals identify consciously or unconsciously with those with whom they feel a common bond because of similar traditions, behaviors, values, and beliefs” (p.40 – 41). This view expresses the psychological dimension of ethnicity where ethnicity becomes a mental bond holding a people together and pushing them towards loyalty and solidarity to a common fold of identity (Pepple in Salawu & Hassan, 2011).

However, ethnicity does not isolate itself; it reaches out and interlocks with other identity forms including political, economic, social, religious, class and other shades of identity. Hence, a particular school of thought argues that ethnicity is realised in political domination, economic exploitation, psychological oppression and class manipulation (Nnoli, 1978).

Ethnicity often lends itself to political contestations as each ethnic group tends to uphold its ideologies and interests against the claims of competing ethnic groups. This is particularly so in multi-ethnic societies where, many a time, one finds ethnic prejudice, discrimination, marginalization and all sorts of conflicts – in one word, “tribalism” (Humphreys, Posner & Weinstein, 2002; Ojie & Ewruhjakpor, 2009; Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Tribalism denotes the divisive, competitive and aggressive dimension of ethnicity wherein ethnicity manifests as rivalry, struggles, rebellion, wars and quest for domination. Examples include the ethnic struggles that culminated in the balkanization of the Soviet Union and the conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups in Rwanda. Ethnic rivalries could degenerate to a crisis of state power leading to attempt by ethnic interests to seize state apparatus in pursuit of sectional advantages (Ojie & Ewruhjakpor, 2009).

Humphreys, Posner and Weinstein (2002) contend that ethnic identities are widely viewed as being responsible for many instances of violent conflict. It has been estimated that conflicts over “identity” account for more than 70% of the civil wars that began between 1960 and 1999 (Sambanis as cited in Humphreys *et al*, 2002).

In addition, ethnic conflicts are perceived as easily culminating in large-scale violence such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. But why is ethnicity usually giving room to political violence? Some leading theories suggest that this is so because of the ability of ethnicity to unite people and catalyse collective action, including actions targeted against a perceived rival or enemy. Furthermore, ethnicity provides the resources including common language and common values which make it easier for individuals to bond and function together with persons of same ethnic group (Bates as cited in Humphreys *et al*, 2002). Also, ethnicity provides informal social institutions that enhance collective action “by promoting the flow of information about reputations, facilitating sanctioning, and generating expectations that cooperative overtures to

fellow group members will be reciprocated” (Humphreys *et al.*, 2002). Lastly, ethnicity operates as a point of reference that allows individuals to organise their behaviour in a way that may include or exclude others (Hardin as cited in Humphreys *et al.*, 2002).

It has been argued that ethnicity has become so significant in the political configurations of modern states that ethnicity and language have at times become equated with national culture. However, this perspective has not been left unchallenged (Kivikuru, 1996).

Admittedly, any discussion on ethnicity may not be complete without attention being paid to the critical and the postmodernist schools that have tended to see ethnicity, not as any rigidly fixed and unassailable phenomenon, but as being completely fluid and dispensable. Writing on this view, Omoniyi (2014) contends that the essentialist framework wherein a person or people are assigned identity by restricting them to a given homogenous socio-linguistic space has become overtaken by a more critical attitude which recognises the dynamic and cross-breeding orientation of cultural spaces. Twentieth century scholarship tends to negate the old essentialist perspectives in the sociolinguistics of identity through emphasis on “the constructedness, multiplicity and in-the-moment nature of identity” (p.103). Arguing in the same vein, Frank Salamone (as cited in Kukah, 1993) avers that ethnic “boundaries are permeable, and people, sometimes singly and sometimes in groups, cross them. They do so in general, either to maximise their opportunities or to minimise or neutralise their threats” (p.1 – 2). Agreeing that ethnic boundaries are not irreversibly fixed, Waters (2009) argues that prevailing social circumstances may enhance or undermine a person’s capacity to cross ethnic identity boundaries. She offers the example of the United States where Whites, she contends, are more enabled to consciously make choices as to their ethnic identity than their Black counterparts. Owing to the fact that for Whites, ethnicity is no longer a significant determinant of social power, White individuals deal with their ethnicity as a matter of mere symbol, so they feel little or no

compulsion in claiming or not claiming their ancestral ethnicity. And when an individual has multiple ancestral ethnicities, they feel free to claim any of them or even discountenance all of them.

The Marxist understanding of ethnicity also denies that ethnicity is ontologically fixed. It contends that ethnicity can be correctly understood only by viewing it as a natural product of the socio-economic realities. It is part of the social superstructure inevitably emanating from the economic infrastructure or mode of production (comprising the society's forces of production and relations of production). In other words, the concept of ethnicity cannot be usefully captured whether for theoretical or practical purposes without situating it in its dialectical relationship with the dynamics of wealth creation, control and distribution as well as class relations – which all account for ethnicity. As such, any attempt to explain ethnicity as an independent phenomenon or attribute to it the “exaggerated” causal status as has often been the case is tantamount to taking the symptom for the disease (Nnoli, 1978).

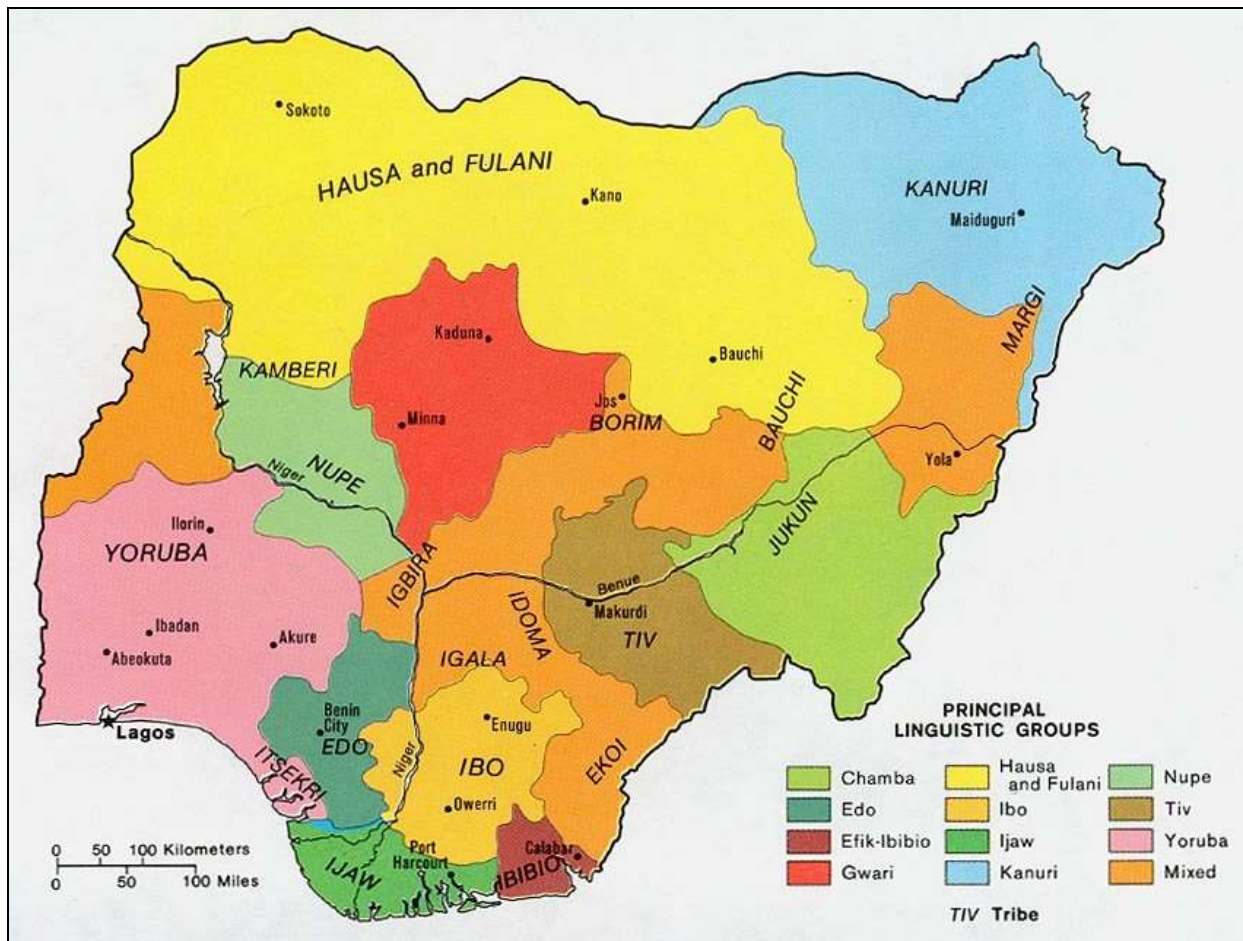
The above differing perspectives point to the complexity and dynamism of the phenomenon of ethnicity. Nnoli (1978) thus reasons that ethnicity cannot be explained by appealing to any fixed or simplistic frame of meaning. This is given its emerging nature, continuous fluidity and interpenetration with other spheres of life, which all create methodological difficulties in studying ethnicity.

However, the above skepticism of the critical cum postmodernist thinking may not remove anything from the fact that ethnic affiliation is a real and influential psychological cum sociological phenomenon. Even if ethnicity is only a matter of perception and emotion, the fact that it is exerting great influence in shaping of human relations in the political, economic, cultural, legal and other spheres of existence is undeniable (Posner & Weinstein, 2002;

Humphreys *et al.*, 2002). Similarly, even if ethnicity, as claimed by the Marxists, is a mere product of economic realities, this fact alone cannot neutralise its social significance.

### **2.1.3. Ethnicity in Nigeria**

After New Guinea and Indonesia, Nigeria ranks as the most ethnically and linguistically diverse country in the world (Blench, & Dendo, 2003). Apparently, no agreement has been reached as to the exact number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, popular views have put this at between 250 and over 300 (Blench, & Dendo, 2003; Ayatse, & Akuva, 2013; Nwafor, 2015). Nwafor (2015) notes that there are 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. The United Nations has also arrived at the same number even as a federal government demographic survey in 1976 found 394 language groups in the country (Ayatse, & Akuva, 2013). This figure is close to the 374 ethnic groups which, according to Salawu and Hassan (2011), have been identified in Nigeria. However, Blench and Dendo (2003) claim that 500 ethnic groups exist in the country. An important reason for these changing figures of ethnic groups in Nigeria, Blench and Dendo (2003) contend, is “increasing self-awareness of linguistic minorities. Peoples formerly content to be recorded under the name of a larger and more prestigious ethnic group now wish for their own identity to be recognized” (p.3).



**Figure 1.1.**

**Ethnic Map of Nigeria** (Source: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/multimedia8819>)

Conflicting as the above figures might be, one reality arising from them is that the number of ethnic groups in Nigeria is significantly high. The nation is a multi-ethnic entity where three major ethnic groups – Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba, and tens of smaller groups have had to coexist under one political roof.

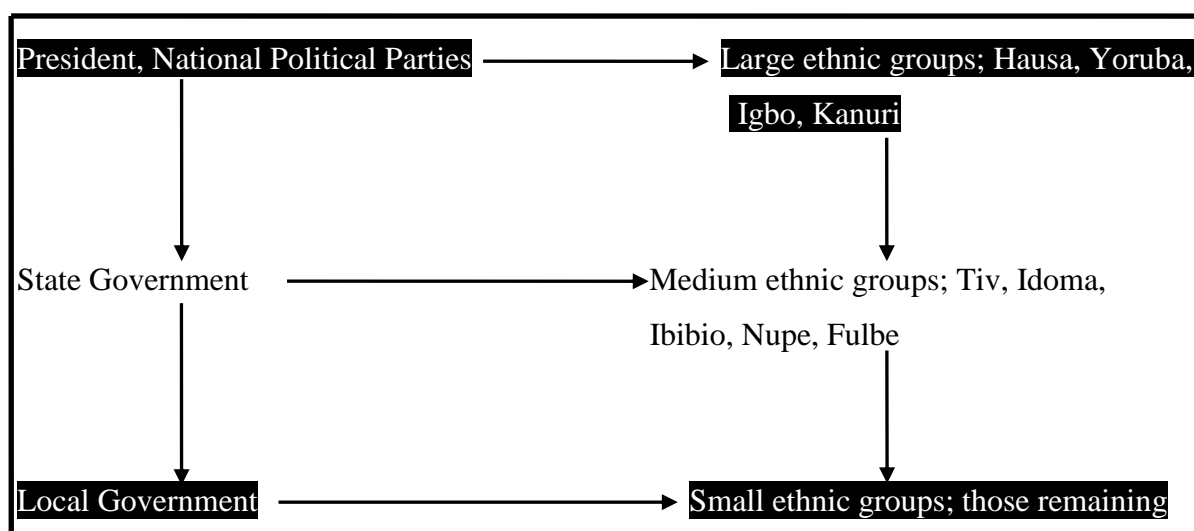
Discussing ethnicity in Nigeria, Nnoli (1978) differentiates ethnicity from tribes, noting that while ethnicity is a more universal concept for describing such lingual cum cultural identities as found in Nigeria and other modern societies, tribes originally referred to those communal, classless and non-state formations of the older eras. He argues that it was the colonialists that, for characteristic imperialistic purposes, arbitrarily imposed the description “tribes” on the lingual groups they met in Africa.

The story of ethnic relations in Nigeria is dominated by instances of conflict. Adebisi (1998) thus observes that the “socio-political history of Nigeria is replete with inter-ethnic rivalry, mutual distrust, bigotry and ethnic cynicism” (p.20). Sule (2015) also rightly notes that the nation has witnessed recurring bloody ethnic and religious conflicts in her history. This trend, he writes, has become more pronounced since the early 1980s, particularly in northern Nigeria. Hence, amongst the 19 states that make up that region of the country, almost all have witnessed one form of such conflict or the other. Incidentally, the rate of such violent incidents has been rising steadily and some of them include the infamous *Maitatsine* crises that engulfed the towns of Kano (1980), Zuru (1980), Maiduguri (1982), Yola (1984), Ilorin (1984), Bauchi (1984) and Kano (1984). Others include disturbances in Kafanchan (1987), Gure Kahugu (1987), Birnin Kebbi (1990), Katsina (1991), Tafawa Balewa (1991), Kano (1991), Jalingo (1992), Kaduna Polytechnic (1992), Kasuwar Magani, Kaduna State (1994), Kaduna (2000), Jos (2001), Kano (2001), Tafawa Balewa (2000), Nasarawa (2001), and Jos (2004, 2008 and 2010). Similarly, there have equally been the Chamba-Kuteb crises in Taraba State (2013), Tiv-Jukun crisis (2013), Bassa-Igbira crisis in Toto (2012) and many others. While the exact number of such violent incidents of ethno-religious nature may not be accurately known, it has been recorded that between 1999 and 2004, over 100 of such incidents were witnessed in different parts of the country (Sule, 2015).

Undoubtedly, ethnicity has been a recurring component of power relations in Nigeria (Ekeanyanwu, 2007; Ademola, 2009; Ojie & Ewghrudjakpor, 2009; Adebisi, 1998; Ebegbukem, 2011; Daramola, 2013; Ayatse & Akuva, 2013; Ekeanyanwu, 2013). The history of political development in Nigeria clearly testifies to the invariable presence of ethnic interest in the country’s power relations sphere. The early political parties that dominated the pre-independence era and the first republic – the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC), the Action Group (AG), the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC)

and Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) – all had ethnic bias (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Interestingly, AG and NPC had metamorphosed from ethnic interest groups of Egbé Ọmọ Odùduwà and Jam’iyyar Mutanen Arewa, respectively (Ebegbukem, 2011; Ojo 2014; Daramola, 2013). Not even the political parties that dominated the subsequent second and third republics and the current fourth republic could completely escape accusation of ethnic colouration (Tytler, 2007; Ademola, 2009; Ebegbukem, 2011; Daramola, 2013; Ayatse & Akuva, 2013).

The fact that ethnic groups in Nigeria are not equal in size adds further complexity to the role of ethnicity in politics. From the onset, the three largest ethnic groups have dominated in what has been known as “tripartite politics” while the minority ethnic groups have continued to fight to assert their independence in the face of this domination. This situation has seen the sphere of contestations becoming more complicated with the three major ethnic groups competing with themselves and also having to contend with the challenge coming from the minority groups, even as the minority groups are not spared of mutual rivalries amongst themselves (Blench & Dendo, 2003).



**Figure 1.2.**

**Levels of Political Influence of Ethnic Groups** (Source: Blench & Dendo, 2003).

Scholars have tended to blame colonialism as the root of ethnic divisiveness in Nigeria and Africa as a whole (Nnoli, 1978; Ebegbulem, 2011; Ojo, 2014; Salawu & Hassan, 2011; Adebisi, 1998; Ojie & Ewghrudjakpor, 2009; Ayatse & Akuva, 2013; Nwafor, 2015; Ajayi & Owumi, 2013; Leibold, 2015; Heerten & Moses, 2018). Ebegbulem (2011) blames the colonial administration for introducing what he terms “ethno-genesis” and “ethno-tensions” in Nigeria by virtue of their amalgamation of peoples of ethnic diversities and imposing of divisive political structures on them. He argues that by splitting the nation into three regions, the colonialists divided Nigerians along ethnic lines thus hampering the growth of nationalism and rather enthrone ethnic politics.

Usman (2015), in his historical survey, shows how the establishment of the settler system in Kano, Northern Nigeria, by the colonialists ensured the polarization of the city whereby non-Hausas lived in a separate area designated “Sabon Gari”. This segregation, he argues, undermined communal integration and engendered mutual suspicion, rivalry and violence between the indigenes and their hosts.

Interestingly, Ojo (2014), in his attempt to empirically establish this alleged colonial origin of ethnic tensions and division in Nigeria, examines secondary data mainly sourced from academic journals, newspapers and textbooks. The study finds that the British forceful amalgamation that gave birth to Nigeria “has been the major origin and reflection of ethnic jingoism and prebendal politics in Nigerian socio-political ecology” (p.1).

However, the modernization theory’s perspective to ethnicity and ethnic conflict tends to contradict the claim that colonialism lies at the root of ethnic tension in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. The modernization theorists argue that the various peoples making up the modern African states had from the onset differed culturally from each other, for which reason they had been

perennially locked in bloody conflicts before the advent of the western “civilisers” who tried to restrain them through education and civilization. However, the “civilisers” could hardly be successful with their project of reconciling the African tribes since the disputes were not founded on principles but on primordial sentiments, making them irresolvable via dialogue and economic concessions (Ukiwo, 2005).

But the above modernization perspective has equally been challenged. For instance, Nnoli (1978) observes that the so-called ethnic groups in Africa existed as political units before the colonialists altered the original borders; for instance, the Oyo Empire was a political unit (a nation) of the Yoruba. He argues, therefore, that the wars that occurred between the pre-colonial African societies were actually international as against inter-ethnic conflicts. Also Ukiwo (2005) cites the arguments by Melson and Wolpe (1971), Coleman (1971) and Cohen (1971) to the effect that ethnic conflict in Nigeria is a later development; an outcome of modernization itself with its characteristic education, inter-migration and cosmopolitanism. For instance, Coleman (as cited in Ukiwo, 2005) shows how the attempt by Igbos to attain western education was seen as a threat to the Yoruba domination of the civil service, while Cohen (as cited in Ukiwo, 2005) shows how the attempt by Hausa migrants to take control of cattle and cola nut market in Ibadan had created ethnic consciousness and rivalry between them and the native community. Similarly, Paden (as cited in Ukiwo, 2005) discusses how similar ethnic consciousness was birthed with Igbo migrants’ adventure in trade which pitched them in a rivalry with their hosts in Kano, northern Nigeria. Thus, inter-group conflict is rarely a product of simple cultural diversity and, in the contest of Nigeria, there is hardly anything *traditional* “about the contemporary pattern of political divisions.” Contrarily, “Nigeria’s political crisis is traceable directly to the widening of social horizons and to the process of modernization at work within the national boundaries” (Melson & Wolpe as cited in Ukiwo, 2005, p.6).

Perhaps, lending credence to the argument for the colonial origin of ethnic conflict in Nigeria is the contention by Blench and Dendo (2003) that manifestation of ethnicity in Nigeria has significantly degenerated from what it was before the colonial era. In the authors' words, "ethnolinguistic fragmentation of Nigeria is extreme, even in comparison to neighbouring countries, and there is strong evidence that the picture today still represents a falling off from the diversity in precolonial times" (p.8).

Importantly, ethnicity in Nigeria is interlocked with religion – at least in certain cases. This scenario is a product of the fact that ethnic grouping – particularly in the context of the north-south divide – roughly corresponds with religious grouping (Doki, n.d.; Salawu, 2013). Thus, the Hausa-Fulani in the north is dominantly Islam while in the Igbo, Yoruba and ethnic minorities of the south and Middle Belt are dominantly Christian. This situation, in the words of Blench and Dendo (2003), implies that "ethnic conflicts often become rewritten as religious conflicts" (p.9).

It is against the backdrop of this ubiquitous role of ethnicity in Nigeria that it has been widely noted as one of the most powerful forces that have shaped the country's history, for good or for bad (Blench & Dendo, 2003; Ukiwo, 2005; Ekeanyanwu, 2007; Ademola, 2009; Ojie & Ewghrudjakpor, 2009; Ebegbulem, 2011; Ojo, 2014; Ajayi & Owumi, 2013). Ebegbulem (2011) argues that the influence of ethnicity has been pervasive, having a major impact on Nigeria's political and economic growth, influencing selection of leaders, siting of industries and other developmental projects; it brews inter-ethnic hostility and violence and generally undermines national unity and socio-economic wellbeing. Ethnicity exerts visible influence on the process of policy formulation and institution development in Nigeria (Ojie & Ewghrudjakpor, 2009). Instances of influence of ethnicity on public policy development, according to Ojie and Ewghrudjakpor (2009), include the native authority system created by the colonial masters, the

NYSC programme initiated to foster national unity, the unity school system, and the federal character principle.

The overall implication of this ubiquitous role of ethnicity in Nigeria is the identity crisis and dilemma it foists on the nation and its peoples. The peoples of various ethnic groups that make up the country tend to be torn between ethnic loyalty and national loyalty, with the former argued to have prevailed most of the times (Ademola, 2009). Thus, the status of the state as one sovereign entity tends to have perennially struggled with the centrifugal pull of ethnic identity and loyalty which predictably hampers efficient functioning of the state institution. Simply put, the efficient functioning of the state machinery may have been hampered by the persistent dialectic of conflicting loyalties. Little wonder ethnicity has been vilified “as the scapegoat of all vices associated with the Nigerian body polity”. Hence it has been a dominant subject in studying the political economy of Nigeria such that no work is considered “scholarly” if it does not consider ethnicity in its analysis and conclusions (Ukiwo, 2005, p.1). It is also in this respect that ethnicity becomes an important subject in the study of the mass media in the country.

#### **2.1.4. Ethnic Interest Groups in Nigeria**

Ethnic interest groups are those groups in the country that have as their main objective the pursuit of the interest of their respective ethnic groups. The rise of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era with the Ibibio State Union, founded in 1927, reportedly being the first to come into existence. Today, the organization bears the name, Ibibio People’s Union. The Igbo State Union was another ethnic interest group that came up in those early days (Orizu, 1994). The Egbé Ọmọ Odùduwà, which was a Yoruba interest group, was founded in 1945 while a Hausa group, Jam’iyyar Mutanen Arewa, came subsequently (Nnoli, 1978).

However, the ethnic interest groups that still exist today came much later than these pioneer bodies. The Ohanaeze Ndigbo was founded in 1976 to represent Igbo interest (Ohanaeze Ndi - Igbo, Enugu State Chapter, 2015). The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) came in 2001 (Arewa Consultative Forum, 2016) to represent the interest of northern ethnic groups, while both O'odua People's Congress, OPC (founded in 1994) and Afenifere are Yoruba interest groups (O'odua People's Congress, 2015). Within the context of the Niger Delta struggles, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) founded in 1990 and the Ijaw Youth Council founded in 1998 were some of the high profile interest groups (Ojoma, 2015).

Worthy of note also is that ethnic interest groups sometimes are organized around other interests such as profession, education or gender. Groups organized around education include students' groups like National Union of Ikwere Students, National Union of Urhobo Students, National Association of Igbo Students, Yoruba Students Association, Hausa Student Association of Nigeria, National Association of Ijaw Female Students, National Union of Isoko Students, and Igala Students' Association, among others. Those organized along gender include women's groups like Ikwere Women Progressive Union, Ijaw Women's Association, and Association of Bini Women of Honour, among others (Ojoma, 2015).

While ethnic interest groups generally promote interests of their respective ethnic groups, ideology and method sometimes differ from one group to another. Some of the groups could be considered more conservative while others could be considered more radical by virtue of their more drastic demand such as self-determination. Among the former groups would include ACF, Afenifere and Ohanaeze while MASSOB, OPC and MOSOP could easily fall into the latter category.

### **2.1.5. The Concept of Representation**

The concept of representation has emerged as an important consideration in the study of the human process of communication and interaction – in fact in the study of culture in general (Hall, 1997a). Representation explains the process whereby meaning is assigned to any phenomenon – be it a person, a group, an institution, an ideology etc and such meaning determines the placement which such phenomenon enjoys in society by way of its value, acceptance, rejection, etc. In fact, representation is a social judgment on somebody or something; the way such a person or thing is viewed within a given cultural space (Moscovici, 2000; Hall, 1997a). In her very concise and very direct description, Ekwenchi (2015) observes that representation is “primarily about meaning making” (p.1).

The concept of representation is based on the assumption that things don’t come with intrinsic meaning, but that it is humans who come in contact with these things that assign or impose meaning on them. Thus, according to Hall cited in Ekwenchi, Adum and Uzuegbunam (2015), phenomena do not possess meaning in themselves but it is “social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others” (p.165).

A notable contributor to the development of the concept of representation is social psychologist, Serge Moscovici. In his seminal work, *Social Representations: Explorations in Social Psychology*, Moscovici engages the process whereby persons are classified based on labels such as ethnicity, race, religion etc and things classified based on labels such as good, bad, acceptable, valuable, valueless etc. He argues that classifying people and things is, as it were, an inevitable means of creating meaning. This is because by fitting persons and things into preconceived categories and imposing definite features on them, we are able to eliminate confusion and

uncertainty, thus maintaining a seemingly consistent and satisfying system of meaning (Moscovici, 2000).

Different approaches have emerged in the way representation is understood in scholarship. There is the reflective or mimetic approach which holds that language or text operates like a mirror that reflects, imitates or mirrors reality. There is also the intentional approach which posits that meaning resides with the originator of the communication who builds such meaning into the text. Lastly, there is the constructionist or constructivist approach which holds the view that ultimately meaning is to be located neither in the phenomenon nor in the person communicating the phenomenon but is constructed employing signs and concepts in the material world. In other words, representation could be independent of both the subject and object of perception (Hall, 1997a).

The constructionist approach to representation has its roots in the famous 1966 work of American sociologists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, wherein they insightfully describe how ideas, images and stereotypes are created in society and then legitimised and imposed on collective and individual consciousness as “natural” reality. Individuals and society therefore tend to confuse beliefs with knowledge and perceptions with reality. Thus, the interplay of social relations, language and institutions end up creating “realities” that are in truth mere products of perceptions that may not necessarily correspond to truth (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The importance of Berger and Luckmann’s work in understanding how social ideas are formed is underscored by the fact that it was their book that introduced the term “social construction” in social sciences – a paradigm that seeks to de-naturalise social ideas and beliefs which have been “erroneously” taken as natural and unalterable truths.

When meanings are constructed, they become – for the people within a given cultural space – the “reality”. It becomes their world; moulding their worldview and shaping their actions. Therefore, from the perspective of the constructionist approach, representation enters into the very fabric of culture; hence it does not just interpret reality but also shapes reality (Hall, 1997a).

Hall (1997a) argues that representation is rooted in two processes or what he terms “two systems of representation”. The first system is what he calls the “conceptual map”, a set of schemata of meaning or frames of understanding which each person carries in their head that enables them to assign meaning to reality. However, this “system” alone would not be enough for achieving transmission and sharing of meaning in society; hence comes the second system which is language, a shared set of signs that enables mutual expression of the meaning generated via the first system of representation. Consequently, representation utilizes language as its indispensable vehicle.

The implication of the foregoing is that what is termed “ethnicity” – being a phenomenon subject to social perception – is inevitably implicated in representation. When we say that we belong to a particular ethnic group or that someone belongs to an ethnic group, we are invariably *representing* ourselves or someone in a particular way by invoking preconceived schemata (or frames) of meaning.

#### **2.1.6. Media, Representation and Identity Construction**

By identity is meant feeling or judgment of belongingness (Epstein & Heizler, 2015). Identity is subjective when one affirms it in regard to themselves, like when one says “I am a Nigerian”, “I am an Igbo”. It is objective when it is upheld in reference to another, like when one says “He is an American”, “She is Hispanic”. Also, identity is positive when it affirms belongingness, for

instance, when one says “I am a Moslem”. On the other hand, it is negative when it denies belongingness, for instance, when one says “I am not a Christian”.

Identity is an inevitable component of society and culture because it is through identity that social bonding is generated – be it at the familial, communal, national and transnational levels. Akerlof and Kranton (as cited in Epstein & Heizler, 2015) define identity “as a person’s sense of self or self image”, and his or her identity is bound to social categories; individuals identify with people in some categories and differentiate themselves from those in others” (p.1). The writers thus note that ethnic identity is a measurement of one’s feeling of belongingness in regard to a particular ethnic group. Such identity can be measured in various ways including by simply asking an individual about his or her feeling of belongingness or otherwise vis-a-vis a given ethnic group.

Identity has an important relationship with representation because identities (ethnic, religious, national etc) are invariably a form of representation. We cannot communicate identity (whether in reference to ourselves or others) without engaging in representation. In driving this point home, Hall (1997b) points out that when, for instance, fans turn up at football matches with banners and slogans, with bodies painted in certain colours and with certain symbols inscribed, all these objects and symbols could be considered as language; a vehicle through which the nationality of the fans are communicated. They are language of representation. Hall explains further that representation in this case is closely related to both identity and knowledge. Therefore, it is difficult to determine what it means to be “English”, “French”, “German”, “South African” or “Japanese” without reference to “all the ways in which our ideas and images of national identity or national cultures have been represented.” Outside these “signifying” systems, we could find it impossible to assume or reject such identities “and consequently could not build up or sustain that common ‘life-world’ which we call a culture” (Hall, 1997b, p.5).

Like gender, race and ethnicity are viewed as social construction (Mayorga, 2007; Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). While ethnicity could be founded on natural characteristics like complexion and other bodily features, the way we understand it and relate with it is ultimately socially constructed. Stated differently, though ethnicity may have some apparent natural basis, its whole manifestation in society is ultimately a product of belief, perception and prejudice (Quintana, 2007).

It is widely accepted in scholarship that the media play a key role in how and to the extent we construct social identity including as related to ethnicity (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). Discussing this power of the media to build identity, Brooks and Hébert (2006) observe that in our present society with its characteristic consumption culture and mediated reality, much of what comes to assume importance is usually a reflection of what the media have told us. Much of what people know and feel concerned about is based on messages that got to them through media institutions – radio, television, film, music, and others. How individuals come about their social identities i.e. how they appreciate what it means to be male, female, negro, white, Asian, Latino, rural or urban is influenced by texts produced by the media for audiences that are becoming more and more “segmented by the social constructions of race and gender. Media, in short, are central to what ultimately come to represent our social realities” (p.297).

Thus, by highlighting perceived ethnic differences, the media create and/or reinforce ethnic consciousness and prejudices. Stated differently, the way the media represent ethnicity could be key to how individual and collective ethnic consciousness is shaped, i.e. individual and collective beliefs and prejudices regarding ethnicity. This role of the media in representing ethnicity and shaping ethnic consciousness informs the next section – the media and ethnicity.

However, it is important to note that the identity building role of the media is mediated by a number of factors including importantly the role of opinion elite or opinion leaders (Bachofer, 2014). Hence, in the context of Nigeria, the ethnic identity construction role of the media cannot be viewed in isolation of the opinion of members of the elite including leaders of ethnic interest groups.

#### **2.1.7. The Media and Ethnicity**

The media are not impregably independent and coldly detached reflectors of social happenings; rather the gatekeepers, like other socially conscious members of society, are equally permeated by their ideological environment including its ethnic dimension as they carry on with their reportage. Thus, Chen (2006) avers that appearance of race and ethnicity in the news is, in the first place, dependent on the news judgment of gatekeepers. Furthermore, the manner of presentation and framing of such reports is a reflection of individual reporter's background, experience, beliefs and prejudices regarding ethnicity and race within the clime in question as well as the policy and views of the media organisation he/she is working for.

The way ethnicity manifests in the media is merely a reflection of the prevailing discourse of ethnicity in the larger society. In other words, the media cannot but reflect the ideological configurations of the society they are coming from (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956; Lewis, 2005). So, in a society such as Nigeria where ethnic discourse is such that embodies deep prejudices and rivalry, then this state of things is likely to reflect in her media. This perhaps justifies the conclusion by Daramola (2013) that ethnic sentiment in political reporting may not be easily eliminated in Nigeria "because ethnicity has been seriously entrenched in our psyche and it dictates our views of politics and reporters" (p.50).

On the other hand, while the media reflect the ethnic discourse in society, society itself is also a reflection of the media. Therefore, the manner in which the media represent ethnicity will very likely shape ethnic discourse in society. Hence, when the media become ethnically biased, the potential implication is deepening of ethnic suspicion among the populace. Chávez and Guido-DiBrito (1999) agree with this when they assert that ethnic consciousness is built not only through “deep conscious immersion” by individuals “into cultural traditions and values” via religious, family and communal affinity but also through reactions to “negative treatment and media messages received from others” on account of their ethnicity (p.39). Stated differently, when gatekeepers engage in negative representation of a particular ethnicity, they automatically construct an irreconcilable binary of “us” versus “them” which naturally translates to social conflicts. Ngwu, Ekwe and Chukwuma (2013) thus observe that when the media serve sectional (ethnic) interest, society suffers as an atmosphere of insecurity is created and which could culminate in crisis or worsen an existing one. Such ethnocentric attitude to reporting (which could come as a result of ownership influence) has the likelihood to enthrone distrust and friction between ethnic or political groups. The authors contend that the media had played a role in the crisis that ultimately led to the January 15, 1966 coup being that they allowed themselves to be used by politicians to disseminate sectional and unethical messages that overheated the polity.

This power of the media to incite sectional conflict has been a recurring theme in scholarship (Arcan, 2013; Pegu, 2014). The events in Rwanda and Yugoslavia provide a classical example of how hate speeches projected through the media could bring about conflicts of cataclysmic dimension (Arcan, 2013). *Libre des Mille Collines*, a private broadcaster and Radio Rwanda, a national station, were active in promoting ethnic rancour among the citizenry leading to killing of at least half a million of the Tutsi population by the Hutu people in what has become popularly known as the Rwandan genocide of 1994. The role of the media in instigating this

phenomenal ethnic crisis has been so obvious that even the UN tribunals that tried cases related to the genocide have asserted this (Arcan, 2013).

Similarly, in Yugoslavia, Milosevic was able to skilfully employ the media to inspire fear and animosity in the Serb population against the Bosnia Muslims and Catholic Croats. He succeeded in integrating Radio Television Belgrade, Radio Television Novi Sad and Radio Television Pristina to form Radio Television of Serbia; a centralized arrangement that allowed him much control of the information space which he exploited to sow and reinforce ethnic hatreds. Such was the damage that at the end, in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the genocide committed by the Serbs against the Muslims saw the systematic murder of 200,000 Muslim civilians, more than 20,000 were missing and feared dead, while 2,000,000 had become refugees (Arcan, 2013).

In the notoriously acrimonious 2007 Kenya election, the media – this time the new media – have been widely accused as a culprit in the ethnic tension and violence that preceded, accompanied and followed the polls. This verdict is found in the numerous reports by both international and local bodies which held that the new media contributed in fanning the embers of ethnic animosity. Many of the reports concluded that there was likelihood that some of the instances of ethnically motivated violence were inspired by hate speeches transmitted via new media platforms (Njoroge, Kimani & Kikech, 2011).

Back home in Nigeria, the media have not escaped the accusation of complicity in whipping up ethnic sentiment (Taiwo, 2007; Daramola, 2013). The media's report of the political sphere in particular has been noted to have been much visibly coloured by ethnic bias (Taiwo, 2007; Daramola, 2013; Nwafor, 2015; Sule, 2015). Recent instances include the 2015 general elections wherein sections of the media were found to have unmistakably displayed ethnic prejudice in their reportage (Alawode & Adesanya, 2016; Ibraheem, Ogwezzy-Ndisika & Tejumaiye, 2015).

Perhaps, more importantly, results of successive empirical investigations (such as Ekeanyanwu, 2007; Salawu, 2013; Sule, 2015; Doki, n.d.) have indicted the media as being partly responsible for many instances of ethnic and religious clashes in the country.

The foregoing, admittedly, are testimony to the earlier noted power of the media to influence the extent and manner of manifestation – positive and negative – of ethnicity in any clime. There is an emerging belief that just as the media have proven to be a powerful inspirer of conflicts, they are as well the most potent instrument for resolving conflicts and preventing development of new conflicts (Arcan, 2013; Pegu, 2014). In other words, the relationship between the media and ethnicity is implicated in a dialectic of two opposing possibilities i.e. the extent the media can advance ethnic harmony, it can as well wrought division and harm (Mastro, 2016).

This seemingly paradoxical position of the media vis-a-vis ethnic and other forms of social conflict has thrown up the question as to what exactly should be the role of the media in the face of continuing threat of conflict in society. Specifically, should the media remain completely “objective” and “neutral” or should they consciously and actively intervene to prevent conflict and promote peace in society? In the context of the subject of this study, the question could be framed thus: should the Nigerian media remain “detached” in their coverage of ethnicity or should their coverage be consciously and strategically tailored towards averting and resolving ethnic conflict? Two conflicting approaches have emerged in the quest to answer this question (Hieber, 1998; Weaver, 1997; Doki, n.d.).

One of the approaches views the media as having an interventionist role towards conflict situations. The media are expected to deliberately intervene in conflicts and play a constructive role of an arbiter, so to speak, between the conflicting interests. Hieber (1998), representing this view, opines that a journalist can be an effective peacemaker by consciously taking up a role of

an intermediary between opposing parties, actively assisting in instantly dispelling rumours or by producing reports that emphasise points of agreement as against areas of disagreements.

This school of thought embodies the principles underpinning what is popularly referred to as “peace journalism” which has been defined as a kind of journalism where “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” (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005, p.5). Doki (n.d.), arguing in support of the media acting in direct advocacy for peace, reasons that the media, following the social responsibility paradigm, should not be an insensitive spreader of hate, prejudice and bitterness as experienced with the anti-Islamic Danish newspaper cartoons.

There are two approaches to the media’s role as an active intervener in conflicts. The first approach “seeks to report conflicts for a general audience in a manner aimed at promoting peace rather than inflaming existing tensions”. The second, on the other hand, is more pro-active; the media are expected to act ahead of time by identifying potential conflict situations and giving them coverage in a pre-determined constructive way aimed at preventing the conflict (Hieber, 1998, p.2).

However, the second school of thought disagrees with the above view that the media should actively intervene in conflict. This school is of the view that the media should simply play the role of an impartial observer who reports conflicts as they happen without giving room for any subjectivity. Representing this school of thought, Weaver (1997) contends that once a journalist consciously accepts the responsibility of actively working for peace, truth and objectivity becomes threatened as he/she may begin to compromise these ethical standards just in the

interest of peace. In this instance, it becomes possible that the journalist opts to tell a “good” lie rather than the truth if such lie will serve the interest of peace.

However, later tendencies in scholarship (following the criticism of the traditional model of media ethics) have treated with suspicion the traditional idea of media objectivity. Hence, that old image of a coldly detached, disinterested and neutral media institution is fast giving way to a more practical view that refuses to tear the media out of their political, economic, cultural and ideological determinations (Bagdikian, 1983; Adonor, 1999; Gilens & Hertzman, 2000; Petley, 2004). Proponents of peace journalism have embraced this argument which suits their idea of what journalism should be in the face of conflict. For instance, McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) argue that journalism is inevitably an intervention and so cannot validly lay any claim to complete detachment. “The choice is about the ethics of that intervention. The questions are: ‘what effect is my intervention likely to have on the prospects for peace?’ ‘What am I going to do about it?’” (p.22). Regarding what happens to objectivity in the course of this intervention, McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) observe that if objectivity means “reporting as we see it” rather than intentionally distorting what we see owing to one interest or the other, then it is completely in agreement with peace journalism. On the contrary, if by objectivity we mean “just reporting the facts” and avoiding responsibility for the likely results of what we decide to report, then it can be highly destructive.

The authors argue that viewing objectivity in terms of total and uncompromising detachment is problematic in two ways. First is that it demands the impossible as journalists, as humans, cannot avoid being emotionally and ideologically involved in what they do, whether they admit this or not. Secondly, such approach to objectivity could mean that journalists, by trying to suppress their feelings and beliefs, may end up distorting information “without fully acknowledging it even to themselves”, hence their personal biases become “hidden behind time-honoured conventions of news language, which camouflage opinions as facts” meaning that the audience

may fail to “inspect or assess the bias; it seeps in to the way the conflict is constructed” (p.23). McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) conclude that such simplistic application of objectivity can lead to news reports being mere superficial and surface narratives that do not offer any true understanding. Such reports allows us to see only how things *actually* are while obscuring *how* they have come to be that way and the fact that they could have come differently; a situation that potentially blurs our moral sense, hinders change and limits options for imaginative solutions.

Whatever are the strengths and weaknesses of the above opposing arguments regarding the role of the media in conflict, one thing deducible from them is that the media occupy a vital place in determining how differences impact on society; whether they overwhelm society or are effectively managed by society. In the context of this study, the media thus ought to be seen as possessing the potency to influence how ethnic differences impact on a multi-ethnic clime like Nigeria because the manner of media representation of ethnicity is an important determinant of how the various ethnic groups view and relate with each other – harmoniously or divisively (Ojo & Adebayo, 2013).

#### **2.1.8. Newspaper and Ethnicity in Nigeria**

At the inauguration of its new board in Lagos in 1985, foremost journalist and then Managing Director of *New Nigerian*, a newspaper owned jointly by governments of northern states of Nigeria, Mohammed Haruna, said of the paper:

...criticisms of the newspaper’s bias for northern interests and causes are hypocritical because there is no newspaper in the country that does not champion sectional or group interest... we would continue to fight for the introduction of Sharia, the application of quota system or federal character in all spheres of national life (Kukah, 1993, p.78).

The above submission by no less eminent journalist than Mohammed Haruna may have said much about the role of ethnicity in newspaper reportage in Nigeria. Mr. Haruna was reacting to

an accusation of ethnic bias against the newspaper, and based on his experience and positioning in the industry, his opinion perhaps deserves to be viewed seriously.

Existing literature has implicated newspapers in the rise of ethnic consciousness in Nigeria (Kukah, 1993; Taiwo, 2007; Daramola, 2013; Nwafor, 2015). In his fairly detailed historical analysis, Daramola (2013) shows that Nigerian newspapers have from the outset been tied to the apron string of their owners, hence becoming partisan and tribal as necessitated by the respective political and ethnic affiliations of these owners. Some of the earliest newspapers established in the country as well as the broadcast stations that came later assumed ethnic colouration as politicians who established them employed them in pursuit of regional interests (Nwafor, 2015).

Two of the earliest newspapers in Nigeria, *West African Pilot* and *Daily Service*, owned by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Ernest Sessei Ikoli respectively, had reportedly been in a feud which at times assumed ethnic colouration. This feud, according to Omu (as cited in Daramola, 2013), contributed to “the regionalisation of nationalism and crystalisation of inter-group tension and animosity which characterized political developments for a long time” (p.41).

Nwafor (2015) recalls that the *Nigerian Tribune* and *West African Pilot* were in 1965 banned from circulating in the Eastern and Western regions respectively by the governments of these regions for what was seen as their promotion of regional (ethnic) consciousness. Similarly, Galadima and Soola (as cited in Nwafor, 2015) note that *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* newspaper run by the northern regional government was also unrepentant in its anti-Yoruba and anti-Igbo posture. The census crisis of 1962, which polarized the nation along regional cum ethnic lines, presents a glaring example of ethnic leaning of newspapers in Nigeria. As the crisis raged, the Northern regional government newspaper, the *Citizen*, described the Igbo as being “industrious, migratory... impenetrably united tribesmen” who had flown to the East during the census to inflate the population there and

then returned to continue to enjoy the life of affluence in the North. A cartoon in the paper depicted the Igbo as pidgin-speaking cannibals. On the other hand, the Eastern regional government-owned *Nigerian Outlook* published materials reflecting stereotypes of the North. This was particularly seen in the column in the “Saturday Catechism” written by the paper’s Editor-in-Chief where he referred to attitude of leaders of the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) as “childishness and amateurishness” which was testimony that “they are not seasoned rulers of the North.” He wrote further that “The North cannot afford a break-up of the Republic. They have nothing up there to eat. They have little education. Their art of government is primitive. They have no access to the sea” (Daramola, 2013, p.76).

Daramola (2013) contends that this influence of owner’s ethnicity on reportage as found in newspapers of the colonial and early independence eras survives till today. Hence, studies on newspaper reportage on key national issues in the country have tended to show that many of the reports craftily take sides on ethnic, political, regional or religious issues (Omenugha & Ukwueze, 2011; Medubi, 2012; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Salawu, 2013; Nwafor, 2015; Sule, 2015). Daramola (2013) contends that the ethnic cleavages evident in newspaper content in Nigeria are so obvious that one cannot but easily decipher them. Taiwo (2007) specifically accuses the Nigerian media of sensationalism in reporting ethnicity which sees them unduly focusing on conflicts in their coverage of ethnicity-related issues.

Perhaps, it is for the above reason that circulation patterns of major newspapers in the country tend largely to reflect the ethnicity of their owners. Eze (2017) contend that this situation may be attributed to the fact that these newspapers, in quantitative and qualitative terms, publish content that appeals to the reading interest of people of the owners’ ethnic groups. The finding by Layefa, Johnson and Taiwo (2016) is an interesting example in this respect. In their study of newspaper readership in Ekiti State, data indicated that the three most widely read papers among

the people of the state were all owned by proprietors from the South-West – *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *The Punch*, in that order

**Table 2.1.**

**Correlation Between Owners’ Regions and Readership Concentration of Some Major Nigerian Newspapers**

S/N	Newspaper	Owner’s Region	Region of Highest Circulation
1.	<i>Champion</i>	South-East	South-East
2.	<i>The Authority</i>	South-East	South-East
3.	<i>The Sun</i>	South-East	South-East
4.	<i>Daily Trust</i>	North (mainly)	North
5.	<i>Leadership</i>	North	North
6.	<i>New Nigerian</i>	North	North
7.	<i>The Nation</i>	South-West	South-West
8.	<i>The Punch</i>	South-West	South-West
9.	<i>Tribune</i>	South-West	South-West
10.	<i>Vanguard</i>	South-South	South-South

Source: Eze (2017)

Information in Table 2.1 above shows that for 10 major daily newspapers reflected, circulation pattern was such that each sold most in the geopolitical zone of the proprietor. This is after the circulation figures for Lagos State have been eliminated given the special position of the state as Nigeria’s newspaper hub and the most cosmopolitan city where all sections of the country are represented in large numbers (Eze, 2017). The implication of this circulation pattern is likely to be that the content of these newspapers is such that appeals to readers who share the same ethnicity with the respective proprietors, implying that there is influence of owner’s ethnicity on such content.

### **2.1.9. The Language-Ideology-Power Nexus**

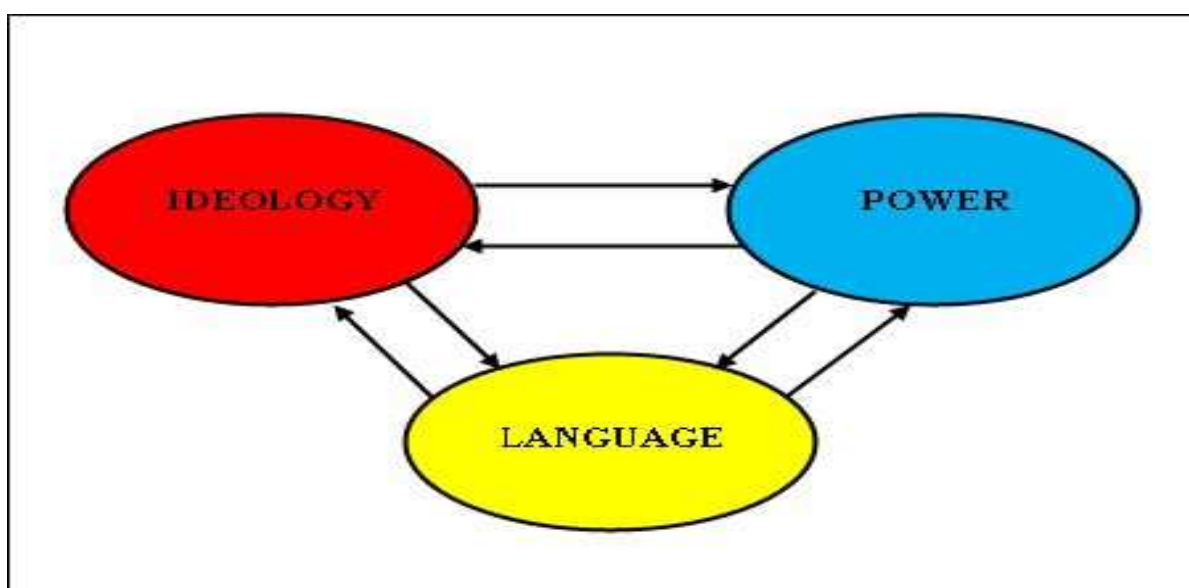
The language-ideology-power nexus is one of most recurring themes in the contemporary social science discourse. The essence of this theme is the intimate and mutually determining relationship between language, ideology and power. To understand this nexus, one may have to first understand the relationship between language and ideology before relating the two to power.

Scholars have not arrived at any commonly accepted definition of ideology (Zaidi, 2012), however, for the present purpose, we may in the interim attempt a rather too simplistic definition by taking ideology to mean a set of beliefs. If ideology implies a set of beliefs, it becomes a given that such beliefs can be expressed only via language. However, language here must be understood in the broadest sense as sign; anything that conveys meaning be it word, sound, picture or object. Language thus would include writings, spoken words, symbols, colour, light, flag, etc. One important feature of language is that it is consensual; it is the property of neither the communicator nor the receiver but a mutually shared space of signification (Hall, 1997a). In expressing an ideology, language confers legitimacy on it. Kelman and Hamilton (2009) observe how the Nazi regime employed lingual expressions like “final solution”, “evacuation” and “special treatment” to confer legitimacy on its anti-Semitic ideology. Thus, a phrase like “final solution” provides some sort of moral justification for killing of the Jews by projecting them as a “problem” and their elimination as a “solution”. A similar instance of language-in-the-service-of ideology was seen in the Indochina war where euphemisms like “protective reaction” and “pacification” were deployed to disguise the murderous atrocities of the belligerents (Kelman & Hamilton, 2009).

Therefore, in the course of social interactions, language use is hardly inflexible as its orientation is often affected by users’ ideological dispositions. Thus, language as a system of codes that define and delimit what can be said and what cannot be said, is in effect intrinsically prescriptive

and prohibitive – a quality that exposes its ideological character. “Language, therefore, can never appear by itself – it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves reflect the prevailing discursive and ideological systems” (Taiwo, 2007, p.220).

Then, the language-ideology continuum is intrinsically related to power. It is generally agreed among scholars that ideology has a social character; “it is about social relations, consciousness, and power struggle which play important parts in carrying out ideological objectives” (Zaidi, 2012, p.72). This suggests that ideology is intimately connected with power, domination and control; each ideology stands in an oppositional relationship with and aims at affirming its superiority over a competing ideology and seeking ultimately to annihilate or at least modify same – in one word, ideology is hegemonic. In other words, power is intrinsic in ideology; it is inscribed in it, it is part of its logic. Thus, once we speak of ideology, we also unavoidably speak of power, whether we are explicit about this or not. Power and ideology cannot be separated because ideology by its very nature is oriented to action i.e. to maintain or change the status quo, and such action presupposes power (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Fairclough, 1989; Zaidi, 2012).



**Figure 2.1.**

### **The Language-Ideology-Power Nexus**

What emerges from the foregoing discussion is language-ideology-power nexus; a mutual relationship wherein the three continuously reinvent each other. Language expresses ideology

and ideology is realised through power. Language, ideology and power emerge as a continuum of three mutually inclusive social elements that mutually define and validate each other. None can be conceived without the other as each is contained in the other (Taiwo, 2007; Zaidi, 2012).

Another way to state the above is that ideology, in its symbolic dimension, is realised in language (signs i.e. words, pictures, flags, emblems etc), and in its physical dimension, in the tendency to dominate or resist domination, sustain or change the status quo – power. Hence, while language gives ideology a name, power gives it a force; physical presence. In other words, while language is ideology in expression, power is ideology in action. Language is ideology spoken, written, or otherwise represented, while power is ideology acted out. A particular definition of ideology captures this mutuality:

A legitimated, normative, and systematic exercise of power by a group in order to achieve specified collective objectives embedded in an impersonal entity or system. Ideology finds its verbal objectification in manifestos that ideologues articulate, its physical correlative in the struggle or movement that people carry out, and its psychological realization in inner satisfaction or reformation (Zaidi, 2012, p.71 – 72).

In using the phrase “language wars” to describe the incidents of terrorism and other forms of political violence, Lewis (2005) refers to “language” in this sense of its oneness with ideology and power, meaning that the violent incidents are ideology in its physical manifestation (i.e. power). Often, we observe how language is employed in the service of state ideology and state power when governments describe certain dissident groups as terrorists and their activities as evil and retrogressive. In the same vein, such groups in contrast describe themselves as freedom fighters fighting for just causes – thus equally employing language in service of their ideological and power interest.

The power relations in each instance determine the legitimacy of any ideology. For instance, once the anti-apartheid forces took over power in South Africa, that racist ideology that had

since enjoyed official legitimacy ceased to enjoy such. Also, the ascendancy to power by Hitler gave the Nazi ideology the almost unchallenged hegemony it enjoyed in Germany till the regime fell in 1945. Thus, the language-ideology-power nexus is not static but fluid and dialectical. Its configuration could alter from moment to moment depending on the prevailing circumstances (Lewis, 2005).

Chomsky (2008) observes how the Western power hegemony has ensured a corresponding ideological hegemony in the way international terrorism is framed. Thus, when the US and her Jewish ally (Israel) engage in aggressions against other nations and peoples, such are framed as legitimate self-defence and fight against retrogressive forces, whereas similar acts are branded as terrorism when they come from organisations like Hamas and PLO, despite the fact that these groups ought not to be denied of the moral right to self-defence. Arguing in the same vein, Lewis (2005) observes how former President George Bush's "war on terror" had been rooted in ideological partisanship upheld through language manoeuvrings. Thus, legitimacy is claimed by appealing to such words as "freedom", "democracy", "civil society" and "rule of law" in juxtaposition with the "barbarism" and "iniquities" of fundamentalist Islamist militancy as represented by groups like al Qaeda and Taliban. In other words, while the US and her allies are projected as engaged in a "just war", these groups are demonised as inflicting iniquitous aggression on humanity and civilisation. "To this extent, the 100,000 civilians who have been killed during the invasion and occupation of Iraq are subsumed within the ideological imperatives of US self-defence and the unswervable project of democracy, modernization and global integration." On the other hand, the so-called terrorists "frequently invoke a politics of liberation against the oppression of US international imperialism" (Lewis, 2005, p.15).

### **2.1.10. The Language-Ideology-Power Nexus, Ethnicity and the Media**

For obvious reasons, the language-ideology-power nexus is an essential consideration in communication and by extension media communication. First, communication inevitably employs language (spoken words, text, picture, symbol, gestures etc) as its tool, and language (as discussed in the previous section) is unassailably implicated in ideology and power. Any lingual expression bears the imprint of a particular ideological and power interest as determined by the social circumstances of that expression. This is the basis of the assertion that the mass media are inevitably implicated in the language-ideology-power nexus.

Hence, news – as a language-based form of communication – cannot be ideologically “innocent”. This is so with other categories of media content (Taiwo, 2007). In this respect, Olowe cited in Taiwo (2007) observes that the editor and his reporters make up “an ideological empire.” The newspaper “subjects all newsworthy events that constantly come up in social life to rigorous linguistic manipulation to make them suit the ideological expectation of the audience” (p.221).

Media messages presented in the form of news reports, headlines, advertisements, editorials, features, etc are “often subjected to linguistic manipulations”. This occurs as gatekeepers “work on societal values, conception of the world and symbolic systems in order to create their messages” (Taiwo, 2007, p.221).

The place of the language-ideology-power nexus in media communication is perhaps more forcefully expressed in the context of capitalism wherein the media are seen as an expression of power; the speech power of the politically and economically powerful. These powerful interests include the government (that own some of the media houses and indirectly control others through laws), the rich entrepreneurs (who operate private media establishments and who many a time are members of the political class), and the corporate heavyweights (who indirectly control

the media through advertising money). The ideologies of these powerful interests naturally find their way into the media, thus shaping the language of media text (Petley, 2004).

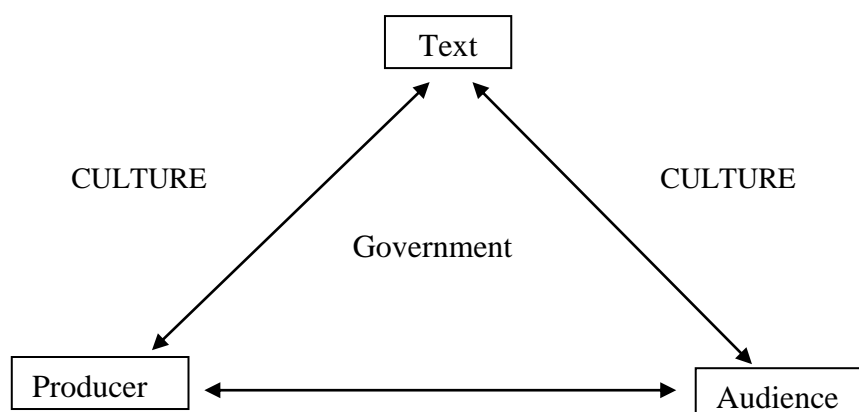
The Marxist criticism of the mass media yet presents a more radical version of this reading of the relationship between the media and the language-ideology-power nexus. Ideology is viewed as a natural result of the prevailing mode of production (structure) and this mode of production generates a colouration of ideology (superstructure) suited to it (Nikitin, 1983). However, the ideology generated is invariably that of the dominant class; the class that dominates the relations of production (in the case of capitalism, the bourgeoisies). In other words, these bourgeoisies who are in alliance with the capitalist state are viewed as purveyors of the dominant ideology which they go ahead to propagate via the media which are of course firmly under their control (Hall as cited in McQuail, 2010).

However, the fact that the media do sometimes also propagate the ideology of people outside the ruling class such as trade unions and other social agitators tends to cast some doubt in the complete accuracy of the Marxist perspective. A more correct position seems to be that the media are a centre for ideological contestations with the richer and more powerful interests usually gaining upper hand, meaning that the poorer and the less powerful are not always entirely shut out. The extent of balance of power between the more powerful and less powerful, in this contest over who is to be heard in the media, would be dependent on a lot of variables including the evenness of distribution of wealth, distribution of literacy power among the populace, and of course the structure of media ownership and control.

But be that as it may, however, the bottom line seems to be that in the realm of media communication, there is a fundamental link between power and ideology; in other words, a connection between who wields power and whose ideology is projected via the media. For instance, Nyamnjoh (2003) observes that the rule of the whites and consequent dominance of

white ownership of the media in the apartheid South Africa had ensured corresponding dominance of pro-apartheid ideology in the media. But the end of apartheid and the resultant participation of blacks as media owners have undermined pro-apartheid ideology in the media (Nyamnjoh, 2003); a strong testimony to how political power is intrinsically linked with media control and by extension the ideology given out through the media.

Perhaps, the model put forward by Lewis (2005) would serve in finally summing up and crystallising the discussion so far on language-ideology-power nexus as related to the media. This model conceptualises the media not in the simplistic terms of an autonomous entity but in terms of being an inseparable component of a larger organic social process. In this sense, the media are constitutive of the producer, the text and the cultural context – the three mutually interacting and mutually shaping each other. The text is not to be seen as autonomously created by the producer but collectively generated via mutual “conspiracy” of the producer and the audience who share a common cultural locus – cultural context. In this case, meaning-making becomes not just an exclusive work of media producers, but is realized through a dynamic nexus encompassing context, production and consumption. However, this complex nexus can only be understood if our understanding of the media is broadened to mean “a set of relationships and processes.” The “media” then emerges as “a collective noun defining the dynamic of the construction, contestation and deconstruction of meanings. Audiences, in this sense, are as critical to the media as producers, distributors and regulators” (Lewis, 2005, p.6).

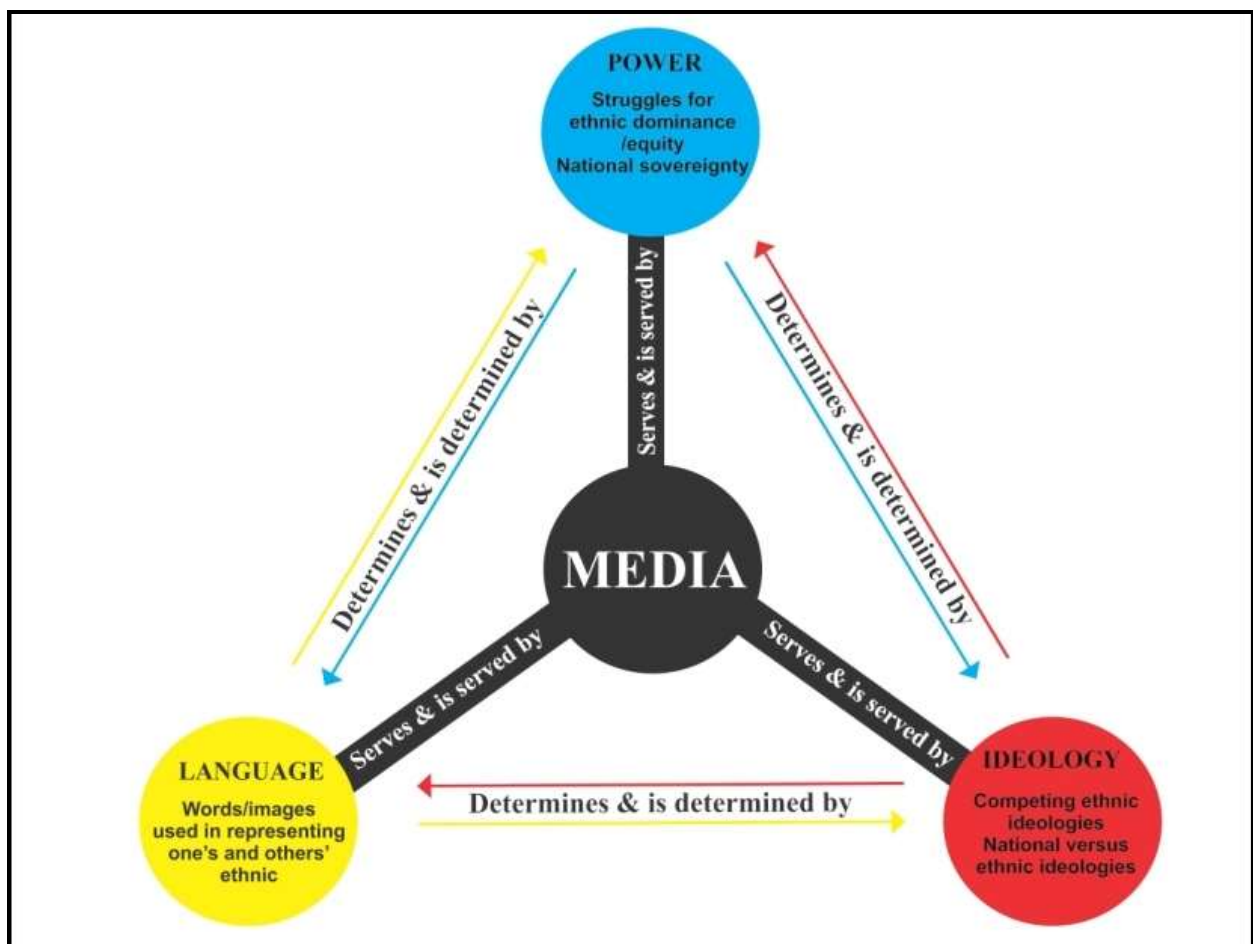


**Figure 2.2.**

**Media Triangle** (Source: Lewis (2005, p.6).

Figure 4 (Media Triangle) shows how the cultural (ideological) context mutually shared by the producer (gatekeeper) and the audience ultimately decides what becomes produced as text (content); while at the same time text shapes what becomes the ideology shared mutually by the producer and the audience – cultural context. In this sense, one understands how the media stand in the centre of how ethnicity expresses itself as an ideology in society; the ethno-ideological context shared by the producer and audience is key in shaping the text (language) of the media. Of course, this ethno-ideological context is an embodiment of its peculiar power relations.

Importantly, one notices the central position occupied by the government in the above Media Triangle. Being the centre of gravity that pulls society together, the government is the dominant power; a position that makes it a force that often exerts considerable influence on the process of formation of culture i.e. values, norms etc – in short, ideology. This means that the government naturally becomes a strong agency influencing the content of the media. In the context of this study, the government would become strong in influencing the content, pattern and tone of ethnic discourse in the Nigerian newspapers. This is not, however, to deny the simultaneous influences from other relevant interests.



**Figure 2.3.**

**Conceptual Framework (A Synthesis of Key Concepts Reviewed in Conceptual Literature)**

The entire discussion so far on media and ethnicity has been grounded in the concept of the language-ideology-power nexus. In other words, this nexus provides the conceptual framework within which all the concepts featured in the review could be understood. This is represented in Figure 5 above where language, ideology and power unite into a societal discourse structure, or to use the words of Hall (1997a) – discourse formation – in which each determines and is determined by the other. Of course, this discourse structure creates and is created by the media. This mutual creation ensures that the language of social expression and its corresponding ideological and power counterparts as embodied in the discourse structure are both a creation and a creator of the media.

Furthermore, this language of social expression when reduced to ethnicity (i.e. words and images used in representing one's and others' ethnicity) finds a counterpart in ethnic ideology and ethnic power relations. Hence, ethnic language, ethnic ideology and ethnic power relations emerge as a discourse sub-structure within the larger societal discourse structure. Then as obtains in the larger societal discourse structure, this discourse sub-structure is both a creator and a creation of the mass media.

The foregoing helps in properly situating our discussion so far which focused on how ethnicity could be a social construction and the role of the media in initiating and/or reinforcing this construction; the role of the media in determining how ethnicity is understood and reacted to in society; and the tendency of the media to be influenced by prevailing ethnic beliefs and biases in their environment. All these could be understood by paying attention to the role of the language-ideology-power nexus as a creator and a creation of the media.

## **2.2. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

In his study of how language and ideology play out in newspaper cartoons in Nigeria, Medubi (2002) reveals how newspaper cartoons function as tool for giving expression to the ideologies of individuals and groups including ethnic groups. Within the conceptual framework of the metaphor theory also known as the Conceptual Integration theory, the research analysed political cartoons whose theme was on "the underlying tensions in the multi-ethnic state of Nigeria" (p.160). The objective was to see how the multiple ethnic ideologies (which are natural in a multi-ethnic clime like Nigeria) and other competing group and individual ideologies express themselves in cartoons. The study involved analysis of 150 cartoons published in *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *Vanguard*, between June and August, 2001. Findings showed that newspaper cartoons reflect the dominance in Nigeria of diverse ethnic and other forms of ideologies and interests (in competition with each other) as against any homogenous national ideology. Medubi concluded that

language is an important tool for spreading ideology in Nigeria through negotiating political, social and economic interests for individuals and groups as they seek to dominate each other. Such conclusion underscores the basis of the current study – that language has an intrinsic connection with ideology and power including as they relate to ethnicity in a clime like Nigeria.

On the other hand, Chen (2006), in his study, of local news programme's coverage and portrayal of race and ethnicity, discovered a tendency to undermine minority ethnic groups in the mainstream media. The writer selected two local television stations (an NBC affiliate and an ABC affiliate) and a university student's weekly news for a video production class. Findings showed underrepresentation of racial and ethnic people in the media. Although the representation of minority people in news is higher than the percentage of minority people in the community, these minorities were more likely to be represented negatively. The connotative meaning in the broadcasts by the local television news appeared to be that the minority population was not an important part of the community, and that their living there might threaten the security of the local people. Although the headquarters of the two local television stations studied are located in the counties with 8 to 13 percent minority populations, the criteria for newsworthiness seemed to have been influenced more by American dominant ideology with no consideration for the multi-cultural nature of the counties. These findings align with one of the fundamental assumptions underlying this dissertation; that the media, as against being completely objective and uninfluenced, are in fact invariably swayed by dominant ideologies around their environment as they carry on with their reportage.

Mayorga's (2007) study shows how ethnicity could influence media text. The study analysed the current discourse on Hispanic/Latino ethnic identity in *Latina*, a Hispanic/Latino ethnic magazine and compared it with that found in *Glamour*, a mainstream magazine. It involved a quantitative analysis of visual portrayals of women in the two magazines. Findings, among

others, showed that, in contrast with *Glamour*, *Latina* “established a delimited and non-conflictive space where Hispanic/Latino women can dwell without interfering with U.S. dominant discourses on ethnicity and race or marketing practices...” (p.104). The magazine also offered a view that tended to counter the stereotypes against Hispanic/Latino women and was progressive in its views about them, laying emphasis on education, professional preparation, independence, and other values that not associated with the concept of beauty. “*Latina* consistently featured average women and their achievements and it did not oversaturate its pages with ideal images of women” (p.105). In other words, the ethnic magazine, *Latina*, to this extent, tended to negate the mainstream discourse on Hispanic and other ethnic minorities. It was a case of ethnic culture-mainstream culture dialectic of the American society exerting its influence on the media. As could be seen, the findings of this study agreed with the assumptions of the language-ideology-power nexus that ideology and power relations have influence on media text and vice versa.

Taiwo (2007), in his critical discourse analysis of Nigerian newspaper headlines, brought to the fore how media text is implicated in the language-ideology-power nexus. The researcher randomly selected 300 newspaper headlines from six Nigerian newspapers and examined them “for peculiarity in the vocabulary and rhetorical devices used in order to identify the ideologies that lie behind their constructions” (p.218). The study found that “the headlines have hidden ideological meanings, being divided along some ideological lines reflecting the views of those whose interest is being served and those whose interest is being undermined” (Taiwo, 2007, p.218). Similarly, it was found that these ideological lines are obvious reflection of opinions of these respective interested parties i.e. those whose interests are being promoted and those whose interests are being undermined. Taiwo reported further that on some rare occasions, “the people may be united ideologically especially on issues that fosters nationalism” and in such circumstances, “almost all the newspaper headlines are singing the same tune, since they have to

reflect the views of the society” which “also reveals that headlines are used to initiate, sustain and shape discourse on the views of readers on national issues” (p.244). It was the study’s conclusion that headlines are tools for inducing emotion in the hands of the gatekeepers who use them “to initiate, sustain discourse and shape the views of the readers on national issues” (Taiwo, 2007, p.218). In the context of the subject of this dissertation, this conclusion is relevant as it underscores the fact that media content is intrinsically linked with societal discourse which it both feeds and feeds from. Hence, representation of ethnicity in the media would be intrinsically related to the discourses of ethnicity in the society in question.

Such ideological influence on newspaper reportage was also found in a research by Anim (2007) (as reported by Ngwu *et al.*, 2013) which studied the effect of geopolitical affiliations on newspapers’ coverage of national issues. Five national dailies – *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *The Trust*, *Daily Times* and *Daily Champion* – were content-analysed in a bid to assess the extent “the newspapers’ coverage of the decision by the former Nigeria’s President Obasanjo to contest the 2003 presidential election was influenced by the papers’ relationships with the six geopolitical zones of the country” (p.114). The researcher discovered “that the coverage by these newspapers was significantly influenced by their geopolitical affiliations. The papers reflected the dominant views of the geopolitical zones with which they were associated” (Ngwu *et al.*, 2013, p.114). This study, like the above research by Taiwo (2007), underlines the fact that media content is intrinsically linked with societal discourse – a perspective that justifies the subject of this study.

In a study focusing on media coverage of political crises and conflicts during President Obasanjo’s second term (2003 – 2007) in office, Ekeanyanwu (2007) discovered biased reportage as influenced by, among others, the ownership. The study, which was concerned with how the press reported struggle for political positions “which breeds crises and conflicts

especially in a pluralistic society”, selected *The Guardian*, *Champion*, *Tribune* and *Daily Trust*. The study found that the Nigerian press has “not fared very well in reporting political conflicts and crises because of the advocacy position adopted by most of them...” and that it “has operated more as active players in political crises and conflicts than as an impartial judge of such crises and conflicts”, a situation that “has negatively affected the management of such crises and conflicts” (Ekeanyanwu, 2007, p.64).

The media were found to have been influenced by ethno-religious sentiment in their coverage of ethnic/religious crises in Nigeria as studied by Omenugha and Ukwueze (2011). The researchers did a textual analysis of *Daily Champion*, *New Nigerian*, *TELL* magazine and *The Guardian*. Findings showed that the papers were visibly swayed by the ethno-religious biases of their owners which compromised objectivity in their coverage. The researchers’ observation shows that the newspaper sounded protective of the ethnic group or religion of their respective owners. Thus, they gave conflicting figures of casualties depending on which side a newspaper was on. *Daily Champion*, a paper owned by a South-Easterner, in reporting the ethnic/religious clash between the Hausa Moslems and the Igbo Christians in 2006, focused mainly on losses by Igbo people by way of casualty figures, burnt churches, and properties destroyed, while giving little attention to occasions where Igbos were the aggressors burning down mosques or engaged in reprisal killings.

The above findings reveal an apparent reflection of ethnic bias in newspaper reportage of controversial issues of ethnicity and religion in Nigeria. Such assumption is in line with the belief that media text is interlocked with ideological discourses in society; a consideration that underlies the subject being studied in this dissertation.

The media’s power to provoke sectional conflict was equally evident in the result of the study by Njoroge, Kimani and Kikech (2011) which focused on the role of the new media in instigating the violence that trailed Kenya’s 2007 presidential election. Using qualitative method, the

researchers analysed data collected from post-election reports and new media which included e-mails and SMS circulated during the violence and those forwarded to the Waki commission of inquiry and major blogs updates before, during and after the elections. Findings indicated that ethnic-based violence was largely induced by encounters with hate speech in new media. The ethnic violence that marked Kenya's elections of that year seemed to have resulted from deliberate manipulation and instigation by new media. Data indicated that by majority percentage the new media played a central role in instigating the post-election violence. The study found that the rise of ethnic violence instigated by new media has resulted in growth in ethnic consciousness. It was also discovered that some new media contents were sensational and caused unnecessary alarm among the audiences and inflaming their passions (Njoroge *et al.*, 2011). Remarkably, this study equally underscored the fact that to the extent the media can instigate sectional conflict, they are also capable of serving as an instrument of peace. This is evident in the further findings that late intervention by the mobile telephone companies and blog owners by way of countering hate speeches with messages of tolerance and persuading local leaders to denounce divisive utterances "might have been effective in pre-empting the violence and in handling future instances" (Njoroge *et al.*, 2011, p.24).

On the media's role in promoting peace within the context of ethnicity, Imoh's (2013) study found that the Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS) Warri had not been effectively positioned to play this role. The study evaluated the activities of the station in the area of "trying to prevent, resolve and transform the inter-ethnic conflicts in Warri in 2003" (p.49). The researcher collected data via content analysis and structured interviews conducted on two policy and decision makers, four producers and programme staff purposively sampled from the DBS. Findings indicated that the role of the station "in the prevention, resolution and transformation of the conflict has been minimal and underplayed. There was no organizational capacity for conflict prevention and resolution" (p.49). The study found that DBS "was not able to objectively

manage the conflict due to the gatekeeping function of its owners and inadequate fiscal, human and technical capacity of the media organization, to design, produce and transmit programmes” (Imoh, 2013, p.49).

Salawu (2013) looks at the phenomenon of ethnic bias in the media from the perspective of “politics of recall” wherein he found that various media houses, in reporting ethno-religious crises, engaged in selective recall of past events – a propaganda technique that served the interest of their respective ethno-religious affiliations. Working within the framework of the selective retention theory, the researcher chose two significant sectional crises in Nigeria – the Miss World Beauty Pageant crisis and the Danish Cartoon Crisis in 2002 and 2006 respectively. The study found that in the two periods under review, the press in the country was polarized along the north-south divide wherein each side of the divide, in trying to interpret the two events, recalled perceived past negative deeds of the other side in order to advance a perspective that serves its propaganda purposes:

Significantly, the Nigerian Press abstracted from the ethnic configuration of the Nigerian nation, and they therefore become veritable sites for the selective recall of the past misdeeds of opposing groups... The practice is observed in the rhetoric of the two major divisions (North and South) during crises... (In this study of the coverage of the Miss World Beauty Pageant crisis and the Danish Cartoon Crisis, each media house was found) aligning by reason of ethno-religious ownership, to either of the opposing sides. Each crisis is seen as an opportunity by one group to inveigh into the other group with a recall of the perceived misdemeanours of the other. Each crisis provides the outlet for verbal outbursts (Salawu, 2007, p.46 – 47).

The foregoing points to the fact that the media can, as against being a detached observer, get involved in sectional contestations including as they relate to ethnicity. This perspective constituted one of the assumptions that informed this dissertation.

How ideological biases influence the media in reporting conflicts was again brought to the fore in the study of Turkish media coverage of the armed conflict between the Turkish Armed Forces and the Kurdish armed organization, PKK, by Arcan (2013). Two Turkish newspapers were selected according to their different ideological and political attachments; *Sözcü* which is secularist, republican, nationalist and pro-establishment in posture, thus not favourably disposed to the attempt by the nation to make peace with the “rebellious” PKK, and *Radikal* which is left-liberal and anti-establishment in posture thus favoured the peace process. The two publications were analysed and compared in terms of how they reported and framed the peace process and the effort of the Wisepeople committee (a body set up to pursue peace). The study came out with the following instructive findings:

- i. Two opposite frames were dominant as *Radikal* largely employed peace/conflict-oriented framing while *Sözcü*'s framing was largely war/violence in orientation. In other words, the newspapers respectively showed the characteristics of peace/conflict journalism and war/violence journalism.
- ii. In most of the headlines of *Sözcü*, strong and emotional words were used to describe the reactions of the people against activities of Wisepeople hence representing the peace process as unpopular, whereas *Radikal* framed such reactions as normal and routine protests obtainable in any democratic society even as the paper also covered public support for the peace process and the Wisepeople Committee.
- iii. *Sözcü* continued to use the derogatory names “wises”, “wiseman/men” or “Wisemen Committee” to refer to the peace committee even after the name had been corrected to read “Wisepeople Committee” for sake of gender sensitiveness and to reflect the gender mixture of the membership even as the paper mocked the intelligence of the committee members and denied the existence of women members of the committee, describing the

committee as greedy, cowardly and ridiculous. *Radikal*, however, used a gender sensitive and modest language on the committee and emphasized their positive contributions.

- iv. In contrast to *Radikal*'s positive language, *Sözcü* portrayed Wisepeople as disrespectful and opposing to the Turkish national values like anthem and flag.

The foregoing findings are revealing of how the media could become trapped in ideological and power contestations going on in their environment. In such a situation, media messages become a reflection of the ideological and political disputes in such environment. The manner in which this may occur in relation to media reportage of ethnicity in Nigeria was what this dissertation set out to study.

In a study by Ngwu, Ekwe and Chukwuma (2013), the influence of media's geographical location and ownership on content was once more established. The researchers employed the qualitative-meta-analysis research approach, meaning that the study made use of results from other studies which it synthesized to arrive at the finding that geographical location and ownership are a significant influence on how the media cover political crisis (Ngwu *et al.*, 2013, p.113). Discussing this finding against the backdrop of the social responsibility commitment of the media, the researchers note that ownership, ethnicity and geographical considerations have arguably remained "very instrumental to the non-observance of the... social responsibility principles of the media in every part of the world" (p.117). When these three elements exert influence on media message generation and dissemination, accuracy and balance suffer. This definitely goes against the tenets of the social responsibility role of the media, particularly as it relates to the fourth and the fifth principles which require the media to avoid doing anything that could encourage crime, violence, disorder or offend minority groups, and to conform with the principles of pluralism reflecting the diversity of society, giving voice to diverse views and

ensuring right of reply (Ngwu *et al.*, 2013, p.117). This ethical imperative arguably should also be invoked in the area of newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups; a consideration that contributed in making the subject of this dissertation relevant.

Another study reported by Ngwu *et al.* (2013) as conducted by Jibo in 1981 revealed the influence of ownership on media coverage. The research, which focused on media reportage on the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) strike, involved content analysis of *National Concord*, *New Nigerian*, *Daily Sketch*, *The Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Times*. The study found that *National Concord*, *New Nigerian* and *Daily Times* partly “owned by a member of the Federal Government and the federal government respectively condemned the NLC strike and gave little coverage to the strike.” This is just as *Daily Sketch* “owned by the UPN-controlled government, the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper owned by the leader of the UPN, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and *The Punch* newspaper owned by Chief Aboderin were on the side of the workers” (p.115). The study further found that each of the newspapers defended the interests of its proprietor and where favourable gave prominence to reports affecting them. “Divisive political considerations based on sordid sentiment dictated their manner of coverage and analysis of the event explored” (Jibo cited in Ngwu *et al.*, 2013, p.115). Such ownership influence formed part of what this dissertation inquired into with particular reference to ethnicity.

The research by Nwafor (2015) revealed how the media in Nigeria are seemingly coming under the influence of ethnic ideology. The focus of the study was how the media framed group identities in the 2014 national dialogue in the country with emphasis on *The Sun* (owned by a Southern Christian of Igbo ethnic group) and *Leadership* (owned by a northern Muslim of Hausa ethnic group). Having analysed 68 editions of the papers, the study found that majority of them published reports “with sectional undertones” with many of the reports showing “unsupportive slants to opposing ethnic groups’ viewpoints on the Conference” (p.21). In addition, the reports

were dominantly framed around sectional interests as it was discovered that an average of two-third editions of the sampled newspaper editions reported stories with sectional undertone, while only one out of three editions did not follow this practice. Reports on issues of sectional interests such as elections, power rotation, creation of additional states, citizenship, ethnicity, religion, security and secession dominated the papers' coverage of the conference.

Similarly, the study by Sule (2015) also found influence of ethnicity and religion on reportage. The objective was to assess the role of the media in escalating, generating and de-escalating religious conflicts in Northern Nigeria. The researcher critically analysed news reports and analysis, editorials, advertorials and special columns of selected newspapers and newsmagazines – *New Nigerian, Vanguard, Saturday Vanguard, Sunday Vanguard, Daily Trust, Weekly Trust, Sunday Trust, Nigeria Standard, The Punch, ThisDay, The News* magazine, *Tell* and *Newswatch*. Also analysed were radio broadcasts and television news from the *Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN)* Kaduna, the *Voice of America (VOA)*, the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, the *Cable Network News (CNN)*, the *Al-jazeera* and some international news agencies. Results showed that the mass media contributed “immensely to the escalation” of the conflicts studied. It was further discovered that the media houses, in reporting ethno-religious conflicts, were swayed by the interests of their owners and editors, geographical locations, and the ethnic and religious affiliations of the owners or editors.

But quite significantly, Doki's (n.d.) study is an indictment of the media as an instigator of ethnic and religious conflict and not just an aggravator of same. In other words, the study exposed how the media, through their manner of reportage, not only aggravate existing conflicts but directly or indirectly cause breakout of conflicts where none existed. The study, which had its area of focus as the northern part of Nigeria, used as its data findings by senior journalists, lecturers and other stakeholders on media's role in specific instances of conflict in Northern Nigeria. The study

found that the mass media in both northern and south Nigeria sometimes inspired conflict “through biased reporting, deliberate distortions, criminal partisanship and unprofessionalism confounded by influences of tribalism and exploitation of the religious divide to settle political vendetta, tribal grudges or both” (Doki, nd., p.22). The study accordingly concluded that mass media could be implicated in conflict instigation when their content becomes permeated by ethnic/religious bias, and political and economic rivalry.

## **2.3. THEORETICAL LITERATURE**

A number of theories could be considered relevant to the subject of this research. This section reviewed some of these theories as follows: gatekeeping theory, framing theory, social constructionism theory and representation theory.

### **2.3.1. Gatekeeping Theory**

Representation is an aspect of the larger gatekeeping role of the media. The gatekeeping theory demonstrates the process whereby media gatekeepers select news and give it perspective for onward publication or broadcast. It describes the actions of the chain of persons who take decisions as to which among the numerous news events that develop from time to time would make the day’s news as well as how these events will be presented. The theory explains the “process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people everyday, and it is the centre of the media’s role in modern public life” ( Shoemaker and Vos, as cited in “Gatekeeping”, 2012, p.1).

Hence, the word “gatekeeping” has come to represent the multifarious and dynamic process involved in news selection and crafting in every media house. It “is nothing but to block unwanted or useless things by using a gate, be it publication, broadcasting, the Internet, or some other type of communication” (Saravanan, 2011, p.2). Gatekeeping encompasses all levels of the

media structure, beginning from the reporter working in the field to the editors working on the desk in the newsroom and the owners of the media. Even further than that, it includes advertisers and opinion contributors (“Gatekeeping Theory”, 2012).

The gatekeeping theory is “one of the original theories to come from mass communication research,” and “has remained important since its debut shortly after World War II” (Roberts, 2005, p.1). Its evolution has occurred through successive contributions of various scholars, beginning with Kurt Zadek Lewin (1890 – 1947), a German psychologist who coined the term “gatekeeping” to represent how housewives act as “gatekeepers” to decide which food enters the family’s menu. This insight, according to Roberts (2012), was a product of his experiments “to entice Iowa women to eat more beef (hearts, livers, kidneys, and other secondary cuts of meat) as a patriotic duty during World War II” (p.2). Quoting Lewin, Roberts writes further that housewives are important gatekeepers who determine what food enters the “channels” that ultimately convey it from the garden or supermarket to the home and ultimately onto the dining table. Each channel is segmented into sections surrounded by gates which constitute the points at which decisions are made as to whether the food will enter the channel in the first place, or move to the next section. And along this way, certain forces exert pressure to accept or reject food. However, even though Lewin was referring to how the choice of food is made at home, he recognises that his gatekeeping model goes far beyond food choices, observing that the theory of gates “holds not only for food channels but also for the travelling of a news item through certain communication channels in a group...” (Roberts, 2005, p.2).

David Manning White was another scholar whose research enriched the gatekeeping theory. In the summer of 1947, he was working on the editorial copy desk of *The Peoria Star*, where he observed “how the newspaper’s wire editor chose which of the scores of available stories would be published.” He asked the editor (now designated “Mr. Gate”) to document his news selection

decisions. Thus, “Mr. Gate” kept record of his decision-making process for a week in February 1949 (Roberts, 2005). Based on the records, White, in 1950, was able to conclude that news items are rejected by gatekeepers for three reasons: personal feelings of the gatekeeper, insufficient space and the fact that the story in question had appeared previously (Saravanan, 2011).

Subsequently, in 1956, Gieber cited in Roberts (2005), repeated the study by White but raised the participants to 16 wire editors. He found that the editors were “caught in a strait jacket of mechanical details” – they were operating at the mercy of the news agencies because they can only publish what these agencies fed them. Apart from influence of news agencies, Gieber discovered that the editors were equally influenced by their medium in making selection decisions – a variable overlooked by White (Roberts, 2005).

McNelly, another scholar, in 1959, however, introduced a very fundamental improvement to the gatekeeping theory by recognising the role of reporters in the process. Earlier theorists beginning from Lewin to White and Geiber had focused on editors. He criticised White’s research for focusing on the wire editor, arguing that he (the wire editor) is not the key decision maker. Thus came “the notion of multiple gatekeepers who control various functions along the news process” (Roberts, 2005, p.8). The “double-action internal newsflow” model as introduced by Bass is a reinforcement of this perspective. The model describes “the flow from ‘raw news’ into the ‘completed product’ for news consumers,” arguing that “news gatherers” (reporters and line editors) are different from “news processors” (editors and translators), preferring that researchers focus more on “the news gathering than on news processing, since stories that are not reported will never reach a point where they can be processed” (Roberts, 2005, p.8 – 9).

Pamela Shoemaker is another scholar whose contribution is prominent in the development of the gatekeeping theory. Her book, published in 1996, “provided a useful history of the theory, the process, and how gatekeeping is applied at the individual, communication routine, organizational, and institutional level” (Roberts, 2005, p.9). She highlighted the role of individual gatekeepers working within a single institution, as well as the internal and external variables that operate on the channels and feedback. Similarly, alongside her associates, she recognises that “gatekeeping in mass communication can be seen as the overall process through which social reality transmitted by the news media is constructed, and is not just a series of ‘in’ and ‘out’ decisions” (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001, as cited in Saravanan, 2011, p.11). In other words, gatekeeping explains not just the process of news selection but also the process of news framing wherein the media construct and reconstruct reality. The gatekeeper “determines not only which information is selected, but also what the content and nature of the messages, such as news, will be” (“Gatekeeping Theory”, 2012).

In summary, the postulations of the gatekeeping theory could be outlined as follows:

- i. In exercising its “surveillance” function, every news medium has a very large number of stories brought to its attention daily by reporters, wire services, and a variety of other sources.
- ii. Due to a number of practical considerations, only a limited amount of time or space is available in any medium for its daily presentations of the news to its audience. The remaining space must be devoted to advertising and other content.
- iii. Within any news organization there exists a news perspective, a subculture that includes a complex set of criteria for judging a particular news story - criteria based on economic needs of the medium, organizational policy, definitions of newsworthiness, conceptions

of the nature of relevant audience, and beliefs about fourth estate obligations of journalists.

- iv. This news perspective and its complex criteria are used by editors, news directors, and other personnel who select a limited number of news stories for presentation to the public and encode them in ways such that the requirements of the medium and the tastes of the audience are met.
- v. Therefore, personnel in the news organization become gatekeepers, letting some stories pass through the system but keeping others out, thus limiting, controlling, and shaping the public's knowledge of the totality of actual event occurring in reality (“Gatekeeping”, 2012).

Lasorsa (2002), cited in Roberts (2005), argues that gatekeeping has contributed to the development of other mass communication theories among which is agenda-setting. While noting that agenda-setting describes how media “help decide the saliency of information based on what they choose to emphasize,” he argues that gatekeeping is at the root of this process as the very action of deciding “what to emphasize and neglect” is itself “gatekeeping” (p.12 – 13).

This centrality of gatekeeping theory in mass communication is summarised as follows:

Gatekeeping is the vanilla ice cream of mass communication theory. It may not be everyone’s favourite, but nearly everyone can tolerate it. And while it may have an unremarkable flavour, it serves as a building block for other theory and methodological approaches (Roberts, 2005, p.3).

However, the arrival of the Internet with the attendant modifications in the dynamics of mass communication has introduced a new dimension in the whole discourse about gatekeeping. Some scholars have wondered whether gatekeeping still retains any relevance in the face of the “gateless media”. Following her study of how the Internet was changing the gatekeeping process for newspapers in the 2000 and 2004 US presidential elections, Singer (as cited in “Gatekeeping Theory”, 2012), argues that, “the power of gatekeepers seems to diminish in a modern

information society. The Internet defies the whole notion of a 'gate' and challenges the idea that journalists (or anyone else) can or should limit what passes through it" (p.2).

However, for Shoemaker (as cited in Roberts, 2005), gatekeeping remains alive irrespective of whatever innovative role the Internet may be playing. While responding to the comment by former *Entertainment Weekly* magazine editor Jeff Jarvis that "We (in mainstream media) used to be gatekeepers", she argues, "This is not an original thought...but each time we come across a new media, we ask new questions that are really old questions" (p.13).

From the perspective of the gatekeeping theory, the decision of Nigerian media houses to select or not to select for publication or broadcast any news event regarding the ethnic interest groups as well as how to frame such news could be placed in perspective. As rightly observed by Johnson and Johnson (2013), the "gatekeepers' choices are a complex web of influences, preferences, motives and common values" (p.101). Therefore, the choices of gatekeepers are better understood when they are not isolated but conceived within the larger framework of the society's meaning making process as implicated in the language-ideology-power dynamics in a social sphere like Nigeria.

### **2.3.2. Social Constructionism Theory**

Social constructionism is a theory which aim is to explain how social ideas are formed; its central argument is that our impressions and "knowledge" about persons and things are socially located. Social constructionists view knowledge as created rather than merely discovered (Andrews, 2012). Andrews observes further that social constructionism is concerned with the character of knowledge and how knowledge is created. It views society as existing both as a subjective and an objective phenomenon. Meaning created about reality is shared and over time it becomes a taken-for-granted reality.

The theory has its origin in the 1966 seminal work by American sociologists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. In the work, the authors analyse how social ideas (i.e. knowledge, impressions etc) are formed and crystallised as “truths” through the processes they term objectivation, institutionalisation and legitimation. In other words, a nexus of social dynamics ensures that impressions or prejudices, over time, become objectified, institutionalized and legitimized as “correct”, “truthful”, “authentic” – in short accepted as the “reality” (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Though originating from Berger and Luckman’s work, the theory has over the years been influenced and modified by other scholarly traditions (Stam, 2001).

Social constructionism postulates that through a long process of repetition (habituation), life and thought become patterned in particular ways, i.e. society begins to think and act in particular patterns which long time of survival has legitimized as the ideal. These “ideal” perspectives are transmitted from generation to generation, becoming more crystallized and deep-rooted with time. Individual members of society are imbued with these thought patterns through the process of primary and secondary socialization. What then happens is that a subjective reality is created, but which, in the collective and individual minds, have become objectified, wearing an appearance of an undeniable reality, an irrefutable truth and an irreplaceable value (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

Berger and Luckman (1966) observe that this process of creation of knowledge is driven by language. Stated differently, within the social constructionism theory, language is an essential element; it is seen as not merely aiding transmission of thoughts and feelings, but as indeed making thought possible in the first place. This is because it is through language that concepts are constructed. “In other words, it is language that makes thoughts and concepts possible and

not the other way around. Language predates concepts and provides a means of structuring the way the world is experienced” (Burr cited in Andrews, 2012, p.41). Against this backdrop,

A recent influence within social constructionism is to investigate the ways in which events, processes and qualities are presented and modelled in language, the discursive, which could be called linguistic analysis, as it concentrates on how descriptions of what is real are made, passed on and changed through time” (Owen, 1995, p.164).

As a powerful agency in the modern process of creation and transmission of meaning, the mass media, in their process of production and transmission of text, could be viewed from the conceptual prism of social constructionism. In this regard, media text becomes not a reflection *of* reality but a reflection *on* reality; not a transmission of fact but an interpretation of fact; and not an objective expression but a subjective expression. In other words, media gatekeeping becomes grounded in the vagaries of collective and individual ideological dispositions. This relationship between the media and social constructionism is aptly summed up by McQuail (2010) when he notes:

- i. Society is a construct rather than a fixed reality
  - ii. Media provide the materials for reality construction
  - iii. Meanings are offered by media, but can be negotiated or rejected
  - iv. Media selectively reproduce certain meanings
  - v. Media cannot give an objective account of social reality (all facts are interpretations)
- (p.101).

Thus, within the context of this study, media reportage of ethnic interest groups would be seen from the perspective of how the gatekeepers create or construct meanings in regard to the activities of the ethnic interest groups. Stated differently, the media would be generating impressions and judgments regarding the interest groups and what they do. Therefore, news reports and other contents related to these groups are not just conveying facts but have in them

inbuilt judgments, biases and interpretations – all located within the society’s overall meaning structure. These judgments, biases and interpretations together constitute the ideological basis of text (language) and this ideology is intrinsically related to the power dynamics prevailing in and around the media.

However, the social constructionism theory has been criticised for its emphasis on language and discourse to the exclusion of other significant psychological factors that could influence perception and meaning making (Nightingale & Cromby in Bragason, 1999). Also, it has been observed that the theory fails to recognise the individual as an agency of meaning making by restricting meaning making to collective consciousness. In other words, it seems to have neglected the fact that the individual could have their peculiar impressions on specific phenomena different from the collective impressions of society (Bragason, 1999).

### **2.3.3. Framing**

Framing theory explains the process whereby an originator of communication builds into their message the perspectives which they want the audience to read the message from. The basis of the theory is that any given issue, event or development can be viewed and understood from varying perspectives. Stated differently, every phenomenon can be seen through different frames of meaning depending on who is seeing and the circumstances of the seeing (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Chong & Druckman, 2007b). Hence, framing has been described as “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (p.104).

Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) observes that the theoretical foundations that gave birth to framing theory are to be found in interpretive sociology, which holds that people’s interpretation of everyday reality is fundamentally dependent “on interaction and the definition of situations” and in

defining situations, individuals are influenced by the activities of others. “In other words, people’s approach to reality takes into account the contributions of others. The performance of people would be determined by this interpretation, and that is why the definition of the situation is linked with action and interaction” (p.427).

Framing thus explains the various viewpoints which we impose on phenomena; the different ways in which we understand persons, things and events. Whenever we are experiencing or reporting reality it is usually through specific frames of understanding; these frames determine the impressions this reality makes on us, the feelings we have about it, and the judgment we make on it (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Chong & Druckman, 2007b). Against this background, McQuail (2010) sees framing as “a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact” (p.380).

A frame is developed “through selection, emphasis, and exclusion.” A given frame makes people to direct their attention on certain messages while failing to see the other” (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015, p.428). In other words, a frame determines what is perceived and what is not perceived, what is understood and what is not understood, what is felt and what is not felt (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015).

In the media, gatekeepers are not excluded from framing. Like other members of society who possess their individual biases and social perspectives, the gatekeepers engage in framing once they are on the task of gathering and processing content. McQuail (2010) thus contends that it “is almost unavoidable for journalists to” engage in framing “and in so doing to depart from pure ‘objectivity’ and to introduce some (unintended) bias” (p.380). Consequently, framing has been described as “an essential feature of news” (Tuchman cited in Scheufele, 1999, p.106). Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) in discussing the relationship between news and framing argues that news messages are “textual and visual structures built around a central axis of thought, from a certain

perspective, and by information professionals” and other actors who in the process provides an interpretive framework within which the audience is to understand the messages. In this respect, framing thus can be seen as “a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance, so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed” (p.424).

It has been argued that the framing theory has an important relationship with the agenda setting theory. Some scholars, particularly Maxwell McCombs, one of the foremost agenda setting researchers, have contended that framing corresponds to the second level of the agenda-setting theory. They have therefore suggested the integration of the two models. Similarly, some authors have considered as a natural extension of the agenda-setting model. Since framing tends to give emphasis to certain narrative, thoughts, and judgments in a given report, its role could be likened to that of agenda setting in giving prominence to one issue over the other (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015).

Within the context of this study, the framing theory helps to put in perspective the role of the gatekeepers in influencing the judgments and feelings of the audience by virtue of what they highlight and what they fail to highlight in their reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. Thus, the process of selecting and processing these contents for transmission to the audience could be understood from the perspective of the direction which the gatekeepers might want the audience’s thought, judgments and emotions to go. Hence, in reporting an ethnic interest group that is demanding for secession from Nigeria, the media might, for instance, choose to present the group as fighting for justice, as fomenting trouble, as pursuing a legitimate cause, as pursuing an illegitimate cause, as making lawfully demands from the state, or as usurping the powers of the state. All these constitute some of the frames in which the gatekeepers could mould their reports on any given ethnic interest group. And the decision of the media to apply any of the frames will be dependent on several factors including the ethnic disposition of the gatekeepers,

the owner's interest, political and legal control, influence of advertisers, and public taste, mood and expectations.

#### **2.3.4. Representation Theory**

Individuals, institutions, interests and ideas are inevitably and continuously subjected to representations in society including via the mass media. This is also the fate of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria and their ideologies; hence the representation theory becomes relevant here. Representation theory, which has its origin in the works of social psychologist, Serge Moscovici, is an attempt to explain the process whereby individuals, groups and phenomena are assigned identity and categorised within a given meaning structure (Moscovici, 2000). According to Moscovici, representations perform two major roles. First, they accord objects, persons and events a definite form and assign them to a definite category, thus gradually establishing them as a certain type of model which is characteristically shared by a group of people. All new elements must conform to and merge into this model. In performing this role, representations are said to *conventionalise* such objects, persons and events. Secondly, representations perform the *prescriptive* role by which they irresistibly impose themselves on our thinking process such that we must conform to their dictates. This imposition is brought about by the combined effect of a meaning making structure which has existed in society even before we have started to think and of a tradition which decrees what we ought to think (Moscovici, 2000).

Once representations are formed, they “invite audiences to understand them and agree with them in certain preferred ways” (Stewart & Kowaltzke, 2007, p.36). However, this is not to say that different interpretations of a particular case of representation are not, to some extent, possible depending on the audience (Stewart & Kowaltzke, 2007).

Media text is inexorably implicated in representation; once the media attempt to communicate about any person or phenomenon they would be unavoidably doing one form of representation or another. Hence, Duveen (as cited in Howarth, 2011) points out that “representations may be the product of communication, but it is also the case that without representation there could be no communication” (p.6). And given the central role of the media in what come our way as information and knowledge in today’s world, we are now ceaselessly at the mercy of media representations. As observed by Brooks and Hébert (2006), much of what emerges as important in our mediated society is based often on messages produced and disseminated by the media. Much of what people know and care about is as result of the images, symbols, and narratives in various forms of mass media. How individuals construct their social identities by way of gender, race, ethnicity and other demographics is shaped by “commodified texts” generated by media for audiences who are getting increasingly segmented along the line of the social constructions of race and gender. Media, therefore, are central to what ultimately stands as our social realities, Stewart and Kowaltzke (2007) note that representations work in the following ways:

- i. **A representation consists of repeated elements:** “The more we see these elements repeated, the more the representation will appear to be natural or normal” (p.36).
- ii. **We are invited either to identify with or to recognise the representation:** Producers of media representation may possess a view of the world similar to our own. If their representation corresponds to our view of who we are, we may choose to align with it. This occurs, for instance, “when a movie invites us to imagine ourselves in the role of an appealing character. On the other hand, the producers may see a person, idea or event as somehow foreign or different from them. We will be invited to recognise the representation from our own experience.” A programme “might invite us to identify with the lawyer hero, for example, but will ask us only to recognise the lawbreaking young thugs” (p.36).

- iii. **The media make categories of people, events or ideas:** Such categories come in the form of labels such as “the unemployed”, “the aged” or “businessman”. “The war in Iraq, for example, becomes ‘another Vietnam’. Representations are generalisations about categories and why events, ideas or people belong in them. These categories then become part of our thinking processes” (p.36).
- iv. **Representations contain a point of view:** “The meaning in a representation will be selected and constructed, already containing built-in value judgements. All representations contain the point of view of the people who made them” (p.36).
- v. **Representations have a mode of address:** While representation comes with some appearances of naturalness, hidden behind such appearances are “assumptions about who you are. For example, a news item about youth may address you in a manner that assumes you are a middle-aged businessperson rather than a young person” (p.36).

Granted that representation tends to confuse appearance with reality, belief with knowledge, perception with concrete experience, one may successfully wade through its deceptive fabric to, as it were, separate a phenomenon from the meaning socially imposed on it. In other words, one may de-naturalise representation by lifting the veil of prejudice cast over the object of representation to view it in its “pure” nature, if there is anything like that. Hence, Stewart and Kowaltzke (2007) argue that we can more critically engage a representation by asking questions as to who made it, when it was made, its purposes and who benefits from the representation or whose point of view it supports.

In the context of this study, the theory of representation helps to conceptualise ethnic representation in the Nigerian media as a function of the dominant ethnic ideologies in society as well as ethnic prejudices of individual media owners and gatekeepers. The Nigerian media, in reporting ethnicity, would inevitably be caught engaging in representation, and this

representation embodies certain perspectives and beliefs regarding ethnic groups, ethnic relations, ethnic struggles and other related matters.

## **2.4. Theoretical Framework**

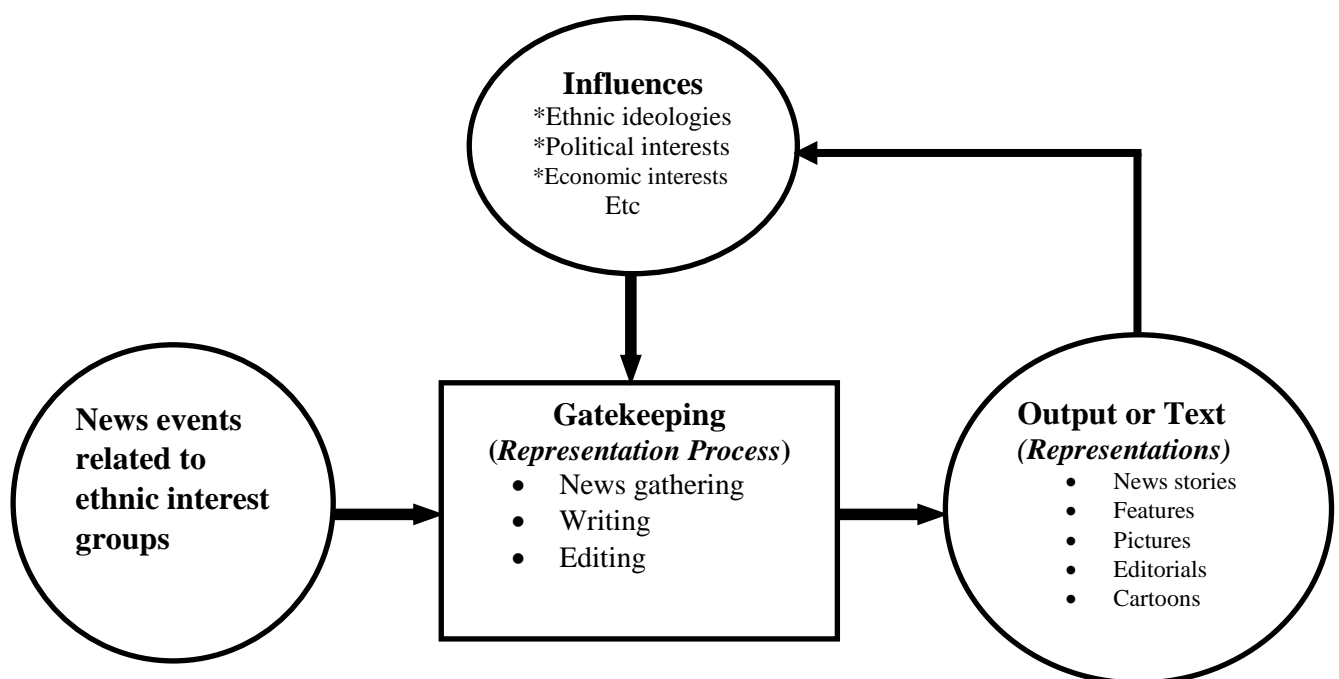
Though each of the four theories reviewed above, in one way or the other, has relevance to the subject of this study, the researcher considers the representation theory as the most suitable for giving a theoretical basis to the study. The reason is simply that the study is about representation of ethnicity in the media, hence such theory that explains the dynamics of representation becomes a compelling choice for establishing a theoretical framework for the research. The relevance of representation theory in viewing how significant societal issues such as ethnicity are portrayed in the media is evident in the assertion by Höijer (2011) that the theory “offers a new approach for studying how the media and citizens construct societal and political issues colouring our age, or some specific time period” (p.3).

The representation theory allows us to see media coverage of ethnic interest groups from the perspective of the ideologies, beliefs and prejudices built into the text by gatekeepers; these ideologies, beliefs and prejudices all make up the ingredients of the representation. The implication is that media content is inevitably an embodiment of certain perspectives, viewpoints and interests which all sum up to certain representations (Taiwo, 2007; Chen, 2006). Stewart and Kowaltzke (2007) observe that media messages, consisting of only a selection of manufactured ideas, are not the same as lived experience. This manufactured “reality” is based on the values of the producers and, in turn, the values of the larger society and culture. This media version of reality is not a presentation, but a *re-presentation* of reality.

The relevance of the representation theory to the study of language, ideology and power in media representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria is further underscored by the intrinsic relationship between representation and power. For one to represent another, the power to

represent is basically present. Ekwenchi (2015) trenchantly notes that representation “is also about power. The social group that has the means to construct knowledge about others not only possesses power to represent other social groups; that group also appears to have the right argument” (p.3). Stated differently, every instance of representation is underpinned by the power dynamics prevailing at that moment; such power dynamics is intrinsically linked with the language and ideology embedded in the representation i.e. the three mutually influence each other.

In the context of media representation of ethnic interest groups, *to represent* implies that one possesses some power as a gatekeeper, an owner, a regulator or an advertiser etc. Therefore, the ideology embedded in the representation (language) becomes a function of this power. In a nutshell, therefore, representation of ethnic interest groups becomes implicated in the given moment of the language-ideology-power dynamics.



**Figure 2.5.**

### **Theoretical Framework**

Figure 5 above demonstrates how the representation theory may apply to the media reportage of ethnic interest groups. News events related to ethnic interest groups are subjected to the gatekeeping process of news selection and processing (editing). This process is, however, influenced by certain factors including ethnic ideologies, political and economic interests which all constitute the ideological and power dynamics that shape what eventually emerges as media text or representations. Nevertheless, this ideological and power dynamics is in turn shaped by the text. Stated differently, the process of media gatekeeping inevitably comes under the influence of certain prejudices and interests which tend to shape the nature of text i.e. representation. At the same time, this representation tends to reinforce those prejudices and interests (i.e. the ideological and power dynamics) that had created it.

## **2.5. Summary of Review**

Ethnicity is a complex form of identity which is ascribed based on one's lingual, cultural, geographical and other affiliations (Ukiwo, 2005). Like race, it is more or less socially constructed given that it is implicated in assumptions and prejudices upheld by individuals and groups in society (Mayorga, 2007; Brooks & Hébert, 2006; Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). These assumptions and prejudices subsist in the language-ideology-power structure of society, and this discourse structure (including its ethnic content) is interlocked with the media as the two mutually feed from each other (Taiwo, 2007; Zaidi, 2012). Based on the foregoing, the way the media may represent ethnicity is always to be viewed from the perspective of the ideological motivations of the media and the resultant power interest.

The multi-ethnic nature of the Nigerian social sphere is such that has made ethnicity a dominant element in the nation's life (Daramola, 2013). Being a part of and a product of the social process, the media become entrapped in this discourse of ethnicity, meaning that media text now becomes a site for ethno-ideological contestations particularly in the light of the divisiveness and rancour

that have become associated with ethnicity in the country. The ethnic interest groups, being the sole organized voice of ethnicity in the country (Ojoma, 2015), assume a prominent role in this process. The above encapsulate the key points of the conceptual review.

On the other hand, the empirical review focused on studies related to how ethnicity/religion influences reportage in the media. The studies took up specific news events and examined media coverage of same in the process of which it became evident that the media were not totally immune from sectional prejudices in carrying out their reportage. In other words, the media are entrapped in the discourse of ethnicity given their tendency to be swayed by ethnic contestations in their reportage.

Lastly, the theoretical aspect of the review focused on the gatekeeping, social constructionism, framing and representation theories which all, from related but slightly differing perspectives, describe the dynamics of the process of media portrayal of events and issues. However, the representation theory was ultimately chosen for establishing a theoretical framework for the study given that it directly touches on the subject of study – representation of ethnic interest groups.

## **2.6. Gap in Literature**

Empirical literature review indicated that studies have been carried out in the areas of media reportage of ethnicity-related issues (such as Ekeanyanwu, 2007; Omenugha & Ukwueze, 2011; Nwafor, 2015) and influence of ethnicity, religion and ownership on reportage (such as Jibo, 1981 cited in Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Medubi, 2002; Anim, 2007; Salawu, 2013; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Ekwe & Chukwuma, 2013; Sule, 2015). Nevertheless, none of the studies focused on how the media had covered ethnic interest groups, which being the only organised corporate ethnic

players in the Nigeria's socio-political sphere (Ojoma, 2015), arguably present an ideal case for assessing the media representation of ethnicity in the country.

Secondly, none of these studies on media and ethnicity was a language-ideology-power study. The advantage of such an approach is that it offers the researcher an opportunity to interrogate media reportage from the perspective of media's interrelationship with the larger social sphere. Gatekeeping is thus treated not as an isolated process but as implicated in the overall societal mechanism of meaning generation, hence its amenability to political, economic and cultural influences (Fairclough; 1989; Hall, 1997a; Taiwo, 2007). This research was designed in line with this approach.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology for the study is presented in this chapter. It covers research design, period of study, population of study, sample and sampling procedure, units of analysis, instrument of data collection, content categories, inter-coder reliability test and method of data analysis.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

As a language-ideology-power study, this research primarily involved language analysis using critical discourse analysis (CDA). However, given the need to enrich data analysis and discussion, other relevant research procedures were incorporated to complement the primary procedure – CDA. Therefore, the study was designed as a triangulated research encompassing content analysis – quantitative and qualitative (CDA) and key informant interview.

##### **3.1.1. Content Analysis**

The study adopted content analysis as suitable design for studying the content of the newspapers. This is based on the consideration that content analysis offers a scientific procedure for analyzing content of communication in order to reveal meanings, contexts and intentions within the messages (Prasad, 2008). However, as indicated earlier, the content analysis part of the study had quantitative and qualitative aspects.

- **Quantitative Content Analysis**

Being that quantitative content analysis is limited to investigating merely the manifest content of communication (Krippendorff, 2004; Frazonsi, 2007), the quantitative content analysis aspect of this study was intended to provide relevant data that would help in illuminating and putting in context the principal (i.e. CDA) data. It involved extracting and presenting data regarding how ethnic interest groups are reported in the newspapers with the view to employing them for further elucidation of the CDA data through comparison, contrast and synthesis.

- **Qualitative Content Analysis (Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA)**

This study, being a language-ideology-power study, was interested in meanings, contexts and intentions of the communications to be analysed, and qualitative content analysis offers a suitable tool for such analysis (Frazonsi, 2004; Krippendorff, 2004; Elo & Kynga, 2007). The particular form of qualitative content analysis to be adopted was critical discourse analysis (CDA). This is a research tradition having its origin in linguistics, and it seeks to analyse language by paying attention to the social context that generated the language. Language in this sense broadly refers to words, pictures and all forms of symbols of representation (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.11). In CDA, language is seen as a discourse; a socially constructed meaning structure that delimits what can be said and what cannot be said and determines how spaces in which new statements can be made are created (Fairclough, 1989; Akinwotu, 2014).

In this study, therefore, language (words, pictures, sketches, etc) employed by the newspapers in representing ethnic interest groups was analysed within the context of the social discourses which this representation is part of. In this process, the ideological and power circumstances that produced this language were revealed. This is given that language and representation mirror the beliefs, biases as well as the power relations that prevail in the environment of their origin – in one word, they are part of the overall social practice (Fairclough, 1989; Jorgensen & Phillips,

2002). The foregoing underscores the suitability of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the qualitative content analysis approach for this study.

### **3.1.2. Key Informant Interview (KII)**

Key informant interview was considered appropriate by the researcher for supplementing the content analysis data as it would further offer insight into the subject of study by permitting the researcher to view newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups from the perspective of data extracted from the mouths of the gatekeepers themselves. Stated differently, the researcher opted for key informant interview in order to integrate in the analysis the views of “a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject” given that “they possess information or ideas that can be solicited by the investigator” (Kumar, 1989, p.2).

### **3.2. Period of Study**

The period of this study was May 29 2015 to May 29 2017 which was the first two years of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration. This period was chosen given its significance within the context of recent ethnic contestations in Nigeria. The period followed a presidential and other elections mired in ethnic tensions in March and April 2015 (Batta, Batta & Mboho, 2015) and these ethnic tensions lingered under the administration as the government continued to be accused of ethnic bias by some interests in the country (Ojoma, 2015). Ethnically charged issues such as attacks by Fulani herdsmen, agitations by secessionist groups like IPOB, MASSOB and Niger Delta groups, and detention of the IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu and leader of the Shiite Islamic Movement Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, among others, are all news stories with ethnic overtone in this period (Ojoma, 2015; Ezeonwuka & Igwe, 2016).

### **3.3. Population of the Study**

The study population was all the national daily newspapers published in Nigeria between May 29 2015 and May 29 2017 which was the time frame of the study. Within this period, a total of 22 national dailies were publishing in Nigeria (See Appendix V), and each would have presumably published 732 issues in the two-year period of the study which gives a total of 16, 104 issues. This was the population size for the study.

### **3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

The researcher conducted sampling for both the content analysis and key informant interview aspects of the study. The sample size for the content analysis was 432 newspaper editions. This size was chosen based on Basden and Wright's (1997) recommendation that selecting one edition per week would be appropriate for a newspaper study extending up to a period of six months – and this study extends to a two-year period. Hence, for each of the four newspapers used here, 108 editions were selected (one from each of the 108 weeks that run between May 29 2015 and May 29 2017). These, on the whole, amounted to 432 editions (See Appendix VI).

This sample selection was conducted in two stages as follows:

- i. Stage One: Selecting newspaper titles
- ii. Stage Two: Selecting newspaper editions

#### **Stage One: Newspapers Titles**

At this stage, the researcher employed judgment sampling procedure which allows a researcher to consciously choose from the population based on certain characteristics sought (Oppong, 2013). In selecting the newspaper titles, the researcher looked out for two major characteristics. First was the market strength of a title and second is the ethnic background of the owner, i.e. ethnic origin of the ownership. This latter characteristic was considered apt given that the subject

of the study was representation of ethnicity in newspapers. Besides, ownership and ethnicity are among factors that influence reportage in the Nigerian press generally (Olayiwola, 1991; Adedeji, 2009; Daramola, 2013).

In considering the market strength of each of the newspapers, the researcher made use of statistics supplied by a 2009 study jointly commissioned by the Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), the Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN) and the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN). The study supervised by Zus Bureau, an independent media audit agency, in its report, rated the following 10 newspapers as the highest circulating in Nigeria in this order: *The Punch, The Nation, The Sun, Vanguard, The Guardian, THISDAY, Daily Trust, Tribune, Champion and Compass* (Ariyibi-Oke, 2010).

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### 3.4.1.1. Brief Profile of Selected Newspaper Titles

The brief profiles of the selected newspapers are discussed as follows.

- ***The Sun:***

*The Sun* is owned by Chief Orji Uzor Kalu, a politician and businessman. The newspaper was established in 2003 and is published in Lagos by The Sun Publishing Limited. Its readership is believed to be strongest in the South-East – an assertion now proven by statistics (Ariyibi-Oke, 2010). *The Sun* publishes under three major titles as follows: *Daily Sun* (flag ship), *Saturday Sun* and *Sunday Sun*. Other sister titles are *Sporting Sun*. The paper is modeled after the now defunct popular Sun newspaper of the United Kingdom. *The Sun* newspaper reports politics, economy, education, science, crimes, culture and sports, among other numerous subjects. Its daily circulation is put at 130, 000 – meaning that it ranks third nationally (Ariyibi-Oke, 2010). *The Sun's* motto is “Voice of the Nation” and its mission statement is “To practice journalism in the classical newspaper tradition of presenting the news and features in an exciting style, with impact, objectivity and appeal that generate returns to all stakeholders; the society, the investors and the practitioners” (The Sun Publishing Limited, 2018).

- ***Daily Trust:***

The *Daily Trust* is a newspaper owned by Media Trust, a private publishing company based in Abuja. It is published alongside *Weekly Trust*, *Sunday Trust* and an Hausa title *Aminiya* as well as a Pan-African Magazine, *Kilimanjaro*. The *Weekly Trust* was established in March 1998 and the *Daily Trust* was launched in January 2001. The *Trust* titles enjoy their strongest circulation in Northern Nigeria and are believed to be favourably disposed to northern cum Islamic sentiments (Adedeji, 2009). Nationally, the newspaper is ranked fifth among Nigerian dailies in terms of advertising revenue, whereas within the North-East and North-West, it is ranked first, and in the North-Central, it is second only to *The Sun*). However, in terms of circulation, the paper ranks

seventh nationally with 11,672 daily sales representing 6.2 percent share of the market (Aribiyi-Oke, 2010). *Daily Trust* mission statement is “To disseminate credible information for the good of all stakeholders” (Media Trust Limited, 2018).

- ***Vanguard***

*Vanguard newspaper* was established in 1984 by Mr. Sam Amuka, a renowned veteran journalist, columnist, former editor of the famous *Sunday Times* and the first Managing Director of the Punch Newspapers. He is of Itsekiri extraction in the Delta State of Nigeria. The paper’s first edition hit the newsstands on Sunday, June 3, 1984. *Vanguard* (daily) is published alongside *Saturday Vanguard* and *Sunday Vanguard* under the aegis of Vanguard Media Limited. The three titles carry news reports and other materials on a wide range of issues including politics, sports, advertising, management and marketing, maritime, energy, Hi-tech and computer, aviation, business and banking, tourism, health, labour, human angle, women affairs, education and insurance (Vanguard Media Limited, 2018). The paper devotes a considerable number of pages to Niger Delta issues daily and is perceived to have some soft spot for the region and its aspirations (Nosa, 2009). The paper’s circulation figures total 120,000 copies with a print run of 130,000 copies (Vanguard Media Limited, 2018). Its mission statement is “To impact positively on our Readers/Clients and society by providing high quality, reliable and affordable media products for promoting knowledge, political stability and economic prosperity” while its core values is equity and fairness, integrity, people-centeredness and excellence (Vanguard Media Limited, 2018).

- ***The Nation***

*The Nation* is one of the national dailies in Nigeria. It was established July 31 2006 by a leading politician and opposition figure, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a former Lagos State Governor. The paper

is published by Vintage Press Limited located in Lagos. The newspaper appears in three titles of *The Nation* (daily, flagship), *The Nation on Saturday* and *The Nation on Sunday*. The newspaper is printed simultaneously in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt. The newspaper is ranked number two in the country both in terms of circulation and advertising revenue (Aribiyi-Oke, 2010). The newspaper has its strongest market base in the South-West region of the country and it is believed to be sympathetic to Yoruba interest (Nosa, 2009). *The Nation's* mission statement embodies three ideals: (a) "To provide the general public with information they need to be free and self-governing in a democratic society"; (b) "To vigorously champion a return to fundamental principles of federalism, believing that it is the arrangement that can best advance the multifarious interests of citizens in a country of many nations and faiths such as Nigeria"; and (c) "To serve as an independent monitor of power and hold those entrusted with its exercise accountable". Its cardinal principles are freedom, justice and market economy (Vintage Press Limited, 2018).

### **Stage Two: Selecting newspaper editions**

The second stage of the sampling involved choosing particular editions of the four newspaper titles to study. Here, the researcher's aim was to ensure that everyday of the week (excluding Saturday and Sunday) was duly represented. The weekend editions were excluded being that their content and style are more in the nature of magazine than newspaper. In other words, they don't usually represent the typical newspaper tradition in terms of content and style (Bellhouse, 2005). In ensuring that all days of the week were evenly represented, the researcher was guided by the recommendation by Basden and Wright (1997) that selection of editions should occur in a regular interval that would ensure that successive days are chosen every other week.

Thus, the researcher began by picking the first day that occurred within the first week of the study – Friday, May 29, 2015. Then, moving to the second week, he chose Monday edition (June

1), the third week, the Tuesday edition (June 9), the fourth week, Wednesday June 17 and so on. This process continued up to the last week of May 2017 where the Tuesday edition (May 23) was selected. On the whole, 108 editions for each of the four newspapers and 432 editions for the entire four become the sample (see Appendix VI).

For the Key Informant Interviews, respondents were chosen because of their training, experience and position which make them “informed” and “reliable” sources for the particular information sought (Kumar, 1989). Hence, the researcher selected two key informants from each of the four newspapers studied as follows:

- i. **Title Editor:** An editor of a title (Daily, Saturday or Sunday) occupies an important place as the final person in the gatekeeping line. The editor determines and takes responsibility for the entire content of the paper; this is evident in the fact that he/she signs the paper at the end. So, an editor occupies such a significant position and is ideally well experienced to act as a key informant in a study of this nature. In selecting a title editor from each of the four newspapers, the researcher’s preference was the editor of the daily title. However, where they could not be accessed or declined to give interview, he went for editors of any of the other titles as happened with *The Nation* and *Daily Trust* whose editors of the Sunday title were selected. Hence, Onuoha Ukeh (Editor, *Daily Sun*), Eze Anaba (Editor, *Vanguard*), Theophilus Abba (Editor, *Sunday Trust*), and Chris Egburonu (Editor, *The Nation On Sunday*).
- ii. **A Reporter:** A reporter is the first person in the gatekeeping line whose position is so vital because he/she is the one that must open the door for any material to get into the gatekeeping channel before it can face the scrutiny of other gatekeepers and either survives or is spiked. A reporter who had at least 10 years experience on the job and had

covered diverse bits in the course of his/her career was considered suitable for this study. Hence, Aloysius Attah (Senior Reporter/Onitsha Correspondent, *The Sun*), Emmanuel Aziken (Political Editor/most senior political reporter, *Vanguard*), Sina Fadire (Head, Investigation Desk, *The Nation*) and Tony Adibe (South-East Bureau Chief, *Daily Trust*) were selected.

Hence, the above selections ensured that the two most critical points in the gatekeeping line were represented – the entry point (reporter) and the exit point (editor). Ultimately, four title editors and four reporters – making a total of eight key informants – were selected across the four newspapers studied.

**Table 3.1.**

**Title Editors and Reporters Selected for Interview**

TITLE EDITORS		
S/N	Name	Designation
1.	Onuoha Ukeh	Editor, <i>Daily Sun</i>
2.	Eze Anaba	Editor, <i>Vanguard</i>
3.	Chris Egburonu	Editor, <i>The Nation</i> (Sunday)
4.	Theophilus Abba	Editor, <i>Sunday Trust</i>
REPORTERS		
1.	Aloysius Attah	Reporter, <i>The Sun</i>
2.	Emmanuel Aziken	Political Editor (most senior political reporter), <i>Vanguard</i>
3.	Sina Fadire	Head, Investigation Desk, <i>The Nation</i>
4.	Tony Adibe	South-East Bureau Chief, <i>Daily Trust</i>

### 3.5. Units of Analysis

The units of analysis were news, features, editorials, pictorials and cartoons. This means that all news stories, feature reports, editorials, pictures and cartoons related to ethnic interest groups became the focus of data collection and subsequent analysis.

- i. **News:** News reports are the primary content of a newspaper. They are understood to be factual and objective accounts of events (Eyiuche, 2003). However, the process of news selection, writing and framing is amenable to ideological influences as the newspaper's editorial policy, economic interest and political and cultural environment among others exert their influence (Eyiuche, 2003; Hall, 1997c). Hence, words, direct quotes, perspectives and frames embodied by news do reflect the gatekeeping choices of the media (Hall, 1997c; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Machin, & Mayr, 2012).
- ii. **Features:** Features are extended reports with in-depth analytical treatment. Unlike news, features present clear perspectives (interpretations) to issues; hence, they offer a deeper insight into a newspaper's view on issues (Eyiuche, 2003; Daramola, 2003).
- iii. **Editorials:** Editorials embody an authoritative position of a newspaper on an issue. It is a completely opinionated piece reflecting the official position of a newspaper on any matter (Eyiuche, 2003). Hence, it is the most reliable indicator of a newspaper's perspective (Machin, & Mayr, 2012).
- iv. **Pictorials:** Pictorials are news pictures. Its content (image and composition) and accompanying elements like cutline and written reports, when interpreted together, do offer insight into not just the denotative but also the connotative meaning (Hall, 1997c; Machin, & Mayr, 2012).

- v. **Cartoons:** They are sketched images that convey message usually humorously and sometimes also sarcastically (Eyiuche, 2003). In political communication, cartoons are considered quite significant due to their ability to compress large amounts of messages as well as subtly convey strong messages (Machin, & Mayr, 2012). Cartoons are opinionated (Eyiuche, 2003).

### **3.6. Instrument for Data Collection**

Instruments of data collection were designed for the different aspects of the study. The researcher designed a coding sheet as the data collection instrument for the quantitative content analysis (see Appendix I). For the qualitative content analysis (critical discourse analysis, CDA), a CDA guide was designed (see Appendix III).

For the KII, the researcher developed a key informant interview guide for the purpose of collecting data from the key informants (see Appendix III). The interview guide contained questions and probe guidelines. Notwithstanding, the researcher could raise follow-up questions when necessary.

### **3.7. Content Categories (for Quantitative Content Analysis)**

A number of content categories were developed by the researcher to aid his coding of the newspaper materials analysed. They were as follows:

- i. **Newspaper Title:** This refers to the identity of a newspaper as indicated by the title and logo; in other words, whether a newspaper is *The Sun*, *The Nation*, *Daily Trust* or *Vanguard*.

- ii. **Ethnic Background of Ownership:** This refers to the ethnic background of the owner of a newspaper, and in the case of joint ownership, that of the majority of the owners. This could be Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani or a minority tribe.
- iii. **Genre:** This refers to the form in which a content appeared – whether as a news story, feature story, pictorial, cartoon or editorial.
- iv. **Placement:** This refers to whether a content is placed on the front page, back page, centre page, editorial page or other pages.
- v. **Page Rating of News:** This refers to whether the page planner has intended a news story to be the most prominent on the page (i.e. the page lead story) or not. This will be identified by looking at the size of the headline, length and positioning of the story vis-à-vis other stories in the page.
- vi. **Headline Size:** This refers to the number of columns across which a headline was spread; in other words, whether a headline would be classified as “large” (five to six columns), “medium” (three to four columns) or “small” (one to two columns).
- vii. **Ethnic Group Reported:** This refers to the ethnic group that is the subject of a report; whether it is Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba or a minority group.
- viii. **Subject:** The area of social life which a content could be classified under; i.e. politics, economy, crime/security, culture/sports/entertainment etc.

- ix. **Issue reported of ethnic interest group:** This refers to the specific subject matter which a report treated in relation to ethnic interest groups; i.e. internal divisions, demonstrations/riots, arrest/trial of members etc.
- x. **Tone:** This refers to whether a content, putting all circumstances into consideration, was intended to unnecessarily excite public interest, fear, alarm, sympathy, grief, animosity, etc. – in other words, whether it is sensational or non-sensational.
- xi. **Slant:** This refers to the direction of a content in terms of being in favour or not in favour of an ethnic interest group.
- xii. **Balance:** This refers to whether a content represented all sides to an issue that was the subject of discussion.

### 3.8. Discursive Elements (for Qualitative Content Analysis – CDA)

In going about the qualitative content analysis (CDA), the researcher looked out for certain discursive (i.e. meaning-making) elements in the newspaper reports. The following elements were involved:

- i. **Lexical Choices:** These refer to the choices of words (i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc) made by a newspaper in reporting an ethnic interest groups. Such choices could be direct or indirect; they are direct when the words belong to the newspaper and indirect when the words are those of a news source.
- ii. **Presence versus Absence:** This refers to a newspaper's decision to include or exclude a person, a thing or an idea in its report of ethnic interest groups. Such inclusion or exclusion usually points to an ideological bias (Machin & Mayr, 2012).
- iii. **Sources/Quotations:** These refer to a newspapers' choice as to whom to use as a news source and the quotations it includes from such source in reporting ethnic interest groups.

Such decisions often affect news frame and slant (Van Leeuwen, 1996; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

- iv. **Juxtapositions (Binaries):** These refer to a newspapers' choice as to persons, things or ideas to place in comparison and in whose favour or disadvantage this comparison is made. It involves making contrasts and the effect of such.
- v. **Inter-textuality:** This refers to how an idea in a newspaper report of ethnic interest groups makes meaning in correlation with other ideas – whether closely or remotely related. In other words, it has to do with interrelationships and interdependence (i.e. synthetic nature) of signs. Ideas or signs hardly make meaning in isolation; they interpenetrate with other ideas and signs to generate discourse (Fairclough, 1989; Hall, 1997a; Machin & Mayr, 2012).
- vi. **Icon's Gaze (pictures):** This refers to whether an icon (a human image) in a newspaper report of ethnic interest groups is looking straight, up or down. Such gaze orientation often has implication for meaning (Machin & Mayr, 2012).
- vii. **Placement:** This refers to how ideas are organized in a newspaper report of ethnic interest groups; i.e. where various signs and ideas are placed in relation to each other. For instance, whether an idea in a headline is placed as a kicker or a rider or whether it is the major statement in the headline, and also whether an idea appears early or later in a report.
- viii. **Nominalisation versus Anonymisation:** This refers to the decision of a newspaper as to who to properly name or not in reporting ethnic interest groups. It has to do with whether a news actor i.e. a person, group or institution is exactly and unambiguously identified (nominalization) or merely referred to in a way that tends to obscure the exact identity (anonymisation). Such decision tends to affect the meaning created by a report (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

### 3.9. Inter-Coder Reliability Test

Given the number of newspaper copies to be coded, the researcher employed the services of research assistants (in this case also known as coders). Consequently, there arose the need to conduct an inter-coder reliability test to ensure that there is an acceptable level of consistency in judgment among the different coders. As rightly observed by Lombard (2010), intercoder reliability is widely acknowledged as “a critical component of content analysis.” Considering that an objective of content analysis “is to identify and record relatively objective (or at least intersubjective) characteristics of messages, reliability is paramount.” Without “the establishment of reliability, content analysis measures are useless” (Lombard, 2010, p.141).

The researcher settled for the formula put forward by Cohen (as cited in Lombard, 2010) Also known as Cohen’s Kappa, the formula goes like this:

$$K = \frac{P_A - P_c}{1 - P_c}$$

Where  $P_A$  = observed element

$P_c$  = expected element

The degree of reliability runs between 1 and 0; while 1 represents perfect reliability, 0 represents total absence of reliability.

### 3.10. Method of Data Collection

Research assistants were employed for coding the newspaper content. They were guided by the coding manual (see Appendix II) to ensure that they abided strictly with the definitions of the coding categories in the study (see section 3.7. above).

For the CDA, the researcher personally went through the newspapers to observe and record language patterns and the underlying power and ideological dynamics. He was aided in this process by the CDA guide.

Then, for the key informant interview (KII), the researcher conducted the interview in face-to-face situations guided by the KII guide. The respondents' answers were recorded on tape while the researcher equally took note of significant points.

### **3.11. Method of Data Analysis**

Data analyses were both quantitative and qualitative as the case may be. The quantitative data extracted via content analysis were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which assisted in generation of statistical tables and application of statistical tools of simple percentages and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

For the qualitative data, the analysis was qualitative in nature. Data extracted via qualitative content analysis and key informant interview were thematically presented and analysed. Eventually, both the quantitative and qualitative data were read and interpreted together in order to arrive at the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter is for presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered through quantitative and qualitative content analysis as well as key informant interview (KII). The quantitative content analysis data are presented first while the qualitative data (critical discourse analysis and KII) follow. Thereafter, combined reading of these data was done to generate answers to the research questions. The chapter then concludes with discussion of the findings.

#### **4.1. QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

The quantitative content analysis data were collected via the coding process as facilitated by the coding sheet (See Appendix I). The data are segmented as follows: frequency/genre, prominence, and perspective/slant, representing the various classes of variables on which data were collected.

##### **4.1.1. Frequency/Genre**

Table 4.1 to Table 4.5 below respectively present data on frequency of coverage, ethnic group reported, genre, subjects reported of ethnic interest groups, and issues reported of ethnic interest groups.

**Table 4.1.****Frequency of Coverage**

	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<b>Total</b>
Editions with reports on ethnic interest groups	75% N = 81	52.8% N = 57	47.2% N = 51	89.8% N = 97	66.2% N = 286
Editions without reports on ethnic interest groups	25% N = 27	47.2% N = 51	52.8% N = 57	10.2% N = 11	33.8% N = 146
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 108</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 108</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 108</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 108</b>	10.3% <b>N = 432</b>

Table 4.1 shows that on the whole, 66.2% of the newspaper editions had reports on ethnic interest groups while 33.8% came with no such reports. Then for individual newspapers, 75% of *Daily Sun*'s editions came with such reports, 52.8% of editions of *The Nation*, 47.2% of those of *Daily Trust* and finally 89.9% of the editions of *Vanguard* all published reports on ethnic interest groups. Thus, apart from *Daily Trust*, all of the newspapers had such reports in the majority of their issues published within the period under study. Nevertheless, the number of *Daily Trust* editions with such reports was merely slightly below majority. The foregoing indicates that ethnic interest groups were a regular news subject in the newspapers, at least within this period, suggesting that these groups and their activities are viewed as important and critical to the nation by the newspaper gatekeepers. Thus, these data tend to reinforce the belief expressed by writers like Daramola (2013) and Nwafor (2015) that ethnicity has over the years constituted an important and recurring news subject in the Nigerian media.

**Table 4.2.****Ethnic Interest Groups Reported**

	Newspapers				<b>Total</b>
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Hausa-Fulani	10.7%	6%	47.9%	2.2%	14.6%
	N = 30	N = 9	N = 67	N = 4	N = 110
Igbo	57.9%	26.2%	25%	51.1%	43.8%
	N = 162	N = 39	N = 35	N = 93	N = 329
Yoruba	15.7%	45.6%	14.3%	3.8%	18.5%
	N = 44	N = 68	N = 20	N = 7	N = 139
Minority	13.6%	12.1%	7.1%	36.3%	17.6%
	N = 38	N = 18	N = 10	N = 66	N = 132
Mixed	2.1%	10.1%	5.7%	6.6%	5.5%
	N = 6	N = 15	N = 8	N = 12	N = 41
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 280</b>	<b>N = 149</b>	<b>N = 140</b>	<b>N = 182</b>	<b>N = 751</b>

Data in Table 4.2 show that on the whole, 14.6% of the reports were on the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, 43.8% were on the Igbo ethnic group, 18.5% were on the Yoruba, 17.6% were on minority ethnic groups, while 5.5% of the reports focused on more than one ethnic group – mixed. For *Daily Sun*, 10.7% of the reports were on the Hausa-Fulani, 57.9% on the Igbo, 15.7% on the Yoruba, 13.6% were on minority groups, while 2.1% were mixed. For *The Nation*, 6% were on the Hausa-Fulani, 26.2% were on the Igbo, 45.6% were on the Yoruba, 12.1% were on minority groups while 10.15 were mixed. In *Daily Trust*, 47.9% were on the Hausa-Fulani, 25% on the Igbo, 14.3% on the Yoruba, 7.1% on minority groups, and 5.7% were mixed. For *Vanguard*, 2.2% were on the Hausa Fulani group, 51.1% were on the Igbo group, 3.8% on the

Yoruba, 36.3% on minority groups, while 6.6% were mixed. From the foregoing data, two tendencies are observable; first, on the whole, the Igbo ethnic group was the most reported while the Hausa-Fulani was the least reported. Then, it is observed that each of the newspapers whose proprietor belongs to any of the three major ethnic groups reported that ethnic group far more than it reported others; thus *Daily Sun* reported the Igbo group most, *The Nation* the Yoruba group and *Daily Trust* the Hausa-Fulani group. However, while *Vanguard* (owned by a proprietor of a minority tribe) reported the Igbo ethnic group most, it also reported the minority groups quite frequently – more than any of the papers. All these suggest that the newspapers were influenced by the owners' ethnicity in their frequency of news selection on the interest groups. In this regard, the fact that the Hausa-Fulani group was on the whole the least reported may become explainable when attention is paid to the fact that only *Daily Trust* has its ownership from the northern part of the country –all the other three are owned by southerners. This pattern of ethnicity-influenced reportage has been observed in previous studies including Sule (2015), Anim (2007), Omenugha and Ukwueze (2011), and Ngwuet *al.* (2013). This issue will be revisited in the critical discourse analysis section below.

**Table 4.3.****Genre**

	Newspapers				<b>Total</b>
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
News	75%	77.9%	80%	88.5%	79.8%
	N = 210	N = 116	N = 112	N = 161	N = 559
Feature	3.6%	6%	5%	2.2%	4%
	N = 10	N = 9	N = 7	N = 4	N = 30
Pictorial	14.3%	10.7%	7.9%	2.2%	9.4%
(Stand-alone)	N = 40	N = 16	N = 11	N = 4	N = 71
Pictorial	5%	2.7%	5%	5.5%	4.7%
(With news)	N = 14	N = 4	N = 7	N = 10	N = 35
Cartoon	1.4%	2%	0%	0.5%	1.1%
	N = 4	N = 3	N = 0	N = 1	N = 8
Editorial	0.7%	0.7%	2.1%	1.1%	1.1%
	N = 2	N = 1	N = 3	N = 2	N = 8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 280</b>	<b>N = 149</b>	<b>N = 140</b>	<b>N = 182</b>	<b>N = 751</b>

Table 4.3 shows that on the whole, 79.8% of the reports on ethnic interest groups came as news, 4% came as features, 9.4% came as pictorials (stand-alone), 4.7% came as pictorials (with news), 1.1% came as cartoons, while 1.1% came as editorial. A similar pattern also reflects in the individual papers; *Daily Sun* published 75% of its reports as news, 3.6% as features, 14.3% as pictorials (stand-alone), 5% as pictorials (with news), 1.4% as cartoons and 0.7% as editorials. For *The Nation*, 77.9% came as news, 6% as features, 10.7% as stand-alone pictures, 2.7% as pictures with news, 2% as cartoons and 0.7% as editorials. *Daily Trust* published 80% of its reports as news, 5% as features, 7.9% as pictorials (stand-alone), 5% as pictorials (with news), none as cartoons and 2.1% as editorials. For *Vanguard*, 88.5% came as news, 2.2% as features, 2.2% as stand-alone pictures, 5.5% as pictures with news, 0.5% as cartoons and 1.1% as editorials. Conventionally, newspapers have news as their dominant content (Baran, 2010) and

the newspapers under study followed this traditional pattern in reporting the ethnic interest groups. Importantly, one observes this apparent willingness of the newspapers to represent the ethnic interest groups in pictures; picture content came second after news in terms of frequency. This pattern may have been instructive vis-à-vis the extent of news value these groups represent for the newspaper gatekeepers. Pictures have been recognised as an important determiner of prominence in print communication; use of pictures in representing a person or something could be an indication of the extent of importance placed on the person or thing by the gatekeeper (Baran, 2010; McQuail, 2010).

**Table 4.4.**  
**Subjects Reported of Ethnic Interest Groups**

	Newspapers				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Politics/Governance	71.8%	33.6%	35.7%	42.9%	50.5%
	N = 201	N = 50	N = 50	N = 78	N = 379
Economy	3.6%	10.1%	4.3%	4.4%	5.2%
	N = 10	N = 15	N = 6	N = 8	N = 39
Culture/Sports/Entertainment	1.4%	7.4%	2.1%	2.2%	2.9%
	N = 4	N = 11	N = 3	N = 4	N = 22
Security/Crime/Unrest	16.1%	17.4%	41.4%	14.8%	20.8%
	N = 45	N = 26	N = 58	N = 27	N = 156
Education	3.6%	4%	2.1%	6.6%	4.1%
	N = 10	N = 6	N = 3	N = 12	N = 31
Others	3.6%	4%	14.3%	29.1%	16.5%
	N = 10	N = 41	N = 20	N = 53	N = 124
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 280</b>	<b>N = 149</b>	<b>N = 140</b>	<b>N = 182</b>	<b>N = 751</b>

Table 4.4 shows that on the whole, 50.5% of the reports on ethnic interest groups were on politics/governance, 5.2% were on economy, 2.9% were on culture/sports/entertainment, 20.8% were on security/crime/unrest, 4.1% were on education, while 16.5% were on other subjects. This distribution of subjects follows a similar pattern in the individual newspapers. In *Daily Sun*, 71.8% were on politics/governance, 3.6% were on economy, 1.4% on culture/sports/entertainment, 16.1% were on security/crime/unrest, 3.6% were on education, while another 3.6% were on other subjects. In *The Nation*, 33.6% were on politics/governance, 10.1% were on economy, 7.4% were on culture/sports/entertainment, 17.4% were on security/crime/unrest, 4% were on education, while another 4% were on other subjects. For *Daily Trust*, 35.7% were on politics/governance, 4.3% were on economy, 2.1% were on culture/sports/entertainment, 41.4% were on security/crime/unrest, 2.1% were on education, while 14.3% were on other subjects. Then for *Vanguard*, 42.9% were on politics/governance, 4.4% were on economy, 2.2% were on culture/sports/entertainment, 14.8% were on security/crime/unrest, 6.6% were on education, while 29.1% were on other subjects. From these data, it is seen that politics/governance enjoys visible dominance in terms of frequency over other subjects reported of the ethnic interest groups. This may have been expected given that ethnic interest groups conduct their activities largely within the political realm; they are principally political actors, making political demands and applying political pressure (Nnoli, 1995; Nyamnjoh). Other spheres of society such as education, culture, sports, entertainment, as has been seen, may not basically be of much concern to these groups, though they would not be totally indifferent about these as these spheres may at times also have direct or indirect relationship with politics. As rightly noted by Nikitin (1980), all spheres of society including “unserious” and recreational spheres like entertainment and sports ultimately have connections with power (politics).

**Table 4.5.****Issues Reported of Ethnic Interest Groups**

	Newspapers				<b>Total</b>
	<i>Daily</i>	<i>The</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Nation</i>	<i>Trust</i>		
Advocacy	29.6%	35.6%	40.7%	25.3%	31.8%
	N = 83	N = 53	N = 57	N = 46	N = 239
Antagonistic communication	31.4%	20.1%	17.9%	25.8%	25.3%
by an ethnic interest group	N = 88	N = 30	N = 25	N = 47	N = 190
Antagonistic communication	3.6%	2%	1.4%	4.4%	3.1%
by government	N = 10	N = 3	N = 2	N = 8	N = 23
Demonstrations/riots/clashes	4.6%	6%	7.1%	2.7%	4.9%
	N = 13	N = 9	N = 10	N = 5	N = 37
Internal divisions	0%	9.4%	2.1%	2.2%	2.8%
	N = 0	N = 14	N = 3	N = 4	N = 21
Arrest/trial of members	18.2%	12.8%	5.7%	19.2%	15%
	N = 51	N = 19	N = 8	N = 35	N = 113
Ceremonies	7.9%	14.1%	3.6%	5.5%	7.7%
	N = 22	N = 21	N = 5	N = 10	N = 58
Others	4.6%	0%	21.4%	14.8%	9.3%
	N = 13	N = 0	N = 30	N = 27	N = 70
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 280</b>	<b>N = 149</b>	<b>N = 140</b>	<b>N = 182</b>	<b>N = 751</b>

Table 4.5 indicates that 31.8% of the reports on ethnic interest groups were on advocacy, 25.3% were on antagonistic communication by an ethnic interest group, 3.1% on antagonistic

communication by government, 4.9% on demonstrations/riots/clashes, 2.8% on internal divisions, 15% on arrest/trial of members, 7.7% on ceremonies, while 9.3% was on other issues. For the individual newspapers; in *Daily Sun*, 29.6% of the reports were on advocacy, 31.4% were on antagonistic communication by an ethnic interest group, 3.6% on antagonistic communication by government, 4.6% on demonstrations/riots/clashes, 0% on internal divisions, 18.2% on arrest/trial of members, 7.9% on ceremonies, while 4.6% was on other issues. In *The Nation*, 35.6% of the reports were on advocacy, 20.1% were on antagonistic communication by an ethnic interest group, 2% on antagonistic communication by government, 6% on demonstrations/riots/clashes, 9.4% on internal divisions, 12.8% on arrest/trial of members, 14.1% on ceremonies, while 0% was on other issues. In *Daily Trust*, 40.7% of the reports were on advocacy, 17.9% were on antagonistic communication by an ethnic interest group, 1.4% on antagonistic communication by government, 7.1% on demonstrations/riots/clashes, 2.1% on internal divisions, 5.7% on arrest/trial of members, 3.6% on ceremonies, while 21.4% was on other issues. In *Vanguard*, 25.3% of the reports were on advocacy, 25.8% were on antagonistic communication by an ethnic interest group, 4.4% on antagonistic communication by government, 2.7% on demonstrations/riots/clashes, 2.2% on internal divisions, 19.2% on arrest/trial of members, 5.5% on ceremonies, while 14.8% was on other issues. From the foregoing, it is observed that newspapers largely reported the ethnic interest groups in terms of the advocacy they make; the ideas they promote and what they want done. This suggests that the newspapers tend to view them as important voices in the national discourse whose opinions and suggestions on the nation should be heard. Similarly, antagonistic communication by these groups was frequently reported as well; this sort of communication is usually in the form of aggressive demands, warnings and accusations coming from these groups. It is often dramatic and sensational and so makes the typical sort of audience-pulling news that interests the press (Jenkins, 1981; Hieber, 1998; Akin, 2005). Also, the researcher observed that the relative dominance of arrest/trial of members among the issues reported of the groups may also be

understood by paying attention to the typically dramatic nature of such occurrence which became a common experience of more radical groups like MASSOB and IPOB. These observations will be revisited in the CDA later.

#### 4.1.2. Prominence

In measuring the amount of prominence accorded to reports on ethnic interest groups, the researcher considered the placement of the reports, their page rating and size of their headlines. Data collected in this respect are presented and analysed in Tables 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 below.

**Table 4.6.**

#### **Placement**

	Newspapers				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Front page	21.4%	24.8%	8.6%	14.3%	18%
	N = 60	N = 37	N = 12	N = 26	N = 135
Centre page	0%	0%	2.1%	0%	0.4%
	N = 0	N = 0	N = 3	N = 0	N = 3
Back page	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	N = 0	N = 0	N = 0	N = 0	N = 0
Editorial page	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%
	N = 2	N = 1	N = 1	N = 1	N = 5
Others	77.9%	74.5%	88.6%	85.2%	81%
	N = 218	N = 111	N = 124	N = 155	N = 608
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 280</b>	<b>N = 149</b>	<b>N = 140</b>	<b>N = 182</b>	<b>N = 751</b>

Table 4.6 shows that overall, 18% of the reports were placed on the front page, 0.4% appeared on centre page, 0% was on the back page, 0.7% appeared on the editorial page, while 81% appeared on other pages. The overwhelming dominance of other pages over front, centre, back and editorial pages is natural because they constitute most of the newspaper space, and so most reports find themselves there. However, for ethnic interest groups to get up to 18% front page placement is remarkable considering the number of subjects and issues competing for that single but most treasured page. A similar pattern occurs across the individual papers. For *Daily Sun*, 21.4% were on the front page, 0% on the centre page, 0% on the back page, 0.7% the editorial page and 77.9% on other pages. For *The Nation*, 24.8% were on the front page, 0% on the centre page, 0% on the back page, 0.7% on the editorial page and 74.5% on other pages. For *Daily Trust*, 8.6% were on the front page, 2.1% on the centre page, 0% on the back page, 0.7% the editorial page and 88.6% on other pages. For *Vanguard*, 14.3% were on the front page, 0% on the centre page, 0% on the back page, 0.5% on the editorial page and 85.2% on other pages. As stated earlier, the amount of front page placement is impressive considering the very many issues and subjects competing for that single page in every edition. The centre page almost did not get any material given that only *Daily Trust* publishes report in that page; others use that mostly for advertisements. Then, the back page, being mainly for opinion columns in the newspapers, had no reports placed on it. For the editorial page, its content is already fixed i.e. editorials, editorial cartoons and letters to the editor. In all, it could be stated that the pattern of placement, to whatever extent, suggests that newspapers placed some value on the activities and communications of the ethnic interest groups; they found them worthy of prominent placement.

**Table 4.7****Page Rating** (Excluding Features, Pictures and Editorials)

	Newspapers				<b>Total</b>
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Page lead	50.5%	21.6%	11.6%	60%	40.1%
	N = 106	N = 25	N = 32	N = 96	N = 240
Non page lead	49.5%	78.4%	88.4%	40%	59.9%
	N = 104	N = 91	N = 99	N = 64	N = 358
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 210</b>	<b>N = 116</b>	<b>N = 112</b>	<b>N = 160</b>	<b>N = 598</b>

Table 4.7 shows that overall, 40.1% of the reports were published as page lead reports as against 59.9% that came as non-page lead reports. For *Daily Sun*, 50.5% came as page lead reports while 49.5% came as non-page lead reports. For *The Nation*, 21.6% came as page lead reports while 78.4% came as non-page lead reports. In *Daily Trust*, while 11.6% were page lead reports, 88.4% were not. For *Vanguard*, 60% came as page lead reports while 40% came as non-page lead reports. Overall, it could be said that ethnic interest groups got an impressive share of the page lead reports considering that many other subjects also compete for that status, and there can be only one lead report in each page.

**Table 4.8.****Headline Size (Excluding Pictures, Editorials and Cartoons)**

	Newspapers				<b>Total</b>
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Large	60.5%	43.5%	23.5%	66.1%	51.6%
	N = 133	N = 54	N = 28	N = 109	N = 324
Medium	8.6%	8.9%	0%	22.4%	7.8%
	N = 19	N = 11	N = 0	N = 19	N = 49
Small	30.9%	47.6%	76.5%	22.4%	40.6%
	N = 68	N = 59	N = 91	N = 37	N = 255
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 220</b>	<b>N = 124</b>	<b>N = 119</b>	<b>N = 165</b>	<b>N = 628</b>

Table 4.8 shows that overall, 51.6% of the reports came with large headlines, 7.8% came with medium headlines, while 40.6% came with small headlines. Almost a similar pattern is reflected in all but one of the individual newspapers. For *Daily Sun*, 60.5% had large headlines, 8.6% had medium headlines, while 30.9% came with small headlines. For *The Nation*, 43.5% of the headlines were large, 8.9% were medium, while 47.6% were small. Furthermore, 23.5% of the reports in *Daily Trust* came with large headlines, 0% came with medium headline, while 76.5% of the headlines were small. Then in *Vanguard*, 66.1% of the reports had large headlines, 22.4% had medium headlines, while 22.4% had small headlines. Looking at the data holistically, it could be stated that the newspapers gave large headlines to a good number of the reports which is a pointer to the extent of value attached to ethnic interest groups by the papers.

### 4.1.3. Perspective/Slant

Data were collected in regard to the slant, balance and tone of the reports on ethnic interest groups. These data are as presented in Tables 4.9 to 4.11 below.

**Table 4.9**

#### Slant

	Newspaper				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Favourable to an Hausa-Fulani interest group	7.1% N = 20	3.4% N = 5	45% N = 63	2.2% N = 4	12.3% N = 92
Favourable to an Igbo interest group	51.8% N = 145	12.% N = 18	15.6% N = 22	45.1% N = 82	35.6% N = 267
Favourable to a Yoruba interest group	17.9% N = 50	30.9% N = 46	10.7% N = 15	3.8% N = 7	15.7% N = 118
Favourable to a minority interest group	13.2% N = 37	9.4% N = 14	5.7% N = 8	27.5% N = 50	14.5% N = 109
No Clear Slant	10% N = 28	44.3% N = 66	22.9% N = 32	21.4% N = 39	22% N = 165
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 280</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 149</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 140</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 182</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>N = 751</b>

Table 4.9 shows that on the whole (across the four newspapers), 12.3% of the reports were favourable to Hausa-Fulani ethnic interest groups, 35.6% to an Igbo interest group, 15.7% favoured Yoruba groups, 14.5% favoured minority groups, while 22% came with no clear slant. For the individual papers, 7.1% of the reports in *Daily Sun* were favourable to Hausa-Fulani interest groups, 51.8% were favourable to Igbo groups, 17.9% were favourable to Yoruba

groups, 13.2% were favourable to minority groups, while 10% had no clear slant. For *The Nation*, 3.4% were favourable to Hausa-Fulani interest groups, 12% were favourable to Igbo groups, 30.9% were favourable to Yoruba groups, 9.4% were favourable to minority groups, while 44.3% had no clear slant. In *Daily Trust*, 45% of the reports were slanted in favour of Hausa-Fulani groups, 15.6% in favour of Igbo groups, 10.7% in favour of Yoruba groups, 5.7% in favour of minority groups, while 22.9% came with no clear slant. For *Vanguard*, 2.2% were slanted in favour of Hausa-Fulani groups, 45.1% in favour of Igbo groups, 3.8% in favour of Yoruba groups, 27.5% in favour of minority groups, while 21.4% came with no clear slant. Interestingly, it can be observed that the news slants largely followed the ethnicity of the proprietors of the newspapers; each of the papers tended to give more positive slant to the ethnic group where the owner(s) come from. However, the exception was *Vanguard* which gave the most positive slants to Igbo interest groups while minority groups (where the proprietor belongs) came second. This same pattern was also seen of *Vanguard* in the amount of reports published of the ethnic interest groups (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.10.**

**Balance** (Excluding pictorials, cartoons and editorials)

	Newspaper				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Balance	4.1%	19.2%	18.7%	23.8%	15%
	N = 9	N = 24	N = 23	N = 40	N = 96
Not Balanced	95.9%	80.8%	81.3%	76.2%	85%
	N = 213	N = 101	N = 100	N = 128	N = 542
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 222</b>	<b>N = 125</b>	<b>N = 123</b>	<b>N = 168</b>	<b>N = 638</b>

Table 4.10 shows that 15% of the reports in the four newspapers (considered collectively) were balanced, while 85% were not. This pattern was replicated all through. In *Daily Sun*, 4.1% of the reports were balanced while 95.9% were not. In *The Nation*, 19.2% were balanced as against 80.8% that were not. For *Daily Trust*, while 18.7% were balanced, 81.3% were not. Lastly, in *Vanguard*, 23.8% were balanced whereas 85% were not. The implication of the foregoing is that the newspapers largely reported the activities and communications of these groups without balancing the claims or issues raised by such. What this means is that most of the reports on these interest groups allowed the reported group to make accusations, claims and attacks without the person, persons or institutions that may be adversely affected by such accusations, claims and attacks being given a voice in the reports to present their own account.

**Table 4.11.**

**Tone**

	Newspaper				Total
	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	
Sensational	11.4%	10.1%	12.1%	30.2%	15.8%
	N = 32	N = 15	N = 17	N = 55	N = 119
Not Sensational	88.6%	89.9%	87.9%	69.8%	84.2%
	N = 248	N = 134	N = 123	N = 127	N = 632
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 280</b>	<b>N = 149</b>	<b>N = 140</b>	<b>N = 182</b>	<b>N = 751</b>

Table 4.11 shows that on the whole, 15.8% of the reports in the four newspapers were sensational as against 84.2% that were not. A similar pattern ran through the individual newspapers. For *Daily Sun*, 11.4% were sensational while 88.6% were not. In *The Nation*, 10.1% were sensational while 89.9% were not. For *Daily Trust*, 12.1% of the reports were sensational

as against 87.9% that were not. Lastly, while 30.2% of *Vanguard's* reports came out sensational, 69.8% came out otherwise. The implication of the foregoing was that the newspapers reported most of the events without unnecessarily exaggerating or otherwise framing them in such a way as to create undue public excitement, alarm, anxiety and fear. The researcher observed that the few reports that came out sensational were those with conflict-related themes such as protests/violence and arrest/trial of members of ethnic interest groups. Such conflict-related developments often lure the media into sensationalism (Hieber, 1998; Akin, 2005).

**Table 4.12.**

**Zero Order Correlation Matrix (Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.Newspaper	1	-.064	-.025	-.235**	-.257**	.332**	.144**	.057	-.169**	.176**	-.123**
2. Genre		1	-.248**	-.087*	-.168**	-.127**	-.121**	-.044	.048	-.036	-.200**
3.Placement			1	.259**	.310**	.072*	.091*	-.179**	-.160**	-.006	.204**
4. Page rating				1	.774**	.066	.226**	-.276**	.042	-.016	.047
5. Headline Size					1	.025	.187**	-.239**	.063	-.041	.149**
6. Ethnic group						1	-.002	-.203**	.088*	.327**	-.094*
Reported											
7. Subjects							1	.153**	-.221**	.053	-.115**
8. Issues								1	.092*	-.032	-.226**
9. Tone									1	.223**	-.083*
10. Slant										1	-.204**
11. Balance											1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.12 shows that newspaper correlates negatively with page rating ( $r = -.235$ ), negatively with headline size ( $r = -.257$ ), positively with ethnic group reported ( $r = .332$ ), positively with subjects ( $r = .144$ ), negatively with tone ( $r = -.169$ ), positively with slant ( $r = .176$ ) and negatively with balance ( $r = -.123$ ). Genre correlates negatively with placement ( $r = -.248$ ), negatively with page rating ( $r = -.087$ ), negatively with headline ( $r = -.168$ ), negatively with ethnic group reported ( $r = -.127$ ), negatively with subjects ( $r = -.121$ ) and negatively with balance ( $r = -.123$ ). Placement correlates positively with page rating ( $r = .359$ ), positively with headline size ( $r = .310$ ), positively with ethnic group reported ( $r = .072$ ), positively with subjects ( $r = .091$ ), negatively with issues ( $r = -.179$ ), negatively with tone ( $r = -.160$ ) and positively with balance ( $r = .204$ ). Page rating correlates positively with placement ( $r = .774$ ), positively with subjects ( $r = .226$ ), and negatively with issues ( $r = -.276$ ). Headline size correlates positively with subjects ( $r = .187$ ), negatively with issues ( $r = -.239$ ) and positively with balance ( $r = .149$ ). Ethnic group reported correlates negatively with issues ( $r = -.203$ ), positively with tone ( $r = .327$ ) and negatively with balance ( $r = -.094$ ). Subjects correlates positively with issues ( $r = .153$ ), negatively with tone ( $r = -.221$ ) and negatively with balance ( $r = -.115$ ). Issues correlates positively with tone ( $r = .092$ ) and negatively with balance ( $r = -.226$ ). Tone correlates positively with slant ( $r = .223$ ) and negatively with balance ( $r = -.083$ ), while slant correlates negatively with balance ( $r = -.204$ ).

#### **4.2. QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS (CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS)**

In the critical discourse analysis, the researcher focused on the implicit meaning of the language of representation of ethnic interest groups with the view to revealing the underlying ideology and power relations. In the course of this, three dominant discourses became manifest; the discourse of legitimate presence, the discourse of opposing ethnic claims and the discourse of common national interest. The analysis is presented under these discourses.

#### 4.2.1. Discourse of Legitimate Presence

Newspaper reports on ethnic interest groups tended to have an implicit intent to legitimate the presence and activities of these groups. Stated differently, the language of portrayal of these groups appeared to embody an implicit defence for their existence and activities. In other words, the newspapers seemed to be driven by the ideology that these interest groups ought to have a space in the arena of public discourse in the country. This discourse of legitimate presence manifested in a number of ways as analysed below.

##### 4.2.1.1. Use of Verbs

The newspapers' seeming quest to legitimate the presence of these ethnic interest groups is deducible from the manner in which they deploy "forceful" verbs to describe the activities of the groups. By these are meant verbs which convey an image of strength, vigour, confidence and courage (Machin & Mayr, 2012). These typically include commanding verbs such as: "demands", "asks", "wants", "tells", "insists", "tasks", "calls for", and "calls on" among others. There are also argumentative verbs such as "argues", "asserts", "contends", "affirms", "expresses", "states", "re-states", "emphasises", "debunks", "dares", and vows among others. Similar to these are censoring verbs like "condemns", "faults", "lampoons", "flays", "accuses", "deplores", berates, "criticises", "rebuffs", "warns", and "cautions" among others. For instance, the following sentences were commonly found in the newspapers under study:

- i. ... Chairman of the South East Traditional Rulers Council... has **called** on the Federal Government... (*Daily Trust*, April 29, 2016, p.4).
- ii. "The Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, has **condemned** the incessant harassment, arrest, and illegal detention of its members in different prisons and secret cells across the country" (*Vanguard*, April 21, 2016, p.26).

- iii. “MASSOB **warns** against grazing bill” (*The Nation*, April 26, 2017, p.43).
- iv. “The Egbesu Red Water Lions (ERWL) and Egbesu Boys of the Niger Delta (EBND)... **warned** the Minister of State for Petroleum... to be wary of impostors who might want to dupe the Federal Government...” (*The Nation*, July 1 2016, p.43).
- v. “The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) Worldwide yesterday **asked** the police to arrest and prosecute persons impersonating officials of the council” (*The Nation*, July 20 2016, p.3).
- vi. “MASSOB **vows** to resist alleged intimidation by FG” (*The Nation*, September 20 2015, p.54).
- vii. “Ijaw youths **demand** probe of raid on Jonathan’s hotel” (*Daily Sun*, May 15, 2017, p.11).
- viii. “**Don’t** distract Osibanjo, group tells ex-minister” (*Daily Sun*, May 12 2017 p.2).
- ix. “Eastern Consultative Assembly **accuses** govt of sponsoring protests against Amnesty” (*Daily Sun*, April 18, 2017, p.10).
- x. “MOSOP, civil societies insist on end to oil exploration in Ogoni” (*Daily Sun*, April 18, 2017, p.26).

This class of verbs, according to Machin and Mayr (2012), tend to portray a person or a thing as strong, firm and independent as against verbs that may portray weakness and dependence such as

“begs”, “cries”, “appeals to” and “pleads”. This sort of verbs has an implicit tendency to legitimate a person, a cause or an idea by building some forcefulness around them, thus tending to make what they stand for more convincing. For instance, the forceful verb “demand” in the headline “Ijaw youths *demand* probe of raid on Jonathan’s hotel” may be replaced with less forceful verbs such as “beg for”, “appeal for” or “pray for” in which case the headline may read “Ijaw youths *beg for* probe of raid on Jonathan’s hotel”. In the former case, Ijaw youths (under the aegis of Ijaw Youth Council, IYC) are portrayed as a group with a strong presence and confident of the appropriateness of what they are requesting, whereas in the second case, the strong presence and confidence suffer substantially, such that an image of a formidable group fearlessly fighting for the rights of a people (the Ijaw) may have been replaced by that of a weak and timid one which is unsure of its principles and cause. Thus, legitimacy is enhanced in the former while it may have suffered in the latter. Stated differently, copious use of such verbs may have been intended to underscore the “seriousness” of these groups and what they represent in the same way people employ affirmative (forceful) words while speaking, just to underscore how serious they are. So, such verbs are a way of legitimating the ideology represented by these groups by giving people a reason to take the groups and their demands “seriously”.

Similarly, censuring verbs (another class of forceful verbs) such as “condemns”, “faults”, “criticises”, “rebuffs”, “warns”, and “cautions” tend to achieve this same objective by portraying one as a righteous judge over others. For instance, in the report with the headline: “Eastern Consultative Assembly **accuses** govt of sponsoring protests against Amnesty” reported by Geoffrey Anyanwu in *Daily Sun* of April 18, 2017, the first two paragraphs are instructive:

Eastern Consultative Assembly (ECA) has **accused** the Federal Government of allegedly hiring and sponsoring demonstrators to intimidate Amnesty International (AI). Rising from its fifth Assembly held in Enugu at the residence of Chief Maria Okwor, ECA said the unnecessary **paranoia** exhibited by the Federal Government in hiring and sponsoring demonstrators to **intimidate** AI was **frightening** (p.10) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In the above story, one finds the Eastern Consultative Assembly, an Igbo ethnic interest group, assuming the position of a censorer who tells people of their fault; in this case the Federal Government was the victim being criticised for being a **paranoid** and an **intimidator** of a **frightening** dimension. The same meaning is implicit in the opening paragraphs of a report entitled “ACF warns against distracting Buhari” by Musa Jibril in *Daily Trust* of October 9, 2015:

The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) has **warned** those it described as **mischief makers** to stay clear of the presidency and avoid distracting President Muhammadu Buhari with their **divisive** and **inciting** comments. The ACF noted that some elements with “obvious tribal agenda” are bent on **frustrating** the Federal Government of Buhari... (p.9).

In the above case, the ACF becomes the censorer pronouncing people guilty of **mischief** and harbouring **divisive** and **inciting** intentions aimed at **frustrating** the state. So, censoring verbs as seen in the above examples tend to achieve a seeming ideological aim by positioning the ethnic interest groups on a high moral ground from where they authoritatively pronounce judgments on others. Instructively, in none of the above cited reports did the reporters bother to present the views of the accused to balance the story, meaning that fair hearing was sacrificed in the face of the “unimpeachable” guilty verdict of these interest groups. The legitimating effect of this sort of representation may not be obscure.

However, this is not to say that less forceful verbs did not appear in the portrayal of the ethnic interest groups in the newspapers under study. Some of them include “appeals”, “cries out”, “begs”, “laments”, “urges”, “solicits” and “pleads” among others. Even though their deployment was not as copious as that of the more forceful verbs, their contexts of use were such that were apparently intended to accentuate legitimacy through invoking sympathy. Some examples may suffice here:

- i. “IPOB **laments** illegal detention of members” (*Vanguard*, April 21 2016, p.26).

- ii. “Don’t scrap Maritime Varsity, Ijaw youths, others **beg** Buhari” (January 25, 2016, p.12).
- iii. “Revenue: Ijaw group **laments** continued injustice” (*Daily Sun*, August 7, 2015, p.6).
- iv. “MOSOP **appeals** for FG’s intervention on roads” (*The Nation*, February 2, 2016, p.13).
- v. “Herdsman chasing us out of our ancestral home, Idoma group **cries out**” (*Daily Sun*, February, 7, 2017, p.29).

While unlike the forceful verbs, the above verbs tend to portray one as weaker and perhaps helpless, but depending on their context of usage, they may also at the same time strengthen one’s position by attracting sympathy to them. In such contexts, verbs like these tend to portray a suffering figure, a persecuted victim crying for justice. Such contexts reflect in the above examples where the verbs were deployed in situations where an ethnic interest group had a perceived injustice to complain about. For example, the report with the headline “MOSOP appeals for FG’s intervention on roads” has its first paragraph as follows:

The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) has **appealed** to the Federal Government to urgently intervene in what it described as the intolerable conditions of roads in Ogoni land. The group **lamented** that despite billions of naira that have over the years accrued to the nation from oil exploration in the region, the region’s critical infrastructure remained in a very pathetic state (p.8) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The above opening paragraph clearly portrayed an image of a suffering and cheated people who were justly calling for an end to their suffering. An inter-textual reading that takes into consideration the long-running contestations and agitations over the contradiction between Niger Delta as the nation’s major source of wealth and the region’s notable socio-economic disadvantage vis-a-vis other regions of the country will make for a better appreciation of the meaning embedded in the two verbs “appealed” and “lamented” as seen in the passage.

So, a combination of forceful (confrontational) and soft (defensive) verbs helped to invoke around the groups an image of both a victorious giant and a persecuted martyr – both qualities

having their meeting point in heroism. Thus, from whatever direction one views them, the groups are heroic and respectable.

**Table 4.13.**

**Verbs Commonly Employed In Describing Activities of Ethnic Interest Group**

<b>Commanding Verbs</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Demands, asks, wants, tells, insists, tasks, calls for, calls on etc.	Depicting the act of requesting something in an authoritative manner.	<i>Commanding, argumentative and censoring verbs tend to portray the doer of the act (subject of the sentence) as strong, firm and confident, which tend to make the person respectable and credible. Such forceful verbs may serve to legitimate a person, an idea or a cause (Machin &amp; Mayr, 2012).</i>
<b>Argumentative Verbs</b>	<b>Function</b>	
Argues, asserts, contends, affirms, expresses, states, re-states, emphasises, submits, challenges, attacks, seeks, makes case for, avers, declares, debunks, rejects, maintains, dares, vows etc.	Depicting the act of presenting one's argument or countering another's argument in a firm and certain manner.	<i>On the other hand, though the appealing verbs tend to portray one as weaker and perhaps helpless, they may, depending on their context of use, also at the same time strengthen one's position by attracting sympathy to them through portraying them as a persecuted victim (Machin &amp; Mayr, 2012).</i>
<b>Censuring Verbs</b>	<b>Function</b>	
Condemns, faults, lampoons, flays, accuses, deplores, berates, criticises, rebuffs, warns, cautions, threatens etc.	Depicting the act of passing judgment over another's act.	
<b>Appealing Verbs</b>	<b>Function</b>	
Appeals, cries out, begs, laments, urges, solicits, pleads etc.	Depicting the act of urging for something to be done in one's favour.	<i>Thus, these four categories of verb may have served in legitimating the existence, ideologies and objectives of the ethnic interest groups</i>

*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*

Interestingly, it would appear that when the verb “beg” is used as coming from a supposedly stronger party in a dispute, it will, rather than evoke an image of a victim, evoke that of a capitulating giant; i.e. a stronger party now forced into negotiation by a weaker but relentless party. This is what one finds in the cartoon published on page 17 of the February 15, 2017 edition of *Vanguard* (See Figure 4.2.). The cartoon has two masculine figures; one a man in Fulani gown and cap, a trademark of President Buhari, and another in shirt and trousers with a rifle and an ammunition belt hanging over his shoulders. The two men are at the opposite sides of a drum (presumably a drum of oil) with the inscription “Niger Delta”. The former figure representing the Federal Government is presenting a paper written “Dialogue” over the drum (which serves as table) to the latter figure but who appears defiant and looking the other way. On top of the figures to the left is the inscription “FG BEGS MILITANTS – NEWS”. Then the figure representing the FG is shown to be saying “I BEG YOU ALL, LET’S MEND OUR ATTITUDES” (the MEND here appears to be a play on words to also refer to the militant group, MEND).



**Figure 4.5.**

**A Cartoon Depicting the Strong Bargaining Power of MEND, an Ijaw Ethnic Interest Group (Source: *Vanguard*, February 15 2017, p.17)**

The above cartoon portrays a desperate Federal Government pleading with (begging) defiant militants (MEND, an Ijaw interest group) to come to the dialogue table. Such a portrayal tends to legitimate such a group by evoking a picture of strength, bravery and courage around it.

Conversely, when a presumed weaker party is presented as being in the receiving end of a conflict, what is evoked is an image of oppression and persecution. For instance, if an adult is at the receiving end of a conflict with a child, such an adult might be open to being ridiculed as weak, whereas when the reverse is the cases, the child might be adjudged a victim of oppression and mindlessness. In this respect, pictures showing agitators who are under the receiving end of government's counter-action may evoke an image of persecution of the weak by the strong. Within the period covered by this study, pictures of the arrested IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, was a recurring text in the newspapers. Such pictures usually showed him being led in or out of the court or seated in the dock. One remarkable character of these pictures is that the subject usually wore a sad and suffering look. While a picture may inspire different interpretations (due to polysemic nature of signs), a closer look at other elements around it including the context, may help in arriving at the most likely interpretation (Hall, 1997c).



**Figure 4.2.**

**IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, being led out of the court**

(Source: *Daily Sun*, February 23, 2017, p.6).

The above picture appearing on the page 6 of February 23, 2017 edition of *Daily Sun* shows the IPOB leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, being led out of the court. He is on handcuffs and surrounded by security agents. His head is bent a little downwards while his gaze is extinguished, completely off the camera. Whether a pictured subject is gazing upwards, downwards or straight has a potential implication for meaning (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Kanu is pictured shackled, hemmed in by the state power of coercion as represented by the security agents. This, combined with his turned-off gaze and the overall context of the discourse of marginalisation and imperative of self-determination, might have had the effect of portraying Kanu in the mould of a persecuted freedom fighter; a martyr.

#### **4.2.1.2. Persecutor-Victim Binary**

Besides verbs, some other ideology-laden words like “intimidation”, “suppression”, “repression” “oppression”, “victimisation”, “persecution”, “harassment” and “discrimination” were found to be rife in the language of representation of the ethnic interest groups. These words, which offer the flexibility of nominal, verbal, adjectival and adverbial usage, tend to have the double effect of vilifying one party and dignifying the other; it necessarily evokes at the same time an image of a persecutor and a martyr. These words, at their connotative level, embody a binary of opposites; an ideological dialectic of good and bad, virtue and vice. Once intimidation, suppression, repression are mentioned, an image of an aggressor and a sufferer is created. Thus, the word “intimidation” will be empty of meaning without the idea of a sufferer of the act who may be described with the word “victim”. This would align with the deconstruction theory of Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher, which argues that every word makes meaning only via its opposing (negating) relation to another word (Derrida, 1997). Some examples of use of such expressions in the newspapers studied include:

- i. “We will resist any **intimidation**, MEND tells FG” (*Vanguard*, May 19, 2016, p.7)
- ii. “Ohanaeze cautions against **clamp-down** on agitating groups” (*The Nation*, January 19, 2017, p.11)
- iii. “**Suppression** of ethnic agitations unhelpful – Afenifere” (*The Nation*, May 19, 2016, p.3)
- iv. “Biafra only solution to **persecution** of Ndigbo – IPOB” (*Daily Sun*, March 22, 2017, p.4)
- v. “Fulani group cautions against **victimisation** of herders” (*Daily Trust*, April 18, 2017, p.4)

In the above examples, the words “intimidation”, “clamp-down”, “suppression”, “victimisation” and “persecution” necessarily connote the existence of a predator and its victim. Their contexts of use will make this clearer. In the report “Fulani group cautions against **victimisation** of herders”, Abbas Jimoh of *Daily Trust* writes:

A Fulani group, Gan Allah Fulani Development Association of Nigeria (GAFDAN), has cautioned against unnecessary **victimisation** of herdsmen over the growing spate of farmers-herdsmen clashes in parts of the country. The group, in a statement, observed that farmers-herdsmen clashes had been with the nation for many years and that the government should find ways of solving the problem once and for all rather than what it sees as the current tendency to **victimise** a particular group (p.4) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In another report “**Suppression** of ethnic agitations unhelpful – Afenifere”, Sina Fadire, reporting in *The Nation* of May 19, 2016, writes:

Afenifere, a Yoruba socio-cultural group, has warned that attempts at **suppressing** ethnic agitations in the country will not be in the interest of the country. Afenifere, which spoke against the backdrop of the rising wave of agitations by groups such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Egbesu Boys of the Niger Delta (EBND) among other groups, reaffirmed its belief in dialogue and restructuring as the panacea to the unending ethnic tensions in the country (p.3) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In the first example, the word “victimisation” embodies an ideological intent to make a group (Fulani herders) not blameable by portraying them as a victim of their accusers, this way automatically but implicitly portraying these unnamed accusers as persecutors. In the second example, the word “suppressing” automatically portrays the agitating groups as a victim of a repressive government of Nigeria. An underlying ideological trick in the deployment of the word here is seen in the fact that “suppression” appears to encompass all counter-actions by the government including perhaps lawful actions against groups that might be disruptive in their methods. Thus, “agitations” are legitimated irrespective of their moral and legal implications.

Generally, in reports concerning radical groups like IPOB, MASSOB, MEND, Niger Delta Avengers etc, words like these are found to the extent of overlexicalisation. For instance, in reports related to IPOB and MASSOB, words like “harassment”, “incessant arrest” “illegal detention” and “intimidation” among others, which are all implicated in the persecutor-victim bias, were copiously used. A specific example is the report by Gabriel Ewepu at page 19 of *Vanguard* of May 19, 2016 entitled “We will resist any **intimidation**, MEND tells FG” wherein the word “intimidation” and its verbal form “intimidate” appeared a total of 11 times, amounting to an average of 1.2 per paragraph. Such overlexicalisation is usually an indication of ideological intent (Teo, 2000).

A similar pattern was also observed with the use of the word “struggle” in the report by Geoffrey Anyanwu on page 11 of *Daily Sun* of May 23, 2017 entitled “Biafra Day: IPOB appeals for solidarity”. This word, which evokes the binary image of a persistent persecutor and an unyielding victim “struggling” for self-emancipation, was used nine times in the six-paragraph story, amounting to 1.5 times per paragraph. Generally, “struggle” with its verbal variant was found to be copiously recurring in reports concerning militant groups like MEND and Avengers as well as other radical groups like IPOB, MASSOB, MOSOP and IYC among others. As it

appeared, this word was usually deployed within the context of an inter-textuality that resonates the usual moral glamour associated with “struggles”. For instance, one may think of famous international historical episodes like the “struggle” against slave trade, the “struggle” against racism in America and the “struggle” against apartheid in South Africa as well as local parallels like the “struggle” for independence and the “struggle” against military rule (i.e. struggle for democracy). Thus, the word “struggle” with its synonym “fight”, as used in reports concerning the ethnic interest groups, apparently became a tool for conferring moral legitimacy on the agitations of the groups.

The suggestion that the newspapers attempted to legitimate the presence of these ethnic interest groups may gain further credence in the data generated via quantitative content analysis. Data in Table 4.1 indicate that ethnic interest groups were a regular news subject in the newspapers with majority (66.2%) of the editions publishing reports on them. Then Tables 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 show that the pattern of page placement of the reports, their page rating and headline size respectively suggest that the newspapers placed some value on the activities and communications of the ethnic interest groups; they found them deserving of prominent treatment. Also, from Table 4.5, it is observed that newspapers largely reported the ethnic interest groups in terms of the advocacy they make; the ideas they promote and what they want done. This suggests that the newspapers tend to view them as important voices in the national discourse whose opinions and suggestions on the nation should be heard. A combined reading of these data and the CDA analysis strongly indicated an attempt at invoking legitimacy around these interest groups.

#### **4.2.2. Discourse of Opposing Ethnic Claims**

By discourse of opposing ethnic claims is meant the tendency of the newspapers to represent the ethnic interest groups in the context of mutual suspicion, hostility and rivalry amongst them. In this instance, the newspapers tended to sometimes take sides in the ensuing ethnic contestations.

This sort of representation was found more obvious in relation to issues that have proven divisive and controversial in the nation. Hence, this segment of the analysis was undertaken along the line of four of such issues discovered to be prominent within the period of study – restructuring, Niger Delta agitations, Biafra agitations and farmers-herdsmen clashes.

#### **4.2.2.1. Restructuring**

Restructuring of the country was found to be a dominant discourse in the representation of the ethnic interest groups in the newspapers. In order to better appreciate the nature of this representation, it is important to first understand the divisive context within which the discourse of restructuring has unfolded in the country:

The advocacy for restructuring of Nigeria's chequered federalism has continued to deepen the gulf between the North and the South, generating strong consciousness and bonding among micro ethnic nationalities. The restructuring debate further realign political and state actors into respective monolithic forces, dissolving partisan political parties' boundaries, including ethnic demarcations, in the North/South dichotomy. All identifiable majority, minority political climes have become assimilated in the North/South divide as the struggle for power reconfiguration gains momentum across Nigeria. The body politic is currently bifurcated into North and South stakeholders contesting a new power equation in the Nigerian nation-state (Odibashi, 2017, p.11).

As seen from the above, the restructuring debate has gone on within a context of north-south divide which has seen the minority ethnic groups in the north joining the south in demanding for restructuring. For some reasons, the north has been reluctant to exactly embrace the restructuring idea – at least within the context of its conceptualisation by the advocacy groups in the south. This ethno-regional pattern of the debate has tended to reflect in the newspaper representation of the ethnic interest groups with *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation* (owned by southerners and stronger in the region in terms of circulation) appearing to be on the side of the groups clamouring for restructuring and *Daily Trust* (owned by mainly by northerners and stronger in the region in terms of circulation) appearing to do otherwise.

One easily observable pattern was the frequent presence which the groups demanding for restructuring seemed to have enjoyed in *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation* as against *Daily Trust*. These groups include Afenifere, Ohanaeze, MEND, Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and Middle Belt Youth Forum (MBYF) among others. A look at the quantitative content analysis data in Table 4.2 suggests an ethno-regional bias in the amount of reports published by the newspapers on the respective interest groups, with the implication that the southern ethnic interest groups naturally enjoyed more presence in *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation* while the northern groups enjoyed more in *Daily Trust*. And the fact that the pro-restructuring argument is coming mainly from these southern groups means that their restructuring demands would have likely found more voice in these three newspapers.

Secondly, these demands for restructuring are many a time represented in the three newspapers in a way that evokes an air of command as seen in the following headlines:

- i. “NDA to FG: Restructure Nigeria **now or** face disintegration” (*Vanguard*, August 24, 2016, p.9)
- ii. “**No alternative** to restructuring – Afenifere” (*The Nation*, October 20, 2015, p.11)
- iii. “Restructuring **only panacea** to Nigeria’s woes – Ohanaeze” (*Daily Sun*, February 15, 2015, p.4)
- iv. “Middle Belt Youth Forum **insists** on restructuring” (*Daily Sun*, February 15, 2017, p.11)
- v. “Restructure the country **now**, group tells FG” (*The Nation*, March 30, 2017, p.21)
- vi. “Restructuring: IYC **berates** APC” (*Vanguard*, November 10, 2016, p.7)

As has earlier been stated, statements containing forceful verbs as the above tend to legitimate a person, thing or cause. Interestingly, headlines containing the direct command “Restructure the country now” were found recurring several times in all of the three papers. *Daily Trust*, contrarily, did not so much dedicate its space to groups with such demands. Rather, there is

evidence to suggest that it was more positively disposed to a northern group like the ACF that has shown suspicion towards the idea of restructuring. The following headlines may be instructive:

- i. “Restructuring **will not** end agitations” – ACF (*Daily Trust*, June 15, 2016, p.18)
- ii. “Restructuring: ACF **cautions** northern politicians” (*Daily Trust*, November 18, 2016, p.5)
- iii. “Clamour for restructuring **selfish** – Adamu” (*Daily Trust*, March 22, 2017, p.8)
- iv. “Restructuring may **disintegrate** Nigeria – Northern elders” (*Daily Trust*, May 23, 2017, p.12)

The above represent a counter-narrative against the call for restructuring. A quotation from the report “Restructuring: ACF cautions northern politicians” will make this clearer:

Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) has **cautioned** politicians from the northern part of the country to be wary of being swayed by the call to restructure the country, describing such calls as arising from **poor understanding** of the **history** and **dynamics** of the nation as well as the origins of her problems. The forum decried the situation where some northern opinion leaders have already bought into the said restructuring without pausing to examine the **motives** of those championing it and its **implications for the north** and the nation as a whole (*Daily Trust*, November 18, 2016, p.5). (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*)

Instructively, the above report, having alluded to poor understanding on the part of others, did not bother to give what should be a “better” understanding of the said “history and dynamics of the nation as well as the origins of her problems.” Rather, it continued to lay emphasis on “poor understanding”, “lack of appreciation” and “poor insight” – such overlexicalisation doing nothing else but serving to counter the pro-restructuring narrative.

Contrarily, the phrase “true federalism” was found recurring in *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation* in contexts that portrayed it as the unassailable benefit of restructuring. For instance, in a report entitled “Restructure the country now, group tells FG”, the following lines are revealing:

The group (Ijaw Monitoring Group) contends that the *problem* of the country started from the time the military unilaterally dismantled the regional structure thus sacrificing **true federalism** in the nation... Eva (leader of the group) called for return to **true federalism** where the component units will take control of their *development*... He insisted that there is no alternative to **true federalism** as the current arrangement is *oppressive*. Eva called on President Buhari to heed the well-intentioned calls for enthronement of **true federalism** for *equity* and *progress* (*The Nation*, March 30, 2017, p.21) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

As seen from the above, “true federalism” apparently became the cliché for justifying the quest for restructuring. Furthermore, “true federalism” is also infused with a lot of wholesome meaning as it is associated with justice, equity, development and progress, while lack of it is associated with oppression and in fact the entire problems of the nation (see the words in italics).

Other instances include:

- i. “Restructuring, according to Ohanaeze, will bring about **true federalism** that will **hasten the growth** of the country” (*Daily Sun*, February 15, 2015, p.4) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).
- ii. “The IYC criticises the APC for “foot-dragging on implementing the recommendations of the 2014 National Conference” which will enthrone **true federalism** and return the nation to the path of **sustainable growth**” (*Vanguard*, November 10, 2016, p.7) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).
- iii. “The Avengers noted that only **restructuring** and true **federalism** will guarantee **unity** and **lasting peace** in the country, arguing that the current arrangement is only **dragging the nation back**” (*Vanguard*, August 24, 2016, p.9) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Also, in a report “Yoruba leaders to Buhari: Restructure Nigeria now to avert imminent disaster” as authored by Kunle Oderemi, in August 5, 2016 of *The Nation*, it is reported that “The Yoruba Unity Forum (YUF) has *warned* that further procrastination in restructuring Nigeria into *true federation* will pose an imminent danger for the country” (p.4). “True federalism” was overlexicalised here, appearing 7 times in the four-paragraph report, amounting to 1.75 per paragraph.

But then the qualifier “true” as attached to “federalism” may be tricky. The question has been asked many times as to whether there can be anything as “false federalism” (Eremie, 2014; Adamu, 2017; Olaopa, 2017). Eremie (2014), for instance, argues that there “is no ideal federal state as every...federal state evolves structures, processes and instructions that best serves its needs, given its peculiarities and unique experiences” (p.83). Similarly, Mohammed Adamu, writing in a column in *Vanguard* newspaper, contends:

People talk about ‘true federalism’ as though there is a particular form of it that is sanctified by the gods -and to the extent of which all other forms of the system which depart from that pristine purity, are necessarily sullied and therefore ‘false’ or ‘untrue’ (*Vanguard*, July 6, 2017, p.26).

Also instructive is argument by Olaopa (2017):

Concepts like “true federalism” or “true democracy” are based on the wrong idea that there is a true and perfect but concrete embodiment of federalism or democracy somewhere in the universe to which countries like Nigeria ought to aspire. This is a patently false deduction. The federal idea is a human ideational construct meant to engage human political dynamics of living together. And this implies automatically that it is subjected to specific weaknesses arising from context-bound anomalies (p.2).

While the above arguments may have their weaknesses, yet they at least point to the tricky nature of the phrase “true federalism”. Like every other lingual expression, this phrase cannot be innocent – it is ideology-laden; and arguably, the meaning cannot be fully grasped without paying attention to the long history of identity politics and contestation over resource sharing and

control amongst the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. Such a historical inter-textual reading offers some insight into the likely ideological and power dynamics in which the phrase “true federalism” is rooted.

The discourse of mutual ethnic antagonism in the representation of ethnic interest groups within the contest of the restructuring debate is further brought out in the relevant editorials found in the four newspapers under study. In the *Daily Sun* editorial entitled “The Arewa Consultative Forum and the Clamour for Restructuring” (May 12, 2017), the newspaper obviously was on a mission to debunk the basis of ACF’s suspicion for restructuring:

Up till the end of the first republic, each of the regions, with its own resources, managed its affairs **to the best of its ability**. Nigeria’s first military head of state, Major-General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi... was overthrown in the **revenge coup** of the same year by northern soldiers. On assuming office, the new head of state, Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon, **a northern officer**, promptly announced the reversion of Nigeria to a federation in consonance with the preference of the **northern** establishment. Successive military administrations under **northern military officers**, progressively turned Nigeria into a huge military formation under a central control... It is ironical that the same **north**, which in 1966, found the idea of a unitary state insufferable is today questioning the objective of the clamour for a return to true federalism. For how long does the ACF and like-minded groups and individuals think Nigeria can survive in this **precarious** situation?... Prominent Nigerians have been consistent in their support for restructuring of the country... They have underscored the necessity of devolution of powers and resource control which are only achievable in a **truly federal set-up**. The purpose of the agitation is to bring about the realisation of the conditions enunciated by the ACF – a peaceful and harmonious coexistence – which is under threat in Nigeria today. What further clarifications are required to make the concept understandable? (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In the above excerpt, the recurring attribution “northern” or “north” achieves an ideological purpose of stereotyping. It sets up an image of the “other” who must be condemned as guilty for working against the “unquestionable” project of restructuring in the past and for standing against it currently.

The *Vanguard* editorial of February 15, 2017 entitled “The threat by Niger Delta Avengers” reads *inter alia*:

The **letter and spirit of federalism** do not promote a strong centre to the **detriment** of the federating units. Federalism does not support the practice of **dictating** to the states how their resources should be spent or how they should be governed. Each constituent part is expected to generate internal revenues and pay a percentage to the Federal government in the form of tax. This was the practice when the nation gained independence in 1960. It was the military juntas that ruined the **true federal arrangement** that had been put in place in the First Republic. What Nigeria practices now is the unitary command-and-obey culture which the military put in place during their years of misadventure in power. The **regular breach of security will be curtailed** with the creation of State Police as part of the restructuring process (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

*The Nation’s* editorial with the title “Avengers’ threat calls for emergency dialogue” published on February 7, 2017 similarly reads:

The issue of restructuring the country has to be addressed now in order to guarantee the nation’s **stability** and the **corporate survival** of Nigeria. It beats the imagination why the President is so intransigent and stuck in his anti-restructuring stance. Sadly, it is on account of these that the region will remain a **cauldron** taxing the leadership until Nigeria rediscovers its **old self**, a country founded on the **ideals of federalism**. The true solution, therefore, is to embrace resource control, in the spirit of **true federalism** (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Incidentally, *The Nation’s* mission statement *inter alia* includes “To vigorously champion a return to fundamental principles of federalism, believing that it is the arrangement that can best advance the multifarious interests of citizens in a country of many nations and faiths such as Nigeria” (Vintage Press Limited, 2018). This perhaps has inspired its stance on federalism as seen in its editorial above.

Generally, the above excerpts from *Vanguard* and *The Nation* editorials deployed the familiar phrase “true federalism” and made attempt to associate this with lofty collective goals like growth, development, unity, peace and security among others. Nevertheless, this pattern was

found lacking in the *Daily Trust* editorial of May 30, 2016 entitled “On Niger Delta Avengers”, which partly reads:

For instance, the Avengers are demanding that the 2014 National Conference’s recommendations as pertains to the region should be revisited. One of them is the increase of the derivation fund from 13% to 17%. Another recommendation calls for the setting up of a special intervention fund for the region. **Other parts** of the country **may not be happy** with some of these recommendations **and may not view** the Conference that made them **favourably**, but the government can still discuss these matters in the National Assembly and other councils (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

While the above comment is an attempt to delegitimize the call for restructuring by the Niger Delta Avengers, it leaves one wondering what the phrase “other parts of the country” stands for. Who constitute these “other parts of the country” that “may not be happy” with some restructuring measures as recommended by the National Conference and so “may not view the Conference... favourably”? Against the backdrop of the ethnic divide within which the restructuring debate has proceeded, one is left curious as to whether the above was not merely a disguised case made for the northern side of the debate. Is this “other parts of the country” not a disguised reference to the north? Once, a writer or speaker opts for anonymisation – the act of referring to a person or thing without exactly identifying them – then ideological intent is suspected (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Again, in its June 7, 2016 editorial captioned “The ‘Biafra Day’ violence”, the paper, while condemning IPOB for alleged violent acts, said “While any Nigerian or group of Nigerians may **romanticise** on the restructuring of the federation, the resort to anomie and violence to achieve such aims is not an option.” The word “romanticise”, apparently sarcastic in the context, could have the effect of diluting the intellectual and moral force of the restructuring idea; an indication of the ideological and power bias that prompted its deployment.

#### 4.2.2.2. Niger Delta Agitations

The long history of agitations in the Niger Delta region (starting from the First Republic) has seen the emergence of several ethnic interest groups pursuing the cause of the people of the region. Within the period of this study, amongst the most vocal of such groups in the region, were Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) and Egbesu Boys of the Niger Delta (EBND), all Ijaw group. Others include Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Niger Delta Patriotic Alliance (NPDA) and Niger Delta Youths Coalition for Peace and Progress (NDYCPP) among many others. These groups were consistently reported by the newspapers.

Instructively, it was found that these groups enjoyed more coverage in the three newspapers owned by southern proprietors – *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation*, but particularly in *Vanguard* owned by a proprietor from the region (see Table 4.2). *Vanguard* prides itself as having “contributed greatly to finding solutions to the Niger Delta crisis by initiating public discuss (sic) and setting agenda for dialogue” (Vanguard Media Limited, 2018). Conversely, the presence of the Niger Delta agitating groups was not observed to be as strong in *Daily Trust*. This apparent north-south bias may be accounted for by the fact that demands made by these agitating groups in the Niger Delta including resource control and economic justice are largely the same demands which the southern ethnic groups are collectively making in the context of restructure and “true federalism” debate (Adamu, 2017; Odibashi, 2017).

In the newspapers under study, what appears like an attempt to give strong presence to the agitating groups in the Niger Delta could be seen in copious use of forceful verbs in reporting them. Instances of this have already been given earlier in this analysis. However, reading through the body of the reports proper, it was observed that *Daily Trust* had the recurring practice of subtly or emphatically placing the groups in positions where they also face censure from other

persons or groups, thus tending to weaken their position. A report on the reaction of some Niger Delta groups to the termination date set for the amnesty programme which appeared in the June 1, 2015 edition of both *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* offers a good illustration. The *Vanguard* report of this incident appeared under the headline “Amnesty: December termination date draws ire of N-Delta youths, ex-militants” as authored by Samuel Oyadongha and Gabriel Ewepu, and it read:

The December deadline set by President Muhammadu Buhari for the termination of the presidential amnesty programme for ex-militants in the Niger Delta has **drawn the ire** of Niger Delta youths and former militants, with the Ijaw Youth Council, IYC, and ex-militants under the aegis of Third Phase Amnesty, **faulting** the deadline. IYC **expressed disappointment** that the President **failed** to address key issues dear to the Niger Delta such as clean up of the environment, implementation of the United Nations Environmental Programme, UNEP report on Ogoni and tackling the menace of oil theft which has greatly contributed to environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region which he promised to tackle during his presidential campaigns (p.8) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In *Daily Trust*, the story, authored by Dan Giwa, came under the headline “Youths, former militants reject amnesty termination date” and it read:

Niger Delta Youths and former militants have **rejected** the December date set for the termination of the Federal Government amnesty programme in the region. **This is even as a group, Coalition for Peace and Justice, has cautioned against return of militancy in the region.** The Niger Delta youths and ex-militants, who spoke under the aegis of Third Phase Amnesty, warned that not enough has been done by the government to address the enormous challenges of the region... Meanwhile, the Coalition for Peace and Justice, while noting that the Federal Government has a lot to do towards uplifting the Niger Delta region, **warned that unguarded comments from some agitating groups are capable of bringing back violence to the now peaceful area...** (p.19) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In the first report, expressions like “drawn the ire”, “faulting”, “expressed disappointment” and “failed” tended to portray the Niger Delta groups in the role of a censurer rightly resenting an inappropriate action and apportioning blame accordingly. In the second report, the word “reject” had a similar legitimating effect, but the inclusion of a warning to agitating groups to be cautious

of returning the region to violence may have had an opposite effect. A similar pattern was found in the following reports appearing in *Daily Trust*:

- i. “*Ijaw youths draw battle line*” (June 25, 2015)
- ii. “*MEND wants implementation of 2014 confab*” (January 25, 2016, p.3)
- iii. “*Niger Delta: Groups caution minister*” (June 7, 2016, p.11)
- iv. “*NDA to Buhari: Don’t negotiate with selfish leaders*” (October 25, 2016, p.19).

The report “NDA to Buhari: Don’t negotiate with selfish leaders”, which appeared on the same day in *Vanguard* with the title “Niger Delta Avengers to Buhari: Don’t provoke us to ground Nigeria” and written by Soni Daniel and three others read in part:

Niger Delta Avengers, NDA, yesterday, served a fresh warning to the Federal Government that it would resume bombing of oil facilities if government made any further mistake to enter into negotiation with selfish leaders in the region that represented themselves instead of the interest of the people... The Avengers in a statement accused some unnamed selfish but vociferous Niger Delta leaders and groups of appropriating the overall interest of the region to themselves and cronies while the majority wallow in penury. A spokesman for the NDA, who gave his name as Col. Rightman Hudson Opukurowari, warned that any attempt by the government to engage in any form of dialogue with Niger Delta leaders who had allegedly hijacked the commonwealth of the people for their selfish interest, would be resisted (p.11).

The *Daily Trust* version of the report reads:

Militant group, Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) has issued a warning to President Muhammadu Buhari against negotiating with people it identified as “selfish” leaders of the region. The Avengers, in a statement, said that since it accepted “to suspend bombing oil facilities and enter into genuine dialogue with the government, the administration has not shown any seriousness in talking to the right set of people to move the peace process forward”... In another development, **the Defence headquarters has cautioned the Niger Delta Avengers and all other militant groups in the Niger Delta to desist from taking the laws into their hands by breaching the peace in the region** (p.19) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

It is customary in journalism for two or more reports to be combined as one news piece as seen in the second excerpt above (Eyiuche, 2003), however, the decision to make such combination in

the first place, the choice of reports to be combined and the manner of such combination may tell a lot as to the reaction the journalist intends to achieve in the audience (Teo, 2000). In this sense, such a mutually opposing combination as done in *Daily Trust* may give clue as to the ideological motive underlying the reports. Generally, the way words, sentences and other signs are placed in relation to each other is an important consideration in interpreting the underlying meaning in communication (Teo, 2000; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Another important observation was that *Vanguard* as against other newspapers had the practice of quoting at length from press statements of these agitating groups and many a time even quoting the entire length of such releases. *Daily Sun* newspaper and *The Nation*, to an extent, also do this, but *Daily Trust* appears more conservative in this respect. For instance, *Vanguard* reports with the headlines: “NDA to FG: Restructure Nigeria now or face disintegration” (August 24, 2016, p.9), “We will resist any intimidation, MEND tells FG” (May 19, 2016, p.7) and “Amnesty: December termination date draws ire of N-Delta youths, ex-militants” (June 1, 2015, p.19), which also appeared in *Daily Trust* under different headlines, showed this pattern. One significant effect of these lengthy quotes from the groups’ press releases is that they enable the news reports to accommodate the undiluted voice of these groups and their ideologies with the characteristic propaganda techniques of name calling, glittering generalities, threats and appeal to sympathy. For instance, in the report “Amnesty: December termination date draws ire of N-Delta youths, ex-militants”, the following direct quote from Niger Delta Avengers is instructive:

The idea of bundling through bills like North East/West Development Commission is **fraud, hypocrisy** and **bigotry** by President Muhammadu Buhari (name calling). We have been **raped** for too long... (appeal to sympathy) ...No amount of military action and surge will stop us from **halting** the flow of the oil from our land to sustain Nigeria. This is our land that we are the **masters of its battlefields**... Any meeting with this government should be seen as driving a **combustible vehicle laden with fire** to safety; it must be driven with carefulness (threat) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

While newspapers may find some of these words too obscene, offensive and explosive to be associated with their medium, they may, to any extent, shield themselves from guilt and public censure by letting these words flow directly from the mouths of the news sources; this way, technically disowning these objectionable words. Hence, in the above instance, the newspaper appeared to be distancing itself from these words even though it could have done more by simply excluding them. It is a kind of editorial trick where a newspaper intentionally yields its editorial power of excluding objectionable materials just to allow the materials find their way in through a proxy gatekeeper – the news source. Hence, the mediation role of the newspaper is diluted to give such groups a stronger media presence by technically vesting them with gatekeeping power. It is in this process that *Vanguard* newspaper became a generous source through which these groups channelled into the public space words of forceful and direct points including reproachful words like “injustice”, “rape”, “exploitation”, “destruction” and “marginalisation”; approving words like “justice”, “equity”, “peace”, “true democracy”, and “true federalism”; as well as ennobling words like “struggle”, “determination”, “unbending” “uncowed”, and “unbowed”. In this light, a juxtaposition of the lengthy quotation approach of the three newspapers owned by southerners – *Daily Sun*, *The Nation* and in particular *Vanguard* and the less generous approach of *Daily Trust* (owned largely by northerners) reveals a discourse of mutual ethno-regional antagonism in their representation of the ethnic interest groups agitating in the Niger Delta.

A comparison of relevant editorials by *Vanguard*, *The Nation* and *Daily Trust* will further make this clear. This comparison is significant in that editorials present a newspaper an opportunity to state its views without much constraint from the objectivity imperative. In editorials, newspapers take liberty to be vocal without the usual real or pretended adherence to the objectivity rule (Eyiuche, 2003). The *Vanguard* editorial entitled “The threat by Niger Delta Avengers” (February 15, 2017) was clearly on the side of the Niger Delta agitators as it berated the “*lackadaisical* response of the Muhammadu Buhari Presidency to sensitive issues of national

concern”, blaming it for the “deep tension” in the country; an argument that subtly absolved the Avengers of guilt in their threat for violence. It went further in this regard by indirectly transferring responsibility for any damage to the Federal Government:

This newspaper does not subscribe to or endorse violence as a means of redressing perceived problems in the country. **But these are fluid, dangerous times.** This militant group has **the capacity to inflict pain on the Nigerian economy and the Federal Government knows this.** It has largely been held in check by the intervention of elders in the region (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In other words, if the Avengers inflict violence on the country, the Federal Government is responsible because she knows that the groups can do violence and yet failed to stop them by addressing the issues in the Niger Delta. The editorial went further to criticise the government for committing one billion naira to the North-East “while the oil-bearing zone is in distress”. It accused the government of “double standards” for allegedly keeping over 1, 000 Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) fighters in prison while it has released captured Boko Haram fighters and treats the killer herdsmen with kid glove. Then, in an apparent justification of NDA’s threat of violence and agitating activities of the region in general, it wrote: “What this means is that the Niger Delta Avengers and the people of the Niger Delta have enough reasons to be disenchanted and angry with the antics of the Federal Government.”

In *The Nation* editorial of February 7, 2017 entitled “Avengers’ threat calls for emergency dialogue”, sympathy for the agitators was present but was moderated by comments advocating caution and restraint for the wellbeing of the generality of the country. The editorial started by recalling how NDA’s threat to resume violence had led to apprehensions prompting the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, Uguru Usani, to appeal for patience and common sense as the government was addressing the issues. It, however, observed that “Usani’s call for common

sense should also go to the military, which have been mobilised to the region as Abuja's first response." After noting that "the Avengers' inclination for bloodbath bodes ill for a country just exiting recession" as it was capable of reversing the economic gains made so far, it concluded in the following strong words:

Undoubtedly, the Niger Delta conundrum remains a sad reminder of the failure of Nigeria to work. The Federal Government should go beyond its perennial tokenistic response. As the operations of the Niger Delta Development Commission so far evince, a thousand of such agencies will not ameliorate the underdevelopment, neglect and exploitation of the region. Sadly, it is on account of these that the region will remain a cauldron taxing the leadership until Nigeria rediscovers its old self, a country founded on the ideals of federalism. The true solution, therefore, is to embrace resource control, in the spirit of true federalism.

While the above two editorials showed, to various extents, sympathy for militant agitations in the Niger Delta, *Daily Trust* editorial of May 30, 2016 entitled "On Niger Delta Avengers" did not do exactly that. The editorial started by observing how "restiveness and destructive militancy have returned through the activities of a new group *that calls itself* Niger Delta Avengers" and how government responded to the Avengers' *criminality* by ordering the military to crush the group." Unlike *The Nation* which called for caution on the part of the military, *Daily Trust* appeared more disposed to defending whatever the military was doing at the time by following up the above last statement with the comment: "Government has a duty to *contain* any act of *lawlessness* and *threat* to national interests which the activities of Niger Delta Avengers constitute." The editorial alleged that "the Avengers do not enjoy any community support" as community "leaders in the Niger Delta region have *roundly condemned* the group's activities" – a comment obviously intended to delegitimize the group by portraying it as unpopular even among the people it claims to represent. The editorial proceeded and ended as follows:

The Avengers' renewed agitation and **insurrectionary** attacks on vital oil and gas infrastructure **baffles most Nigerians** because over the years, much political attention has been given to the problem of the Niger Delta and there has been substantial flow of resources into the region. Abject poverty and environmental degradation is still the lot of the region's people. **This does not in any way justify a return to militancy... Some observers** have already likened Niger Delta Avengers to Boko Haram. **In some respects that is true** but in other respects, Niger Delta

agitation can at least be tackled in a rational manner. For instance, the Avengers are demanding that the 2014 National Conference's recommendations as pertains to the region should be revisited. One of them is the increase of the derivation fund from 13% to 17%. Another recommendation calls for the setting up of a special intervention fund for the region. **Other** parts of the country **may not be happy** with some of these recommendations and **may not view** the Conference that made them **favourably**, but the government can still discuss these matters in the National Assembly and other councils (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

A few important observations could be made on the above excerpts. The use of the adjective “insurrectionary” was derogatory as it gave the agitation and the group a criminal character. (As seen earlier, the editorial in its first paragraph used the phrase “Avengers’ *criminality*”). Secondly, the use of the qualifiers “most”, “some” and “others” may inspire curiosity. Who were the “*most* Nigerians” that were baffled by the Avengers’ attacks? Who were the “*some* observers” that have likened Niger Delta Avengers to Boko Haram? Since this editorial did not bother to make these clarifications, one may be led to suspect that these anonymous collectives – “most”, “some”, “others” – were merely invoked to create an impression of popularity; an impression that these views were coming from the people. The science of reasoning, logic, recognises this sort of reasoning as the fallacy of *argumentum ad populum* (argument towards the people), implying that the argument is deriving its validity merely from the fact of it being popular and not from any sound reasoning (Omoregbe, 1993). In other words, such view may still be wrong irrespective of its popular appeal.

**Table 4.14.**

**Comments Showing Mutually Antagonistic Ethnic Claims in Editorials By *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* On Niger Delta Avengers (An Ijaw Ethnic Interest Group)**

<i>Vanguard</i> (February 15, 2017) “The Threat By Niger Delta Avengers”	<i>Daily Trust</i> (May 30, 2016) “On Niger Delta Avengers”
<p>“The Niger Delta Avengers has threatened to unleash violence on the nation’s oil facilities. This they said is in <b>reaction</b> to the killing of <b>innocent</b> people by herdsmen across the country” (paragraph 1).</p> <p>“But the plan of the Federal government to commit one billion US dollars to the North east while the oil-bearing zone is in <b>distress</b> is an <b>insult</b> to the collective intelligence of the Nigerian people” (paragraph 5).</p> <p>“At no time has the Federal Government committed the kind of funds it is planning to deploy to the north east to the Niger Delta <b>which produces the wealth</b>” (paragraph 8).</p> <p>“This has been compounded by the inability and <b>outright refusal</b> of the Federal Government <b>to listen to the cries</b> of the people who voted it to power...” (paragraph 5).</p> <p>“What the people of the Niger Delta have experienced is <b>the worst of oppression...</b>” (paragraph 7).</p> <p>“The Niger Delta Avengers also alleges that over one</p>	<p>“Several years since the Amnesty Programme... brought relative peace to the Niger Delta region, <b>restiveness</b> and <b>destructive militancy</b> have returned through the activities of a new group <b>that calls itself</b> Niger Delta Avengers” (paragraph 1).</p> <p>“Government responded to the Avengers’ <b>criminality</b> by ordering the military to <b>crush</b> the group. Suspected leaders and sponsors of the group have been arrested and detained” (paragraph 2).</p> <p>...over the years, <b>much political attention</b> has been given to the problem of the Niger Delta and there has been <b>substantial flow</b> of resources into the region” (paragraph 4).</p> <p>“Government has <b>a duty</b> to contain any act of <b>lawlessness</b> and <b>threat</b> to <b>national interests</b> which the activities of Niger Delta Avengers constitute” (paragraph 2).</p> <p>“It is noteworthy that the Avengers <b>do not enjoy any community support</b>. Community leaders in the Niger Delta region have <b>roundly condemned</b> the group’s activities” (paragraph 3).</p>

<p>thousand of their men are in detention while the Federal Government recently released captured Boko Haram fighters. If this is true, then the government is open to accusations of maintaining <b>double standards</b>” (paragraph 9).</p> <p>“The <b>impunity</b> of the herdsmen and the <b>acquiescence</b> of the Federal Government therefore support the narrative of <b>parochialism</b> and <b>clannishness</b>” (paragraph 9).</p> <p>“What this means is that the Niger Delta Avengers and the people of the Niger Delta have <b>enough reasons</b> to be <b>disenchanted</b> and <b>angry</b> with the <b>antics</b> of the Federal Government. Sadly, the presidency is sending out <b>discordant tunes...</b>” (paragraph 10).</p> <p>No effort should be spared to redress <b>the acts of injustice</b> now being <b>perpetrated</b> by the government” (paragraph 16).</p>	<p>“The Avengers’ renewed agitation and <b>insurrectionary attacks</b> on vital oil and gas infrastructure <b>baffle most Nigerians ...</b>” (paragraph 4).</p> <p>“Abject poverty and environmental degradation is still the lot of the region’s people. <b>This does not in any way justify a return to militancy ...</b>” (paragraph 7).</p> <p>“<b>Some observers</b> have already <b>likened</b> Niger Delta Avengers to Boko Haram. <b>In some respects that is true...</b>”</p> <p>“... the Avengers are demanding that the 2014 National Conference’s recommendations as pertains to the region should be revisited... <b>Other</b> parts of the country <b>may not be happy</b> with some of these recommendations and may not view the Conference that made them <b>favourably...</b>” (paragraph 9).</p>
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**NB:** *All emphasis supplied by the researcher*

Thus, the news reports and editorials, when viewed critically, tend to suggest that they were a product of an ideological and power dynamics that is rooted in ethnic contestations. In other words, the newspaper gatekeepers had been influenced by this dynamics in their representation of the ethnic interest groups.

#### **4.2.2.3. Biafra Agitations**

The rise of the Biafra agitations in the wake of the Fourth Republic commenced with the emergence of the Ralph Uwazurike-led Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) founded in 2000 (Egburonu, 2017). Today, however, there are other

groups that have joined in these secessionist agitations. They include prominently the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Biafra Independence Movement (BIM). The activities of these groups were found to have been a dominant content of the newspapers within the period under study.

As seen with the Niger Delta agitations, the representation of the pro-Biafra groups tended towards mutual ethnic antagonism as the newspapers owned by southerners, particularly *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* appeared to report the groups in ways that seemed to advance their ideology more than see with *Daily Trust*. Like the agitating Niger Delta groups, the two groups were often represented as strongly and confidently speaking out. However, this pattern was observed more with the three papers owned by southerners than with *Daily Trust*. For example the following reports in *Daily Sun* were also found in *Vanguard* and *The Nation* but not in the *Daily Trust*:

- i. “MASSOB to FG: Will **not bow** to your intimidation” (*Daily Sun*, September 20 2015, p.11).
- ii. “IPOB **condemns** harassment of members” (*Daily Sun*, April 21, 2016, p.4)
- iii. “Grazing bill not acceptable, MASSOB **warns**” (*Daily Sun*, April 26, 2017, p.4)
- iv. “Biafra: IPOB **blows hot...Threatens** to cripple Nigeria” (March 28, 2016,
- v. “Biafra: IPOB **blasts** Buhari” (*Daily Sun*, October 14, 2016, p.19)
- vi. “IPOB **blasts** Ojukwu’s son, Debe, over comments against Kanu’s leadership (*Daily Sun*, May 10, 2016, p.3)

Though with different headlines, these reports were also found in *Vanguard* and *The Nation* on the same dates they appeared in *Daily Sun* and with no less forceful wordings. There were also similar reports found only in *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* and a good number that occurred exclusively in *Daily Sun*. However, while *Daily Trust* also carried reports with similar wordings, there appeared to be a tendency towards reports with censoring words against the pro-Biafra groups such as:

- i. “MASSOB, IPOB **cannot divide** Nigeria – Ibrahim” (*Daily Trust*, December 18, 201, p.13)
- ii. “ACF **warns** IPOB against **inciting** comments” (*Daily Trust*, August 5, 2016, p.29)
- iii. “Call IPOB, other separatist groups to order – Group” (*Daily Trust*, August 5, 2016, p.8)
- iv. “Biafra Day: Police **warns** IPOB, others against **lawlessness** ((*Daily Trust* May 27, 2016, p.11)

In reports concerning MASSOB and IPOB, words such as “harassment”, “incessant arrest” “illegal detention” and “intimidation” among others were deployed for depicting the ordeal of the groups in the hands of the security agencies. The report “IPOB *laments* illegal detention of members”, published in page 26 of *Vanguard*, April 21, 2016, reads that “The Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, has *condemned* the *incessant harassment, arrest, and illegal detention* of its members in different prisons and secret cells across the country” (*Vanguard*, April 21 2016, p.26). This report which appeared in page 4 of *Daily Sun* on the same date under the headline “IPOB *condemns* harassment of members” similarly reads: “Pro-Biafra group, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), has condemned the *continued harassment, unlawful arrest and incarceration* of her members by security agents”. In a report on the ultimatum given to the Federal Government by IPOB to release Kanu, the difference between the approach of *Daily Trust* and that of the other three newspapers was obvious. The report appeared concurrently in four newspapers on February 23, 2017. *Daily Sun* carried the report under the headline “IPOB to FG: Release Kanu now or face our wrath” as written by Aloysius Attah and it read:

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has **asked** the Federal Government to immediately release its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who **has been held in detention** for over a year now despite **court orders** for his release. IPOB, in a release signed by its spokesman, Emma Powerful, said it was handing the Federal Government two months ultimatum to free Kanu or face its wrath (p.4) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In *Vanguard*, the report “IPOB gives ultimatum to FG on Kanu” written by Vincent Ujumadu reads:

Pro-Biafra group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), has **demanded** the immediate release of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who **has been incarcerated for** over a year now. IPOB, in a statement, observed that Kanu had remained in detention for more than one year **in defiance to court orders** for his bail, **threatening** that if the President Buhari-led Federal Government fails to release him within two months, it will face the wrath of IPOB (p.7) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The *Nation* tagged its own story, “Kanu: IPOB hands 2 months ultimatum to Buhari” and it went:

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) yesterday **handed** a two-month ultimatum to President Muhammadu Buhari to release its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, **who has been detained for over a year now**. IPOB, in a statement by its spokesman, Emma Powerful, said if Kanu is not released after the expiration of the ultimatum, the Federal Government will face the wrath of the group (p.11) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The *Daily Trust* story, entitled “Kanu: IPOB gives ultimatum to FG” and authored by Tony Adibe, reads:

**Separatist** group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has called on the Federal Government to release its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, whom **it said** has been illegally detained for more than one year. IPOB, in its statement, said it was giving the Federal Government two months to release Kanu or face the wrath of the group (p.18). (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

In the *Daily Trust* excerpts, one immediately observes the qualifier “separatist” – a description that tends to emphasise the negative moral and legal implication of IPOB’s activities as against when the qualifier “pro-Biafra” is employed. Also instructive is the relative clause “*whom it said* has been illegally detained for more than one year”. The inclusion of the phrase “whom it said” is revealing. Such phrase, which could be re-written to read “whom it claimed” or “whom it alleged”, usually has the effect of calling to question the credibility of a claim by showing that it came from the interested party itself. Thus, the paper was in effect distancing itself from the IPOB’s allegation, this way, leaving the burden of proof on the group. Similarly, there was also the omission in *Daily Trust* of the claim that Kanu’s “continued” detention was in disobedience

to court orders. A look at the IPOB's press release which was quoted copiously in *Vanguard* and wholly in *Daily Sun* showed that this claim was clearly articulated in the first paragraph of the release, meaning that its absence in *Daily Trust* was an editorial decision. The decision of a journalist as to what to take or leave out from a documentary news source is a critical gatekeeping act and which is amenable to ideological influence (Van Leeuwen, 1996).

Again, in *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun* reports, there was overlexication in the use of phrases like "continued detention", "illegal detention", and "unlawful incarceration". For instance, the phrase "continued detention" appeared a total of nine times in the *Daily Sun* story. The likely effect of the qualifier "continued" is to give a historical dimension to the narrative by showing that this "persecution" has been an ongoing thing and not just a one-off coincidence. The same effect could be ascribed to the recurring phrase "despite court orders", which apart from providing a historical depth, invokes the moral and legal imperative of the rule of law and right to personal liberty; all of which resolves into a powerful inter-textuality that legitimates the group's demand. Words and phrases like "detention", "incarceration", "harassment", "intimidation" and "repression" were also recurring in many other reports on MASSOB and IPOB – the two leading pro-Biafra groups. Of similar ideological impact could be the word "frustrate", "clamp down" and "strict bail conditions" as used in the Sam Egburonu-authored feature report "Biafra: Rising sun or dying dream?" published in *The Nation* of May 23, 2017:

To confirm its determination to continue with the agitation after the release of its leader through what **critics** called **strict** bail conditions that are designed to **frustrate** future agitations, IPOB issued a sit-at-home order for all "Biafrans" on May 30 to observe the 50th anniversary of the declaration of Biafra and to honour the **heroes** and **heroines** who died in the 50 years quest for Biafra... Worried by the development, the then Chief Olusegun Obasanjo-led civilian administration began a **clampdown** on the group (MASSOB) and its leader, Uwazuruike. He therefore spent almost three years in prison **without trial** until October 26, 2007, when he was granted three-month conditional bail by Justice Binta Murtala Nyako" (p.39) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

One may ask; who exactly are the “critics” being cited in the above excerpts? Just like other indeterminate references such as “observers”, “experts” and “stakeholders” found commonly in Nigerian newspapers, the anonymous collective - “critics” may have simply been an arbitrary attribution by the newspaper just to validate the claim made. Machin and Mayr (2012) rightly observe that when journalists attribute their facts to unnamed “sources”, what usually becomes obscured is the reality that the journalist has the power to determine who becomes and who does not become a “source” by simply choosing whom to get information from and whom not to get, or having got the information, whether to use or not use it. This is one reason anonymisation in communication will ordinarily give rise to suspicion of ideological interest.

The release of Nnamdi Kanu in April 2017 was easily one of the most important events in the pro-Biafra struggle within the period under study. The story was broken and followed up by the four newspapers under study. One easily observable pattern was the glamorisation of this event in *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation*. This was particularly visible in the copious use of the word “jubilation” and its variants in the reports. *Daily Sun* of April 26, 2017 broke the news with the headline “*Jubilation* in Rivers, Anambra, Ebonyi, others, as Nnamdi Kanu gets bail.” The front page report authored by Cosmas Omegoh and six others shows overlexicalisation in this regard:

There was wild **jubilation** in some parts of the country yesterday, as an Abuja court granted bail to the detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mr. Nnamdi Kanu. As the people of Biafra erupted in **jubilation** all over the world in celebration of triumph of light over darkness... (At Onitsha) As soon as the news of Kanu’s release filtered into the air yesterday, members of IPOB converged on the Old Market Road, opposite Post Office, Onitsha, the commercial city in Anambra State, **singing** freedom songs and **dancing** along the road. They were joined by scores of passers-by and commercial motorbike operators.” (In Rivers State) Shortly after the announcement that Kanu had been granted bail, IPOB supporters trooped to major streets of Port Harcourt, **rejoicing**. The **jubilation** created some traffic along Ikwerre Road, but there was no tension... It was also a day of **jubilation** in various parts of Ebonyi State, as members of MASSOB across the state **celebrated** Kanu’s release (p.6) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Also, the *Daily Sun* report tends to give historical dimension to the narrative by its repeated use of the qualifier “continued” (i.e. “continued detention” and “continued incarceration”) in reference to released Kanu. The qualifier appeared six times in this context.

Similarly, in *Vanguard*, the glamorisation took a like pattern in the story entitled “Nnamdi Kanu’s family rejects bail condition” by Anayo Okoli and published on the same date:

Meanwhile, thousands of MASSOB members in Umuahia went into wild in **jubilation**... when the news of Kanu’s release came... There was similar **jubilation** elsewhere as IPOB members other persons sympathetic to their cause poured into the road in **joyous mood**. Even transporters had to suspend their business for some hours to join in the **celebration** as **jubilant** commercial cyclists rode **joyously** around the town (p.6) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

*The Nation* report on this same day with the headline “Alleged treason: Kanu’s parents reject bail terms” authored By Eric Ikhilae read “Vehicular and economic activities were disrupted as residents took to the streets to *celebrate*... Some of the *jubilant* Biafra supporters who spoke to *The Nation* expressed their *joy* at the release of Kanu”.

The likely effect of the words “jubilation” and its synonyms in these reports was that they evoked an air of popularity around Kanu, IPO and Biafra agitations. This is also the likely effect of words like “solidarity” as seen in the *Daily Sun* report – “Some of them told *Daily Sun* that they came to show *solidarity* with their leader who had been in detention for about two years now” (p.6); and phrase like “tremendous support” as seen in the earlier cited feature by Sam Egburonu of *The Nation* – “*The Nation* observed that the pro-Biafran groups still enjoy *tremendous support*, especially in the commercial cities... and most of the university towns... (It was also) observed that the *Biafran sentiment* has become *electrifying*” (p.39). Such use of language tended to legitimate the group and its demands by representing them as popularly accepted; in other words, by appealing to the democratic ideal of the “will of the people”.

Contrarily, the *Daily Trust* report of the release of Kanu did not give emphasis to the “jubilations”; it appeared not to have been interested in glamorising the event. Its news story was short as, unlike those of the other papers, it did not give an in-depth treatment to the story by way of focusing on the reactions of IPOB members and other sympathetic individuals and groups. The report was straightforward and its tone non-patronising:

The Federal High Court in Abuja yesterday granted bail to leader of **separatist** group, Nnamdi Kanu. Kanu, who is facing trying for treason-related offences, was released by Justice Binta Nyako of the court subject to his satisfying the bail conditions. Kanu is to produce two sureties one of whom must be a serving senator and the other a Jewish leader, both of whom will sign a bail bond in the sum of N100 million each (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The above report continued and ended without introducing the theme of popular appeal which was dominant in the reports of the other three papers. Also absent in *Daily Trust* coverage was the generous use of photographs showing IPOB celebrations across Nigerian cities by the other three newspapers. Such photographs tended to add to the glamorisation of the incident.

It is also important to observe that the pro-Biafra groups and their sympathisers tended to have their voice represented in a more undiluted manner in *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* (but especially in the former) by virtue of these papers’ lengthy and sometimes exhaustive quotes from the groups’ press releases. As noted earlier, such direct quotes enable a newspaper to let in ideologically strong (even objectionable) comments into their pages by shifting the responsibility to the directly quoted news source. As seen earlier with the Niger Delta groups, such direct quotes help to transmit, in an undiluted manner, strong and even offensive words of obvious propaganda intent. In the *Daily Sun* story “Biafra: IPOB blows hot...Threatens to cripple Nigeria” written by Jeff Amechi Agbodo on March 28, 2016, the propaganda techniques of threat, name calling, plain folk and alarm were reflected in the direct quotation of IPOB spokesman, Emma Powerful:

We have endured; we will start the **protest** that will bring the Nigeria government **to its knees** (threat). We stopped protests not out of cowardice and fear but, to show maturity and professionalism in what we are doing and to allow the federal government release our leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu unconditionally... The

president's advisers, who don't want him to release our leader and those **sycophants** in his government waiting for his **downfall** are somewhere waiting to laugh at him ... (name calling)... Biafra is a **spirit** that possesses those who are **chosen people of Chukwuokike abiama**... (Plain folk)... We are calling on world Christian leaders and Christian countries to come to our rescue, otherwise the people of God will be **exterminated** in the surface of the earth (alarm).

The same pattern of strong-worded direct quotations were found in other reports such as “Biafra: IPOB blasts Buhari (*Daily Sun*, October 14, 2016) and IPOB blasts Ojukwu's son, Debe, over comments against Kanu's leadership (*Daily Sun*, May 10, 2016), and “IPOB *laments* illegal detention of members” (*Vanguard*, April 21 2016, p.26).

Two relevant editorials in *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* on Biafra agitations will be useful in validating some of the conclusions made so far given that it is in editorials that the undisguised voice of a newspaper is heard (Eyiuche, 2003). The *Daily Sun* editorial of March 6, 2017 captioned “Release Nnamdi Kanu” was as advocatory as its title sounded. The opening paragraph read:

We add our voice to those of many **concerned** Nigerians who have appealed to the Federal Government to urgently release Mr. Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), who has been incarcerated since October 2015 **in spite of several court orders** that he be released on bail.

Again, the expression “many concerned Nigerians” raises the question of who was being referred to exactly and what was the intention. Similarly, the familiar legal and moral sentiment was evoked by the phrase “in spite of several court orders”. This editorial piece, true to its intentions, went further to argue at length on the unconstitutionality and immorality of continued detention of Kanu before ending thus:

The continued incarceration of Nnamdi Kanu will continue to be an issue for concern. The **most reasonable way** to end the IPOB protests is to release Nnamdi Kanu and ultimately halt the circle of violence and bloodletting occasioned by the frequent clashes between security agencies and the group.

On the other side of the Biafra discourse was the *Daily Trust* editorial of June 7, 2016 titled “The Biafra Day Violence” which was unpretentious in its opposition to whatever IPOB and MASSOB represent through its deployment of derogatory expressions like “condemnable”, “ethnic hue”, “unhelpful sentiment”, “secessionist gambit”, “miscreants”, “false”, “unreal”, “dead cause” and “reckless utterances” among others in portraying the groups and their activities. The concluding paragraph brought out in no uncertain terms the oppositional character of the ideology embodied by the editorial:

... the fate of all Nigerians is intricately linked together and all agitations for separation are **false** and **unreal** when it comes down to the brass tacks. It is therefore incumbent on South Eastern as well as all other regional leaders in Nigeria to take urgent steps to immediately bring to an end all forms of separatist agitation and to call to order all hate groups and all persons whose **reckless utterances** and **conduct** cause **inter-communal tension** in the country.

Also of significance is the enclosure of the word Biafra in inverted commas whenever it is mentioned in the *Daily Trust* editorial. Such use of inverted commas implies that one is distancing themselves from whatever the word stands for. It serves to show one’s objection as to the appropriateness of a word or genuineness or legitimacy of what the word purports to stand for; in other words, “to show that you think a particular word, description etc is not true or appropriate” (Hornby, 2010, p.792).

**Table 4.15.**

**Comments Showing Mutually Antagonistic Ethnic Claims In Newspaper Editorials by  
*Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* On IPOB/MASSOB (Igbo Ethnic Interest Groups)**

<i>Daily Sun</i> (March 6, 2017) “Release Nnamdi Kanu”	<i>Daily Trust</i> (June 7, 2016) “The ‘Biafra Day’ violence”
<p>“We add our voice to those of many <b>concerned</b> Nigerians who have appealed to the Federal Government to urgently release Mr. Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), who has been incarcerated since October 2015 <b>in spite of several court orders</b> that he be released on bail” (paragraph 1).</p> <p>“The latest calls for Kanu’s release have come from former Senate President, Mr. Ken Nnamani... and Professor Pat Utomi, a political economist and social critic, spoke on <b>the need for the Federal Government to obey court orders</b>, even when such orders are unpalatable” (paragraph 2).</p> <p>“Inter Society, an international society for civil liberties and rule of law, has written an open letter to world leaders in Europe, America, Canada, and their parliaments, and to international multilateral organisations, drawing attention to <b>the grave injustice</b> of the continued incarceration of Mr. Nnamdi Kanu” (paragraph 3).</p> <p>“That this administration has to be reminded to obey court orders <b>dents</b> its progressive credentials. <b>Disobedience</b> of court orders is <b>antithetical</b> to democratic ethos. It is also universally acknowledged as <b>the most visible and potent threat</b> to democracy. There can be no rule of law where court orders are <b>routinely ignored</b> and <b>treated with disdain</b> (paragraph 3).</p> <p>“The continued detention of Nnamdi Kanu <b>cannot be supported by law, policy or politics</b>. Each day he is held in detention is an extra day he garners more support, he grows in stature as a <b>prisoner of conscience</b> and as a <b>freedom fighter</b>” (paragraph 6).</p>	<p>“The violence that heralded the marking of ‘Biafra Day’ by members of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) was <b>most condemnable</b>” (paragraph 1).</p> <p>“The agitators <b>claimed</b> to be marking ‘Biafra Day’ in memory of the late Ikemba Chukwemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu who in 1967 led the Eastern region of the country in a failed secession bid, <b>and plunged</b> the country into a 30 month long costly civil war” (paragraph 1).</p> <p>“Under this <b>guise</b>, thousands of youths took to the streets in seven states... demanding to be granted freedom to establish an independent <b>‘Biafra’ state</b>” (paragraph 1).</p> <p>“In some places the agitators were <b>resisted</b> by local youths who said their states wanted no part in a <b>secessionist ‘Biafra’</b>” (paragraph 1).</p> <p>“They (IPOB/MASSOB) also tried to attach an <b>ethnic hue</b> to their claim by citing the involvement of strange “terrorists” on the side of the security forces to attack them” (paragraph 2).</p> <p>“For some time the agitators for the creation of “Biafra” have been busy launching sporadic activities in <b>stoking the embers of disunity</b> by reviving the very <b>unhelpful sentiments</b> that spawned the Nigeria Civil War” (paragraph 3).</p> <p>“Their <b>penchant</b> to engage in acts of <b>lawlessness</b> has also not helped matters. ... the recent protests along with several others in the past were held <b>without any consideration for the sensitivities</b> of</p>

<p>“The longer he is held, the more he is seen as <b>bearing the cross of the Igbo people</b>, and the more the <b>persecution</b> perception of the Igbo takes on <b>greater reality</b> (paragraph 6).</p> <p>The <b>continued incarceration</b> of Nnamdi Kanu will continue to be an issue for <b>concern</b>. The <b>most reasonable</b> way to end the IPOB protests is to release Nnamdi Kanu and ultimately halt the circle of violence and bloodletting occasioned by the <b>frequent clashes</b> between security agencies and the group (paragraph 7).</p> <p>“We believe that Nigeria is a democracy and the Nigerian Constitution is the <b>ground norm</b> which <b>must be respected</b> at all times. Any <b>disrespect</b> of a constitutional order is tantamount to <b>a subversion of the legal system and a breach of the democratic ideals</b> on which the present dispensation rests (paragraph 4).</p> <p>“Chapter 4, Section 35 of the Constitution spells out in unequivocal terms how Nigerian citizens <b>must be treated</b> when they are suspected of having committed an offence.</p>	<p>other Nigerians” (paragraph 3).</p> <p>“The present agitations <b>evoke unpleasant memories</b> of the pains of the past ...” (paragraph 3).</p> <p>“...they <b>must</b> do their agitation <b>peacefully</b> while government has a duty to listen to their legitimate grievances and aspirations, <b>if they have any</b>” (paragraph 5).</p> <p>“...their objective, which is to split the country, has been <b>expressly banned</b> by the 1999 Constitution which declared Nigeria to be <b>an indivisible and indissoluble republic</b>” (paragraph 4).</p> <p>“...there is <b>no strategic interest</b> for the Igbo in the “Biafran” cause, <b>which died and was buried</b> by its original sponsors at the end of the Civil War in 1970. The new found <b>restiveness</b> over a <b>dead cause</b> is therefore an <b>ill wind</b> that blows nobody any good (paragraph 4).</p> <p>“... if persons who engage in <b>secessionist gambits</b> and spread inter-ethnic and inter-regional <b>hatred</b> are not called to order, they will plunge this country into <b>chaos with incalculable consequences...</b> (paragraph 5).</p> <p>“... all agitations for separation are <b>false</b> and <b>unreal</b> when it comes down to the brass tacks” (paragraph 9).</p> <p>“It is therefore incumbent on South Eastern as well as all other regional leaders in Nigeria to... call to <b>order</b> all <b>hate groups</b> and all persons whose <b>reckless utterances</b> and <b>conduct cause inter-communal tension</b> in the country” (paragraph 9).</p>
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**NB:** All emphases supplied by the researcher

#### 4.2.2.4. *Farmers-Herdsmen Clashes*

The herdsmen-farmers clash was one significant news event which featured ethnic interest groups as news characters. Prominent among these was the Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), the umbrella group of Fulani herders in the country. Other Fulani groups that were prominently reported under this subject included Fulani Nationality Movement, Fulbe (Fulani) Development Association of Nigeria (FULDAN) and Gan Allah Fulani Development Association of Nigeria (GAFDAN). Not unexpectedly, given the ethnically charged nature of the farmers-herdsmen episodes, groups representing other ethnicities such as Ohanaeze, Afenifere, Idoma National Forum and Tiv Cultural and Development Association (TCDA) were prominently in the news on this matter.

The killing of some villagers at Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani L.G.A. of Enugu State on April 25, 2016 was one of the reverberating episodes of farmers-herdsmen clashes that occurred within the period under study. The manner in which the event was reported in *Daily Trust* differed in terms of slant from the way *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation* reported it. Significantly, the three latter newspapers featured Ohanaeze in their reports, quoting the President-General, Chief Nnia Nwodo, as saying that cattle owners were to be held responsible. The voice given to Ohanaeze might have been inspired by the sentiment that the Igbo group were the offended party who thus deserved an opportunity to air their grievances. On the other hand, the exclusion of other groups who might have some opinion to express on the matter may inspire suspicion as to the intent. However, some of these groups found their voice in *Daily Trust*. For instance, alongside its major report on the incident, *Daily Trust* had another story “MACBAN Enugu chapter dissociates self from attacks” By Austine Odo and it went:

The South-east Zonal Chairman, Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Alhaji Gidado Sadiq, (who is based in Enugu) in a chat with *Daily Trust* last night, **distanced Fulani herdsmen** from the recent attacks, saying, sometimes, disgruntled groups take advantage of the often **frosty relations between Fulani herdsmen and farmers** to carry out criminal activities under the cover of herdsmen...Sadiq admitted though that there was a problem between Fulani

herdsmen and members of the Nimbo community earlier in February this year triggered by the **killing of two Fulani boys** – Hassan and Usman, and later, their father, by unknown persons in Nimbo. He said the leadership of the herdsmen resolved to give the police at Uzo-Uwani, headquarters of the LGA, the opportunity to carry out a full investigation into the incident without any threat of reprisals (p.4) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The apparently defensive slant of the report is, however, contrasted by what appeared like an outright indictment of the Fulani herdsmen in the reports by *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation*. Breaking the news under the headline, “Enugu: 15 feared dead, as herdsmen attack Nimbo community”, *Daily Sun*’s Chidi Nnadi and Petrus Obi wrote that “A midnight raid on Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government area of Enugu State, by suspected *armed Fulani* herdsmen left over 15 people dead” (note the qualifiers “Fulani” and “armed”). Similarly, *Vanguard*’s report titled “Bloodbath in Enugu as *Fulani* herdsmen kill 40” written by Emeka Mamah and three others read: “About 40 persons have so far been reportedly killed by some *Fulani* herdsmen at Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State”. *The Nation*’s anonymously written story with the headline “Herdsmen kill 48 in attack on Enugu community” went thus,

**Rampaging Fulani** herdsmen yesterday invaded an agrarian community, Ukpabi Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government, Enugu State... The attack came two days after a security report hinted of an impending attack by **Fulani** herdsmen in the area. The report had said the community would be invaded by about 500 **Fulani** herdsmen from Nasarawa State (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The above excerpts from the newspapers’ breaking of the news of the Nimbo killings showed the deployment of the appellations “Fulani”, “armed Fulani” and “rampaging Fulani”. However, all these were found lacking in the *Daily Trust* report on the incident which stated that “Some *suspected herders* have attacked the Ukpabi Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani Local Government, Enugu State, killing about 15 and injuring others.” At nowhere in the report was the qualifier “Fulani” used in reference to the said killers. Furthermore, the same pattern was largely seen in the paper’s subsequent reports on this incident and other instances of farmers-herdsmen clash. For instance, on June 15, 2016, a report “Enugu buries victims of Nimbo killings” by Tony Adibe

read that “The remains of victims of the attack by *suspected herders* on Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani local government area of Enugu State were buried yesterday.” The ethnic interest group featured in this report was Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), whose South-East Zonal Chairman, Alhaji Gidado Sadiq, was quoted as commiserating with the bereaved while calling for investigation into the “root cause” of the killings. Subsequently, on July 4, 2016, a report “Igbo group plans legal action over *Nimbo killings*” by John Chuks Azu appeared on page 21 of the paper with the following opening paragraphs:

A socio-cultural and political organisation, the Igbo Improvement Union (IIU), is to initiate a legal action against Nigerian security forces over the **Ukpabi-Nimbo killings**. The report states further that “the group blamed security forces for failing to protect the lives and property of the people of Ukpabi-Nimbo community in Enugu State which led to the killings by **suspected herdsmen** (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Similarly, a May 2, 2016 feature story “Enugu killings: How we came under attack – Villagers” authored by Tony Adibe exhibited the same tendency towards excluding the qualifier “Fulani”.

The report, which featured MACBAN one whose officers was interviewed, read:

The remains of victims of the attack by **suspected herders** on Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani local government area of Enugu State were buried yesterday ... It was learnt that the victims whose corpses were discovered in the bush a few days after the herders’ attack, had been buried previously... The community is demanding N17 billion compensation from the federal government for the killings and destruction, said to be perpetrated by the **herdsmen**... Perhaps, the ... invasion... by **suspected armed herdsmen** would have been averted if security operatives in the state had properly beefed up security... (p.18) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The preference for “herders”, “suspected herdsmen” or “suspected herders” by *Daily Trust* may have been an evasive technique borne out of a dilemma of judging in favour or against Miyetti-Allah. On the other hand, the likely partiality in the other three papers’ apparent preference for attaching the appellation “Fulani” may become more obvious when attention is paid to the fact that there are two sides to the whole story of the farmers-herdsmen clashes, with one side affirming or at least doubting that the attackers are Fulani herdsmen. But the absence of the

qualifier in *Daily Trust* is no less instructive. Absence tells a lot in communication (Hall, 1997c). So, in the context of the appellation “Fulani”, the presence versus absence politics strongly points to a discourse of mutual ethnic antagonism in representation of MACBAN. Adibe (2014) found *Daily Trust* avoiding attaching the qualifier “Islamic” or “Islamist” in representing Boko Haram. Thus, phrases like “Islamic terrorist group”, “Islamist terrorist group” and “Sunni fundamentalist group” found commonly in other papers were completely absent in *Daily Trust*.

Also, paragraph 11 of Tony Adibe’s feature cited above began with a sub-title “Root cause of the invasion”. The paragraph read:

... the **relationship** between Ukpabi Nimbo and its herdsmen guests was **severed** in 2015, when the hosts demanded that the **herdsmen** must leave their land... Last year, a **fight between** the herdsmen and Nimbo people reportedly led to the loss of lives **on both sides**. At last, the **herdsmen** were said to have angrily left the community, but some of them stayed back inside the bush (p.18) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

The above excerpts suggest an attempt to present the herders as less guilty by deploying statements like “the *relationship* between Ukpabi Nimbo and its herdsmen guests *was severed*” and “a *fight between* the herdsmen and Nimbo people reportedly led to the loss of lives *on both sides*.” The allusion to a “severed” relationship and a “fight between” the parties leading to “loss of lives *on both sides*” gave an impression of a clash between two rivals aiming to outdo each other as against the predator-victim image evoked by the news published by the other three newspapers on April 26, 2016 and subsequently.

While the other papers did not fail to give a similar historical dimension to their reports, theirs, however, was by way of recalling past “sins” of the herdsmen. For instance, the earlier cited *Daily Sun* report by Chidi Nnadi and Petrus Obi said:

The herdsmen (earlier identified as “Fulani” in the report) had, **earlier this year attacked** Abbi community, where a woman and her younger brother were **slaughtered**. Further investigation indicated that over 15 people were **abducted** in

the area while suspected herdsmen **raped** some married women in the farmland (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Thus, by ascribing to the herdsmen the crimes of slaughter and rape as a matter of their past, an image of a group with a history of crime was evoked. In other words, Miyetti-Allah members are serial murderers and serial rapists, thus, no one should be too surprised if they were accused of being guilty once more. In criminal law, one's past conduct may be circumstantial evidence in favour or against them while facing trying for a given offence (Okonkwo & Naish, 1980).

Generally, reports about MACBAN and its members in *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation* were largely negative, dwelling on killings and their condemnation by groups such as Ohanaeze, Afenifere, Idoma National Forum and Tiv Cultural and Development Association (TCDA). Reports giving voice to Myetti Allah and its sympathisers such as the ACF, FULDAN and GAFDAN were to be found largely in *Daily Trust*. Such reports came under the headlines like these:

- i. “**No herdsman** would kidnap Falae – Fulani group” (October 1, 2015, p.4)
- ii. “Fulani herders **not** criminals” (February 29, 2016, p.14)
- iii. “Attacks: ACF **doubts** villains are Fulani” (April 29, 2016, p.4)
- iv. “Fulani herdsmen **have no grudges** against South-East, Says Miyetti Allah” (January 18, 2017, p.13)
- v. “How **other Nigerians** see us, by Fulani herders” (March 3, 2017, p.3)

A few of these deserve some more detailed examination. The report “No herdsman would kidnap Falae – Fulani group” as authored by Abdullateef Aliyu went:

A Fulani leader in the South-West yesterday said **no Fulani man** would kidnap former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Olu Falae. The statement followed allegation that Fulani herdsmen were responsible for his abduction. President of Jamu Nati Fulbe Association, a Fulani socio-cultural group in the South-west, Alhaji Salihu Kadir, said **no Fulani herder** preoccupied with feeding and nourishing his herds of cows and sheep would think of kidnapping

anyone, not to talk of an elder statesman like Falae (p.4) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Similarly, the Lami Sadiq-written story “Fulani herders not criminals” read:

The Jonde Jam Fulani Youth Association yesterday alleged a **conspiracy to tag all Fulani herdsmen** across the country as criminals, saying it will not do well for the unity of the nation. National President of the group, Saidu Maikano who spoke to journalists in Jos said a number of Fulani herdsmen were facing persecution in the South-South and South Western parts of the country for offences committed **by a few criminals**. While not denying that there are some criminal elements among the herdsmen, Maikano said, “Criminality has no ethnic or religious attachment and therefore should not be used as a Fulani identity. We have criminal elements in all ethnic groups but blaming Fulani is not the solution to the problem.” However, the Serikin Fulani deplored what he called the **unending blackmail** of the Fulani herdsmen, noting that every crime committed is linked with herdsmen.” (p.13) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Equally revealing was the feature “Lives of *real* Fulani herders of Nigeria” authored by Tadaferua Ujorha and published on the May 15, 2017 issue of the paper. The piece, to all intents and purposes, was an attempt to correct a “wrong” impression about members of Miyetti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN). The writer, in effect, wanted the reader to learn about the “real” Fulani herdsmen as against the image of mindless killers that had been substituted for this group. The article, which quoted copiously one Ibrahim Abdullah identified as Assistant National Secretary General of MACBAN among other Fulani leaders, told how Fulani herders have contributed crucially to the economy of the country, but yet without being appreciated. “Many of the Fulanis are *victims* of so much, but rather *many see them* as oppressors, as kidnappers and as a violent group” (p.19), the writer affirmed.

Similarly instructive was a piece titled “Herdsmen Attack: How Nigerian Newspapers Mislead Readers With Foreign Photos” authored Yunus Abdulhamid and Victoria Bamas and published in *Daily Trust* “Media” Column on May 10, 2016. The write-up aimed at revealing how Nigerian

newspapers allegedly used pictures from foreign countries to illustrate the report on the Nimbo attack. While indicting other newspapers in this alleged offence, the paper skilfully absolves itself:

The three most viral photographs used to depict killer herdsmen were indeed not taken anywhere in Nigeria.... Mainstream newspapers including *The Punch*, *Vanguard*, *Thisday*, *Guardian* etc have each repeatedly used the misleading photographs. *Even Daily Trust* failed **in the past** in this litmus test (p.28) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

This report incidentally quoted only sources whose views were defensive of Miyetti-Allah and the Fulani in general. The sources included a leader of the Association of Arewa Farmers and Traders and one Dr. Farook Kperogi of the Journalism and Emerging Media School of Communication, Kennesaw State University, USA. Kperogi was quoted as asserting that ethics commands that journalists “verify the real source of a picture before using it, especially in light of the tendency for purveyors of hate on social media to mislabel and misidentify pictures to promote predetermined agenda” (p.28). This source went on:

(It is) now fashionable to write that someone was killed or kidnapped, or robbed “by suspected herdsmen”. (This is) an **unfair criminalization** of an entire demographic category. It’s OK to write that someone was robbed/murdered/kidnapped by “criminals suspected to be Fulani herdsmen.” Writing or saying “suspected Fulani herdsmen” equates “Fulani herdsmen” with criminals. That’s both unfair and inaccurate. To see how **invidious** and **ridiculous** this emergent reportorial phraseology is, replace it with descriptors like “suspected Ogoni farmers,” “suspected Bini traders,” “suspected Yoruba spare part sellers,” etc. and see how it sounds. What is suspected isn’t an ethnic identity; it is the perpetrators of a crime (p.28) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

As stated earlier, a reporter’s choice of news source and the particular portion(s) of their interview to include in a report could be a pointer to the ideological agenda that may be embedded in such report. Generally, the entire analysis above points to the discourse of mutually

opposing ethnic claims in representation of Miyetti-Allah and other ethnic interest groups involved in the farmers-herdsmen episodes.

**Table 4.16.**

***Daily Trust* Headlines Suggesting Defensive Representation Of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MCBAN) And Other Sympathetic Groups in the Herdsmen-Farmers Clashes**

S/N	Headlines	Interpretation
1.	“ <b>No herdsman</b> would kidnap Falae – Fulani group” (October 1, 2015, p.4)	<i>The headlines appear to be countering what seems to be a negative view of Fulani herders in the country. Reading through the body of the reports, this suspicion becomes stronger as only members of the Miyetti-Allah or those sympathetic to them are quoted as news sources. Also, the fact that these reports are absent in the other newspapers studied may also be instructive here.</i>
2.	“Fulani herders <b>not criminals</b> ” (February 29, 2016, p.14)	
3.	“Attacks: ACF <b>doubts</b> villains are Fulani” (April 29, 2016, p.4)	
4.	“MACBAN Enugu chapter <b>dissociates</b> self from attacks” April 26, 2016, p.4)	
5.	“Fulani herdsmen <b>have no grudges</b> against South-East, Says Miyetti Allah” (January 18, 2017, p.13)	
6.	“How <b>other Nigerians</b> see us, by Fulani herders” (March 3, 2017, p.3)	
7.	“12 Oyo herdsmen <b>killed</b> , 14 <b>missing</b> , says Fulani community” (March 14 2017 p.10)	
8.	“Lives of <b>real</b> Fulani herders of Nigeria” (May 15, 2017, p.19)	

*Emphases supplied by the researcher*

Generally, the position taken so far on the discourse of opposing ethnic claims in newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups may be further strengthened by reference to the quantitative content analysis data. Table 4.2 shows that each of the newspapers whose proprietor belongs to any of the three major ethnic groups reported that ethnic group far more than it reported others; thus *The Sun* reported the Igbo group most, *The Nation* the Yoruba group and *Daily Trust* the Hausa-Fulani group. However, while *Vanguard* (owned by a proprietor of a minority tribe) reported the Igbo ethnic group most, it also reported the minority groups (of the Niger Delta) quite frequently – more than any of the other papers did. Furthermore, Table 4.9 shows that the news slants largely followed the ethnicity of the proprietors of the newspapers; each of the papers tended to give more positive slant to the ethnic group where the owner(s) come from. The correlation matrix as seen in Table 4.12 indicates that newspaper correlates positively with slant ( $r = .176$ ), meaning that there was an association between the slant a report received and the particular newspaper that published it. All this would tend to reinforce the suggestion that the representation of ethnic interest groups in the newspapers followed the line of mutual ethnic antagonism (opposing ethnic claims) as each of the newspapers appeared to have been sympathetic to given ethnic and regional persuasions. This perhaps reinforces the charge by Ekeanyanwu (2007), after his study of media coverage of political crises and conflicts during President Obasanjo's second term (2003 – 2007) in office, that “the Nigerian press has not fared very well in reporting political conflicts and crises because of the advocacy position adopted by most of them.” In other words, the press “has operated more as active players in political crises and conflicts than as an impartial judge of such crises and conflicts” (p.64).

#### **4.2.3. The Discourse of Common National Interest**

Another discourse observable in the newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups was that of the common interest shared by the various ethnic groups in the one entity, Nigeria. Stated differently, notwithstanding their seeming ethnic slant, the newspapers appeared also to have

been swayed by the ideology of an imperative of a united nation peacefully accommodating the various ethnic interests. Though this discourse seemed not to have been as pronounced as the discourse of opposing ethnic claims in the reports, it often manifested by way of the newspapers tending to negate ethnic claims in favour of an “overriding” national sovereignty.

The newspapers usually employed collectivising qualifiers such as “collective”, “common”, “general”, “overall”, “united”, “one” and such like. Thus, phrases like “common interest”, “general interest”, “overall good”, “united people”, and “one Nigeria” might have the effect of reinforcing an ideology of a common interest, a common destiny and a common national sovereignty, thus tending to negate or moderate ethnic politics. However, one must guard against taking these words on their face value without carefully observing the contexts and other elements that will lead to their most likely underlying meaning given that these qualifiers could also be deployed to legitimate ethnic interest by aligning such interest to these collectivising qualifiers.

In the *Daily Sun* editorial of March 6, 2017 entitled “Release Nnamdi Kanu”, despite the pro-IPOB leader advocacy that dominated the write-up, the paper still stated; “Yet, IPOB and other agitating groups ought to carry on in a manner that does not jeopardise *common* interest.” Given that this editorial was not against IPOB, its caution for moderation as shown in the use of the qualifier “common” may be seen as a reflection of a genuine sentiment for common interest. This might have been viewed differently were the editorial anti-IPOB and probably written by a paper associated with an opposing ethnic ideology; then the appeal to “common interest” could merely have been a disguised attempt to gain advantage by undermining an opponent. The character and known intention of an originator of a message are an important clue as to the covert meaning built into the message (Van Leeuwen, 1996; Teo, 2000; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

In *Vanguard* editorial of February 15, 2017 entitled “The Threat By Niger Delta Avengers”, the following line is read: “Though the Avengers’ agitations are an inevitable outcome of years of lingering injustice, yet the group must desist from creating unnecessary tensions that are capable of breaching the peace and imperilling the *overall* wellbeing of the country.” This editorial, which was unpretentious in its support for the demands being made by MEND and other Niger Delta groups, still found it necessary to accommodate the imperative of dilution of ethnic belligerence for the “*overall* wellbeing.”

The following examples were found in news stories published by the newspapers under study:

- i. “Clark cautioned that agitations by Niger Delta group, if not prosecuted with reasonable restraint, could undermine the **general** interest of Nigerians” (*Vanguard* February 10, 2016, p.3)
- ii. “The Ohanaeze chieftain urged IPOB to contain its erring members so as to avoid being wrongly perceived as constituting a stumbling block to the **common** interest... (*Daily Sun*, December 2, 2015, p.13)
- iii. “Aliu (a member of House of Reps) noted that Nigeria can remain strongly as **one** if groups like Arewa, Ohanaeze, Afenifere and others eschew selfish goals and work towards **common** interest (*Daily Trust*, November 13, 2015, p.8)
- iv. “The CNPP observed that the country will remain **united** with all interests living in harmony once everyone including ethnic groups joins hand to strengthen its democracy” (*The Nation* June 24, 2015)

The above excerpts show deployment of collectivising qualifiers in contexts that suggest bias for the ideology of common national interest in the face of mutually opposing ethnic claims. The

words were employed by the newspapers in paraphrasing these news sources; however, even if the words belonged originally to the news sources, the decision of the papers to quote them would mean the papers were vicariously responsible for these words.

Furthermore, the newspapers were also found to deploy what could be termed extolling qualifiers such as “peaceful”, “progressive”, “harmonious” and “cohesive” in their seeming attempt to project the ideology of a common national interest. These qualifiers extol what appears to have been understood as the ideal political existence but which ethnic politics tends to jeopardise; thus phrases like “peaceful nation”, “peaceful Nigeria”, “progressive nation”, “progressive people”, “harmonious nation”, “cohesive entity” etc were juxtaposed with ethnic divisiveness to generate the binary of desirable versus undesirable. Examples of such usage include:

- i. “...Chief Eva (an Ijaw leader) stated that there is no alternative to a **harmonious** and **progressive** Nigeria, and that it is the duty of all stakeholders including the federal government and the ethnic nationalities to bring this about” (*Vanguard*, June 17, 2015, p.8).
- ii. “A chieftain of Afenifere Renewal Group, Otunba Gbenga Adesoji, has called on all ethnic nationalities agitating for fair treatment in Nigeria to opt for dialogue as against engaging in violence, which he said, was capable of derailing the quest for a **peaceful** and **progressive** nature” (*The Nation*, January 22, 2016, p.17).
- iii. “The ACF contended that unity, understanding and cooperation between the north and south are necessary for emergence of a **harmonious** and **progressive** society” (*Daily Trust*, February 2, 2016, p.31).

- iv. “The body (Eastern Mandate Union) regretted that the unending inter-ethnic hostilities have been frustrating the dream of a **strong** and **prosperous** nation (*Daily Sun*, January 11, 2017, p.21).

In the above cases, the qualifiers “harmonious”, “peaceful”, “progressive” and “prosperous” were deployed in an extolling sense to project an “ideal” Nigeria as juxtaposed with its less desirable counterpart; a nation undermined by ethnic contestation. The context of the use was such that created an association between this “ideal” nation and absence of ethnic hostilities; in other words, the former is the result of the latter. This way, these qualifiers appeared to delegitimize ethnic politics.

There were also moralising qualifiers employed by the newspapers in ways that tend to dilute ethnic politics. These include complimentary adjectives like “patriotic”, “well-meaning” and “responsible” as well as disapproving ones like “divisive”, “inciting” and “provocative”. Thus, complimentary phrases like “patriotic Nigerians”, “well-meaning citizens”, “responsible group” and morally disapproving ones like “divisive comments”, “inciting speeches”, and “provocative acts” functioned as definite moral judgments aimed at moderating ethnic divisiveness. For instance, a *Daily Sun* June 7, 2016 report entitled “Biafra: Ikedife wants FG to respect agitators’ rights” read:

Former President-General of Ohaneze Ndigbo, Dr. Dozie Ikedife, has appealed to the Federal Government to respect the constitutional rights of Igbo young men and women agitating for equity and justice under the aegis of groups like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Realisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) even as he called for a more **responsible** approach from the groups to avoid plunging the nation into crisis (p.2) (*Emphasis supplied by the researcher*).

Here, “responsible approach” was juxtaposed with “plunging the nation into crisis”; in effect, being “responsible” was being concerned about the peace of the state which unrestrained ethnic

struggle put at risk. The same ideological interpretation could be given to the qualifier “well-meaning” in the *Vanguard* editorial of February 15, 2017 “The Threat By Niger Delta Avengers”, which though sympathetic to the cause of the group still wrote:

We join other **well-meaning** Nigerians to appeal to Niger Delta Avengers to drop its violent method as the nation can ill-afford another round of endless violence in the creeks. Common sense tells that development occurs best under **peaceful** conditions.

Here “well-meaning” was juxtaposed with “violent method” implying that engaging in violent agitations marked one as meaning bad for the nation. Hence, the word “well-meaning” apparently served an ideological purpose of diluting ethnic politics in favour of a common national identity. Other examples include use of disapproving qualifiers:

- i. “Sanusi (Emir of Kano) therefore cautioned members of the group (Arewa Students Forum) to shun any form of **divisive** rhetoric capable of creating tensions in the country (*Daily Trust*, March 1, 2016, p.11).
- ii. “Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) has stated that the Yoruba nation can still realise its full potentials in Nigeria by strategically engaging other groups and stakeholders without being unnecessarily aggressive in its demands... The council observed that legitimate demands could still be made and instances of injustice and other wrongs pointed out by any group without unnecessarily making **inciting** comments capable of causing divisions in the country” *The Nation*, June 1, 2015, p.42).
- iii. “Niger Delta Patriotic Alliance (NPDA) observed that it was time for all groups advocating for justice in the Niger Delta to speak with one voice for greater efficiency, observing that dialogue as against violence and **provocative** comments was the best solution to the Niger Delta problems...” (*Vanguard*, November 29, 2016, p.11).

Thus, the qualifiers “divisive”, “inciting” and “provocative” served to make a negative moral judgment on methods of ethnic agitations seen as undermining unity, peace and all other perceived qualities of the “ideal” Nigeria. These words, seen from the perspective of Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction theory, derived their meaning from their oppositional relationship with words like “patriotic”, “well-meaning”, “peaceful” etc and vice versa (Derrida, 1997). In other words, each of the complimentary or disapproving qualifiers evoked a virtue-vice dialectic, with virtue referring to conducts helpful to advancement of a common national interest, and vice referring to ethnic conducts capable of undermining this.

Instructively, approvingly moralising words such as “united”, “peaceful”, “progressive”, “patriotic” and their disapproving counterparts such as “unpatriotic”, “divisive” and “inciting” have been identified by critics of political systems as constituting an effective tool of social control to ensure conformity by the people. They are an embodiment of ideologies aimed at projecting the state and its array of institutions as possessing an unquestionable legal and moral legitimacy. They are in effect a manipulative tool for restraining the people from resisting political control (Sabine & Thorson, 1973). They may be equated to what Berger and Luckmann (1966) call “symbolic universes” – moralising statements including proverbs, wise sayings and mottos typically seen as containing universal “truths” which everyone is expected to accept without questioning; they are a compelling indoctrinating tool aimed at whipping everyone into the line to guard against individuals questioning the validity of ideals upheld by society. It is in this light, that Nigeria’s national motto – “Unity and faith, peace and progress” may be understood. That the newspapers deployed such words is an indication of an underlying influence of state ideology and power hegemony in the representation of ethnic interest groups.

Equally embodying the discourse of common national interest was the cartoon appearing on page 17 of *Daily Sun* of February 15, 2017. The image in the cartoon had multiple components i.e. a

shirt, six human heads, two arms and six feet – all deployed to portray a nation contending with ethnic agitations.



**Figure 4.3.**

**A Cartoon Depicting A Nation Contending With Multiple Ethnic Claims (Source: *The Sun*, February 15, 2017, p.17)**

The above cartoon depicted a metaphor of a nation that is one in name but disunited in character as a result of ethnic claims. The underpinning ideology could be read differently, but paying attention to an opinion article which the cartoon was employed in illustrating could help in giving the most appropriate interpretation. The article, entitled “Stemming the tide of ethnic agitations”, was an advocacy piece pointing out the many losses and potential future catastrophe of continued ethnic restiveness in Nigeria. It was in effect urging for de-escalation of ethnic tensions threatening the peace, unity and progress of the nation; hence, its ideological underpinning could be said to be that of the imperative of diluting ethnic politics in favour of common wellbeing.

**Table 4.17.**

**Qualifiers Employed in the Newspapers Towards Negation of Ethnic Divisiveness**

<b>Collectivizing Qualifiers</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
*Collective *Common *General *Overall *United *One	Phrases like “common interest”, “general interest”, “overall good”, “united people”, and “one Nigeria” tends to reinforce the idea of a common interest, a common destiny and a common national sovereignty as juxtaposed with ethnic divisiveness.	<i>This sort of language use suggests an attempt to negate ethnic politics in favour of the imperative of a “united”, “peaceful” and “progressive” Nigeria. In effect, the language use is such aimed at advancing national collectiveness by diluting ethnic divisiveness. This suggests an influence of state ideology and power interest on the newspapers’ representation of the ethnic interest groups. This ideology and power interest is advanced via collectivising, extolling and moralising which are all implicated in the discourse of common national interest.</i>
<b>Extolling Qualifiers</b>	<b>Function</b>	
*Peaceful *Progressive * Harmonious * Cohesive	Phrases like “peaceful nation”, “progressive nation”, “progressive people”, “harmonious nation” and “cohesive entity” etc extol an “ideal” political existence which ethnic politics is seen as threatening.	
<b>Moralising Qualifiers</b>	<b>Function</b>	
<u><b>Complimentary:</b></u> *Patriotic *Well-meaning *Responsible  <u><b>Disapproving:</b></u> *Divisive *Inciting *Provocative	Complimentary phrases like “patriotic Nigerians”, “well-meaning citizens”, “responsible group” with disapproving ones like “divisive comments”, “inciting speeches”, and “provocative acts” function as definite moral judgments aimed at moderating ethnic divisiveness.	

### 4.3. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) ANALYSIS

The key informant interview (KII) was intended to further provide insight into the ideological and power dynamics underlying the representation of ethnic interest groups by hearing from the newspaper gatekeepers themselves – title editors and reporters. The data generated in this process were analysed under three dominant themes observed to run through the responses of the respondents – politics, ethnicity, economy and law/morality; in other words, the political factor, the ethnic factor, the economic factor and the legal/moral factor.

#### 4.3.1. The Political Factor

The respondents generally were of the view that the ethnic interest groups are legitimate actors in the nation's politics and so deserve to be heard. They believe that their being reported in the newspapers is a political imperative, a democratic necessity. Chris Egburonu, Editor of *The Nation On Sunday*, said:

We are all conscious of our ethnicity. A man from the north is conscious of the fact that he is an Hausa man. I am from the east, I am conscious of my Igbo origin. But in a bid to keep the country one, the Nigerian government tries to undermine this reality. But you know that they cannot write off these ethnic nationalities. Whether the government wants it or not; whether it considers them important or not, the reality on the ground is that these groups are part of the life and history of this nation. So whenever they (ethnic interest groups) come out to speak or act, the nation would have no option than to take them seriously.

For Theophilus Abba, Editor of *Sunday Trust*, these groups are representatives of legitimate political interests:

The groups dominate the news headlines because they are socio-cultural organizations that tend to canvas the interest of the nations they stand for. Each ethnic community boasts of burgeoning population who cannot all speak to the press at once. These groups are the voices of these millions of Nigerian citizens. Though they are not elected in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, they tend to have the nod of their people who readily defer to them when issues concerning those communities are in national discourse. Also, it is noteworthy that civil society organizations (which ethnic interest groups are part of) are recognized under the law.

According to Eze Anaaba, *Vanguard* Editor:

... the distressed economic situation in our country fuels the agitations, making both the agitations and the agitating groups important. Being important is being prominent and this means that you matter, so you will ordinarily make news. The political situation is another thing. The way the ruling party is constituted has alienated a particular part of the country. The state of our federalism also contributed to it. In the Niger Delta, the warlords became the government the people know. So whatever you say about the warlords makes news.

Editor of *Daily Sun*, Onuoha Ukeh, said:

Reporting what they say could... help national interest because if you have bottled-up anger, for example, and you don't express it meanwhile you are planning to do something, nobody will know. But when they say it, the government and the rest of Nigerians will know their grievances and what can be done to solve their problems. This is the rationale for all the reports you may have been reading in this newspaper and other papers in the country which appear to contain potentially dangerous comments; such comments usually represent bottled-up anger, grievances, which ought to be brought to the public domain in order to be addressed. Doing otherwise may be to act against ... national interest...

The editors' opinions as to the political imperative of coverage of the activities and communications of the ethnic interest groups were echoed by the reporters interviewed. Aloysius

Attah of *Daily Sun* argued:

I am still convinced that they (ethnic interest groups) deserve the coverage given to them because they are important stakeholders in our nation, our democracy. We cannot proceed with our national discussion and debate without them... groups with legitimate interest should be given a voice in the press. It is their right and it is the duty of those of us in the media to ensure realisation of that right. When we do this, we would have discharged our duties properly as custodians of democracy and public conscience.

For Emmanuel Aziken of *Vanguard*:

... ethnic interest groups have their role in our nation, in our democracy. Demands and agitations are an integral part of democracy. In fact, they could be a yardstick for measuring democracy because where demands and agitations are absent, you begin to suspect that democracy is suffering there because there is no way everybody and every group in a place as big as a nation can be satisfied with everything at the same time. There ought to be dissatisfactions here and there, demands, grievances, and people's freedom to express this is a democratic right... Based on this, you will agree with me that ethnic interest groups, their communications and their activities should be covered by the media. Make no mistake about that, this is not a matter of choice for the media because the media is there to serve democracy and the most crucial way it can do this is to give voice to all interests.

Sina Fadire of *The Nation* noted:

The issue of ethnicity in Nigeria is a very broad one; a very serious and very complex issue of our nationhood. There is no media house in Nigeria that doesn't take the issues seriously. Take for instance, the Niger Delta struggle; if you visit Olobiri (where crude oil was first discovered), you will begin to wonder whether this is the same place we are getting the oil with which we develop Abuja. So, looking at an injustice like this, there is no way you can merely wish away ethnic interest groups and their agitations. You cannot ignore them because they shape the politics of the nation and they influence government policies. On that basis alone, they are important sources of news, and they are rightly so because they have the democratic right to express themselves.

Tony Adibe, *Daily Trust* reporter:

These groups are representing some legitimate interests in our country. If so, why shouldn't they be able to claim some space in newspapers? These groups are political in nature, they represent political interests along ethnic lines and this is why they are important and should be taken seriously by any journalist that knows his onion.

In essence, the respondents were of the view that ethnic interest groups should be reported in the newspapers because they are legitimate interest groups with political rights. Giving them space in the newspapers is in keeping with the democratic ideals of equality, freedom of association and freedom of expression, while doing otherwise will amount to unjustifiable suppression. Thus, the gatekeepers viewed the presence of these groups as legitimate (i.e. legitimate presence). Little wonder their representation of the groups tended to reflect this same sentiment as found in the CDA analysis above.

#### **4.3.2. The Economic Factor**

The respondents admitted that economic consideration was of influence in their coverage of ethnic interest groups. This dynamics manifested by way of the gatekeepers considering the sales implication of reporting the groups and what to report of them. Some excerpts from the responses of the four title editors interviewed are instructive According to Editor, *Daily Sun*:

As an editor you choose reports that you think will interest the reader for the newspaper to make sales... Newspaper is a business which if you don't sell, you are not in business. So when they (ethnic interest groups) make comment (it depends on

what they say; most of the times they make controversial comments) and like they say, “bad news is good news for the journalist” because that is what will provoke the interest of the reader.

Editor, *Vanguard*:

...our particular focus on that region (Niger Delta) is because it is our strong area in terms of readership... The South-East is our biggest market (it is the largest newspaper market in Nigeria by the way), so that is why we also focus much on what is happening in that part of the country including the agitations that go on there and the groups and personalities involved in all of it.

Editor, *The Nation On Sunday*:

We are a business, you know that, so we need to go out there and make some reasonable amount of sales and attract advert subscriptions to be able to move on. As such it also necessary that we consider our readers while selecting and packaging our news – who are they? What do they want to read? What are their expectations? Answers to all these will guide us in tailoring our content to their taste and expectations.

Editor, *Sunday Trust*:

*Daily Trust* is essentially a business concern... However, the newspaper circulates largely in the 19 Northern States, hence we publish viewpoints, interviews, investigative reports, feature stories, analyses, photographs, and other materials that approximate to the interests and perspectives of the large swath of the North.

The foregoing indicates an economic motive shaping gatekeeping decision as far as reporting of ethnic interest groups was concerned. The reporters fully agreed with their editors in this regard.

For instance, Aloysius Attah of *Daily Sun* reasoned that frequent coverage of these groups “is all about market strategy on the part of the newspapers” as the “activities and communications of these groups are characteristically explosive; they spread like wildfire and people like to read them.” Emmanuel Aziken of *Vanguard* similarly admitted that in reporting ethnic interest groups, his newspaper first considered what is of interest to her readers. “This is because we are not writing for ourselves, we are not publishing for ourselves, we are doing this so that people out there will read us and get informed.” Like his editor, Tony Adibe of *Daily Trust* noted that

his paper circulates more in the northern state. “I must consider the readership... I must bear in mind that whatever I report must be such that will appeal to the majority of the readers that will see it,” he said.

Thus, the economic imperative of circulation and advert revenue earning becomes influential in the gatekeeping process. This offers insight into why the newspapers reported certain ethnic interest groups more than they reported others as seen in the survey data (Table 4.2) and why the news slant followed a similar pattern as seen also in the survey data (Table 4.9) and the CDA analysis of the “discourse of opposing ethnic interests.” Interestingly, the *Sunday Trust* Editor claimed that this economic factor is what people largely misconstrue as ethnic bias on the part of the newspapers:

On the face value, it would seem as if Nigerian newspapers engage in ethnic bigotry, promoting one ethnic group and putting down another, but it may not be absolutely in that spirit. What each media organization does is to promote the viewpoints of its main readers, or what may be termed as “catchment” areas.

Perhaps lending credence to the economic motive in gatekeeping are some of the corporate values claimed by the newspapers. *The Sun*, in the statement of its core values, states: “We believe that we will serve our customers (readers) and other stakeholders better when we work as a team” and its mission statement, includes to practise journalism in a way that will “generate returns to all stakeholders” including “the investors” (The Sun Publishing Limited, 2018). *The Nation*’s mission statement partly reads “To be Nigeria’s newspaper of first choice among discerning readers” (Vintage Press Limited), while *Vanguard*’s mission statement goes: “To impact positively on our Readers/Clients and society by providing high quality, reliable and affordable media products” (Vanguard Media Limited, 2018). Admittedly, all these are indicative of economic motive and competition as a force influencing content.

### 4.3.3. The Ethnic Factor

Out of the eight key informants interviewed, three did not admit that ethnicity was a factor in their representation of ethnic interest groups; i.e. that ethnic sentiment of the owners and gatekeepers did play a role. The other five who admitted otherwise spoke as follows:

*Daily Sun* Editor:

I the editor, being from the Igbo ethnic group, may take particular interest about what is happening in the South-East. The interest we take interest in reporting what is going on there (South-East) is also meant to inform and educate the people there (the Igbo).

*The Nation On Sunday* Editor:

Of course in theory we are expected to be objective; our profession requires that we maintain objectivity. But in practice, objectivity, like every other human value, cannot be absolute. You know he who pays the piper, to a large extent, dictates the tune. It is not in doubt. It is the reality, not just in journalism but in all spheres of life.

*Sunday Trust* Editor:

Arewa Consultative Forum's activities are given prominence in the *Daily Trust*, perhaps, better than the activities of O'odua People's Congress (because)... ACF activities would have more impact on the northern readers than OPC's activities.

*Vanguard* Reporter:

To an extent, I agree that our sentiments as individual journalists and media organization do affect our reportage... Ethnicity in particular is a very emotional issue and so influence of sentiment may prove to be more emphatic here.

*The Nation* Reporter:

...*The Nation* is the political nerve of the South-West; so anything that concerns them (the South-Westerners) will likely receive attention in the paper. This shows you how the interest of the owner influences content. It is almost inevitable, and this of course will naturally reflect in the way a paper reports ethnic interest groups in the country.

Importantly, the respondents did not limit their observations to their own medium only, as they noted that such ethnic influence on reportage was as true in other organisations as it was in

theirs. This view may not be ignored given that the credentials of the respondents indicate that they have previously worked in other newspaper houses (see Appendix VIII) and so are likely to be speaking from an insider's point of view. Instructively, this influence of ethnicity on reportage has been established by previous studies including Sule (2015), Anim (2007), Omenugha and Ukwueze (2011), Ngwuet *al.* (2013).

#### **4.3.4. The Moral/Legal Factor**

All the respondents mentioned moral/legal consideration as one of the factors that shaped their representation of ethnic interest groups. The submissions of the four title editors are instructive in this regard:

*Daily Sun* Editor:

...it is not everything they (ethnic interest groups) say that gets reported because as an editor or a journalist, you have that duty... to sieve the information... You need to verify and find a way to balance facts; that is a way to be a responsible journalist.

*Vanguard* Editor:

The first job of an editor is knowing what not to publish. At the end of the day, if you are irresponsible with your news stories you will soon be found out and you will die.

*The Nation On Sunday* Editor:

...we are not just to go out there recklessly reporting every issue or comment made by anybody. As media people, we are bound to be socially responsible; it is inscribed in the very philosophy of our calling because the wellbeing of society has a lot to do with the way we do our duties. So, I must tell you that public interest is paramount in whatever we do including while reporting these groups. For instance, you cannot just come out and announce that you will kill off other ethnic groups and we just publish it. No, that will be most irresponsible.

*Sunday Trust* Editor:

If the activities/statements by the groups are acrimonious or promoting ethnic hatred, inciting, or outrightly (sic) libelous, *Daily Trust* may not publish it. If they impugn on the integrity of individuals or ethnic communities, or if they expose *Daily Trust* to legal action, the story may not be published.

The reporters largely agreed with their editors on the influence of law and ethics on their gatekeeping decisions in regard to the ethnic interest groups. The *Daily Sun* reporter observed that journalism has its rules “like every other profession” and that if you are not careful on how you carry out your duty, “you may get into trouble with the law.” The *Vanguard* reporter observed that his paper considers security of the society as “the communication and activities of some of these ethnic interest groups could sometimes constitute security risk”. It also considers “whether what is to be reported is in any way injurious or libelous.” *The Nation* reporter indicated that the consequences – good and bad – of what is to be reported were of paramount importance. “You need to be able to assure yourself that you are doing the right thing according to your training and conscience”, he said. The *Daily Trust* reporter stated:

Once there is anything that is illegal or immoral or otherwise tends to be injurious to individuals or society as a collective, then it has to shut out. Everything should not be reported. A journalist should always be able to sieve out unwanted information, information that could prove harmful.

The implication of influence of morality and law on the gatekeeping process is that the government with its lawmaking cum enforcement institutions as well as other institutional custodians of the social norms (including religion) exert influence on media content. These institutions are collectively described by Louis Althusser as the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 2001). They constitute an important actor in the society’s ideology and power dynamics. Their influence on newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria may be deduced from the above responses of the key informants.

**Table 4.18.**

**Factors Influencing Representation of Ethnic Interest Groups in Newspapers**

<b>Influences</b>	<b>Constituents</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>Political factor</b>	*Ethnic blocs versus state authority *Ethnic claims versus state legitimacy *Self-determination versus state sovereignty	<i>The newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups is a product of the interactions among these four interests – political, economic, ethnic and moral/legal. These interests interact in a continuous and dynamic way that involves exchanges, complementation, conflicts and compromises. All these constitute the ideological and power basis of the representation of the ethnic interest groups in the newspapers.</i>
<b>Economic factor</b>	*Circulation/sales *Advert revenues	
<b>Ethnic factor</b>	*Owner's ethnicity *Journalists' ethnicity * Readers' ethnicity	
<b>Moral/Legal factor</b>	*Government laws *Society's morals *Media ethics	

By paying attention to the four influences examined above – political, economic, ethnic and moral cum legal – one may be able to identify the nature of ideology and power relations that operate at the root of newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups. The interests that interact to shape the newspaper content here include the ethnic interest groups, individual ethnic activists and government (political influence), readers and advertisers (economic influence), owners, journalists and readers (ethnic influence), and then government, social institutions and

regulatory/professional bodies (moral/legal influence). It is the interactions (i.e. exchanges, conflicts and compromises) among these interests that constitute the ideological and power basis of the representation of the ethnic interest groups.

#### **4.4. Analysis of Research Questions**

The first research question sought to assess the extent newspapers gave frequent and prominent coverage to ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. Data in Table 4.1 show that on the whole, 66.2% of the newspaper editions had reports on ethnic interest groups while 33.8% came with no such reports. This pattern was fairly distributed among the four newspapers under study. This indicates that ethnic interest groups were a regular news subject in the newspapers, at least within this period. From Table 4.6, it is seen that the pattern of placement suggests that newspapers gave prominence to the activities and communications of the ethnic interest groups. Also, Table 4.7 shows that in terms of page rating, reports on these groups received prominent treatment as over 40%. Similarly, data in Table 4.8 indicate that the reports were given prominence in terms of headline size as over 50% came with large headlines. From the foregoing, it could be stated in answer to the first research questions that newspapers gave regular and prominent coverage to ethnic interest groups in Nigeria.

The second research question sought to discover the ideologies and power interests that were embedded in the language of representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers. Data from the critical discourse analysis (CDA) indicate that the newspapers tended to present the ethnic interest groups as legitimate actors with democratic rights. This is affirmed by the key informant interview (III) data that show that the gatekeepers actually believed that these groups

actually possess this character and so deserve to be given coverage. This points to the influence of the democratic ideologies of equal rights, freedom of association and freedom of expression. Furthermore, the CDA analysis shows that the newspapers tended to slant their reports in ways that align with the interest and ideology of particular ethnic groups. This bias was found to have corresponded with the ethnicity of the owners of the respective papers even as the KII data indicate that the ethnicity of individual journalists and that of the people of the area where a newspaper makes the most sales was also an influential factor. Thus, influence of ethnicity and economic interest is revealed here. Then, the KII analysis equally shows that the newspapers were also influenced by considerations of legal and moral nature, revealing the influence of government and other social institutions including media professional bodies. Based on the foregoing, it could be stated in answer to the second research question that the language of newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups was shaped by the newspapers' bias for the democratic ideals of equal rights, freedom of association and freedom of expression as well as their economic interest, ethnic sentiments and the imperative of law and morality. As such, the power interests that were active in the gatekeeping process included the newspaper owners, journalists, ethnic interest groups, advertisers, readers, government and media professional bodies.

The third research question sought to find out ways in which the ethnicity of the owner influences the language of representation of ethnic interest groups. From the answer to the second research question above, it is already evident that the language of representation of ethnic interest groups tends to appear favourable to the ethnic groups of the respective newspaper owners. It is evident in the CDA analysis that in reporting the ethnic interest groups, the

language strategies employed by the newspapers largely tended to legitimate the activities and communications of groups representing the owner's ethnicity (See also the quantitative data in Table 4.15 above). However, a close attention to the KII data reveals that this correspondence between the owners' ethnicity and language of representation appears to be a function of the proprietors' economic and political interests. Based on the foregoing, the third research question may be answered by noting that while the language of representation of ethnic interest groups was such that tended to favour particular ethnic groups of the respective newspaper owners, this tendency was found to be largely a function of the owners' economic and political interest, even though the role of their ethnic sentiments may not be entirely ruled out.

The fourth research question sought to discover the dominant discourses of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers. The CDA data indicate that the newspapers approached the ethnic interest groups from the perspective of contestation of legitimacy; the papers tended to confer legitimacy on them through deployment of language that builds around the groups an image of strength, confidence and tenacity. This constituted a discourse of legitimacy. Similarly, the newspapers further portrayed the groups in terms of conflicting interests through deployment of language that depicts mutually opposing ethnic claims. Such representation embodies the discourse of conflict. However, the newspapers still deployed language that tended to dilute ethnic conflict in favour of common national identity and interest. This representation embodies the discourse of compromise and unity. Therefore, it could be stated in answer to the fourth research question that the dominant discourses of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers included those of legitimacy, conflict, compromise and unity.

#### **4.5. Discussion of Findings**

The first finding of the study, which shows frequent and prominent coverage of the ethnic interest groups by the newspapers, is an indication that the papers viewed these groups as

deserving of being kept on the public agenda. Frequent and prominent coverage is the most critical element in the agenda setting process, as subjects accorded such treatment by the media are likely to emerge as part of the public agenda (Daramola, 2003; Baran, 2010). This finding may have been lent credence by the assertion of Sule (2015) that ethnic interest groups and ethnicity-related issues are dominant in the sphere of public discussion and debate in Nigeria:

In Nigeria, ethnicity has become pervasive in the sphere of public discourse. Discussion and debate on national issues ranging from politics to economics have to a significant extent been permeated by the “omnipresent” ethnic sentiments. Little wonder groups that project ethnic ideologies and interests have become very important actors in our national life. The implication of this whole scenario is that hardly is anything discussed by Nigerians and their leaders without ethnicity coming into consideration (p.11).

In this light, one could state that these subjects have gained their prominent status due to the manner in which the newspapers, and perhaps, other mass media, have treated them. However, this is after allowance must have been made for other intervening variables that might influence the agenda setting process.

The rest of the findings indicate that the newspapers’ coverage of ethnic interest groups is implicated in social representations, hence reflective of the beliefs, biases and prejudices upheld about ethnicity in Nigeria. Interestingly, influence of ethnic ideology on reportage in the country has been investigated by several previous studies including Omenugha and Ukwueze (2011), Medubi (2012), Ngwu *et al.* (2013), Salawu (2013), Nwafor (2015) and Sule (2015) – with the results generally showing that this influence is real and strong. Studies such as Ekeanyanwu (2007), Ngwu *et al.* (2013) and (2013) Sule (2015) were also interested in the role of ownership in this influence, and just like the present study, the ethnicity of the owner was found to be significant.

From the foregoing, it could be generally stated that images of ethnicity and ethnic interest groups as found in newspapers are merely the mirror image of the meanings upheld and contested in society about these. Ekwenchi (2015) observes that representation is “primarily about meaning making” (p.1). Therefore, the mere fact that the newspapers attempted a representation of these groups means that they simply became involved in the dynamics of meaning making in society; they did not merely report something that happened, but they actually said something about it. This meaning making process constitutes what is known as discourses which, according to Hall (1997a):

... are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice; a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular subject or site of social activity or institutional site in society. These discursive formations, as they are known, define what knowledge is considered useful, relevant and “true” in that context; and what sorts of persons or “subjects” embody its characteristics (p.6).

Thus, in this meaning making process, the newspapers are, strictly speaking, not isolated and independent, but are a participant in a holistic social process. “In this instance, meaning-making is not merely an exercise of media producers, but is absolutely implicated in the dynamics of context, production and consumption” (Lewis, 2005, p.6). Hence, both the producers (newspapers) and the consumers (audience) are involved and interacting in this context of meaning making. This role of the audience in producing text is evident in the second finding where the power interests that condition representations were discovered to include the newspaper readers – others include owners, journalists, ethnic interest groups, advertisers, government and media professional bodies.

But the fact that the newspaper representation was found to have been influenced by ethnic and commercial interests might raise the question as to how well the newspapers may have performed in the light of their duties under the social responsibility doctrine. Ngwu *et al.* (2013)

argue that the trio of ownership, ethnicity and geographical considerations “have continued to be very instrumental to the non-observance of the... social responsibility principles of the media in every part of the world.” Once these three are influential in the gatekeeping process, then what the media give out are “inaccurate and unbalanced reports are definitely the end products” (p.117). The social responsibility doctrine decrees equitable representation of all groups and interests in the society which expects the media to eschew all forms of discrimination, prejudice and stereotype and serve as an instrument of democratising the society (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956, p. 91). They should reflect the “society’s plurality, giving access to various points of view and grant all the right to reply” (McQuail, 2010, p.150). Obviously, a newspaper caught up in the web of ethnic bias cannot do this in reference to the various ethnic groups.

However, the vicarious role of the audience and other interests in shaping the content of the media may bring up the question as to whether the mass media should exactly and wholly be held accountable for violation of the above social responsibility tenet. While some scholars have contended that the gatekeepers remain inexcusably the chief culprit in instances such as this (Okunna, 2003; Momoh, 2003), one thing that is clear is that the dynamics of representation may have created the need for a new approach in viewing and addressing the question of ethics in the media (Petley, 2004; Lewis, 2005).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Summary

This study examined the representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers within the context of the mutual relationship between language, ideology and power. In effect, it carried out a language-based analysis of newspaper content as it relates to the activities of the ethnic interest groups in order to discover the ideological tendencies and power interests linked to the language of the reportage.

The study adopted a triangulated approach involving quantitative content analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA) and key informant interview (KII). The time frame was the first two years of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration; May 29, 2015 to May 29, 2017. Four national daily newspapers i.e. *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, *The Nation* and *Daily Trust* were purposively selected, while a total of 432 editions (108 editions for each paper) were chosen. One title editor and one reporter were selected from each of the newspaper establishments for the key informant interview. Data analysis was both quantitative (for quantitative content analysis) and qualitative (for CDA and KII). The quantitative analysis involved simple percentages and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient, while the qualitative analyses were done thematically.

Findings showed that the newspapers gave regular and prominent coverage to ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. It was also found that the language of newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups was shaped by the newspapers' bias for the democratic ideals of equal rights, freedom of association and freedom of expression as well as their economic interest, ethnic sentiments and the imperative of law and morality. As such, the power interests that were active in the gatekeeping process included the newspaper owners, journalists, ethnic interest groups, advertisers, readers, government and media professional bodies. While the language of representation of ethnic interest groups was such that tended to favour particular ethnic groups of the respective newspaper owners, this tendency was found to be largely a function of the owners' economic and political interest, even though the role of their ethnic sentiments may not be entirely ruled out. The study also found that the dominant discourses of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian newspapers included those of legitimacy, conflict, compromise and unity.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

The findings of this study **showed that** the activities of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria have emerged as an important news subject for newspapers which accounts for the frequent and prominent coverage they have enjoyed in these news publications. **This reflects in the findings in previous studies (such as** Medubi, 2012; Ngwu *et al.*, 2013; Salawu, 2013; Nwafor, 2015; and Sule, 2015). The decision taken by gatekeepers to report an issue frequently and prominently is ordinarily evidence of the extent they consider such issue as important and newsworthy (Lewis, 2005; McQuail, 2010). And such consideration, in the context of this study, could stem from the fact that ethnicity-related issues often embody conflict or at least potentially so, and conflict is an attractive subject for the media anywhere (Lewis, 2005). Another possible reason for such

frequent and prominent coverage is (as seen from the key informant interviews) the fact that the gatekeepers consider these ethnic interest groups as legitimate and important actors in the nation's democracy and who should be heard.

Furthermore, the study shows that the newspapers, in their representation of the ethnic interest groups, cannot be isolated as an independent actor but should be considered within the context of the nexus of interests that influence this representation. These interests constitute the ideological and power dynamics that shapes the language of the representation. This agrees with the representation theory which conceives media text as a product of culture itself; as a reflection of biases and interests within society; in short as a reflection of the societal dynamics of ideology and power relations (Fairclough, 1989; Hall, 1997a; Lewis, 2005; Machin & Mayr, 2012). More precisely stated, the study has shown that this theoretical perspective is valid in respect of newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigerian, just the same way as it has been proven to be in other instances. The findings further validate other theories reviewed in this work such as framing and constructivism, which like representation, view gatekeeping as transcending mere passive reporting of events and issues to include active creation of meanings and perspectives (i.e. discourses). Within the foregoing theoretical context, therefore, the representations of ethnic interest groups as seen in the newspapers would be largely a reflection of the dominant discourses of ethnicity (i.e. beliefs and practices) in the Nigerian society; in other words, these discursively generated meanings regarding ethnicity would reproduce themselves in the newspaper pages as news, features, pictures, cartoons and editorials.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions made in this study, the researcher viewed the following recommendations as appropriate:

1. Newspaper houses in Nigeria should work towards improving objectivity in their representation of ethnic interest groups through adopting deliberate editorial policies aimed at giving even amounts of coverage to different ethnic interests as well as reporting them fairly irrespective of whatever interest a newspaper house might have. Such policies may involve posting enough reporters to each of the regions of the country to ensure equal and adequate coverage of the ethnic group(s) inhabiting the regions. The current scenario is such that some newspapers have their reporters concentrated in one region of the country where the papers have commercial interests (Adedeji, 2009).
2. Given how sensitive and emotive ethnicity-related issues have proven in Nigeria and other places (Umejesi, 2012), there is need for periodic internal review of performances of Nigerian newspapers. This could be done under the auspices of bodies like the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) and Nigerian Press Council, among others. The aim will be to continually appraise how much practitioners have been faithful to the established norms of practice in terms of equal representation and objectivity. Such peer review mechanism could help individual journalists and newspaper houses to continuously improve their performance without threat to press freedom.

3. Training of journalists should prioritise impartation of necessary skills and ethical orientation for coverage of a sensitive and divisive sphere like ethnicity. This should cover both pre-qualification training and in-service training of practitioners. This sort of training may prove helpful in improving the quality of reportage of ethnicity and ethnic interest groups in the country.
4. Towards a more insightful coverage of ethnicity and ethnic interest groups, there is need for the newspapers not to work in isolation; there should be regular forums for interfacing with ethnic interest groups, government, security agencies and other interested bodies and individuals in the nation's sphere of ethnic relations. Such continuous interfacing and cross-fertilisation of ideas could help deepen the journalists' understanding of the dynamics of ethnicity and ethnic relations in the country which will in turn help them improve their performance in covering this aspect of the nation's life.

#### **5.4. Suggestions for Future Research**

As a way of building on the gains of this research, the following suggestions are put forward for further studies:

- i. A repeat of this study using other newspapers different from those employed in this study may be necessary. For instance, based on ethnic background of ownership (which informed the researcher's choice of newspaper), *The Punch* could be substituted for *The Nation*, *The Authority* for *Daily Sun*, *New Nigerian* for *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* for

*Vanguard*. Study of these other newspapers may help in further validating the generalisations made in the present study.

- ii. In the same vein, other media forms such as radio and television should also be subjected to this sort of study. This is important given that various media forms have their various unique characteristics and dynamics. For instance, television, given its greater capacity to graphically depict and glamorise events, its presence has injected much dramatisation to political events (Lewis, 2005) such as represented by ethnic relations in Nigeria.
- iii. A different approach in methodology may benefit further investigation of newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria. Hence, it is suggested that studies using other designs such as semiotic analysis, critical incidence analysis (CIA) and observation (to observe the gatekeeping process) should be undertaken on this subject to further deepen understanding.
- iv. Also, audience studies may be undertaken on this subject, this time, with focus on readers' exposure, perception and reaction to newspaper representation of ethnic interest groups. Results of studies like this will help in complementing those of the present study towards a better appreciation of the subject.

### **5.5. Limitations of the Study**

This research was not without limitations. First, the researcher used only four out of all the national dailies in Nigeria. This limited generalization to just the particular newspapers studied. This necessitated the recommendation for further studies to include other publications.

There was an apparent dearth of literature on language-ideology-power studies as it relates to media and ethnicity. This made the researcher to rely mainly on studies on media and ethnicity generally.

Absence of the observation method may have also limited the study. Such would have helped for a better appreciation of the gatekeeping process in regard to representation of ethnic interest groups as demonstrated by a number of studies that contributed to the development of the gatekeeping theory (Roberts, 2005; Almaghlooth, 2013). Hence, the recommendation for an observation study.

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## APPENDIX I CODING SHEET

<b>Newspaper Title</b>	<b>Ethnic Background of Ownership</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Placement</b> (Excluding editorials)	<b>Page Rating</b> (Excluding pictorials, cartoons, features and editorials)	<b>Headline Size</b> (Excluding editorials, pictures and cartoons)	<b>Ethnic Group Reported</b>
The Sun – 01		News story – 01	Front Page – 01	Page Lead Story – 01	Large – 01	Hausa – 01
The Nation – 02	Hausa-Fulani – 01	Feature – 02	Back Page – 02	Non-Page Lead Story – 02	Medium – 02	Igbo – 02
Daily Trust – 03	Igbo – 02	Pictorial (stand alone) – 03	Centre Page – 03		Small – 03	Yoruba – 03
Vanguard – 04	Yoruba – 03	Pictorial (with story) – 04	Editorial Page – 04			Minority – 04
	Minority – 04	Cartoon – 05	Others – 05			Mixed – 05
		Editorial – 06				
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Issue Reported of Ethnic Groups</b>			<b>Tone</b>	<b>Slant</b>	<b>Balance</b> (Excluding pictorials, cartoons and editorials)
Politics/Governance – 01	Advocacy – 01			Sensational – 01	Favourable to an Hausa interest group – 01	
Economy – 02	Antagonistic communication by interest group – 02			Not Sensational – 02	Favourable to an Igbo interest group – 02	
Culture/Sports/Entertainment – 03	Antagonistic communication by govt – 03				Favourable to a Yoruba interest group – 03	
Security/Crime/Unrest – 04	Demonstrations/riots/attacks – 04				Favourable to a minority interest group – 04	
Education – 05	Internal divisions – 05				No clear slant – 05	
Others – 06	Arrest/trial of members – 06					
	Ceremonies – 07					
	Others – 07					

S/N	News Headline/Picture Cutline/Cartoon title	Newspaper Title	Ethnic Background of Ownership	Genre	Placement	Page Rating	Headlin e Size	Ethnic Group Reported	Subject	Issues	Tone	Slant	Balance

## **APPENDIX II**

### **CODING MANUAL**

#### ***General instructions to coders:***

1. The subject categories and their appropriate codes (01, 02, 03, etc) are provided on the top of the coding sheet; enter the appropriate codes in the appropriate columns.
2. Thoroughly examine every story, picture or cartoon before deciding on the appropriate code to enter.
3. All aspects of a news material **MUST** be taken into account while making coding decisions; i.e. headlines, picture cutlines, cartoon titles and body texts must all be carefully examined and then viewed collectively before deciding on the category that correctly applies.
4. Where more than one category appears to apply to a particular content, choose the category that seems to be dominant or more emphatic in the content. For instance, where a news story appears to be sensational and not sensational at the same time, care should be taken to decide which is more dominant – whether its sensational character is more emphasised than the non-sensational character and vice versa.

## INTERPRETING THE CATEGORIES

**Newspaper Title:** This is to be interpreted as the brand name of a newspaper house. It is identified by simply observing the masthead of a publication where names like “Daily Sun”, “Daily Trust”, “The Nation” and “Vanguard”. will be seen

**Ethnic Background of Ownership:** This is to be interpreted as the ethnic affiliation of the owner or majority of the owners of a newspaper house as geographically represented thus: *Daily Sun* (Igbo), *The Nation* (Yoruba), *Daily Trust* (Hausa-Fulani) and *Vanguard* (Minority).

**Genre:** This is to be interpreted by observing the distinguishing character of any given content thus:

- News story – A written report that is straightforward and purported to be objective and lacking in-depth treatment
- Feature – A written report that is more extensive; involving background information, more in-depth treatment and sometimes investigative.
- Pictorial (stand alone) – A picture that stands on its own (not relating to any story on the page in which it is published).
- Pictorial (with story) – A picture that accompanies a story; relating to the story.
- Cartoon – A sketched content with or without accompanying texts and often humorous, sensational and subtly satirical.
- Editorial – An official and authoritative stance of a newspaper on a particular public issue.

**Placement:** This is to be interpreted as the page on which a news material is placed in a newspaper publication thus: Front Page, Back Page, Centre Page, Editorial Page or Others.

**Page Rating** (Applicable only to news): This is to be interpreted as whether a particular news story enjoys greater visibility over others on the same page. The visibility is usually determined by size of headline and/or position.

**Headline Size:** This is to be interpreted by looking at the number of columns across which a headline appears; i.e. 1 – 2 columns (small), 3 columns (medium), 4 columns and above (large).

**Ethnic Group Reported:** This is to be interpreted by observing the ethnic group(s) represented by the ethnic interest group(s) reported i.e. Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba, minority group or mixed.

**Subject:** This is to be interpreted by observing whether a material on an ethnic interest group revolves primarily around politics, economy, education, etc.

**Issue Reported of Ethnic Groups:** This is to be interpreted by observing what an ethnic interest group has been reported as doing or saying or what another person, institution or group is doing in relation to such a group.

**Tone:** This is to be interpreted as whether a material, putting all circumstances into consideration, is unnecessarily constructed in a way intended to arouse undue public interest, fear, alarm, sympathy, grief, animosity, etc.

**Slant:** This is to be interpreted observing whether a material appears favourable to the interest of one ethnic group or another.

**Balance:** This is to be interpreted by observing whether a material appears one-sided or not in presenting a controversy, dispute or any other form of conflict.

**APPENDIX III**  
**CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA) GUIDE**

Newspaper: .....

Date: .....

Page: .....

Story headline/picture cutline/cartoon title.....

S/N	RELEVANT EXTRACTS (words, phrases, sentences etc)	THEMATIC IMPLICATIONS	FURTHER REMARKS	OVERALL CONCLUSION
1.				
2.				
3.				

## APPENDIX IV

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Mode of Interview (Face-to-face, phone, online): \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Henry Chigozie Duru. I am a doctoral student of the Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. I am currently carrying out a research on **Language, Ideology and Power in Newspaper Representation of Ethnic Interest Groups in Nigeria** and you have been selected as one of my respondents. Please kindly assist my effort by sparing some time to participate in this interview session. All answers supplied are strictly for academic purpose and utmost confidentiality is assured.

Thanks in anticipation.

**Researcher**

S/N	QUESTIONS
1.	<p>How newsworthy do you view developments related to ethnic interest groups in the country?</p> <p>Probe for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>Whether the respondent sees the developments related to ethnic interest groups as news worthy</i></li><li>➤ <i>What factors the respondents consider as making these developments newsworthy or not</i></li></ul>
2.	<p>What and what would you consider in deciding whether to and from which angle to report developments related to ethnic interest groups?</p> <p>Probe for:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>The respondents' motivations/de-motivations in reporting or not reporting ethnic interest groups</i></li> <li>➤ <i>The factors that influence the respondents in choosing the angle and frame of reports on ethnic interest groups</i></li> </ul>
3.	<p>To what extent does your ethnic background/interest tend to influence the decisions you make in reporting ethnic interest groups?</p> <p>Probe for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Whether the respondents' ethnic sentiments shape their decisions in reporting ethnic interest groups</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How this influence reflects in the respondents' reports on ethnic interest groups</i></li> </ul>
4.	<p>To what extent does the ethnic background/interest of the owner of your medium tend to influence the decisions you make in reporting ethnic interest groups?</p> <p>Probe for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Whether the owners' ethnic sentiments shape the respondents' decisions in reporting ethnic interest groups</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How this influence reflects in the respondents' reports on ethnic interest groups</i></li> </ul>
5.	<p>Are there other factors that tend to influence the decisions you make in reporting ethnic interest groups?</p> <p>Probe for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Whether there are other consideration that tend to shape the respondents' decisions in reporting ethnic interest groups</i></li> <li>➤ <i>How this influence reflects in the respondents' reports on ethnic interest groups</i></li> </ul>

## APPENDIX V

### LIST OF NIGERIAN NATIONAL DAILIES

S/N	NEWSPAPER	YEAR ESTABLISHED	LOCATION
1.	<i>Blue Print</i>	2011	Abuja
2.	<i>Business Day</i>	2005	Lagos
3.	<i>Compass</i>	2008	Lagos
4.	<i>Daily Champion</i>	1988	Lagos
5.	<i>Daily Times</i>	1926	Lagos
6.	<i>Business Hallmark</i>	2009	Lagos
7.	<i>Independent</i>	2001	Lagos
8.	<i>Leadership</i>	2005	Abuja
9.	<i>National Daily</i>	2009	Lagos
10.	<i>National Mirror</i>	2008	Lagos
11.	<i>New Nigerian</i>	1964	Kaduna
12.	<i>Next</i>	2004	Lagos
13.	<i>People's Daily</i>	2008	Abuja
14.	<i>Premium Times</i>	2011	Abuja
15.	<i>The Authority</i>	2014	Abuja
16.	<i>The Guardian</i>	1983	Lagos
17.	<i>The Nation</i>	2006	Lagos
18.	<i>The Sun</i>	2001	Lagos
19.	<i>This Day</i>	1995	Lagos
20.	<i>Tribune</i>	1949	Ibadan
21.	<i>Trust</i>	2001	Abuja
22.	<i>Vanguard</i>	1983	Lagos

Source: <http://www.w3newspapers.com/nigeria/>

**APPENDIX VI**  
**LIST OF NEWSPAPER EDITIONS SELECTED**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>NEWSPAPER EDITIONS</b>	<b>S/N</b>	<b>NEWSPAPER EDITIONS</b>
1.	Friday May 29 2015	26.	Friday November 13 2015
2.	Monday June 1 2015	27.	Monday November 16 2015
3.	Tuesday June 9 2015	28.	Tuesday November 24 2015
4.	Wednesday June 17 2015	29.	Wednesday December 2 2015
5.	Thursday June 25 2015	30.	Thursday December 10 2015
6.	Friday July 3 2015	31.	Friday December 18 2015
7.	Monday July 6 2015	32.	Monday December 21 2015
8.	Tuesday July 14 2015	33.	Tuesday December 29 2015
9.	Wednesday July 22 2015	34.	Wednesday January 6 2016
10.	Thursday July 30 2015	35.	Thursday January 14 2016
11.	Friday August 7 2015	36.	Friday January 22 2016
12.	Monday August 10 2015	37.	Monday January 25 2016
13.	Tuesday August 18 2015	38.	Tuesday February 2 2016
14.	Wednesday August 26 2015	39.	Wednesday February 10 2016
15.	Thursday September 3 2015	40.	Thursday February 18 2016
16.	Friday September 11 2015	41.	Friday February 26 2016
17.	Monday September 14 2015	42.	Monday February 29 2016
18.	Tuesday September 22 2015	43.	Tuesday March 1 2016
19.	Wednesday September 30 2015	44.	Wednesday March 9 2016
20.	Thursday October 1 2015	45.	Thursday March 17 2016
21.	Friday October 9 2015	46.	Friday March 25 2016
22.	Monday October 12 2015	47.	Monday March 28 2016
23.	Tuesday October 20 2015	48.	Tuesday April 5 2016
24.	Wednesday October 28 2015	49.	Wednesday April 13 2016
25.	Thursday November 5	50.	Thursday April 21 2016

51.	Friday April 29 2016	80.	Thursday November 10 2016
52.	Monday May 2 2016	81.	Friday November 18 2016
53.	Tuesday May 10 2016	82.	Monday November 21 2016
54.	Wednesday May 18 2016	83.	Tuesday November 29 2016
55.	Thursday May 19 2016	84.	Wednesday December 7 2016
56.	Friday May 27 2016	85.	Thursday December 15 2016
57.	Monday May 30 2016	86.	Friday December 23 2016
58.	Tuesday June 7 2016	87.	Monday December 26 2016
59.	Wednesday June 15 2016	88.	Tuesday January 3 2017
60.	Thursday June 23 2016	89.	Wednesday January 11 2017
61.	Friday July 1 2016	90.	Thursday January 19 2017
62.	Monday July 4 2016	91.	Friday January 27 2017
63.	Tuesday July 12 2016	92.	Monday January 30 2017
64.	Wednesday July 20 2016	93.	Tuesday February 7 2017
65.	Thursday July 28 2016	94.	Wednesday February 15 2017
66.	Friday August 5 2016	95.	Thursday February 23 2017
67.	Monday August 8 2016	96.	Friday March 3 2017
68.	Tuesday August 16 2016	97.	Monday March 6 2017
69.	Wednesday August 24 2016	98.	Tuesday March 14 2017
70.	Thursday September 1 2016	99.	Wednesday March 22 2017
71.	Friday September 9 2016	100.	Thursday March 30 2017
72.	Monday September 12 2016	101.	Friday April 7 2017
73.	Tuesday September 20 2016	102.	Monday April 10 2017
74.	Wednesday September 28 2016	103.	Tuesday April 18 2017
75.	Thursday October 6 2016	104.	Wednesday April 26 2017
76.	Friday October 14 2016	105.	Thursday May 4 2017
77.	Monday October 17 2016	106.	Friday May 12 2017
78.	Tuesday October 25 2016	107.	Monday May 15 2017
79.	Wednesday November 2 2016	108.	Tuesday May 23 2017

**APPENDIX VII**  
**ETHNIC INTEREST GROUPS REPORTED**  
**IN THE NEWSPAPER EDITIONS STUDIED**

1. Afenifere
2. Afenifere Renewal Group
3. Arewa Citizens Action for Change
4. Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF)
5. Arewa Lawyers Forum
6. Arewa Students Forum
7. Arewa Youth Development Foundation
8. Association of Arewa Farmers and Traders
9. Association of Bini Women of Honour
10. Association of Idoma Lawyers
11. Benin Leaders of Thought (BLT)
12. Biafra Independence Movement (BIM or MASSOB-BIM)
13. Biafra Nations Youth League (BNYL)
14. Biafran National Guard (BNG)
15. Birom Militias
16. Christian Association of Biafra (CAB)
17. Conference of Ethnic Nationalities of Niger Delta
18. Council for Ikwerre Nationality
19. Council of Ogoni Churches (COC)
20. Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP)
21. Council of Ogoni Traditional Ruleers (COTRA)
22. Council of the Northern Monarchs

23. Council of Yoruba Obas
24. Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN)
25. Eastern Consultative Assembly (ECA)
26. Ebira People's Association (EPA)
27. Efik National Association Inc.
28. Egbesu Boys of the Niger Delta (EBND)
29. Egbesu Red Water Lions (ERWL)
30. Federation of Ogoni Women Associations (FOWA)
31. Fulani Nationality Movement
32. Fulbe (Fulani) Development Association of Nigeria (FULDAN)
33. Gan Allah Fulani Development Association of Nigeria (GAFDAN)
34. Hausa Student Association of Nigeria
35. Idoma National Forum
36. Idoma Youth Network
37. Idoma Youth Movement (IYM)
38. Idoma Forum Jos
39. Igala Association – USA
40. Igala Students' Association
41. Igbo Community Welfare Association (ICWA)
42. Igbo Improvement Union (IIU)
43. Igbo Progressive Leaders Council (IPLC)
44. Igbo Women Assembly (IWA)
45. Igbo World Assembly (IWA)
46. Igbo Youth Associations
47. Igbo Youth Movement (IYM)
48. Ijaw Council for Human Rights (ICHR)

49. Ijaw Monitoring Group
50. Ijaw National Congress (INC)
51. Ijaw People's Development Initiative (IPDI)
52. Ijaw Women's Association
53. Ijaw Youth Council
54. Ijaw Youth Development Association (IYDA)
55. Ikwere Women Progressive Union
56. Ikwerre Youth Movement (IYM)
57. Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)
58. Isoko Development Union (IDU)
59. Isoko Dynamic Youths Association (IDYA)
60. Isoko National Youth Assembly Worldwide
61. Itsekiri Leaders of Thought (ILT)
62. Itsekiri National Youth Council (INYC)
63. Jamu Nati Fulbe Association
64. Jonde Jam Fulani Youth Association
65. Jukun Development Association of Nigeria
66. Jukun Militias
67. Kalabari Youth Federation
68. Mdzough U Tiv
69. Middle Belt Youth Council
70. Middle Belt Youth Forum (MBYF)
71. Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)
72. Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)
73. Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)
74. Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta (MOSIEND)

75. National Association of Anang Youths (NAAY)
76. National Association of Igbo Students
77. National Association of Ijaw Female Students
78. National Council of Tiv Youths
79. National Union of Andoni Students (NUAS) Worldwide
80. National Union of Ikwere Students
81. National Union of Isoko Students
82. National Union of Ogoni Students (NUOS)
83. National Union of Urhobo Students
84. National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP)
85. Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)
86. Niger Delta Patriotic Alliance (NPDA)
87. Niger Delta Youths Coalition for Peace and Progress (NDYCPP)
88. Ngas Militias
89. North East Youth Initiative Forum (NEYIF)
90. Northern Elders Council (NEC)
91. Northern Elders Forum (NEF)
92. Northern Emancipation Network on Igbo Persistent for Secession
93. O'odua People's Congress (OPC)
94. O'oduwa Progressive Youth Assembly (COPYA)
95. Ogoni Solidarity Forum (OSF)
96. Ogoni Students Union (OSU)
97. Ogoni Teachers Union (OTU)
98. Ogoni Central Union (OCU)
99. Ohanaeze Ndigbo
100. Ohanaeze Youths

101. Ombalse Militia Group (OMG)
102. Opiatoha K'Idoma
103. Oron Development Union (ODU)
104. Oron National Forum (ONF)
105. Oron Women Action Group (OWAG)
106. Oron Youth Movement (OYM)
107. South East Forum
108. South East Governors Forum (SEGF)
109. South East Traditional Rulers Council
110. Swem Karagbe Club
111. Tiv Cultural and Development Association (TCDA)
112. Tiv Militias
113. Urhobo Common Cause (UCC)
114. Urhobo Democratic Assembly
115. Urhobo Nationality Council
116. Urhobo Progressive Union (UPU)
117. Urhobo Social Club
118. Urhobo Youth Council
119. Urhobo Youths Alliance
120. Urhobo Youths Alliance for Equity and Justice (UYAFEJ)
121. World Igbo Congress (WIC)
122. Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE)
123. Yoruba Students Association
124. Yoruba Unity Forum (YUF)
125. Zaar Militias

## APPENDIX VIII

### NEWSPAPER TITLE EDITORS AND REPORTERS INTERVIEWED

TITLE EDITORS			
S/N	Name	Designation	Credential
1.	Onuoha Ukeh	Editor, <i>Daily Sun</i>	A journalist of more than 20 years experience that involves reporting across diverse bits and holding various editorial positions.
2.	Eze Anaba	Editor, <i>Vanguard</i>	A journalist of more than two decades experience, rising from the ranks as a reporter, correspondent and head of various desks.
3.	Chris Egburonu	Editor, <i>The Nation</i> (Sunday)	A journalist of more than 30 years experience in various newspaper establishments, working as a reporter, head of desks and news editor to eventually becoming a title editor.
4.	Theophilus Abba	Editor, <i>Sunday Daily Trust</i>	An award winning journalist with over two decades of experience garnered in a number of print establishments. He is a notable figure in investigative journalism.
REPORTERS			
S/N	Name	Designation	Credential
1.	Aloysius Attah	Reporter, <i>The Sun</i>	A reporter of over a decade experience, working as a correspondent and reporting across diverse bits (politics, economy, education, culture etc).
2.	Emmanuel Aziken	Political Editor, <i>Vanguard</i>	The most senior political reporter in <i>Vanguard</i> and editor of political pages with about 20 years experience in the field
3.	Sina Fadire	Head, Investigation Desk, <i>The Nation</i>	A reporter of more than 20 years experience working across bits including politics and crime.
4.	Tony Adibe	South-East Bureau Chief, <i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>Daily Trust's</i> most senior reporter in the South-East with more than 20 years experience working mainly as a correspondent for various newspapers.

## APPENDIX IXA

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (1)

**Name of Interviewee:** Onuoha Ukeh  
**Designation:** Editor, *Daily Sun*  
**Location:** Editor's office, The Sun Publishing Limited, Apapa, Lagos  
**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017  
**Time:** 3:07pm

**Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

The ethnic interest groups are found newsworthy to be reported based on what they say and their activities. It is what they say and do that makes them deserving of being reported by any serious-minded news medium. If they say nothing and do nothing, they do not matter for the journalist, even though they exist. It is when they make comments on certain issues or when they do something that they become relevant to be reported in the news.

For a newspaper, our duty is to give information. As an editor you choose reports that you think will interest the reader for the newspaper to make sales... that is it. Newspaper is a business which if you don't sell, you are not in business. So when they make comment (it depends on what they say; most of the times they make controversial comments) and like they say, "bad news is good news for the journalist" because that is what will provoke the interest of the reader. It is not about interest, it is not about what they say. Therefore, I would say that as a journalist, as an editor, I look out for the news value in the comments and activities of the interest groups.

**Question:     What and what would you consider in deciding whether to and from which angle to report developments related to ethnic interest groups?**

I think I have just answered that question substantially. I look out for the newsworthiness of the event or issue in question. Will it interest the public? Who will be interested in reading it? How consequential is it to the public? Generally speaking, as a journalist that knows his onion, once any potentially news event is before you, you first consider its news value or what is called newsworthiness. Once a material lacks newsworthiness, it is not considered at all. If it has some newsworthiness, then the next task for the journalist is to weigh it against other materials competing for position in the paper. It is through this process that the journalist arrives at the final decision as to what to report and what not to. It is a professional decision, strictly speaking.

It is, perhaps, important to also point out that once you report what interests no one, then you have failed to communicate. You have merely spoken to yourself. This is why newsworthiness is the chief consideration in this case because you are not publishing your paper to dump the copies in your warehouse or to read them alone, but you are publishing to circulate, to have it read by the public.

**Question:     You earlier admitted that the ethnic interest groups do sometimes say controversial things; don't you think that such comments when reported may undermine national interest even if they are newsworthy?**

Reporting what they say could also help national interest because if you have bottled-up anger, for example, and you don't express it meanwhile you are planning to do something, nobody will know. But when they say it, the government and the rest of Nigerians will know their grievances and what can be done to solve their problems. This is the rationale for all the reports you may have been reading in this newspaper and other papers in the country which appear to contain potentially dangerous comments; such comments usually represent bottled-up anger, grievances,

which ought to be brought to the public domain in order to be addressed. Doing otherwise may be to act against the very national interest you spoke about.

However, it is not everything they say that gets reported because as an editor or a journalist, you have that duty of care to sieve the information. So it is not everything they say that should be reported. For example if a group come up and say that President Buhari is a thief you go and publish it. No you don't publish such things. You need to verify and find a way to balance facts; that is a way to be a responsible journalist.

**Question:     How correct will it be to say that a newspaper like yours is often swayed by ethnic interest in reporting these groups i.e. that you cannot be completely dispassionate in reporting them?**

Individual newspapers have what they believe in. That is why if you read editorials on the same matter across different newspapers you may discover that they have different views on the same issue. This is because it is what you believe and how you perceive issues that will shape the view you express on a particular matter. But I agree that newspapers may be ethnically swayed in their reportage. We have national newspapers but you will also discover that certain newspapers come out stronger when particular issues are talked about; and if it is in Nigeria, you see *Daily Trust* or *Leadership* playing up something that develops in the North more than they would do to something that develops in the South East. If you look at their pattern of sales you see that they sell more there. So that it is how it goes. It is all about interest, where you believe you will make more sales and then the philosophy of the owner or even the editor. It may be that the owner will intervene and say "this is what you must do" or the interest editor or the reporter may also come in there. It is everywhere... even abroad you see newspapers standing for and defending certain interests. For instance, in the United States, you find newspapers that are liberal and so pro-

Democratic Party and the ones that are conservative and so pro-Republican Party. So that it is how it is everywhere.

**Question: Could you address this issue precisely in relation to how your medium reports ethnic interest groups promoting the cause of the South-East people?**

Actually, you may have observed that these South-East interest groups receive dominant coverage in *The Sun*. But this is not about the interest group, it is may be about the South-East but it is not to say that *The Sun* is a South-East paper, *The Sun* is a national paper but may be because it is read more in the South-East than any other part of the country, the newspaper may take particular interest in what is happening in that part of the country and accordingly report them more prominently. Similarly, I the editor, being from the Igbo ethnic group, may take particular interest about what is happening there (the South-East). The interest we take interest in reporting what is going on there (South-East) is also meant to inform and educate the people there (the Igbo). But it doesn't also mean that if something is going wrong you will not report it just because you an Igbo. So, *The Sun* is a national newspaper but may be because its readership is strongest in the South East it has taken particular interest in that part of the country. It is not only *The Sun*; newspaper readership is strongest in the East, whether it is *ThisDay* or *Punch* or any other paper for that matter.

**Question: Are there other factors that tend to influence the decisions you make in reporting ethnic interest groups?**

Certainly there are because news judgment is typically influenced by many factors. Apart from the factor of newsworthiness which I spoke about earlier, you also have to consider the mood of the nation and the context. For instance, when we are into a presidential election which is a very

crucial event in our democracy and an ethnic interest group is saying or doing something that does not in any way relate to the election, such may not make news at that point in time or it may only emerge as not-too-serious news. This is a matter of timing and context because such an issue or event might have made the front page were it to come at a time when the presidential election is not on.

Secondly, you also consider the people that are involved, the individuals, the personalities and even the group. All these are put into consideration in deciding what to report about any group, not only the ethnic interest groups.

Thirdly, you have to consider the policy of your medium, its editorial disposition. This is very, very crucial because it is only through your medium that what you have written can be published. So, once what you have reported is contrary to what your medium wants, it automatically gets not published, and there is nothing you can do about it.

You also consider taste, morality and the law. You don't go about writing and publishing anything as though you are in a lawless and normless enclave. No, it is not that way. Human societies are regulated, so we have to work that way irrespective of what our calling is. This is an important professional consideration for any journalist.

**Question:     How would you generally assess the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?**

Overall, I would say honestly that newspapers in Nigeria have done very well in reporting these (ethnic interest) groups. Contrary to what might be the popular belief, I don't think the newspapers have been sensational in reporting ethnic interest groups. The duty of the newspaper is to give information, to report events. When events are reported, it helps people in authority to

address the issues being highlighted. I don't see the newspapers promoting divisive tendencies; they are only reporting events as they unfold. Like I said before, if you don't report these grievances and agitations, they might escalate to something that is worse for the society. On the other hand, if you report them, these things will be known and the government will be able to know what to do to solve the problems. The only requirement is that you have to be responsible in reporting. And like I told you before, it is not everything that you see that you report; you also have to edit what you report and know the ones that will undermine national security. The allegation that newspapers are sensational and undermining national security usually comes from quarters that do not want these issues (activities and views of ethnic interest groups) to be reported at all; they want newspapers to be censored.

## APPENDIX IXB

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (2)

**Name of Interviewee:** Aloysius Attah  
**Designation:** Reporter, *The Sun* Newspaper  
**Location:** Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Anambra State Secretariat,  
Central Business District, Awka.  
**Date:** October 5, 2017  
**Time:** 1.25pm

**Question:** **Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

I consider these groups as newsmakers. As a journalist, I have reported them uncountable number of times, and each time I report them, there is likelihood that the report will make the front page, such that I have myself even wondered what is this about such groups that they are assuming very important newsmakers.

However, I am still convinced that they deserve the coverage given to them because they are important stakeholders in our nation, our democracy. We cannot proceed with our national discussion and debate without them. They have the right to be heard just like other shades of interest in the country. Their agitations cannot be ignored. And I believe all this makes the groups' activities newsworthy.

But more importantly, I think their frequent coverage is all about market strategy on the part of the newspapers. People tend to buy newspapers having reports on these groups. The activities

and communications of these groups are characteristically explosive; they spread like wildfire and people like to read them. These groups use propaganda a lot, they employ indoctrination just like Boko Haram, and this propaganda are bought by many people. A lot of these people are not even in the middle class, they are very poor people who barely manage to eke out a living, but still whenever they see a newspaper carrying reports about these groups, they purchase it, even if that will cost them the money for their feeding. So, reporting these groups is part of sale strategy.

Secondly, the diverse composition of Nigeria in terms of ethnicity introduces this rivalry among the various ethnic nationalities. Every region have their own one or more groups that speak and act for them in this rivalry, and such a group commands followership among the people of the area who would then be interested in reading anything published about the group. This drives newspapers to report such groups. For instance, at a time, my newspaper introduced what it calls “Regional Cover” where it focuses on the various ethnic regions There is a day for the Niger Delta, a day of the South-East, a day of the South-West and a day for the North. All this is geared towards improving and sustaining sales.

**Question:     How would you explain the seeming dominance of the Igbo ethnic interest groups in your newspaper?**

It is still the same case of sales strategy. *The Sun* is seen as speaking for the South-East, just as *The Nation* is seen as the voice of the South-West reporting copiously groups like Afenifere and OPC, and *Vanguard* reporting issues of Niger Delta. *The Nation* is owned by a Yoruba man while *Vanguard* is owned by a Niger Deltan. *The Sun* is owned by an Igbo man, and so seen as the voice of Igbos. Many Igbos see the paper as their own. For this reason, they consider it first when they want to purchase newspaper. This is what *The Sun* tries to take advantage of when it gives more coverage to ethnic interest groups promoting the cause of the South-East than those promoting the cause of other regions of the country.

**Question:     What and what would you consider in deciding whether to and from which angle to report developments related to ethnic interest groups?**

As I stated earlier, no one can deny these groups the right to be heard. Freedom of association and freedom of expression are enshrined in our constitution. So, in considering what to and report these groups, you first of all bear in mind that they are expressing their legitimate rights which they are entitled to do. Once you have this in mind, you are then in a right position to know when a group is making a justifiable demand and when it is merely fomenting trouble. What I am saying in essence, is that human rights are the first consideration.

Secondly, as I noted before, you have to consider your audience. My own newspaper is read dominantly in the South-East, therefore, you need to bear in mind that any group you are reporting and whatever you are reporting about them are such that will draw the interest of this audience. That is the way to be good journalist because as a journalist your reports ought to provoke interest.

**Question:     Does it then mean that you as a journalist would report just anything about the group as long as it will interest your readers notwithstanding that it may harm national interest?**

No sane person will assert that. That is why I used the word “professionalism”; you must be professional in whatever you are doing. Look, this is a profession, I mean journalism, and like every other professions, it has its rules. If you are not careful, you may get into trouble with the law. That is why one undergoes training before becoming a bona fide practitioner. So, on that ground, I would not subscribe to the idea that one reports everything once it will interest the audience. Mind you that the interest of the audience, the public, is your paramount guide, and there are certain things you report in the name of exciting their interest and you will be indirectly

working against their interest. For instance, if you begin to report comments that could cause divisions and breakdown in law and order just because they are sensational enough to attract your readers, then you are also, perhaps without knowing it, working contrary to their overall interest.

But still as I stated before, groups with legitimate interest should be given a voice in the press. It is their right and it is the duty of those of us in the media to ensure realisation of that right. When we do this, we would have discharged our duties properly as custodians of democracy and public conscience.

**Question: Will it be correct to say that your newspaper is not always dispassionate in reporting issues relating to ethnic interest groups promoting the cause of the South-East people?**

Basically, it depends on what you mean by being dispassionate. There is no human being without sentiments, no news medium without bias. The truth is that you have to be professional in whatever you are doing. Nevertheless, this professionalism does not remove the fact that you have a constituency to serve. For a paper which the South-East is its constituency, it will only be reasonable to expect a good quantity of its content to concern the people. That is normal and I don't see anything wrong with it. A media house must serve its audience. Imagine a situation where Anambra Broadcasting Service, for instance, abandons its major area of coverage to be reporting about Imo or Lagos State. That will amount to deficiency and a professional blunder. So, if you examine what the newspapers do from that perspective then you will discover that any accusation of outright bias may lack basis.

Again, media houses can also engage in advocacy. In fact, they do this in all parts of the world and it is part of their social responsibility. This is what a newspaper like *The Sun* does when it

takes up the reports relating to ethnic interest groups from the South-East. The perspectives adopted in reporting these groups are such that highlights their demands and whatever injustice they suffer. This is also what the paper does with other ethnic interest groups. But do remember what I said earlier to the effect that the paper has its primary constituency which is the South-East just as every other paper has its.

**Question: Are there other factors that tend to influence the decisions you make in reporting ethnic interest groups?**

I think I have largely dealt with these factors. But one may add that with emphasis that you don't build a house and destroy it. The press played a leading role in building this country starting from the days of the fight for independence. The press was also in the vanguard of the struggle for democracy in this country. So, having taken the country this far, it will only take a fool to excuse a situation where the press will allow itself to be used as an instrument to destroy the very house it has sacrificed a lot to build. So, in essence, whatever is being reported about the ethnic interest groups, it is only wise that the press be mindful of the overriding national interest. It will not be promoting the people's interest by throwing the country into crisis or even war. We practitioners have tried to have this in mind. In fact, I think the newspapers in general have been conscious of this irrespective of what certain persons with vested interest might say in this regard.

**Question: How would you generally assess the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?**

I would say with certainty that newspapers in the country have really served public interest in the way they have reported these ethnic interest groups. The press has given them prominence and has afforded them the voice so that the world will hear them. Nigerian newspapers have promoted these groups and made them a force to reckon with such that you cannot ignore their

presence and agitations. This is a very good service which the press has rendered to this country if you look at it broadmindedly. The agitations of these groups have come to stay and you cannot stop them. The only thing you can do is to address them for the peaceful existence and progress of this nation. Anything short of this will amount to self-deceit and which consequences may be catastrophic.

So, in that light, you would understand what I mean when I said that the press has done so well in terms of projecting these groups. We cannot just ignore them and pretend that all is well. For instance, the agitations for economic equity and justice in the Niger Delta cannot just be swept under the carpet. We have seen that all attempts made by the military and civil governments to suppress the agitations by mere force of arms have largely failed. We also cannot, for instance, pretend that the agitations for creation of an additional state for the South-East to bring it at par with most of the zones can be conveniently ignored. It is in the best interest of the nation that these demands are brought to light, that they are mounted on the table for the nation to look at them and consider addressing them because if they are not addressed, they will linger forever. This is what we have learnt and continued to learn from our experience as a people and even from the experiences of other nations.

## APPENDIX IXC

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (3)

**Name of Interviewee:** Eze Anaba  
**Designation:** Editor, *Vanguard* Newspaper  
**Location:** Editor's office, The Vintage Press Limited Headquarters, Lagos  
**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017  
**Time:** 5:05pm

**Question:** **Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

Before we consider what makes the ethnic interest groups and activities newsworthy we have to consider first how these groups came about in the first place. How and why did they emerge to become part of national experience? The answer is in the economic situation in the country and the political situation in the country. Economy plays the major role; take the South East for example; people are hungry and somebody (such as MASSOB or IPOB) comes and said "you are hungry because you are marginalized, because you lost the civil war, that if you have Biafra all the problems will be solved." And because of hunger people may tend to be convinced by this argument. So the economic situation in the country is an important factor in throwing up these agitations and making them prominent and the fact that they have become a prominent phenomenon in our national life makes them newsworthy. Put in another way, the distressed economic situation in our country fuels the agitations, making both the agitations and the agitating groups important. Being important is being prominent and this means that you matter, so you will ordinarily make news.

The political situation is another thing. The way the ruling party is constituted has alienated a particular part of the country. The state of our federalism also contributed to it. In the Niger Delta, the warlords became the government the people know. So whatever you say about the warlords make news. And don't forget newspapers are business and they have to survive. So, if reports about these groups will help the newspapers to make their sales, then they will embrace them. This is actually the case because each newspaper is making effort to circulate and sell, and you do this well by reporting what will be of interest to readers.

**Question: Does it then mean that you as an editor would publish just anything about ethnic interest groups as long as it will interest readers even when this may jeopardise common interest?**

The first job of an editor is knowing what not to publish. There is a limit which a publication must not exceed. At the end of the day, if you are irresponsible with your news stories you will soon be found out and you will die. So we look at news that is not sensational. If a news story is not irresponsible you will be an irresponsible editor not to publish it. If newspapers have promoted hate as is the case in the social media this country would have been in flames by now.

What are the issues you put into consideration? You have to answer these questions: is it irresponsible? Does it affect our national security? Does it promote peace? Any news material that does not meet these criteria will not be published?

So, my point is that while it is the duty and right of newspapers to report sectional groups, they must do it in line with the best practice. Their reports ought to comply with the law, be ethical, promote peace, unity and progress.

**Question:     What other factors do you usually put into consideration in reporting these groups?**

Basically, every news event has its peculiar demands in terms of judgment and decisions one makes in reporting it. To that extent, there may be no blanket answer to that question. Ethnic interest groups come in various shades. There are ones that are less confrontational and more diplomatic in their approach and demands while there are others (such as MEND, OPC, IPOB and the rest) who are more radical and more confrontational in their demands and approach. So, you have to approach each one as the circumstance may require. Even when you are talking about a particular group, say OPC, the decision you may have to make about it today may not be the same as the one you may have to make tomorrow. Each particular occasion may come with its own peculiar demands depending on what the group is saying or doing at the material time. So, all of this counts; the group that is involved, the particular issue involved, what the groups is doing or saying and perhaps the overall context of the development. All these will task the professional sense of a journalist, but he must get it right.

**Question:     To what extent would you admit that your coverage of ethnic interest groups is influenced by ethnic sentiments of your publisher and other gatekeepers?**

The situation where ethnic sentiments (of individual journalists or the owner) do colour the reportage of ethnic interest groups does not apply to *Vanguard*. I don't think it applies to other papers as well. For instance, *The Sun* is owned by an Igbo, but what they do is to use their Igboness to build their market; they focus on Igbo issues (but) not on hate speech. In *Vanguard* our publisher is from the South-South but it does not mean that ours is a South-South newspaper or belonging to any ethnic group in that region. Ours is a national paper, but our particular focus on that region is because it is our strong area in terms of readership. When the Niger Delta campaign on resource control came, we supported it based on this consideration and not because our publisher is from there (don't forget that our publisher is the oldest practising journalist in

the country. He set up *The Punch*; so you cannot ascribe any ethnic sentiment to him). The South-East is our biggest market (it is the largest newspaper market in Nigeria by the way), so that is why we also focus much on what is happening in that part of the country including the agitations that go on there and the groups and personalities involved in all of it. *The Punch* is also a national newspaper but they have to do business, so that is the reason for the seeming South-Western focus of the paper.

We may go on and on to cite other examples. Let's start from *Champion* (which market space *The Sun* took over); its editorial leaning towards the Igbo is because there is market in the East and not because its owner is an Igbo. The same thing will apply to other newspapers like *The Nation*. Generally, apart from a few exceptions, I don't think the ethnicity of the owner has been so pronounced in shaping the content of newspapers in Nigeria. What is generally seen as ethnic sentiment in these papers is merely an attempt by them to serve and retain their market. Remember that what we are doing has a crucial economic dimension; you cannot run a newspaper when you cannot sell your copies, and you cannot sell your copies when you don't have a strategy for doing this. Part of the strategy is to identify your market and work in that in line. When people express dissatisfaction about this sort of strategy by newspapers, they tend to forget that the newspapers have to survive economically first before they can be there to continue to provide the news people are looking up to them to provide. When a newspaper cannot sell its copies, it is definitely headed for doom. We have seen it uncountable number times here with several newspapers that came out and couldn't stay afloat. And this will be the fate of newspaper including *Vanguard* once it cannot sell its copies. Therefore, what may be misunderstood as ethnic inclination or bias among the newspapers in Nigeria is nothing but an attempt by the papers to stay afloat through sustained circulation.

Be that as it may, there might have been instances of ethnic bias in some newspapers in the country. However, this is not enough to say that newspapers in Nigeria, such as *Vanguard*, are ethnic papers. This will be very far from the truth. So, apart from a few exceptions, I don't think the ethnicity of the owner has been so pronounced in shaping the content of newspapers in Nigeria.

**Question: How would you generally assess the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?**

I think the newspapers are doing what they should do. No national newspaper is encouraging hate speech. None is promoting tribalism and acrimony. If you look at the way the newspapers are run internally, you will understand exactly what I mean when I say that the newspapers are national and never regional or tribal. For instance, I am an Igbo man editing *Vanguard* owned by a Niger Delta man of Itsekiri extraction. A Yoruba man has edited *The Sun* in spite of the obvious fact that the newspaper is owned by an Igbo. A Yoruba man, Debo Adesina, has edited *The Guardian* even though the Ibru family that owns it is not Yoruba. *The Punch* perhaps still has this Yorubanness when it comes to appointment of officers. *The Nation* of course has this political inspiration behind it, but still it is a national paper. Based on all these, you can always say, and confidently too, that the Nigerian newspapers have done well. They have put the ethnic agitations on the public agenda yet without sacrificing their neutrality and social responsibility.

The traditional media in general (and not just the newspapers) have really helped this country's unity and stability, believe me. People should always distinguish between the sort of rumours and careless propaganda originating from the social media from what is genuinely coming from the traditional media. In traditional media, there is a great deal of sense of responsibility which is exactly what is largely lacking in social media.

However, this is not to say that we have arrived. We can always do better. There is no perfection anywhere. We just keep on improving, keep on learning because Rome was not built in a day.

## APPENDIX IXD

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (4)

**Name of Interviewee:** Emmanuel Aziken  
**Designation:** Political Editor, *Vanguard* Newspaper  
**Location:** Newsroom, The Vintage Press Limited Headquarters, Lagos  
**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> August 2017  
**Time:** 5:40pm

**Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

News about ethnic interest groups many a time is about conflict, about drama. These (conflict and drama) are a major element of news. Events around these groups are potentially breaking news. Some of these groups want to leave Nigeria, they are agitating, they are protesting, demonstrating and issuing threats. These developments are invariably newsworthy and should be reported by the media.

Besides these dramatic developments, we have to consider the fact that ethnic interest groups have their role in our nation, in our democracy. Demands and agitations are an integral part of democracy. In fact, they could be a yardstick for measuring democracy because where demands and agitations are absent, you begin to suspect that democracy is suffering there because there is no way everybody and every group in a place that is big as a nation can be satisfied with everything at the same time. There ought to be dissatisfactions here and there, demands, grievances, and people's freedom to express this is a democratic right. So, you can understand

what I mean when I said that agitations could be a measure of democracy. Based on this, you will agree with me that ethnic interest groups, their communications and their activities should be covered by the media. Make no mistake about that, this is not a matter of choice for the media because the media is there to serve democracy and the most crucial way it can do this is to give voice to all interests.

So, we can now admit that activities of these groups are newsworthy on two fronts. First, from the perspective of the newspapers, they often offer something interesting for readers thus enhancing sales. Secondly, the media's social responsibility and professional imperatives demand that such groups should be reported and not ignored.

**Question: Does it then mean that you as a journalist would report just anything about ethnic interest groups as long as it will interest readers even when this may jeopardise common interest?**

Not at all. However, we must ask the question: "what is even this 'national interest'?" Who defines it? By what standards is it measured?" I say this because when people (particularly those having vested interest in the political and economic status quo and so feel threatened by demands for say restructuring of the country) recite the usual lines about national interest, we must be on our guard, we must probe their real intentions and be sure that they are not merely safeguarding their interest in a system that may not be working, I don't know. So, I think the press should not just allow itself to be cheaply seduced by the national interest mantra. It ought to approach that ideology with a critical attitude and see that its role of giving voice to interests and demands that may not be pleasing to the ruling class is not undermined.

What am I saying in essence? Newspapers in Nigeria have a duty to carry out by way of projecting the diverse interests in the country (this is not limited to ethnic interests but extends to

all others including political interests, religious interests, etc). It is a duty they owe to our democracy. However, they should not also be mindless of the collective wellbeing while doing this. They should avoid sensationalism and should not take sides. At the same time, they should be wary of vested interests and their characteristic appeal to this overused mantra of “national interest”.

**Question:     What other factors do you usually put into consideration in reporting these groups?**

Apart from newsworthiness, in reporting ethnic interest groups, we first consider what is of interest to our readers. This is because we are not writing for ourselves, we are not publishing for ourselves, we doing this so that people out there will read us and get informed. Therefore, we must consider, as a matter of priority, what will attract the reader out there. No matter how excellent your news judgment may have been, you would have failed as a journalist if you don’t succeed in communicating; if you don’t succeed in getting someone out there to read what you have written and published.

Importantly, we also consider what is safe for the society because the communication and activities of some of these ethnic interest groups could sometimes constitute security risk for society. Remember, as I said earlier, our report of ethnic interest groups and in fact anything for that matter ought not to be mindless of the collective wellbeing. Still in this regard, we also consider whether what is to be reported is in any way injurious or libelous. We also consider what is of interest to our market. We are very strong in the South-East, so we put that also into consideration.

**Question: To what extent would you admit that your coverage of ethnic interest groups is influenced by ethnic sentiments of your publisher and other gatekeepers?**

To some extent I agree that our sentiments as individual journalists and media organization do affect our reportage. We are all humans after all. This influence (of sentiments) is not only in regard to reporting ethnic interest groups, it applies to every other subject that can be reported. But let's not dramatise this; sentiment is part of our nature as human beings, we cannot run away from it. So, it is understandable to admit that sometimes all sorts of personal and group interests do interfere in the way we work as journalists. Ethnicity in particular is a very emotional issue and so influence of sentiment may prove to be more emphatic here.

**Question: How would you generally assess the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?**

We have done well basically despite all the environmental challenges. First is that newspapers in Nigeria have never failed in terms of representing the diverse views and interests in our country. It has not been easy at all given that the sheer huge number of interests and the fierceness of the competitions among them mean that the journalist is always brought under pressure as each interest insists on having a voice in the press. But despite all this, the press has performed creditably. To cover a complex society like Nigeria without being accused of partiality and all sorts of mistake will be a miracle. But no matter what the failings of the newspapers might have been, I still firmly believe that they have carried out their responsibilities well in terms of covering the ethnic interest groups.

## APPENDIX VIIIIE

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (5)

**Name of Interviewee:** Chris Egburonu  
**Designation:** Editor, *The Nation* (Sunday)  
**Location:** Sunday newsroom, *The Nation* newspapers headquarters,  
Matori, Lagos  
**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017  
**Time:** 10:32am

**Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

I view them as highly newsworthy based on the reality of the Nigerian situation. In other words, it is the reality of the Nigerian nation that has made these groups assumed so much importance within our polity. Before the amalgamation, before the alleged forced union, what we call Nigeria today was actually several ethnic nationalities. An average Nigerian first of all sees himself as belonging to an ethnic nationality before thinking about Nigeria. It is just something out there; the reality. We are all conscious of our ethnicity. A man from the north is conscious of the fact that he is an Hausa man. I am from the east, I am conscious of my Igbo origin. But in a bid to keep the country one, the Nigerian government tries to undermine this reality. But you know that they cannot write off these ethnic nationalities. Whether the government wants it or not; whether it considers them important or not, the reality on the ground is that these groups are part of the life and history of this nation. So whenever they (ethnic interest groups) come out to speak or act, the nation would have no option than to take them seriously. While the Nigeria

nation insists that the states are the federating units, you and I know that the current arrangement that makes the states the federating units is not natural; it is an artificial thing. The natural thing is for the ethnic nationalities to be the federating units. But since things have turned out this way with the nation lopsidedly structured, we now have on our hands a situation where our public sphere is persistently dominated by agitations, and some of them quite radical and even violent. And a situation like this has made the ethnic interest groups relevant and their voices quite powerful. That is the way I view it.

Another thing is that news per se is anchored on conflict. The fact that Nigerian government has failed to recognize the relevance, the importance and place of these ethnic nationalities, conflict becomes the natural outcome. So when these conflicts occur, they naturally make news. There must be news from conflict. That is the situation everywhere and not just with the Nigerian media sector alone. Tune to CNN everyday and you will agree with me that if it is not all about one terrorist strike somewhere in Pakistan it will be about the war in Syria or Iraq. When Trump Clashes with Hilary Clinton, that makes a major news piece. I think it is natural with humans to show interest in conflicts. So, that is partly why news about ethnic interest groups will tend to feature regularly in Nigerian newspapers. Their activities and comments are always potentially conflict-related. Based on that reality, it is not unnatural for one to expect that issues related to these groups will be prominent in the media. Remember, we in the media do not manufacture news, we report news as it develops in society.

**Question: Does it then mean that you as an editor would publish just anything about ethnic interest groups as long as it will interest readers even when this may jeopardise common interest?**

No, it is not necessarily so. Though we are interested in conflict cases and a reporter can go out there and see a conflict situation and report it, we however have this responsibility not to

deliberately go out of our way to foment trouble; yet we should not bury news when we see it. If there is conflict, we report. If there is something that is of interest to the public, we report because that is what we are out there to do.

If an ethnic nationality is making a demand (and we know they have right to make demands; it is a matter of human rights), the best thing to do is for government to listen to them, pay attention to their demand no matter how reckless they might have been in making such. That is what any responsible government should do and not to try to write off such group and their demands. Our duty as journalists is to bring to the fore the sentiments, interests and voices of every section of the country in the interest of the union called Nigeria. If you try to suppress any of the voices, you are not helping the union. What will help the union is for every agitation and every voice to be given attention. In our profession, we are expected to bare it all. If there are problems in the country, we are expected to say it as it is. So, we would be doing the society a great disservice if we pretend, like some politicians would like us to, that these agitations are non-existent, that all is well with Nigeria, that all the agitating groups are talking nonsense and are mere troublemakers. That is not why we are called journalists, that is not what we are here to do as media people.

**Question:     What other factors do you usually put into consideration in reporting these groups?**

We consider the value it will add to the country and the particular ethnic group that is involved. As I told you earlier, though we are interested in newsworthy events, we are not just to go out there recklessly reporting every issue or comment made by anybody. As media people, we are bound to be socially responsible; it is inscribed in the very philosophy of our calling because the wellbeing of society has a lot to do with the way we do our duties. So, I must tell you that public interest is paramount in whatever we do including while reporting these groups. For instance,

you cannot just come out and announce that you will kill off other ethnic groups and we just publish it. No, that will be most irresponsible.

Of course, we also put into consideration the in-house policy and interest of our organisation. We are a business, you know that, so we need to go out there and make some reasonable amount of sales and attract advert subscriptions to be able to move on. As such it also necessary that we consider our readers while selecting and packaging our news – who are they? What do they want to read? What are their expectations? Answers to all these will guide us in tailoring our content to their taste and expectations.

**Question: To what extent would you admit that your coverage of ethnic interest groups is influenced by ethnic sentiments of your publisher and other gatekeepers?**

Of course in theory we are expected to be objective; our profession requires that we maintain objectivity. But in practice, objectivity, like every other human value, cannot be absolute. You know he who pays the piper, to a large extent, dictates the tune. It is not in doubt. It is the reality, not just in journalism but in all spheres of life.

I work here in *The Nation* and we all know the owner of the paper. Even though my proprietor does not come out to directly interfere in the editorial decision making process here. But you and I know that if someone comes out to say that my publisher Ahmed Bola Tinubu is a fool, you don't expect me to publish it. If he is in government and there is something the government has done that is unpopular, our duty as professionals requires us to report that by way of giving a voice to the critics who discuss issues as against those who merely engage in name calling. If you begin to sing the praises of your proprietor, if you don't balance issues properly, you are digging the grave of the newspaper. If the owner of this paper is in APC and there is fire in APC secretariat and you decide not to report it, then the paper is being killed.

So, we find ourselves in a situation where we have to balance a number of interests. We have the public interest to protect. We have our professional interest to protect. And of course, we are under someone's employ (he has hired us and given us a platform for professional self-expression), so you cannot just deny him the right to have his interest protected.

**Question:     How would you generally assess the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?**

I think we have not done badly at all. Our profession is such that is fraught with a lot of challenges, some of them quite complex and far-reaching. But in the midst of all that, I think the newspapers in this country have been able to keep our democracy alive by highlighting these ethnic cleavages and agitations coming from all corners of the country. If anyone accuses the press of mischief for reporting these issues, then the person is merely being myopic. What is democracy if not differences and the quest to harmonise them, interests and the quest to satisfy them? And you cannot satisfy these interests if they are not brought to the table. On this front, I would commend Nigerian newspapers for doing what they have been able to do so far.

Nevertheless, there are always things we can do to perform better. Newspapers or editors must have realized that ethnic nationalities are there; that there are ethnic interests. We should go beyond sensationalism and face the issues professionally. Sensationalism will sell newspapers but we should go beyond it. We should look at the issues, the history that brought about ethnic agitations. We should call the attention of the authorities and even educate the ethnic leaders on better ways to carry out their agitations. If one says "I am no longer part of the union" he should be listened to and asked to explain why. He should not just be rebuffed because if you fail to listen to him today, he may become more dangerous tomorrow. Who knows, the violent agitations we are experiencing today in our nation are a result of our reluctance to listen to more moderate agitations and demands made in the past by some of these groups.

## APPENDIX IXF

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (6)

**Name of Interviewee:** Sina Fadire  
**Designation:** Head, Investigation Desk, *The Nation* Newspaper  
**Location:** Newsroom, The *Nation* Newspapers Headquarters,  
Matori, Lagos  
**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017  
**Time:** 12.20pm

**Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

The issue of ethnicity in Nigeria is a very broad one; a very serious and very complex issue of our nationhood. There is no media house in Nigeria that doesn't take the issues seriously. Take for instance, the Niger Delta struggle; if you visit Olobiri (where crude oil was first discovered), you will begin to wonder whether this is the same place we are getting the oil with which we develop Abuja. So, looking at an injustice like this, there is no way you can merely wish away ethnic interest groups and their agitations. You cannot ignore them because they shape the politics of the nation and they influence government policies. On that basis alone, they are important sources of news, and they are rightly so because they have the democratic right to express themselves.

If you look you will see them (ethnic interest groups) everywhere. There is OPC, there is the IPOB people, there is Arewa and all that. These groups feel that because the government is not

disposed to dialogue, their only way to be heard is through agitations. As a reporter, you have to pay attention to them; what are they agitating for? What is the reason for their agitations? You need to let the authorities know these. You need to let these demands and grievances be known to all stakeholders. This is what I think the press in Nigeria is doing in the way they report these groups. The press is trying to let the democracy grow because we need all voices to come to the arena before we can really practice and grow this democracy. And so any voice that has something to say deserves to be reported, deserves to be included as part of news. Because every voice matters in democracy, more so when it is a voice of one of the constituents of our union – an ethnic group, it should have a space in newspapers.

**Question: Does it then mean that you as a journalist would report just anything about ethnic interest groups as long as it will interest readers even when this may jeopardise common interest?**

It cannot be so, my brother. The standard is that as a professional you have to consider the social, ethical and legal implications of what you are writing. Communication is very powerful; it can make and mar, more so when it is channelled through the mass media. Therefore, it will be most irresponsible for any media practitioner to act recklessly in reporting news knowing that whatever he takes out there cannot be taken back; that whatever he gives out could cause a disaster of unquantifiable proportions.

Based on this, I would tell you certainly that as responsible professionals, it cannot be the case that we report whatever that develops around the ethnic interest groups irrespective of the consequences on society. You need to consider the consequences – good and bad. You need to be able to assure yourself that you are doing the right thing according to your training and conscience. The approach has to be professional. That is the way I do it; that is the way we do it

here in *The Nation*. A journalist should be the solution to the problem and not the problem. We should be nation builders and not destroyers.

**Question:     What other factors do you usually put into consideration in reporting these groups?**

The truth is that reporting can be complex depending on the prevailing circumstances at any point in time. Therefore, it may be difficult to sit here and capture all factors one considers while reporting issues. You need to be in the particular situation in question to be able to decide exactly.

But in general terms, I will say that being professional is the bottom line. I have stated this a while ago that you need to be professional in reporting these groups, in fact, in reporting every group and everything. Once you have done that, every other thing falls into its proper place.

Another important thing is how vocal a group is. More vocal groups are more likely to be heard in the media because the media go to report what you say and do not do the saying for you. Therefore, the group that cries out will more likely attract the attention of the media. Nigeria is a very large country; so if you don't cry out, you will not be heard. This is an important factor that influences coverage of these interest groups.

**Question:     To what extent would you admit that your coverage of ethnic interest groups is influenced by ethnic sentiments of your publisher and other gatekeepers?**

There are interests all over the place and the media cannot be an exception though we are expected to exhibit some unique degree of social responsibility. That is the reason why you might see what looks like ethnic interest reflecting in the way the media report the ethnic groups. For instance, if I were from the South-South, I might be a little biased in reporting issues of the

region. The same thing will apply if I were from any of the other regions. Bias is natural with us human beings.

All over the world, you see this trend with media houses no matter how much they avow that they are objective. There are interests here and there that tend to interfere in the process of news selection and dissemination.

But don't misunderstand me at all. I don't mean to say that the press should just succumb to pressures. No, that will run completely contrary to what ideal journalism should be. Though we shouldn't deny our shortcomings, it behooves us to work persistently to overcome them and get better and better.

**Question:     You did not address the influence of the owner's interest and ideology**

At times, you cannot divorce the interest of the owner from the editorial decisions in a newspaper. For instance, *Vanguard* is owned by a Niger Deltan and you can see that reflecting on the content. Similarly, *The Nation* is the political nerve of the South-West; so anything that concerns them (the South-Westerners) will likely receive attention in the paper. This shows you how the interest of the owner influences content. It is almost inevitable, and this of course will naturally reflect in the way a paper reports ethnic interest groups in the country.

But let me state with all firmness that that newspaper is always expected to be objective notwithstanding what might be the interest or opinion of an individual journalist or the owner of the paper. This is the situation, this is the global standard. However, being humans that we are, we are never perfect, we are always prone to error. That is why you will at times see that the newspapers may not always performed to the highest standard of professionalism. But then, there should be no excuses for failing.

**Question: How would you generally assess the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?**

The newspapers are trying their best. I must commend them for being the champion of democracy and human rights. I wonder where we would have been by now but for the energetic and courageous manner in which the newspapers, in fact the media generally, in Nigeria have taken it upon themselves to represent the diverse interests in the country. This is what our democracy requires. By projecting these groups and their agitations, the media is helping to keep the government on its toes, it is helping to hold back dictatorship and ensure that the government becomes responsive to the yearnings of the citizenry. The ethnic interest groups are not external elements; they are citizens of Nigeria; they are stakeholders; they are a part and parcel of the system. This means that by reporting them they have done so far, our newspapers do deserve a pat on the back. I don't think anybody with understanding of what democracy is will dispute this.

Be that as it may though, one may still advise the newspapers in Nigeria on the ways they may improve their performance in reporting these groups. First, objectivity should be the watchword of journalists. They should strive to as much as possible minimise bias in their reportage. Since they are there to inform the public, they should do that without misinforming them due to unnecessary bias.

Similarly, they should not do armchair journalism. They should critique. You cannot stay in Lagos and say you report the Niger Delta. When I travelled to Oloibiri where oil was first discovered in this country, I was able to witness firsthand the acute development problems of the region. When I travelled deep north, I was able to experience that part of Nigeria and its peculiar challenges. Such firsthand experience places one in a good position to report efficiently and objectively.

## APPENDIX IXG

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (7)

**Name of Interviewee:** Theophilus Abba  
**Designation:** Editor, *Sunday Trust*  
**Mode of Interview:** Online (E-mail)  
**Date:** October 18, 2017  
**Time:** 2.10pm

**Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

The groups dominate the news headlines because they are socio-cultural organizations that tend to canvas the interest of the nations they stand for. Each ethnic community boasts of burgeoning population who cannot all speak to the press at once. These groups are the voices of these millions of Nigerian citizens. Though they are not elected in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, they tend to have the nod of their people who readily defer to them when issues concerning those communities are in national discourse. Also, it is noteworthy that civil society organizations are recognized under the law. Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides amongst other things that: “*Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests.*” The ethnic interest groups are associations in the context of the above section of the constitution. The media, therefore, have to give them mention because they speak in the interest of the public which they represent. Section 22 of the 1999 constitution has empowered the media

as an institution to protect the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy as well as citizen's fundamental human rights. As long as these groups make statements or engage in activities that protect the rights and interests of the citizens they represent, the media should publish or broadcast them as frequently as possible. On this basis, I would say that the media has done the right thing in the way they frequently report these groups. If we ignore them, then we are not helping the society. If what they are doing amounts to mere exercise of their human rights, then the media should act to help them advance these rights.

**Question:     What are factors you put into consideration while deciding what to report about the ethnic interest groups and how to report it?**

The factors we consider when deciding whether or not to publish statements or activities of such interest groups are those related to the newsworthiness of the statements/activities of the group. They include first, public interest; are those statements or activities in the interest of the public or promoting the selfish interest of an individual? If IPOB speaks on behalf of a presumably marginalised Igbo group, it becomes newsworthy, but if it is how to raise money to marry new wives for its leaders, it is not. A media organization may not publish a story with the latter content.

We also consider relevance. If the information/event is not relevant to current socio-political discourse, then it may not enjoy the attention of the media. After all, we are there to serve the public with information that is relevant to their lives and interest at any point in times and not to bother them with irrelevancies.

Another factor to consider is timeliness. If the events or activities of the groups are about events that occurred three months ago, then the media may not be willing to publish the statement or activities. This is because news is about currency, if not, one would be reeling out history in the

name of news. Hence, we must be certain that whatever is coming up regarding these groups is something that still enjoys currency.

Proximity is another factor. To a great extent media houses publish reports about associations that operate in the environment where the media houses have more readership. For instance, Arewa Consultative Forum's activities are given prominence in the *Daily Trust*, perhaps, better than the activities of O'odua People's Congress (OPC). The logic is that ACF activities would have more impact on the northern readers than OPC's activities. Therefore, it is only reasonable and proper that the former gets more attention in a paper that circulates more in the northern part of the country.

There is also the important factor of fairness. If the activities/statements by the groups are acrimonious or promoting ethnic hatred, inciting, or outrightly (sic) libelous, *Daily Trust* may not publish it. If they impugn on the integrity of individuals or ethnic communities, or if they expose *Daily Trust* to legal action, the story may not be published.

We also consider national unity. As a newspaper that values the corporate existence of Nigeria, *Daily Trust* will publish materials that promote national unity, and reject those ones that call for dismemberment of the nation, until there is a counter narrative that would neutralize the call for war, segregation or division.

The foregoing represents what we as a newspaper have in mind when we deal with reports regarding the ethnic interest groups. You know the sphere of ethnic and religious agitations in the country could be quite complex and tricky, so you need to be careful and meticulous in viewing each circumstance to avoid any costly mistakes.

**Question: To what extent does your ethnic background/interest tend to influence the decisions you make in reporting ethnic interest groups?**

As I mentioned earlier, proximity is a crucial factor when editors determine what stories to run. It follows that a statement issued by a civil society organization (CSO) that operates where *Daily Trust* has more readers would most likely be published in the newspaper. However, if the statement promotes ethnic bigotry, violence, hatred and obscenity, *Daily Trust* will not publish it. On many occasions our editors have taken decisions in line with this rule. For instance, we have stopped the publication of interviews granted us by Dr. Junaid Muhammad, because his viewpoints in such interviews were considered to be either divisive, raw, biased, acidic, or promoted hatred. This is in line with our belief in the corporate existence of the nation and peaceful and harmonious existence of its inhabitants, and such divisive comments do not in any way serve this goal.

**Question: To what extent does the ethnic background and interest of the owner of your medium tend to influence the decisions you make in reporting ethnic interest groups?**

*Daily Trust* is essentially a business concern. Therefore, it would be unwise to use the newspaper to promote the ethnic and personal interest of its publishers/directors. However, the newspaper circulates largely in the 19 Northern States, hence we publish viewpoints, interviews, investigative reports, feature stories, analyses, photographs, and other materials that approximate to the interests and perspectives of the large swath of the North. That is what someone who may not understand these dynamics might see as the paper's ethnic or regional bias. But this is far from the real situation.

It must be added that the newspaper has special pullouts that cater for the interest of other ethnic communities. For instance, we publish *EKO Trust* as a pullout in the Lagos Edition of the *Daily*

*Trust*. In Kano, we have the *KANO Chronicles*. As the country is being welded together on a daily basis, no newspaper can afford to be the promoter of the interests of a section by antagonizing the interests of other sections of Nigeria. For instance, *Daily Trust* cannot be seen to canvass for the voting into power a ‘northern candidate’, because the 2019 election will be about Nigeria’s development.

Therefore, while it strives to satisfy the information need of the inhabitants of its strongest area of circulation (northern Nigeria), *Daily Trust* has not lost sight of its social responsibility in excluding anything that could cause division or acrimony. Neither the society nor the paper benefits from anarchy after all.

**Question:     How would you assess the Nigerian newspapers in terms of professionalism in reporting the ethnic interest groups?**

On the face value, it would seem as if Nigerian newspapers engage in ethnic bigotry, promoting one ethnic group and putting down another, but it may not be absolutely in that spirit. What each media organization does is to promote the viewpoints of its main readers, or what may be termed as “catchment” areas.’ Whether they do it very well or not may depend on the disposition and exposure of the individual newspaper editor and even those of publishers. However, it is insensitive for any newspaper to promote ethnic hatred in the name of promoting the interest of a particular ethnic community. Nigeria is not at war, so media houses should not be instruments of ethnic propaganda.

## APPENDIX IXH

### TRANSCRIPT OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (8)

**Name of Interviewee:** Tony Adibe  
**Designation:** Bureau Chief (South-East) *Daily Trust*  
**Location:** *Daily Trust* South-East Bureau Office, Edinburgh Road, Enugu  
**Date:** October 25, 2017  
**Time:** 11.20pm

**Question:** Ethnic interest groups (such as ACF, Ohanaeze, IPOB, Afenifere etc) have continued to dominate news headlines in recent years in Nigeria; in your view, why do you think these groups and their activities deserve to be frequently reported by the media?

These groups are representing some legitimate interests in our country. If so, why shouldn't they be able to claim some space in newspapers? It is an imperative under a democracy such as ours that all political interests are represented. These groups are political in nature, they represent political interests along ethnic lines and this is why they are important and should be taken seriously by any journalist that knows his onion.

Secondly, the activities and statements of these groups are typically sensational; as such every news medium should be interested in them. This is not a matter of choice because news has its features or what is usually referred to as elements of news, and sensation is one of them; news must be about something that is of interest, of consequence to the public. I believe these ethnic interest groups exactly fit these standards considering what they represent, what they fight for and what they usually say. All these, I think, are why they make news every now and then, and I

believe it will remain same so long as we remain a people with strong ethnic consciousness. You know that ethnic consciousness is very very strong in this country.

**Question: Does it then mean that you as a journalist would report just anything about ethnic interest groups as long as it will interest readers even when this may jeopardise common interest?**

Once there is anything that is illegal or immoral or otherwise tends to be injurious to individuals or society as a collective, then it has to shut out. Everything should not be reported. A journalist should always be able to sieve out unwanted information, information that could prove harmful. If a journalist does not do this, he is not worthy to be called a journalist, and of course he will soon land himself in trouble. In essence, my point is that even though we as newsmen are interested in news, news that will sell, it does not in any way excuse anybody from being irresponsible. We are serving the society and as such should not constitute disaster for the same society we purport to serve.

**Question: What other factors do you usually put into consideration in reporting these groups?**

I must consider the readership. My own paper circulates more in the northern state; though I report from the South-East, I must bear in mind that whatever I report must be such that will appeal to the majority of the readers that will see it. This consideration is important in my taking decision as to what to report and how to report it whether the subject has to do with the ethnic interest groups or any other group.

Secondly, I also consider what will interest Nigerians in other parts of the country because we are a national paper and so should be read nationally. This consideration is necessary because it helps you to be broadminded in choosing what to report and how to report it.

Thirdly, I am also influenced by ethical consideration, just as I have stated before. Any journalist that is worth the name should always be conscious of the ethical dimension of his calling as this is paramount.

**Question: To what extent would you admit that your coverage of ethnic interest groups is influenced by ethnic sentiments of your publisher and other gatekeepers?**

This (influence of ethnic sentiment) is often inevitable. Even though we are professionals expected to be objective in our reporting, this is not to be taken to a ridiculous dimension by assuming that a human being in flesh and blood can be totally detached from a reality, particularly a reality that is affecting him. We all are entrapped in the ethnic politics in Nigeria; it is affecting our lives in one way or the other; it is shaping our destiny as a people and even our individual fortune. Therefore, it will be most unrealistic to think that once one is called a journalist, he loses completely these human promptings.

So, in essence, one would not be completely wrong if he says that ethnic sentiments do affect report of ethnic interest groups by newspapers. However, this is not to say that such subjectivity should be encouraged. As I said earlier, journalism is founded on social responsibility and one is not being socially responsible if he does not rise above primitive sentiments to become really broadminded.

**Question: How would you generally assess the Nigerian newspapers' reportage of ethnic interest groups in Nigeria?**

The newspapers have done well largely. I must say that they have been able to give voice to these groups; they have been able to project them, yet without setting the nation on fire. The fact

that they are able to navigate through that very delicate realm of ethnic engagement is quite heroic. They have contributed to deepening of democracy in the country by allowing these agitating interests to be heard; otherwise, only God knows what could have become of our democracy and our nation. Giving voice to dissenting interests is one potent way defusing tension and nurturing understanding and cohesion.

## APPENDIX X

### NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS



Front page of Wednesday, April 26, 2017 issue of *Vanguard* showing the news of release of leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu



Friday, March 26, 2016 issue of *Vanguard* containing a report on MASSOB, an Igbo ethnic interest group



Monday, June 1, 2015 issue of *Vanguard* containing a report on IPLC, an Igbo ethnic interest group



Wednesday, April 13, 2016 issue of *Vanguard* containing a report on INYC, an Itsekiri ethnic interest group



Friday, April 7, 2017 issue of *Vanguard* containing a report on UYAFEJ, an Urhobo ethnic interest group

# News

## FALAE: Yoruba leaders threaten secession

By Ola Ajayi & Henry Umoru

**I**BADAN—FOLLOWING alleged incessant and unprovoked attacks and invasion of their farmlands by some Fulani herdsmen, notable Yoruba leaders held an emergency summit in Ibadan, Oyo State, yesterday threatening to review its status in the Nigerian federation.

The summit was entitled, *National Insecurity and the Menace of Fulani Herdsmen in Yorubaland*.

The meeting, presided over by former Governor of the Western Region, General Adeyinka Adebayo, warned that the Yoruba will no longer tolerate the present structure of the country, which they claim undermine self actualization of the people of the South West.

Reports from the summit said failure to restructure Nigeria using the 2014 confab report might force the Yoruba people to review her place in a political arrangement that cannot guarantee the protection of her citizens. Factional leaders of the Oodua Peoples Congress, (OPC), Dr Fredrick Faseun and Otunba Gani Adams were unanimous in saying that the time to "leave Nigeria" and assert the sovereignty of the Yoruba people is now.

The summit strongly condemned what it described as the "invasion and killing of people in Yoruba territories" by the Fulani herdsmen. The summit held in the House of Chiefs Section of the Parliament Building of the Oyo State Secretariat with the theme "National Insecurity and the Menace of Fulani Herdsmen in Yorubaland." The participants also decried the continued oppression of the Yoruba in their homeland by some Fulani herdsmen.

The summit cite incessant cases of rape, destruction of economic plants that form the bedrock of the livelihood of locals, the armed violence unleashed by the nomads

coupled with the consequent cultural disequilibrium the displacement of people from crisis-ridden Northern Nigeria have brought to communities in Yorubaland.

He added that subsequent governments in Nigeria have come into power waving slogans that end up leaving the country worse than they met it.

They demanded an immediate end to lawless nomadic activities in the South West warning that any community who cannot establish ranches for their flock should retreat from Yoruba territories.

At the event were prominent Yoruba sons and daughters from the academia, politics and the Diaspora. The sponsors of the summit were Yoruba Council of Elders, (YCE), Oodua Foundation,

Afenifere and the Yoruba Unity Forum, (YUF). Some of the participants included the Oyo State Deputy Governor, Otunba Moses Alake Adeyemo, who represented the State Governor, Senator Abiola Ajimobi; Sola Ebiseni, who represented the Ondo State Governor, Olusegun Mimiko, Pa Olanihun Ajayi, Pa Ayo Adebajo, Pa Supo Sonibare, Prof Banji Akintoye, Prof Toun Ogunseye, the first woman Professor in Nigeria.

Others were Dr Fredrick Faseun, Otunba Gani Adams, Dr Kunle Olajide, Chief Shuaib Oyedokun and the former Military governor of Lagos State, Brig-Gen Raji Rasaki among many others.

The Afenifere Renewal Group, ARG and many other Pan-Yoruba groups were however absent at the summit.

**Fani Kayode hails summit**

Meantime, against the backdrop of cases of kidnap and destruction of farms by Fulani herdsmen, former Spokesperson of former President Goodluck Jonathan's Campaign Organisation, Chief Femi Fani-Kayode hailed the Yoruba peoples meeting held in Ibadan, warning that the zone cannot be sacrificial lamb to any other zone of the country.

He also warned that the South West may resort to self help if the government fails to protect them.

In a statement yesterday, the former Minister of Aviation said if and when the people of the South West were pushed to the wall, they would then know exactly what to do, adding that the killings, cases of rape and kidnap must stop.



**SUMMIT:** Participants at the Yoruba Summit with the theme "National Insecurity and the menace of Fulani herdsmen in Yorubaland", organised by the Yoruba Council of Elders YCE, Odu Foundation and Yoruba Unity Forum in Ibadan, yesterday. Photo by Dare Fasube.

## NANS defends award to Kashamu

By Etop Ekanem

**T**HE National Association of Nigeria Students, NANS, has defended the award bestowed on the Senator representing Ogun East Senatorial district,

Senator Buruji Kashamu, saying: "It was for his untiring, exemplary and compassionate leadership style which cannot be taken away from him."

In a statement by its General Secretary, Zone D (South-

West), Comrade Oloja Olanrewaju, NANS said the vast majority of students, workers, politicians and people of Ogun State, even the South-West Nigeria, appreciate his rare philanthropic disposition, noting that it accounts for his being widely accepted by his people and given the mandate to represent them at the Red Chamber of

## Ogun Assembly confirms 18 commissioners, 20 SAs

By Daud Olatunji

**A**BEOKUTA—THE

following the presentation of the report of the Committee of the Whole House by the

Special Advisers"

Consequently, the

## News

# Don't scrap Maritime Varsity, Ijaw youths, others beg Buhari

By Emma Amaeze & Samuel Oyadongha

**YENAGOA**—IJAW youths from the nine states of the Niger Delta have appealed to President Muhammadu Buhari not to accede to the planned scrapping of Maritime University at Okerenkoko, Delta State.

Also, Foundation for Human Rights and Anti-Corruption Crusade, FHRACC, and Committee for Rural Development Movement, have warned that the Federal Government would be encouraging mayhem if it does not rescind the plan to scrap the maritime university.

FHRACC, in a statement by its National President, Alaowei Cleric, said, "The plan by the Federal Government to scrap the Maritime University can provoke violence in the Niger Delta region."

"The university is the only gain from the Federal Government which can be regarded as a compensation to the educationally disadvantaged region. We recall that the Niger Delta region was once a hot bed of militant activities, which almost ran the country's economy aground."

Speaking to reporters at Ayakoromo, Delta State, President of Committee for Rural Development, Asiaye Enaibo, who described the plan to scrap

the university as injustice by President Buhari to the Niger Delta region, said: "The Niger Delta region was sacrifically made calm and peaceful by the late President Umaru Yar'Adua."

On their part, the youths argued that the university will address the age-long marginalisation of the Niger Delta region, develop manpower in the maritime sector and help the Federal Government in its efforts to diversify the country's economy.

The Ijaw youths, in a letter addressed to President Buhari, said they were

disturbed by the proposed cancellation of the university by the Minister of Transportation and former governor of Rivers State, Mr Rotimi Amaechi.

In the letter by the President of Ijaw Youth Council, IYC, Udengs Eradiri, the youths kicked against the reasons adduced by Amaechi for the university's cancellation.

They said that the reasons advanced by Amaechi when he briefed the Senate Committee on Marine, were weak, misleading, highly provocative and inciting.

## NDDC seeks monarchs' support to end insecurity in N-Delta

By Jimitota Onoyume

**PORT HARCOURT**—NIGER Delta Development Commission, NDDC, has expressed worry over the increasing cases of pipeline vandalism and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, saying that it would impact negatively on the revenue accruing to the commission.

Acting Managing Director of the Commission, Mrs Ibim Semenitari, who spoke weekend, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, at a consultative meeting with the executives of Traditional Rulers of Oil Mineral Producing Communities, TROMPCON, appealed

for the support of the monarchs to redress the challenges.

She enjoined the traditional rulers to urgently sensitize their subjects against oil theft, vandalism and acts that heighten insecurity in the region.

"This has become even more critical in view of the dwindling oil revenue and serious economic challenges we face today as a nation. We must protect our pipelines and infrastructure," she said.

Assuring the monarchs of support of the commission to achieve their set out objectives as a body, Semenitari said that the commission was better poised to deliver dividends to the region.

## Thai investors arrive C-River to commence \$4m Rice City project

**THE** management team of Thai-African Corporation Limited, a leading rice producer in Thailand, has arrived Calabar, Cross River State, for the commencement of the development of a Rice City in the state.

The project is estimated to cost over \$4 million.

Sited along Goodluck Ebele Jonathan Bypass,

and other African countries," Dhanagom said.

On the choice of the project site, the MD said: "The land is suitable and is also the best location because it is on the highway and similar to the

one Governor Ben Ayade inspected in Thailand."

Commenting on the development, Cross River State Governor, Prof. Ben Ayade said the initiative was to complement Federal Government's efforts on agriculture.



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## VACANCY FOR THE POST OF PROVOST INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVERTISING

APPLICATIONS are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of Provost, College of Education, Agbor, Delta State.

### 1. DUTIES:

The Provost as Chief Academic Officer and Chief of the College shall be responsible to Council for the day-to-day of the College, provide academic and professional execution of policy guidelines laid down by Council, as well as cater for the welfare and interest of the staff of the College and perform such other functions as may be assigned to him by the Edict establishing the College or the Council.

### 2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Candidates should be persons of academic eminence with qualifications and experience stated below:

- Not below the rank of Reader of at least five (5) years in the College of Education system with at least seven years teaching experience,
- Should possess at least a Doctorate Degree relevant to any of the programmes in the College,
- Should possess a professional qualification in Education,
- Should be Computer literate,
- Show evidence of academic leadership and scholarly way of acclaimed research and publication.

### 3. SALARY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE:

- The Provost shall be on a consolidated salary scale.
- The Provost shall be appointed for a term of five (5) years.
- Other conditions are as applicable to Provosts in the College of Education in Nigeria.

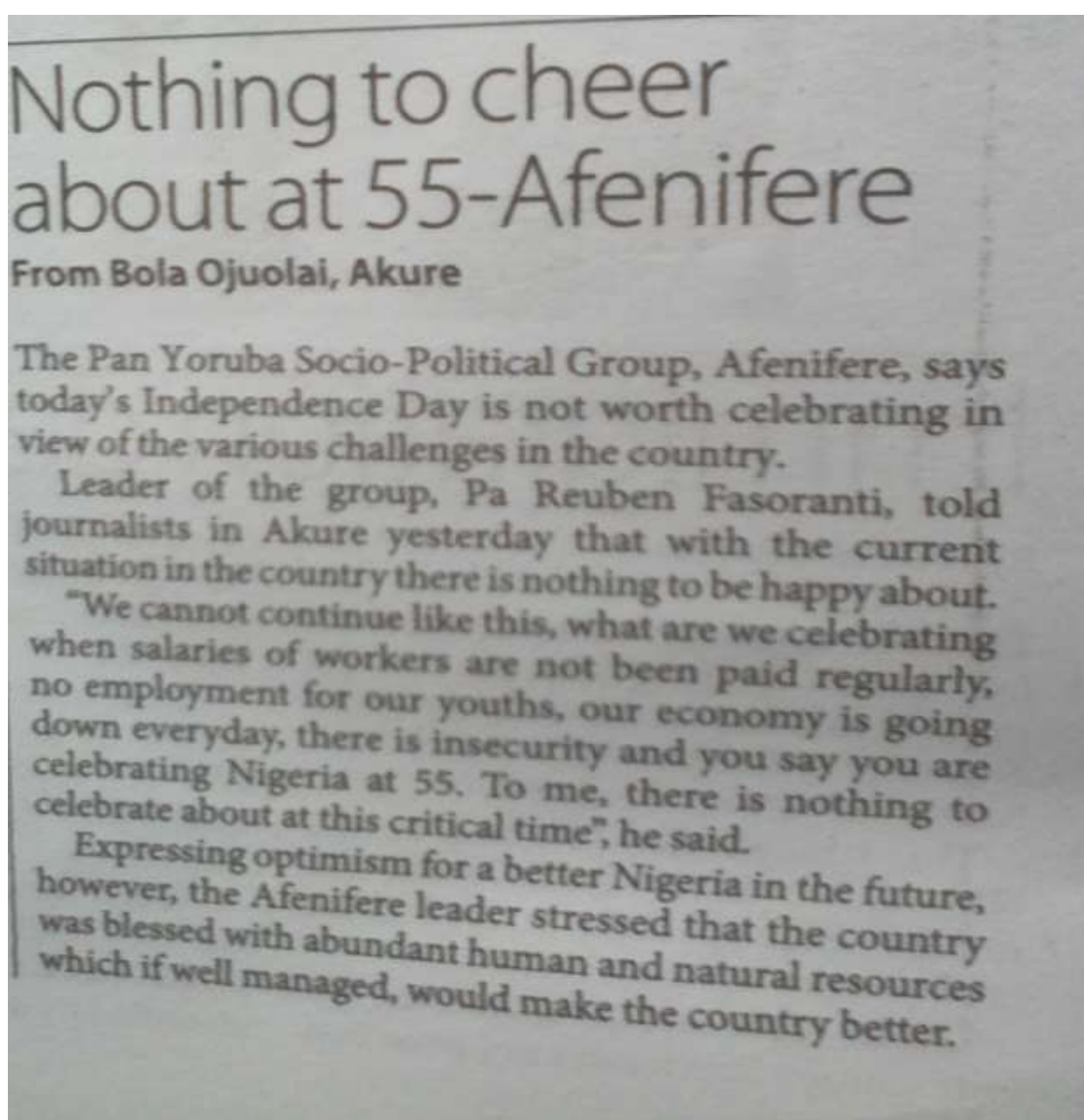
### 4. METHOD OF APPLICATION:

- Applicants should submit twenty (20) copies of Curriculum Vitae with photocopies of Curriculum Vitae Educational/Professional Credentials attached.
- The Curriculum Vitae should include information:
  - Name of applicant in full, surname first;
  - Post Desired;
  - Date and Place of birth;
  - Permanent Home Address;
  - Current Postal Address;
  - Marital Status;
  - Number and ages of Children (if any);
  - Educational Institutions attended with dates;
  - Academic/Professional qualifications and locations;
  - Name(s) and Addresses of previous Employers;
  - Name(s) and Addresses of present Employer with date and salary;
  - Research Journals/Book Publications;
  - Administrative experiences;
  - Academic distinctions/Special awards (if any);
  - Administrative exposure/knowledge and background;
  - Extra Curricular Activities;
  - Names and addresses of three (3) referees (referees should be in a position to give Academic/Professional reference).

Applicants should request for the application form from the Registrar.



Thursday, May 4, 2017 issue of *Daily Trust* containing a report on Council of Obas, a Yoruba ethnic interest group



Thursday, October 1, 2015 issue of *Daily Trust* containing a report on *Afenifere*, a Yoruba ethnic interest group

score the lawful majority

## No herdsman would kidnap Falae- Fulani group

From Abdullateef Aliyu, Lagos

A Fulani leader in the South-West yesterday said no Fulani man would kidnap former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Olu Falae. The statement followed allegation that Fulani herdsmen were responsible for his abduction.

President of Jamu Nati Fulbe Association, a Fulani socio-cultural group in the South-west, Alhaji Salihu Kadir, said no Fulani herder preoccupied with feeding and nourishing his herds of cows and sheep would think of kidnapping anyone, not to talk of an elder statesman like Falae.

He also flayed suggestion in some quarters for a ban on grazing in the south-west, saying such call would amount to denying herdsmen their means of survival. This, he stressed, would equally hurt the economy of that part of the country.

In an interview with Daily Trust, the Fulani leader reiterated call for the establishment of grazing reserves for herdsmen to prevent the recurring clash between farmers and herdsmen.

It would be recalled that Falae was last week Tuesday abducted in his farm in Akure, Ondo State and spent three days in the kidnappers' den before regaining freedom.

There have been insinuations that Fulani herdsmen were responsible for the abduction with some indigenes of the south-west calling for cancellation of grazing in the region.

However, the Serikin Fulani deplored what he called the unending blackmail of the Fulani herdsmen, noting that every crime committed is linked with herdsmen.

## Police didn't kill MASSOB, IPOB members - IGP

By Donald Mufum

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Solomon Arase has denied allegations that police men shot and killed pro-Biafra protesters in some south eastern part of the country.

A statement yesterday by police spokesperson, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Olabisi Kolawole described as untrue several false posts on Facebook and other social media, accusing Police of shooting, maiming and even killing members of the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

She noted that the group has taken their protests to the streets, markets and other public places in some eastern states, infringing on the rights and freedom of innocent citizens who were ordinarily going about their lawful businesses.

"Despite provocation, the Police have maintained and managed the situation with high sense of responsibility and professionalism," Kolawole explained.

She added the IGP is conscious of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association amongst others as enshrined in Chapter Four of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended), and cannot afford to maim or kill citizens exercising these rights.

Kolawole said the IGP called on all law-abiding citizens to disregard the allegations by the groups, describing them as false and calculated attempt to attract undue attention and sympathy.

"The IGP called on the leadership of Ohanaeze to wade into these superfluous protests to save the law-abiding and innocent citizens in the affected states from the hardship being

Monday, February 29, 2016 issue of *Daily Trust* containing a report on Miyetti-Allah, a Fulani ethnic interest group.

Monday, May 2, 2016 issue of *Daily Trust* containing a report on MASSOB, an Igbo ethnic interest group.

# Attacks: ACF doubts villains are Fulani

From Andrew Agbese, Kaduna

The Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) has expressed doubts over the identity of those behind attacks in several communities in Nigeria, saying it has reasons to believe they are not Fulani.

The forum, which condemned the recent attack by suspected herdsmen on the Ukpabi Nimbo Community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State, said there was need to investigate the claims that those behind the attacks are Fulani to avoid unnecessary stigmatization.

ACF national publicity secretary, Muhammad Ibrahim, said in a statement that Fulani nomads have coexisted peacefully with their host communities and

have been grazing their cattle for decades all over Nigeria without any such attacks.

The ACF urged security agencies to do a thorough investigation into the identities of the suspected gunmen in order to stop this dangerous generalization of labelling certain tribe or people of certain faith responsible for these attacks.

It commended President Muhammadu Buhari for directing the Chief of Defence Staff to stop the attacks and the Inspector General of Police to secure the affected communities under attacks, and extended its condolences to the government and people of Enugu State over the attack on the people of Ukpabi Nimbo Community.

Friday, April 29, 2016 issue of *Daily Trust* containing a report on ACF, an Hausa-Fulani ethnic interest group.

# IPOB laments illegal detention of members

By Dennis Agbo

**E**NUGU— THE Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, has condemned the incessant harassment, arrest and illegal detention of its members in different prisons and secret cells across the country.

IPOB Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, noted particularly an alleged illegal detention of one of its members, Bright Chimezie Ishinwa, in a DSS secret cell.

Powerful said IPOB was also worried about their members languishing in Port Harcourt prisons and the state CID headquarters.

Powerful said: "Nevertheless, we expect the Nigerian government and her security agencies to do the needful, either to release them on bail or charge them to court without further delay, if they are still alive in their custody.

"The Federal High court sitting in Abuja on February 6, 2017 declared IPOB as a legal

organization but the Nigerian Police and other security agencies, who do not know the law are, busy breaking the law by targetting peaceful members of IPOB."

He alleged that on April 15, 2017, a top officer of a police station, ordered the kidnap of IPOB members who were doing evangelism for the restoration of the ancient nation of Biafra in Umuebulu 1 Etche in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

"When the peaceful evangelism of IPOB family members were held on April 2, 2017, there was no

arrest or kidnap until April 15, 2017 when the officer ordered the kidnap of the IPOB members in the community.

"We, therefore, call on the international community, the European Union EU, African Union AU, all the relevant human rights organizations, men and women of good conscience around the globe to prevail upon the Nigeria government and her security agencies to stop harassing and intimidating IPOB members and release those who have been detained illegally in different prisons and secret cells across the country."

## Register to vote out political mis

By Chimaobi  
Nwaiwu

**N**EWI—ELIGIBLE adults in Anambra State have been urged to register with the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, in order to vote in their preferred candidate in the forthcom-

ing November 18, 2017 Anambra governorship election.

National Treasurer of All Progressives Congress, APC, and governorship aspirant, in the forthcoming governorship election in the state, Chief George Moghalu, made the call while addressing

Amnesty  
Office cancels  
double pay for  
ex-militants

PAGE 4

Nigeria's widest circulating newspaper

- EFCC halts appeal against Patience Jonathan P7
- Tears as Rivers demolishes structures at market P47
- Germany likely to play friendly with Nigeria P47
- CBN: Nigeria will exit recession in third quarter P11



THE NATION

VOL. 11, NO. 3929 WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2017

TRUTH IN DEFENCE OF FREEDOM

N200.00

• NSIDE: SUSPECTS' ABSENCE STALLS HEARING IN EX-MILITANT'S MURDER P6

# Alleged treason: Kanu's parents reject bail terms

- Family insists on freedom
- Aba agog over court ruling

From Eric Nwaku, Abuja

SEPARATE Nnamdi Kanu got a temporary reprieve yesterday. A Federal High Court in Abuja granted him a N100million bail on health grounds.

But his parents complained that the conditions were harsh and meant to keep him in detention.

Justice Nwako, in a ruling, noted that the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPB) leader had consistently exhibited traits of ill-health in court. He was directed to produce three sureties.

But the trio of Chidera Okeke, Benjamin Madubugwu and David Nwawu, who are standing trial with Kanu, were not that hasty. The judge rejected their bail.

Justice Nwako said, "I have not seen any new argument to warrant my reviewing my earlier decision. However, as it relates to the 1st defendant, the applicant has deposed extensively on his health and appeals to the court on health grounds to allow bail on any condition."

"Overtime that the 1st defendant has appeared in court, the 1st defendant may be having some health issues as he always sits down and sweats profusely."

"I am of the opinion that the 1st defendant needs better health attention than the Prison Service is able to provide."

"Pursuant to this, the bail of the 2nd to 4th defendants, is hereby refused. I hereby use my discretion and grant the 1st defendant bail on the following conditions:

• He shall undertake before the court and depose to an affidavit that he shall attend his trial diligently and shall provide three sureties."

Continued on page 2



• Kanu (left) and supporters at the Federal High Court Abuja, yesterday

PHOTO: ARAYONG JAYE

## SOME OF THE BAIL CONDITIONS

- He shall depose to an affidavit that he shall attend his trial diligently
- Three sureties in the sum of N100m each. One of them must be a highly placed Igbo person, such as a senator; a person highly respected and recognised religious leader in Nigeria of the defendant's belief. A highly respected Jewish leader. The third surety must be resident in Abuja, highly respected, with landed property and CofO verified
- He shall deposit all his international passports with the court.



## Buhari's govt harassing my family, says Jonathan

PAGE 8

- Ex-president criticises anti-graft war ■ 'Mua'zu, Jega disappointed me'

• RETIREES PROTEST 42 MONTHS UNPAID PENSION P6 POLICE ARREST 11 KIDNAP SUSPECTS P6

Wednesday, April 26, 2017 issue of *The Nation* containing a report on IPOB, an Igbo ethnic interest group.



# THE NATION

## POLITICS

Yoruba leaders gathered in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, recently to mark the 130th anniversary of the end of Kiriji War. One of the objectives of the event was to use lessons of the war to identify the pathway to greatness for the ethnic nationality in the new century. **BISI OLADELE** covered the conference.

## Yoruba leaders chart pathway to greatness

**I**t was a mix of the old, the young and the not-so-young. Generations of Yoruba leaders, though it was a time to exchange views and revive kind memories, gathered at the International Conference of the University of Lagos yesterday Friday took enough time to examine the destiny of the younger generations in the contemporary world.

They were deep into the past to discuss what used to make the ethnic group good, including their culture, language, science, technology, art, war, trade, commerce, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Major towns and communities had reached an accord to end the civil war, the longest civil war among a nationality on September 19, 1916. The treaty was signed at Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, to bring unity and peace among the Yoruba.

Many of the participants perhaps had the remote part of Yoruba history for the first time, as a leading historian, Prof. Bisi Akintoye, gave a vivid and verifiable account of how Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, was established from the old town.

The argument, the *Akintoye Report* (AR) and the Yoruba leaders, also ensured that attention was placed on how current generation of young Yoruba is disconnected from the culture and values of how such problems can be resolved.

Perhaps the greatest surprise was to focus on the weakness of the Yoruba as handed over from one generation to another. The conference unanimously affirmed the worldview, limited aspect of it on the grounds that it is not to life beyond the cocoon of Yoruba land, a situation they said, made it difficult for recent generations to be active players in a globalised world.

During the time for the discourse on the life and times of the Oyo Empire, the Kiriji War and how a deal was reached to end it on September 23, 1916, Akintoye spoke glowingly about military, the commercial and cultural strength of the Yoruba at the time, the concurrent rise of the Hausa and Fulani and how they made their way into the land, through the spread of land, slavery, activities.

Her description of how the Oyo Empire was killed and dismantled by the British war team and historians ended by saying that the Yoruba warriors made a great mistake in not preventing the colonialists from invading their land.

Adding to her, as at the time the colonialists signed the treaty to end the Kiriji War, she said the Yoruba warriors were wearing the same ethnicity. Akintoye revealed that some away 430,000 foot fighting on behalf of all the Yoruba towns.

She said that the colonialists have been unable to penetrate land, if they had come to fight them as one bloc, together, Akintoye advised



• Olanuga



• Othman



• Adegboye



• Olatunji



• Famakinwa



• Odeh

Yoruba political leaders, traditional rulers and other leading lights in business, academic, to begin to think, work and execute together for the Yoruba to take their rightful place in the world in coming years.

Yet, the second lecturer, Prof. Olatunji Adegboye, gave a more thought-provoking challenge in his paper entitled: *The Yoruba Today*.

In the paper, Olatunji, a professor of History at the University of Ibadan, highlighted the plight of today's Yoruba who are fully disconnected from the values of the ethnic group due to the inability of the society to meet their expectations.

Except today's leaders are able to reorganise the Nigerian society in ways that can meet the youth's rising expectations, Adegboye contended that the Yoruba values and greatness, which are a source of pride, will remain worthless to the younger generations.

Emphasising that today's society is radically different from the way Yoruba ancestors conceived it centuries ago, Adegboye called for recognition, understanding and negotiation of this orientation of the younger Yoruba as a way to make progress.

He said: "What does it mean to be Yoruba today? This power takes us towards a more self-conscious identity as a people. This becomes even more important when we realise that our society today is radically different from the way our ancestors conceived it several hundred years ago. The move towards a self-consciously defined identity in the contemporary period has been affected by a variety of historical developments. These include, but are by no means restricted to the following:

lowing: our political circumstances; the power equation and the National Question in Nigeria; our economic situation; our consumption patterns; and our rising expectations. The questions we face are therefore legion and they have as much to do with where we are coming from as much as where we are headed as a people.

To understand this, we must look at where we are today. It is a general belief among the young people that to be a true Yoruba man or woman in the real sense of the word is now anathema. It is a heritage that should only be venerated and exalted in artistic or cultural productions. The emergence of a new generation of Yoruba men and women, and boys and girls who have tried to quote their own understanding of the self, far away from the traditions of the Yoruba people is therefore a reality to be recognised, understood and negotiated.

The historian insisted that through the creation of the modern society, there is inter-generational tension, adding that Yoruba have lost their position to education and their cultural values.

To move forward, Adegboye called for the "Yoruba Grand Strategy," adding: "We have to be realistic about the dynamics of the world we live in. We now need to be more creative in times of adversity. The period of adjustment should be the incubator of ideas. The great leap forward can be achieved with both a Marshall Plan and ideas. For instance, we need to make our agriculture productive and profitable in the shortest possible time."

In her contribution, Bantidele

Olatunji stirred up the participants when she challenged the Yoruba to begin to embrace innovations, by adding values to their cultural items and ways of doing things, so that they can become global products.

Olatunji faulted the worldview of Yoruba ancestors, saying it localised the concept of traditional knowledge, because it failed to see the coming of a modern and later, globalised world. For this reason, she and the Yoruba are not able to function in the globalised world as a major player.

She said: "Our forefathers were handicapped. Their conceptual knowledge framework of traditional knowledge was localised. This localisation of knowledge did not prepare them for what was to come. They were unable to foresee a new political destiny, an economic destiny, a new socio-cultural destiny that would shape them for the next 200 years."

To overcome the challenge, she said: "We have lost almost two generations to mis-education. They are lost! We can embark on a salvage mission, but the best effort of the current youth demographic can only produce semi-skilled labour. If we must exist as a competitive ethnic-nationality in the next 100 years, we must start planning for a child that will be conceived tonight. We must teach them that our culture, language and values can co-exist with openness and competitiveness."

"Yoruba of the future can only exist if we see our ethnic-cultural and ethnic-national identity that is shaping how we live and will be living in the next 200 years in perspective. We must understand that the innovation of hypermodernity projects

and reshapes the culture and values of their countries. With all the hypermodernity of Globalisation, has anyone referred to the Gull state in the West? Dubai is about Arabian ethno-nationality.

"If you have any medium of thought about how innovation defines the culture of its creators, take a look at Twitter. Twitter epitomises the practicality of the American. It is the best reference in the American drive through culture. It is the philosophy of 'do your own thing or die'. Twitter sucks you into the adoption of the cultural habits of American ethno-nationalism. What is the Yoruba take? Yorubaland is the emerging hub of technological innovation in Nigeria, how are we embracing it? A Yoruba man owns a smartphone, what can we identify as Yoruba in the ontology of a smartphone? What Yoruba philosophy drives it?"

"My people, innovation is not neutral! It creates culture and its associations. Innovation is a distinctive purveyor of ethno-nationalism. While we disdain our culture and cultural products, globalisation has continued to take Western colonisation. The spread of global cultural products, popular culture, and the diffusion of knowledge and ideas is predominantly Western. While we face the crisis of legitimisation, many of our cultural traditions and products are undergoing the globalising influence of innovative packaging and new markets where they are commodified and marketed as ethnic or 'organic' with a premium price tag."

"If we get our act together, educate our children to global standards, we could create a Yoruba regional miracle within the context with a rapidly growing workforce. Our fathers say the war does not affect the whole people, thus we prepare for the coming population boom in the single most important long-term challenge we face. We have to reform the use of land."

Earlier, ARS Chairman, Hon. Chawale Odun, while welcoming participants, said the event was to celebrate the end of Kiriji war, as well as to allow Yoruba discuss how the lessons of the war can help them maximise opportunities of the next century.

He added that the programme was also aimed at fostering unity among all political leaders, traditional rulers and other leaders in Yoruba land.

At the event were Oyo and Ogun State governors, Abiodun Ajakaiye and Babafemi Amosun respectively. While Amosun was represented by the Secretary to the State Government (SG), Mr. Olatunji Al. Amosun was represented by his deputy, Chief Mrs. Yemiade Olanuga.

The Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly, Hon. Madhuchin Othman, many members of the Oyo State House of Assembly, traditional rulers, Chief, Surjo Olatunji, Prof. David Nsoke, Mr. Ayo Adesola, Mr. Dande Kufun, Dr. Kufun Olatunji, Prof. Wale Chukwura and the Oyo State Council of the Oyo State Government, Agbada for Western Nigeria (OANW), Oyo State, Mr. Olatunji Famakinwa, were in attendance.

**'If we get our act together, educate our children to global standards, we could create a Yoruba regional miracle within the continent with a rapidly growing workforce'**

Monday, October 17, 2016 issue of *The Nation* containing a report on Yoruba ethnic interest groups.

## IYC seeks arrest, prosecution of impersonators

**T**HE Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) Worldwide yesterday asked the police to arrest and prosecute persons impersonating officials of the council.

It said it was worried over the activities of Elvis Donkemezu, whom it accused of impersonating the office of the President of the council, Mr. Udensi Eradiri.

The council said Donkemezu allegedly produced business cards and letterheads of the IYC president, among other insignia of the president's office.

It said Donkemezu went about with misguided youths to deceive the public.

Eradiri alleged that Donkemezu visited oil companies in the Niger Delta, claiming to be the IYC president and seeking economic empowerment.

He said although Donkemezu is an Ijaw, he is not a member of the IYC, as he does

From Mike Odiegwu,  
Yorubos

not pay dues.

"The truth is that this young man goes about claiming to be IYC president. He presents himself to oil companies that he is the leader of the IYC to gain favour.

"The public must note that this man is an impostor. He has business cards and letterheads and sends them to companies, especially Agip, NNPC and Shell. He goes everywhere, claiming that he is the IYC president."

Eradiri said the objectives of the group did not include using it as a platform to harass oil companies. "It is to ensure peace."

He said since he defeated Donkemezu and other contenders to emerge president two years ago, he (Donkemezu) had engaged in untoward activities, including blocking of roads and causing a breach

of the peace.

Eradiri said: "His activities are a violation of a judgment, which says my tenure will expire on March 1 next year.

"I advise that the law should deal with them. I have written to the Inspector-General of Police. I have written to the Director-General, Department of State Services and the Police Commissioner.

"I have followed the procedure of maintaining law and order. I even have a court order. What they are doing is a violation of a court process, which they are part of and they know."

He said he suspected that Donkemezu and his cohorts were encouraged by political interests to destabilise IYC.

"They are doing it deliberately, probably because of political interests. There are political dimensions to the issue," Eradiri added.

But Donkemezu asked Eradiri to seek legal redress if

he felt his office was being impersonated.

He said Eradiri was removed by the council on allegations of financial misdeeds and other offences despite the court judgment, which stipulated that his tenure would end next year.

Donkemezu said he had approached a court to seek an interim injunction stopping Eradiri from parading himself as the IYC president.

He claimed that he grudgingly accepted to be the president after a congress allegedly ratified the suspension of Eradiri.

According to him, eight of the 10 executive members were against Eradiri, but supported his leadership.

Eradiri maintained that his purported suspension did not follow due process stipulated in the IYC constitution.

The IYC parliament rose in defence of Eradiri, saying he remained the president.

Friday, May 12, 2017 issue of *The Nation* containing a report on IYC, an Ijaw ethnic interest group.

THE NATION MONDAY, JULY 4, 2016

NEWS

## Avengers destroys five oil facilities in Delta

**T**HE militant group, Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), at the weekend said it launched five attacks on the nation's oil and gas facilities in the Warri creeks in the last three days.

NDA, in a series of tweets, claimed to have attacked critical facilities in three locations in Warri Southwest Local Government Area of Delta State.

But the claim has not been independently confirmed.

Efforts to get security and industry confirmations on the alleged attacks did not yield results, although community sources confirmed the attacks.

In its tweet, NDA claimed to have destroyed a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) crude pipeline in an unidentified location on Friday night; two major crude oil trunk lines belonging to

From Bolaji Ogundele, Warri

the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), near Batan, on Saturday night and two major oil wells belonging to Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) near Abiteye, on Sunday morning.

It said: "At 9:15 p.m. on Friday, the @NDAvengers blew up Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) crude oil trunk line to Warri Refinery.

"At 11:26 p.m. on Saturday, @NDAvengers blew up two NPDC major crude trunk lines close to Batan flow station in Delta State.

"At 1:15 a.m. on Sunday, @NDAvengers blew up two major Chevron oil wells - Well 7 and Well 8, close to Abiteye flow station in Delta State.

"All five operations were carried out by @ndavengers strike team. Well done, soldiers."

Confirming the attacks, a community leader at Koko-diabene in Warri Southwest Local Government Area, who is also an environmental activist, Comrade Sheriff Mulade, said he had confirmed the attacks from community sources.

The activist said the location of the NNPC trunk line attack had not been confirmed.

Mulade said: "The one that happened yesterday (Saturday) was at Dibi flow station; that's not exactly Abiteye, but behind it. It affects the Chevron Dibi flow station and the NNPC trunk line to the Warri Refinery. We have confirmed the one at Dibi, but we are yet to confirm the one at the trunk line. That's the confirmation we are waiting for.

"We have not been able to confirm the attack on the NNPC trunk line to Warri Refinery, but it is around the Batan Chanomi Creek axis. We are yet to know the exact area."

Also, a police report, which our reporter accessed in Warri last night, confirmed the twin attacks on the Chevron Oil Wells 7 and 8 at Abiteye.

It reads: "At about 0110 hours (1.10 a.m) and 0115 hours (1.15 a.m), Chevron Oil Wells 7 and 8 were blown up at Abiteye flow station, Chevron's Chief Security Officer (CSO), who was on ground at the location, claimed that the twin explosions occurred at about 5 minutes intervals. The bombed oil wells are a little distant from the Abiteye flow station. Chevron has reported a drop in pressure from the crude oil pipeline at Abiteye."

Monday, July 4, 2016 issue of *The Nation* containing a report on NDA, an Ijaw ethnic interest group.

## MOSOP, civil societies insist on end to oil exploration in Ogoni

From TONY JOHN, Port Harcourt

**SOME** Ogoni people, in collaboration with some civil society groups recently gathered at the Ken Saro-Wiwa Centre in Bori, Khana Local Government Area, the traditional headquarters of Ogoni people, to re-echo their insistence on end to oil exploration in the area.

Though Federal Government has flagged off the clean-up of oil-polluted Ogoniland, as recommended by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report, the natives and environmental activists said what they need was "action and not much talk."

That was why, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), Ogoni Solidarity Forum (OSF) and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), as well as the natives, staged a peaceful protest in Bori, to reiterate their position that Federal Government must stop further oil exploration in Ogoniland.

The groups berated the federal and Rivers State governments for not doing enough to tackle the insurgence of soot, which has threatened the health of the people living in Port Harcourt and its environs.

The protesters expressed disgust at the untold hard times faced by the residents whose lives span had been seriously threatened and shortened by environmental emission.

The groups noted that oil exploration in the region, especially in Ogoni, has done more harm than good, pointing out that the recent presence of black, powdery substances was one of the harmful effects of oil exploration in the region.

Some of the inscriptions on their placards included: "Oil is wicked", "Fossil oil destroys our planet",

"With oil, the future is dark", "A world without pollution", "Ogonis say no to fossil fuel", "Oil should remain in the ground", "Our water, air and environment, all polluted", "We thought it was oil, but we saw blood" and "A world without fossil fuel? Yes, we can," among others.

MOSOP President, Chief Legbori Pyagbara, said both the federal and state governments must find a lasting solution to the issue of soot in Rivers and other states in the region.

Pyagbara said what was happening to residents of Port Harcourt was one of the reasons Ogoni must join other voices around the world, to oppose to further exploration of oil in Ogoniland and other part of Niger Delta.

"I'm happy that we have gathered here to continue the struggle for the common good of our people. I believe it is better to leave the oil on the ground because oil has done more harm to us. Today, in Port Harcourt, people are dying on daily basis over the appearance of soot."

"As we are talk, even in Delta State, the people are experiencing the same thing. We want the federal and state governments to take drastic action. What we are facing now is not an issue to be treated with lips service. What Ogoni people are facing today is enough message that it is better to leave the oil on the ground."

He explained that Ogoni people did not need any report before they would notice that their land had been destroyed by oil exploration and exploitation. He said Ogoni people had won the fight against oil exploration by making their impact known globally, that oil had brought more woes than blessings.

"We have won the fight because when we started the struggle in the 1990s, we were the first to raise the alarm on the environmental pollution. We were the first to bring the attention of the world to the dangers of environmental pollution."

lution.

"The joy of it all is that, later, many people have come to believe with us that pollution has been a problem. We gathered here today to remind ourselves of the impact of environmental degradation. Ogoni has been a central key in this environmental degradation."

"We should leave the oil in the ground and think of other things. Ogoni is a living example of what fossil oil extraction can cause. We join the world to say enough is enough for fossil oil extraction."

"Up till this moment, we have not seen a responsive attention, either from the state or federal government, regarding the soot. MOSOP demands immediate investigation into it. State and federal government should rise to address the soot problem because of what people are passing through. What we are facing in Rivers state should be treated the way Ebola was treated. Efforts should be made to restore the air in Rivers State and Niger Delta," Pyagbara charged.

Also, the Director of HOMEF, Nnuno Bassey said Ogoni was a significant location in the struggle to end oil exploration in Nigeria, particularly in the region.

He said refusal to break away from fossil fuel was a call for the continuous pollution of air, land and creek, stressing that inability to break away from fossil oil was an unacceptable call for unchecked climate change.

He argued that oil has not made the people live a healthy life, instead, it has made Nigerians poorer than they should have been. According to him, Ogoni has shown the world that oil could be kept in the ground.

"Even the late Ogoni environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa declared that silence is treason. We are here to tell the world that refusal to break away from fossil fuel sentences Nigeria to a corrupt political arrangement that breeds corruption, violence and conflict."