



UNIVERSITY OF  
STIRLING

Media Representation and Democracy in Africa:  
**‘Why there are no skyscrapers in Nigeria’**

-A critical analysis of UK news media’s representation of Nigeria’s democracy, 1997  
- 2007

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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the representation of Nigeria in the British news media. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, it examines the interplay of culture, race, ideology and geo-political power relations in the production of news. It interrogates the influence of sources, the impact of sources-media relations and their direct consequences on the construction as news of Nigeria's socio-economic and human development indices, which further signpost the direction of representation of the world's most populous black nation. By considering the coverage of Nigeria in the UK news media between 1997 and 2007, a period which marked a watershed in the democratic evolution of Nigeria, this thesis contributes to the on-going debates regarding cultural understanding in a globalized community.

First, the research is based on a content analysis of the coverage of Nigeria in five UK quality newspapers at a period marking the end of the political logjam that engulfed the country following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections; the return to democratic rule and the early years of democracy, which witnessed the successful transfer of power from one civilian administration to another for the first time in Nigeria's history. Second, a critical discourse analysis of a sample of the coverage of the most mentioned issues in the reportage, and third, on a small set of interviews with some of the journalists involved in the coverage. As a framework for its analysis, this thesis focuses on the theories of cultural politics, representation and news discourse.

It finds that the coverage of Nigeria does not just follow the pattern of a distant and differentiated 'Other,' but is also significantly influenced by pre-colonial cum colonial

history and geo-political power relations. Though news media outlets and individual journalists do try, within their own powers, to make a difference but the fact that the myths supporting these assumptions have been institutionalised over time presents a huge challenge. The issues in the coverage are discursively constructed from western point of view with greater access to shape the news clearly domiciled in the pouch of European or western sources rather than the Nigerians who should have a better appreciation of their local circumstance. This kind of coverage informs the idea of applying western solution to Africa's problem, which further compounds the crisis. The fact that this manifest pattern of representation obfuscates the real issue behind Africa's situation and presents imminent dangers to our common humanity are the core concerns contextualized within the thesis. It is negotiated with references to relevant dimensions of culture, politics, news discourse and interpreted in the light of geo-political power relations.

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# **Dedication**

To those who suffered imprisonment.

To those who lost their lives.

To those involved in the struggle to restore democracy.

To God, be the glory.

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## **Author's declaration**

This thesis represents the original work of Patrick Oluwaniran Malaolu unless explicitly stated in the text. The research upon which it is based was carried out at the University of Stirling, under the supervision of Dr. Jairo Lugo, Dr. Graham Meikle and Dr. Richard Haynes, during the period October 2008 and December 2011. Parts of this work have been accepted for publication in a different form in:

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## Preface

*“[Stereotypes] ... are an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves...In that world people and things have their well-known places, and do certain expected things.”*  
*(Walter Lippmann 1922:95)*

*“No story can be told, no account of events given, without contextualisation around a set of assumptions, beliefs and values”.*  
*(Brian McNair 1998:5)*

There were five passport-sized colour photographs. They stared down at the seminar participants from the overhanging large multimedia screen. Magnified by the multimedia Canon projector, the images of three men and two women in the photographs looked big, bold and captivating. And that made their stares more intense. Aly Colon<sup>1</sup>, a senior official of the Poynter Institute, who was conducting the seminar, then asked participants, made up of professional journalists drawn from different cultures across the globe, to write their impressions of the faces in the photographs. In the manner of journalists well accustomed to police’s “wanted - dead or alive - posters,” the participants quickly wrote their impressions of the staring images.

Colon asked that the impressions be read as written. It turned out that every participant wrote very damning and unprintable depictions of the people in the photographs. While the seminar room was still filled with throaty laughter about their damning representation, Colon walked to the large screen. Pointing at the photographs one after another, he identified his father, his mother, his sister, and his brothers.

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<sup>1</sup>Aly Colon, Ethics Group & Diversity Program Director of the Poynter Institute, is a Latin-American. He conducted the experiment at the seminar: ‘Values & Ethics in the News – Reporting on the intersection of Morality and Current Events, April 25-30, 2004

Suddenly, a thick silence enveloped the room. After a moment, the silence gave way to a heartfelt expression of apology. Then, Colon said very calmly: “You don’t need to be sorry. Just know that when you write, you’re writing about someone’s father, mother, uncle, cousin, brother and sister...” He paused a little and then added: “Errors of **representation** like these can always be avoided if journalists could **test their assumptions**.”

To grasp the key lesson from Colon’s experiment, it is pertinent to ponder on why a group of journalists from different parts of the world, different cultures and different social backgrounds would provide identical descriptions of the faces in the pictures. Faces they never met before. Several scholars and researchers have adduced many reasons for this phenomenon. One is the fact that journalists are accustomed to certain routines as part of journalistic culture. Ericson et al. (1987) render these routines comprehensible with the concept called “vocabulary of precedents.” Ericson and his colleagues explain the concept thus: “The ongoing articulation of precedent in the working culture of journalists provides them with recognition knowledge (that this is a story of a particular type)...and accounting knowledge (how to frame and formulate the story...)” (p.348). Allan (1991:78) adds that the vocabulary of precedents thus profoundly shapes how the journalist represents events.

Thus, relying on their recognition knowledge, which defines the story type and their accounting knowledge, which informs the frames, these journalists constructed their own “representation” of the pictures which, in the final analysis, was at variance with the reality. Second, alongside work routines is the role played by the journalist’s own social and cultural affinity, which as Louw (2001) and Silverstone (2002) have argued, are a key factor in representation, particularly of the distant “Other.” Both the

concept of 'vocabulary of precedents,' and the journalist's own culture come with pre-given assumptions. These assumptions, as Colon's experiment has shown, will continually interfere with representation and thus recurrently create distortions in mediated messages unless journalists recognise the need to imbibe the idea of constantly testing their assumptions.

Therefore, this work explores the cultural, historical and political power relations that underpin these assumptions, which have become institutionalised over time and manifest as common sense in today's media messages. By so doing, it examines the implications of those assumptions for cultural understanding and, most importantly, explores how subjecting these assumptions to test would bring significant improvement, not only to journalism practice, but also to intercultural relations and communication.

## Chapter One: **Introduction**

*“Mediation has significant consequences for the way in which the world appears in and to everyday life, and as such this mediated appearance in turn provides a framework for the definition and conduct of our relationships to the other, and especially the distant other.”*  
*(Roger Silverstone 2002:762)*

### **1.1 Introduction & Background**

The issue of representation in the media has been a major concern for many researchers and has, consequently, been the subject of several scholarly inquiries in the past. However, most published works on media representation have emerged from the broad disciplines of sociology, political science and international politics. The focus of most of these works has been the dynamics of class struggles within the developed countries of the northern hemisphere. Little attention, if any, was paid to distant countries of the southern hemisphere otherwise known as the ‘third world’ countries (Mankekar 1978).

Most of the available works deal extensively with representation in relation to the news centres and the peripheries (Harris 1985: 263; van Ginneken 1998:128-32); the First World and the Third World, especially in the context of international news flow (Mankekar 1978; MacBride 1980; Taylor 1997: 38, 47); ideology, culture and representation (Hall 1997; Gilroy 1987; McNair 1998: 38); media and foreign policy (Kennan, 1993; Hoge 1994); media and global crises (Shaw 1996; Robinson 2002); Whites and Blacks racial divide in the United States (Gates 2007) and the Judaeo-Christian West versus the Muslim Arab States in the Middle-East (Shaw 1996) among others. Not so much attention has been devoted to critical study of the issues of

representation of Africa, in general and Nigeria, in particular. As noted by Monfils (1985: 307) it is clear that more work is required in the vast area.

Nonetheless, from the few works done in this area, Africa's representation, particularly in the western news media, is by and large, still routinely based on stereotypes (Harrison and Palmer 1986: x, 76; Hunter-Gault 2002, Mano 2005), which tend to, perhaps inadvertently, blot out its progress in the areas of increasing democratization, socio-economic advancement (Olujobi 2006) and thereby portray to the world a grossly incomplete picture of its second largest continent and homeland to almost a billion people.

However, the handful of works available (Harrison and Palmer, 1986; Hunter-Gault, 2002) in this regard, provide a veritable template for this research and, along with the classic works of such scholars and authors as Walter Lippmann, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, Johan Galtung and Mari Holboe Ruge, Herbert Gans, Gaye Tuchman, John Hartley, Herbert Schiller, Manuel Castells, Robert McChensney, John Tomlinson among others, are well considered below.

Consequently, this study reviews a whole range of concepts, theories, views, ideas, and perspectives on representation and other related issues such as culture, ideology, the influence of the wire services, news value, news construction and news presentation amongst others. Also, in a bid to situate the context of representation generally, and with particular focus on the dynamics of representation of Nigeria in the British news media, this researcher examines the historical perspective of Britain and Nigeria, and traces the evolution of the Nigerian press while critically analysing

the challenges of journalists *vis-à-vis* newsroom routines, ownership influence, economic policies and political pressures as well as the importance of journalism to the human society as a whole. As McNair (1998:49) has argued, in so far as journalism gives social meaning to events and thus make them real for social action, then the importance of journalism cannot be over-emphasised.

Therefore, with the belief in many quarters that journalism studies is fast emerging as a discipline on its own right (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009: 4); it is expected that much more attention will be given to further inquiry into it as a very important arm of the larger communication research and media studies and this may ultimately lead to a reduction, if not elimination, of assumptions causing distortions in representation. Indeed, journalism is constantly being assailed by incessant complaints from all quarters. While politicians growled about bias, ordinary citizens grumbled about negligence and media elitism on one hand; academics, on the other hand, deride it for its supposedly ‘inferior’ investigative capacity and claim that the emergence of the new media signifies its death (Bromley, 1997; Waisbord, 2001; Deuze, 2006: 2). But Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch have observed that journalism is by far too important to modern society and its structures of governance to die. Their argument is supported by Webber (2007) who believes that the challenging circumstances in which journalism has found itself will lead more to re-invention than death. Essentially, while this submission underscores the strategic importance of media, and particularly, journalism to the society (McNair, 2003; Gans 2007: 161-66; Zelizer, 2007: 111-14); it also reiterates the need for media practitioners, particularly journalists, to constantly *test their assumptions* and find new ways of thinking about journalism. Zelizer’s argument that journalism occupies a central position and plays

strategic roles in modern society's social relations and structures corroborates the submission of Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch; and both views demand that academics give serious attention to journalistic inquiry as a means to rethinking its process, redrawing its parameters and maintaining its relevance.

Similarly, others have argued that in as much as the texts of journalism remain 'the first draft of history,' and the journalists continue to function as the purveyor of the news; and the news, in turn, remains the conveyor of the ingredients with which we articulate societal conflicts (Cottle 2006) and consensus (Hall et al. 1978); the option left for society is to find a whole range of new ways of thinking about journalism. This submission thus reinforces the argument by Zelizer, Webber and Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch that society has a lot to gain by developing new standards needed to guarantee the future of journalism.

As part of the rethinking process, it is incumbent on this study to explore the notion of journalists '*testing their assumptions*,' as a component of the groundwork crucial to properly situating the effects of ideology, cultural perception, meaning and interpretation in media representation. Culture is, no doubt, crucial to interaction and communication (Gudykunst and Kim 1992); and so are images (Hartley 1992), which television uses to full effect. All of these combined have a powerful effect on the way the British news media view themselves and frame others, especially Nigeria, in this particular case. First, this research will examine the historical trajectory as a means of putting Anglo-Nigerian connection in proper context.

## **1.2 *Britain and Nigeria: Historical Perspective***

Europe's first contact with Africa began in the fifteenth century when the Portuguese established stopover ports along the coast of Africa for their ships travelling to Asia's spice market. But the British arrived in Nigeria in 1539. And for four hundred years, her missionaries, merchants, and soldiers interacted with Nigerians along the Atlantic coast. In 1796, a Scottish sailor named Mungo Park had embarked on a voyage which led him to “discover” River Niger. Following Mungo Park's adventure and purported discovery (a claim whose veracity has been disclaimed by African intelligentsia and politicians), more groups of British missionaries found their way into Africa ostensibly to spread the Gospel. No sooner had the Bible-wielding priests settled down amongst the “African heathens” than their trader kinsmen arrived and booming commerce (including inhuman trade in human beings) intensified on the shores of Africa. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the gospel workers and their trader compatriots had noticed the existence of huge deposits of natural resources needed to boost the economy at home. Hence, administrative control posts, which eventually metamorphosed into colonial governments, were created after much of Africa had been partitioned by European colonial powers in Berlin.

By the 1880s, the British had begun ruling Nigeria as a colony and subsequently forcefully divided the more than 200 ethnic groups into three distinct regions without considerations for traditional borders, past history and ethnic identity of the most diverse territory in Africa. On January 1, 1914, the British colonialists amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria to form one country ostensibly for administrative convenience and appointed Fredrick D. Lugard as the first Governor-General of the West African nation. Between 1914 and October 1, 1960 when Nigeria

became independent, it had had a total of 10 colonial Governors-general and four colonial constitutions. Between 1951 and 1954, there were two constitutional conferences, which resulted in a federal constitution that separated the former colony of Lagos from western Nigeria. The frequent hosting of these constitutional conferences was a pointer to intense pressures by the implacable nationalists demanding for independence. The Nigerian press provided the needed platform for these nationalist agitations (Duyile 1987). Critics of British colonialists have always expressed suspicion that the British deliberately punished Nigeria for the nationalists' agitations by denying them power and transferring authority instead to unprepared sectional leaders thereby setting in motion the fissiparous tendencies that currently bedevil the naturally well-endowed nation.

Harold Smith<sup>2</sup>, a member of the colonial team, confirmed that suspicion in an interview in 2007. Smith revealed that the British falsified census figures to justify the transfer of power to a section of the country and, more so, as a strategy to maintain their hold and control of the country. Smith's revelation tore into shreds every iota of the colonialists' pretensions. It is worth quoting at length:

*Our agenda was to completely exploit Africa. Nigeria was my duty post. When we assessed Nigeria, this was what we found in the southern region; strength, intelligence, determination to succeed, well-established history, complex but focused lifestyle, great hope and aspirations... the East is good in business and technology, the West is good in administration and commerce, law and medicine, but it was a pity we planned our agenda to give power "at all cost" to the northerner. They seemed to be submissive and silly of a kind. Our mission was accomplished by destroying the opposition at all fronts. The west*

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<sup>2</sup> Harold Smith revealed on a BEN-TV interview broadcast in London that the British colonialists deliberately falsified census figures to aid northern Nigeria's ascension to power and control of Nigeria. See: <http://haroldsmithmemorial.wordpress.com/tv-interview/>

*led in the fight for the independence, and was punished for asking for freedom.*

*They will not rule Nigeria!*

The agenda to exploit the Africans, pilfer their huge natural resources, dehumanise their people and blame them for their predicament *was* not just at the core of yesterday's colonialism (Taiwo 1999); it *is* also at the epicentre of today's imperialism. This explains why the rhetoric on free-trade does not incorporate the principle of fair-pricing and why the wealth of Africa, its huge natural resources, benefit only the imperial powers and their local agents. British colonial policy, by the disclosure of Harold Smith, is implicated in the perennial mismanagement of Nigeria's rich resources and the attendant needless suffering of its innocent citizens; a suffering for which its news media have become collusive spectators (Chouliaraki 2007).

Indeed, as the world's seventh largest producer of crude oil among other rich natural resources, Nigeria is potentially a rich country. Located on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, Nigeria has a landmass of 923,768 sq. km (or 356,700 sq miles, almost four times the size of Britain). It is bordered by Benin Republic on its Western side, Niger Republic on the North, Chad to the north-east and Cameroon to the east and south-east. With a population of 151million<sup>3</sup>, Nigeria is not just the most populated country in Africa; it's the most populous black nation in the world. The socio-cultural and economic ties between Britain and Nigeria today are still very strong. Nigeria is the UK's 34<sup>th</sup> largest overseas market and the second largest market in Africa. Nigeria's legal system is based on the British Common Law system and

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<sup>3</sup> *World Bank (2008) figures at the annual growth rate of 2.2%. Source: World Development Indicators database, April 2009*

over 70% of Nigerian elite was educated in Britain while there are a huge population of Nigerians in diasporas living in the United Kingdom.

### **1.3 Nationalists Struggle and the Nigerian Press**

Nigerian nationalists, no doubt, were inspired by the activities of such radical figures as C.L.R. James, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, W.E.B. DuBois, Kwame Nkrumah and Franz Fanon who either fought slavery or challenged European rule of Africa and exploitation of its resources. Thus they engaged the British colonialists in a long and tortuous battle for self-determination. The Nigerian press, as stated above, played a frontline role in this crusade. Efforts of the British colonialists to maintain firm control on their “new territory,” such as formation of the police force, the army and other state security, pitched them against the press; more so, because these agencies were regarded as an army of occupation enforcing the will of the foreign minority over the helpless local majority.

Other contentious issues include colonialists’ attitudes towards the people. Commonly referred to as “natives,” the people were treated with disdain and condescension. They had no voice in the way they were governed. Taxes were imposed without consultation or consideration of their ability to pay. Harsh laws including the Seditious Offences Ordinance of 1909 (directed at the nationalists and the press) were made with impunity (Sobowale 1985: 29). Attempts to organise some kind of pressure groups were met with more punitive laws, which curtailed freedom of movement. The colonialists promulgated a law against wandering, for example. The legislation barred any “native” from walking the streets from 7:00 p.m. until dawn. The police force, seen as an army of occupation, enforced the law to the letter.

But the more the brutality, the more aggressive and restive the people became. They rose in unison against the colonial rulers. The Nigerian press was created by those circumstances. Peter Golding and Philip Elliott (1979: 21) corroborate this view: “Nigerian journalism was born of anti-colonial protest, baptized in the waters of nationalist propaganda and matured in party politics.” It was a militant press: bellicose in temperament, belligerent in posturing and adversarial in language (Malaolu 2004). Where the police force was supportive of the authority, the press pitched its tent with the people. It was resolute in its determination for political emancipation for the people. It was passionate in its demand for self government and unrelenting in its battle against all vestiges of oppression, both local and foreign. It was, and still largely is, a fearless, vibrant and nationalistic press. And, as attested to by *Time* magazine: “Even by western standards, the quality of the Nigerian press is good” (Time 1960).

Understandably, the history of the Nigerian press has a strong British connection. The first newspaper in Nigeria, *Iwe-Irohin*, was established in Abeokuta on December 3, 1859 by Reverend Henry Townsend, an Anglican missionary (Ademoyega 1962: 67). The newspaper became bi-lingual in January, 1866, when its English edition was introduced, ostensibly to encourage the patronage of the literate Egba<sup>4</sup> political class. Though the eight-page newspaper's production quality was rudimentary, critics believe it adequately compensated with its vibrancy what it lacked in aesthetics (Duyile 1987). It provided a strong platform for vitriolic attacks on slavery via forceful but logical editorial opinions (Kopytoff 1965: 216-18). *Iwe-Irohin* was a crusader against the slave trade, a derider, however, subtly of the fetish (Aloba 1956

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<sup>4</sup> *The Egba people live in Abeokuta and its environs in the southwest of Nigeria. They have a high concentration of literate people because of early contact with Christianity and education.*

cited in Omu 1978). The newspaper's mission against slavery was successful (Azikwe 1937). Following the footsteps of Townsend, Robert Campbell in 1863 established the "Anglo-African" newspaper, which was Nigeria's second newspaper, in Lagos (Omu 1978: 19). Since then, the Nigerian media landscape has witnessed tremendous growth and transformation. In 1935, Mr. R.B Paul from Liverpool invested in the newspaper business in Nigeria and also in 1947, Cecil King of Mirror Group invested in Sir Adeyemo Alakija's *Daily Times* of Nigeria, which became a major voice on the African continent principally because it was undeniably a good newspaper (Hatchten 1971: 27). In 1959, Nigeria established WNTV, Ibadan, which was the very first TV station in Africa. Today, with the deregulation of the broadcasting sector, there are more than 180 TV stations in Nigeria, with 30 privately owned and about 130 radio stations, 20 of which are privately owned, according to the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC).

There are more than 500 newspapers in Nigeria, all competing for market share and, co-operating where possible, with the foreign-owned news media companies operating in the country. Prominent among these are the BBC (whose Hausa Service has a large following in Nigeria) and CNN. The AFP and Reuters are also prominent wire services operating in Nigeria. *The Economist*, *Financial Times* (a favourite of the Nigerian business and political elites) and other UK newspapers are regularly available on the newsstand in Nigeria. But only the BBC, AFP and Reuters have correspondents based in Nigeria. CNN reports Nigeria, and indeed the whole of Africa, with its sole correspondent based in South Africa. The implication of this and its impact on representation are fully discussed later.

#### **1.4 Framing: Between the coloniser and the colonised**

One of the first history lessons a Nigerian child learns in elementary school, until recently, is that Mungo Park discovered River Niger (the river through which Nigeria got its name). The import of the lesson is that the history of Nigeria, and indeed Africa, began with the adventure of colonialism. For the child thus educated, the rich history of African exploits in cultural development, commerce, trade, education, science and technology more than 3,000 years before the arrival of the European colonialists is obliterated. The child's innocent mind is thus conditioned to view the century-long exploitation of Africa and Africans by European colonial powers and slave traders as liberation efforts whose principal actors are deserving of gratitude.

The fact that the child's mind is even further conditioned, through such historical mis-education, to accept such *discovery* as divine intervention of one race to save another is the foundation of cultural imperialism, a spurious construction, which the news media rather than debunk seem to constantly justify as a means to maintain the hegemony of neo-colonial ideology. Anand's (2007:23) hypothesis supports this argument. In his discourse of western techniques of representation of the 'Other,' he identifies the lack of boundary between fiction and non-fiction works such as journalistic writings, arguing that evaluation is based mostly on archival materials that made little distinction between myths and legends, hearsay and facts. Anand therefore concludes that "western writers constructed facts...through repetition and cross-referencing" (p.29). That Anand implicates western news media in the production and reproduction, justification and reinforcement of imperial hegemony is one side of his hypothesis; the other side is his argument about western classification of people, which centres on the theory of hierarchization and racialization of cultures. The white

Europeans, Anand explains, are at the top of the table with the Chinese, Indians and Arabs occupying different positions in the middle of the hierarchical table while the “primitive” Africans and the aborigines of the new world are at the bottom (p.32).

As Spelman (1999:202-215) has argued, the white identity is dependent not only upon commitment to black inferiority, but also upon black affirmation of white superiority. Spelman contends that blacks are consistently called upon to act in ways that attest to the inferiority of blacks to whites. She supports her thesis with the paradox of the labour market in the United States arguing that the work blacks are required to do are a ‘kind of labour in a racial economy,’ but it is labour that cannot be acknowledged, for to notice such labour and, moreover, to notice it as labour that is constantly demanded would undermine the very idea of innate white superiority that the labour is meant to support. This, argues Taiwo (1999:157-188), explains why the African child is taught the kind of history that stripped him of his self-esteem and racial pride. In his work, *“Reading the Colonizer's Mind: Lord Lugard and the Philosophical Foundations of British Colonialism,”* Taiwo takes Lugard to task for claiming that it was God who bequeathed to Britain the riches and resources of Africa which lay wasted and un-garnered because the natives did not know their use and value. He concluded that cultural parity and modernization were not at the core of British colonialism but dehumanization, racism and political subjugation for pure economic exploitation.

Added to the dilemma facing the innocent child is the fact that across the Atlantic, his age-mates are being educated with textbooks, which affirm his inferiority on the basis of his skin colour. In his work, *Racism in School Textbooks*, David Wright (1983; also

see Punter 1986: 223-236) explains how authors of geography books transmit materials they feel are worthwhile for students, and also - knowingly or unknowingly - transmit attitudes and values. These attitudes and values, which are a reflection of the authors' worldview, shape the attitudes and values of the pupils. Wright's work was based on the analysis of two geography textbooks, *Man and his World*<sup>5</sup> and *Elements of Human Geography*<sup>6</sup>. In support of his point, Wright highlights phrases, words and statements affirming the assumption that whites are normal and others are odd. These include statement such as: "*The lips are thick,*" in description of "*negroid people,*" which appeared in both books. Wright argues that "*thick,*" does not just mean "*broad*" to pupils as "*thick*" is also used as an adjective to imply low intelligence. Wright illustrates this point further with another example about the description of head hair. The authors of *Elements of Human Geography* write, "*head hair is coarse-textured and curly or woolly,*" while *Man and his World* renders this as "*coarse hair, usually curly or woolly.*" Wright notes the close agreement between the authors and argues that "*thick*" and "*coarse*" have numerous meanings, which are mostly uncomplimentary or worse. He contends that the "*Woolly hair*" may not seem insulting at first sight until it is misinterpreted as "*woolly-headed*" and applied to minds and thinking. The contrast, for "*caucasoid peoples*" in both books, is "*fine,*" "*straight or wavy.*"

Wright's conclusion is not just that the choice of words in these books has many positive connotations for one race in contrast to the negative connotations for the other but that the words and phrases are more than 150 years old — predating Charles

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<sup>5</sup> Dawson, John A.; and Thomas, D.; (1975) *Man and His World: An Introduction To Human Geography*, London: Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> Whyne-Hammond, C.; (1979) *Elements of Human Geography*; London: Allen & Unwin.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* by more than a generation — and are being recycled again and again. He claims that Gill's *Oxford and Cambridge Geography*, completely revised and edited by L. Dudley Stamp in 1933 did contain the same phrases just as Rev. J. Goldsmith's *Grammar of Geography* published in 1827. Worthy of note is Wright's assertion that the recycled phrases predated Charles Darwin's work. This declaration underscores the theory of Pan-Africanists that *Origin of Species*, is a deliberate philosophical work meant to justify racism and imperialism. And once racism and imperialism are accepted as normal, having being sufficiently justified theoretically and "scientifically," it must then be perpetuated as an ideology. The perpetuation becomes the function of journalism, which through its agenda-setting functions, plays a major role in building consensus around society's values. Journalism's narrative, McNair (1998: 7) has argued, is an ideological force. It must portray a picture that makes the colonised accept the inevitability of colonisation.

While colonial education instils the inferiority complex on one hand (as in the case of history lesson in Nigeria) "civilised" education of the original "species" model fosters the superiority complex on the other hand (as in the case of geography texts in Britain). It is journalism's task also to defend that ideology in perpetuity. Since constant recycling of phrases is the pastime of journalists (Anand 2007); it possibly explains why representation continually takes a particular form in spite of noticeable changes in both societies. As Christian (1996) has noted, telling a child to ignore taunting peers is good advice: but cruel names and distorted pictures attack our very being (p.237).

## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

### 2.1 Introduction

*“Representation is a complex business and, especially when dealing with ‘difference,’ it engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilises fears and anxieties...at a deeper levels than we can explain in a simple, common-sense way. This is why we need theories – to deepen our analysis.”*  
(Stuart Hall 1997:226)

A critical analysis of the notion *testing assumptions* reveals certain concepts central to the practice of journalism, or more properly, news construction and news presentation. Therefore, embedded in the idea of testing assumptions are notions of perception, conception, interpretation, meaning, bias, judgement, value, and representation. Hall (1997:25-31) has argued that all these notions are culture-based. Language and images are codes and both are not only important signifiers in representation; they are equally key elements in both the construction and presentation of news (van Ginneken 1998: 65).

The outcome of the Colon experiment discussed in the Preface above reveals a certain tendency causing distortions in representation. If taken as one of the platforms for the examination of media representation, the experiment is an explicit revelation of the genesis of the representation we get in the media. It is also a practical demonstration of how journalistic outputs are influenced by a whole gamut of factors such as culture, ideology, political and economic policies as well as professional dynamics. These include news values, newsroom routines and vocabulary of precedents (Ericson et al. 1987). Consequently, this work shall examine representation from the prism of these factors and more. First, the cultural perspective:

## 2.2 The influence of culture

In their work, *Communicating with Strangers*, Gudykunst and Kim (1992: 197-203) explain how presuppositions about the nature of truth and reality make such communications difficult and almost twice as difficult particularly when the communication is about strangers. Journalists, more than anyone else, are often engaged in communication with, and about strangers. Since they have as much as ideological and cultural framework as other people, observes van Ginneken (1998: 69), their reports are inevitably conditioned by such frameworks.

For some inexplicable reasons, journalists often disagree with this conclusion and prefer to romanticize about the idealism of neutrality or objectivity. As Hall (1997: 42) has argued, “meaning and representation belong irrevocably to the interpretative side of human and cultural sciences.” Thus, it becomes impossible for journalists to interpret news and report events without some forms of context intricately linked with their culture, which is the lens through which *we* frame *other* people. van Ginneken (1996: 193) also contends that the repertoire of possible codes and meanings is determined by culture. These arguments, to a large extent, seek to establish the influence of cultural values on media representation and their proponents have offered series of experiments, examples and sound theories to justify the connection.

In several research works, including Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s (1966) *Social Construction of Reality* and Alfred Schutz’ (et al. 1967) *phenomenology*, different scholars have demonstrated the linkage between ‘our’ reality and culture through the objectification process. Citing the works of Hugh Mehan and Houston Wood (1975), Kenneth Allan contends that cultural reality is reflexively constructed.

His submission that “every culture system is based on cultural assumptions that are never questioned but are protected through a set of legitimized secondary elaboration of belief” (1998:6), underscores not only the difficulty even the most conscientious and open-minded journalist would encounter in separating his work from cultural interference but also the trouble in admitting the presence of such pressures.

Drawing inspiration from postmodernist scholar Jean Baudrillard (1994), Allan posits that when the media and advertising seek to represent this ‘life,’ the culture that is produced is purely the image of an image. What Allan (1998: 25-26) refers to as ‘image of an image’ in cultural studies is similar in context to what in mass communication studies is termed ‘mediated’ image (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Baudrillard himself is less sanguine. Though, he did not centre his argument on the effect of culture on media representation, he nevertheless identifies inherent flaws in the process of news construction and presentation which he contends naturally ‘destroy’ such news or information. Arguing that the destruction occurs because there is natural entropy within the information process, Baudrillard maintains that a media report of an event is usually a corrupted version or form of the real event and concludes that media’s representation...is nothing more than a conglomeration of image bits and signs (Allan 1998: 25).

Baudrillard’s submission hits at the core values of journalistic practice. His concerns, in this regard, are two-fold: one, that the process of news-gathering routines badly interferes with the mediated message. Two; that the notion of news value or whatever parameters the media use in the process of news selection negatively affects the mediated message. Baudrillard terms this process ‘staging.’ That Baudrillard (1994)

also takes a swipe at other 'interests', particularly what he terms current public tastes, economic and political considerations, which he insists dictate the slant of mediated message is not surprising. But worthy of note is his postulation that mass communication comes pre-packaged in a meaning form that has no relationship to the actual events depicted but is intrinsically linked to the medium itself.

However, what Baudrillard has put to task here is the worth of journalistic rituals of selection and gate-keeping. Sigal (1973: 189) has also come to similar conclusions. Sigal contends that news is not what happens, but what someone says has happened or will happen. He argues that reporters are seldom in a position to witness events firsthand and had to rely on the accounts of others: sources or eye-witnesses. As humans, these sources or witnesses have their own point of views, which are based on selective perceptions sharpened by certain cultural values. Readers, Sigal argues further, whether they are attentive citizens or interested officials tend to lose sight of the fact that news is not reality, but a sampling of sources' portrayals of reality mediated by news organisations (p. 189).

Similarly, in his 1922 work, *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann accentuates the position of culture in the construction of reality. His discourses and arguments have illuminated public debate ever since, while his conclusions, based on critical theories and experiments, have immeasurably helped modern society in understanding the relationship between conception, perception, interpretation, representation, meaning and culture. Lippmann (1922: 81) explains that "*for the most part we do not see and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend*

*to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.*” Lippmann’s thesis is that from the codification and objectification process, culture impacts its unquestioned traditions of moral codes and social philosophies. Once internalized, they shape the way we see things, inform the meanings we ascribe to things, and dominate our representation of things. Journalists, like all other humans, are susceptible to constructing social reality from the prism of culture as they often assume that western values must have universal application (Louw 2001: 200).

Building on Lippmann’s argument, van Ginneken (1998: 73) concludes that journalists are a product of dual culture. They belong to a culture and a sub-culture as well as a professional culture which confines them to certain rules and regulations as well as styles, principles and routines guiding workplace operations. Lippmann’s idea is that stereotypes engraved in “our minds” by “our culture,” form the picture in “our head.” The picture then conditions the way “we” [including the news media practitioners] see and interpret things. Thus, while Lippmann pinpoints stereotypes, Herman and Chomsky’s (1988) arguments, like those of Sigal, situate the problems at the threshold of sources and other interests which, they claim, combined to present propaganda as the news.

The propaganda theory is the brainchild of Herman and Chomsky (1988), who contest the perception of the press as an implacably cantankerous, adamant, thorough and dogged fighter for justice, always in search of truth for the good of the society. Their work published in the book: *Manufacturing Consent - The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, contends that a highly prejudiced elite consensus creates the state propaganda that is presented daily as “news.” Herman and Chomsky analyse the ways

in which the marketplace and the economics of publishing significantly shape the news. They not only reveal how issues are framed and topics are chosen, but also give succinct examples of how the rules of double standards are employed by the corporate media when “reporting” about countries which are puppets of the U.S., and countries which attempt to free themselves from the United States’ control (p: 28). For instance, denouncing what they term as corporate mass-media’s propagandistic accounts of “free elections,” a “free press,” and governmental repression, Herman and Chomsky (1988: 32-33) contrast media coverage between Nicaragua and El Salvador; between the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the American invasion of Vietnam; between the genocide in Cambodia under a pro-American government and genocide under Pol Pot (which was later supported by the U.S. government) and conclude that the whole episodes smack of double standards.

Similarly, they explore how Watergate and the Iran-Contra hearings manifested not an excess but a lack of investigative zeal into the accumulating illegalities of the executive branch. What emerges from their work is a denunciation of the mainstream mass media as a mere sophisticated propaganda organ of the corporate state. As many scholars and critics have observed, what shows clearly from the submission of Herman and Chomsky is that the news media toe the official line when reporting international news (Shaw 1996; van Ginneken 1998: 28); just as their use of language and labels becomes more magisterial and condescending in the coverage of distant lands.

### **2.3 Images and Representation**

In his work, *The Politics of Pictures: the Creation of the Public in the Age of Popular Media*, John Hartley (1992) analyses the relationship between media’s usage of

images to convey meaning and representation and the complexity of its connection with politics and public life. He proclaims that the public domain had disappeared from the city centres and relocated to the media domain where the spectacle of everyday life and politics is now being constructed and that makes the use of imagery the more compelling. To fully appreciate Hartley's thesis, there's a need to revisit the gripping effect television had on the public at its inception. Because television as a medium captures both sight and sound, it quickly became a hit as enunciated in the Magic Box theory.

This theory, also known as the Hypodermic Needle theory, holds that the media inject information into the brains of the people and people react instantly and collectively at the same wavelength, but subsequent theories such as 'two-step flow' and 'uses and gratifications' have revealed it to be indefensible and unrealistic. However, the evolution of television has been phenomenal. Events are beamed live as they happen. The advent of CNN has ensured even 24-hour news telecasts, and there have been a number of other entertainment channels worldwide offering round-the-clock broadcast. Without telling pictures, television stations are not keen to consider an event as news (McGregor, 2009: 1-7; van Ginneken, 1998; Shaw, 1996).

As imagery becomes a major factor in the media domain, it has also effectively translated into a powerful force in social construction of reality occupying the commanding height of the main signifier in cultural representation and media framing. The impact of the Biafran war and Ethiopian famines were due to gripping television images (Harrison and Palmer 1986). Hall (1997: 16) argues that to represent something is to depict it: "to call it up in the mind by description or

portrayal....” In essence, by saturating the public space with imagery the media are engaged in the magisterial act of depiction, interpretation and definition. By so doing, they are creating, for and in their readers, viewers, listeners and users, as the case may be, the “sense of being there” – authentic, true, real (Stott, 1973: 11). Hamilton (1997) contends that the process (of media representation) is denominated in the currency of culture. Using the analogy of photography and the production of documentary, he argues that a:

*Document’s informational value is mediated through the perspective of the person making it, and it is presented as a mixture of emotion and information. Indeed, it is in creating images which have the power to move the viewer, to retain their attention through presentation of a telling image, that this form of documentary works (p.84).*

Fulton (1988: 106 - 7) agrees that the documentary nature of photographic journalism is essentially interpretative. The representations that the newspaper photographer and TV cameraman produce are informed by their own personal interpretations of not only the events but also the subjects involved. Walter Lippmann (1922) posits that “the facts” that we see depend on where [the spot] we are placed, and the habits of our eyes: that’s our cultural socialization. It thus becomes apparent that personal preferences, culture and ideology of the media practitioner, whether reporter or cameraman, photographer or documentary producer, impact heavily on the media representations produced. The latitude to experiment, at will, becomes more pronounced when the subject of representation is a distant land or people (Shaw 1996; van Ginneken 1998). In the case of Africa, unquestioned template of representation reinforces the recycling of stereotypes (Harrison 1986: 76) and thus resulted perhaps

inadvertently in blacking out (or missing) the new news out of the world's second biggest continent (Hunter-Gault 2002:106).

## **2.4 Representation of 'Otherness'**

While news media tend to be patriotic and give more attention to geographical and cultural proximity in news coverage (Shaw 1996: 97), there also have been criticisms about the tacit acceptance of the unevenness and the arbitrariness in their representation of the distant lands and people. A terminology for this notion is 'representation of the otherness' (Silverstone 2002: 762). While acknowledging the important role the news media play in the supply of information that enables the general public to construct meanings of everyday life, Silverstone identifies significant consequence for the way in which the world appears in everyday life or, more properly, the way global reality is constructed or represented by the media.

Silverstone's main contention is hinged on his perception of the distortions inherent in the representation of "otherness," by the dominant media of the dominant ideology, in our global village. Unlike most scholars who merely make passing reference to this distortion, Silverstone recognizes its presence, warns against its dangers and challenges both academics and news media practitioners themselves as well as the general public to address the issue boldly:

*insofar as the persisting representational characteristics of contemporary media, above all in our media's representation of the other, remain unchallenged—as for the most part they are—then those who receive and accept them are neither mere prisoners of a dominant ideology nor innocents in a world of false consciousness; rather they are willing participants, that is, complicit, or even actively engaged, that is, collusive, in a mediated culture that fails to deliver its promises of communication and connection, with*

*enduring, powerful and largely negative consequences for our status as human beings (p. 762).*

Silverstone's deft juxtaposition of the media and everyday life while at the same time arguing that the media and everyday life are in significant ways inseparable is, to a certain extent, in tandem with the views of Herbert Gans (2007: 161-66). The divergence of their views is underscored by Gans' recognition of everyday newsworkers as a better alternative to the professional newsman and his observation that the professional journalists may have some lessons to learn from the everyday news worker. While Gans' contention resonates with the general frustration arising from the distortions and flaws in mediated reality, ostensibly caused by several factors including, but not limited, to cultural influences, economic interests, journalistic routines such as news values and organizational styles; Silverstone's argument indicts the media for faking reality and, more importantly, strongly chastises the public for acquiescing with such despicable act that weakens trust. It is worth quoting at length:

*Much of our media has palpably an unstable, not to say from time to time an exploitative, relationship to reality and to truth. The boundaries are daily crossed between the so-called purity of information and entertainment. The distinction between descriptive and analytic reporting is blurred, and the op-ed has become a feature of the world's press. Reality TV and docu-soaps visibly and playfully massage the boundary between reality and fiction. Spontaneous chat shows are rehearsed. Live transmissions from the world's hot-spots are pre-recorded. How can we trust in a fake, especially one we know to be a fake? Or to put it another way, the question is not so much about the absence of trust within the processes of mediation but our acceptance of those absences, our willing refusal to challenge manifest breaches of trust. How come we don't seem to mind? (p.771)*

For this reason and more, Silverstone argues further, that the media have literally become a second order paramount reality; which is notionally similar in context to Baudrillard's (1994) model of *simulacrum* but much more bizarre. Consequently, at the epicentre of the arguments of both Gans (2007) and Silverstone (2002) is, one: the need to reassess mediation of reality; and two: the need to provide a theoretical framework for the explanation and the understanding of the factors causing distortions of mediated reality.

Representation of otherness is multi-dimensional. Within national boundaries, economic power, class, and proximity to the news centres play important roles while cultural, racial and religious calculations are reflected only when immigrants are involved. Shaw's (1996) analysis of The *Sun newspaper's* hate campaign against British Muslims during the Gulf war illustrates this point (p.98). But globally, the fundamentals of representations shift full circle. A combination of subtle extant factors jumps onto the radar. These include culture, race, geo-politics and ideology.

These factors form and inform the values that shape international news flow and thereby leave magisterial imprint on global representation. Naturally, ideology functions to perpetuate hegemonic tendencies; which manifest themselves in the theory of "us" and "them;" the "civilized" and the "uncivilized barbarians;" the modern organized society, and the "primitive backward nation;" the "urbane and cultured colonizers" and the "hopeless colonies;" the "nations" and the "tribes;" the "first world" and the "third worlds;" those "naturally equipped to administer their own affairs" and those "consistently unable to govern themselves" (Hartley 1992; van Ginneken 1998; Anand 2007). Most of these bizarre ideas come from folk tales. As Fowler (2007: 25-78) has noted, when old travellers' tales are hung on new

characters, they produce fitting stereotypes, which in turn provide resource for media framing. Henry Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, a demeaning caricaturization of Africa, has a perfect equivalent in Afghanistan (Haggard 1993).

Walter Lippmann (1922: 77-94) contends, first of all, that all of these notions are mere stereotypes; which are being legitimized via the instrumentality of persistent recycling by the media of the dominant ideology; and second, that because '*nothing is so obdurate to education or to criticism as the stereotypes,*' those who hold these notions of stereotypes hardly know nor recognize their presence or existence in their lives, it thus becomes a recurrent decimal or an enduring phenomenon. Lippmann further explains why stereotypes are so deeply entrenched:

*A pattern of stereotypes is not neutral. It is not merely a way of substituting order for the great blooming, buzzing confusion of reality. It is not merely a short cut. It is all these things and something more. It is a guarantee of our self-respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. Stereotypes are, therefore, highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defences we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy (p.96).*

Jean Baudrillard (1994) likens the notion of the fortress and its accompanying emotionally charged defence to Christianity's defence of the existence of God: unqualified belief and unquestioned acceptance of the given. Sociologists view stereotypes as a fixed, exaggerated, and preconceived description about a certain type of person, group, or society based on prejudice or the "picture in our head" rather than the fact. While it can prove too volatile when employed to justify persecution and discrimination in allocation of state's resources as the London riots have shown

(Gilroy 1987); it also reflects societal power structure in which one group uses labeling to keep the Other in its place.

Exploring media representation through the insight provided by Silverstone above, shows mediated representation could assume the function of putting 'distant lands and people' in their place. For instance, Shohat and Stam (1994) provide a comprehensive analysis of how and why African and South American "voodoo" religions are represented in certain manners (p. 202-3). van Ginneken (1998) also offers some framework as to why South Asians' Hinduism is portrayed as fanaticism; and South-east Asian Buddhism as superstitious, whereas all variants of Judao-Christian religions seem normal (p. 66). With these instances, it seems the stereotypes become more pronounced and the representation more acerbic the more the distance between the dominant news centres and the represented.

In other words, some critics believe that the further the distance, the less salubrious the framing and that the closer the cultural cum racial ties, the softer [or more positive] the representation. For instance, framing of European peripheries such as the Netherlands by the major news centres of Europe, majorly Britain and France, (van Ginneken 1998) is much more sympathetic than the framing of China or India. In the same vein, the framing of China and India is somehow different from that of Iran or Iraq principally because of the influence of religious differences while the framing of Brazil, Venezuela, or Argentina is markedly different from that of Sudan, Nigeria or South Africa. Even within Africa, some critics have argued, without any concrete proofs however, that framing is categorized as skin colour plays a key role in representation: the fairer the colour the more charitable the representation and

treatment (*see* Irele and Jeyifo 2010: 261). The protagonists of this notion claim that, from observation, South Africa and Ethiopia get fairer representation than Nigeria or Ghana in the western media and South Africa particularly features more prominently in the international news agenda (Harrison and Palmer 1986: 90) principally because of British economic interest as South Africa is UK's largest market in Africa and also because historically, Reuters has had a close relationship with South African media organisations (Harris 1985: 263-4).

## **2.5 Representation in International News**

### *i) News Value*

Lippmann (1922), with a perspective that casts doubts on objectivity and the efficacy of the processes that determine 'what is news,' says:

*Every newspaper when it reaches the reader is the result of a whole series of selections as to what items shall be printed, in what position they shall be printed, how much space each shall occupy, what emphasis each shall have.*

*There are no objective standards here. There are conventions (p.354).*

The same fact holds true of the broadcast news media. Gans (1980) has argued along the same line while Hall's (1981) dissection of the issue reflects ideological underpinnings:

*Journalists speak of 'the news,' as if events select themselves. Further, they speak as if which is the most significant news story, and which 'news angles' are most salient are divinely inspired. Yet of millions of events which occur every day in the world, only a tiny proportion ever become visible as 'potential news stories': and of this proportion, only a small fraction are actually produced as the day's news in the news media. We appear to be dealing, then, with a 'deep structure' whose function as a selective device is untransparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it (p.234-5).*

Essentially, the core of Hall, Gans and Lippmann's argument is that the process of news selection is the strong-room where every element of journalistic debauchery is kept, nurtured and constantly unleashed on an unsuspecting public. It is, therefore, imperative that if journalism or most appropriately, the news media are to address the issue of misrepresentation particularly of the distant lands and people, then news media practitioners, as a matter of fact, must *test their assumptions* as part of the holistic exercise of finding new ways of thinking about journalism (Zelizer 2007: 111-4) in view of media's role as defender of global justice and democracy (Blair, 1999 cited in Robinson, 2002: 9). As McGregor (2009:1-7) has argued, the process of determining what constitutes news must be re-examined, re-structured and constantly re-validated in the face of an ever-changing global media environment.

Indeed, earlier studies by Herbert Gans, *Deciding What's News*, (1979); Gaye Tuchman, *Making News*, (1978), and most importantly, Galtung and Ruge (1965) among others have dealt extensively with the concept of news values. Relying on basic psychology of perception and a couple of additional assumptions, Galtung and Ruge came up with a typology of twelve factors that are used as a definition of newsworthiness. Galtung and Ruge presented three basic hypotheses: the *additivity* hypothesis - that the more factors an event satisfies, the higher the probability that it becomes news; the *complementarity* hypothesis - that the factors will tend to exclude each other since if one factor is present it is less necessary for the other factors to be present for the event to become news; and the *exclusion* hypothesis – that events that satisfy none or very few of these factors will be excluded from being selected as news. Galtung and Ruge then tested this theory on the news presented in four different Norwegian newspapers from the Congo and Cuba crises of July 1960 and the Cyprus

crisis of March-April 1964, and the data were, in most cases, found to be consistent with the theory. A dozen additional hypotheses are then deduced from the theory and their social implications are discussed and since then has remained the foundation of news values (McGregor, 2002; Meikle, 2009: 25-30). Though many scholars have critically challenged Galtung and Ruge's work since it was written (McGregor, 2009: 1-7). Hall (et al: 1978) have read ideological connotations into it. Tiffen (1989) has simplified it. McGregor (2009) has modified it by including four additions. Meikle (2007: 25) highlights major reasons why it is sometimes misunderstood and invariably criticized; but the work remains fundamentally unaltered as a key element to the study of news values.

As Meikle (2009: 24) has argued, news values represent the power accruing to recognized media organizations with which they are at liberty not only to define a particular world view as *the* news but also to make a claim on the definition of reality. Indeed, if there's anything the dominant global news media do not shy away from, it is consistency in defining reality on the global scale while persistently using narrow cultural preconceptions which continually result in misconception and misrepresentation. Meikle identifies the role of technology in ensuring that "more news from culturally remote parts of the world now circulated globally;" but notes that such news still very much conforms to stereotypes (p.29). Meikle's assertion is true especially in respect of Africa where, as Mano (2005: 5) has pointed out, stereotyping still remains the prime device by which the representations of the continent are circulated in the Western media.

However, like Gans (1979) who argues that the value in the news may not necessarily be those of the journalists, Meikle also aligns with the ideas of Golding and Elliot (1979: 207) that news is better seen as an institutional product which remains unchanged when individual reporters or journalists come and go. This argument, though well-reasoned, raises a couple of very important and complicated issues. First, it inadvertently framed journalists as puppets or mere pawns in the hands of sources and media owners while downgrading their individual roles and importance in news construction.

Second, it is dismissive of those attributes journalists take pride in: independence, courage, determination, perseverance, journalistic initiative or risk-taking and the personal conviction to act against the norms when necessary in a bid to hold society accountable to self-evident truth. Third, the argument tries to explain away why there's conformity to stereotypes in global news in the twenty-first century in spite of technological advancement as Meikle (2007: 29) has pointed out. It also ignores the fact that the individual journalists themselves are products of the culture that needs the reinforcement of such stereotypes so as to keep the other people in their place. Furthermore, the argument does not consider Lippmann's notion of stereotypes:

*They are an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves...In that world people and things have their well-known places, and do certain expected things (p.95).*

With this insight, Lippmann has called attention to the fact that the individual journalists blend with the culture of the larger society in which their media outlets operate. If not, the individual journalists would have demurred because as Lippmann

argues further, even a minor disruption to stereotypes creates major mental and psychological disorientation:

*...any disturbance of the stereotypes seems like an attack upon the foundations of the universe. It is an attack upon the foundation of our universe, and, where big things are at stake, we do not readily admit that there is any distinction between our universe and the universe (p.95).*

The theory of Anand (2007) in respect of stereotypes suffices here. Anand contends that stereotypes and their reproductions serve a special purpose in western power relations. The thrust of his argument is that stereotyping is not just about expressing cultural differences and fixing these in a pre-given socio-cultural milieu with extreme power differentials, but that it also serves imperialism at both representational and psychic levels – supporting the idea of paternal domination and acting as a kind of perceptual blinder protecting the colonizers from the discomfoting consciousness of either poverty or guilt (p.27).

Therefore, it would amount to pure escapism to assume that journalists lack the guts to challenge stereotypes. As Graham Mytton, head of International Broadcasting and Audience Research in the External Service of the BBC (quoted in Harrison and Palmer, 1986) has argued, the BBC External Service [now BBC World Service] tries to do a more thorough and professional job; something akin to always ‘*testing their assumptions*’ to fish out bias, preconception, misconception and misrepresentation.

Mytton says:

*In the External Service and in the African Service in particular, we treat our listeners much more seriously. We make far less allowance for lack of knowledge or not being up-to-date than any other part of the BBC. And it pays off. We have an enthusiastic following, especially in West Africa, where the signal is very good. We don't steer away from stories just because we think our listeners won't understand them. Whereas I feel in our domestic radio we*

*are increasingly simplifying things. Our domestic channels don't challenge the stereotypes that people have of Africa very much; they tend to follow them (p.89).*

Mytton's position is shared by Jonathan Dimpleby (Harrison and Palmer 1986) who said one gets a feel of what is happening in the world by listening to a BBC World Service bulletin but get to know what's happening in the rest of the world from local BBC or ITN news bulletin only if there has been some disasters, coups, or a visit by the royal family. Dimpleby feels frustrated and depressed about local BBC and ITN's inability to carry considered news, and wonders what criteria determines the news agenda. Mytton thinks the problem lies with domestic radio's overt reliance on newspapers, their journalists' inability to do enough home work and trivialization of domestic radio and television news. This submission highlights the point that with more effort, the individual journalists have powers over the news even if it is seen as an institutional product (Gans 1979; van Ginneken 1998; Golding and Elliot 1979; Galtung and Ruge 1965 and Meikle 2007). However, Mytton's insight resonates with the views of Stewart Purvis, editor of Channel 4 News. Purvis suggests that stereotypes are recycled and reinforced because pictures that Visnews and WTN supply are without commentaries. Since the networks are left to interpret without context, stereotypes are reinforced.

Hunter-Gault (2002) in her book, *New News Out of Africa*, however, discusses the possibility of journalists challenging stereotypes through conscientious personal efforts. Hunter-Gault, then a reporter with *The New York Times*, recalls her encounter with a young Black Panther member in New York in 1972. The Black Panthers were then pre-occupied with fighting against the perception that they were a threat to United States national security. The young man declined an interview, saying he

would be misrepresented as long as his interviewer works for the “white man” downtown; insisting that he would only agree to an interview if Hunter-Gault would *come in right*. Hunter-Gault gave her words, took the pains to represent the young man correctly and a few days after the story was published, he waved to her across the street shouting his acknowledgement that her representation was devoid of the usual stereotypes (p.110-1). It is hardly expected that contextual reporting can be done by parachute reporters or embedded journalists (Taylor 1997) who are only flown in for specific assignments and full of certain preconceived notions. The works of such reporters can only create distortions, reinforce stereotypes and amplify the imbalance in global news-flow.

ii) *History of Imbalance*

The idea of international news-flow was formulated in the early fifties, when two studies, which generated a lot of attention amongst analysts and set the tone for debate in later years, were published. One was International Press Institute’s (IPI) *Flow of News*, (1953) and UNESCO’s *How Nations See Each Others*, (1954). While the IPI study raises issues about how international news is reported and distributed and concludes that international news flow is both uneven and favours the elite nations; the UNESCO study focuses on image studies particularly the stereotypes of United States of America in the press of other nations (Robinson and Sparkes 1976: 203-18). Then, most of the stories in international news were focused on war, politics and related issues. That the United States featured prominently was not surprising. It was the period of US ascendancy and the tail end of colonialism (Merill 1964). Conversely, the United States had publicly complained of unfavourable representation in the global media less than forty years before then (van Ginneken 1998: 45; Mankekar 1978: 19-33). van Ginneken explains that in the run-up to the First and the

Second World Wars, the United States had protested the “manipulation” of the world news by the European news agencies through Kent Cooper who was for almost a quarter century the general manager of Associated Press, (AP). Cooper says:

*International attitudes [about the US] have developed from impressions and prejudices aroused by what the [Europeans] news agencies reported. The mighty foreign propaganda carried out through these channels in the last one hundred years has been one of the causes of wars. [Of America], these agencies told the world about Indians on the warpath in the West, lynching in the South, and bizarre crimes in the North. For decades nothing credible to America was ever sent (Cooper 1969).*

In his book, *Barriers Down: Barriers down: the story of the news agency epoch*; Cooper (1969) recalls the long struggle for the US to break into the mainstream of international news flow, which the US later came to dominate. Cooper’s insight is instructive because he was involved in the fight against the hegemony of Reuters in England, Haves in France and Wolf in Germany over the control of international news. The AP’s incursion and eventual domination began, first in South America, then in Europe, finally in the Far East. Cooper’s step-by-step account of policy-formulation, boardroom discussions, negotiations, until the agency was fully established and its objectives realised is a testimony to the fact that information dissemination in the international arena is by war by other means.

However, it is interesting that the United States, which had had direct experience of negative representation, later led the US-Britain assault on a UNESCO initiative in 1980 meant to address the ubiquitous imbalance in world information flow. In the 1970s, UNESCO under the leadership of Senegalese Ahmadou-Mahtar M’Bow as Director-General, had appointed an International Commission for the Study of

Communication Problems headed by Sean MacBride, a former Irish minister of Foreign Affairs, a founder of Amnesty International and a Nobel Prize winner. Better known as The MacBride Commission, the body studied problems associated with world information flow and came up in 1980 with a report, *Many Voices, One World* (MacBride 1980). Though the implementation of the report's recommendations was blocked by the western powers its publication generated a lot of brouhaha. Part of the fallout was the change in the leadership of UNESCO and a policy shift in the organisation.

However, the issues raised in the MacBride Report have continued to generate renewed interest across the globe. The fact that key western nations too complain about the imbalance in international news flow (van Ginneken, 1998: 46) is an indication that the problem requires further attention. As recently as 1991, Herve Bourges, a former president of the French public service channels, and a central figure in audio-visual policy-making, lamented what he termed the Anglo-American monopoly of the international news flow. Writing in an article published by *Le Monde*, shortly after the Gulf war, Bourges voiced his displeasure that France had been dependent on foreign images and foreign image-making; thus suggesting that some Allied information had contributed to spoiling the traditionally good relations (of France) with some Arab countries on this occasion (3 April, 1991).

Beside agency news, Shaw (1996: 97) has revealed how the television screen and newspaper columns can be effectively deployed for patriotic propaganda on one hand; and propagation of religious, cultural, if not racial bigotry, on the other hand. Shaw's critical appraisal of the United Kingdom's newspapers' coverage of the Gulf war also

showed that the news media can be unsparing in their use of negative epithets in the framing of otherness (p.99). As Taylor (1997) has shown in his extensive work, *Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945*, the emergence of 24-hour live telecasts symbolised by CNN has, indeed, transformed the world into a proper global village. Unlike in the past, when news takes matters of days to arrive at some corners of the world, with the arrival CNN and other channels, it now takes a matter of seconds (Shaw, 1996; Taylor, 1997; Robinson, 2002; McGregor, 2009). Also, *live* broadcasting has ensured that real-time newscasts are beamed around the world as the events are happening. The more people – including those in distant lands - watch these telecasts, oblivious of the ideological intent of their sponsors, the more they identify with the stations; and thus the war of the mind is won and lost.

Taylor (1997) attributes this victory to the concept of *freedom* enunciated by the west: *freedom of movement, freedom of thought, freedom of religion and freedom to vote*. This Anglo-American strategic concept was devised as a deliberate ideological warfare policy for the battle with the Soviet Union, fought in the international media sphere (p.28). Tony Blair corroborated this point. In a 1999 speech in Chicago, the British Prime Minister claimed that the pursuit of global justice and democracy as the reason for western intervention in world troubled spots (Robinson, 2002: 9):

*Now, our actions are guided by a more subtle blend of mutual interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish. In the end, values and interest merge. If we can establish the spread of values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society then that's our national interest.*

In the same vein, Barry Elliot, former head of BBC Central European Services, made similar claims in 1992 (Taylor 1997: 53):

*In terms of keeping hope alive and spreading democratic ideals, of really putting it to the people that there were alternatives, yes, I think we did have a role. We were not propounding a change of regime – that wasn't part of our job – but we were stimulating the democratic process, and providing a whole new range of views; by reporting strikes and demonstrations that people would not have heard about from their own media we encouraged them to come out and demonstrate.*

The correlation of Elliot's position with that of Blair is not only striking but also significant as it underlines how easily the line of demarcation between the news media and the government becomes blurred when the issue concerns distant lands and people (Shaw 1996). Again, Elliot's use of the frame *regime*, instead of *government*, underscores the cultural underpinning inherent in the notion of 'us' and 'them,' and more so, highlights news media's relapse to stereotypes as a means of representation of otherness. As Silverstone (2002) has argued the domestication of otherness is necessarily a refusal of otherness.

For Africa, and most of the Third World, the war was different but the strategy was the same: *status quo ante*. For, it is in the maintenance of the *status quo* lies the economic interest of the west. As Taylor (1997) has noted, western nations led by the United States frustrated the call for New World Information Order: first, because it had Soviet support; and second, because the East-West idea of free-flow of information is diametrically opposed (p.48). Yet, non-western nations are criticized in the media when they adopt protectionism or impose overt regulatory trade regimes (van Ginneken 1998: 61). They are told; van Ginneken argues further, that unfettered free trade will solve problems at once. This is the real new world order: a democratic

free-market capitalist order in which information has become the lifeblood of the system (Taylor 1997: 56).

## 2.6 Critical Analysis of Media Representation

Indeed, one of the features of this new world order is the commodification of information. It is an international system whose base lies in a free-trade concept of a free-market economy (Harris 1985: 260). In such system, it is difficult for information to be ideologically free because the free-market model itself is intrinsically ideological. As Taylor's (1997: 28) analysis of the new world order has shown, the concept of freedom is western ideological propaganda strategically devised as a mind war in the battle against Stalinist Soviet Union. The West won that war, as Taylor argues further, with that victory came the acknowledgement of the immense powers of global information dissemination system and the re-affirmation of the fact that media *might* is capable of achieving victory where military *might* has failed. The power of the media is enormous. The *Berliner Tageblatt*<sup>7</sup> gave a poignant testament to this assertion when in a September 1918 comment, it stated: "Mightier and more dangerous than fleet or army is *Reuter*" (Mankekar 1978: 22). Interestingly, the infantry men for this ideological battle fought and won (with the victory still being fiercely but subtly guarded) in the global sphere are not soldiers but journalists. The ammunitions are their narratives; and the arms are their news media outlets.

Therefore, as McNair (1998: 7) has observed, journalism as an authored narrative, is an ideological force. Unfortunately, journalists – as well as most citizens of major western nations - find it hard to admit that they are ideological (van Ginneken 1998: 62). They are deeply convinced, van Ginneken states further, that their societies do

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<sup>7</sup> *Berliner Tageblatt* is a German newspaper

not only represent the very apex of civilisation, but are also willing to help others achieve the same goal as soon as possible. To them, the idea that the western colonialism had created those inequalities in the world system, while western imperialism perpetuates them seems totally absurd (Harris 1985: 261). When journalists produce their narratives, they are consciously or otherwise, transmitting ideology to their subscribers and, in respect of the distant lands or the news peripheries, they are perpetuating western imperial hegemony.

In media studies, hegemony refers to the ways in which the news media encourage the people to accede to the *status quo* power structures without questions. The basis of hegemony is rooted in Marx's historical dialectics and it was enunciated by Marxist scholar, Antonio Gramsci. Both as an activist and a journalist, Gramsci's empathy resided with the suffering proletariat majority and he was always berating the oppressors and their bourgeois press for perpetuating social, political and economic inequalities.

As van Ginneken (1998) points out, many Third World citizens and journalists such as authors Naiwu Osahon, Eduardo Galeano and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, (like Gramsci) view the free-flow of information and free-trade, which are recurrent values in western news media outputs, as perpetuation of global economic inequality and subjugation of citizens of the Third World countries (p.61). van Ginneken argues further that it is to the credit of western nation's ideological machine that most of their citizens are unaware that western nations have ideology as the four freedoms have been seamlessly processed as naturalised common-sense instead of ideology.

Michael Schudson (1978: 184) submits that it is impossible not to have ideology: for without it, it's impracticable for anyone to function in both nation and society.

Quoting Jack Newfield, he sums it up thus:

*So the men and women who control the technological giants of the mass media are not neutral, unbiased computers. They have a mind-set. They have definite lifestyles and political values, which are concealed under the rhetoric of objectivity. But those values are organically institutionalised by the Times, the AP, by the CBS...into their corporate bureaucracies. Among these unspoken but organic values are belief in welfare capitalism, God, the West, Puritanism, the Law, the family, property, the two-party system, and perhaps most crucially, in the notion that violence is only defensible when employed by [our] state. I can't think of any White House correspondent, or network television analyst, who doesn't share these values. And at the same time, who doesn't insist that he is totally objective (p.184).*

Anand (2007:24) views objectivity as a camouflage: “the mask of objectivity in the colonial discourse hid the relations of inequality and domination. Harris (1985: 260) contends that when subscribers to particular news organisations are supplied with news according to the free-market principles couched in terms of press freedom, they are supplied with a commodity, which promotes the perpetuation of the present inequality. Elliot and Golding (1974) also argue that:

*The notion of a free press and the free-flow of information, like the analogous free trade, presuppose a system whose members participate with equal opportunity and power. This is no more true for news than it is for other commodities. The rhetoric of the free press and the free-flow of information is ideologically congruent with the interest of its proponents. The relationship between the slogans of free trade and the triumph of international private enterprise is precisely that between the commercial base of the media and the symbols of press freedom (p.248).*

As Hall (1997) has argued, representation is complex, especially when dealing with difference, it engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilises fears and anxieties....: (p.226) The differences of race, culture and the shared past occasioned by the colonial history made dealing with the issue of representation of Nigeria in the British news media the more complicated. While journalism focuses on *difference*, the difference here is objectified through the cultural and political values of the coloniser *a la* Lugard. The outcome is a highly condescending stereotypical representation; which Harris (1985) did not only blame on the content of Reuters' services in West Africa but also defined as a "biased image of reality" (p. 273). Reuters, indeed, is a dominant institution in global news flow. To underscore the pre-eminence of Reuters in this strategically important sector, Sir Roderick Jones,<sup>8</sup> who was then at the helm of the agency affairs, said:

*"...Reuter's news in some form or another finds its way without a single exception, into every country in the world – literally from China to Peru... I do not think there is any other factor that has been consistently working directly and indirectly throughout that period (60 years) with such effect for the advancement of British influence"* (Mankekar 1978: .21).

What the British *influence* meant is, no doubt, the global spread of the current dominant ideology. Perhaps, what is being witnessed is the fulfilment of Churchill's 1943 prophecy that: "*The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.*"

Indeed, Reuters' significance in the projection of the British *influence* is enormous as most of the foreign news seen on TV throughout the world has, at some point, being processed in London. The reason for London being the centre for dissemination of world news, according to Harrison and Palmer (1986: 73), include the fact that it is a

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<sup>8</sup> Sir Roderick Jones, the chief executive of Reuter speaking at the Institute of Journalists in London in 1930;

time zone midway between the occident and the orient: virtually every international airline in the world passes through London; moreover, English is the international language of communication and many overseas journalists do their training in London.

Tim Arlott, News Editor of *Visnews*, has another perspective: “The two biggest news agencies in the world are in London because we have a tradition of objective news; and because we thought of it first” (cited in Harrison and Palmer 1986: 73). From an empiricist point of view, objectivity may not be problematic. But in the realm of social science, education and media as van Ginneken (1998) has argued, naïve empiricism often becomes a way of recycling ideologies as hard facts (p.42). Western news media practitioners, as earlier stated above, believe in the notion of objectivity as Arlott’s view indicates and are prone to defend the notion rather than reconsider the issue from the other point of view as Boyd-Barrett (1980: 247) has suggested.

Consequently, in the last one decade, countries of the Third World may have started to challenge the western media hegemony as Doha, the home of Arabic network; *Al Jazeera* has become a media centre just as Mumbai in India and Lagos in Nigeria at a smaller scale. These new developments are pointers to the fact that there is need to engage in the process of rethinking journalism. As Silverstone (2002) has argued there are those whose complaints, unlike Cooper’s, cannot be heard because even the power to challenge the dominant deeply entrenched meanings that the media provide is unevenly distributed across and within societies or, in this case, among nations.

The frustration of such people found in every corner of the world (including people of the 'Fourth World' scattered all over the advanced nations) is given expression by Jonathan Dimbleby who said he is not only frustrated but depressed because "increasingly, it is becoming almost impossible to understand the criteria which determine the news agenda" (Harrison and Palmer, 1996: 78). Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009: 4) believe that in spite of this widespread frustration, there's still hope for journalism to reinvent itself. Barbie Zelizer (2007: 111-4) sees the future resting on academics helping to find new ways of thinking about journalism through new range of critical inquiries that will institutionalize the concept of journalists *testing their assumptions*. This study is a step in that direction.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

The conceptualization of this research work was informed by the researcher's peculiar experience. Having practiced as a journalist (with its social activism flavour) for almost two decades; moved into government and had direct experience of governance at its highest level and then returned into journalism practice; that trajectory presented a kind of milieu for reflection on the international news media and Nigeria's image. More importantly at the time, Nigeria was prominent in the news because of a long drawn battle that had pitched pro-democracy activists against forces of dictatorship who annulled free and fair election in preference for military despotism. That bitter political impasse almost broke the country into pieces, but it survived and had managed to settle into a fragile democratic rule; held national elections thrice - 1999, 2003 and 2007 - with the whole world and the international news media as interested observers. The environment seemed ideal to explore the question of how Nigeria and its democracy is perceived; and represented in the global news media with special focus on British news media. Yet, the conceptualization of this study raised a couple of issues. First, let's clarify the reason for the choice of Britain.

Since it is practically impossible to effectively study all the global news outlets in every advanced country of the world, it becomes imperative to narrow the research to a specific country that'll be most representative. It seems appropriate to choose Britain for many obvious reasons: Nigeria was for many years a British colony. There exist between both countries strong socio-economic ties including some form of media relationship. Most importantly, Britain was and, still is (to certain extent) a dominant player in the world media sphere (*see Chapter 2*). Second, the researcher's

role as a journalist might jeopardize an objective analysis. Despite this, the researcher's professional experience was always regarded as an advantage in the process of interpreting the news, analyzing its contexts and frames – the thematic structure and discourse schemata; a procedure that would be unfamiliar and confounding to neophytes. Consequently, some of the professional roles and activities involved in the construction of news had been undertaken by the researcher during his career in journalism either as a reporter, editor or media executive.

Therefore, the take-off position for this research work was indeed the professional experience garnered in almost 20 years of journalism career and in setting up and administering an FM radio station. The aggregation of these experiences gave this research work considerable advantage in the analysis of empirical data collected. One factor whose inevitability is reflected in this work is the researcher's individual identity as a Nigerian journalist. This, however, is to the extent that there is an underlying understanding of representation and cultural issues from an African perspective. Taking a distance is a tough effort for someone who feels strongly about such issues. Therefore, often and reluctantly, Nigeria (or Africa, as the case may be) becomes the point of reference. Such a proneness to lack of balance is acknowledged. However, it is believed, such a circumstance also gives significant credence to the notion that the questions of global, national and cultural identity need to be framed in certain specific contexts. As Blaxter et al., (1999) have noted, research is “powerfully affected by the researcher's own motivations and values” (p.15). This observation is apt as motivation is essential in sustaining interest.

### **3.2 The researcher's personal location and the topic**

It is important to start by explaining the positionality of this researcher in terms of the personal context that led to the undertaking of this topic. As noted in Section 3.1 above, the motivation for this researcher stems from his interest in representation, which first developed while he was serving life imprisonment in Katsina prison between 1997 and 1999. Unjustly accused of 'concealment of treason' by the then ruling military government of late General Sanni Abacha following the phantom coup of 1997, this researcher (then editor of a Lagos daily, *The Diet*) was arrested, secretly tried and imprisoned. While behind the prison walls, stripped of his rights and unable to defend himself against the serious allegations leveled against him nor participate in the public debate around his 'involvement' in the phantom coup plot, this researcher began to think about representation and the bigger issue of power relations and control that surround it.

His interest in representation metamorphosed into the idea of this research topic following his experience during the 2007 national elections in Nigeria. This researcher covered that year's elections alongside a team of international journalists. The assessment of the conduct of the elections by the journalists involved (both local and foreign) was positive in spite of unconfirmed report about logistic problems in the Niger Delta area. The conduct of the elections, according to the international journalists, signifies that the future is bright for Nigeria as a democracy. However, a few days afterwards when their (international journalists') reports were published, the contents were remarkably different from the sentiments and views they had earlier expressed. The reports, in various news media, painted a completely different picture as what was made more salient centered on the 'problems' in the Niger Delta region.

It was later discovered that the report emphasizing logistic problems, which characterized Nigeria's elections in the international news media, was from a wire service.

Thus that coverage heightens this researcher's interest in representation and serves as platform for the initial formal inquiry into the subject of this investigation. The inquiry reveals that British news media do take position on international issues and by so doing galvanize public support for political action. Examples in this regards include the media's purposive stand on apartheid in South Africa, the land issue in Zimbabwe and recent democracy struggles in the Arab world. In respect of Nigeria, the position was ambivalent. The struggle for democracy did not just receive far less media attention, political statements were not only intermittent and couched in diplomatic language; the coverage was mostly problem-focused and largely muted about the positive effort of Nigerians themselves. The reasons for a difference in position regarding Nigeria, the rationale for framing the said 2007 election coverage the way it was and their larger implications for Nigeria's democracy and the way the country is perceived globally are issues of interest, as noted earlier, to this researcher.

Consequently, the implication thereof is that the point of reference in this analysis (especially in chapters 5 and 6) is not only Nigerian and, or African, as the case may be; it is also from the positionality of a Nigerian journalist and human rights activist. The avowal of the researcher's personal location in the investigation is important also because, as Kirby et al. (2006:36) have argued, researchers do express and represent elements of their personality in every research situation. These should be acknowledged as one of the standards of good qualitative research practice is the

visibility and acknowledged presence of the researcher in a research account (Cole and Knowles 2001). As a Nigerian, it is difficult not to feel concerned about news conveying certain images of the country. It is also hard not to contemplate bias as a motive for the producers of such news. But a reflexive and reflective appreciation of this researcher's positionality and of his situated response to such news materials helped him to move to a different level of understanding in the course of this study. Thus, this researcher who had always thought he was objective during his career as a journalist had come to the understanding that he had a position all along.

Though the concept of objectivity has been seriously questioned; it presupposes that news is a veridical account of events in the world (Tuchman 1978:5). It holds that in gathering, processing and presenting news, the journalist is detached, unbiased and impersonal (Tuchman 1972:664). That stance, as Coombs (1997) has argued, is not natural. Everyone, Machan (2004:86) posits, acts with guiding values...the only difference is whether they face up to this or keep their values hidden from themselves. Machan adds that there's no value-free journalism just as van Dijk has argued that there's no value-free science (2001:252-253). Thus journalists who reflect on their work or test their assumption would come to the understanding that their positionality is inherent in their reports whether acknowledged or not. As such, *Time* magazine's Henry Luce underscores this point when he was quoted as saying: "show me a man who thinks he's objective...and I'll show you a man who's deceiving himself" (Novick 1988:162). Consequently, by subscribing to the idea of interpretive journalism or activist journalism, which defines "informing the public" as challenging 'status quo,' and promoting social causes (Ward 2009:299), this researcher was not neutral as no interpretation of event can be done without a position. Therefore,

although positionality is a key factor in selecting the methodology, in this case, it was at the core of the definition of the methods as a strategy to mitigate the effect of the researcher's positionality and achieve reliability and validity. As such, the content analysis segment in chapter 4 and the semi-structured interview section in chapter 7 counterbalance the researcher's interpretations in the critical discourse analysis in both chapters 5 and 6 as earlier mentioned.

### **3.3 The approach of investigation**

Given the focus of this study, the researcher thus come to the conclusion that a mechanism that would allow for critical analysis of opaque structures of power relations (Reisigl and Wodak 2001) and dominant ideology in the context of news construction and news presentation (van Dijk 2001), would be ideal for this work. Consequently, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is considered the most convenient, appropriate and ideal method for the purpose of this research. However, that conclusion as it concerned the design of the project further raised a couple of methodological issues. First, critical discourse analysis, as Fairclough (2001) has noted, is a mix of theory and method; and requires a dialogical relationship with other social theories and methods (p.121). What Fairclough means, by dialogical relationship, is a method or methods that could interface with critical discourse analysis (CDA). In this particular instance, the challenge is to find other methods that would be most complementary given the thrust and context of this research. Therefore, semi-structured in-depth interviews and content analysis are considered most complementary, appropriate and are, therefore, adopted.

While critical discourse analysis provides the vehicle for the examination and evaluation of the discursive construction of news, the pattern of news presentation, the focus and the frame of the news as well as the trend of representation in respect of Nigeria and its democracy; content analysis offer the unique opportunity to scientifically and methodically evaluate the representation in quantitative term: as it helps to decipher the amount and distribution of the coverage based on the selected samples' outputs from:- i) 1997 – 1999, the years marking the end of Nigeria's political logjam and its return to democratic rule ii) 2000 – 2002, the first two years of democratic rule and iii) 2003 – 2007, a period of significant importance in Nigeria's history as it witnessed, not only the conduct of two national elections but also the successful transfer of political power from one administration to another. For the reason of project manageability, the sample corpus used in the critical discourse analysis (CDA) are much smaller compared to the ones used in the content analysis, which covered the whole 10-year period under study. In addition, major interviews were conducted with a number of media professionals including journalists, journalism teachers, writers, editors and presenters who are involved, one way or the other, in the production of the contents at the core of this study. The data from the interviews complements the interpretation of the other findings. First, the accounts of the chosen research design, the selection of samples and the individual methods adopted.

### **3. 4 Multiple methods**

In this study, three different methods are combined. The idea is to provide a comprehensive account of how the selected samples represented Nigeria and its democracy as a means to determine the trend or pattern of the representation. Such an account, on one hand, requires a scientific, systematic and objective form of appraisal

and, on the other hand, a qualitative investigation on how the issues of representation are discursively constructed as well as how the actors responsible for framing the news, a major factor that shaped representation, perceive their activities. Combining these three methods means this study adopted the mixed methods research design and underscores the fact that it follows the pragmatist approach. The pragmatic concept will be further discussed later in this section. However, the idea of using multiple methods, also known as mixed methods of data collection (Maykut and Morehouse 1994), which is similar to the notion of triangulation, is to ensure reliability and validity (Wimmer and Dominick 1997).

Indeed, mixed methods go beyond data collection. It is an approach that employs the broad quantitative and qualitative research methods orientation and it is perfectly suitable to examine phenomenon that cannot be adequately explained by either of the traditional paradigms (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007). More importantly, Greene and Caracelli (1997), Creswell (1999), Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), Johnson and Onwugbuzie (2004) and Creswell and Piano-Clark (2007) posit that multiple methods allow researchers the opportunity to evaluate the subject of analysis from different perspectives. Deacon et al. (1999:134-5) recommend their usage, urging researchers to break away from the realm of what they call academic apartheid and avail themselves of the methods' inherent benefits: a much more robust, rigorous, comprehensively enriched analysis and the triangulation of research findings.

In their definition of mixed methods, very many scholars have emphasized the element of combination of paradigms; ostensibly to support their belief that mixed methods is not an ideologically dogmatic paradigm. Greene (2007) defines it as a

concept “...that invites us to participate in dialogue about multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the social world, and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued and cherished (p.20).” Thurston, Cove and Meadows (2008:8) describe mixed methods as combination of methods from different paradigms or use of multiple methods within the same paradigm or multiple strategies within methods. The *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* (2006; cited in Cameron and Molina-Azorin 2010), classify it as a research method in which the investigator collects, analyses, mixes, and draws inferences from both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a program of inquiry. Similarly, Creswell and Plano-Clark’s (2007) much quoted definition, represent mixed methods as:

*...a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (p. 5).*

Besides highlighting the use of combination of methods, Creswell and Plano-Clark emphasize philosophical assumptions. This is significant. The emphasis reflects the divisions that emerge at the evolutionary stages of the concept in the 1970s and 1980s. Then, some academics opposed mixed methods’ idea of integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. As mentioned earlier, Deacon et al. (1999) tag the refusal of these academics to accept mixed methods as apartheid while Rossman and Wilson (1985) label them as purists. Other charges are that these academics resisted mixed methods’ interference and, or its incursion, into their traditional ideological forte delineated by positivist and constructivist paradigms

(Bryman 1988, Guba & Lincoln 1988 and Smith 1988). While the positivist paradigm, rooted in the philosophical ideas of French philosopher August Comte, leaned towards quantitative methods and their attendant concept of objectivity, which suggests that social reality can be objectively measured; the constructivist paradigm, associated with qualitative methods rejects the existence of a universal social reality. In this school of thought, social reality is not just experienced and understood differently by different people; meaning is also diverse, and is negotiated, through discourse and social interaction. It is these diversities, these differences in meaning and experience that Greene (2007), as quoted above, invites us to explore through the instrumentality of mixed methods. Indeed, it will be impracticable to accept Greene's (2007) invite, unless we break free from academic apartheid (Deacon et al. 1999). This study explores these diversities, these *differences*, these *meanings* and the *multiple standpoints* to answer the question at the core of this inquiry.

Furthermore, mixed methods, according to Maxcy (2003), Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003a), Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), follow a pragmatic paradigm. The approach does not only supports the idea that multiple techniques could be adopted in investigating a phenomenon, it also encourages the researcher to draw on both objective and subjective knowledge, test hypotheses and explore participants' experiences of the events or, as the case may be, the issues in question. The pragmatist approach, Greene (2008) argues, enables mixing and matching of methods to achieve the combination most appropriate for a given inquiry. As Maxcy (2003) also posits, a pragmatist approach supports the concept of studies so designed in order to specifically and effectively answer a research question in a manner that it 'works' practically. Taking into account these submissions vis-à-vis the complex nature of this

study, this researcher concludes that neither a quantitative nor a qualitative approach alone would be adequate to convey a satisfactory account of the issues in question.

Therefore, methods are understandably mixed. To determine the *trend* or *pattern* of the representation of Nigeria over the chosen timeframe, an account, which requires a scientific, systematic and objective form of appraisal, quantitative approach (content analysis) was adopted. In terms of evaluating *how* the issues of representation are *discursively constructed*, which requires qualitative investigation of historical and ideological power relations, cultural signs interpretation and deconstruction of frames; qualitative approach (critical discourse analysis, CDA) was applied. The interview component, another qualitative paradigm, also addresses these issues in a complementary way. It is equally important to underscore the fact that the combination of methods in this study further mitigated the inherent weaknesses in the individual methods as it enabled the triangulation of the findings, as advocated by Deacon et al (1999). The interviews are very effective in this respect. They do not only feature throughout the discussion of the other findings, they also offer the much needed alternative views from the framers of the news, which is key to the issue under study.

In terms of design, after considering many types of formats used in mixed methods research designs including Greene, Caracelli and Graham's (1989) five-format model, Maxwell and Loomis's (2003) interactive model and Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2009:140) seven-criteria, this researcher decides to adopt Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007:59-79) model, which is a four-part distinction between the '*triangulation*,' the '*embedded*,' the '*explanatory*,' and the '*exploratory*' design. In the triangulation

design-type, the implementation of both quantitative and qualitative components takes place simultaneously during the same timeframe and both methods have equal weight. The embedded design-type is slightly different. One set of data in this model, plays a supportive, secondary role in a study based on other data types. But in the explanatory design-type, qualitative data helps to explain or build on the initial quantitative results while in the exploratory design-type, the result of the qualitative helps to develop, inform or enrich the findings of the quantitative method.

In the context of this study and as stated earlier, content analysis gives insights into the *trend* and *pattern* of coverage of the chosen newspaper samples. The critical discourse component addresses the same issue from a different perspective for two different but related reasons. First, neither of the methods can sufficiently, adequately and comprehensively answer the question at issue. Second, the numbers of words used, the types of words used, their frequency of usage as well as their meanings are essential in determining the issue of representation at the core of this study. The interview component plays a supportive role throughout the process while the quantitative component also serves as a means to identifying the samples for the qualitative analysis (This is further discussed later in this chapter). Therefore, the design approach adopted in this research coheres with various categories in Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007) classification. The main components are combined to address the central research question, which fits 'triangulation.' The interviews play supportive role; which reveals the 'embedded' part while using the quantitative component to select samples for the qualitative resonates with the 'exploratory' design-type.

### **3. 5 Aims and Limitations**

As stated earlier, this work focuses on the representation of Nigeria and its democracy in the British news media, specifically from 1997 to 2007; a ten-year period of great significance in the existence of the most populous black nation in the world. The timeframe captures i) the crucial period of political logjam that preceded the country's return to democracy in October, 1999; ii) the first two years of democratic governance; and iii) the period between 2003 and 2007, during which Nigeria held two national elections with the last resulting in the peaceful transfer of political power from one civilian administration to another. As far as is known, such an approach to the study of media representation has not been attempted before. The few studies available (*see* Harrison and Palmer 1986; Ebo 1992; Martin 1994; Brookes 1995; Scott 2009) tend to lump the whole of Africa, a continent of 54 different countries with diverse people, culture and history, together and thereby obfuscate the issues. It is hard to imagine how issues relating to such a huge continent, with its attendant diversities, could be adequately, effectively and comprehensively addressed in one study. Therefore, this study is limited to Nigeria. In line with its stated focus, it adopts content analysis, a quantitative paradigm, as a means to render a scientific, systematic and objective appraisal of the outputs of the selected samples as part of the study-wide efforts to ascertain the representation of Nigeria within the given time-frame.

Similarly, critical discourse analysis (CDA), a qualitative paradigm, is applied in the evaluation of how the issues of representation are discursively constructed while the interview component, another qualitative technique helps to repudiate or validate the other findings. It is important to note that this study did not delve into the realm of audience perception or reception theory. To interrogate how audiences use news or

form opinion will take further resources and time. Therefore, audience study is clearly not within the scope of this work either by design or objective. Similarly, though this study explores the representation of 'the Other,' it does not cover alternative and radical media, which as Atton (2002) has posited, gives full heterogeneous voice to all those 'Others' (p. 9). Indeed, the argument is plausible that new media and cultural forms including the internet and internet-based platforms such as blogs, Facebook, You-tube and Twitter provide the working people, protest groups and 'the Other' tremendous opportunity to make their own news or create news relevant to their own situation (Atton 2002:11). There are, however, disparities in the distribution of that opportunity across different regions of the world. Thus access to new media technologies is not only low in Africa, new media are yet to make any significant dent on the representation of Africa in the West. Meikle (2009: 29) argues that in spite of new technologies news from culturally remote parts of the world still conform to stereotypes. Even in Africa, new technologies are yet to supplant the traditional forms of communication (Atton and Mabweazara 2011: 669).

However, there have been concerns that in spite of the strides by many African nations such as Nigeria to become more open and democratic, their efforts have not been noticed (Hunter-Gault 2002), nor have their representation deviated from the 'known pattern' (Mano 2005, De Beer 2010). That Africa's strides have not elicited a less dismal portrayal, De Beer (2010:602) notes, is a function of both the operating 'media regime' in the West for which the western media networks are complicit as well as the lack of activities on Africa's research studies frontiers. This study is an effort to address these concerns. It is also an attempt at the deconstruction of a very complex apparatus: the international news oligarchy. It aims to critically examine

trends in global news, and possibly to lay bare the veneer on the surface of the philosophy guiding the principles of news construction; which is deeply layered with hardcore ideology but the ideological bent, dressed in the garb of *objectivity* seemed well-concealed to so many citizens including news media practitioners (*see Chapter 2*).

As regards the 10 years timeframe of this research, it is thought that a study covering such a long period, though extensive, would more likely show the *trend* or *pattern* of representation than a study covering a short timeframe. Therefore, unlike Scott (2009) who studied representation of the whole of Africa in the UK newspapers just within the time-frame of one month, this study takes a different approach thus covering a more extensive period so as to ensure a more comprehensive, valid and reliable analysis. It is hoped that this work will not only engender the debate of change but also create a better understanding of these mechanisms and thus help re-focus current and future journalists on the path of improvement, which is a critical requirement for intercultural appreciation. Promoting our values is good, as van Ginneken (1998: 21) has argued, but it's also important to see why others adhere to a different one. Thus, this study invites us, as Greene (2007:20) has enthused, to participate in the dialogue about a new way of seeing, hearing, and making sense of this social world: the representation of Nigeria. Now, the subsequent section will explain the accounts of the individual methods adopted; their order of application and the procedure followed.

## **3.6 Research Process**

### **3.6.1 *Research questions***

In view of the focus of this study, it is pertinent to re-emphasize the significance of the 10-year period in the life of the country. It captures a crucial period in history

during which Nigeria held two national elections with the last resulting in the peaceful transfer of political power from one civilian administration to another. Given the political history of colonial Nigeria vis-à-vis the role of the British colonial authorities in the events leading to independence (*see chapter 1, section 2*) and how these events impacted on the administration of post-colonial Nigeria, the period marked out for this study becomes significant just as elections and successful transfer of power are indicative of some progress.

Consequent upon this, this research explores the issue of how Nigeria is represented in the British news media. Specifically, it compares the coverage of Nigeria and its democratic practices in the first three years leading to the restoration of democracy with the coverage offered in the first two years of actual practice of democracy and the coverage given during five years of democratic practices, which witnessed two national elections and successful transfer of political power to see if these strides towards creating a more open and democratic society by Nigeria elicit a positive representation, that is supportive and encouraging; or a negative representation, that is condescending and dismissive of Africans and their homeland as a “hopeless continent” at best (The Economist 2000; Saul 2002) or “a basket case” at worst (Ramos et al., 2007; Chabal 2008; De Beer 2010). The theoretical philosophy underpinning the research questions addressed by this study is located in *chapters 2 and 3*.

However, the primary question enunciated above was broken down into sub-questions. They were subsequently addressed by the different methods adopted in this research study. The questions are:

RQ1: Does the stride by Nigeria towards a more open and democratic governance reflect in the way Nigeria is represented in the British news media?

RQ2: What *trend* or *pattern*, if any, is identifiable in the representation of Nigeria?

RQ3: What are the major factors that influence or shape the representation of Nigeria in the UK news media?

### 3.6.2 Content analysis

Visiting a friend in Alloo in the spring of 2009, his mother-in-law asked this researcher if *Rockcity* is political. The response of a straight ‘No’ and further explanation that the station’s focus is: ‘News, Talkshow and Entertainment,’ elicited a very germane and revealing question: “How can the station claim not to be political when it does ‘news’?” The lesson here is: ‘news’ is chiefly about political messages. And as Grabber (2004) has pointed out, when research focuses on political messages, some form of content analysis is in order (p.53). Consequently, content analysis, as part of the triangulating research mechanisms in this study, is considered an appropriate methodology in this context. Several scholars including Travers (1969), Bailey (1978), Walizer and Wienir (1978), Krippendorf (1980), Kerlinger (1986) have defined content analysis in different ways. Kerlinger (1986) defines it as “a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables (p.525).” Berelson (1952) similarly defines it as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 18). Wimmer and

Dominick (1997:112) underline these three concepts: *systematic*, *objective*, and *quantitative* as worthy of critical consideration for researchers using the methodology.

These submissions do not only cohere with the thrust of this study, they equally account for the ‘dialogical relationship’ between method or methods, as proposed by Fairclough and mentioned earlier. Content analysis is quantitative. Its inherent quantification, as Wimmer and Dominick (1997) have pointed out, provides the statistical tools capable of aiding data interpretation and analysis (p.112). This further helps to strengthen the reliability and validity process in research. Though, content analysis has been criticized by some scholars as laborious and time-consuming, and in some cases, expensive, Wimmer and Dominick (1997) also add that it cannot alone serve as a basis for making statement about the effect of content; noting that this represents one of its major limitations (p.115). Again, the fact that its origins are rooted in the philosophical traditions of positivism has also elicited criticisms.

The positivist philosophical paradigm, as mentioned earlier, holds dear the theory of ‘objectivity,’ which works on the assumption that an objective account of social reality exists. This belief has been subjected to serious criticism (see Hansen et al., 1998:91) as well as the inherent possibility that textual evidence could be interpreted out of context. To account for this weakness, scholars counsel researchers to refrain from imposing their purpose on both the research procedure and final analysis (Krippendorff 1969:11). Rather, they should ensure that categories coded and procedure followed are well-defined and are clearly explained so as to enable the process be replicated by another researcher (Holsti 1969; Krippendorff 1980, Riffe et al., 1998). However, studies by Berelson (1952), Tannenbaum and Greenberg (1968),

Comstock (1975), Moffett and Dominick (1987), Cooper, Potter and Dupagne (1994) indicate that it has gained tremendous recognition amongst researchers and thus remains a favoured research tool, whose goal is the accurate representation of a body of message (Wimmer and Dominick 1997:112). To mitigate the flaws noted in this method and still achieve ‘accurate representation’ of the body of message in this particular context, this study has well-defined categories and makes explicit the procedures followed. It has also adopted the triangulating process as earlier stated as part of the efforts to ensure reliability and validity.

Consequently, guided by Kerlinger’s (1986) three concepts: *systematic*, *objective*, and *quantitative*; as well as the experiences of several researchers who have applied content analysis in the past (Glascok and LaRose, 1993; Bogaert, Turkovich and Hafer, 1993; Gross and Sheth, 1989; Siegelman and Bullock, 1991); this study employs similar technique in analyzing the contents of these samples i) *Times of London* ii) *The Daily Telegraph* iii) *Financial Times* iv) *The Guardian* and v) *The Independent* between 1997 and 2007 using the following variables as unit of analysis.

### **3.6.3: *Population and samples***

In accordance with the focus of the study: representation of Nigeria and its democracy in the British news media, specifically from 1997 to 2007; it is imperative to clearly define the population. News media in this context refers specifically to newspapers based, published, circulated and read in the entity known as the United Kingdom. There are more than 500 newspapers published in the UK. Selecting representative samples (for content analysis) from this huge population requires special consideration (Wimmer and Dominick 1997:117). Therefore, a stratified sampling strategy was adopted. Guided by Babbie (1995), who urges the use of clusters to

control sampling errors, cluster sampling became a useful technique in identifying 19 national newspapers from the huge population of publications in the UK. Stempel (1989) points out that researcher studying newspaper coverage of South Africa, for instance, should examine a small sample of carefully selected newspapers, which subscribe to international wire service or have correspondents in South Africa rather than studying a random sample of 100 newspapers. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) counsel researchers to obtain the minimum sample size that will accurately represent the population being targeted (p.93). In view of these, multi-stage sampling strategy was employed to select five representative newspapers for analysis out of the 19 national publications already identified. The five sample newspapers (*also see Table 1*), which fit Stempel's (1989) model, are:

*i) The Times of London*, first published as *The Daily Universal Register*, is regarded as the UK's newspaper of record. Traditionally a centre-right newspaper, *The Times* is equally a news source and its editorial columns are weighty and influential. *The Times* gives wide coverage to foreign news and is regularly available on the newsstand in Nigeria.

*ii) The Daily Telegraph* is unarguably the highest selling quality news publication in Britain. It prides itself as the voice of 'middle Britain' and has a wide coverage of politics, sports and international news. It is also known as a newspaper of record.

*iii) Financial Times*, widely acknowledged as a foremost international business newspaper, the FT is an influential source of global business intelligence. It is also renowned for its coverage of the London Stock Exchange and the world markets. The FT, which represents the business and financial publications, is also regularly available on the newsstand in Nigeria and read particularly amongst the country's elite.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Samples					
Titles	The Times	The Telegraph	Financial Times	The Guardian	The Independent
Publisher	News International/ Rupert Murdoch	The Barclay Brothers	Pearson Group	The Scott Trust	Independent Print Ltd/Alexander Ledbedev
Circulation Figures*	448,463	631,280	390,121	264,819	175,002
Sector/ Geography	Quality/ Morning	Quality/ Morning	Quality/ Morning	Quality/ Morning	Quality/ Morning
Ideological Bent/Product Type	Conservative/ National Newspaper	Conservative/ National newspaper	Business News & Global Finance	Liberal/ National Newspaper	Liberal/National Newspaper
Year of first publication	1785	1855	1888	1821	1986
Other Available Outlets	Online/Pay Subscription	Online	Online/Pay Subscription	Online	Online
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nov 29, 2010 - Jan 2, 2011 ABC Figures</li> </ul>					

iv) *The Guardian* was first published as a weekly from May 1821 to 1836; and a bi-weekly from 1836 to 1855, when it finally became a daily. It is a newspaper of records, liberal in philosophy and balance in its coverage. *The Guardian* is the first UK national newspaper to admit errors and make corrections in the next day's publication, which further consolidates readers' trust. *The Guardian* covers foreign news and is sold in Nigeria.

v) *The Independent* is the youngest quality newspaper in Britain. The newspaper's stance is towards the left of the political spectrum. Though troubled by funding and dwindling circulation, it has established itself as a major voice in the British news media industry with its wide coverage of local and international news.

Worthy of note here are two distinct but related issues. These are the decision to study *only* newspapers, on the one hand, and only *quality* newspapers, on the other hand. According to Ladder (2007:3), 47% of British citizens use newspapers as their sources of news regarding Africa. In the same vein, Brown and Minty (2006:1) report

on their analysis of US media coverage after the 2004 tsunami reflects the enormous influence newspapers wield in not only shaping public views but also in galvanizing public action. They note that charitable giving increased by 18% percent following the publication of an additional 700-word news articles by *The New York Times* or *Wall Street Journal*. Also, Olsen et al., (2003) find a link between relevant articles in western newspapers and humanitarian aid allocated to victims of both the 1999 cyclone in India and the 2000 flooding in Mozambique (cited in Brown and Minty, 2006).

Moreover, as regards quality and tabloid newspapers, quality newspapers, as opposed to the popular press or 'Red Top,' notes Palmer (2000: 38), have extensive coverage, which includes background information, context as well as wider range of reactions. Whereas the popular press carries fewer foreign stories compared to the quality press except, Palmer argues further, when there is a human interest story of great magnitude such as disaster or some form of UK involvement with attractive or compelling photographs (p.36-8). The popular press generally tend to be banal, particularly in cases where the issue of differences in culture, ethnic nationality or national identity is concerned. Results from Darnton's Public Perceptions of Poverty (PPP) study, underscores this point. It shows that tabloid readers are more likely to be less concerned (2005a: 12) about poverty issues in poor countries while quality newspaper readers are likely to be 'very concerned' (2005b:12).

The popular press, as Richardson (2007:169) has noted, is known for its anti-immigrant bias and racism. Though the quality newspapers too are susceptible to manifesting what Billig (1995) terms 'banal nationalism,' as they, like other news

outlets, are often implicated in the agenda to construct, preserve and sustain national identities in order to maintain a sense of belonging to an imagined community (Anderson 1983); they still exercise some modicum of restraint. Most importantly, they devote larger amount of space to analysis and contextualization as opposed to the breezy sensationalism of the 'Red-Top' press. They also act as sources of news and, are largely perceived as publications of records. They are also influential as they address policy makers and the elite. The chosen newspaper samples fit this mould even though a couple of British mid-market newspapers such as *The Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* equally influence policy makers. However, two each of the selected newspapers, as stated above, are on either sides of the political spectrum while the fifth is business-oriented; representing the importance of economics in international news.

As Wimmer and Dominick (1997) suggest, the major advantage of analyzing samples that are representative is reduction in sampling errors (p.69). Thus, analysis of these five samples adequately represents the target population considering the stated focus of this study and both the researcher's prior knowledge and familiarity with the population samples eliminate the disadvantages in selection procedures. Although the content analysis component of this study only evaluates the print news media, brief references are made in the discussion (through the insights of the interviewees) to the BBC, which has grown to become a major voice of the British state in global media sphere and more importantly, the symbol of its power relations in post-colonial Africa.

#### 3.6.4: *Unit of Analysis*

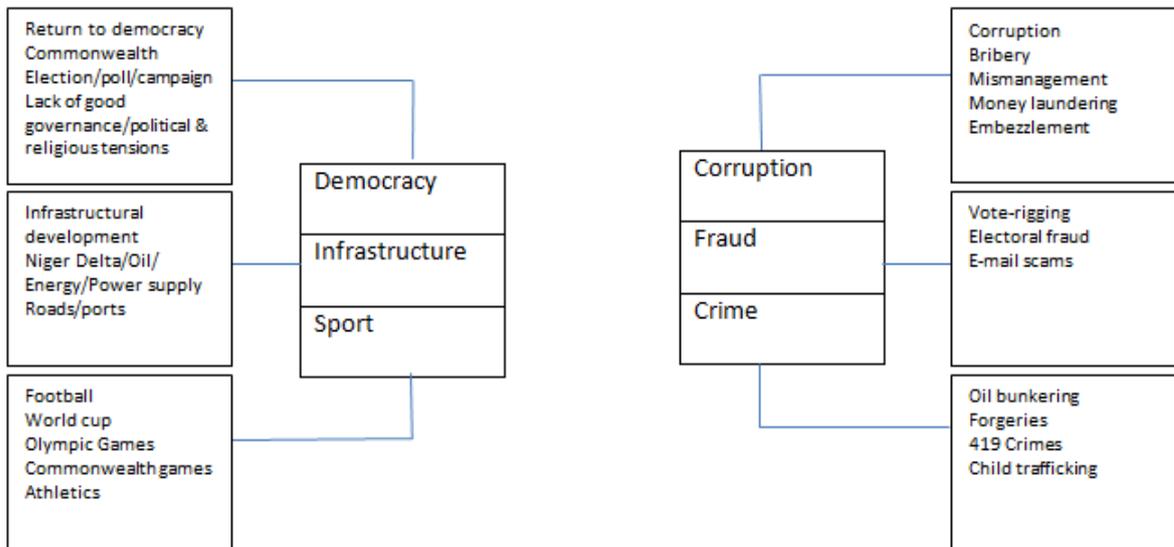
Wimmer and Dominick (1997) note that operational definitions of the unit of analysis should be clear, thorough and unambiguous; stressing that the criteria for inclusion

must be apparent and easily observable (p.119). Several scholars have also underscored the importance of the category system in this context. A category system means placing one unit of analysis in one and only one category (Wimmer and Dominick 1997:120). As Berelson (1952:147) has noted, categories that are clearly formulated and well-adapted to the problem and the content are essential to productive studies. Bearing this in mind, the researcher has taken the pains to develop a relevant category system that is mutually exclusive, exhaustive, and reliable (Berelson 1952, Holsti 1981). They include:

- |                         |                           |                   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| A. i) <i>Democracy</i>  | ii) <i>Infrastructure</i> | iii) <i>Sport</i> |
| B. i) <i>Corruption</i> | ii) <i>Fraud</i>          | iii) <i>Crime</i> |

The formulation of this category system is informed by the result of a pilot study conducted in the autumn of 2008. The study, which focused on the coverage of the five UK samples of the Nigeria's election campaigns of 1999, 2003 and 2007, reveals a number of frequently mentioned issues, which dominated the coverage. These include: 'return to democracy,' 'commonwealth,' 'corruption,' 'lack of good governance,' 'bribery,' 'crumbling infrastructure,' 'election,' 'poll,' 'campaign,' 'Niger Delta,' 'oil bunkering,' 'oil spillage' and 'oil prices.' Others are 'sport,' 'football,' world cup,' Olympic game, 'crime,' '419 criminals' 'email scams' 'forgeries,' 'vote-rigging,' 'electoral fraud,' 'religious dichotomy' 'Christian south,' 'Muslims north,' political violence,' 'tribal tensions' and 'instability' as well as 'poverty.' These frequently mentioned issues are thus categorised under relevant headings. For example, issues relating to 'return to democracy,' 'governance,' 'poll,' 'election,' 'campaign' and 'commonwealth' are grouped under '*democracy*,' while issues relating to '419 criminals,' email scams,' 'forgeries' are categorised under '*crime*' (see figure 1 for details).

Figure 1: Categories A and B



Thus, Category A has three different units. The first, *Democracy*, is indicative of the totality of the system of governance. It encompasses all the processes involved in transfer of political powers, which is key to political stability. Political stability manifests in social and economic development, technological breakthroughs, medical feats, IT advancement etc. It is the backbone of the organized modern society. The second, *Infrastructure*, represents the level of economic development and measures growth in real terms. The decision to include *Infrastructure* instead of other pure economic indicators is informed by the fact that the World Bank, having come to the conclusion that sustainable growth is better achieved through infrastructural development with regards to Africa, has identified the need to put emphasis on infrastructure. In addition, infrastructure impacts on the landscape, which tells the story of growth and development better. Consequently, the news media, particularly newspapers often use photographs of nation's city landscapes to depict level of development. For instance, the skyline of New York testifies to US state of

development. The third unit, *Sport*, represents focus on social interaction and is a key factor in appraising patriotism or nationalism (Billig 1995).

Category B equally has three units, *Corruption*, *Fraud* and *Crime*. It is considered that while news focus on the first category connotes positive coverage and tends towards helpful representation, a tilt towards the second category would connote negative representation. As Wimmer and Dominick (1997:121) have recommended, a pre-test of these categories was undertaken to ensure reliability. The argument for pre-test is supported by Weber's (1985) hypothesis that coding reliability or reproducibility is particularly relevant to content analysis as it 'measures the consistency of shared understanding and meanings' (p.17). With shared understandings and meanings established, quantification and coding were carried out with less difficulty while tabulation of data was accomplished with the help of computer to ensure the sanctity of the process.

A pilot content study, as mentioned earlier, was conducted using Lexis-Nexis research resources as a further means of ensuring reliability and validity. Although this database has been criticized for its inherent weaknesses such as retrieval of irrelevant materials, problems of identifying appropriate keywords and random omissions (Deacon 2007); these critiques were specifically accounted for while planning the project design by ensuring that the keywords directly speak to the issues in question because, as Berelson (1952) has counselled, studies are only productive when categories are well-adapted to the problem and the content. Given the timeframe of this study and amount of data to be considered, it would be impracticable to consult

hard copies while to reduce the samples would not produce an effective, comprehensive, reliable and valid analysis.

Therefore, with the insights gained from the pilot study, which was severally repeated to ensure procedural reliability, each category was searched and retrieved independently from Lexis-Nexis databases. For example, for stories linking Nigeria with democracy, the keywords: '*Nigeria*' and '*democracy*' were input into the search engine and, in order to eliminate irrelevant materials, the option of '*major mentions*' was selected from the drop down menu. In the same vein, to ensure that a strong link is established between the keywords in the retrieved stories, the option of '*same paragraph*,' was selected. Additionally, the option of '*high similarity*,' a new search device on Lexis-Nexis, was set at '*on*' to further ensure that duplicated articles were eliminated. This process was repeated for each of the units in the two sets of categories listed above. The materials retrieved for the 10-year period of the study are enormous.

Thus, for manageability reasons, this researcher followed the footsteps of Troyna (1981:104) who, in his analysis of the reporting of race in two regional newspapers, randomly selected a date in January and then selected every 13<sup>th</sup> issue of the newspaper over a period of three years. This study adopts a similar technique but slightly modified. After retrieving the relevant stories from the databases of Nexis-Lexis, as stated earlier, this researcher then picked every ninth story for analysis. This increases the chances of having various categories of news items selected. The process was repeated for all the chosen categories. The retrieved materials, a total of 3,127 stories in all, are then processed using Microsoft Excel to determine the number

of articles and number of words for each article (*see the Appendix section for details*). This meant the word-count format is used instead of measuring size of columns. Although keywords search from electronic databases foreclosed analysis of newspapers' visual design; to further ensure validity and reliability, the retrieved articles were read and compared with hard copies, which further provides insights on the hierarchy of importance attached to each article or story by the newspapers. It is important to note that because of the complex and controversial nature of the subject of this study, this researcher avoided the use of pre-set categories in coding the data as this might impose a pre-defined agenda on the corpus.

However, in coding the *types* of articles, this researcher followed the normal pre-set format of distinguishing between *editorial*, *comment*, *letter to the editor*, *news* and *sources of the articles* in newspapers sections. These sets of categories were coded to determine the level of distribution of both informative and evaluative items in the samples (*see Chapter 7 for details*). This is germane to the context of this study as they do not only represent the distribution of voices in the publications' content; they also speak volumes regarding the issue of access. Access is crucial to the issue of representation. The thrust of news stories, the space allotted a news event, the sources quoted, as well as the kind of prominence given an issue are, altogether as important, as the linguistic and the syntactic elements that shaped news production. More so, all these factors are not just a function of the value judgment in the process of news making (Richardson 2008: 156); they are also informed and conditioned by the ideological stance of the newspaper organisation (Bell 1991; Conboy 2007), as well as the culture, educational background and worldviews of their officials such as editors, correspondents and reporters. Now, to the qualitative component:

### 3.6.5: Critical discourse Analysis

The role of this researcher, in the context of the focus of this study, is to analyze the texts of the chosen samples within the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA). To evaluate and determine the *trend* or *pattern* of representation of Nigeria and its democracy in the British news media, first of all, requires examining *context and meanings, language* and *power relations* as well as the *ideology* inherent in the texts as a whole. Analyzing texts, as Fairclough (2003:15) has argued, is best suited to explore *meanings, themes, context, and language* amongst other basics of social constructions (including historical and ideological elements) needed to understand the authors, their environment and sources of power and domination in that environment. Second, it also requires taking a critical look at *what is* - the *status quo* of representation; interrogate its structures; to ascertain whether there's a need for emancipation.

For this reason, Karl Marx enjoins us to understand the situation and then take commensurate action to effect change where necessary. Thus, his question: "why should we be content to understand the world instead of trying to change it?" (Marx 1846/1974: 123). Oliver Wright puts it more succinctly: "if we worked on the assumption that what is accepted as true is really true, there would be little hope for advance" (cited in McFarland 2001: 314). Recognizing the danger in our tendency to acquiesce with the *status quo*, even in the face of debilitating social inequality, Schutz (1972) concludes thus, we live in a "taken for granted" reality; which means living in a "particular level of experience that presents itself as not in need of further analysis" (p.74). As Thomas (1993: 3) has argued, we create meanings and choose courses of action within the confines of generally accepted existing choices, but these choices

often reflect hidden meanings and unrecognized consequences. It is a truism that in the world of representation of Nigeria (and, Africa generally), there's an '*accepted existing*' reality- the *norm*, representing a kind of '*given picture.*' in the western news media. It is this '*accepted existing reality*' that these thinkers and scholars enjoin us to subject to interrogation; to question, to analyze and, to examine from different perspectives, so as to see and make sense of the *given* representation, as Greene (2007) has urged, in a new way.

Critical discourse analysis thus provides the platform to properly dissect what is *given*, scrutinize what Thomas calls *these hidden meanings* and *their unrecognized consequences* in the context of the representation of Nigeria in the British news media. Consequently, this study employs the framework of critical discourse analysis to describe, analyze, open to scrutiny otherwise hidden agendas, power centres, and assumptions that inhibits, repress, and constrain (Thomas 1993: 3) because as the work of Reisigl and Wodak (2001) has shown, critical discourse analysis is concerned with unearthing complexity, challenging reductionism and making opaque structures of power relations manifest. According to van Dijk (2001:352), it is most suitable to study the way in which 'social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social political context.'

Teun van Dijk's emphasis on *text* and *talk* brings into focus the traditional distinction between those two elements of the concept. As Garrett and Bell (1998) explain, *discourse* in that traditional sense refers to talk or the spoken words, while *text* refers to the written words or written language. However, that distinction has disappeared as the concept is now generally applied to the diverse systems of representation

employed in talks about social life, including the conduct of politics and international relations, news construction and presentation, as well as different ways of language use in social practice, (*see* van Dijk 1985, Fiske 1987, Fairclough 1995a, 2003). Critical discourse analysis derives from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second World War (Agger 1992b; Rasmussen 1996).

Its current bent towards language and discourse was influenced and shaped by the thoughts of the “critical linguistics” in the late 1970s in Australia and the UK (Fowler et al. 1979; *see* also Mey 1985). In its evolutionary years, CDA was influenced by similar “critical” developments in sociolinguistics, psychology, and the social sciences, some of which already dated back to the early 1970s (Birnbaum 1971; Hymes 1972; Fay 1987; Thomas 1993; Calhoun 1995; Singh 1996; Turkel 1996; Wodak 1996; Fox and Prilleltensky 1997; Ibanez and Iniguez 1997). As is the case in these neighbouring disciplines, Dijk (2001:352) suggests that critical discourse analysis (CDA) may be viewed as a reaction against the dominant formal and, or “uncritical” paradigms of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, the term discourse analysis holds that texts, language, and communication be considered in their social context given the fact that they are formed and informed by a much wider process within the society.

Worthy of mention here is this notion’s contention that texts are far from being a neutral agent, which merely and passively report upon the world. Texts, like news, infuse their reports with meanings, shape perspectives and, therefore, call the world into being in certain particular ways. Fairclough (1992a: 41) calls this discursive process an ‘active relation to reality.’ In furtherance of this discussion, Fairclough

(2003) then outlines three characteristics of discourse within social life (p.26) as *genre*, which deals with ways of acting; *discourse*, which characterizes ways of representing; and *style*, which explores ways of being. In this sense, ‘genres’ refer to ways of manipulating and framing discourse. Examples of these can be found in political speeches [see van Dijk’s (2009) for Blair’s speech in the UK parliament on March 18, 2003], church sermons, newspaper interviews and, or news articles. Genres are significant as they do not only provide the framework with which the audience comprehends discourse; they also act as the nexus of power, domination and resistance.

Discourses deal with representation and it is concerned with the means through which aspects of the world is perceived, appreciated or understood while styles involves the ways by which discourse is used to evolve the sense of being and identity. Thus, style becomes the agent through which identification is located by the simple application of a particular kind of discourse. For instance, the notion of ‘*us*’ and ‘*them*,’ the ‘*modern organized society*’ and the ‘*primitive backward nation*,’ the ‘*urbane and cultured colonizers*’ and the ‘*hopeless colonies*,’ the ‘*nations*’ and the ‘*tribes*,’ the ‘*first worlds*’ and the ‘*third worlds*,’ that permeates international news (as mentioned in chapter 2, section 4) is located within racial discourse just as the justification of human suffering in poor countries of the south, characterized by resorting to blaming the victims (Atton 2002: 10), is firmly located in the discourse of imperialism. The discourse analyst’s role in this scenario, van Dijk (2001:352) posits, is not only to offer a different mode or perspective of theorizing on these issues but also to reject the possibility of a value-free science. Teun van Dijk’s argument is premised on the fact that ‘science, and especially scholarly discourse, is inherently part of and influenced

by social structure, and produced in social interaction.’ He contends that instead of denying or ignoring the existence of such a relationship between scholarship and society, such relations should be studied and accounted for in their own right; surmising that if it does mean, by so doing, that the discourse analysts conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with dominated groups; it is in order (352-353).

Therefore, it is quite in order for this study to employ the instrumentality of the critical variant of discourse analysis to address what Thomas (1993) terms the hidden agendas, power centres, and assumptions that inhibits, repress, and constrain. It is also in order to examine the ideological philosophy that makes the enactment; the reproduction, the sustenance of power abuse; dominance and social inequality possible (see van Dijk 1985, Kress 1985, Fowler 1985, Fairclough 1995a, Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, Reisigl and Wodak 2001). It is equally in order to interrogate the labyrinth of subtle domineering discourses which feed perception and attitudes dictating the representation of Nigeria (and indeed, Africa) in the British news media as van Dijk (1991) examined racist discourse within the British press.

However, critical discourse analysis has been criticized as being too subjective, negative or sceptical and that it allows the will of the researcher be imposed on the analysis (Schegloff 1997; Stubbs 1997). Reisigl and Wodak (2001) debunk such criticism, arguing that CDA does not imply the commonsense meaning of being negative or sceptical because it is most concerned about proposing alternatives. Fairclough (2003) rejects suggestions that any text at all could be interpreted objectively (p.15) just as Teun van Dijk (2001) dismisses the existence of a “value-free” science. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) also argue in the same vein pointing

out that every analysis is shaped by the researcher's theoretical and ideological presumptions. They, therefore, task the researcher to explain the given text based on both theoretical and practical arguments. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that validity in critical discourse analysis, as in every qualitative method, rests on the sanctity of the accounts rendered. Meyer (2001) recommends combining critical discourse analysis with other methods, as this does not only enable triangulation of findings: it also ensures enriched analysis. This study follows this course.

### ***3.6.6: Account of the Procedure followed***

Unlike in the content analysis component, where word-count and distribution of coverage of the selected newspaper samples over the period covered by the study are carried out; in this segment, the focus is on analyzing the texts as a means to, as Fairclough (2003:15) has proposed, explore meanings, themes, context, and language amongst other basics of social constructions including historical and ideological elements in news texts. Teun van Dijk (2001: 359) underscores the undeniable power of the news media and how it has attracted many critical studies in such disciplines as linguistics, semiotics, pragmatics, and discourse studies. In his treatise, van Dijk traces how media studies from the content analytical paradigms and the media language approach have only examined the 'easily observable surface structures,' such as biased, stereotypical, sexist or racist images in texts, illustrations, and photos,' noting that the critical tone was set by the series of "Bad News" studies conducted by the Glasgow University Media Group (1976, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1993) on features of TV reporting in the coverage of issues such as strikes, the Falklands (Malvinas) war and AIDS. But the critical approach to media studies has continued to develop with the work of such scholars as Couldry (2003) and Durham and Kellner (2012) among others.

However, Agger (1992a), Collins et al., (1986), Hall et al., (1980) are also important research works from the cultural studies paradigm. Davis and Walton's (1983) studies represent earlier critical approaches to analysis of media images. An early collection of works by Roger Fowler and his collaborators (Fowler et al., 1979; see Cotter 2001) also focuses on the media but the critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to media studies was adopted by Fairclough (1995b). Studies in this paradigm follow the theoretical framework of Halliday's functional-systemic grammar in examining the "transitivity" of syntactic patterns of sentences (see Martin 2001). This perspective holds that events and actions may be described with syntactic variations that are a function of the underlying involvement of actors (e.g. their agency, responsibility, and perspective).

Thus, in analysing media accounts of the riots during a minority festival, van Dijk (2001) argues, the responsibility of the authorities and especially of the police in such violence may be systematically de-emphasized by defocusing through passive constructions and nominalizations; that is, by leaving agency and responsibility implicit. Fowler's later critical studies of the media did not only continue this tradition, it also applauded the British cultural studies paradigm for defining news not as a reflection of reality, but as a product shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces (Fowler 1991:70). For such critical studies, Fowler focuses on such linguistic tools as the analysis of transitivity in syntax, lexical structure, modality, and speech acts. Teun van Dijk (1988b) applies similar theory to news discourse (van Dijk 1988a) as well as in critical studies of international news and racism in the press.

These submissions give credence to the fundamental assumption that meaning is a “social production” (Acosta-Alzuru and Lester-Roushanzamir 2000:300). Since newspapers are socially produced, either institutionally or communally, meaning is inherently attached to their texts. Miller (1994:216) suggests that “inquiry into the ways in which language itself is used in terms of, for instance, choices of voice, persona, and style and how those choices influence and interact with readers in different ways” is very important. Krippendorf (1980) proposes a method of investigation in this context that emphasizes identifying the phenomenon, the representative samples, developing a coding system as well as intra and inter-coder reliability framework. For the purpose of analyzing representation of Nigeria in the British news media, this study follows both the suggestion of Miller and the technique of Krippendorf in examining the voices, and of course, the personae that construct the text, both ideologically and historically while being guided by the philosophy of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as enunciated by Fairclough (1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2003), Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), van Dijk (1985, 1988a, 1988b, 1991, 2001, 2005) and Reisigl and Wodak (2009).

### ***3.6.7: The specific analytical tools for CDA***

This section provides a detailed account of the methods employed in the critical discourse analysis. In so doing, it provides a key to the texture of interpretations in chapters 5 and 6. As Fairclough (1995b) has argued, three processes simultaneously take place in a text. They are construction of identities, construction of relations and representation. Language and its use enable these constructions to take place (Givon 2009). Thus language use in any text, especially media texts, is not only fundamental to social practice, it is bound up with causes and effects, which under normal

circumstance are not noticeable (Bourdieu 1977). Fairclough (1995b) expands this idea further by noting that “connections between the use of language and the exercise of power are often not clear to people but appear on closer examination to be virtually important to the workings of power” (p. 54). To illustrate this point, Fairclough points attention to the practice whereby a reporter, as one who speaks for the public, legitimately challenges the politician and notes that the opacity of such practice even to those involved in them (the invisibility of their ideological assumptions, and of the power relations which underlie the practice) helps to sustain these power relations (1995b:54). Similarly, reporters and editors producing the media texts that constitute international news (including news about Nigeria) are legitimately doing their work while the ideological assumptions underpinning their practice, though invisible, sustain regional power relations.

The mass media, as institutions of power along with religion, education and markets, play a catalytic role in naturalizing such social practices (Bucholtz and Hall, 2003; Fairclough 1989, 1995b; Archakis and Tsakona, 2012). Thus, media texts do not just mirror the reality out there: they constitute versions of reality in ways which depend on the social positions and interest and objectives of those who produce them. They do so through the various choices made at various levels in the processes of producing the texts (Fairclough 1995b: 104). As such, analyzing representational process in a text, Fairclough (1995b) argues further, “comes down to an account of what choices are made - what is included and what is excluded, what is made explicit or left implicit, what is foregrounded and what is backgrounded, what is thematized and what is unthematized, what process types and categories are drawn upon to represent events...” (p. 104). Therefore, in order to decipher how Nigeria is constructed as

news, the texts of the five UK samples are examined from the perspective of both linguistic and intertextual analyses. “Linguistic analysis,” argues Fairclough “is descriptive in nature, whereas intertextual analysis is more interpretative” (1995b: 61). Though this analysis (especially in chapter 5 and 6) adopted the linguistic framework where necessary, it no doubt leaned heavily on intertextual analysis as a major tool of its examination. The different tools of analysis adopted are:

### *Linguistic Analysis*

In view of the context of this study, some linguistic concepts and tools are adopted in relation to newspaper texts. It is important to note that the approach adopted here is unavoidably selective. It misses out some notable and key concepts as the contribution of linguistics to textual analysis is vast and diverse (see Fowler 1991, van Dijk 1997a, 1997b; Bell 1991, Fairclough 1995b and others for exhaustive details). However, as Fairclough (1995b: 104) has noted, two major aspects of texts should be considered during analysis. One is structuring of proposition, which is concerned with the representation of individuals and other social actors, the analysis of clauses representing actions, processes, and events. The other is the organization of these single clauses into a coherently structured whole. In view of this insight, Richardson (2007:47-8) contends that linguistic analysis of news texts should move from micro-textual to macro-textual analysis. Richardson’s argument is that linguistic analysis should go beyond analysis of words through sentences to the organization of meaning across a text as a whole. Therefore, as this study is concerned, the linguistic features of the news texts (of the selected five UK samples) are examined in order to establish what is present in the news and what is not, as they provide evidence in unpacking the meaning across the whole texts. Some of the linguistic concepts adopted are explained below:

**Lexical analysis:** As articulated by Kress (1989) and Fairclough (2000), lexical analysis refers to the process of analyzing the choice of words used by a text producer. Therefore, the analysis of words used in a newspaper text is usually the first stage of any text or discourse analysis. This is essentially because words, as Richardson (2007) has argued, convey both the imprint of society and of value judgments in particular (p. 47). All types of words, particularly nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs bear connoted as well as denoted meanings. For example, take the use of the word *cajole* from the statement: “*An action group seeking to cajole Nigeria into a swifter return to democracy meets in London today...*” as well as “*when their membership was suspended...*” [see Excerpt 1, p.145]. While *their* emphasizes distant and difference, *cajole* calls attention to a distant ‘Other’ in need of sweet-talk to embrace democracy as pointed out on p.146. Thus words used in a news text do not just communicate the message of such text: they also help frame the text in a certain direct and unavoidable ways. Words provide the evidence for interpretation in intertextual analysis (Fairclough 1995b: 61). The words identified above serve the same purpose in this case.

**Overlexicalization:** Fowler et al. (1979) define overlexicalisation as a strategy of encoding ideology in news discourse. It entails excessive use of particular words and their synonyms or where there is evidence of over-description. According to Fowler, powerless people are often over-lexicalized. The terms ‘female lawyer,’ ‘male nurse,’ ‘black Africans’ and ‘*Muslim North*’ in respect of the story about Nigeria’s vice-president as noted on p.154, are examples of overlexicalization. Also, the excessive use of the word ‘corruption’ and its repetitive co-location with Nigeria (as noted on p. 189-192) underscores how over-description is used in text production to achieve

certain discursive aim. Teo (2000) notes that it often has a pejorative effect as it reflects judgments based on biased cultural norms.

**Transitivity:** This key analytic component provides text producers particularly news workers with the potentials for categorizing the infinite variety of occurrences or ‘goings on’ into a finite set of process types (Teo 2000). Transitivity helps to identify who plays an important role in a particular clause and who receives the consequences of that action. In other words, it is concerned with how actions are represented. For example, the transitive action in “*Fraudsters who are using London...to operate their scams,*” in sentence 1 (p.221-222) does not only amplifies the dominant discourse it also reinforces the notion that “*they*” are not part of “*us*” while the predicate “*many of which are connected with Nigeria,*” in sentence 2 is indicative of where “*they*” (the fraudsters) belong. Thus the action of a single Nigerian was framed as typical of all Nigerians in respect of scam and the consequence of such scam is borne by the Britain among others (see sentence 7, excerpt 1, p.221). The principle of transitivity, which Iwamoto (1995) also renders in terms of who does what to whom, was applied in describing the said action in certain ways.

**Allusions:** Januschek (1994) defines allusions as a linguistic term that relies on active, thinking and discriminating recipient. Allusions, Wodak (2004) contends, suggest negative associations without being held responsible for them. A text reader must make the associations in the act of reception (Wodak and de Cillia 1988: 10) as allusions depend on shared knowledge. The text producer who alludes to something counts on the preparedness of the recipients to consciously call to mind the facts alluded to (Wodak 2004: 207). Allusions are frequently used in politics to devalue opponents and in media texts concerning the out-groups. The use of “*the new chief*” instead of the “*new head of state*” in sentence 4 (excerpt 2, see p.192-194) alludes to

the colonial construct that Africans are culturally suitably governed by traditional chiefs. Also, the use of “*familiar Nigerian problems*” (see p.194, 195 and 197) is alluding to something which the writer believes his reader would consciously call to mind.

**Presuppositions:** This concept, according to Schiffrin (1994), makes it possible to make explicit the implicit assumptions and intertextual relations that underlie text production. Since CDA has demonstrated that language is continually used to highlight, silence and shape qualities of people, the world and events (Hansen and Machin 2012: 166), presuppositions are a central mechanism used in this process. It is impossible not to use presuppositions in the production of text, particularly news texts. They are a sort of background belief. As Wodak (2004:208) has posited, presuppositions imply that people see certain assumptions as “common sense beliefs” or “shared truth” (see also van Dijk 2009). Reah (2002) and Fairclough (2000) argue that presuppositions are a powerful representational tool in journalistic texts. This device is used to represent the state of power supply in Nigeria as pointed out on p.195-196. The use of “*Familiar Nigerian problems have intervened*” (p.197) exemplifies the assumption of a common-sense belief.

**Modals:** Generally, modals refer to verbs and auxiliary verbs expressing grammatical mood such as possibility and necessities. Thus modality is concerned with judgements, comments and attitude of a text producer in text and talk or, as Simpson (1993) puts it, it refers to a speaker's “attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence” (p.47). Modal choices are key elements of the language of journalism. Statements such as “*To Tony Blair he (in reference to Obasanjo) was one of the "new generation" of African leaders who would help to drag the continent out of its dependency on foreign aid*” and “*It (in reference to Nigeria)*

*ought to be the powerhouse of Africa,*” as noted on p.209, 217 and 219 are examples of modality underlining the attitude towards the proposition expressed.

**Rhetorical Tropes:** Rhetorical tropes include hyperbole, metaphor, metonym, neologism, synecdoche and puns. They are used to shape understanding of a situation rather than describe it in concrete terms. In media texts, their use indicates attempts at persuasion and abstraction. Thus Richardson (2004) argues that journalism is best approached as an argumentative discourse genre. This observation is premised on the fact that journalists employ rhetorical strategies aimed at persuading others to accept their point of view (Thompson 1996: 6), draw attention and as such indirectly emphasise specific meanings (van Dijk 1991: 217). For example, the statements “*Nigeria, after all, is **the Vatican of the international church of theft and fraud,***” (*Daily Telegraph*, 07/12/2003) and “*....Bangladesh might become ‘**another Nigeria**’*” (see p.190, 197, 214, 223, 288 and 167) construct Nigeria as a metaphor for a failed state and thus persuade readers to perceive Nigeria as such. Similarly, arguments about African economies stuttering because they are not fully liberalized exemplify how journalists emphasize specific meanings (see p.164-168). The proponent of the argument was silent on the fact that Britain and other developed economies achieved industrialization through the same means Africans are now being told to abandon. Text producers are able to make such arguments through the use of different rhetorical strategies.

### ***Intertextual Analysis***

As noted above, intertextual analysis entails making explicit on text what is not implicit but exists in other texts. The concept of intertextuality is founded on the idea that texts cannot be viewed or studied in isolation and that all texts must be understood in relation to other texts. Intertextuality is central to Fairclough’s model of

CDA, which holds that texts can only be understood in relation to social context (Phillips and Jorgensen 2002:70) and also in terms of internal and external intertextualities; two characteristics, which are significant to the study of journalism (Richardson 2007). Internal intertextuality includes quotation and reported speech. A large amount of news text is constitutive of some politicians' comments, judges' pronouncements, sources or experts' opinions and they may be processed as direct quotation. All of these (particularly reported speech) often constitute the larger component of news reporting.

Consequently, Leitch (1983) notes that prior texts reside in present texts. Indeed, as Richardson (2007) puts it, all texts consist of, or are composed from, fragments or elements of previous texts (p.101). On the other hand, external intertextuality, Richardson further argues, means texts can only be intelligible, that is completely meaningful, when contextualized and read in relation to other texts and other social practices. This is because "every text," argues Blommaert (1999:5), "incorporates, reformulates, reinterprets, or re-reads previous texts...every act of communication is grounded in semantic and pragmatic histories which are not simple and linear, but complex, multi-layered and fragmented." The running story is a good and succinct journalistic example of this idea. Most importantly, intertextual analysis affords the analyst the latitude of depending upon social and cultural understanding in his or her interpretation. Such latitude, as Fairclough (1995b:61) has argued, can seem problematic to those who expect more 'objective' form of analysis, even though it is easy to overstate the objectivity of linguistic analysis. Notwithstanding, Fairclough contends that connecting linguistic analysis of texts to an intertextual analysis is crucial in bridging the gap between text and language on one hand, and society and

culture on the other. Thus following Fairclough's idea, this researcher links linguistic and intertextual analyses to untangle how language use and social practices impact on the construction of Nigeria as news in the five UK samples. Some of the mechanisms adopted in this respect are explained below:

**Argumentation:** Journalism, Richardson (2004) posits, is best approached as an argumentative discourse genre. Wodak (2004) also outlines several ways in which the concept of argumentation is a key component of discursive strategies for positive self and negative other representation. The objective of argumentation in journalistic text, Wodak explains, is to justify positive or negative attributions and the device relied upon is called '*topoi*,' which enables justification of political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination, or preferential treatment (2004:207). As such, the Nigerian political class is rendered as "*notoriously venal*," its president is "*an inept leader whose policies are not only ineffective but as someone who can't be trusted to keep a promise*" (see p.209) but for similar reasons, as pointed out on p.208-211, the British political class and its leadership were positively and preferentially treated.

**Recontextualization:** This is a process of transferring given elements to a new context or inserted into a new context (Wodak 2001: 90). Recontextualization allows metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases and depictions used to justify colonialism to resurrect into new euphemism in current news discourse. For example, the statement, "*If only they'd be equally frank with each other...*" in reference to Nigerians' attitude to public discourse is a new euphemism for one of the racist phrases expressed by the colonial governor-general of Nigeria, Frederick Lugard regarding the African personae. Recontextualization allows these phrases and exemplars to be recycled and re-used in modern day news reporting as indicated in the analysis on p.152.

**Naming and reference:** The manner in which people are named and referenced in text or speech, as Kress (1989) and Fairclough (2003) have shown, has significant impact on how they are viewed. Text producers do have a range of naming choices when they wish to refer to a person or a group. Their choice does not just place people or a group in a particular way in the social world, it also highlights certain aspects they wish to draw attention to and silence others as well. The use of this device in context is best illustrated with the way Nigeria is commonly referenced in news texts (see p.197). For instance, the statement “*a country much known for its kleptocratic tendencies*” (*The Times* 4/12/1998) as noted on p.190 is inviting readers to perceive the country in a certain way.

**Power of discourse:** Jäger and Maier (2009:35) conceptualise discourse as a knowledge-related process involving power and domination. Link (1983) defines discourse as ‘an institutionalized way of talking that regulates and reinforces action and thereby exerts power (p.60). Thus discourses are not merely about expression of social practice, they work for the exercise of power. As such, the power of discourse lies in the fact that discourses allow text producers to amplify the positive on the one hand and inhibit the negative on the other hand. The *Financial Times* editorial (see p.211), which cautioned against making corruption the national narrative of Britain in spite of lurid accounts of corrupt practices, exemplifies how discourse is used to amplify the positive. Also, the reportage of the BAE scandal (see p.212) illustrates how discourse is used to inhibit the negative. As Jäger and Maier (2009) have noted, discourses guide the individual and collective creation of reality.

Other discursive strategies used for positive self-representation and negative other-representation include referential and nomination, which is concerned with the use of

membership categorization, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors, metonyms and synecdoches in the construction of in-groups and out-groups. This strategy was put to effect in respect of how two Nigerian social actors, James Ibori and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala were constructed as news (see the analysis of excerpts 13 and 14, p.218-220). Similarly, the strategies of predication, perspectivation, framing and discourse representation are also used by text producers to label social actors and highlight point of view. These devices are also employed to amplify the construction of Nigeria as a distant and differentiated 'Other,' while rebuttals by Nigerian officials are treated as fragments or are fitted into dominant discourse flow as indicated in the analysis on p.224-225. Thus, the linguistic features of the news texts of the selected five UK samples are closely examined in order to establish what is present in the news texts and what is not as these provide evidence used for interpretation in intertextual analysis. However, as regards this evidence and the interpretation, there are some limitations, which are discussed in section 4.1, p. 100-102.

### 3.6.8: *The corpus for CDA*

This section gives a detailed account of how the corpus for the critical discourse analysis is selected. In the context of this study, focus on news stories is very important. As Reason and Garcia (2007) have noted, past studies in this category tend to place undue emphasis on media items such as editorials or comment articles presumed to be the most shaped by ideology; thus neglecting the communication of attitudes, values and opinion in supposedly more neutral news reports (p.308). There are several methods for choosing samples for this kind of analysis. One model is to choose a particular date for sampling and evaluate only excerpts for that date. While this model seems straightforward, it is likely to generate homogenous entries as newspapers are published in sections with different issues addressed on a particular

day of the week. For example, if a newspaper under evaluation publishes development issues on Mondays, choosing Mondays for sampling will most certainly generate only development issues-related stories thus creating an avenue for pigeon-hole analysis.

Therefore, to circumvent this pigeon-hole dilemma, as well as avoid the tendency to engage in cherry-picking, which according to Wodak and Meyer (2009), describes the practice by researchers of choosing examples that best fit their assumptions (p.11); this researcher decides to create a set of criteria for stories from which excerpts are selected. The first criterion is related to headline, subhead and intro based on their known journalistic importance. A story qualifies if the relevant word, for instance “corruption,” appears either on its headline, its subhead or intro. The second is that the story must focus in particular on Nigeria. Where more than one story meets these conditions, the story with the highest number of words is selected for analysis. The idea is that a lengthy story focused on the subject and theme of discussion would provide a much more robust discourse on the issues under evaluation. More importantly, to ensure that corpus for this segment is manageable, only one story is chosen per sample newspaper per each period of investigation (i.e. 1997-1999). Where a sample has no story that meets these criteria, such sample is omitted from selection. This model of selection affords the researcher the opportunity to critically read the stories, which basing selection on a particular date in the week may not entail. It also ensures that the selected excerpts are not picked based on the whims of the researcher.

Thus the corpus for the CDA component, 40 stories in all, was compared with hard copies in order to get a feel of the display accorded them in terms of prominence,

which is key in newspaper's selection process. The corpus' informative (news) and evaluative (comments and opinions) contents were then analyzed specifically for the use of language, such as transitivity in syntax, lexical structure etc., and choices of voice, persona, and style as part of the stated task of examining the discursive construction of Nigeria and its democracy in the British news media for the stated timeframe. The analysis in this component extends unavoidably to historical and ideological frontiers; as it does examine colonial and post-colonial discourses. It traces the linkage between these discourses to the philosophy of imperialism and globalization, power and control; and explores their impact on poverty and developments issues. In the same vein, it also examines the role of the NGOs, with reference to the multi-lateral organizations including the Breton woods institutions (IMF and World Bank), government agencies such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and their policy enunciation, which creates and nurtures the operating media regimes (De Beer 2010) and discusses how their activities form and reinforce representation with particular reference to Nigeria.

### 3.6.9: Interviews

In spite of the challenges associated with identifying and contacting respondents (Priest 1992); interviews, no doubt, constitute an important aspect of data collection in qualitative research. They help in exploring the meanings participants ascribe to the subject under study, based on their own stance, personal experiences, knowledge and understanding of the issues in question (McCracken 1988; Seidman 1998, Arksey and Knight 1999). There are different types of interview. Patton (1980: 206) outlines four types: informal conversational interviews, interview guide approaches, standardized open-ended interviews and closed quantitative interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985) add structured interviews. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) identify semi-structured

interviews and group interviews. Oppenheim (1992) adds exploratory interviews. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) identify six types: standardized interviews; in-depth interviews; ethnographic interviews; elite interviews; life history interviews and focus groups. As Gillham (2000:11) has stated, interview helps to convey ‘insight and understanding.’

Many researchers have used interview techniques in the past. Baldwin and Lewis (1972) apply the semi-structured variant for their one to four hours interviews with Hollywood personnel responsible for primetime series most likely to contain violence. Their strategy included sending letters explaining the project to the respondents and following up with phone calls. Graber (1988) conducted intensive interview with 21 randomly selected registered voters. The interviews averaged two hours duration while each respondent was interviewed for a total of 20 hours. Swenson (1989) also conducted between two and three hours interview with respondents in her study of TV news viewers. Similarly, Pardun and Krugman (1994) also conducted two-hour interviews with a purposive sample of 20 families in their study of how home architectural style affect TV viewing. Guided by the experiences of these researchers who have successfully applied different types of interview techniques in media research; this researcher also conducts between two and three hours’ interviews with respondents who are either responsible for news reporting and processing, educating future journalists or engaged in news-making advocacy practices.

### ***3.6.10: Procedure followed, quality and ethics***

The interview model followed in this segment is semi-structured type (see Kvale 1996, Arksey and Knight 1999, and Gillham 2000). Semi-structured interview holds that the interview questions are open-ended and thus allow the interviewee ample

opportunity to respond to questions as he or she feels appropriate and render accounts of their experiences in their own terms. Cohen et al. (2007: 182) note that “it enables respondents to project their own way of defining the world.” Before conducting the interviews, a set of questions was prepared, which serves as a guide during the interview proper (*see appendix for details*). The questions are informed by the focus of this study and are shaped by the insights gained through the textual analysis. Thereafter, the next task is to identify potential respondents.

Following the example of Harrison and Palmer (1986), who identified and conducted interviews with journalists involved in the coverage of Africa for their work, *News out of Africa*; this researcher adopts similar but slightly modified approach. Therefore, this researcher creates a set of criteria for selecting respondents. First, a respondent must be a journalist who writes stories or presents programmes about of Africa or Nigeria. Second, a respondent must be a journalism teacher who prepares journalists for the task of reporting and third, a respondent must represent organisations (such as NGOs) whose activities impact on the representation of Africa. Subsequently, a list of relevant potential respondents, 20 names in all, was drawn up. Following Baldwin and Lewis’ (1972) example, the identified individuals were contacted through letters, emails and phone calls. As Priest (1992) has noted, the challenge in getting access is daunting but this researcher’s experience in journalism proved useful in negotiating access to only nine respondents.

Also useful are the interviewing skills this researcher has appropriated during many years of journalistic practice. Thus, the interviews were conducted in various locations depending on the schedule of the interviewees, and most lasted for two or three hours.

The interviews were tape-recorded and the interviewees, having agreed to the interview and well aware of its purpose signed a written consent authorizing the application of the data in this study (*see appendix for details*). The interviews were then transcribed, read and appropriately indexed (Arksey and Knight 1999:162) and thematically grouped to form relevant categories (Kvale 1996:192, Seidman 1998:100-110, Gillham 2000:70). The categorized statements were thus applied in the analysis where they best fit. This enables the interviews to complement the process by repudiating or validating textual data. Thus, the insights of the interviewees are used in this text as part of the triangulating process especially in following four chapters.

It is worthwhile to mention that the samples here are varied and did not include all the five newspapers. This is because the interview is meant to complement both the content and textual analyses and render additional insight rather than stand as an independent or exhaustive means of data collection. More importantly, the sampling criterion adopted here followed Patton's (1980:100-107) maximum variation model and Seidman's (1998:47) concept of sufficiency, which hold that samples represent different categories in the population. Therefore, journalists from the BBC, which has grown, as stated earlier, to become a major voice of the British state in global media sphere and more importantly, the symbol of its powerful presence in post-colonial Africa, are included in the sample. This compensates for the inability to access journalists from *The Telegraph* and *The Independent* for instance.

Though getting access was tough and arranging interviews with very busy news people was daunting, this researcher considers the interviewees' perspectives as important. This conclusion is based on the premise that after carefully reading the

stories, it became evident that individuals concerned either wrote some of the stories being analyzed or were actively involved in the texts in question. For example, a large numbers of the stories published by the *Financial Times* were written by Michael Peel just as the work of Jonathan Dimbleby is important in the representation of Africa. The insights of these nine individuals are therefore significant in this respect and are thus included in the discussion (*see appendix for a list of the questions; a full transcript of a sample of the interviews as well as copies of the written consent signed by the interviewees*).

#### **4.0 Validity and Reliability**

Validity, on the one hand, refers to “the degree to which a test measures what it claims or purports to be measuring” (Brown 1996: 213). Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the collection of data in a consistent and accurate manner (Seliger and Shohamy 1989). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), Titscher et al., (2000) emphasize reproducibility, suggesting that the research result must remain consistent if repeated by another researcher. As mentioned above, this study follows a rigorous adherence to procedure as defined and clearly stated as part of the validity and reliability process. It is also pertinent to re-emphasize here that the use of triangulation technique (Maykut and Morehouse (1994) in this study is, first, to increase the degree of validity and reliability; and second, to achieve a quantitative depth through the provision of quantitative breadth (Reason and Garcia 2007:317).

In the same vein, combination of methods additionally offsets the weaknesses in the individual methods. And, as Deacon et al., (1999), Erzberger and Kelle (2003) have stated, the use of different methods and diverse data sources further help to ensure validity and reliability. Also, because of the complex nature of this study, this

researcher thinks that one individual method would be insufficient to render an adequate and comprehensive analysis of the findings and, as such a combination of methods, which supports triangulation of findings, is adopted in order to mitigate the weaknesses in the individual methods and further to raise the degree of validity and reliability. Moreover, as part of the process of achieving a high level of valid and reliable results, proper care was taken to ensure that samples are representative of the target populations; categories in the unit of analysis are not only well-formulated and well-defined, they are equally mutually exclusive, exhaustive and reliable (Berelson 1952, Holsti 1981). Pre-test of the established coding system, as Wimmer and Dominick (1997) have recommended, was undertaken and a pilot study was conducted.

#### ***4.1: Limits of the methods***

It is important to give a thorough account of the limits of the methods employed in respect of this analysis. As noted in the preceding sections, three different methods, content analysis, critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews are employed for the purpose of this investigation. The idea of mixed methods is to enable triangulation of research findings because of the inherent weaknesses in the individual methods. While content analysis systematically and objectively measures media content, it does not robustly account for: i) the often arbitrary reasons for news selection and presentation ii) ideological position behind news selection and form of presentation iii) how language use shape representation amongst other weaknesses. Thus, in order to account for these weaknesses, this researcher, as explained earlier, adopted critical discourse analysis, which according to Fairclough (2001), could interface with other social methods.

However, given the goal of this study, which is focused on the representation of Nigeria in the UK news media and the positionality of this researcher, as noted in section 3.2, critical discourse analysis in this respect has its own weaknesses. These weaknesses are more pronounced in intertextual analysis where analysts depend upon social and cultural understanding in their interpretation. In spite of this weakness, Fairclough (1995b) contends that connecting linguistic analysis of texts to an intertextual analysis is crucial in bridging the gap between text and language on one hand and society and culture on the other. Thus Fair (1993), Martin (1994), Brookes (1995), Teo (2000), Anand (2007) and Scott (2009) have used similar approach of analysis. Therefore, in tandem with the approach of these scholars and, most importantly, as a means to untangle how language use and social practices impact on the construction of Nigeria as news in the five UK samples, this researcher also links linguistic and intertextual analyses. In the process, this researcher often, and unavoidably, relies on his social and cultural understanding in his interpretation of the texts presented in this analysis. This however underscores the point that the issue of identity is significant in the construction of social reality. For the same reason, the interpretation of another researcher using the same tool on the same texts would be different.

However, it is important to reiterate here that the purpose of the texts as examples of how Nigeria is constructed as news is neither to dispute the accuracy of the journalistic accounts therein nor to comment on social responsibility of the journalists or news media outlets concerned. This researcher makes no claim whatsoever that those readers who read the stories from which the texts were selected read, understood and appraised the messages in exactly the same manner. Nonetheless, this researcher

works by the hypothesis that because the representation of Nigeria is largely historically derived and ideologically determined, a dominant way of viewing and perceiving Nigeria is as the differentiated, distance “Other.” The texts, selected according to stated criteria on p.93-94, 143-144 and 186-187, are meant only to illustrate how Nigeria is differentiated from Europe or the west and framed as belonging to another time in the far distant past, which recreates the sub-Saharan country as the “Other.”

However, to account for the identified weakness in intertextual analysis component of CDA, the researcher adopted the semi-structured interview method. Semi-structured interview, as earlier stated, allows interviewees, who are journalists, journalism educators and commentators to add valuable insights to the study and therefore, enrich the discussion on how Nigeria is represented in the UK news media. Though some of the categorized statements of the interviewees are used where they best fit as part of the triangulating process, a detail account of their contribution is located in chapter 7 (p. 265) where their rich insight is specifically applied in answering research question three. Both the content analysis and the semi-structured interview methods complement the critical discourse analysis approach and adequately off-set whatever the weaknesses in the later. The following pages shall discuss the research findings.

## **Chapter 4:** **The Texts and the Numbers: When the frequency of occurrence counts**

*“...news about Third World countries is invariably framed in a western ideological or cultural perspective, which in part leads to highly stereotypical accounts of only a few types of event (coup and earthquake).”*  
–*Teun van Dijk (1988:34)*

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter evaluates the coverage of Nigeria by five UK national newspapers specifically during three important stages in the contemporary history of the African country. The stages include the three-year period before the return to democracy in 1999, the first two years of democracy and five years afterwards during which Nigeria held two national elections: one in 2003 and the other in 2007 with the last resulting in the peaceful transfer of political power from one civilian administration to another. At the core of this evaluation is the quantitative feature of the sample newspapers' reports as part of a mixed methods approach, which includes critical assessment of other agencies of journalistic communication.

However, the decision to begin this evaluation by measuring numerical quantities in the newspapers' contents is rooted in two established assumptions. One is that numbers, unlike language, are 'neutral and factual' (Richardson 2007: 13); and the other is that the quantitative description of communication content is meaningful (Berelson 1952: 265). The second assumption holds that the frequency of occurrence of certain words is significant. The repetitive use of such words has telling effects in the formation of mental models that feed and sustain stereotypes (van Dijk 2009, van

Dijk and Kintsch 1983, Johnson-Laird 1983). As discussed in chapter 3, Bernard Berelson supports the definitive nature of quantitative content analysis:

*Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (1952: 263).*

Therefore, based on this premise, this analysis begins by examining the output of the five sample newspapers. It then proceeds to compare their focus on the identified categories of keywords at issue. As discussed in the preceding chapter, rather than focus on diverse issues (which could be unwieldy), this researcher chooses to concentrate on well-defined keywords whose meanings are unambiguous in terms of their representational sense and best capture the essence of the content under study. Similarly, the trend in the coverage of the individual sample newspapers was then examined. Finally, coverage of South Africa and Libya, two other African nations was equally studied and the results were then analyzed in order to further ascertain the trend or pattern in the coverage of Africa as mentioned in chapter 3.

The choice of South Africa and Libya is informed by their geographical locations and cultural diversities. South Africa is in the southern part of the continent while Libya is in the north. Nigeria, of course, is in the middle of the continent. The three countries thus represent the diversity of culture, people and religious traditions across Africa. Also, relevant findings from the interviews conducted with some of the journalists and other professionals who wrote, framed or impacted the news reports under analysis, are presented in the discussion of the content analysis findings. This approach is adopted in the following chapters on the strength that the juxtaposition of the interviewees' insights with the analysis of both content and textual facts provides a cogent means of triangulating both sets of findings.

## 1. Focus of interest on the battle to return Nigeria to Democracy

The coverage provided between 1997 and 1999 reveals the existence of a high level of interest in the return of Nigeria to democracy. The newspapers allocated 31% of their coverage to democracy, 14% of the coverage was focused on infrastructure while sport got coverage amounting 16% of the total coverage for same period (*see* Table 2). In comparison with the amount of coverage allocated to corruption, fraud and crime, which stood at 20%, 6% and 13% respectively; it is obvious that the coverage reflects the aspiration and the enthusiasm of majority of Nigerians. It is also supportive of the campaign by the pro-democracy activists who engaged the ruling

Table 2: Overall coverage

Total coverage per category										
		1997-1999			2000 - 2002			2003 - 2007		
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	Words %	No. of Articles	No. of Words	Words %	No. of Articles	No. of Words	Words %
1	Democracy	235	147,218	31%	130	97,723	18%	163	152,677	12%
2	Infrastructure	73	65,725	14%	81	65,761	12%	243	211,470	17%
3	Sport	92	75,338	16%	134	89,264	16%	137	134,186	11%
4	Corruption	137	93,702	20%	181	124,866	22%	410	320,115	26%
5	Fraud	47	31,078	6%	110	59,713	11%	244	161,119	13%
6	Crime	99	63,068	13%	208	118,339	21%	403	257,711	21%
	Total	683	476,129	100%	844	555,666	100%	1600	1,237,278	100%

Table 3: Average coverage per category

Average coverage							
		1997 -1999		2000 - 2002		2003 - 2007	
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words
1	Democracy	47	29,443.6	26	19,544.6	32.6	30,535.4
2	Infrastructure	14.6	13,145	16.2	13,152.2	48.6	68,591.2
3	Sport	18.4	15,067.6	26.8	17,852.8	27.4	59,757.6
4	Corruption	27.4	18,740.4	36.2	24,973.2	82	107,736.6
5	Fraud	9.4	621.6	22	11,942.6	48.8	50,382
6	Crime	19.8	12,613.6	41.6	23,871.2	80.6	87,823.6

military junta, opposed to the idea of surrendering power to the people, in protracted battles. As Table 3 shows, the average number of words per category as well as the number of articles followed the same trend. Democracy, infrastructure and sport received more coverage overall with a total of 61% almost double the coverage devoted to corruption, fraud and crime, which altogether received 39% coverage during the same period. Figure 3 (below) shows the number of articles devoted to each of the categories by the sample newspapers between 1997 and 1999. Democracy attracted the highest coverage with 34%; infrastructure got 11% while sport drew 13% of coverage attention.

Though corruption attracted 20% of coverage attention, even if this is added to the results of fraud (7%) and crime (15%), the overall coverage was still positive. It also underlines the fact that there was high interest in the battle to restore democracy in Nigeria. This trend is similar when compared to results from the analysis of cumulative number of words published within the same timeframe. As Figure 2 shows, democracy came on top with 31% of coverage attention; infrastructure had 14% while sport attracted 16%. When these results are compared with the results of the second category: corruption 20%, Fraud 6% and crime 13%; it is obvious that

Figure 2

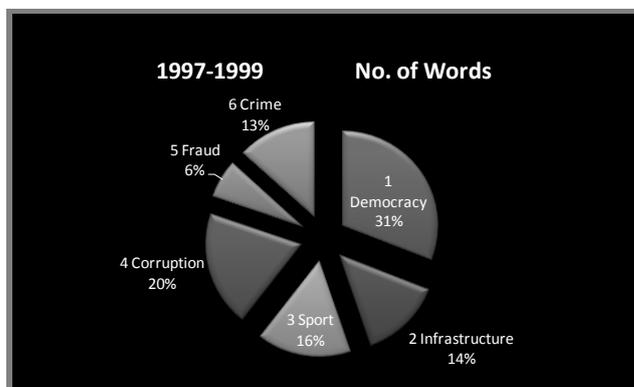
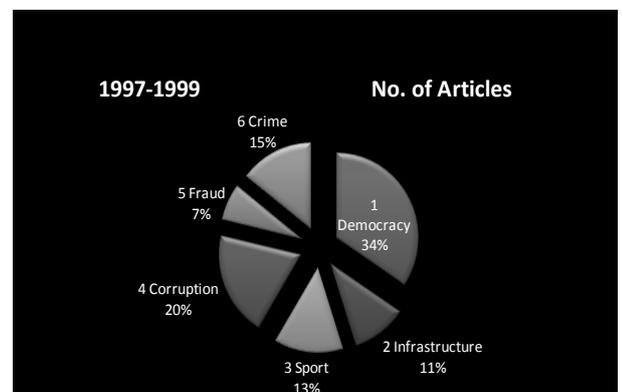


Figure 3



more attention was given to issues engendering positive representation by the selected newspapers under analysis. However, the coverage pattern begins to change after 1999. With the emergence of the new millennium, the focus of attention on democracy was de-emphasized as there was a noticeable decrease in the amount of articles and number of words published in this respect while the number of articles and words published with regards to corruption, fraud and crime increased.

## 2. Interest wanes and a pattern of coverage emerges

Between the years 2000 and 2002, the focus of attention has shifted, as indicated in Table 2, from the high level coverage of democracy, infrastructure and sport to sustained coverage of corruption, fraud and crime. As Figure 4 indicates, democracy, which enjoyed 34% of coverage attention in terms of number of articles recorded only 15% coverage, less than half of the coverage recorded between 1997 and 1999. Infrastructure too was down by one percentage point to 10% from 11% in the period under review. Although 2000 was an Olympic year, sport is the only category which recorded an increase in coverage as it moved up by three percentage points to 16% in

Figure 4

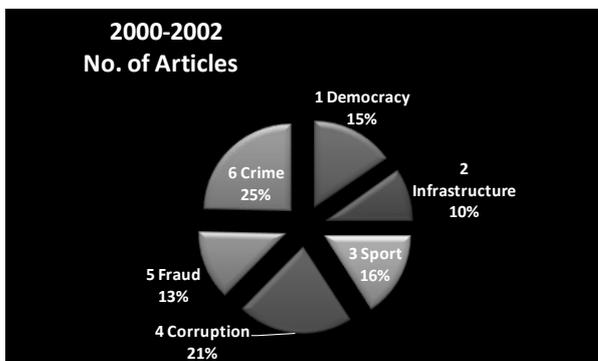
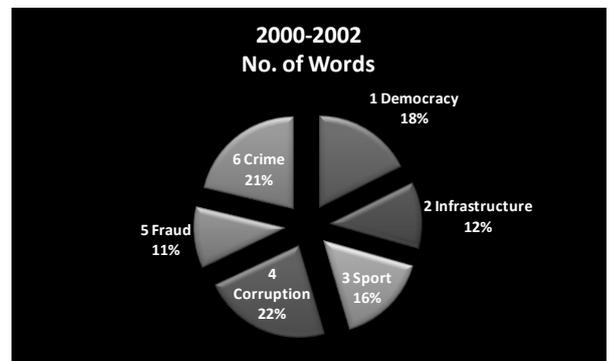


Figure 5



2000 – 2002 from 13% in 1997 and 1999. With the coverage of democracy, infrastructure and sport slipping by a total of 20 percentage points to 41% in 2000-2002 from a total of 61% between 1997 and 1999, there was increased focus of attention on corruption, fraud and crime. Corruption recorded an increase of one percentage point to stand at 21% in 2000-2002 from 20% in 1997-1999. Correspondingly, more space was found for the coverage of fraud, which also recorded six percentage points increase to perch at 13% almost doubling its position of 7% in 1997-1999. Similarly, crime also recorded a 10 percentage points' increase to stand at 25% from a mere 15% in 1997 – 1999. Consequently, while democracy, infrastructure and sport recorded a total of 41% coverage in terms of number of articles; corruption, fraud and crime recorded a total of 59% for 2000 – 2002 showing an 18% shift in favour of this category.

One of the interview respondents and head of Africa and the Middle East region of the BBC World Service, Jerry Timmins attributes the shift in coverage to media outlets' desire to reflect the true picture of Africa rather than anything sinister. "If news organisations are to reflect the true Africa," Timmins explains, "they have to reflect both sides...it's a set of mixed pictures." But Michael Schudson (1995: 21) contends that if the phenomena to be explained are large and pervasive enough, then the media can be found to be responsible for it no matter what the features of the media are." Indeed, the phenomena in this circumstance are large and pervasive as similar pattern continues in terms of the number of words published during the same period. As Figure 5 shows, democracy got 18% of the coverage representing a drop of 13 percentage points from 31% recorded in the 1997 -1999 period. Infrastructure also

Figure 6

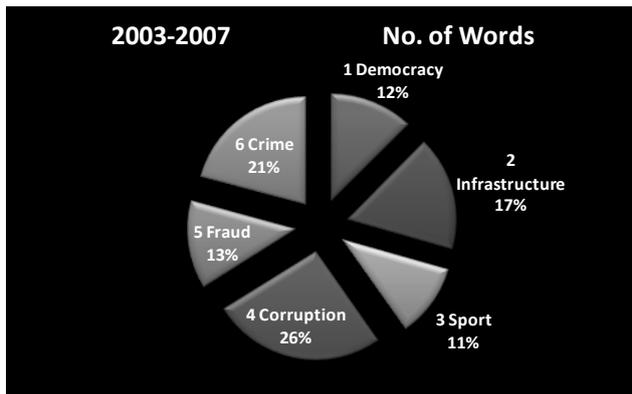
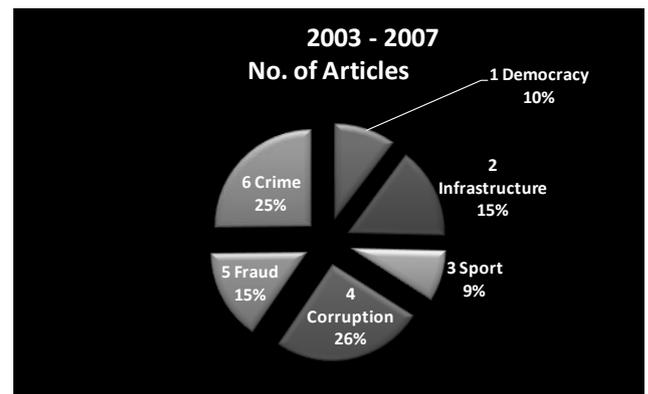


Figure 7



received 12% representing a drop of two percentage points from 14% recorded in 1997 – 1999 while sport retained the same 16% coverage in 2000 - 2002 as in 1997-1999. For 2000 – 2002, democracy, infrastructure and sport garnered a total of 46% while corruption, fraud and crime recorded a total haul of 54% coverage. The trend, however, continues for the period between 2003 and 2007 (*see* Table 2 above). In respect of number of articles, the coverage allocated to the different categories by the sample newspapers reveals a clear shift in focus from the first set of categories (democracy, infrastructure and sport) to the second set (corruption, fraud and crime). As figure 7 (above) reveals, democracy suffered diminished attention with only 10% coverage in 2003 to 2007. Though infrastructure recorded 15% coverage, representing an increase of five percentage points from 2000 – 2002 figure of 10% and four percentage points from the 1997 to 1999 figure of 11% respectively; sport, on the other hand, also suffered from diminished attention with only 9% coverage in 2003-2007 representing a seven-percentage point decrease from 16% recorded in 2000 – 2002 and a four-percentage point decrease from the figure of 13% recorded in 1997-1999.

Conversely, the coverage allotted to corruption in respect of number of articles stood at 26% representing an increase of five percentage points from the 21% recorded in 2000 – 2002 and also an increase of six percentage points from 20% recorded in 1997 – 1999. Similarly, fraud was allotted coverage of 15% representing an increase of two percentage points from 13% in 2000 – 2002 and an increase of eight percentage points from 7% recorded in the 1997 - 1999 period. Crime, however, retained its 25% coverage slot in 2003 - 2007 as in 2000 - 2002, which is still a 10-percentage point increase from the figure of 15% in 1997 – 1999. Cumulatively, while democracy, infrastructure and sport got a total of 34% coverage attention within 2003 – 2007; corruption, fraud and crime got a total coverage attention of 66%. The trend of coverage, however, continues in the same vein when number of articles is compared with number of words. As figure 6 (above) shows, in terms of the number of words, democracy was allotted 12% coverage representing six percentage points decrease from the 2000 – 2002 figure of 18% and a 19 percentage point decrease from the 1997 – 1999 figure of 31%. Infrastructure, however, received 17% coverage in 2003-2007, representing a five percentage point increase from the 2000 – 2002 figure of 12% and a three-percentage point increase from the 1997 to 1999 figure of 14%. Sport's coverage for the 2003 to 2007 period stood at 11% representing five percentage points loss compared with the figure of 16% in both the 2000 - 2002 and 1997 –1999 periods.

In contrast, attention devoted to the coverage of corruption gained steady increase from 20% in 1997 – 1999, to 22% in 2000 – 2002 and finally 26% in 2003 to 2007. Similarly, attention devoted to the coverage of fraud also rose steadily from 6% in the 1997 – 1999 period to 11% between 2000 and 2002 representing a rise of five

percentage points; and finally 13 % in 2003-2007 representing a rise of two percentage points. In respect of crime, the 2003 to 2007 figure remained at 21% with the figure recorded for 2000-2002, which represents an eight percentage point increase on the figure of 13% recorded for 1997-1999. Cumulatively, while democracy, infrastructure and sport recorded a total of 40% coverage for the period under review, corruption, fraud and crime recorded a total of 60% coverage in terms of number of words published by the selected samples during the same period.

Timmins maintains that the media reportage on corruption has also been of immense benefits to the society whether in Africa or Europe. According to him, “Some of the coverage the media does around corruption have been enormously influential in making politicians and heads of institutions sit and take notice and try to improve things.” Michael Peel, another interview respondent and former *Financial Times* correspondent in Nigeria, states categorically that the shift towards the coverage of corruption was mere happenstance and not something premeditated. “One of the reasons I work for this newspaper,” Peel asserts, “is that I have certainly never been told, via proprietary interference, that I should cast the story in certain ways.” Peel continues: “something like, let’s pick this up so as to make Nigeria look more corrupt. I mean that is not how it works in the *Financial Times*; I can’t speak for other papers.” What then is responsible for the clear shift in focus as the data presented has shown?

Jonathan Dimbleby, a well-known British journalist and TV presenter; provides a clue. During an interview, Dimbleby acknowledges the fact that reporting on Africa, including the issue of corruption, is not untrue in itself but the problem is that it is mostly done, except for specialist writings, without context. According to Dimbleby,

“What we are reporting in the west (about Africa) is not untrue in itself. But since it is out of any context, the images that are left powerfully in the mind, not just on television but also in the print media and radio as well, are very acute, very sharp, often very pungent, and often very harsh.” Now, let’s examine images from the records of papers.

Table 4: *The Times’ coverage in numbers*

		1997 – 1999		2000 – 2002		2003 – 2007			
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	Total Articles	TOTAL Words
The Times	Dem	19(0)=19	8,942	3(1)=4	2,533	1(0)=1	142	24	11,617
	Infr	2(0)=2	177	1(0)=1	699	3(0)=3	1,113	6	1,989
	Spo	4(0)=4	1,763	10(4)=14	9,794	8(1)=9	20,559	27	32,116
	Cor	7(2)=9	6,201	5(0)=5	3,695	13(0)=13	7,319	27	17,215
	Fra	5(0)=5	2,419	3(1)=4	2,335	9(0)=9	5,013	18	9,767
	Cri	1(0)=1	451	3(0)=3	1,619	11(3)=14	5,833	18	7,903

\*Figures in Bracket (0) represent the number of stories from the Sunday newspaper.

### 3. The individual newspapers’ performance and the emerging pattern of coverage

The sample newspapers’ individual patterns of coverage during the three stages under study are reflective of their organisational structures, newsroom routines and constraints as well as the operating media regimes at the particular period in question. As de Beer (2010) has noted, the media regimes operating in the news media home environment impact on their coverage of the foreign environment. The British government’s support for democracy coupled with the activities of the Commonwealth of Nations, an organisation in which Britain plays a leading role, during the battle to return Nigeria to democracy ensure that issues linking Nigeria and democracy received attention in the British press. Although the newspapers’ coverage differs significantly, that again is informed by their (the individual news

organisation's) policies as well as their understanding of what their readers want to or should read.

### **3.2.1 *The Times***

Table 4 (above) shows the performance of *The Times* during each stage of the timeframe under investigation. Between 1997 and 1999, *The Times* had a total 19 stories with a wordcount of 8,942 on democracy. This performance dropped significantly in the period between 2000 and 2002 to only four stories of 2,533 words. The performance dipped further in the 2003 to 2007 period with only one story of just 142 words. Thus, the total number of articles or stories devoted to democracy by the newspaper throughout the period under study is 24 while the total number of words for that category is 11,617. *The Times* gave the coverage of infrastructure only two stories with a total wordcount of only 177 words in the 1997 – 1999 period. The coverage reduced to just one story in 2000-2002 though the one story had 699 words, a much more higher number of words compared with just 177 words for the two stories in 1997 – 1999. The coverage, in terms of number of articles rose to three in 2003 – 2007 with a total wordcount of 1,113. Thus, *The Times* devoted a total of six articles of 1,989 words to infrastructure throughout the period under study.

However, the coverage was different in respect of sport, which had a better showing particularly in both 2000 – 2002 and 2003 – 2007 periods. *The Times* allocated space for only four sport stories in 1997 – 1999 with a total wordcount of 1,763 but the figure rose to 14 stories in 2000 – 2002 and a total wordcount of 9,794. Unfortunately, the coverage slumped again in 2003 – 2007 with only nine stories, one of which was

Figure 8

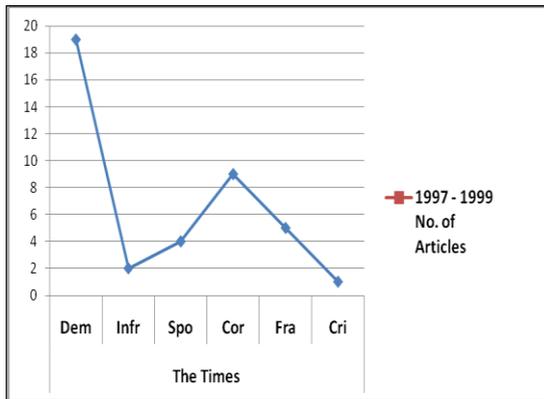
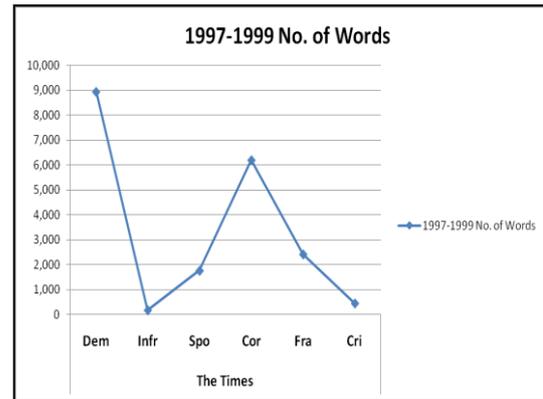


Figure 9



published by *The Sunday Times*. But in terms of number of words, the nine stories had a total of 20,559 words; which underscored the fact that sport coverage had more space during the period under review when compared with 1997-1999 and 2000-2002. Therefore, sport coverage was allocated space for a total of 27 articles totaling 32,116 words for the entire period under study. The trend was different compared to the coverage *The Times* gave to corruption, fraud and crime as Figures 8 and 9 (above) indicate. *The Times* had space for nine stories of 6,201 words, with two of the stories published in the Sunday edition, for corruption during the 1997 – 1999 period. The number of articles reduced by four in the 2000-2002 period to five stories totalling 3,695 words but rose again to 13 articles of 7,319 words in 2003- 2007.

Thus, *The Times* published a total of 27 articles of 17,215 words on corruption for the entire period under examination. When compared with the attention given to fraud, there's a striking similarity in the pattern of *The Times*' coverage. There were a total of five stories in 1997-1999 with a total wordcount of 2,419. The number of articles reduced in 2000-2002 to four articles of 2,335 words and rose to a total of nine articles of 5,013 words in 2003-3007. The total number of articles printed by *The Times* on fraud during the entire study period stood at 18 with a total of 9,767 words.

*The Times* paid little attention to crime stories in 1997-1999 period with only one story of 451 words but the coverage attention rose steadily in 2000-2002 through 2003-2007 with three stories of 1,619 words during the former and 14 stories of 5,833 words during the latter. Overall, *The Times* published a total of 18 articles of 7,903 words on crime during the period under review. Cumulatively, while *The Times* provided space for a total of 57 stories of 45,722 words on democracy, infrastructure and sport during the entire period under study, the newspaper allocated space for a total of 63 stories on corruption, fraud and crime with a total of 34,885 words during the same period. Though *The Times*' coverage was relatively balance, it is quite obvious that there was a noticeable drop in its focus of attention on the coverage of democracy, just as there was an observable rise in the coverage of corruption, fraud and crime particularly in 2003-2007.

Table 5: *The Telegraph's* coverage in numbers

		1997 – 1999		2000 – 2002		2003 – 2007			
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	Total Articles	TOTAL Words
The Telegraph	Dem	0(0)=0	0	2(1)=3	1,258	3(1)=4	2,678	7	3,936
	Infr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	0(0)=0	0	1(0)=1	102	2(0)=2	2,717	3	2,819
	Cor	0(0)=0	0	2(1)=3	1,909	8(5)=13	9,308	16	11,217
	Fra	0(0)=0	0	2(0)=2	147	2(2)=4	2,882	6	3,029
	Cri	0(0)=0	0	0(0)=0	0	6(6)=12	8,263	12	8,263

\*Figures in bracket (0) represent the number of stories from the Sunday paper.

### 3.2.2 *The Telegraph*

In contrast to *The Times*, which allocated space for 19 stories on democracy between 1997 and 1999, *The Telegraph* allocated zero space to the issue, which British prime minister, Tony Blair (as discussed in chapter 2) claimed is not only paramount to British interest but is also at the core of western intervention in world's troubled spots

Figure 10: *The Telegraph*

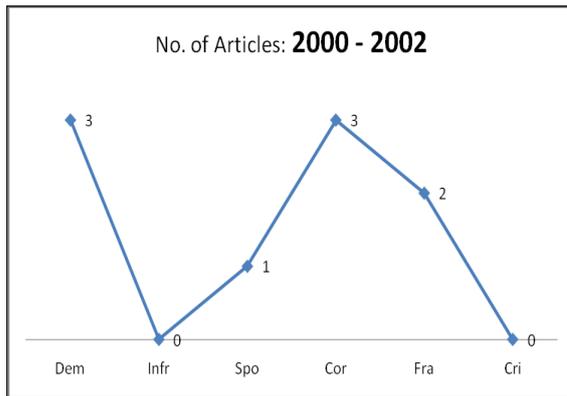
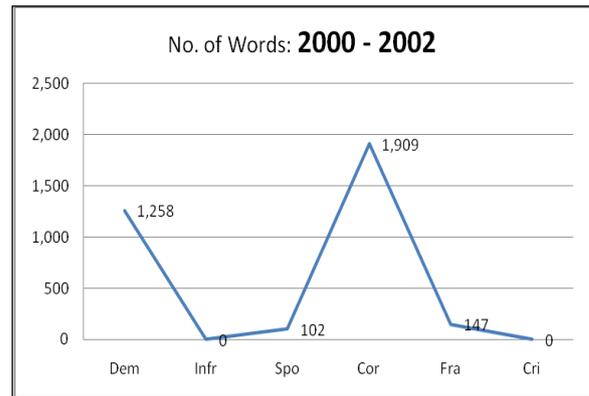


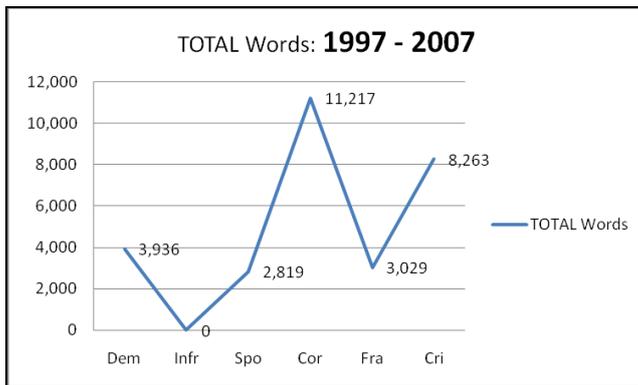
Figure 11: *The Telegraph*



(Robinson, 2002: 9) and thus dented the arguments by Barry Elliotts, former head of BBC Central European Services (see chapter 2), about the importance the British news media attached to stimulating democratic process around the world (Taylor 1997: 53). However, while *The Telegraph* had no space for democracy, infrastructure and sport, the newspaper equally had no space for corruption, fraud and crime during the 1997-1999 period as Table 5 (above) shows.

Nevertheless, the situation changed between 2000-2002 as the newspaper allocated space for three articles of 1,258 words (*see* Figure 10 above) and published four articles of 2,678 words between 2003-2007 on democracy. Thus, it published a total of seven articles of 3,936 words on democracy during the entire period under examination. The newspaper did not allocate space at all for stories on infrastructure throughout the entire period under study while it allocated space for one article of 102 words on sport in 2000-2002 and two articles of 2,717 words in 2003-2007. The total articles published on sport throughout the period under review by *The Telegraph* remained three with the total wordcount of 2,819. Conversely, the newspaper

Figure 12: *The Telegraph*



allocated space for three stories of 1,909 words on corruption in 2000-2002 and a total of 13 stories of 9,308 words on corruption during 2003-2007 (see Figure 12). It thus published a total of 16 stories of 11,217 words on corruption during the entire period under investigation. The same trend was observed in the newspaper's coverage of fraud. It published two stories of 147 words in 2000-2002 (see Figure 10 and 11 above) and four stories of 2,882 words during 2003-2007 while it had a sum of six articles totalling 3,029 words on fraud for the entire period under study. In respect of crime, *The Telegraph* had no story on record for the 2000-2002 period but published a total of 12 stories numbering 8,263 words in 2003-2007. Thus, the newspaper allocated space for 12 stories of 8,263 words on crime throughout the period under review.

In total, *The Telegraph* devoted space for 10 stories numbering 6,755 words on democracy, infrastructure and sport during the time under study while it allocated space for 34 stories totalling 22,509 words on corruption, fraud and crime during the same period. Compared to the output of *The Times*, this paper's coverage focused

Table 6: *Financial Times* 'coverage in numbers

		1997 – 1999		2000 – 2002		2003 – 2007			
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	Total Articles	TOTAL Words
The Financial Times	Dem	149	95,673	116	84,619	149	143,349	414	323,641
	Infr	70	64,911	80	65,062	240	210,357	390	340,330
	Spo	83	71,988	107	74,721	116	105,054	306	251,763
	Cor	113	79,591	163	113,009	354	282,189	630	474,789
	Fra	38	26,391	103	56,732	214	143,464	355	226,587
	Cri	93	57,503	192	110,714	355	236,138	640	404,355

### 3.2.3 *Financial Times*

more on stories relating to corruption, fraud and crime more than democracy, infrastructure and sport. *Financial Times* by far offered the widest coverage of Nigeria in terms of the number of articles as well as number of words allocated to each of the categories at issue during the period under study. This indicates the economic importance of Nigeria as the seventh largest producer of crude oil in the world. Between 1997 and 1999, *Financial Times* (FT), allocated space for 149 articles numbering a total of 95,673 words on democracy (see Table 6). Though the number of articles published was reduced to 116 with 84,619 words in 2000-2002; the figure rose again in 2003- 2007 to 149 articles, to equal 1997-1999 figure but with a higher number of words. Thus in 2003-2007, *FT* allocated space for a total of 143,349 words on democracy. Cumulatively, the newspaper published a total of 414 stories with

Figure 13: *The FT*

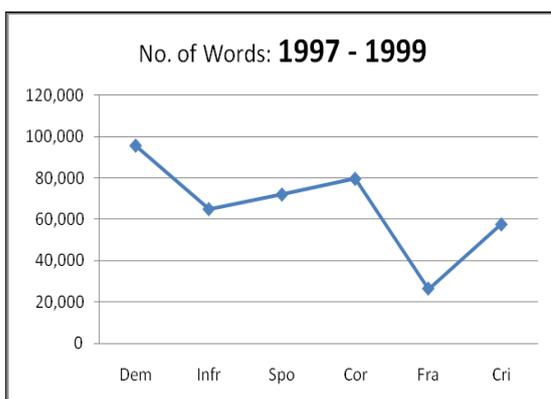


Figure 14: *The FT*

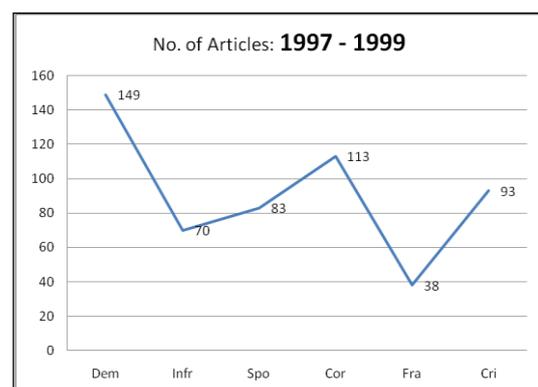


Figure 15: *The FT*

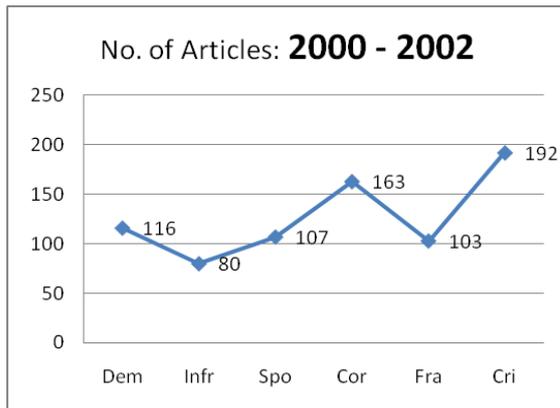
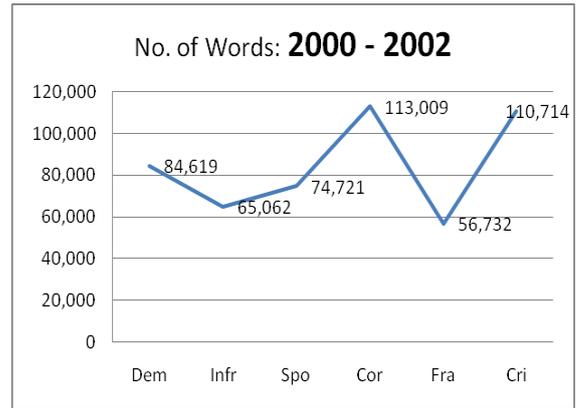


Figure 16: *The FT*



wordcount totaling 323,641 on democracy alone during the entire period under review. Compared to infrastructure, *FT*'s reportage dropped by more than half to just 70 stories of 64,911 words in 1997-1999. This is significant for a specialist publication. The coverage, however, rose steadily in both the 2000-2002 and 2003-2007 periods to 80 articles made up of 65,062 words and a massive 240 articles with the total wordcount of 210,357 respectively. In total, the newspaper offered a sum of 390 articles of 340,330 words on infrastructure throughout the period under study.

Similarly, the same trend is observed from the coverage of sport. The newspaper printed a total of 83 articles of 71,988 words between 1997 and 1999. In 2000-2002, the number of articles rose to 107 while words stood at 74,721 just slightly higher than the figure of 1997-1999. The trend, however, continued in the 2003-2007 period with a total of 116 stories made up of 105,054 words. Thus, the newspaper published a total of 306 articles with a cumulative wordcount of 251,763 on sport during the period under investigation. However, if *Financial Times* was charitable with the coverage attention devoted to the reportage of democracy, infrastructure and

Figure 17: *The FT*

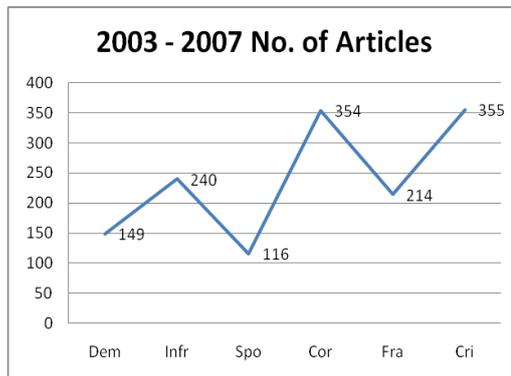
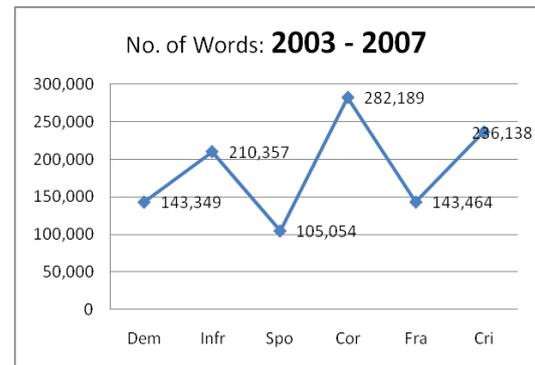


Figure 18: *The FT*



sport, the newspaper was even more than generous in its attention to corruption, fraud and crime; which constitute the negative elements of the spectrum. Between 1997 and 1999, the newspaper published a total of 113 articles on corruption totalling 79,591 words. As noticed in the coverage of other newspapers, especially *The Times*, democracy had the focus of attention in the period between 1997 and 1999 for the reasons already stated in section one above. However, a new trend emerged with the turn of the century as the focus of attention shifted from democracy issues to other ones.

Consequently, in the 2002-2002 period, *Financial Times* allocated space to 163 articles of 113,009 words on corruption while the figures rose to 354 articles totalling 282,189 words in the 2003-2007 period. Thus, the newspaper published a sum total of 630 articles made up of a total wordcount of 474,789 on corruption. The total haul of articles published under corruption is 216 more than the total of 414 published on democracy within the same period while in terms of wordcount, there were 151,148 more words published on corruption than democracy throughout the period under investigation. Though the space allocated by the FT to fraud in the 1997-1999 period was far less than what was allotted to corruption but from the turn of the new

millennium, more attention was focused on fraud thus confirming the emergence of a trend in the reportage. During 1997-1999, fraud got a total of 38 articles made up of 26,391 words. But the figures rose in 2000-2002 to 103 stories made up of 56,732 words and by 2003-2007, the newspaper had recorded 214 articles with a total wordcount of 143,464. Thus, *Financial Times* published a total of 355 articles made up of 226,587 words on fraud during the whole period under study.

The same trend is observed in respect of crime, which was allocated space for a total of 93 articles totalling 57,503 words in 1997-1999. The figure witnessed a sharp rise in the 2000-2002 period with a total of 192 stories totaling 110,714 words while the number of articles published on crime almost doubled in 2003-2007 with 355 articles made up of 236,138 words, more than double the figure of 110,714 words recorded in 2000-2002. In summary, while *Financial Times* allocated space for the publication of a total of 1,110 stories with the wordcount of 915,734 on democracy, infrastructure and sport; the newspaper also adorned its pages with 1,625 articles totalling 1,105,731 words on corruption, fraud and crime during the same period thus indicating where emphasis lies in the newspaper's reportage.

Figure 19: *The Guardian*

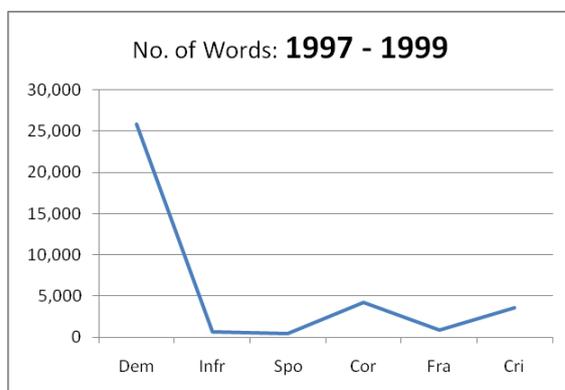


Figure 20: *The Guardian*

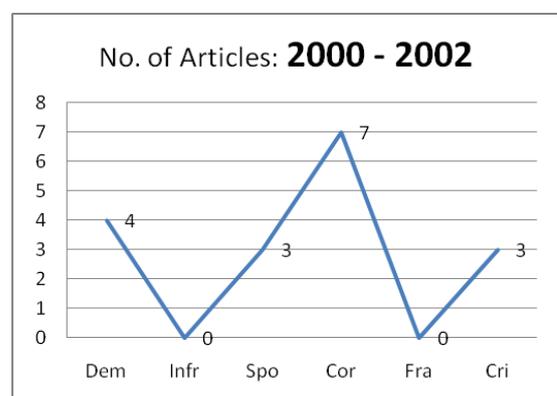


Table 7: *The Guardian's coverage in numbers*

		1997 – 1999		2000 – 2002		2003 – 2007		Total Articles	TOTAL Words
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words		
The Guardian	Dem	34(2)=36	25,834	4(0)=4	6,879	6(1)=7	4,011	47	36,724
	Infr	1(0)=1	637	0	0	0	0	1	637
	Spo	2(0)=2	426	2(1)=3	1,781	3(1)=4	832	9	3,039
	Cor	7(1)=8	4,250	6(1)=7	5,113	15(7)=22	16,773	37	26,136
	Fra	2(0)=2	934	0(0)=0	0	6(3)=9	6,252	11	7,186
	Cri	2(0)=2	3,589	2(1)=3	1,417	8(3)=11	3,838	16	8,844

\*Figures in bracket (0) represent the number of stories from the Sunday paper.

### 3.2.4 *The Guardian*

Like the other samples *The Guardian's* coverage followed a similar trend. There was more space allocated to democracy in the first period, 1997- 1999 but thereafter, the focus changed and less space was allocated in the second and third periods while the elements in the second category received more space or coverage attention. As Table 7 shows, *The Guardian* allocated space for a total of 36 articles with a total haul of 25,834 words in 1997-1999. The figure shrank in the second period (2000-2002) to four stories of 6,879 words but rose again to seven articles of 4,011 words in the third period (2003-2007).

Thus, *The Guardian's* total number of articles published during the whole period under study stood at 47 with a total wordcount of 36,724. Infrastructure received far less reportage attention from the newspaper as the category got space for just one story of 637 words in the first period and none both in the second and third periods. Thus, the total number of articles published by *The Guardian* during the whole period under review remained one article of only 637 words. Sport however, got a much better deal as it was allotted space for two stories of 426 words in the first period. This figure almost double in the second period with a total of three stories numbering 1,781 words. In the third period (2003-2007), the figure rose to four articles but the

Figure 21: *The Guardian*

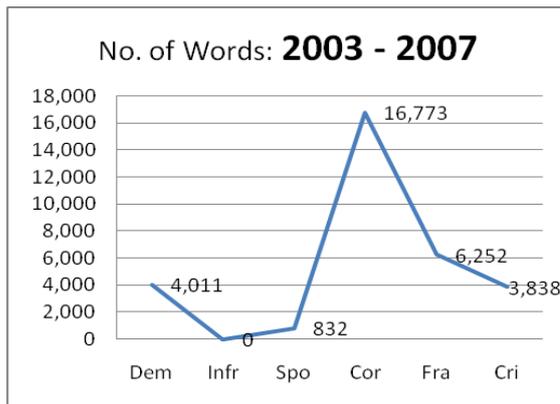
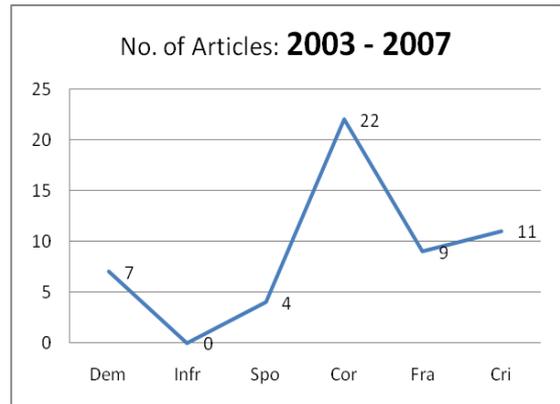


Figure 22: *The Guardian*



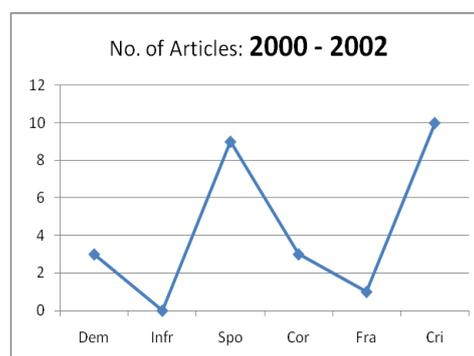
wordcount reduced to only 832. Therefore, the newspaper published a total of nine articles of 3,039 words on sport throughout the whole period under review. *The Guardian's* reportage followed the observed pattern as corruption was allocated space for eight stories numbering 4,250 words in the first period. The figure dropped slightly to seven with a much higher word-count of 5,113 in the second period while it rose again significantly to 22 articles with a total haul of 16,773 words in the third period.

The coverage of fraud followed a similar trend. There were two articles in the 1997-1999 period with 934 words. Though the second period recorded zero articles and words, the situation changed in the third period with a total of nine articles made up of 6,252 words. Overall, the newspaper allocated space for a total of 11 articles with 7,186 words throughout the whole period under review. Similarly, crime had only two articles of 3,589 words and three articles of 1,417 words in the first and second periods respectively but the tally jumped to 11 articles of 3,838 words in the third period (2003-2007). In all, the newspaper allotted space to 16 articles of 8,844 words on crime in the third phase of the whole period under study. Thus, while *The*

Figure 23: *The Independent*



Figure 24: *The Independent*



*Guardian* allocated space for a total of 57 stories made up of 40,400 words on democracy, infrastructure and sport, the newspaper allotted space for a total of 64 articles made up of 42,166 for corruption, fraud and crime throughout the three periods under review. The reportage of *The Guardian* like *The Times*, indicate that corruption, fraud and crime had more attention compared to the other categories.

Table 8: *The Independent's coverage in numbers*

		1997 – 1999		2000 – 2002		2003 - 2007			
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	Total Articles	TOTAL Words
The Independent	Dem	24(7)=31	16,769	2(1)=3	2,434	2(0)=2	2,497	36	21,700
	Infr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	3(0)=3	1,161	6(3)=9	2,866	5(1)=6	5,024	18	9,051
	Cor	5(2)=7	3,660	3(0)=3	1,140	7(1)=8	4,526	18	9,326
	Fra	2(0)=2	1,334	1(0)=1	499	6(2)=8	3,508	11	5,341
	Cri	2(1)=3	1,525	8(2)=10	4,589	8(3)=11	3,639	24	9,753

\*Figures in bracket (0) represent the number of stories from the Sunday paper.

### 3.2.5 *The Independent*

Though the trend observed in the reportage of *The Independent* followed the pattern noticed in the output of the other samples, its output is slightly different and could be said to be fairly balanced. *The Independent* as shown in Table 8 (above) allotted space for 31 stories of 16,769 words to democracy in 1997-1999. The newspaper's

Figure 25: *The Independent*

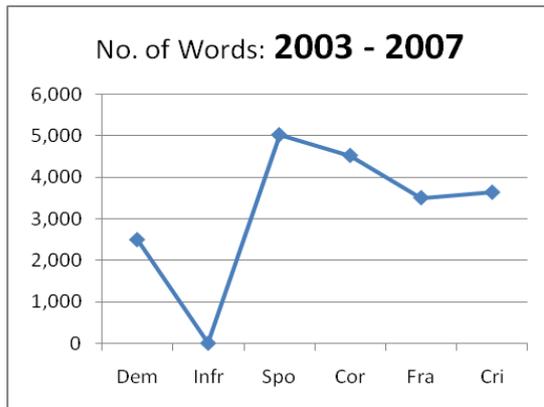
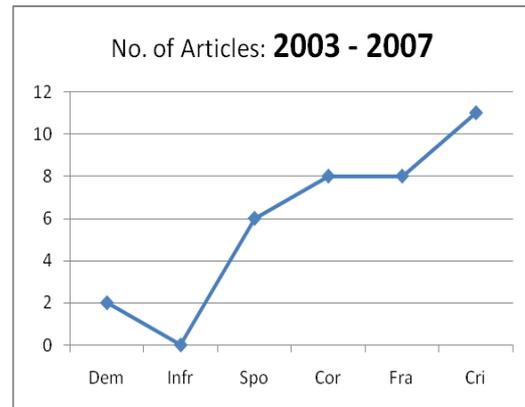


Figure 26: *The Independent*



coverage dropped sharply to three articles of 2,434 words in the second period and dropped further still in the third period to two articles of 2,497 words. In total, the newspaper published a total of 36 stories with 21,700 words on democracy throughout the three periods under review. Like *The Telegraph*, which recorded zero articles for infrastructure throughout the three periods under study, *The Independent* too similarly had no records of articles published on the category. But sport recorded a better showing with three articles in 1997-1999, nine in 2000-2002 and six in 2003-2007 with a total word count of 1,161; 2,866 and 5,024 respectively for the three periods. Overall, *The Independent* allocated space for 18 articles numbering a total of 9,051 words for sport throughout the period under study.

In respect of corruption, the newspaper allocated space for seven stories in the first period, three articles in the second period and eight articles in the final period with the word count of 3,660; 1,140 and 4,526 respectively. *The Independent's* total offer for corruption throughout the period under review was 18 articles totalling 9,326 words. The records of the newspaper's reportage on fraud followed a similar trend. There were two articles of 1,334 words in the first period; one article of 499 words in the

second and eight articles of 3,508 words in the third period. There were 11 articles with a total of 5,341 words in all throughout the whole period under study.

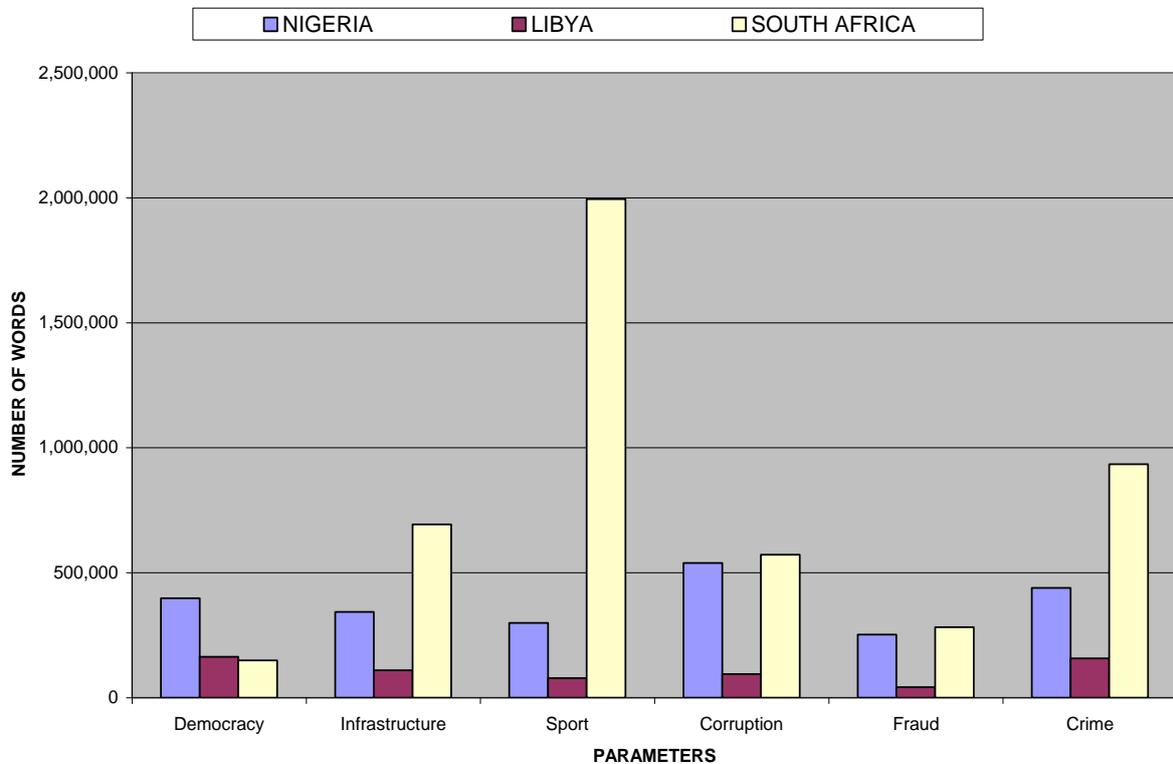
However, there was increased focus on crime as its coverage rose from three articles of 1,525 words in the first period to 10 articles of 4,589 in the second period and 11 articles of 3,639 words in the final period. Throughout the whole period, crime attracted coverage attention of 24 articles totalling 9,753 words. Thus, while the newspaper published a total of 54 articles made up of 30,751 words on democracy, infrastructure and sport, it provided space for a total of 53 articles numbering 24,420 words. Consequently, *The Independent's* reportage could be said to be fairly balanced even though there was an obvious lack of enthusiasm in the coverage of infrastructure as well as a noticeable loss of attention in the coverage of democracy as with the other newspapers under study. However, it is important to see how the reportage is for two other countries, Libya and South Africa and then compared with coverage of Nigeria.

#### **4. The pattern of coverage: comparison of three countries**

In his *Foreword* to the World Bank's Year 2009 World Development Report titled *Reshaping Economics Geography*, Robert B. Zoellick, the bank's president, wrote: "...North America, the European Union, and Japan - with fewer than a billion people – account for three quarter of the world's wealth." In contrast, Zoellick continues, "a billion people, living in the poorest and most isolated nations, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and south and central Asia, survive on less than 2 percent of the world's wealth." Though Zoellick's testament underscores the inequality in global distribution of wealth what it doesn't highlight are two different but related points. One: the fact

Figure 27

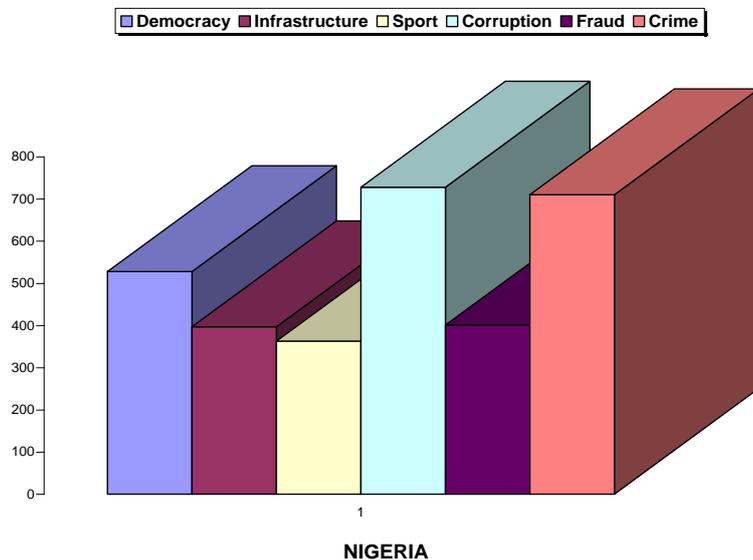
**TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS ON EACH CATEGORY IN THE THREE COUNTRIES**



that the prosperity of the former is intrinsically linked with the poverty of the latter, as one region’s wealth machine is oiled by the resources extracted from the lands of the other. Two: why the civilized world and the powerful western news media have become what Chouliaraki (2009) terms ordinary spectators of the continual suffering of more than a billion people around the world. Boyd-Barrett (2010) links this western media’s seeming reluctance to galvanize public action towards addressing human suffering in certain parts of the world to the effects of ‘media imperialism.’ Media imperialism, however, works to maintain and sustain the interest of the dominant world economic and political powers and, more so, sometimes justifies such suffering by blaming the victims as part of what Das and Harindranath (1996); and Scannell and Cardiff (1991) term the media’s role in the constructions of nations and national

Figure 28

### NUMBER OF REPORTS FOR EACH CATEGORY MEASURED

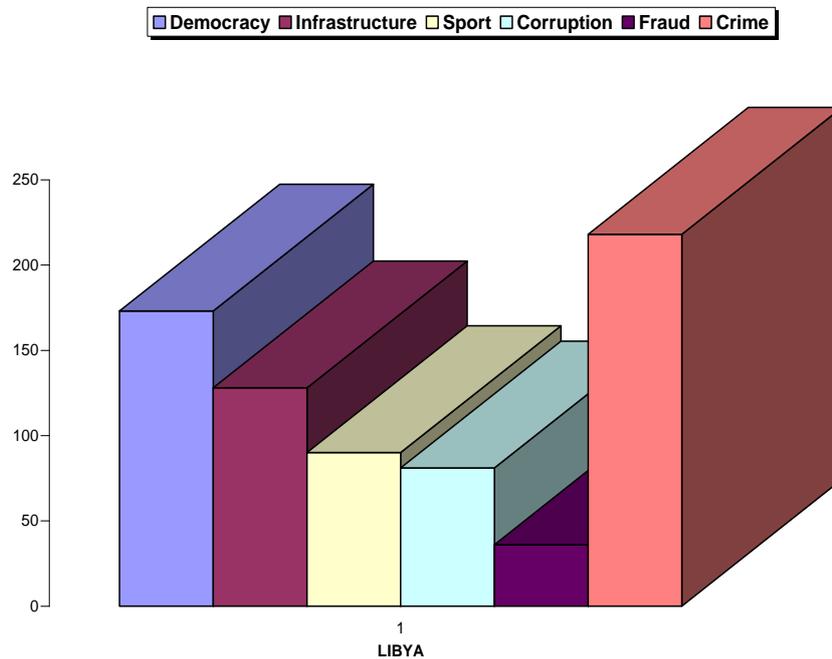


identity. Consequently, studying the sample newspapers' outputs on two other African countries provides the opportunity to ascertain if the coverage pattern of Nigeria is replicated continentally; to determine the nature of representations Africa receives in the British news media; and also, to find out if the British news media's reportage reflects a buy-in into the idea of reshaping the world's economic geography as advocated by Zoellick or creating the conditions for structural change (van Dijk 1988).

The selected countries, as stated earlier, are Libya and South Africa. Figure 27 (above) clearly shows that the reportage of the sample newspapers revealed a high level of interest in sports (84.1%) and other events happening in South Africa when compared with Nigeria and Libya. This is indicative of a strong socio-cultural relationship between Britain and South Africa amongst other interests. However, the reportage on democracy in respect of Nigeria was the highest amongst the three

Figure 29

**NUMBER OF REPORTS FOR EACH PARAMETER MEASURED**



countries as the West African country was awarded space for 528 stories representing 59% of the sample newspapers’ offering and a total of 397,618 words representing 56% of the total word count. In terms of the number of articles, Libya got 19.3% on democracy while South Africa had 21.7% but in respect of total word count, Libya had more word space with 23% than South Africa, which had 21% thus suggesting that South Africa, which is Britain’s biggest trading partner in Africa, is considered (amongst other possible interpretations) a much more stable democracy.

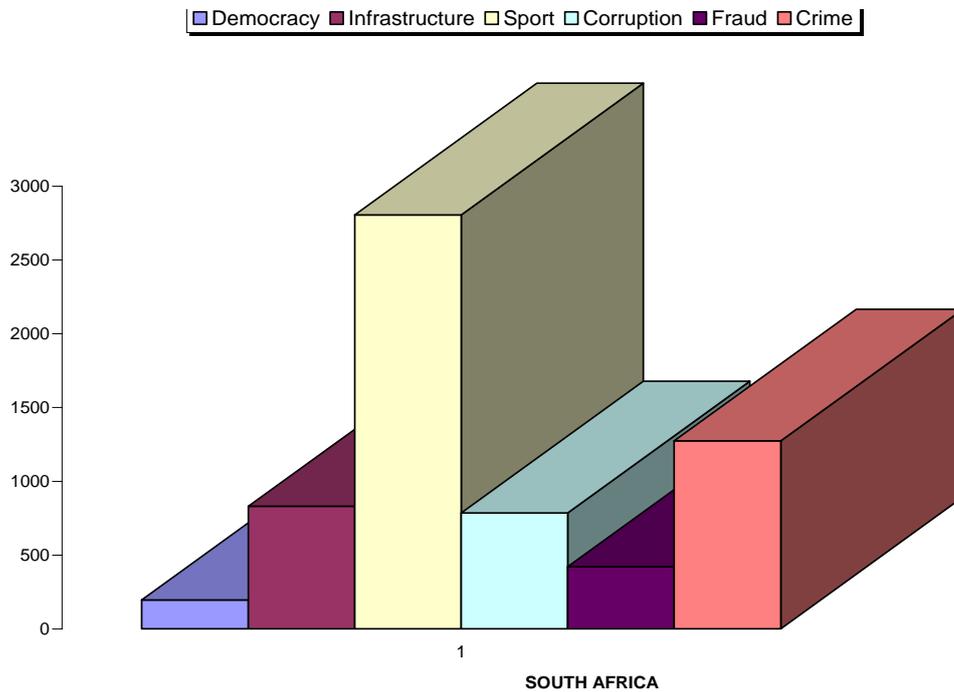
This fact can also be gleaned from the coverage attention devoted to infrastructure. While Libya had 9.4% and Nigeria got 29.3% of the space allocated in terms of the number of articles, South Africa had 61.3%. The figures followed the same trend when compared with number of words published by the newspapers on infrastructure. Libya was allocated 9.6%, Nigeria was allotted 30.0% and South Africa got the lion’s

share of 60.4%, slightly more than twice the space allotted Nigeria. In respect of corruption, the coverage attention between Nigeria and South Africa were almost the same with Nigeria allocated 45.7% space in terms of the number of articles while South Africa had 49.2% as Libya made up the rear with only 5.1%. The coverage followed similar pattern in terms of number of words as Nigeria got 44.6%, South Africa 47.4% and Libya 8.0%. The trend is similar in respect of fraud as South Africa had an allocation 49.1% in terms of number of articles while Nigeria had 46.7% with Libya at the rear with 4.1%. In terms of number of words, the pattern is the same as South Africa had 49.0%, Nigeria: 43.7% and Libya: 7.3%. However, the pattern changed in respect of crime where South Africa was allotted space almost twice as Nigeria's in both the number of articles and number of words unit. While Nigeria had 32.2% and 28.7% respectively, South Africa got 57.8% and 61.0% respectively. Libya got a little coverage attention of 10.0% and 10.3% respectively.

Jonathan Dimbleby acknowledges the low coverage of Libya in the British news media. "We only know Libya for three things," says Dimbleby, "Lockerbie, Oil and Gaddafi. There's no more to Libya than that." The reason, according to him, is because countries or regions that haven't become a problem don't jump into the news agenda. Dimbleby explains: "When a country or an area becomes a problem to your own interest, they then shoot up in the news agenda. Take a country like Yemen for instance, it shoots up and down. It was a terrorist attack on a British consulate official that first shot it up and then it stopped." Eventually, the Libyan revolution of 2011 which resulted in the overthrow and death of Muammar Gaddafi brought Libya into the news agenda. Since then, Libya's prominence in the news agenda has diminished thus corroborating Dimbleby's assertion.

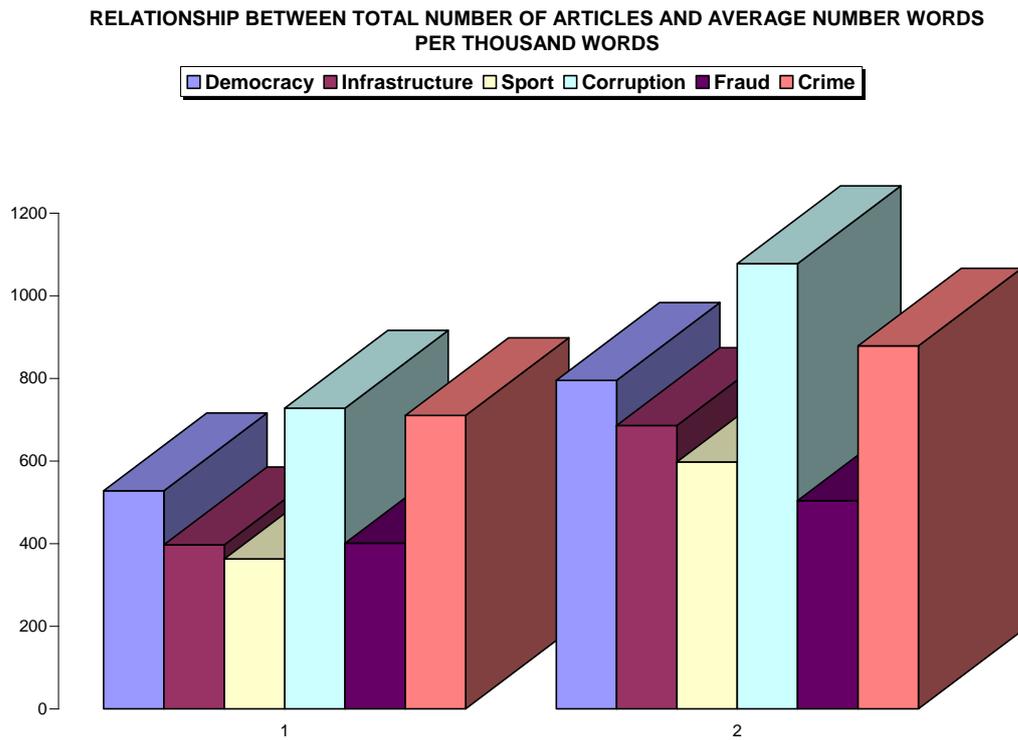
Figure 30

**NUMBER OF REPORTS FOR EACH CATEGORY MEASURED**



As for South Africa, the high result in respect of crime suggests that crime is a much more serious issue in South Africa than in Nigeria yet it did not become the symbol of South Africa in the British news media because its impact was diluted by the heavy coverage sport received. The British news media as earlier mentioned appears to pay less attention to news coming from Libya hence the generally low rate of reporting except on democracy where South Africa and Libya are within close range. It is also obvious from Figure 27 (above) that crime and corruption are reported by these newspapers more than sports and infrastructural development in Nigeria. Despite the fact that the period under examination was a time of several democratic events in Nigeria, the bent or interest of these news media organizations, perhaps did not give room for much reporting of these events in the West African country. As Figures 28 and 29 (above) show, the coverage of Libya from observation was close to that of Nigeria except that democracy was reported more than corruption.

Figure 31



It is a known fact that the then Libyan ruler, Muammar Gaddafi, was not a democratically elected leader. Thus the west seriously opposed his leadership and supported his overthrow ostensibly because of his refusal to allow democratic reforms after over 40 years in power. This might be responsible for the interest the newspapers have shown in matters of democracy, crime and corruption to portray to the rest of the world that the undemocratic government fosters high crime and corruption rate. Religious bias against Libya cannot be established or connected with the little coverage of sport because corruption and fraud were not extensively covered either. Figure 30 (above) shows the coverage allotted South Africa with sport standing out of the pack as earlier discussed. Figure 31 (also above) displays a twin graph with identical patterns. It portrays a clear relationship between the number of words and the number of articles published on each of the parameters in respect of Nigeria.

Table 9

**ANOVA TABLE OF ARTICLES REPORTED AND THE NUMBER OF YEARS COVERED**

**Anova:** Two-Factor Without Replication

<i>SUMMARY</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Democracy	3	528	176	2883
Infrastructure	3	397	132.333333	9201.33333
Sport	3	363	121	633
Corruption	3	728	242.666666	21484.3333
Fraud	3	401	133.666666	10122.3333
Crime	3	710	236.666666	23720.3333
			113.833333	4409.76666
1997 -1999	6	683	113.833333	4409.76666
2000 – 2002	6	844	140.666666	2163.86666
2003 – 2007	6	160	266.666666	13553.0666
	6	0	7	7

ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
NEWS ITEMS REPORTED	44452.9	4	8890.58888	1.58250284	0.25073	3.32583738
YEARS OF REPORT/COVERAGE	79908.1	5	39954.0555	7.11172311	4	4.10281586
Error	56180.5	2	5618.05555	5	0.01199	5
Total	180541.	6	10	6		

The same trend is found in the other nations considered. The ANOVA table, which shall be considered later also, buttresses the claim. While the first graph is focused on the number of articles published during the period under consideration, the second reflects the number of words in thousands for published articles for each of the reported categories. Although this is not a statistical analysis, a statistical test was applied to verify the results obtained as part of the validity process. As indicated in Tables 9 (above) and 10 (below), the test statistics of  $F=1.58$  is less than  $F$ -critical value  $F=3.33$ , it is thus valid to accept the null hypothesis of equal reporting on the given categories and conclude that there is no (statistically) significant difference in

Table 10

**ANOVA TABLE: TOTAL NUMBER OF ARTICLES REPORTED IN THE THREE COUNTRIES FOR EACH PARAMETER**

**Anova:** Two-Factor Without Replication

<i>SUMMARY</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Democracy	3	896	298.6667	39566.33
Infrastructure	3	1355	451.6667	125442.3
Sport	3	3258	1086	2234853
Corruption	3	1594	531.3333	152912.3
Fraud	3	858	286	46975
Crime	3	2201	733.6667	278676.3
NIGERIA	6	3127	521.1667	26671.77
LIBYA	6	726	121	4389.6
SOUTH AFRICA	6	6309	1051.5	875006.3

ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
NEWS ITEM REPORTED	1387922	5	277584.4	0.883347	0.526319	3.325837
COUNTRIES UNDER STUDY	2614434	2	1307217	4.15991	0.048461	4.102816
Error	3142417	10	314241.7			
Total	7144772	17				

terms of space and attention devoted to the parameters. The difference in the number of times each category was reported is due to chance. This implies that the sample newspapers reported on each category in the same manner in terms of frequency of reporting. Thus, the differences in the variation of reporting of each category throughout the period under consideration are insignificant. In the same vein, the *p-value* of 0.25 is greater than *p-value* of 0.05 used for the calculation, which implies also that there is no significant difference in the number of times the various categories were reported among the selected African nations. This is with regards to the significance of the variations observed in the report for the different nations; which totally agrees with the analysis of the *F-Critical values*. However, considering the column analysis, that is, years of reporting mean variance, the test statistics of  $F=7.11$  is greater than *F-critical value* of  $F=4.10$ , therefore, it is valid to reject the

Table 11

Total per category							
		Nigeria		Libya		South Africa	
		No. of Articles/%	No. of Words/%	No. of Articles/%	No. of Words/%	No. of Articles/%	No. of Words/%
1	Dem	528 (59%)	397,618(56%)	173 (19.3%)	163,036(23%)	195(21.7%)	149,229(21%)
2	Infr	397(29.3%)	342,956(30.0%)	128(9.4%)	109,849(9.6%)	830(61.3%)	692,845(60.4%)
3	Spo	363(11.0%)	298,788(12.6%)	90(3.0%)	78,210((3.3%)	2,805(86.0%)	1,994,233(84.1%)
4	Cor	728(45.7%)	538,683(44.6%)	81(5.1%)	94,322(8.0%)	785(49.2%)	572,197(47.4%)
5	Fra	401(46.7%)	251,910(43.7%)	36(4.1%)	41,868(7.3%)	421(49.1%)	282,305(49.0%)
6	Cri	710(32.2%)	439,118(28.7%)	218(10.0%)	157,303(10.3%)	1,273(57.8%)	934,217(61.0%)
		<b>3127 (31%)</b>	<b>2,269,073 (30%)</b>	<b>726 (7%)</b>	<b>644,588 (9%)</b>	<b>6,309 (62%)</b>	<b>4,625,026 (61%)</b>

null hypothesis of equal population mean on years and then conclude that there is a (statistically) significant difference among years of coverage. The *p-value* for 7.11 is 0.01, so the statistical test difference is significant at that level and such significant variance cannot be said to be due to chance because it is lower than 0.05 probability ratio as the *P-value* is always more reliable than the *F-value*. What this means in essence, is that there is evidence that the differences in the reportage as the year progresses cannot be said to be due to chance, because a significant difference is statistically established. Similarly, as Table 9 shows, the *P-value* of 0.526319 is higher than 0.05 while the *F-value* of 0.883347 is much smaller than the *F-critical value* of 3.325837. Therefore, the variation in the reporting based on number of articles is insignificant for the period under investigation. The reporting follows almost the same trend throughout, so any observable difference is merely due to chance. However, considering the mean variance between the selected countries where the *F-value* is almost the same as the *F-critical*, thus the value becomes unreliable in making valid judgment. Therefore, it is valid to look into the *P-value* to make a decision here. The *P-value* of 0.048461 though small and is very close to the

0.05 probability level; it still represents a significant difference, which cannot be attributed to mere happenstance.

## **5. Conclusion**

This chapter has evaluated the performance of the British news media in terms of their representations of Nigeria during the critical ten-year period of 1997 – 2007 and found significant evidence suggesting that there was a marked shift of attention from the coverage of democracy to corruption. Some may argue that writing about democracy will most likely touch on the theme of political corruption. While that is true, as Ralph Negrine (1996: 87) has pointed out, news stories by their nature often cut across natural boundaries associated with areas of reporting and as such they provide a narrative structure for relating a number of different and interconnected themes, it is equally true that airlines do crash. But collocating a particular airline with crash in several news stories for a long period sends certain signals. It is also significant that while Libya and South Africa had more articles on democracy, infrastructure and sport combined than on corruption, fraud and crime, Nigeria had more articles combined on corruption, fraud and crime than on democracy, infrastructure and sport. This finding suggests the existence of a pattern of representation.

In the same vein, the fact that each newspaper's tally, no matter how minute, shows evidence of a shift in the coverage attention from democracy, infrastructure and sport, which characterize positive representation to corruption, fraud and crime, which imply negative representation, it is valid to conclude that the representation of Nigeria is both negative and dismissive. This corroborates van Dijk's (1988) submission that

*“.... the negativity or the stereotypical nature of news about many Third World countries is not incidental but structural and, therefore ideologically ethnocentric.”*

This notion is evident in the fact a newspaper of *The Telegraph's* status did not take notice of the democratic struggle in the most populous black nation in the world. Also significant is the fact that the sample newspapers' (except FT) reportage on infrastructure is very minute. It underscores news media's spectatorship approach to human suffering elsewhere. Similarly, the fact that the FT has the widest coverage of Nigeria supports McChesney's (2010) idea of the interface between global media and global capitalism, which has fostered a neoliberal system that continually rejects the idea of reshaping or reconstructing global economic geography.

## Chapter 5: Current News, Yesterday's History – How the past intervenes with news construction and presentation

### 1. Introduction

*“Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like nightmares upon the brains of the living.”*  
-Karl Marx (1963:15)

In his book, *The state of Africa: a history of fifty years of independence*, Martin Meredith (2005), a British journalist, historian and researcher, writes about Africa that is today spoken of only in pessimistic terms. He paints a lucid picture of a vast continent with hugely daunting problems incomparable to any other areas of the world. Though Meredith's central theme addresses how Africa has come so close to destitution and despair in the space of two generations despite its enormous riches in resources, culture and history, his dissection of what went wrong, or how Harold Macmillan's *wind of change*<sup>9</sup> turns into Tony Blair's *scar on the conscience of the world*,<sup>10</sup> tells a pungent story about the hierarchy of Africa on the pecking order of global importance.

While the phrase 'in the space of two generations,' is a veiled reference to the period when Africans took charge of their continent's affairs, the statement "Africa that is today spoken of only in pessimistic terms..." suggests that Africa had, at a point in time, been spoken of in *non-pessimistic* terms or that talk about Africa in '*pessimistic terms*' is a new phenomenon. These suggestions are contentious; as Africa is

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<sup>9</sup> British Prime Minister, Harold MacMillan's famous speech to the South Africa's Parliament on February 3, 1960.

<sup>10</sup> British Prime Minister, Tony Blair's speech at the Labour Party Conference on October 2, 2001.

generally seen, viewed, perceived and, not just *spoken of*, in pessimistic terms, particularly in the western imagination. As mentioned in chapter three, it has been declared a “hopeless continent” (*The Economist* 2000; Saul 2002) and a “basket case” (Ramos et al., 2007; Chabal 2008 and De Beer 2010). A simple reference to Africa, in any news story, conjures up images of lush jungles and wild animals, endless poverty and famine, blatant corruption and tribal warfare, unkempt huts or abode and deadly diseases such as the Ebola and AIDS viruses (Schraeder and Endless, 1998: 29).

Indeed, Meredith’s treatise effectively follows the long tradition of such discourse, a patronizing neo-colonial narrative that has reduced Africa to the simplistic caricature of a mother and her famished son begging for help. That construct of Africa has been predicated on the idea of a continent whose only hope was to be civilized by the “white man;” a notion that soon became, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “the white man’s burden” (Kipling 1926). Consequently, the idea that “we must do something about Africa,” predominates in the news agenda and justifies the recurring but usually inadequate western interventions. It is an idea that has a deeply embedded neo-colonial understanding of Africa and from which most media discourses about the continent have emerged.

It also contains a very subtle argument that “they” -*the Africans*- are passive (Lugard 1926) and hopeless people waiting for “us” -the civilized western society- to help them, to intervene and fix the problems they confront, as “we” know better. Several writers, scholars and researchers have implicated western media in the reproduction of these kinds of negative constructs. Janeske Botes (2011) shows in her research that the international media is constantly and consistently painting Africa as a hopeless

continent where poverty, disease, corruption, AIDS and many other negative connotations are the traditional representative of its fortunes in media narratives. Also, Milton Allimadi (2002: 77) notes in his book, *The Hearts of Darkness: How White Writers Created the Racist Image of Africa*, that “people need to realize that past racist practices still condition and influence contemporary reporting.” Allimadi’s work is especially an embarrassing revelation. It details how reporters and editors at *The New York Times* conspire to invent quotes and manufacture scenes, and then insert same into their reports on Africa. This ostensibly makes such reports to fit into certain preset image of Africa even though some may argue that such journalistic debauchery is not peculiar to reports on the continent.

However, this crisis-ridden image of Africa in the western media is not a self-portrait. What we see in them is not necessarily what we get when confronted with reality. They are rubble and debris of century-long construction process of Africa, which according to Mudimbe (1988), was carefully and strategically invented to fit into European constructs. But it has, undoubtedly, remained the portraiture of Africa that is constantly and consistently produced and reproduced in dominant media discourse. This raises a lot of questions but the pertinent ones, in the interim, are: Do racist practices of the past still condition and influence current reporting? Are there metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases and depictions of that era that have been resurrected into new euphemisms and have found their ways into news construction of current events? Have fables from traveller’s tales or celebrated novels such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* become the signifier of the African character in current news discourse? Are there traces of ideology in the language used in the construction of news about Africa or, in this particular instance, Nigeria? Ideology in this sense

refers to what Thompson (1990: 56) calls, the “social forms and processes within which, and by means of which, hegemonic symbolic forms circulate in the social world” (see also Wodak and Meyer 2009: 88).

Thus, this chapter examines the discourse used by the five UK samples in their discussions of Nigeria, an important part of the African continent, as regards the themes revealed in chapters three and four. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, the analysis adopts a critical perspective in order to assess how the use of language impact on texts and context as well as their links with historical discourses mentioned above. In this chapter, therefore, excerpts of the discourse which represent identified trends when applying the analytical tools mentioned in chapter three and four are presented along with the insights of the interviewees. Where individual excerpts or insights contrast with these patterns, they are equally presented to reflect the diversity in the discourse.

Consequently, this chapter focuses on how past (not just recent) history and current events meet at the junction of news construction; and the impact that summit has on the coverage of Nigeria and the representation such coverage engenders. As discussed in chapter one and two, representation is a complex subject, especially when dealing with “difference.” Hall (1997) underscores this point when he posits that representation “engages feelings, attitudes and emotions and it mobilizes fears and anxieties...at a deeper level...” (p. 226). How these *complexities* and *differences* are contextualized have proven to be of essence in news reporting, because as McNair (1998) has said, “no story can be told, no account of events given, without contextualization around a set of assumptions, beliefs and values” (p: 5). Therefore,

an examination of how Nigeria is constructed as news, the set of assumptions, beliefs and values around which the contextualization was based is significant in this discussion. Also of significance is the use of language in the news process (see Fairclough 1989, Fairclough 1992, 1995a, Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). Language use provides such devices as metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases and depictions that help to condense information and offer a media package of an issue (Gamson and Modigliani 1989).

Therefore, news and its narratives, Wodak (2004) argues, cannot be taken as isolated frames because news and its narratives are a daily process of legitimizing the inequality in power relations. As Hall (1998) notes, news is socially-constructed. Entman (1993) adds that it is an ordinary event or occurrence that is selected, processed, constructed and ‘appropriately’ framed by news workers. Framing is essential in news construction. Entman puts it thus: *"[t]o frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation"* (Entman 1993: 52). By so doing, journalists invite the public to see the ‘world about them’ in certain ways. In this process, they demonstrate immense powers over what the public have access to see, read or discuss. Meikle (2009) sums up that power as ‘news values,’ describing it as “a manifestation of the symbolic power that accrues to recognized media organizations; with which they define a particular world-view as *the news*, and in so doing make a claim on the definition of reality” (p.24).

## 2. Method of Analysis

It is worth reiterating here that this chapter looks at how the selected UK titles communicated Nigeria to their readers. The *reality* they defined about the West African country; the issues they made more *salient*; the *language* they used and the historical context within which their discourse is located are presented along with excerpts from the interviews with some of the news people involved in writing the news, particularly where their comment is relevant to the topic under discussion. The corpus for this component of the analysis, as earlier mentioned, is generated from the much larger set used in the content analysis segment. Also, as stated in chapter 3, there are several methods for choosing samples for this kind of analysis. One model is to choose a particular date for sampling and evaluate excerpts for that date. Though this model seems straightforward, it is likely to generate homogenous entries as newspapers are published in sections with different issues addressed on a particular day of the week. For example, if a newspaper under evaluation publishes development issues on Mondays, choosing Mondays for sampling will most certainly generate only development issues-related stories thus creating a pigeon-hole analysis.

Therefore, to circumvent this pigeon-hole dilemma, as well as avoid the tendency to engage in cherry-picking, which according to Wodak and Meyer (2009), describes the practice by researchers of choosing examples that best fit their assumptions (p.11); this researcher decided to create a set of criteria for stories from which excerpts are selected. The first criterion is headline and subhead. For example, a story qualifies for selection if the word “democracy” appears either on its headline, its subhead or intro. The second is that the story must focus on Nigeria. Where more than one story meets these conditions, the story with the highest number of words is selected for analysis.

The idea is that a lengthy story focused on the subject and theme of discussion would provide a much more robust discourse on the issues under evaluation. More importantly, to ensure that corpus for this segment is manageable, only one story is chosen per sample newspaper per each period of investigation (i.e. 1997-1999). Where a sample has no story that meets these criteria, such sample newspaper is omitted from selection. This model of selection affords the researcher the opportunity to critically read the stories, which basing selection on a date may not entail as well as ensure that the selected excerpts are not picked based on the whims of the researcher. Therefore, included in this analysis is, at least, an excerpt from each of the samples for each of the three stages (1997-1999; 2000-2002; 2003-2007) under investigation; except where a particular sample records no publication in a particular stage during the period under investigation. This is to ensure that the excerpts are representative of the samples under investigation. First, the representation of democracy in Africa:

### 3. Democracy: **Is this virtue congenial with the African culture?**

The major debate in Nigeria, and around Nigeria in the global media in the early 1990s, is dominated by the idea of returning the country to democracy. Consequently, the issue of Nigeria's democracy generated a lot of interest and concern in both local and international news media. Subsumed under the debate is the discussion on whether to suspend or retain Nigeria as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. This discussion received a lot of attentions in the western news media, particularly in the five UK samples under analysis. In their coverage, the five UK newspapers frame Nigeria as a distant 'Other' that is very far-away or isolated from 'us.' Of course, there are differences and similarities in the way they constructed the news but they

also demonstrate striking similarities in raising questions as to the appropriateness of democracy in an African environment as exemplified by the excerpts below:

1. *“AN ACTION group seeking to cajole Nigeria into a swifter return to democracy meets in London today for a review of how willing Nigerians are now to make changes demanded by the Commonwealth in 1995, when their membership was suspended. Human rights advocates fear the eight-man Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group is weakening in its resolve to impose new sanctions if the military Government of General Sani Abacha fails to speed up an election timetable. Activists also point to differences in the group, headed by Stan Mudenge, the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister, between those ready to compromise and hardliners. Britain and Canada are identified as hardliners; [...] Britain insisted before the two-day meeting that it was not willing to make any concessions in the demand that Nigeria must release political prisoners and hold elections by October, the two-year deadline set in 1995. (The Sunday Times, Overseas News, February 18, 1997).*

2. *“The Commonwealth's ministerial action group opened a two-day meeting on Nigeria yesterday to hear evidence on conditions in the country from opponents of the military regime.[...] Mr. Robin Cook, British foreign secretary, has already said London would recommend that Nigeria should remain suspended[...]Sanctions currently in force, including visa restrictions and an arms embargo, "have not had any serious effect", said the coalition, which includes Mr. Wole Soyinka, the 1986 Nobel prize winner for literature.[...] Nigeria's suspension followed the execution in November 1995 of the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists.” (Financial Times, New: World Trade, P.04, July 11, 1997)*

The use of the word *cajole* in this context suggests an unwilling Nigeria has to be persuaded to embrace democracy by a Big Uncle, who is more experienced and understands better the importance of democracy, just like a baby needed to be sweet-talked into accepting something that is good for him or her but for which his or her

mind is too juvenile to appreciate. With the use of “*their*,” the writer of this excerpt contextualized the distance between his reading public and Nigerians and therefore, flagged Nigeria as a distant ‘Other.’ In the same vein, by pointing to the “*differences in the group, headed by Stan Mudenge, the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister, and couching the differences in terms of those willing to compromise and hardliners*,” the writer is not just inviting his readers to differentiate between those who believe in democracy and are ready to fight for it but is also taking the liberty to define a particular reality. The next statement does not only identify Britain and Canada as champions of democracy but draws a distinction between the two western countries and Zimbabwe, an African country whose foreign minister headed the 8-man Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group that is weak and unable to follow its resolve to uphold democracy. Meanwhile, while *Excerpt 1* announces proudly that the meeting is being held in London, a subtle reference to Britain’s Big Uncle role, *Excerpt 2* refers to London metonymically, as it stands for the UK government. In contrast to *Excerpt 1*, which obliterates Nigerians’ role in the fight for enthronement of democracy in their country, *Excerpt 2* acknowledges the activities of Nigerians themselves in the battle to get the military leadership to surrender to the people’s will. It does not portray the whole of 150 million Nigerians as needing to be persuaded to embrace democracy (the impression created by *Excerpt 1*) but identifies a group of military leaders as those opposed to democracy.

It is possible to contest the interpretation of these referential expressions and argue that the story reflects the reality of the event at issue, but the fact that in spite of the similarity of the events in the excerpts, there are noticeable distinctions in the salient points highlighted by different excerpts is instructive. It is also instructive that in *Excerpt 1* the story makes a clear distinction between the two western countries

involved and the two African countries involved; and more so, paints them in different lights. By emphasizing Britain's demand for *the release [of] political prisoners and holding of elections* the story is highlighting the values the western countries hold dear on the one hand and contrasting that on the other hand with one African country that has to be cajoled to embrace democracy and the other, under whose leadership *the resolve* to embrace democracy is weakening. These constructions are deictic and therefore not only reinforce the colonial constructs that the African culture is not congenial with democracy but also that the Africans can neither manage nor organize their own affairs. Furthermore, though there may be no explicit references to Britain (or the western society) as decent, moral and ethical while Nigeria (or the African society) is indecent, immoral and unethical but the element of this comparison is fully implied. For example:

3. *"NIGERIA should not be allowed to return to the Commonwealth because it has made no progress on human rights or democracy since being suspended, the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said yesterday. Mr. Cook made clear that Britain would be pursuing its ethical approach to foreign policy with a tough line at October's meeting of Commonwealth heads of government in Edinburgh. [...]"Nigeria is an interesting example of how economic progress and human rights are complementary," he said. "Nigeria should be the second richest country in Africa. What holds it back is a corrupt regime and very poor standards of governance" [...] Nigeria's record has been under international scrutiny since the army, under General Sani Abacha, annulled a presidential election in 1993 that would have ended military rule". (The Guardian, Foreign Page, Pg.19, June 26, 1997).*

In this excerpt as in Excerpt 2, the source of the story is explicit: Robin Cook, the British Foreign Secretary. Though he was not explicitly named in Excerpt 1, the readers of the newspapers as members of the British national community would

understand that the statement, “*Britain insisted before the two-day meeting...*,” contains the relevant national identifier, which points the information to the foreign office where Cook is the boss. Cook, as the source of this story, acts as what Hall et al. (1978) calls the “primary definers” of the news agenda. Although his statement may have been completely re-written, what is published frames Nigeria in the context of a corrupt society where economic progress is retarded and human rights are almost non-existent. With the stage already set by Cook, as Excerpt 3 shows, the writer tells us that “Britain would be pursuing *its* ethical approach to foreign policy,” thus flagging Britain as an ethical nation where decency and morality is given. The implication is that readers are invited to see Britain as a society in contrast to an *interesting* example of corruption and poor standards of governance. Also, in the statement “*since the army, under General Sani Abacha, annulled a presidential election in 1993,*” “*the army*” is used as an interpellation for the military government or regime (as it is usually referred to in western news media) and it subtly points to another distinction between Britain and Nigeria: one is governed through democratic means and the other ruled by military junta. However, the statement may be factually confusing as the military government (or regime) annulled the election and not really the army *per se* and Abacha may be in charge of the army, but he was not the head of state then.

No doubt, news is about differences but constructs of a differentiated ‘Other’ such as in excerpt 3 typify a positive self-representation and negative other representation (van Dijk 2009). They represent a typical processing and circulating of hegemonic symbols (see Thompson 1990; Jager and Maier 2009) as they highlight corruption and poverty in Africa while side-stepping how western companies operating in Africa

along with western banking institutions fuel such corruption and, as a result, aid the spread of poverty. For example, in 2010, Global Witness, a London-based Non-Governmental Organisation published a report titled “*International Thief Thief: How British Banks are complicit in Nigerian corruption.*” The 37-page report, which comprehensively detailed the involvement of UK financial institutions in the stealing of funds meant to give succour to poor and desperate Nigerians, received little or no coverage in the British press.

Conversely, a similar report by the Chatham House, (another London-based organisation also known as The Royal Institute of International Affairs), which supposedly detailed the criminality of Nigerians was widely covered (*see: Nigerian money scams cost Britain millions, says report, The Guardian, 20/11/2006*). The principle guiding the news selection process in this context appears skewed in favour of certain kind of stories. Also slanted is criticism of “African” corruption in the western press. Writing in the *London Review of Books* (March 26, 2009 edition), Bernard Porter wonders why western criticism about corruption in Africa is always one-way. He notes that “...for every African leader taking bribes there is usually a western company dispensing them.” If there’s any discomfoting truth to which western news writers are quick to turn a blind eye, this is one. Coincidentally, *Financial Times*’ Michael Peel, who authored the Chatham House Report, agrees that the west is also implicated in the Nigerian corruption. Peel says in an interview: “it also involves obviously western oil companies; but also western governments who make cynical policies as well as western financial institutions, for example, who continued even now to accept money from people in Nigeria who they really should not have as clients.”

While the western news media reputed for their investigative prowess are almost always constrained to go after ‘individuals’ behind western companies implicated in African corruption, they give detailed accounts when writing a different kind of news report on Africa as the following excerpt shows:

4. *“Paramilitary forces spread throughout Nigeria yesterday over concerns that voting today could trigger violence between supporters of the military junta and pro-democracy activists. About 50 million people are registered to vote. But two unexplained explosions this week which left nine people dead, along with the threat of violence, boycotts and overall political apathy may keep turnout at the polls very low. Last year, about 10 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote in state assembly elections”.* (*The Independent; News; Page 11, April 25, 1998*).

The framing of this excerpt, especially the phrase ‘*paramilitary forces spread throughout Nigeria*’ is suggestive of a level of violence and disruption beyond control. The writer amplifies this construct by telling his readers about two *explosions* but fails to name where they actually took place, which may further reinforce the impression that every single space in the country is engulfed in violence. While reference to *voter apathy* shows democratic culture is yet to have roots, widespread *violence* as aptly painted shows the environment for it is non-existent. Generally, it is contentious if the violence and disruption covers the entirety of Nigeria, but the framing of the excerpt suggests otherwise and thus engrain in mind a differentiated image of Nigeria, which to quote Jonathan Dimbleby, is “very acute, very sharp, often very pungent and often very harsh.”

By 2000 to 2002, the coverage of Nigeria in the five UK samples witnessed a slight change. There was a difference in focus even though the context of the coverage

remained the same as in 1997-1999. Once democracy has been restored in Nigeria, doubts as to whether the Africans could organize the electoral process involved or whether the much trumpeted political and 'tribal' violence would consume the whole country receded while fear of whether the process could survive receives boost as the following excerpts show:

5. *“Peter Hain, the Foreign Office Minister, flies out of Nigeria this morning leaving praise and promises for a nation which now boasts almost seven months of democracy. Applauding President Olusegun Obasanjo for the peacemaking role that his country played in Sierra Leone, Mr. Hain suggested that Britain was on standby to offer assistance to its former colony should it continue on its current path. ‘This is make or break time for Nigeria,’ he said. Certainly with economic reforms under way and the introduction of an anti-corruption Bill, Nigeria is showing the first signs of making it. But how near is this former British colony to breaking?” (The Times, Features, January 12, 2000)*

6. *“TWO YEARS after Nigeria shook off its military dictatorship and embraced democracy, half its population was still on or below the poverty line, with hundreds of ethnic groups constantly at each other's throats, and many of its intellectuals seeking to leave. Corruption is still endemic and everyone wants a ‘dash’ before anything gets done. Yet Nigeria has the mental and physical resources to bring prosperity to everyone. Karl Maier, a journalist who knows it well, reports frank conversations he's had with all sorts of people, helped by Nigerians' love of conversation. If only they'd be equally frank with each other, he says. In the end, no one else can help them.” (The Sunday Telegraph, p.14, February 24, 2002)*

In excerpt 5, the writer emphasizes something worthy of praising Nigeria for but the phrase *“for a nation which now boasts almost seven months of democracy...”* appears condescending. And so is the statement: *“Britain was on standby to offer assistance to*

*its former colony should it continue on its current path.*” A differently phrased statement like: “for a nation whose citizens deserve their hard-earned seven months of democracy” would not just have paid compliments to the people but convey a different message. Thus the language use in both statements shows that the object of report is framed as a distant ‘Other’ and more so, still a “colony,” which will get assistance from Britain, the Big Uncle, as long as it behaves well. It is like telling a child to behave or be grounded. Furthermore, the excerpt’s emphasis on ‘British colony,’ though may have been included as a part of historical context to remind an average reader, it ostensibly reinforces colonial discourses. Because reports about the United States, for instance, do not include such reminders, the tendency to *misread* them as cultural condescension is high. Though it is commendable that excerpt 6 used *ethnic groups* and not *tribal groups*, it however still follows the dismissive and derisive discourse-types; except that it went further by suggesting that Nigerians lie to each other. “*If only they'd be equally frank with each other...*” is a modern day euphemism of Lugard’s damning portraiture of the African personae. That Lugard’s racist prejudices are being recycled, touched up and re-used in modern day reporting corroborates Reisigl and Wodak’s (2001) notion of recontextualization, which is a process of transferring given elements to a new context or inserted into a new context (p: 90).

In an interview, Robin Denselow, who has done extensive work on Africa for both the BBC and *The Guardian*, offers his perspective on the issue. Denselow agrees that the historical fact of Nigeria being a British colony, among other factors, impacts on the portrayals of the country in the British news media. Peel, another interviewee, also concurs arguing that a large part of the media sees Nigeria and Africa as something to

be patronized. Peel explains: “I think to a large part of the media, there is this view of Nigeria and Africa in general as something to be patronized as a recipient of aid.” Explaining further, he argues that: “There’s also this sort of very tenacious strength with the aid industry, which I think is about the notion of ‘let’s just help them,’ and this idea has led to charity, which is actually not kind of different from the missionary stuff or paternalism you saw during colonial times.” Dimbleby puts it in sharper focus: “I think there has been a sense of ‘we were the masters.’ We are the wise men. These new kids on the block are doing quite well or not very well. Therefore, there would be an inevitable slight sense of superiority and, therefore, patronizing Nigeria and other countries. But I think that is shifting and it’s shifting for generational reasons apart from anything else.” While these insights explain the presence of colonial discourses in current news writings, Peel believes the problem could be addressed “if journalists are internationally-minded, bring to their readers a sense of the wider world and try to be as scrupulous as possible.”

Indeed, Peel’s suggestion is congruent with the notion of journalists testing their assumptions. The point can be made that journalism practice without testing of assumptions has led to the archives overflowing with a particular type of materials about Africa. The fact that Africans are not sufficiently empowered to challenge those misrepresentations, -processed, adopted and stored as facts- over time, has made them become commonsense. Thus, Africa is not only reduced to disease, disaster, drought and debts in the western imagination, it is common knowledge that only these issues continue to dominate the news discourse about the continent. The excerpts below contain poignant examples of how news discourses are framed around these issues:

*7. “Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria's vice-president, will unveil a blueprint of his government's privatisation plans as part of a week-long foreign investment*

*drive in the UK and US starting in London today. [...] Mr. Abubakar, a former customs chief from the Muslim north of the country, said in an interview with the Financial Times that he hoped these commitments would help persuade foreign investors that Nigeria was open for business again.” (Financial Times, World News, p.10, February 14, 2000)*

8. *“The region's misery is well documented. The 2m barrels of oil pumped from the delta each day provides more than 90% of Nigeria's foreign income. The delta communities have little to show for it beyond contamination, repression, and an ever more restless younger generation which has found violence, hostage-taking and extortion in place of jobs. [...] Today the burned-out houses stand as a monument to the failed hope that democratic rule would rescue the delta. Its blighted communities looked to the new government to ensure that the region benefited from the riches it gives up. But a bill to set up a development commission to return some of the oil profits to the delta is stuck in the national assembly, a victim of the endless feuding between MPs and President Obasanjo. [...] The oil companies accuse villagers of breaching the pipes, either to steal the fuel or to claim compensation for the resulting pollution. But in one recent explosion it was clear that the pipe was so old that it had fallen apart.” (The Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 15, August 24, 2000)*

In excerpt 7, Mr. Abubakar, in this case, is not just the *vice-president*; he also is a *“former custom chief from the Muslim North of the country.”* It is doubtful if it is necessary to insert the religious denomination of a nation’s vice-president in an investment story except it is to make a very important point. One important point in this respect would be to make salient the discourse of religious dichotomy in Nigeria about the Christian south and Muslim north, which reinforces the construct of religious division and political instability. Also, *‘that Nigeria was open for business again’* points to instability whereas an alternative phrase such as *‘that business opportunities abound in Nigeria,’* would have conveyed the same information in a more positive manner. Such little differences in framing resonate with the reader. The

reader thus processes this seemingly innocuous information actively and constructs meanings using his pre-existing cognitive social representation (Grabber 1988; Livingstone 1990; van Dijk 2001). Excerpt 8, highlights the *troubles in the Niger Delta* region and their insalubrious effects on *restless young generations*, a development bill that got stuck because of *endless feuding* and oil companies *accusing villagers of breaching pipes or stealing*. The excerpt's story touches all the points that are representative of Nigeria's fortunes in the UK media narrative: *troubles* and *endless feuding* point to instability. *Oil profits* signify wealth while *stealing* represents corruption but the writer of the excerpt side-stepped the complicity of the oil companies in both corruption and degradation of the environment, which is part of the reasons for youth joblessness. These issues are often discussed without comparing the attitudes of the oil companies towards spills in their home countries and in Nigeria. However, excerpt 9 (below), passes an unmistakable judgment on Africa as a distant 'Other' whose culture, and inclinations, are not congenial with democracy.

9. *"To collective relief, the rainy season cracked into life last Wednesday night after Lagbaja, on stage in Lagos, banged his talking drum with such vigour that Sango, deity of thunder and lightning, could not prolong her dry-season slumber. But Nigeria's masked musician wants to do more than change the weather. Calling himself by his stage name, he said: 'Lagbaja is trying to tell Nigerians that we need to have patience with democracy. It takes a lot more effort to build a nation than to destroy it like the military did. That is why we sing Suurulere.'* The name of a Lagos suburb, the word means 'patience is a virtue.' *Probably the most hurried and chaotic nation in the world, Nigeria is already complaining that President Olusegun Obasanjo is taking too long to deliver the 'democracy dividend'. It is two years this month since the retired general was sworn in as a civilian leader. Islamists are entrenching sharia law in the north of the country, the regions and tribes are grumbling and the currency, the naira, is tumbling. But at least, deliberately*

*or not, Lagbaja brought proper rain last Wednesday after his gig in the commercial capital. A saxophone genius who wears a mask in public, he has made his mark by blending the traditional sounds and instruments of the Yoruba - the people of the south-west of Nigeria - with messages about modern life in the world's third biggest city.” (Independent on Sunday; Foreign News; Pg. 17; May 6, 2001.)*

This excerpt typifies what Kagoro (2012; 40) calls “classical western media image of a continent synonymous with violence and long-standing conflicts.” The original story from which the excerpt is taken was titled: *Nigeria’s crusader sings his messages of democracy*. The writer, as the excerpt shows, links music with democracy, politics and chaos while emphasizing the issues of religious division (Christian south and Muslim north), regional and tribal divide as well as economic problems by pointing attention to ‘*the currency, the naira,*’ which according to him, ‘*is tumbling.*’ While the coverage of Nigeria has, for the most part, followed the construct of a differentiated ‘Other,’ commendable progress in the area of increasing democratisation has been largely ignored. As such the account of Nigeria holding two national elections between 2003 and 2007 period with the last one culminating in the transfer of political power from one civilian administration to another has failed to make the news. If anything, issues relating to political chaos, tribal and religious divisions, disease, and debts have continue to occupy prime position in the news in respect of Africa.

Denselow identifies the reasons for this kind of reportage. “The problem I suppose,” *The Guardian* and *BBC* journalist posits, “is that people go to Africa when there’s problem and there have been lots of problems in Africa but because of the expense of going there and the rest of it, they tend to ignore places where things are going on

well.” From this insight, it is obvious that the coverage of Africa is problem-driven. Denselow explains further: “So, you have a problem in one country and assume that it’s the entire continent. For instance, when there was a problem in Yugoslavia, it was incorrect to assume that the whole of Europe was in chaos. It was not. It was just only a small part of Europe that was the problem. So, I think for public and people, who haven’t been to Africa, it is easy to get the wrong perception.” Indeed, that perception is further accentuated by comments, which are often ‘very acute,’ ‘very pungent’ and ‘very harsh,’ as Dimbleby has noted.

Though comment is meant to be frank, and as C.P. Scott<sup>11</sup> has counselled, it should also be balanced and fair. But as Will Hutton has noted, the distinction between facts and comment has been obliterated. Writing in *The Observer* (August 17, 2003), under the headline: *Facts are free, opinion is sacred: When our media are more interested in reporting opinion as fact, how will we ever discover the truth?* Hutton posits that “the contemporary media are no longer refractors and reflectors of the society on which they report; askers of simple questions and seekers after truth, however imperfect. The media have become actors in their own right, with a post-modern view of facts - truth lies in the eye of the beholder.” Therefore, while problem-driven coverage, lax fact-checking, passing opinion as facts amongst others are issues in reporting, self-imposed restraint, balance and fairness are important to a newspaper’s comment. Thus comments in this corpus are assessed for language use, in relation to the opinion they canvass and the cultural context they invoke. The tone of most comments is magisterial, derisive and even condescending. Since comments are influential in moulding public perception, their focus on corruption rather than

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<sup>11</sup> C.P. Scott (1846-1932) British journalist, publisher and politician was editor of *The Guardian* from 1872 to 1929 and the newspaper’s owner from 1907 to 1932.

increasing democratisation is critical to the perception of Africa as the following excerpts show:

10. *“We've all received them, those dodgy emails purporting to come from the wealthy widows of obscure Nigerian chieftains. If only, they implore, you would kindly agree to allow them to use your British bank account to transfer their mysteriously acquired fortunes out of the country, you will be the lucky recipient of a handsome reward running into millions of pounds. The reality, of course, is that anyone foolish - or rapacious - enough to participate will end up being just another hapless victim of Nigeria's legendary computer scammers [...]Corruption in Nigeria is so endemic that it almost rivals oil as the country's main economic activity[...]Corruption...is not just confined to the dispossessed - i.e. the majority of Nigeria's 140 million people[...]the country's considerable natural wealth has been controlled - some would say looted - by the clique of tribal elders and military dictators who have dominated the political landscape[...]the country was governed by a succession of military dictators who ensured the country's riches were confined to the elite group of businessmen who helped to keep them in power. This was the period when it was not uncommon for a smartly dressed Nigerian businessman to buy a Mayfair flat with a suitcase stuffed with cash [...] Tomorrow's presidential election - assuming it still takes place - is supposed to consolidate the painful transition from corrupt oligarchy to functioning democracy, but already the twin spectres of corruption and political violence have returned to throw the entire process into turmoil” (The Daily Telegraph, Comment, P.23, April 20, 2007)*

The writer begins by putting to good use the routine deixis of mediated address “we,” “you,” which as Billig (1995) notes, invites readers to a shared position. By saying “we all receive them...” The writer is appealing to nationalist sentiments against a crime targeted at “you,” (or “us”) by “them;” those who want “your British bank accounts” to transfer “their” mysteriously acquired fortunes out *the* country. This is a typical example of “us” and “them.” These kinds of binary formulations, as Sreberny

(2007) has argued, project everything bad on to the “Other”. Although the commentator mentioned the greed and foolishness of the victim in passing, he did not to dwell much on it but rather concentrated on the crime of the “Other.”

Indeed, scamming is evil and condemnable but it is inconceivable that every single Nigerian would be involved in it. With the use of deixis, by which he rhetorically points his readers in that direction, the commentator says: “*Corruption in Nigeria is so endemic that it almost rivals oil as the country's main economic activity [...] Corruption...is not just confined to the dispossessed - i.e. the majority of Nigeria's 140 million people....*” Evaluated linguistically and stylistically, this statement could be interpreted to mean that every Nigerian is guilty of the crime of corruption. Thus the commentator transfers values and prejudices to his readers by structuring the prejudices as media intelligence and communicated them in form of a negative image of Nigeria and Nigerians.

In contrast to excerpt 6, where “ethnic groups,” was used to describe different nationalities in Nigeria, “tribal” elders, a borrowed word from colonial discourse was used in excerpt 10. The commentator also tells of how smartly-dressed Nigerian businessmen carrying briefcases filled with cash turn up to buy flats at Mayfair. It is unclear in which currencies the cash is denominated neither is it obvious from the article how such large sums of money got into the UK. This kind of writing unfortunately gives credence to Anand’s (2007) notion that western journalists construct facts from hearsay (p: 29). In tandem with the construction of Nigeria as revealed in this discussion so far, this excerpt also raises doubts about Nigerians’ ability to conduct their election: “*tomorrow's presidential election - assuming it still*

*takes place;*” and by pin-pointing corruption and political violence as the reason it might be aborted shows there’s a particular trend the representation follows. However, the following excerpt, even though it slams Africa’s democracy, expresses dissimilar sentiments to a large extent:

*11. “...One cause for optimism is that democracy, of a sort, has spread quickly since the cold war. Between 1960 and 1990, only one sub-Saharan leader was peacefully voted out of power; in the 1990s, 12 were. Some new leaders have proved as bad as the old ones but the principle that rulers can be ejected has been established. Democracy has brought welcome change in Africa's two most important countries: South Africa, which has the largest economy, and Nigeria, the continent's most populous nation. Both are better governed than they were a decade ago. Nigeria was liberated from Sani Abacha, the thuggish of military dictators, by a heart attack in 1998 and now enjoys an exuberantly free press. However, Olusegun Obasanjo, the current president, has barely tried to live up to a promise five years ago to root out the corruption that keeps Nigeria so dysfunctional.” (Financial Times, Comment, p.19, July 6, 2004*

Excerpt 11 acknowledges the strides of the African nations in adopting democracy “*of a sort*” and notes the fact that the “imperfect democracy” in Africa has resulted in peaceful political changes. This excerpt, which is equally a comment, is less dismissive and much less derisive than the other comment. This is indicative of the fact that constructs can indeed be freed of certain influences if the opaque constraints are made manifest. Unlike the other, this excerpt rather than condemn the whole population points the readers’ attention directly to the culprits by naming the military despot involved though it harps on rooting out corruption thus giving the impression that corruption can be rooted out completely in any society whereas a corruption-free society is an aspiration even in western societies that have practiced democracy for

years. The following excerpts generally focus on the election aspect of democracy. While excerpt 13 underscores irregularities in the voting system as well as logistics problems though with a subdued tone, excerpt 12 highlights how past history intervenes and thus condition or shape the construction of current events:

*12. MILLIONS queued in Nigeria yesterday to ink their left forefinger and smudge a ballot sheet to choose the next big man, the leader of the biggest democracy in Africa. President Olusegun Obasanjo was expected to sweep to a second term. Voting was generally peaceful in the major cities such as Lagos, Kano and Ibadan, but opposition officials said six of their supporters were killed in clashes between rival parties in Bayelsa state, in the southern delta. [...] In Nigeria all the power wielders are called 'big men' and none looms larger than Obasanjo. Rival candidates backed by ethnic minorities in the south and Muslims in the north hinted that there would be bloodshed should the incumbent win an election deemed rigged. In fact, diplomats and the Nigerian media expect almost all sides to try to cheat, not difficult when the administrative machinery for more than 60 million registered voters is ramshackle. (Observer News Pages, Pg. 21 April 20, 2003)*

*13. "Foreign observers of the weekend's parliamentary elections in Nigeria said they were concerned by polling irregularities but they praised the country's continued efforts to entrench democracy after decades of military rule. The head of 20 Commonwealth observers, Salim Ahmed Salim, said in a statement that "logistical" problems in the first elections held for 20 years under a civilian regime had hampered the voting on Saturday for a new national assembly." (The Independent, Foreign News; Pg. 14; April 15, 2003)*

Excerpt 12 illustrates the innate contradictions in the reporting of Africa and, more so, how the past intervenes with the construction of current events. In the past, there was a colonial-cum-racial discourse based on the assumption that Africans can only be

governed by “strongmen.” At that time, many African leaders were referred to in western news media as strongmen. Today, “big men” has become a perfect euphemism for “strongmen” as the past continues to intervene, influence and condition the construction of current news events. The writer of this excerpt acknowledges peaceful voting on the one hand and, in the same breadth on the other hand, reports “killings,” “violence clashes,” by unnamed opposition officials. Peaceful voting does not fit the profile of Nigeria but as this discourse has shown “killings” and “violent clashes” in the “Niger Delta region” is a perfectly fitting rhetoric about Nigeria in the western imagination. It is doubtful if a construction such as “*but opposition officials said...*” would not have elicited a much more critical editorial scrutiny if the subject of the story were a western nation. In the same vein, the resultant uproar could only be imagined if an attribution to diplomats saying *all sides in an election* in Britain, for instance, would try to cheat. But it seems the standards are different once the subject of reporting is the distant “Other.” The implication of this example brings to the fore A.J. Liebling’s famous quote: “Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one” (*The New Yorker*, 14/05/1960). In terms of global news, the freedom of the press seemed guaranteed only for those in our geopolitical centres; who own the dominant global media and not those “Others” in the peripheries.

#### 4. Infrastructure: Describing the African landscape

What follows in this section is the evaluation of the five samples’ constructs of Nigeria around the theme of infrastructure. As explained in the preceding section, the analysis adopts a critical perspective to assess how language use links text and context in the construct of the Nigerian landscape. It evaluates the perceived *reality* that is

made more *salient* and examines the given *context*. The researcher argues that the perpetual depiction of the entire African landscape in the western media even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with ancient huts and wild animals instead of modern skyscrapers passes a profoundly subtle message of cultural condescension: A skyscraper is modern and western. Huts and wild animals are primitive, rural, natural and African. As mentioned in chapter three, infrastructure does not only impact on the landscape, it tells the story of growth and development better. Consequently, the news media, particularly newspapers, often use photographs of nation's city landscapes to depict level of development; thus the skyline of New York City is a very popular image used as a testament to the United States' post-modern state of development. As John Hartley (1992) has posited in his work, *The Politics of Pictures: the Creation of the Public in the Age of Popular Media*, images are essential to meaning and representation. Hartley explains why the media use images by highlighting the complexity of this media practice in the discourse on politics and public life. The fact that the public domain, according to Hartley, had disappeared from the city centres and relocated to the media domain where the spectacle of everyday life and politics is now being constructed makes the media usage of imagery the more compelling.

In the same vein, the fact that the media have the powers to define a *perceived reality* with these images makes a critical assessment of this theme very valuable to this study. Indeed, two of the newspapers, *The Telegraph* and *The Independent* did not have any records on infrastructure throughout the period under study, which is indicative of those newspapers' level of interest. The other samples, with the exception of the *Financial Times*, have very scanty offerings on infrastructure, which is not only significant in our socio-economic development efforts but also an

indication of our ability to master, conquer or subdue our environment. However, where there are records on this very important index of human development, it is sadly restricted to the oil and gas business sector; an industry dominated by western interest. Again, the coverage is constructed in manners similar to the pattern discussed above as the following excerpts show:

*14. BT yesterday won a contract, estimated to be valued at more than \$ 1 billion, to install and operate a network of one million phone lines in Nigeria over the next five years. The contract was awarded to BT Telconsult, a subsidiary, by NITTI, the holder of Nigeria's second telecommunications licence. NITTI's founders include the Emir of Kano, head of the Hausa tribe, and the Ooni of Ife, nominal head of the Yoruba tribe, who want to modernise the telecoms infrastructure in a country where the ratio of phone lines is less than one per 100 head of population. (The Times; Business, January 17, 1997)*

*15. THE struggling Nigerian oil industry has been thrown a lifeline by the new Government. Yesterday, it approved payment of \$ 630 million (Pounds 380 million) in arrears to joint ventures, including Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria. Western oil companies had been fighting a losing battle with the military Government of Sani Abacha to secure investment in the crumbling oil infrastructure. The move by the new regime may lead to a shake-up in dealings with the oil group. (The Times; Business; July 22, 1998)*

Excerpt 14 reports that BT's subsidiary had won a contract valued at more than \$1 billion, to install and operate a network of *one million phone lines* in Nigeria. Since the writer did not elaborate on how the British company won the contract given previous reports that almost all Nigerians demand bribe before anything gets done (see excerpt 6 and 10) it is difficult to know whether BT official also paid bribe or the award of this particular contract was clean. Also, the report did not indicate if

questions are asked on the propriety of installing one million telephone lines at the cost of over \$1 billion and then compare the unit cost with similar project elsewhere. The newspaper switches from asking such germane economic questions and rather focuses on the perceived owners of NITTI, the holder of *Nigeria's second telecommunications licence*. That line provides the needed link to amplify the thread of tribalism in consonance with the pre-set racist-colonial construction of Nigeria. Similarly, the use of the word '*modernise*' fits the narratives of the "civilized western society" helping the Nigerians to fix the problems confronting them as their *telecoms infrastructure* is very basic or, at least, so rudimentary that *the ratio of phone lines is less than one per 100 head of population*". The construction of this excerpt does not portray BT as doing its business as it would in any other part of the world; rather it represents intervention from "we" who know better to help "them" the *uncivilized* Africans develop their telecoms infrastructure.

Excerpt 15 is constructed in a similar manner. The oil industry is portrayed as being in trouble with "*crumbling oil infrastructure*" while the "foolhardy government" (not *regime*, as usual) fails to listen to the superior advice from none other than the western oil companies, who know best. The usage of the words "*struggling*," "*crumbling*," and "*in arrears...*" collectively paint the picture of shambolic management of the industry, which perfectly fits the construct of Africans' inability to manage their own affairs. Also, by adding "*...including Shell...*," an oil major of Anglo-Dutch origins, while the other companies remained nameless, the writer of the excerpt is connecting with his readers through shared knowledge. Soon after, the writer employs the power of discourse, as Jager and Maier (2009) have noted, to represent the same oil company in a completely different light. Shell, the Anglo-Dutch company, is thus purposely

labelled *Nigerian* to amplify the positive on the one hand and inhibit the negative, as Link and Link-Heer (1990) have noted, on the other hand all in the same story. The evidence provided so far in this analysis indicates that the writers of these excerpts, and by implication, the British news media, put to full use their power of discourse in the construction of the image of Africa and Nigeria. They define the reality as they are pleased and are, at times, unrestrained in their magisterial pronouncements. For example:

16. “...So is Bangladesh equipped to make the most of its prospective resources - and to oversee the development of one of the world's biggest, fastest-moving and technically most complex global industries? It is too soon to tell. But more than one official will admit worries that Bangladesh might become ‘another Nigeria’.” (*Financial Times; Survey; Pg. 01; May 5, 1998*)

17. “For all the talk of an “African renaissance”, corruption remains a problem, skilled employees are scarce, economic recovery is patchy and the determination of governments to liberalise remains questionable. ‘There are still tremendous obstacles,’ says one Johannesburg-based banker. ‘Where are the judicial systems? Where are the accountants, the lawyers, where is the infrastructure?’ [...]Another obstacle for South African banks, as for all South African investors, is resentment of the economic and business clout of ‘big brother’ down south. Just as Nigeria is often resented for throwing its weight around in West Africa, so South Africa faces accusations that it tries to dominate the region”. (*Financial Times; Survey, Pg. 03; June 2, 1998*)

Excerpts 16 and 17 are from the popular *Financial Times* economic survey. The former is linked to Bangladesh, a south Asian country where gas has been discovered in large quantities while the latter relates to South Africa’s growing investment in Africa. As it is normal when constructing the Third World countries as news, the writer doubts if Bangladesh is equipped to handle the exploration of its own resources. Although, the writer did not elaborate on the kind of resources he meant

but for anyone familiar with the social representation of the Third World in the western imagination, the resource most lacking in Bangladesh is none other than human capital: the technological know-how and managerial expertise, which is presumed resident in the western world. The writer then tells his readers to keep their fingers crossed and thereafter throws in the clincher: "...*Bangladesh might become another Nigeria*". Though the writer did not expatiate on what *Nigeria* is, but his readers are not lost as they already have a perception of Nigeria. This kind of communicative practice is possible between the writer and the reader because there's a shared representation of both Bangladesh and Nigeria just as there's a shared knowledge of what exploitation of gas resource in Bangladesh means. Also, the fact that the story discursively connects Nigeria shows that the West African country has become a metaphor for a failed state in the imagination of the news media. No doubt, the use of the phrase "*another Nigeria*" cannot be a flattering representation.

Excerpt 17 follows familiar trend. It is not only dismissive of an "*African renaissance*," it also questions availability of human skills in Africa. It knocks whatever economic recovery policies being undertaken. It broadly underlines corruption as usual and, more importantly, wonders why the Africans still refuse to open up their economies totally and completely as required by the WTO and the Breton Woods institutions because, as the argument goes, it is only through trade *liberalization* that their lagging economies can grow. These neo-colonial narratives obfuscate the real issue. Unfortunately, the writer did not juxtapose his prescriptions with the history of British industrialization. If he does, it would have been obvious that Britain, at the time of the Tudors, did exactly what the Africans are now being told not to do. Then, Britain was a backward rural country dependent on exporting

raw wool. Writing in *The Independent* (01/08/2008), Johann Hari puts it thus: “...turning that wool profitably into clothes happened elsewhere. Henry VII wanted Britain to catch up – so he set up manufacturing bases, and banned the export of wool, so clothes were manufactured here. It's called protectionism.” Hari argues further that it was after Britain’s protected industry had “spurred ahead” of their European competitors that the walls were finally dismantled. South Korea followed a similar route. In his book, *Bad Samaritan: The Guilty Secrets of Rich Nations and The Threat to Global prosperity*, Ha-Joon Chang (2007) explains that South Korea nurtured certain new industries through tariff protection, subsidies and other forms of government support, until they could withstand international competition; revealing that the state did not only own all the banks and control foreign investment tightly but it also guided the economy to the international marketplace. The United States followed similar approach in the 1820s. All the G8 and G20 countries did the same but having achieved industrial growth; they have co-opted the multilateral agencies to put impediments on the way of Africa while mouthing the rhetoric of trade liberalization. Whereas trade liberalization, as Chang (2007) has explained, is the outcome of economic development – not its cause.

The writer (of excerpt 17) also appears to have an axe to grind with South African banks extending their tentacles northward and writes about *resentment* to the idea from unnamed sources. It is unclear if there were resentments when in the past the terrain was the exclusive turf of western banks. Perhaps, what the writer is saying is that Africans north of Limpopo River (South Africa) should prefer the domineering influence of their colonial masters to the clout of their “Big Brother” (South Africa). The *resentment* tale did not stop there. It continues with how Nigeria is resented in

West Africa by unnamed sources thus reinforcing the narrative that Africans are divided and are perpetually at war with one another. The statement: "...Nigeria is often resented for *throwing its weight around* in West Africa is loaded with meanings." Throwing its weight around could be interpreted to mean that Nigeria is some bad joke. Nothing can be more condescending. According to Kocher (1986), British journalists perceive themselves as less interpretative and more often as mere transmitters of facts. Neither this evidence nor Will Hutton's assertion (see *The Observer* 17/08/2003) support that claim. Similarly, the notion that western writers often construct facts from archival materials that makes little distinction between myths, legends, hearsay and facts (Anand 2007: 29) is brought to the fore by the following excerpts:

*18. "Nigeria's first elected president in two decades takes office tomorrow facing a plundered treasury, decaying infrastructure and unrest in the oil fields, while wondering if there is a soldier waiting to take his job. [...] Nigerians are so sick of army rule that Gen Obasanjo will have to fail badly for a military government to be welcomed. [...] Many of those elected on his coat tails already appear more than willing to continue the kickbacks and largesse. (The Guardian; Foreign Pages; Pg. 19; May 28, 1999)*

*19. "THE price of crude oil made new records yesterday, flirting close to \$ 50 per barrel in New York as traders reacted to continuing violence in oil-producing states, including Nigeria. Rising tension in the Niger Delta renewed concerns about attacks on oil infrastructure in one of the larger Opec producer states. Anxiety about the repeat of last year's production shutdowns in Nigeria [...] over the weekend sent the crude price climbing to \$ 49.74 a barrel in New York, a record high for the Nymex light, sweet crude forward contract. Oil companies in Nigeria were evacuating staff from areas of River State in the Niger Delta, fearing clashes between government troops and rebel militias. Shell said it had removed some 200 non-essential workers from an*

*area close to Soku, where the oil company has a hub facility that collects gas from oil wells across the region for delivery to Nigeria LNG, one of the world's biggest gas liquefaction plants, located on Bonny Island.” (The Times; Business, P.44; September 28, 2004)*

Excerpts 18 and 19 are analogous in several ways than one. They both follow similar pattern of representation as indicated by the evidence analyzed so far. They both highlight decaying infrastructure, political instability, violence and corruption. The first excerpt however introduces a comical dimension to news reporting. In an effort to make Nigeria fits the pre-existing image of corruption, the writer says: “...*Many of those elected on his coat tails already appear more than willing to continue the kickbacks and largesse.*” The possessive pronoun *his* refers to Obasanjo who has just been sworn-in as Nigeria’s president. The information the writer is passing to his readers is that those elected along with Obasanjo either on his party’s platform or on the platform of the other parties are *more than willing to continue the kickbacks and largesse*. Though the writer did not attribute this disparaging information, it is inconceivable that any elected official would announce that he would be corrupt. However, since the story is about Nigeria and it fits the on-going narratives of corruption, checking or double-checking facts seems immaterial. In such situations, hearsay readily transmutes into “facts” and they get published. Afterwards, such “facts” settle into archives and thus become veritable background information for newer reports. The second excerpt continues the tale of instability and its effects on world oil prices.

As the evidence presented has indicated whether the theme is democracy or infrastructure, the discourse has always been reduced to political instability, violence and corruption. As mentioned earlier, two samples have no records on infrastructure

but the reports of the remaining three are similar in every material particular. The similarities are too striking to have been due to mere chance. The coverage of Africa in the western media, or Nigeria in this particular instance, is conditioned by the same ideology that gave rise to colonialism in the first place. That ideology, effectively using stereotypes as a means of social representation, reduces the Africans to sub-humans who needed to be civilized, Christianized and organized according to European concepts. This is why the tone of these reports, as Wallerstein (2006: xiii) has noted, is often righteous, hectoring, and arrogant. The western writer believes he represents universal values and truths even when his knowledge of the “Other” is grossly and glaringly inadequate.

##### 5. Sport: Telling the story of the “Other” culture

In this section, this researcher further evaluates the five samples’ constructs of Nigeria using the newspapers’ coverage of sport as an anchor. As explained in the preceding section, this analysis also employs the tools of a critical perspective to assess how language use links text and context in the construct of the Nigerian culture. It evaluates the perceived *reality* that is made more *salient* and examines the given *context* as they affect the phenomenon under investigation. Sport, as a cultural experience, is essential in this context. First, sporting events do not just represent a platform for contemporary manifestation of national belonging, they have, as Sreberny (2007) has argued, become the signifiers of a taken-for-granted but always re-asserted cultural and national identity. Thus sport has become one of the most obvious forms of nation-building content. Former Nigerian High Commissioner to Britain, Prince Bola Ajibola agrees with this notion. Reacting to insinuations that his home government was profligate because it built a stadium, he told the *Financial*

*Times* in a letter to the editor published August 6, 2001 that a sports stadium is not *reminiscent* of “profligate habits.” “Sport,” he said, “makes a vital and valuable contribution to civil society in Nigeria, both through health and recreational benefits...and through its ability to unite the nation.” Hence, as sport becomes important in national schemes, its coverage becomes a matter of national pride in the news media as the following discussion would show even in respect of major European nations. Consequently, sport coverage presents the most poignant examples of how undisguised nationalism are found in reporting as all attempts at objective positioning collapse (Sreberny 2007: 65). Billig (1995) also posits that newspapers, irrespective of their status, target market or professed ideological stance, always address their readers as members of the nation and thus “present news in ways that take for granted the existence of a world of nations” (p. 11). The following excerpts present the opportunity to test these notions as they provide a perfect ambience to find out whether the samples under investigation jettison objectivity while representing Nigeria and, more so, if there are differences or similarities in the trend of representation already identified in the preceding section.

20. *“On the face of it, Nigeria, such surprising 3-2 victors against Spain, should win again here in Paris against a Bulgaria team that looked dull and flat in their goalless draw with Paraguay. [...]Nigeria's one worry may be that they will not always find a goalkeeper as obliging as the hapless veteran Spain goalkeeper, Zubizarreta, in whom his manager, Javier Clemente, has an almost iconic faith, however misplaced. Not that the Nigeria defence was especially impressive against Spain. None of the four men at the back, including the fearsome Internazionale stopper, Taribo West, and Celestine Babayaro, of Chelsea, was wholly convincing. The right back, Oparaku, was probably the weakest player in the side.” (The Times, Sport; June 19, 1998)*

21. *“The former colony is addicted to the Premiership [...] Welcome to Lagos, Africa's Manhattan; gridlocked traffic, cries of hawkers and eyeball-to-eyeball streetside screaming matches assault the senses. Everyone is chasing dollars any way they can, but as your ear becomes accustomed to the loud babble of pidgin English, you begin to recognise certain words: Beckham-o, Arsenal-o, Heskey-o. While the average Nigerian struggles daily to put an extra dollar or two in his pocket, it is the English game that captivates his heart. [...] Ask any Nigerian, from street vendor to businessman, about English football and he will give you an informed view of any side. [...] The reasons for the enthusiasm for English football vary. Many of the new breed of young professionals now running Nigerian business, as it escapes state control, were brought up and educated in the UK.”(The Times; May 28, 2002)*

Excerpt 20 creates the impression that Nigeria is not supposed to defeat Spain, a major European football power. It is expected that a victorious side in a competitive game should be deserving of praise for excelling but in this particular case, the writer eschews paying tributes to Nigeria. First, it was a “*surprising*” victory; due much more to the indiscretion of the Spanish goalkeeper who gifted the Nigerian team cheap goals and not that the Nigerians were spectacular. Second, there’s the analysis of how unimpressive the Nigerian defence is. Though, the writer entertains the prospect of another victory against Bulgaria but that is not because they are good but because the Bulgaria team “... *looked dull and flat.*” The framing of Nigeria’s victory over Spain, (given the history and development levels of both countries) could be interpreted as ethnocentrism. This is also partly because the phrase “*here in Paris,*” is loaded with meanings.

“Here in Paris” is a deictic for Europe. It has both *locational* and territorial meanings. It represents the location of the event and, of course, the territory of the Europeans, the centre of the civilized world. This is an example of how sport reporting elicits

patriotism (regional patriotism, in this case). Spain's loss is reflected by this writer as an issue of geo-politics and has, by communicative practice, transmitted the sense of loss to his readers. He is thus telling them through the power of discourse that they are much closer culturally (and obviously regionally) to the Spanish than the Africans. The second excerpt (21) is much more explicit in highlighting the power differentials between Europe and Africa using as metaphor the game of football, which is an aspect of cultural development in which Europe maintains dominance. In this excerpt, Nigeria remains a former colony and as a child holds on to the apron of her mother, the former colony can't do without *our* football. They are addicted to *our* culture, *the Premiership*. The writer then lapsed into a standard neo-colonial narrative of how Nigeria's commercial city is shambolic; how its citizens speak sub-standard English (*pidgin*) and how it takes eternity for a cultured British person to understand what they are saying: "...you begin to recognise certain words: *Beckham-o, Arsenal-o, Heskey-o.*" The use of "*loud babble*" equates the Nigerians to Barbarians. It is also reminiscent of Joseph Conrad's use of grunts to depict Africans in his book *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad paints the picture of Europeans speaking discernible language and portrays Africans as grunting like animals, lacking the power of speech-making. The fact that these kinds of racist epithets are being resurrected and used in modern day news reporting unchallenged illustrates how little our world has changed.

The writer of excerpt 21 says they (Nigerians) are well-informed about English football, if that is true, then "*Beckham-o, Arsenal-o, Heskey-o;*" does not pay tribute to their knowledge as Beckham and Heskey are footballers while Arsenal is a football club. Such framing may shape discourse but they do create representational errors and the fact that such errors get reproduced as archival materials say a lot about why the

representation of Africa follows a particular pattern. The hero in the western narratives on Africa, as usual, is either visiting white Europeans or European-educated Africans. In this excerpt, the narrative follows the already beaten path to the letter: *“The reasons for the enthusiasm for English football vary. Many of the new breed of young professionals now running Nigerian business, as it escapes state control, were brought up and educated in the UK.”* Note that *escapes states control* connotes something dreadful or worse. The next excerpts follow similar pattern. The first focuses on the issue of the contest between Glasgow and Abuja for the hosting rights of the 2014 Commonwealth Games while the second addresses Africa’s systemic failure using sport as a metaphor:

22. *GLASGOW should not be awarded the 2014 Commonwealth Games because it is too violent and poverty stricken, according to the sports minister of Nigeria. Bala Kaoje said Abuja, the capital of the West African country, which is now Glasgow's only competitor, was a safer and more prosperous venue. [...]Nigeria has a gross domestic product of just £ 706 per head, compared with £ 15,900 in the UK. Despite years of military rule, corruption and economic mismanagement, Kaoje said his country was better placed than Scotland to stage the games. Kidnappings of foreigners is (sic) a common problem in the Niger Delta -almost 70 have been abducted this year. In addition, criminal gangs regularly set up roadblocks to rob passers-by at gunpoint. (The Sunday Times, Home News; Pg. 9; May 13, 2007)*

23. *“What is lacking in Africa, however, is organisation and vision, not so much on the field as off it. Africa remains a continent with few resources; and although soccer can claim to be an opiate of the masses, not much is being done to feed the popular habit...Nigeria are a classic case. Their administrative and coaching resources are so far behind their playing talent and ability that it is no surprise that the side have twice failed to reach the World Cup quarter-finals....Soccer officials come and go in Nigeria as frequently as coaches. Political patronage puts them into place and failure to*

*satisfy popular whim takes them out of office just as quickly. The short tenure leads to a high level of meddling, as officials attempt to ensure profitable gain....Meanwhile, the lack of stability means neither Nigeria, nor most other African countries, have developed the forward looking vision and planning needed for long-term success. (Financial Times; Pg. 17; June 30, 1998)*

The battle for the hosting rights of 2014 Commonwealth Games exemplifies van Ginneken's (1998) notion that there's "no neutrality in news" (p. 44). Excerpt 22 corroborates this idea. The opening statement says Glasgow should not be awarded the hosting rights of the Games because it is too violent and poverty-stricken. The statement was duly credited: "*according to the sports minister of Nigeria.*" This is followed by another statement, which explains the Nigerian minister's preference and why. The structuring of the statement that follows shows banal nationalism at work as an unattributed statement comparing the GDPs of Nigeria with the UK's suddenly surfaced. It reads: "*Nigeria has a gross domestic product of just £706 per head, compared with £15,900 in the UK.*" The writer then highlights Nigeria's problems—military rule, mismanagement and corruption with its minister's defence that despite all these Nigeria is a safer option for hosting the Games. Suddenly again, another counter-statement equally unattributed emerged: "*Kidnappings of foreigners is (sic) a common problem in the Niger Delta -almost 70 have been abducted this year. In addition, criminal gangs regularly set up roadblocks to rob passers-by at gunpoint.*" The writer of this excerpt did not bother to play the objectivity card. That would have meant getting either a UK government official of the Nigerian minister's status or a local Scottish official to debunk or counter the Nigerian minister's claim. However, he took up the mantle of defending Glasgow by himself and thus injected 'popular counter-statements' into his story. Similarly, excerpt 23 is equally dismissive and derisive: "*What is lacking in Africa...is organisation and vision, not so much on the*

*field as off it.*” This means apart from on the field of play as in other areas of life, Africans are disorganized and unorganized. They lack the technological knowledge to harness their natural resources by themselves. They are so dumb that they do not know the value of the resources they have got. Lugard (the first colonial Governor-General of Nigeria), as mentioned in chapter one, puts this in perspective when he claimed that it was God who bequeathed to Britain the riches and resources of Africa which lay wasted and un-garnered because the natives did not know their use and value. When the writer of the excerpt says “*Africa remains a continent with few resources,*” he is simply advancing the age-old construct of Africans as lacking in intelligence and retarded in thinking (see Lucien Levy Bruhl’s (1926) *How Natives Think* and his *Primitive Mentality* (1923) for more insight on this issue). Indeed, the statement: “*Nigeria are a classic case. Their administrative and coaching resources are so far behind their playing talent and ability...*” is a modern day euphemism for their “inability to govern themselves” or “organised their own affairs properly,” an enterprise that requires stable polity, “forward-looking vision and planning.”

The following excerpts are a comparison of news structures. They illustrate how news construction takes different shapes even when the issue is similar but the subjects are two different nations. Excerpt 24 addresses the injury of modern English football icon, David Beckham and how his absence could affect England chances in the world cup campaign. The other excerpt is a continuation of the Nigerian discourse:

24. “*Never can a broken metatarsal bone have triggered so much hysteria. As the realisation yesterday sank in that the offending fracture might deprive England of David Beckham at this summer's World Cup, one journalist was moved to compare the sense of loss with mourning for the Queen Mother. There is no doubt that his loss would be a huge blow to Sven Goran Eriksson's plans for Japan and Korea, even if medical opinion suggested last night that*

*he might be back within six weeks - just in time for possible inclusion in the final 23-man squad. He is one of England's few world-class players but the England coach does have alternatives". (Financial Times; Pg. 16; April 12, 2002)*

25. *"Every time Nigeria arrive at a big tournament, the line on them is the same. It was no different before their opening game in the African Cup of Nations yesterday. Extremely gifted players, with the talent to beat anyone, likely to be undone by coaching and organisational chaos..." (Financial Times; P.16; January 28, 2004)*

Anyone familiar with England's preparation for the Korea-Japan world cup would acknowledge that *the three lions* had their own share of organisational problems. Added to that is the fact that England's best player became injured. Injuries naturally create problems for coaches and if not well-managed they cause unwanted results. The Beckham injury was understandably treated as a national problem and his exclusion from *the three lions* a national loss. The tone adopted by the writer of this excerpt shows empathy towards the English nation. The troubles experienced during the preparations did not elicit condemnation. Issues relating to Britain's economic and political problems did not metamorphose into metaphors to pass judgment on the British society. The writer even displays enviable patriotism as he begins to seek alternatives for Beckham's position. His rhetoric is inclusive rather than exclusive. His language is neither dismissive nor derisive; rather it exudes understanding. He finds a national symbol in the Queen mother and uses it appropriately as an anchor, with which he rallies his countrymen behind their team. Conversely, excerpt 25 from the same newspaper is an illustration of how the subject of the news determines the structure of its construction. More importantly, it follows the identified trend as the differences in the language, tone and context of construction of the excerpts (24 and

25) are obviously positive in respect of one country and unflattering in respect of the other.

## **6. Conclusion**

While the data presented in chapter 4 reveals that coverage attention is given to issues creating harsh imagery about Africa, as Dimpleby has said, the data presented in this chapter has established a link between historical perception and today's news thus highlighting the influence of ethnocentric-based pre-colonial discourse on current news construction. Though stereotypes in certain news reports could be attributed to lazy reporting rather than deliberate perpetuation of ethnocentrism, a large scale representation of the 'Other' that is both negative and condescending is synonymous with the construct of hierarchization of cultures (see Salter 2002, Keal 2003). In that hierarchy table, Anand (2007: 32) posits, white Europeans are at the zenith and black Africans have their own position.

The application of socio-diagnostic critique, which according to Wodak (2001: 88) is concerned with demystifying manifest or latent persuasive and 'manipulative' character of discursive practices, to the examination of these excerpts reveals latent elements of cultural condescension. Herein lies the powers of discourse as Jager and Maier (2009: 37) have argued; it delineates 'positive' statements, which are "sayable" and simultaneously inhibit a range of others that are not "sayable" (Link and Link-Heer 1990). The discourses in these excerpts represent the democratic process, the landscape and culture in Nigeria in certain ways. While they paint a positive picture of Britain's role particularly in the democratic process, they portray Nigeria as a symbol of unstable polity. Such representations are meant to justify colonialism and shield the

colonizers, as Lebow (1976) has argued, from the guilt of inhuman exploitation of industrial-scale that went on in Africa forcefully for centuries.

The idea embedded in such discourse is that colonial occupation would better serve the Nigerians as the opposite has proven disastrous. Thus, the texts in this context are dismissive of Nigeria's democratic process even to the point of derision. With the exception of excerpt 2, which mentions the involvement of Nigerians themselves in the struggle for the enthronement of democracy and perhaps excerpt 13, the representation of the other excerpts reminds anyone with contextual knowledge of the relationship between Britain and Nigeria of the era when decisions affecting the lives of many Nigerians in Ogoja are taken in London by those who lack even the correct geographical idea of where the eastern Nigerian town is located. Indeed, the striking similarities in the tone and context of the excerpts (either in the area of democracy, infrastructure or sport) are equally significant. They underscore the fact that colonial discourse has been institutionalized over time (Link 1983: 60).

Such discourses get spruced up and reproduced each time many a western journalist is constructing his news today. He does not construct such news in isolation of western history, his perception of western culture and its relationship with the cultures and histories of the distant "Others." As a matter of fact, he constructs the news, by first of all, consulting the spirit and letters of that history by means of background research and therefore, proceed to legitimise socially-constructed colonial perceptions and cultural prejudices as 'divine' facts through constant repetition and cross-references (Anand (2007: 29). As discussion on excerpt 12 particularly has revealed, the interpellation of "big men" for candidates in an election supports the notion that

euphemism are invented to represent old ideas or words that are no longer “sayable” or fashionable today. This further demonstrates that there is a patterned way of writing about Nigeria or Africa that has become well-processed and naturalized or normalized so much that even those who do the writing would find it difficult to accept that they are following a path charted centuries ago. The naturalization process has evolved over time through social cognition, which as van Dijk (2009a) has noted, is an aggregation of beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, values, norms, ideologies or social representations people share with fellow members of their community or ethnic group. These social representations are updated regularly through models, which according to van Dijk (2009a: 78), are the interface between the individual and the social. While Holland and Quinn (1987) define models as a form of general, socially-shaped knowledge as it’s used in cognitive anthropology; van Dijk and Kintsch (1983), van Dijk (2009) describe it as subjective representation of an episode. van Dijk explains that model is stored in episodic memory (part of long-term memory) where people’s autobiographical personal experiences are accumulated. Living an experience or being aware of a situation means we are constructing or updating a mental model of such an episode (p. 6).

Consequently, when “big men,” a euphemism for “strongmen” is used as interpellation for candidates standing for election, the writer is inviting the reader to update his mental model. The writer and his reader are thus engaged in a continuous process. Both have a much deeper understanding of what “big men” means in this particular context because they have learned over time, as van Dijk (2009) explains, to build situational relevant context models that are mutually tuned to each other. Group beliefs influence and condition personal beliefs and *vice-versa*, and the influence, is

reflected in discourse. A non-member of the group may be excused for failing to grasp the deeper meaning of the phrase “big men.” It is simply a code for the initiated language user that comes pre-packaged. Africa, or indeed Nigeria in this particular instance, has been prefabricated in a certain social context. It may not be appropriate to declare that its attempt at voting as a “sham” but to say *our former colony* is getting set to vote for its “big men” is a much more politically correct phrase. The phrase conveys the intended message perfectly simply because it’s just a new addition in an on-going process.

That there’s a patterned way of writing about Nigeria or Africa, as indicated by the evidence presented in this discussion, is not in doubt. But this is not in any way an attempt to dispute the accounts of events reported in these excerpts. Neither does this researcher claim that the excerpts discussed here have been read, understood and appraised the same way. The point is, as Entman (1993) posits, certain selections are made. Those selections are made more salient in such a way as they promote a particular problem. In the same vein, the selections made, as McNair (1998) has said, are chosen and processed around a certain set of assumptions, beliefs and values. Those assumptions, values, and beliefs are located, not in the present or current events alone; but also as Marx (1963) has said, under circumstances directly *found, given and transmitted* from the past. This explains why we find that news about Africa, as van Dijk (1988) has noted, is invariably dominated by “highly stereotypical accounts of only a few types of events...” (p. 34).

## Chapter 6: News as divine message - written by the 'Hand of God'

*“Journalists speak of ‘the news,’ as if events select themselves. Further, they speak as if which is the most significant news story, and which ‘news angles’ are most salient are divinely inspired. Yet of millions of events which occur every day in the world, only a tiny proportion ever become visible as ‘potential news stories’: and of this proportion, only a small fraction are actually produced as the day’s news in the news media. We appear to be dealing, then, with a ‘deep structure’ whose function as a selective device is untransparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it”*  
-Stuart Hall (1981: 234-5).

### 1. Introduction

On a flight from Paris to Edinburgh in the summer of 2011, this researcher had one of the best in-flight conversations he ever had, with a Dutch journalist and his partner, who teaches journalism and cultural studies in a Dutch university. Having been educated in the UK, they both speak English fluently. They are widely travelled and have been to different places in Africa. The conversation was triggered by an essay this researcher was reading: ‘How To Write About Africa,’ written by Kenyan-born literary critic, Binyavanga Wainaina<sup>12</sup>. In the essay, Wainaina, who won the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2002, gives a vivid characterization of how monotonous writing about Africa has become. It is worth quoting at length:

*Always use the word ‘Africa’ or ‘Darkness’ or ‘Safari’ in your title. Subtitles may include the words ‘Zanzibar’, ‘Masai’, ‘Zulu’, ‘Zambezi’, ‘Congo’, ‘Nile’, ‘Big’, ‘Sky’, ‘Shadow’, ‘Drum’, ‘Sun’ or ‘Bygone’. Also useful are words such as ‘Guerrillas’, ‘Timeless’, ‘Primordial’ and ‘Tribal’. Note that ‘People’ means Africans who are not black, while ‘The People’ means black Africans.*

*Never have a picture of a well-adjusted African on the cover of your book, or in it, unless that African has won the Nobel Prize. An AK-47, prominent ribs,*

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<sup>12</sup> Wainaina’s essay was published in *Granta*, Issue 92, 2005: <http://www.granta.com/Magazine/92>

*naked breasts: use these. If you must include an African, make sure you get one in Masai or Zulu or Dogon dress.*

*In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving. Or it is hot and steamy with very short people who eat primates. Don't get bogged down with precise descriptions. Africa is big: fifty-four countries, 900 million people who are too busy starving and dying and warring and emigrating to read your book.*

*The continent is full of deserts, jungles, highlands, savannahs and many other things, but your reader doesn't care about all that, so keep your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular... When talking about exploitation by foreigners mention the Chinese and Indian traders. Blame the West for Africa's situation. But do not be too specific."*

The Dutch duo shook their heads after reading the piece and admitted that the essay sadly mirrors the truth concerning writings about Africa. Our discussion soon shifted to how this prescriptive style of writing about Africa emerged. The lady, a teacher of journalism, was unequivocal when she said: "*we don't teach people to write like this. They just learn it...*" This researcher finds her comment particularly revealing and it thus raises a couple of germane questions: How do people learn to write about Africa in certain ways? Where do they learn to write about Africa in a particular manner? Are people aware that writing about Africa is done in a certain distinctive way? What role does this kind of writing play in shaping and reinforcing western understanding of Africa?

Africa, no doubt, is the least understood in the west of all the regions of the world (Herskovits 1962; Abdolfathi 1971; McCarthy 1983; Staniland 1991). Many scholars have also noted with concerns how predictable Africa's representation is in the western news media. Kunczk (2003) argues that negativism; spelt out as "civil war,"

“natural disasters,” “debt crisis,” “human-rights violation,” “electoral frauds,” often remain the only important news factor dominating the coverage of developing countries in the west (p. 123). Teun van Dijk (1988: 34) agrees that only “a few types of event” (such as coups and earthquakes) make the news about Third World countries in the western media. He argues that such stereotypical representation is based on western ideological and cultural perspective. Reinforcing that viewpoint, Olujobi (2006) decries the practice in the Western media “of blacking out Africa’s stock markets, cell-phones, heart surgeries, soaring literacy and increasing democratization, while gleefully parading its genocides, armed conflicts, child soldiers, foreign debts, hunger, disease and backwardness.” She defines the practice as pure amplification of “disaster pornography.”

In her work titled: “War, Famine, and Poverty: Race in the construction of Africa’s Media Image,” Jo Ellen Fair (1993) also notes the points raised by Wainaina. She recounts how each semester she asks her students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA; the majority of whom are white and middle class, to describe their impression and idea of Africa and Africans. Fair states that what she gets in return is: “the usual litany of stereotypical, negative, and often condescending descriptions” (p. 5). According to Fair, Africa is described by the students as “a basket case,” “jungle-covered,” “big games,” “safari,” “impoverished,” “falling apart,” “famine-plagued,” “full of war,” “AIDS-ridden,” “weird,” “brutal,” “primitive,” “backward,” “underdeveloped” and “black;” while Africans are described as “lazy,” “crazy,” “corrupt,” “troubled,” “fighting all the time,” “exotic,” “sexually active,” “savage,” “tribal,” “primitive” and “black.” As mentioned in chapter 5, the metamorphosis of these age-old words and phrases into new euphemisms used in the construction of current events corroborate the notion that the historically invented Africa, as Fair has

argued, is still being reinvented contemporarily. How does the reinvention take place and where?

The answer is located in the daily communicative practices people engage in. These practices, as van Dijk's (1987) work on interpersonal enactment of racism has revealed, shows that micro-level communicative practices reproduce ethnic prejudices stemming from and reinforcing hegemonic discourses. Also significant is the platform or forum or social occasions or spheres (Reisigl and Wodak 2001) where such communicative practices are taking place. These social occasions or public spheres or platforms include the literary, the artistic, and the anthropological works and, of course, the mass media, which occupy a central position in today's literary landscape (Said 1990). The news media, as Fair (1993) has pointed out, are a modern-day story-teller vital to the framing of events that may not have been personally experienced (p. 5). Consequently, if as the Dutch lady has said, no one teaches anyone else to write about Africa in a particular manner, it is pertinent to explore how people "*just learn*" to write about the least-understood continent in a certain way, and left the continent and its people almost entirely misunderstood still.

## **2. Method of Analysis**

Thus, this chapter explores how the five UK samples, as an important part of the modern-day global story-teller, frame Nigeria, also an important part of the African continent. The evaluation, as explained in chapter five, takes a critical perspective in order to assess how the use of language impacts on text and context. As in the preceding chapter, excerpts of the discourse which represent identified trends when applying the analytical tools mentioned in chapter three and four are presented along

with the insights of the interviewees. Where individual excerpts or insights contrast with these patterns, they are equally presented to reflect the diversity of the discourse. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the corpus for this component of the analysis is generated from the much larger set used in the content analysis segment. Instead of choosing a particular date for sampling and evaluate only excerpts for that date, which is likely to generate homogenous entries as earlier explained, this researcher decides to create a set of criteria for stories from which excerpts are selected. For example, in this particular section, the first criterion is related to headline, subhead and intro based on their known journalistic importance. A story qualifies if the word “corruption” appears either on its headline, its subhead or intro. The second is that the story must focus in particular on Nigeria. Where more than one story meets these conditions, the story with the highest number of words is selected for analysis. The idea is that a lengthy story focused on the subject and theme of discussion would provide a much more robust discourse on the issues under evaluation. More importantly, to ensure that corpus for this segment is manageable, only one story is chosen per sample newspaper per each period of investigation (i.e. 1997-1999). Where a sample has no story that meets these criteria, such sample newspaper is omitted from selection. This model of selection affords the researcher the opportunity to critically read the stories, which basing selection on a particular date in the week may not entail. It also ensure that the selected excerpts are not picked based on the whims of the researcher.

Consequently, in evaluating the way these five UK samples construct Nigeria, this chapter pays special attention to frame used in the construction of Nigeria as news. As Gamson and Modigham (1987: 143) have noted, a frame is a “central organising idea or storyline that provides meaning to events related to an issue. It is the core of a

larger unit of public discourse known as *package*.” In this chapter, this researcher will identify the *frame*, the *common* storyline at the *core* of how Nigeria is delivered as a media *package*; discuss their *meanings* and *intertextuality*, and then explore the notion that the prescriptive manner of writing about Africa demands that the news media focus on a particular kind of stories such as corruption, fraud and crime because it is only stories constructed around those themes that well fit the discourse on Nigeria, a unit of *the* Africa already invented and now being constantly and consistently reinvented in media narratives. The evaluation also compares how Britain, the home country of the sample newspapers, is represented to see whether there are similarities or differences. More importantly, by so doing, this chapter thus evaluates discourse strands and discourse planes as well as identifies adopted discourse positions, which according to Jager and Maier (2009), is the ideological position from which subjects including individuals, groups and institutions participate in and evaluate discourse. The media, Jager and Maier argue further, take up discourse positions, which become evident in their reporting (p. 49).

As Stuart Hall (1981) has argued, neither the news selection process nor the news construction procedures is an act of God. They are tasks undertaken by journalists who are both human and cultural in a dual way (van Ginneken (1989: 65). In their tasks of selection, journalists make choices. Those choices are governed by certain values (both personal and organisational) while the values dictate which event in Nigeria becomes the news. The journalists are not unaware that millions of events occur every day in Nigeria; yet only a small fraction of such events, and most importantly, of a particular kind are actually produced as news. Lynn Boyd Hinds (1995) proffers a reason for this: “the basic theme of the story is generally known

before the reporter leaves the newsroom. The interviews will fill in particulars, but theme is part and parcel of the decision to cover the story in the first place” (p. 10).

The following discussion, based on excerpts from the selected samples, which contains some of the identified themes that have characterized the narratives on Nigeria so far, will test Hinds’ thesis.

However, a few caveats are pertinent before the discussions on the excerpts begin. One, the purpose of these excerpts as examples of how Nigeria is constructed as news is neither to dispute the accuracy of the journalistic accounts therein nor to comment on social responsibility of the journalists or news media outlets concerned. Two, this researcher makes no claim whatsoever that those readers who read the stories from which these excerpts were selected read, understood and appraised the messages in exactly the same manner. However, this researcher works by the hypothesis that because the representation of Nigeria (just as is the case with Africa) is largely historically derived and ideologically determined, a dominant way of viewing and perceiving Nigeria is as the differentiated, distance “Other.” Three, the excerpts as earlier explained above are selected according to the criteria stated. They are meant only to illustrate how Nigeria is differentiated from Europe or the west and framed as belonging to another time in the far distant past, which recreates the sub-Saharan country as the “Other.”

### **3. Corruption: Amplifying a discourse position**

Between 1997 and 1999, as the content analysis component of this study has shown, greater focus of media attention was devoted to democracy issues even though the theme of corruption still crops up in the stories. There’s nothing unusual about the

linkage between democracy and corruption or infrastructure and fraud in a single story. As Ralph Negrine (1996: 87) has noted, news stories by their nature often cut across natural boundaries associated with areas of reporting. They provide a narrative structure, Negrine posits, for relating a number of different and interconnected themes. Therefore, a story about coal miners, Negrine explains further, could also focus on productivity, or unemployment, or devastation just as stories on sport activities in Nigeria could be structured to connect issues of security of lives and property, infrastructural development and medical feats or corruption and mismanagement. However, between 2000 – 2002 and 2003 – 2007, corruption, violence, political instability and the likes became the central theme of coverage.

### 3.1 Portrait of corruption

There's hardly a story on Nigeria during this period in which the word corruption does not feature. Some reports even claim that Nigeria is a by-word for corruption. Thus referents such as "*a country much known for its kleptocratic tendencies*" (*The Times* 4/12/1998); or "*Nigeria, after all, is the Vatican of the international church of theft and fraud*" (*Daily Telegraph* 7/12/2003) help to create and reinforce certain images. Such depictions often assume the status of a discourse plane (Jager and Maier 2009: 48) as leading news media outlets constantly recycle them thus creating the impression that nothing goes on in Nigeria except corruption. Many of such articles rely on the construct that Nigerians and corruption, crime and violence are linked in a taken-for-granted common sense manner – something like a culture as the following excerpts show. Excerpt 1, however, points to the genesis of those referents:

1. i) "*The latest international corruption perception index in 1996 ranked Nigeria as the world's most corrupt country and Pakistan as the world's*

*second most corrupt. Pakistan probably bribed the judges...or so the old joke goes [...] ii) The problem of corruption will no longer be shrugged off as an endemic and incurable disease in certain cultures. iii) No longer will grand-scale inducements be accepted as an inevitable part of the practice of Western businesses in developing countries. iv). Western business executives who have operated on the assumption that a 15 to 20 per cent bribe to secure a sale in a developing country is culturally acceptable will have to think again if such practices are to be made a criminal offence at home. (The Times, Section: Business, June 11, 1997)*

Though many Nigerians agree that the issue of political corruption requires serious attention as evident by their denunciations of the evil in both local and foreign press (see *Financial Times* 11/03/2003), they have also questioned the methods of Transparency International's (TI) studies, which they claim rely too heavily on the perception of foreign [western] businessmen who are also guilty of fostering the corruption "culture" in the first place. Also, they argue that blaming the human development tragedy in Africa on corruption alone is a TI's strategy to find other means of explaining away the failure of various multilateral agencies and other western intervention programmes in Africa. Those who advance this argument point to the link between the founder of the Berlin-based non-governmental organisation and the World Bank to support their argument. However, there's no doubt that TI's work has helped to draw attention to the dangers of corruption and the need for transparency and accountability worldwide. The choice of language use in this excerpt did not suggest that corruption is a global problem [though in varying degrees] but rather as a cultural phenomenon restricted to certain geographical locale. Sentence 2 constructs it as "an incurable disease in certain cultures." To differentiate the cultures, the frame adopts the nuance of 'Othering,' as Sentence 3 explains: *No longer will grand-scale inducements be accepted as an inevitable part of the practice of Western*

*businesses in developing countries.* The use of the term ‘developing countries’ in that sentence clearly removes any ambiguity as to where corruption is domiciled as well as who makes the culture of corruption inevitable for others. Corruption is evil. It is also a crime. As represented in this excerpt, the crime of corruption is not synonymous with ‘us’ but the ‘Other.’ As Hansen and Machin (2012) have noted, crime reporting usually involves creating a moral ‘Others,’ so that the perpetrator is not like us (P.157). The last sentence adopts the strategy of mitigation (see Wodak 2004) to explain the involvement of western business executives. By using the word ‘who,’ the excerpt intensify the ‘silent’ argument that not all western business executives are involved [just only a few] but by repeating ‘developing countries’ and ‘culturally acceptable,’ the writer intensifies differences. The following excerpt is similar both in tone and characteristics:

2. i) *“IN THE normal run of things, Nigeria's frequent changes of government are accompanied by pious pledges from the new leadership, inevitably clad in khaki, to restore democracy, boost the economy and banish corruption. ii) But when a hastily promoted General Abdulsalam Abubakar was sworn in last week, there was no such promise. iii) In an unprecedented turn of events, a sitting head of state, General Sani Abacha, had suddenly died in office - reportedly of natural causes iv) The new chief, it seemed, had more urgent matters to hand than making yet more promises to the nation. v) The uncertainty surrounding the implications of the change of leadership was felt in parts of the commercial capital, Lagos, on Friday, when groups of pro-democracy activists tested the patience of armed police, prompting a brief confrontation and isolated scuffles.” (The Independent; News, Pg. 22; June 14, 1998)*

The use of the term ‘new chief’ instead of ‘new head of state’ to describe a military officer who was not even a titled chief, is a referent to the colonial construct that African are culturally suitably governed by their primitive traditional chiefs; who lack

the required vision, planning and finesse of modern administration. Similarly, the use of ‘hastily promoted General’ [in the second sentence] suggests the “normal” political instability dogging the former colony while the effects of these were reflected, first in the ‘uncertainty surrounding...the change of leadership,’ and second, in the ‘brief confrontation and isolated scuffles,’ that ensued ‘in parts of the commercial capital, Lagos,’ thus reinforcing the construct that Nigeria is still unsafe for business investments. Indeed, Nigeria has been dogged by frequent (sometimes) violent change of government. The desire to make that history resulted in the protracted battle for democracy that caused the loss of so many lives and imprisonment without trial of so many more between 1993 and 1999. Language choice enables the writer of this excerpt to omit the sacrifices of these Nigerians while subtly amplifying constructs that represent Nigeria in certain light. It is language choice, among available options, Hansen and Machin (2011: 147) have explained, that allows us to foreground certain aspects of identities and background others. Also, in her analysis of the Haider affair, Ruth Wodak (2004) employs similar linguistic devices to unearth ‘Othering’ in communicative act. However, in spite of the caustic tones of excerpt 1 and 2, the following excerpt records a significant difference:

3. i) *“THE MOST powerful voice in Nigerian politics is not running for president in this week's elections, or even bidding for a seat in parliament. ii) He has not had anything to say about the ballot which many Nigerians only half-heartedly believe will really bring an end to decades of military rule interspersed with incompetent, self-serving civilian governments. iii) Yet even from his grave under a small marble pyramid, Fela Kuti continues to harass the Nigerian establishment with the songs which spoke for a nation by deriding the army's corruption and thirst for power. iv) Now his son, Femi, has taken up the cause. v) Fela Kuti never let Nigeria's succession of abusive regimes off the hook - and they rarely went easy on him. vi) The founder of Afrobeat sang in pidgin to Nigeria's urban poor and neglected villagers. vii)*

*His denunciations of the corruption of the political and military elite won him no friends in the establishment. viii) Neither did his marriage to 27 women simultaneously in a traditional ceremony, or his love of drugs. ix) But songs such as 'Soldier Go, Soldier Come' gave voice to the anger and frustration of tens of millions of exploited Nigerians at successive military regimes.” (The Observer; News, Pg. 21; February 21, 1999)*

Unlike excerpts 1 and 2, this excerpt projects positives about Nigerians recognising the ills of their society and fighting to correct such ills, which include corruption, authoritarianism and the attendant misrule. The fight is championed by Fela, who used his scathing lyrics to attack successive military regimes. As the social actor in this excerpt, the strategy of predication is adopted to label him ‘the most powerful voice’ in sentence 1 while the strategy of argumentation is used to justify the positive attributions. His son, Femi is similarly identified in sentence 5 whilst some of Fela’s social excesses are mentioned in sentences 8. Though this excerpt has a foreground of positives it is equally laden with allusions, which as part of the linguistic terms used for the description of exclusion and discrimination, suggest negative associations (Wodak 2004: 207).

Allusions, Wodak argues further, depend on shared knowledge. “The person who alludes to something” Wodak explains, “counts on the preparedness for resonance...the preparedness of the recipients consciously to call to mind the facts that are alluded to” (2004: 207). The use of “many Nigerians only half-heartedly believe,” and “an end to decades of military rules...incompetent, self-serving civilian governments” in sentences 2 are allusions to the construct that Nigerians like all sub-Saharan Africans are incapable of self-governing just as “deriding army's corruption and thirst for power” in sentence 3 and “his denunciations of the corruption of the

political and military elite” in sentence 7 are allusions reinforcing the discourse of corruption. The word ‘misrule’ could have effectively replaced “corruption” in both sentences 3 and 7 without the meaning being lost but the word “corruption” serves the purpose for the allusion better. Allusions, Wodak (2004) argues, rely on *topoi* and linguistic patterns already in play, which show a clear meaning content or well-established stereotype (p.207). They also allow speakers and writers to express preferences, justify political inclusion or exclusion or devalue the ‘Other’ without accepting responsibility for what is implicitly said, because, as Wodak posits, it is not said explicitly (2004). In this case, it was Fela who said it. The narrative technique in the next excerpt is slightly different but the meanings reinforce the dominant discourse flow:

*4. i) “When officials of Nigeria's state-owned electricity company, Nepa, were asked the cause of a recent nationwide power cut, their response was to remain silent. ii) Was it the storms outside? iii) Or was this the swansong of the last functioning gas turbines at a thermal plant? iv) At Nepa headquarters in the commercial capital, Lagos, officials passed the question up and down the stairwell. v) But the roar of a diesel powered generator outside the building floored their attempts to persuade that all was well. vi) To make up for the failures of the national electricity grid, Nigerian business is spending millions of dollars each year on fuel for its own generators. vii) The state, meanwhile, is unable to afford even basic maintenance of its collapsing utilities. [...] viii) Ten months after Gen Abubakar took office and pledged to sell off or commercialise more than 40 state-owned companies, his programme is in limbo. ix) The plan was ambitious: to make irreversible progress towards the commercialisation of key utilities, symbolically sell some of the smaller companies and the oil refineries, and thereby tie the elected government he intends to hand over to by the end of May into continuing the programme. x) Familiar Nigerian problems have intervened. x) The most damaging has been a turf war between competing government advisory bodies*

*for control of the programme, which could - if it attracts the right foreign partners - bring in the biggest inflow of investment Nigeria has seen outside the upstream oil and gas sector.” (Financial Times, International, Pg. 05; March 30, 1999)*

The acronym NEPA in the Nigerian context means National Electric Power Authority. It is the national institution charged with the responsibility of generating, transmitting and distributing electricity to citizens or customers and consumers. Though NEPA was neglected by successive military regimes, the corporation and the issue of power generally began to receive attention with the return of democracy in 1999. However, the writer of excerpt 4 employs NEPA’s story as a metaphor for the construction of Nigeria as a differentiated ‘Other’ or an out-group using the strategy of referential and nomination. News is about differences and such differences are often expressed in terms of binary oppositions. There is nowhere this is more evident than in the construction of news where the positive ‘self’ and the negative ‘other’ (van Dijk 2009) representation is pervasive. Embedded in this excerpt [and throughout the full text] is the construct of difference between an organised modern western society and a backward socially, economically and politically unstable former colony. The device adopted is to naturalize that construct [of the backward ‘Other’] using the concept of presuppositions.

As Wodak (2004) has posited, presuppositions imply that people see certain assumptions as “common sense beliefs” or “shared truth” (p.208) (see also van Dijk 2009). Therefore, a major difference is underscored by highlighting the problems of power supply in Nigeria in spite of the abundant availability of such natural resources as oil and gas in the former British colony, a situation that is so elementary in our own

society. Sentence 7 states that the Nigerian state “is unable to afford *even basic maintenance* of its collapsing utilities,” the opposite is that “we” do such basic maintenance almost effortlessly. The concept of presupposition is further exemplified by sentence 9: “Familiar Nigerian problems have intervened.” Sentences 1-6 exemplify the use of narration and description devices to amplify the writer’s point of view; the strategy adopted includes perspectivation, framing and discourse representation (Wodak 2004). Although it could be argued that this article mirrors the situation on the ground as regards NEPA, the fact that it did not account for efforts to redress the situation nor touch on solutions to the problem underscores its ‘Othering’ function.

### **3.2 Looking at the same news differently: Comparison of how UK and Nigeria are represented**

It is true that certain kinds of events about Nigeria often seem to garner a disproportionate amount of negative attention. Such events do happen in other countries, but they are rarely described in media reports in such terms as “fraudulent,” “violent,” “unstable,” “irredeemably corrupt,” “collapsing,” “disorganised,” “disintegrating,” “the Vatican of international church of theft and fraud” or variations of the terms that deride Nigeria as a joke. It is also true that Nigeria and its leadership share most of the blame for the image of their country; but as the following section would show, the representation evident in the news when Nigeria and Britain are compared is worlds apart. This thus corroborates Paul Weaver’s assertion that news is not a neutral body of information; but rather information gathered and presented to illustrate certain ways of seeing the world, based on certain values and favorable to

certain course of action (1972:73). First, the excerpts discussing the state of affairs in Nigeria:

5. i) *“Nigeria, according to a Western businessman I met on my first flight into Lagos, the dilapidated commercial capital of Africa's most populous country, is a swamp. ii) “Everything you put into it,” he lamented, more in sorrow than anger, “disappears without trace.” iii) Nearly a year after the return to civilian rule, and the much-publicised campaign by President Olusegun Obasanjo to bring to book those responsible for plundering Nigeria's oil wealth, very little, at least in his bitter experience, has changed. iv) “It's true,” he said, “some of the military top brass have had to return the money they stuffed into their Swiss bank accounts. v) The three-day queues for petrol have gone, and you no longer have to slip a \$ 10 bill in your passport to get through customs and immigration.” vi) But that was as far as it went, he added, shaking his head in exasperation. [...] vii) Little wonder that Nigeria is known as the most corrupt country in the world. viii) Everywhere you look it's the same story.” (The Times, Section: Features, March 4, 2000)*

6. i) *“...The five-lane highways built in the oil boom of the 1970s are full of pot-holes and clogged with traffic. After 20 years of almost zero investment in the fundamentals of modern life - electricity, sanitation, transport and communications - Nigeria is in a mess. ii) Average life expectancy is 50; less than half the population have access to clean water; health care is a luxury of the rich; and Aids, while below the levels of many east and southern African states, is running at 10 per cent. [...] iii) Every day the newspapers are full of bitter jokes about the absurdity of a country that produces 2.2 million barrels of oil a day suffering chronic petrol shortages. iv) Crime and corruption, despite grandiose new laws, remain endemic. v) Everyone, it seems, must have their cut. (The Daily Telegraph; P.18; December 05, 2000)*

A striking similarity exists between the last three excerpts above. They adopt the strategy of perspectivation, framing or discourse representation to highlight the state of Nigeria using the device of reporting, description and narration or quotation.

Excerpt 5 presents a much gloomier picture of the former British colony as sentences 1-8 tend to foreclose any hope for Nigeria thus amplifying the construct of Africa as the hopeless continent and Nigeria as a place where nothing happens except corruption. Though excerpt 5 was published in March, 2000, there is a little difference in its focus, lexis and structure with excerpt 6, which was published in December, 2000 by a different newspaper thus supporting the notion that “facts” are often recycled in the process of journalistic enterprise. However, the writer of excerpt 6 accentuates the credibility of the story by the use of the rhetorical device of numbers by including statistics in sentences 2 and 3. Rhetoric of numbers, as van Dijk (1988) posits, is used to stress the preciseness and truthfulness of the text.

A common thread in both excerpts is that they reinforce the construct of Nigeria as being synonymous with corruption. Magnifying corruption, instability and violence to such dizzying heights well fit the strategy of constructing a differentiated cultural “Other” especially when similar incidents are constructed differently as news in respect of western countries. For example, *The Times* [of London] in its 01/12/1999 edition published two stories detailing benefit fraud. The stories, no doubt, present a valid example of how the concept of positive self and negative “Other” representation plays out in news construction. The first story titled: “**GPs and councils shamed as benefit fraud grows,**” states:

i] “The government much-vaunted crackdown on benefit fraud is failing because too many councils are ignoring new powers to root out bogus claimants.

ii] “Figures published today by the Audit Commission show that detected fraud in local government has risen to by 18% in the past year, passing the pounds 100 mark for the first time. And detected fraud in the health service has almost doubled to Pounds 4.7 million.

iii] “The Commission's reports show that councils are failing to make even the most basic checks on applicants before handing out public money: 40 percent do not require applicants to provide a national insurance number; 20 percent are not taking advantage of the authority to instruct the Post Office not to redirect benefit cheques; and fewer than 50 councils have implemented a Verification Framework to check claims.

iv] “One company was awarded a Pounds 40,000 business expansion grant to purchase machinery, which it ordered and received but never paid for. No checks had been made on the company. In another case a council officer responsible for banking car parking fees pocketed Pounds 110,000 before being found out. Because everyone assumed that she was trustworthy, no one checked her work.

v] “And when fraud is uncovered, 80 percent of councils are not using their powers to fine cheats rather than take them to court

vi] “A separate commission report on the health service showed that 25 GPs had been charged with fraud over the year, a small but 'very concerning' number. In one case a husband and wife who had left the country on retiring as GPs were found to have claimed Pounds 45,000 to which they not entitled. In another case, an optician obtained Pounds 30,000 by claiming for glasses he had not supplied.

vii] “David Willetts, the Shadow Social Security Secretary, said he was shocked at both the increase in detected fraud and council's apparent inability to prevent it. "This is not brain surgery, you know. All you need to do is some pretty basic stuff, such as checking that benefit claimants really are who they say they are and the pooling of information between agencies involved in handing out benefits," he said.

viii] “Jeff Rooker, the Social Security Minister, admitted that more needed to be done and he urged councils to take up the anti-fraud measures available.

ix] “Andrew Foster, controller of the Audit Commission, said that while the increased levels of detected fraud were a sign that authorities were getting better at catching cheats, he had no idea how much fraud remained undetected. It was likely that only a fraction of cheats were caught.”

The second story is an account of a man whose disingenuous tactics netted him thousands of pounds in benefit claims. The story published (also in *The Times* 01/12/1999) under the headline, “**Benefit fraud boosted thief's fortune by Pounds 43,000 a year,**” states:

i] “DAVID HILL was known to the Department of Social Security as a housebound invalid requiring 24-hour care and Pounds 43,000 in benefits; to the police, he was the high-rolling mastermind behind a series of armed robberies that netted millions.

ii] “Hundreds of thousands of pounds passed through Hill's bank account as he paid for his house in cash, holidayed in exotic South American resorts and went scuba diving.

iii] “He loved to sail in his own Pounds 100,000 yacht, go skiing, run half marathons and, as the holder of a pilot's licence, flew himself, his wife and children around the world. According to detectives, he enjoyed a ‘champagne lifestyle’.

iv] “At the same time, he was registered with the social services as permanently disabled, so crippled by his asthmatic condition that he was unable to wash or dress himself.”

The first story highlights a systemic failure in the British local government administration as evident by “the government’s much-vaunted crackdown...is failing,” in paragraph 1; “councils are failing...,” in paragraph 3; “fraud in the health service has almost doubled...” in paragraph 2; “no checks had been made on the company,” as well as “no one checked her work.” both in paragraph 4. However, the writer of the report, using both the strategies of referential/nomination as well as perspectivation, framing or discourse representation, represent this failure as mere defects in the system. In the same vein, employing the strategy of intensification and mitigation, the writer amplifies the construct of mere defects in the system by making intermittent

reference to “detected fraud,” [Paragraph 2 and 7] “basic checks,” [Paragraph 3 and 4] “ignoring new powers,” [Paragraph 1, 5] as well as the attribution to Jeff Rooker, the Social Security Minister who “...urged the councils to take up the anti-fraud measures available” [Paragraph 8].

Thus, the story is constructed by the use of argumentation to emphasise the positives. Reporters regularly employ the strategy of language choice to construct in-group in more positive and favourable light. In comparison, the same newspaper's story on Nigeria (see excerpt 5 above) admits that “nearly a year after the return to civilian rule” [sentence iii], “some of the military top brass have had to return the money they stuffed into their Swiss bank accounts” [sentence iv], “the three-day queues for petrol have gone” and “you no longer have to slip a \$10 bill in your passport to get through customs and immigration” [sentence vi]; yet it represents these efforts as infinitesimal whereas such efforts in the case of the UK story are well-intensified. Similarly, the magnitude of the systemic “defects” in the British local government administration in spite of UK’s many centuries of administrative experience is not constructed as the centre-piece of British national narratives whereas in the case of Nigeria, the failure of NEPA is generalised and constructed as corruption and Nigerians are thus represented as irretrievably corrupt while Nigeria is beyond redemption [sentence viii].

Similarly, the second story exemplifies how negative generalization is applied selectively in news construction. First, the system that allows Hill’s fraud to go on for years is not rendered as corrupt. Second, the elaborateness of his scam did not elicit a generalized representation of Britain as a corrupt nation. His case is treated as an isolated case in spite of the reported rise in such cases of corruption as indicated in the

first story. With respect to Nigeria, individual cases are seldom reported but corruption reports are often generalised with conclusions drawn thereby creating the impression that every Nigerian is corrupt. Though the phenomenal rise in cases of benefit corruption in Britain is represented in the press as isolated cases of corruption, the brazenness of the acts and the fact that they are often given mitigated coverage anger some readers. One reader, in a letter to the editor published in *The Times* (10/12/1999) underscores how the media selectively applies negative generalization in news construction:

i] “Sir, Lest we were under the impression that the culture of corruption belonged to the Third World while ours was only a culture of permissiveness, *The Times* of December 1 reveals that Britain is shamed by both.

ii] “I refer to your headlines ‘**GPs and councils shamed as benefit fraud grows**’ (page 1); ‘**Benefit fraud boosted thief’s fortune by Pounds 43,000 a year**’ (page 3); and ‘**Cowboy builder trick 3m**’ (page 9).

iii] “And what do we make of the report, neatly tucked away in the Business section (City diary, page 33) that ‘the BBC has quietly shelved a hard-hitting expose of City insider dealing that was to have gone out next week as the last series of MacIntyre Undercover,’ which aimed to take the lid off the City?

iv] “Too much of a hot potato, I expect.”

The letter is instructive. First, it corroborates the point raised in the discussion of excerpt 1 as it further highlights how news media coverage has created the impression that the culture of corruption belongs to a certain region of the world while as a matter of fact, some of the worst cases are close to home. Second, it also highlights how an expose on City Insiders’ dealing was spiked ostensibly “in public interest.” However, the letter did not just puncture the notion that persistent representation of Africa or the Third World as a citadel of corruption is a reflection of what happens there, it also

underscores the point that there is a certain level of myth in and around the news the media outlets serve us. News, Weaver (1972:73) has said, is not a neutral body of information, but rather information gathered and presented to illustrate certain ways of seeing the world. Thus the world is not organized for us or its social activities measured for us in a linear homogeneous manner by the media. They organize it and measure the cultural and social interactions using uneven scales; which favours some and disfavours 'Others.' As van Dijk (2009) has noted the favourable coverage is reserved for the in-group while the negative representation is for the out-group or the differentiated "Other."

The next two excerpts and the discussion thereafter explore these themes further; noting the influence of socio-cognition in the way representation is ordered:

*7. i) "Endemic corruption is far from unique to Nigeria. [...] ii) But it has rarely been seen on the scale practised by the late General Abacha, who along with other members of his kleptocracy stole Dollars 2.2bn from the Central Bank during their time in power. iii) Abacha died in the arms of a couple of Indian prostitutes, an event which Karl Maier describes as "a coup from heaven". iv) In This House has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis Maier relates a shocking litany of statistics: "Literacy is below that of the Democratic Republic of Congo . . . Gross domestic product per person is lower than the 1970s . . . The navy's 52 admirals and commodores outnumber serviceable ships by a ratio of six to one. The airforce has 10,000 men but fewer than 20 functioning aircraft." v) And so on. vi) Maier pauses for breath, then says: "The facts speak for themselves." vii) Well, not quite. It is not the facts that make this a fascinating book, but the sheer weight of voices competing to win the post-rationalisation contest, the analysis of what has happened to Nigeria since independence. viii) Ex-heads of state (Babangida), tribal leaders (Ojukwu) and popular rabble-rousers (Adams) are all given a platform to justify their actions and put forward their heavily partisan analysis. ix) The only common thread among these jockeying voices is an unwillingness to*

*admit mistakes or to give any ideological quarter to the perceived enemy. x) Maier's own summation is blunt: "a non-productive economy addicted to petrodollars, ruled by a coterie of army officers and bureaucrats growing fat on contract kickbacks and siphoning off the oil revenues". (The Guardian; Pg. 9; January 13, 2001)*

8. i) *"A COUNTRY probably better known for its corruption, rapacious dictators and gifted confidence tricksters than for its talented writers, scientists and diplomats, Nigeria does not lend itself easily to generalisations. ii) Terms such as "ethnic competition" and "economic mismanagement" may come in handy when trying to provide a broad description, but they do not begin to convey the give-and-take by which more than 100 million Nigerians negotiate their existence. iii) Nigerians have not given up trying to achieve for themselves what others aspire to in economic and social advancement. iv) They are widely admired for displaying a high level of creative and commercial drive, which by rights should make their country into a successful performer in the globalising world of the 21st century. v) But economic and political stagnation have driven the most successful Nigerians abroad, depriving the country of the talent it needs to solve its problems at home. vi) Even since the arrival of a new democratic era in May 1999 seemed to signify a new dawn, Nigeria's inherent problems have shown few signs of solution. vii) Thousands have died in religious or ethnic conflict. [...] viii) Karl Maier's timely and sympathetic book does not pretend to be a complete analysis of Nigeria's almost impossibly complex challenges. ix) But it succeeds in capturing the authentic flavour of the Nigerian political landscape..." (The Independent; Comment, Pg. 5; January 23, 2001)*

Excerpts 7 and 8 are different from the others in many ways. First, the difference underscores the diverse nature of the excerpts under analysis. Second, they are culled from the reviews of a book written by a former Africa correspondent of one of the samples under evaluation. In that regard, the book itself is an aggregation of a long career experience by one of those who shape the news on Africa and as such its

review will present a very important insight into how the representation of Nigeria is constructed. However, like excerpt 5 and 6, which were published months apart and are similar in terms of focus, wordings, plots and emphasis, excerpt 7 and 8 were published days apart as well by two different newspapers but also share striking similarities. Since it is unlikely that the writers (from different stables) copied one another, the remarkable similarities in their work could be safely attributed to what van Dijk (2009) terms socio-cognition.

According to Teun van Dijk, socio-cognition embodies various aspects of interaction such as shared beliefs, knowledge and ideologies, and the way these are represented, used and reproduced by individual social actors as group members (p. 32). Van Dijk explains further that people's participation in social situations is shaped by their group membership, which in turn defines their social identities. The writers of these excerpts (even if their individual backgrounds and experiences are different) as well as their news media outlets have a common social identity. The shared knowledge, beliefs and attitudes as group members thus account for the near uniform evaluation, interpretation and rendition of these excerpts as well as explain how people "*just learn*" to perceive and write in certain ways. Language use in newspaper, notes Fowler (1991: 118), is dependent on the culture of its production and consumption, which equally depend on pre-existing system of beliefs of which the news reports are a part of.

Therefore, while excerpt 7 concedes that endemic corruption is not unique to Nigeria and largely paraphrases Maier's book; excerpt 8 provides a more direct interpretation. With the use of rhetoric of numbers, excerpt 7 relays "a shocking litany of statistics,"

which described how deep those who rule Nigeria have sunk the West African country and are not –in spite of the decadence- prepared to accept responsibilities. However, information about the relationship of those rulers with the west is glossed over. For instance, Babangida enjoyed the full support of the Thatcher government. Also, excerpt 8 rues the country's lost opportunities and concludes that the return of democracy has failed to arrest the slide. Although many Nigerians scholars and writers including Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka (*The open sore of a continent*), Chinua Achebe (*The trouble with Nigeria*) and Eghosa Osaghae (*Crippled Giant*) among others have, at different times, dissected the Nigerian situation in various books as Maier's *This House has fallen: Nigeria in crisis*; none has gotten the kind of review that put in context the global perception of Nigeria as Karl Maier's work. That the evaluation and interpretation of different writers from different stables tally is a reflection of that perception, which withholds hope but predicts doom.

Besides the ring of hopelessness embedded in the tone of these excerpts as well as the impression that virtually all Nigerians are corrupt that is being reinforced, also embedded in these representations is the false impression being created that Nigerians have acquiesced with corruption and accepted it as normal. Whereas individual Nigerians, the media, clubs, associations and organisations such as Christian Coalition Against Corruption (mentioned in sentence 2, in excerpt 9 below) are engaged in the battle against corruption. For example, renowned Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe raised his weighty voice against corruption, violence and political instability in an article titled: "Nigeria: Stepping back from the frontier of anarchy," published in the *Financial Times* (30/03/2000). The difference is that his conclusion was hinged on hope, not hopelessness; solution to the problems, and not the derision ringing out loud

in some of the excerpts. The difference is evident in Achebe's passionate argument that: "...what *we* really must first do before anything else can have a chance to happen is to lower the voice, to reduce violent speech and violent action on all sides. Providence has yet again granted *us* reprieve, given *us* a truly undeserved chance to try again to construct a peaceful, prosperous and progressive nation. *We* should humbly and gratefully use it."

Achebe's tone is empathetic and his use of the deictic "we" and "us" indicates he is writing from the standpoint of a Nigerian. Hence, in this case, Nigeria is constructed as the in-group while it is represented as an out-group in the other excerpts thus corroborating van Dijk's (2009) thesis that when talking or writing people tend to emphasize the positive things about their own group, and the negative things about the out-group (p.71). For example, we can contrast Achebe's tone with the tone in the excerpts below:

9. i) *"At the government anti-corruption commission in Abuja, Nigeria, the decor is an admonishment to the country's notoriously venal political class. ii) A sign on the first-floor noticeboard advertises the work of the Christian Coalition Against Corruption, while doors to officials' rooms carry a series of posters advocating honesty in public life. iii) "There is enough for our needs but not enough for our greed," says one. iv) "Shun corruption . . . it is evil!" v) The exhortation could have come from Olusegun Obasanjo, the country's president and a founder member of Transparency International, the anti-corruption organisation. vi) Mr Obasanjo, who came to office in 1999 after more than 15 years of military rule, has promised to help dispel widely held perceptions of Nigeria as an archetype of unethical business behaviour. vii) Less than a year before he is due to stand for re-election, the country's continued notoriety raises questions about the effectiveness of the president's actions and highlights the manifold and deep-rooted difficulties that confront campaigns for greater public sector and corporate transparency in poor*

nations. viii) Mr Obasanjo's pronouncements on the need for change are seen as inconsistent with the actions of others in government and companies' disparate standards of behaviour. ix) Business people praise the quality of some of the president's technical advisers while expressing concern at the enduring influence of discredited politicians. x) Bribery of public officials endures despite law changes in industrialised countries that were supposed to stop it.”(**Financial Times; Inside Track, Pg. 13; September 12, 2002**)

10. i) “Mr Obasanjo, 69, was supposed to be different. ii) This, after all, was the man whose opposition to the country's most notorious military dictator, Gen Sani Abacha, saw him hounded and imprisoned. iii) To Tony Blair he was one of the "new generation" of African leaders who would help to drag the continent out of its dependency on foreign aid. iv) Others in the West have praised his efforts to crack down on corruption and the ambitious economic reform programme embarked upon by the small team of former World Bank technocrats he has brought into government. v) Even allegations that his re-election in 2003 was marred by vote-rigging in some states failed to dent his image. vi) Yet today, while the West still lauds him, many Nigerians have become disillusioned, blaming his government for a worsening standard of living and complaining that his anti-corruption drive is a tool of political intimidation. vii) Some claim he is using his office for his own enrichment. (**The Sunday Telegraph; Pg. 29; May 21, 2006**)

Excerpts 9 and 10 further underscore the use of referential/nomination, predication and argumentation strategies and such devices as categorisation, naturalising and synecdoche to reinforce the construction of Nigeria as a corrupt entity while its president, as the social actor in both excerpts, is labelled deprecatorily. In sentence 1-4 (of Excerpt 9), the writer employs the devices of reporting, modality, narration and description not only to label Nigeria's political class as “notoriously venal,” but also to allude to the country's president, in sentences 5-10, as an inept leader whose policies are not only ineffective but as someone who can't be trusted to keep a

promise. Excerpt 10, published four years later, is similarly deprecatory. Though it underscores his bringing into government “a small team of World Bank technocrats,” the predicates used either implicitly or explicitly, described Obasanjo and his performance in the negative. Sentence 6 is a good example: “*Yet today, while the West still lauds him, many Nigerians have become disillusioned, blaming his government for a worsening standard of living and complaining that his anti-corruption drive is a tool of political intimidation.*” If there are still doubts as to the level of his integrity, the framing of sentence 7 provides the answer: “*Some claim he is using his office for his own enrichment.*” Unlike in sentence 5 where accusations of vote rigging are rendered as “allegations,” the claim in sentence 6 that “*Some claim he is using his office for his own enrichment*” creates the impression of guilty as charged. However, examples of similar stories published on corruption in Britain show that language use in news construction can be less flagrant. An article published in the *Financial Times* (02/10/1997) and titled: “**Spotlight on summer of sleaze: Labour has some tidying to do in its own backyard, says Brian Groom,**” reads:

i] “Tony Blair used the word “beacon” 14 times in his speech this week to the Labour party's conference, referring to his aim of leading one of Britain's great, reforming governments. His beacon needs to shine all the more clearly into one of the dark corners of his own party - local councils.

ii] “Labour faces serious allegations against councillors, council officials or party members in eight places. They are Glasgow, Paisley, South Tyneside, Doncaster, Hull, Coventry, Birmingham, and the London borough of Hackney. The issues range from incompetence, cronyism and misuse of power through to bullying, vote-buying and alleged corruption. “In sum, they do not mean that Labour's local organisations are corrupt. But they do suggest that while the government is zealous in its reform of other parts of the British system of government, the change in the culture of local government is likely to be painfully slow.”

Like Obasanjo, British Prime Minister, Tony Blair is the social actor in the excerpt. But unlike Obasanjo and in spite of widespread accusations, he was more positively labelled. The fact that his promises have not manifested does not make him untrustworthy. The fact that corruption is festering like a bad sore in the local councils does not make him an inept leader with ineffective policies. Also, in spite of the fact that very many local councils are named in the corrupt practices at issue, and that there are also allegations of vote-rigging and corruption running deep down in the local government administration and involving hundreds of thousands of people, nowhere is the term “notoriously venal political class,” used to describe those involved. Rather, paragraph 3 mitigates the whole incidents and thus presents a poignant example of how language use can be employed to halt the projection of one’s country in the negative. Similarly, a *Financial Times* leader, titled “**The dangerous game of sleaze,**” and published on April 17, 2002 reads:

i] “A visitor to Britain might conclude from lurid accounts of Labour sleaze that the government is drowning in a sea of **corruption**. Far from it: New Labour has had its embarrassments over financing but much of the noise about "cash for influence" has been little more than political mud-slinging. Those who sling the mud should reflect on the consequences for party funding.

ii] “The paradox is that the government is being pilloried by the transparency it introduced into party finances. A good example is the weekend story that Tony Blair used a trip to the Czech Republic to promote the sale of jet fighters produced by a UK-Swedish consortium. **BAE** Systems, a consortium member, had donated more than Pounds 5,000 to Labour in 1998-99 and 2000-01 and also paid Pounds 12m to sponsor the Millennium Dome mind zone.

“How do we know about the donations? Because they were declared under the rules introduced by New Labour.

iii] “Is it unusual for the prime minister to use a foreign visit to support a business deal that would benefit the UK? No - he does it all the time, as do

leaders of other countries. It would be better if the practice was ended, but Margaret Thatcher "batted for Britain" with no less gusto."

As in the first article, the social actors in this piece are the British political class and, more importantly, the country's Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair. Unlike Obasanjo and the Nigerian "venal political class," in excerpt 9, the labelling in this instance is rather appreciative than deprecatory and the attributions and allusions are positive. More importantly, the influential *Financial Times* knew the implications of letting the government of Britain drown in the lurid accounts of corruption. Hence, the newspaper lent its weighty voice to calm things down. The tone and the language use portray a positive self. There's a parallel here with the intervention of Achebe in the article titled "Nigeria: Stepping back from the frontiers of anarchy," already discussed above. Achebe dissects the problems and focuses on solutions, *Financial Times* too appraises the problems and provides solutions while warning all concerned against the consequences of making corruption the national narrative of Britain.

In the same vein, a news story published on December 16, 2006 under the headline: "**Commercial considerations did not affect my decision - Robert Wardle**" by *Financial Times* in the midst of BAE scandal also presents another example of how language use in news construction is applied for positive and negative projections. In the story, the Head of Serious Fraud Office (Robert Wardle) explains "his" decision to drop investigations into the bribery scandal because of "public interest." It is unclear which is really in the public interest, probing the scandal to unravel the truth or sweeping the whole affairs under the carpet as it has been done. However, in spite of this ambiguity as well as clear contradictions in the views expressed by the Attorney-General and the Head of SFO over the issue, there are no insinuations in the story that

the British Prime Minister is corrupt or that the political class as a whole is corrupt. Therefore, these excerpts and examples presented above thus support the notion that different discursive strategies are adopted by the news media in their representation of different groups. Jonathan Dimbleby's insight on this issue is instructive: "Of course, where are we, in the west incidentally, to be critical of Africa? Where is transparency when our politicians were free to exploit the system to increase their incomes without anyone knowing? So, I think we have to be very careful about being judgmental."

### 3.3 News, Myth, Reality, and **the notion of Representation**

One significant point about the remaining excerpts is that, much like majority of the stories on Nigeria, they are written in narrative form. Bird and Dardenne (1988: 341) submit that the device is used to enable journalists or writers organize information clearly and effectively. Its most striking feature, Scholes (1982:64) notes, is that it is very different from traditional story form. To become a story, Scholes explains further, a narrative must be ordered in a particular way, usually presenting cause-and-effect relationship in a logical progression. Ricoeur's (1981) position is similar. Ricoeur posits that in order for the readers to follow a story, "explanations... must be woven into the narrative tissues" (1981: 278). Indeed, explanations about how Nigeria is held captive by corruption, fraud and other societal ills are never short in supply as the following excerpts indicate, but what is equally obvious is the fact that such explanations are narrow, ideologically produced and, as such, are at variance with reality. They focus on crisis in the Niger Delta without addressing the culpability of western oil companies thus corroborating Wainaina's statement that western writers 'mention the west's 'involvement' in passing without being specific.' The coverage as a package excludes almost entirely other news-making events as will be shown later

in this evaluation thus effectively ensuring that only “a few types of event” (van Dijk 1988:34) make the news about Nigeria. So, how much of this coverage is myth?

Myth, argues Drummond (1984), is primarily “a metaphorical device for telling people about themselves, about *Other* people, and about the complex world of natural and mechanical objects which they inhabit” (p.27). Bird and Dardenne (1988) add that it has meaning only in the telling; arguing that for myth to have power, it has to be constantly retold (p.337). What this means is that the form and the structure of the story already exists. Hence, Bird and Dardenne insist, the journalist as the story-teller does not reinvent stories when the need arises; instead, what he does, as Hall (1984) has noted, is he “constantly draw on the inventory which [has] been established over time” (p. 6). Darnton (1975) recalls drawing from such established inventory while recording actual events such as “the bereavement story”:

*When I needed quotes, I used to make them up, as did some of the others...for we knew what the “bereaved mother” and the “mourning father” should have said and possibly even heard them speak what was in our minds rather than what was in theirs (p.190).*

Given Darnton’s declaration and Allimadi’s (2002) testimony (see chapter 5), it is very easy to guess what is expected from a “violent,” “corrupt” and “fraudulent” country that has become “the Vatican of the International church of theft and fraud.” Also, the fact that striking similarities exist in different excerpts by different writers from different news outlets at different times raises legitimate concern. Nevertheless, excerpts 11 and 12 further exemplify the issue in discourse:

*11. i) “A SENTRY BOX looms over the forecourt of a petrol station on the main road north from the city of Port Harcourt in the Niger Delta. ii) It is an ugly metal crate on stilts with a narrow window, just wide enough to position*

*the barrel of a gun. iii) Fuel is precious and petrol station owners take no chances, the pumps are protected by steel cages. iv) The price of fuel is soaring in Nigeria and its provision is irregular, creating shortages in a region that virtually floats on oil. v) The Delta produces almost 2.5 million barrels of crude per day, providing the government with a rent that accounts for more than two thirds of its income. vi) Port Harcourt -Nigeria's answer to Houston -shows little evidence of the oil money. vii) It is a town of hovels, shacks and shebeens. viii) The roads leaving the city are lined with broken lorries, a queue of hulks that could provide a mill with enough scrap metal to keep Nigeria in steel for years, were there energy to fuel the furnaces.”(The Times, Business, P.78; November 6, 2004)*

*12. i) “In a hotel in the city of Warri in southern Nigeria, a mobile phone rings impatiently. Even at six in the morning the city is roasting under a fierce sun. ii) Warri is waking up to another hard day in its hard history. iii) Populated mainly by three ethnic groups, it has been the theatre for the fierce rivalry and drama that animates the Itshekiri, Urhobo and Ijaw. iv) Money has since been poured onto this smouldering ethnic fire from the proceeds of oil, turning the city into an industrial beast with the character of a frontier town. iii) At the end of the phone is a deep baritone voice. iv) 'I am Adams of Mend,' the caller says, revealing himself as a member of the newly notorious militia, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. v) A few minutes after the call a new okada pulls up outside the hotel. vi) A short young man steps off the small motorbike. vii) 'Please come mister journalist, I know you,' he calls out, 'I am Adams of Mend.' viii) After a short bike ride and a two-hour speedboat journey, we arrive at a small village community to the west of Warri. ix) As the boat comes to a stop, about 25 men emerge from a house, armed with AK 47 rifles and with rocket-fired grenades wrapped around their waists. x) The insurgents don't bother to hide their identity. xi) They are polite and friendly. xii) At a thatched house in the community, which they insist on calling a 'camp', the militants showcase their arsenal, repeatedly insisting that they are prepared to go to war.” (The Observer; Foreign Pages, Pg. 36; March 5, 2006)*

In these excerpts (11 and 12), the writers apply the devices of reporting, description and narration to intensify the given perception of the Nigerian social and physical environments. Sentences 1-3 of excerpt 11 invite readers to think about Nigeria as unstable, insecure and crime-infested as they reinforce the constructs that the Niger Delta is fraught with violence. Sentences 4, 5, 6 and 7 point attention to the paradox of a nation producing million of barrels of crude daily but still has shortages of its by-products. The comparison to Houston in the United States as well as the scrap metals allusion in sentence 8 serve to differentiate the modern, organised and civilized west from the primitive and backward Nigeria; thus intensifying the construct of the differentiated 'Other.'

Similarly, excerpt 12 invites readers to behold a territory where governance, organised in the form as we are used to in the west, has lost control to militia men with sentences 3 introducing the flavour of tribalism while sentence 12 infuses or reinforces the construct of the primitive Africans living in thatched houses as opposed to our modern housing estates in the west. Although the excerpt mentions "money," "oil" and "this smouldering ethnic fire (sentence 4)," it did not account for the role western oil companies play both in stoking the fire and in causing the environmental degradation that created the problems in the first place. However, excerpts 13 and 14 are different as they highlight the diversity in the corpus:

*13. i) "James Ibori, former governor of an oil-rich Nigerian state, liked investing in Britain and putting his money in its banks. ii) British anti-corruption investigators claim he had a "criminal lifestyle" involving accounts at Barclays and Abbey National, properties in London and Dorset and four cars, including a Bentley, a Jaguar and a Chrysler. iii) Most spectacularly, police claim, he bought and armour-plated a Euros 406,600 (Pounds 293,700) Mercedes-Benz from a Mayfair showroom in a 2005 deal arranged by a Swiss*

private bank, carried out via a company registered in the tiny Pacific island of Niue. iv) Mr Ibori has declined to comment on the claim - made in a police affidavit first obtained by Saharareporters, an internet newspaper - that these assets were part of a scheme to launder at least Pounds 20m through Britain. v) The investigation is a reminder of the dangers facing leading companies - in Mr Ibori's case, Abbey and Barclays - over money-laundering allegations, in spite of internal due diligence and global attempts to crack down on dirty cash. vi) As banks, regulators, law enforcement officers and government officials gather in London today for two days of discussions on anti-money-laundering efforts, they are faced with both existing systemic weaknesses and dangers that are emerging with the arrival of new sources of international capital. vii) They must tackle a problem that can earn companies fines, criminal charges and huge reputational damage." (**Financial Times; Business Life, Pg. 16; December 6, 2007**)

14. i) "The Finance Minister is fulsome in her apologies. ii) "Sorry, it's my first day back in the country and I had to go and see the President. iii) Even so, I do apologise for keeping you waiting." iv) It is an interesting example of the priorities of Mrs Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the woman who has been in charge of the finances of Nigeria for the past three years. v) First she spends more than a week at IMF/World Bank meetings in Washington, then she briefs her boss, but next she sets aside a couple of hours from a "crazy schedule" to talk to someone from the foreign press. vi) Getting the message out about the change in Africa's most populous nation is pretty high on her "to do" list just now. vii) As well it might be. viii) One in four of the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa lives in Nigeria which has the biggest oil reserves on the continent. ix) It ought to be the powerhouse of Africa. x) Yet for decades it has languished, paralysed by years of military dictatorship, in a sump of corruption. xi) The year before Mrs Ngozi took over, in 2003, Nigeria rejoiced in the unenviable reputation as the most corrupt place on earth, according to Transparency International. xii) But something - an awful lot - has changed. xiii) Last year Nigeria was named as one of the 21 most improved countries in 2005. xiv) "Some very, very powerful people including the inspector general of police [Nigeria's top cop] have been brought to book. xv) He has been tried,

*and is now in jail on several counts," the minister says with a grim smile. xvi) "Two judges have been suspended; two sacked outright, three ministers sacked, two rear-admirals, a state governor, top customs officials. xvii) Did we get all the people? xviii) Not yet - but we've got enough to send a powerful signal and [generate] a powerful fear. xix) People in power now know they can't act with impunity" (The Independent; Features, Pg. 17; May 16, 2006)*

These excerpts (13 and 14) focus on two social actors representing the Nigerian political class. While one of them was labelled negatively and even deprecatorily, the other was labelled more positively and appreciatively thus highlighting the diversity of these excerpts. The first, a former governor of oil-rich Delta state of Nigeria, whose duty it was to ensure that the rent from oil transform into sustainable economic development for his people and, more so, ensure that the western oil companies clean up their spills, which deprived his people of their source of livelihood did not only abandon his people but also betray their cause as he engaged in rather indiscriminate spending on property acquisition in London. Sentences 1-4 detail his expensive "properties in London," fat "bank accounts" in prominent high street banking institutions and a fleet of choice cars. Although the excerpts named the banks involved as Barclays and Abbey National in sentence 2, it applies the device of mitigation in the representation of the banks' involvement in what is clearly an illegal act of money laundering.

This is evident in sentence 5 where rather than accused the banks of a misdemeanour, the excerpt invite readers to think about "the dangers facing leading companies – in Mr. Ibori's case, Abbey and Barclays – over money-laundering..." The mitigation continues by finding excuses for the banks "...in spite of internal due diligence..." The writer then seeks resolution through collective efforts to protect companies' from

“reputational damage.” Damaging the affected companies’ reputation is understandably more important than the ‘Other’ nation’s image and more precious than the lives of millions who die needless deaths from otherwise curable diseases because funds meant for their treatment have been accepted and kept in the safe havens of *the* reputable banks. Though Ibori’s betrayal of the trust of his own people is criminal and should not be excused, it is important that his criminal behaviour is possible only when there are banks ready to assist in laundering crime proceeds despite extant national and international laws. The writer of the excerpt, as the discussions of the excerpts have shown so far, applies the choice of language use to construct the issues affecting the in-group positively and the out-group negatively as a differentiated ‘other.’

Though excerpt 14 is different as it portrays the social actor in a positive light as mentioned earlier, it nonetheless pilloried Nigeria as a whole and sticks to the construct of corruption as the country’s national narrative. The modal verb ‘*ought*’ used in sentence 9 underscores this point. However, following the western construct of “Angel of Mercy” or the western-trained Africans as heroes, the social actor in excerpt 14, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Obasanjo's Minister of Finance and a former high-ranking official of the World Bank, is represented in positive and appreciative lights just as “the small team of former World Bank technocrats he has brought into government,” was picked out for praise in the sentence 4 of excerpt 10. The excerpt is different in other ways as it (from sentences 1-5) further portrays Okonjo-Iweala as a hard-working, businesslike, courteous and gracious professional woman who does not only know her onions but also brings in her expertise to help her country.

Applying the device known as “*topoi*,” which Wodak (2004) has noted, is used to express preferences, the writer justifies the positive portrayals by emphasising that “the year before Mrs Ngozi took over, in 2003, Nigeria rejoiced in the unenviable reputation as the most corrupt place on earth, according to Transparency International,” in sentence 11. And quickly adds in sentence 12 that “but something - an awful lot - has changed.” Continuing in sentence 13, the writer delivers heart-warming news, which portrays Nigeria in a positive light unlike the other excerpts: “Last year Nigeria was named as one of the 21 most improved countries in 2005.” The excerpt, unlike the others, concludes by holding out hope even though it acknowledges that a lot of work still needs to be done. It is neither derisive nor magisterial in tone. It has in abundance something that is evidently lacking in the other excerpts: empathy; thus supporting the thesis that stereotypes-free representation is possible in news construction.

#### 4. Representing **Sodom and Gomorrah**

If the modern news media were to represent Sodom and Gomorrah, they would probably ignore the conversation between God and Abraham and the lessons of its moral, and most likely peg their news stories on the destruction. While the lessons of God-Abraham dialogue, hinged on the fact that the existence of a few righteous men in the midst of a corrupt Sodom could save the city may be a good story; the racy and sensationalism of the destruction of a whole city would be a much more appealing story to today’s news worker. ‘If God seeks the opinion of the western press,’ says Eniola Bello, managing director of Lagos-based *Thisday* newspaper in an interview, ‘Nigeria would be destroyed like the Biblical Sodom. In her work, *The 4-1-9*

*Coalition, the Internet and Nigerian Business Integration in the United States*, Conleth Eleanya (2008) highlights the injuries suffer by innocent Nigerians in the course of doing their lawful business in the US because of the way Nigeria is represented in the media. The account of one of Eleanya's respondents, a real estate agent, tells of the silent anguish of the innocent:

*Often, when I speak, some of my potential clients would ask where I come from and when I tell them, I notice they no longer sound as enthused as they did originally. Some would promise to get back to me, or come back in person but then they do not actually return. Someone actually told me he had nothing against me personally but he would not work with a Nigerian (p. 191).*

The following excerpt exemplifies how journalistic texts, whether comment/opinion articles, news features, straight news or hard news stories (Thompson, White and Kitley 2008), function and are implicated in the reproduction of constructs that inflict harm on the innocent.

1. i] *"HUNDREDS of wealthy Californian investors have lost millions of dollars to fraudsters who are using London as an international base from which to operate their scams. ii] Their plight has led senior fraud squad detectives in Britain to warn investors to be on the alert for a fresh wave of illegal schemes operating out of London, many of which are connected with Nigeria. iii] These new scams are more sophisticated versions of the Nigerian letters that have flooded the UK in recent years. iv] One was even sent to George Staple, director of the Serious Fraud Office. v] Most Nigerian letters offer millions of dollars to UK and overseas investors who help bogus Nigerian officials smuggle money, which has allegedly been siphoned from Government contracts, out of the country. vi] Detective Inspector David Crinnion, of the Metropolitan Police Company Fraud Squad, said: "Worldwide, the losses from these scams run into billions of dollars every year. vii] Investors in over 51 countries, including Britain, have received*

*Nigerian letters. viii] In spite of our repeated warnings not to touch them people still prove all too gullible." ix]Mr Crinnion, who last year broke up a Nigerian scam led by fugitive "Chief" Frank Okosa, which resulted in a former Barclays Bank manager being jailed for five years, added: "Translated, these letters have the same theme - 'Dear Sir or Madam, I am a thief who has stolen a lot of money from the Government and I would like your help to get it out of Nigeria'. x] These monies do not exist and never have. [...] xi The Nigerian High Commission in London yesterday denied categorically that the fraudsters were Nigerian Government officials. xii] The Commission pointed out that its Government has taken out newspaper advertisements worldwide to warn investors about the fraudulent nature of these letters and deals." (**The Times, Business; January 10, 1997**)*

This excerpt is about the loss of \$3million to fraudsters operating from London by a group of US-based “investors.” The loss of such a huge amount of money is quite unfortunate and suffering such a loss on account of trickery is a condemnable malevolence. The fraudsters who perpetrated such evil act should be brought to book to answer for their heinous crime. However, certain elements of language use in the construction of the text such as lexis, syntax and transitivity, modality, presupposition, rhetoric and narrative, which give meanings and shape reader’s understanding of the story suggest that the writer of the excerpt is less concerned about the pursuit of justice but is more interested in i) mitigating the culpability of London security agencies under whose jurisdiction the crime was committed, and ii) in making the vital connection between “being Nigerian and being fraudulent,” which fits in with the dominant discourse flow. For example, the transitive action in “Fraudsters who are using London...to operate their scams,” in sentence 1 does not only amplifies the dominant discourse it also reinforces the notion that "they" are not

part of "us" while the predicate "many of which are connected with Nigeria," in sentence 2 is indicative of where "they" (the fraudsters) belong. There's a parallel between this connection and the example of "being Muslim and being violent" (see Richardson 2007:9; Hacker et al., 1991, cited in Fairclough 1992:193).

Although some Nigerians have been implicated in the crime known to Nigerian laws as "advance fee fraud," just as some Muslims have been involved in violent activities, it is hard to justify the generalisation often ascribed and recycled in media reports when those actually involved remain a tiny percentage of the Nigerian population and the violent Muslims do not represent majority of the entire Islamic world. Statement such as "Nigeria, after all, is the Vatican of the international church of theft and fraud," published by *Daily Telegraph* (07/12/2003) are referent to the nature of the dominant discourse. Journalistic texts make these kinds of connections implicitly through different devices including the use of modality and transitivity in news construction. While modality refers to judgements, comments and attitude in text and talk or, as Simpson (1993) puts it, to a speaker's "attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence" (p.47); transitivity, Richardson (2007:54) notes, depicts the relationship between participants and the roles they play in the process described in reporting. Mills (1995) posits that it is concerned with how actions are represented. As such, even though only a single Nigerian is reported to be connected with this case (as indicated in the full text) the report is framed as if almost all Nigerians are involved. The writer achieves this through what Reisigl and Wodak (2001) term "referential strategies." For instance, Nigeria (or Nigerian) is mentioned nine separate times in this excerpt and also in one sentence twice as sentences 5 and 11 show. Such over-description serves certain discursive purposes.

The writer also applies other linguistic devices to convey meanings. The choice of "a fresh wave..." in sentence 2 triggers presuppositions. It invites readers to recall the old wave while the predicate "many of which are connected with Nigeria," complete the sense by telling readers to think of Nigeria as being responsible for "their (the investor's) plight." Also, the *new* in "these new scams," the definite article *the*, in "the Nigerian letter," also trigger presuppositions as they also invite readers to perceive things in certain ways. These supposed meanings embedded in the excerpt amplify certain constructs of Nigeria. Presupposition deals with meanings that are not manifest from simply reading the content. Reah (2002) and Fairclough (2000) give further insight into how this device is used as a representational tool in journalistic texts.

However, there are remarkable contradictions in the excerpt. The writer refers to the victims as "investors," in sentences 1, 2, 5 and 7 but refers to them in sentence 8, as "people" as it is doubtful if genuine "investors" would part with their money on the basis of such "Dear Sir or Ma" letters described in sentence 9. Also, information, which provides alternative viewpoint or contradicts the dominant views such as the refutation by the Nigerian High Commission in sentences 11 and 12 are not pursued but left as fragments. This corroborates the notion by Philo et al., (1995) that information which contradicts the dominant view, if it appears at all, exists as fragments and is never explored by news personnel as a rational alternative explanation...where alternatives do occasionally surface, they are simply fitted into the dominant flow (p. 10). Indeed, the Nigerian government through its various ministries, agencies and departments had taken paid advertisements in global media at various times to warn "investors" against such incredulous business offers. For instance, the report of

*Financial Times* (05/09/1997) published under the headline, "Warning Shot," highlights such a caveat: "The Central Bank of Nigeria is warning the world about the advance fee frauds emanating from Africa's most populous country. Fraudsters invite punters to help shift money out of Nigeria, then demand money for fees and taxes to enable "transactions" to take place. The bank's adverts, in over 80 publications in 36 countries, spare little sympathy for the victims - or, in the bank's words, "so-called victims who are also villains" who get involved because of "criminality, avarice and greed." The advert makes clear that 'there are no contract payments trapped in the bank? ...'"

The fact that several "investors" still fall victim of these traps in spite of various warnings has generated animated debates across the globe. Okey Ndibe, a Nigerian novelist and university professor in the United States, according to *Financial Times* (03/03/2003) posits that: "many westerners who participate in 419 schemes are probably attracted by a racist belief that the fraudsters are fools throwing away money - even when it turns out that they themselves are the ones to be defrauded." Ndibe explains further "It goes without saying that greed is a part of it - and also a sense that Africans are idiots with \$40m or \$50m to ferry around the country, (The fraudsters) have made a lot of play out of the stereotype of the African as childlike, innocent, naive and intellectually uninvolved." *Thisday's* Eniola Bello expresses similar views in an interview. He notes that such 'easy money' may have existed in the past, during the days of the Nigerian oil-boom when a Nigerian military head of state was quoted as saying that 'the problem of Nigeria is not money but how to spend it.' "It is the desire to continue with that tradition," Bello remarks, "that lured many a westerner into the illicit transactions."

## 5. Nigeria: **Between the UK and Nigerian press**

Some researchers have studied the coverage of Africa in the western news media and have come up with different conclusions (Brookes 1995, Alozie 2007 and Scott 2009 for example). Brookes finds that Africa is negatively represented. Conversely, Scott (2009) concludes that the coverage of Africa in the UK press is neither marginalized, negative nor trivial claiming that the tendency to focus on negative attributes is not an exclusive practice of the UK press as *All-Africa.com* and African newspapers too also pay attention to such negative stories (p.553). Although Nigerian newspapers are very critical of corruption in the Nigerian system but unlike their British counterparts, they are equally sensitive to the inclusion of other news-making social activities and issues in their coverage.

Thus, they provide a more robust and balanced coverage. For example, in its July 5, 2003 edition, *Weekend Vanguard*, a Lagos-based newspaper published a three-page [news-feature] story on eight children who underwent heart surgery at the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Enugu.<sup>13</sup> The operation took place under the auspices of Kanu Heart Foundation (KHF), the International Children Heart Foundation (ICHF) and the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu. Though two of the children did not survive the operation, the remaining six had their lives saved. In a nation “reputed” for only the “bad” and the “ugly”, such a feat is heart-warming news. But it did not catch the attention of the British press as none of them reported the operation.

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<sup>13</sup> Enugu is the capital of Enugu state in south-eastern Nigeria.

*The Times* (of London 17/10/2000) reported the launch of Kanu Heart Foundation, the catalyst of the medical operation that took place in Nigeria by Nigerian medical personnel. The brief report was however, constructed from the distant “Other” cum dependency perspective. Excerpt from *The Times*’ story reads:

*Kanu has launched Kanu Nwankwo Heart Foundation to help children in need in his home country of Nigeria. The first beneficiaries were scheduled to visit the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children this week. ‘The more money we can make, the more we can bring the kids over here for essential operation,’ he said. The striker, whose career was saved when he underwent revolutionary heart surgery in the United States, is also hoping to raise funds to build a hospital in Nigeria.*

In order to robustly discuss *The Times*’ story, a brief background on the footballer is necessary to put the report in proper context. Kanu Nwankwo is a Nigerian footballer who had a successful career playing for Arsenal Football Club of London. A former Nigerian Olympic football gold medallist, Kanu’s skills and classy performance at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia, USA endeared him to many top European football clubs. It was at the point of his signing for Italian giant, Inter Milan, that Kanu was discovered to have a heart condition requiring surgery. He had the surgery in the United States and then went on have a successful playing career with Arsenal FC and a few other English teams before retiring from football.

However, in reporting this story, as the excerpt has shown, the writer uses the device of stereotypical and evaluative attributions of positive and negative traits to reinforce the attributes of the civilized west and the constructs of a primitive Africa dependent on the modern west and, by so doing, renders Africa as a differentiated “Other.” The last predicate of the first sentence: “to help children in need in his home country of

Nigeria” brings to mind the image of starving African children constantly recycled in western media. The second sentence: “The first beneficiaries were scheduled to visit the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children this week,” reinforces the notion of dependency as the primitive, underdeveloped and rural Africa is not able to provide medical services for its many children, it has to turn to no other place than our own facility. The deictic “here” in the quote attributed to Kanu similarly identifies where help is coming from just as the fact that the footballer’s career was “saved” in no other place than the United States. This otherwise innocuous usage of language has implicit meanings and as language use invites readers to reason in a particular way, it simultaneously creates certain impressions. For example, the predicate “to raise funds to build a hospital in Nigeria,” could be interpreted to mean that there are no standard hospitals in Nigeria whereas it is in one of the hospitals in Nigeria that the heart surgery discussed above took place.

There is ample evidence that other similar medical feats are achieved and are also reported in the Nigerian newspapers. For instance, *The Guardian* (28/05/2002) reports under the headline: “A medical feat at OAU,” the story of a 7-hour operation that resulted in the successful separation of a Siamese twin. The *Nigerian Tribune* (17/05/2002) reports the story under the heading: “Nigerian doctors in 7-hour medical feat: separate Siamese twin at Ife;” Also, *The Punch* of May (17/05/2002) captures the operations at the university teaching hospital thus: “OAUTH separates Siamese twin,” while *Thisday* (19/05/2002) pays tribute to the hospital team in its story titled: “Kudos to OAUTH.” Similarly, besides the story of the successful separation of the co-joined babies, which the minister acclaims, according to the *Vanguard* (12/06/2002) under the headline, “Minister commends health professionals over medical feat at OAUTH;”

there are other reports telling positive stories of laudable achievements by Nigerians in the medical field.

*The Guardian* (04/07/2002) under the headline, “Awolowo varsity doctors transplant kidney,” tells the story of successful kidney operation while *Thisday* (02/08/2002) reports the story of another kidney transplant in Kano under the headline: “Aminu Kano teaching hospital performs kidney transplant.” *Daily Times* (05/08/2002) captures the same story thus: “Successful kidney transplant at Aminu Kano teaching hospital.” These news-making events received wide coverage in the local press, which are also very critical of corruption, fraud and other societal ills; but they did not receive any mention in the sample newspapers under evaluation. While the exclusion of stories such as these supports Brookes’ (1995) conclusion that Africa is negatively represented in the western media, it negates Scott’s (2009) position. This is because, as van Dijk (1988) has pointed out, only a particular type of events, which paints a particular picture of Nigeria, are routinely given wide coverage. As John F. Kennedy said (during his June 11, 1962 commencement speech at Yale University): “the great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived and dishonest - but the myth - persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.”

## **6. Conclusion**

Indeed, in terms of its huge natural and human resources, Nigeria ought to flourish economically. But its fortune is equally its misfortune. British colonialism creates it. Western imperialism controls the mechanisms for extracting and processing most of its natural wealth. The process of extraction in turn creates problems that dispossess the people of their ancestral lands and traditional means of economic support.

Dispossessed, jobless and poor, the children of the landowners in the Niger Delta, unlike their parents before them, have become restive. Further up north, where the British first established their outpost and uncharacteristically acceded to indirect rule, unemployed youth have also become restless. Their protests bring them in confrontation with the authorities. The fall-outs from the ensuing conflicts are the spectacles that only make the news about Nigeria internationally as some of the excerpts presented above indicate.

Although, Nigerians and their leaders share the blame for their own problems, however, the coverage, as already mentioned above, is skewed. First, it did not only exclude uncomplimentary truth that may be injurious to the image of Britain or the west, it also focuses on a particular kind of story. As the evidence presented shows, different rules apply when similar issues are being presented in the case of Britain and Nigeria thus corroborating Teun van Dijk's (2009) notion of positive self-representation and negative Other-representation. Although, there are a number of positive stories, but overall, there are more referents to "electoral fraud," "corruption" and "debt crisis," thus supporting Kunczk's (2003) theory of negative representation of Third World as well as van Dijk's (1988) thesis of a few type of events making the news about the Third World countries. This further supports the hypothesis that the discursive construction of Nigeria is historically derived and ideologically determined.

Also, the argument that stereotypical representation of Third World countries is based on western ideological and cultural perspective is further reinforced by the fact that in spite of the feats Nigeria has recorded in advanced medical operations such as heart

surgery, brain surgery, separation of co-joined babies amongst others, none of these are reported in the samples thus supporting Olujobi's (2006) point that Western media blackout Africa's positive achievements while parading its negatives such as genocides, armed conflicts, child soldiers, foreign debts, hunger and disease. Nigeria is, no doubt, defined and represented as a differentiated 'Other,' where life is still several years in the ancient past but some of the excerpts hold out hope and did acknowledge the potentials and capacity of the West African nation to surmount its problems.

However, the sample newspapers did invite the world to understand Nigeria in certain ways and not in others simply by the way they frame information about Nigeria. Thus, they select some aspects of the reality in Nigeria's socio-economic and political context and make these more salient than others in their reports. These representations ask the world to perceive Nigeria and Nigerians in certain ways instead of another. They encourage the public to perceive Nigerian products and culture in certain ways. They also invite individual Nigerians to perceive themselves and their country in certain ways instead of another.

## Chapter 7: Sources and the News – The Influence of Travel guide, Experts' views, and others

*“The right to be considered the primary source of authoritative information about world events should probably be considered a central component of the legitimacy of modern political institutions. It is comparable in a secular age to the rights of the church in medieval Europe to interpret the scriptures”*  
**Hallin (1994:50).**

### 1. Introduction

It is incontrovertible that journalism is storytelling with a purpose. The most crucial part of that purpose, as Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001:189) have posited, is to provide people with the information they need to understand the world. Ordinarily, the body of information provided by journalists, generally referred to as news, is supposed to be neutral and unbiased. It is only when news is neutral and free of bias that it can truly serve its purpose. However, scholars and researchers who have undertaken critical studies of the role of the media in society (Hall 1978; Chomsky 1991; Roger 1991; van Dijk 1995, 1998; Silverstone 2002; Wodak 2004) have raised questions on the assumed independence of the news media and neutrality of the news. While Herman and Chomsky (1988) have labelled the news media as lapdog of the establishment and their news product as propaganda, Roger Fowler (1991) has questioned the supposed neutrality and impartiality in the news arguing that the language of news is ideological. Fowler's argument is that once the foundation of the house is skewed, it is nearly impossible for the building to stand erect.

Beside the existence of ideology in the framing of news, Hall et al. (1978); van Dijk (1988) and Silverstone (2001) have also identified the presence of cultural

perspectives in the construction of news. This mix of culture and ideology, van Dijk (1995, 1988) has argued, invariably leads to misrepresentation or distortion in representation. In the case of African countries, van Dijk (1988:34) concludes that the combined effect of culture and ideology leads to the production and reproduction of “highly stereotypical accounts of only a few types of event....” Although, as Chomsky (1991) has argued, news or information provided by journalists are supposed to be open and free; neutral and unbiased, the reality, as Roger Fowler (1991) has found, is that both the language and the structure of the news are neither open and free nor neutral and unbiased.

Therefore, Stuart Hall (1981) insists that the system of news process is opaque. Hall says of the process: “what we appear to be dealing with is a ‘deep structure’ whose function as a selective device is untransparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it (1981: 234-5).” Also taking a critical look at news selection practice, Walter Lippmann (1922) similarly concludes that the process is highly subjective. “Every newspaper when it reaches the reader,” Lippmann contends, “is the result of a whole series of selections as to what items shall be printed, in what position they shall be printed, how much space each shall occupy, what emphasis each shall have. There are no objective standards here. There are conventions” (p.354).

Indeed, journalists do engage in several selection activities or conventional choice-making before news is produced. Besides deciding on which items to print, in what position, how much space and what emphasis each item shall have, journalists also consider sources of stories (or items) to print or choose or select which sources to consult for comments on stories. One of the most controversial conventions in

journalism is the issue of sources. Sources have profound impact on the structure of news and ultimately on representation. The influence of sources on news is so enormous that sources tend to shape the news and, by extension, have greater claim on where the pendulum of public opinion swings. This resonates with the study by Herman and Chomsky (1988), which found that the press is not only cosy with, but also overtly relies on, official sources to the detriment of the public. Herman and Chomsky thus reject the notion that the news media are a watchdog of the society but are rather a lapdog of the establishment or corporate and political elites (p.28).

Hall et al. (1978) have also underscored the influence of sources in determining or shaping the news agenda. In their work, *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the State, Law and Order,* Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts examine how the journalistic convention of accessing accredited sources, who indeed may be accredited representatives of the people either as elected representatives or leaders of organised interest groups, has inadvertently placed the control of defining social reality –to a large extent- in the laps of powerful elites (p: 58). Thus Hall and his colleagues term these sources as *the primary definers* of the news agenda stressing that their access to the media, which allows them to give the initial definition or primary interpretation of the news topic does not only confer enormous powers on their position but also establishes such position or definition as the term of reference for further discourse on the subject. Moreover, these initial interpretations, Hall et al. (1978: 58-9) argue further; become extremely difficult to alter in any way fundamental, once established.

The prominence of *primary definers* in the news agenda is due to the journalist's understanding of the way the society is organized (Allan 1999), bureaucratically

structured (Fishman 1980) or the world (global village), is arranged. This perspective, according to Fishman (1980: 51) furnishes the journalist with the specific procedures for locating knowledge of occurrence or a 'map of relevant knowers' for newsworthy topics. For example, Allan (1999:68) explains that a journalist covering a story on the possible effects of a nuclear power plant on the health of children in a local community knows that information officers at the plant, scientists, environmentalists, politicians, social workers and health officials would be positioned to offer their viewpoints. "Whatever happens," Fishman (1980: 51) posits, "there are officials and authorities in a structural position to know." Becker (1967) illuminates this concept further with his notion of a 'hierarchy of credibility.' Hierarchy of credibility simply refers to how the definitions of the way things are by those at the top is taken as given by all participants in any system where ranked groupings operate. Becker further explains, 'any tale told by those at the top intrinsically deserves to be regarded as the most credible account obtainable ... Thus, credibility and the right to be heard are differentially distributed through the ranks of the system' (1967:241). What this means, Allan (1999) adds, is that the higher up in this hierarchy the news source is situated, the more authoritative his or her words will be for the journalist processing the bureaucratic account (p.68).

Consequently, journalists, as Fishman (1980: 96) has argued, are predisposed to treat the accounts of these accredited (official) sources as factual. It is by so doing that journalists play an active role in upholding and ratifying the normative order of the authorized primary definers of the news agenda - whom Hallin (1986, 1994), in his analyses, also refers to as credible sources (see Hallin 1986: 116-18). Hallin's analyses support Hall et al.'s (1978) position that journalists' reliance on these

“credible,” “official,” “institutional,” “accredited,” “legitimate” sources (otherwise known as primary definers) results in processing the opinion of the powerful as public consensus. Gans (1979:116) also contends that journalists are active in the pursuit of one source and passive as regards the other. Similarly, Bell’s (1991) investigation of the principal sources accessed by newspaper journalists in New Zealand finds that sources inputs such as ‘pre-existing text,’ have huge impacts on how news is framed. Bell’s observation thus suggests that the sources-media relationship is more about influence and control. Allan’s (1999) conclusion is similar. Analyzing the sources-media scenario, he contends that it is political as it tends to ostracize from the media the voice of sources whose views are at variance with political consensus (p. 70). Such “ostracized” sources find solace in alternative media (see Atton 2002).

Although a number of scholars (Schlesinger and Tumber 1994; Deacon and Golding 1994) have provided alternative arguments to the concept of primary definers, there’s no doubt that issues relating to sources have remained central to the practice of journalism and the performance of its role in the society. Again, because it is impracticable for the journalist to be everywhere a news event is breaking, the journalist is still dependent on the support and co-operation of sources. Thus sources are not only vital to journalism but also crucial to the context and structure of news. Therefore, the core issue in the study of sources is control. Gans (1979: 116) draws attention to the need to study sources and their activities. Philip Schlesinger (1990) explains that the study of sources must account for “relations between the media and the exercise of political and ideological power ... by central social institutions which seek to define and manage the flow of information in a contested field of discourse (p. 62).” In the case of international news, such study must also account for relations

between the media and the exercise of geo-political power by those social institutions which seek to define and manage global information flow. Stretched a bit farther, the idea that news media product is used by corporate and political elites to control the public mind instead of informing it (Chomsky 2011), is also applicable to the global public. Sources are crucial in this process as well. News media, Gans (1993: 32-33) contends, “remain primarily messengers...if they report news about rising unemployment, for example, the effects they produce stem from unemployment, not of their reporting it.” “They are,” adds Schudson, “messengers of their major sources more than they are autonomous setters of the political agenda” (1995: 19). Thus, the issue of sources and sourcing is of paramount importance to news construction and as such has attracted the interest of several other scholars including Tuchman (1978), Gans (1979), Fishman (1980), Golding et al. (1986), Fallows (1996) and Butler (1998).

Therefore, this chapter evaluates the role of sources in the way the five samples represent Nigeria. By so doing, it interrogates the character and functions of sources, whom Hall et al. (1978), as mentioned earlier, describe as the primary definers of the news agenda, as a means to ascertain their influence in the way and manner in which Nigeria is constructed as news in the British press. Taking a cue from Stuart Allan (1999), who noted that the definitions of certain sources are routinely over-accessed to the detriment of alternative but crucial viewpoints (p. 71); this chapter examines how and which sources are routinely accessed, and the nature of the sources accessed; it also categorises such sources and evaluates their impact as a means to unpack why the construction of Nigeria as news in the British press is the way it is. First, let’s examine the rituals performed for journalists on foreign reportorial assignments.

## **2. Assignment Briefs: *How reporters are primed for the task***

In his work titled: “*Broadcasting the local news: the early years of Pittsburgh’s KDKA-TV*,” Lynn Boyd Hind’s (1995) narration supports the idea that reporters are not only briefed, but that the theme of the story they are going to cover is well-known even before they exit the newsroom. Though Hind’s account directly captures the scene in respect of local news on an electronic medium it is no less a ritual true of all other news media. Hind recounts: “The basic theme of the story is generally known before the reporter leaves the newsroom. The interviews will fill in particulars, but theme is part and parcel of the decision to cover the story in the first place.” He continues, “...although a reporter is expected to come back with a story that is faithful to the storyline as assigned, details are left to his or her discretion.” “However,” Hinds adds “the story is often ‘framed’ in advance by the reporter’s view of political reality and by the way the story may have been framed in other news media” (p. 134).

Similarly, reporters on foreign assignments are also well-briefed as to the theme and frame of the reports they are expected to send in or come back with. Such reports, in Hind’s words, must be *‘faithful to the storyline as assigned.’* Though, the storyline at issue here is not anything sinister but that the tone and structure of the story must be congruent with the philosophy and editorial policy of the particular news media outlet, which the reader or customer is accustomed to and therefore, expects. However, besides such briefings from assignment or superior officers and perhaps counsel from experienced colleagues, a very important source of information for any western journalist travelling to a foreign country like Nigeria for the very first time is the official travel guides usually issued by western countries. In the case of the United Kingdom, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly issues travel guides

about Nigeria. Such guides, though meant to inform and help travellers prepare for their journey, constitute policy statements for the mere fact that they are issued by an authorized government department. Though the FCO regularly updates its travel guide, the central theme in respect of Nigeria is fairly constant as a close observation of the guide spanning a period of three years (2008 – 2011) has shown. An excerpt of the latest amendment to the guide as at 6/10/2011 reads:

*Localised outbreaks of civil unrest can occur at short notice. You are advised to avoid large crowds, demonstrations and obvious political gatherings. Trouble on the streets can be spontaneous, and can quickly lead to violence...Violent street crimes e.g. muggings, kidnappings, car-jackings and especially armed robberies continue at high levels in the south of the country. The prevailing situation even in comparatively safe areas of Lagos can change quickly, with periodic reports of street and car-related crimes. [...]Foreign nationals are frequently defrauded by scam artists. The scams come in many forms, and can pose great financial loss to victims... (UK's FCO, 2011).*

As an important policy framework, the travel guide on Nigeria serves very significant purposes at representational level. First, it conditions the mind of the traveller as it has successfully defined the West African nation in certain ways. Second, the authority-given definitions become the parameter by which whatever the traveller-journalist encounters on the field is measured especially because the issuing authority, as Hall et al (1988) have argued, is an accredited, legitimate and trusted official source. This scenario explains in part what is meant by the idea of society defining for us what we are yet to see or experience. Walter Lippmann (1922) puts it succinctly:

*We do not see and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture (p. 81).*

Although there are security issues in Nigeria as in any other nation, the genuine fear for personal safety has led many foreign journalists in such Third World countries as Nigeria to seek refuge in what van Ginneken (cited in Karim 2000: 179) calls “expatriates communities consisting of western media and business people, embassy and intelligence staff, NGO humanitarian and aid workers.” This herding together creates a closed community, which in turn fuels closed interpretations of events that the folks back home get to hear via journalistic and diplomatic dispatches (van Ginneken 1998:113).

Besides the fact that the journalist has been thoroughly schooled by his or her news media organisation in respect of what kind of product (news) the customer (reader) desires, the fact that foreign journalists live in closed communities thus explains one vital reason why there’s constant reproduction of ‘facts,’ which in turn reinforces old stereotypes or what Louw (2005) terms recycling of “a distorted view of the ‘Other’ (p.193).” Also important is the fact that a journalist who has been strongly advised by his country’s officials “*to avoid large crowds, demonstrations and obvious political gatherings,*” will most likely have a distorted interpretation of events due to lack of proper intimate interactions with the subjects of his reports. In this respect, the possibility of applying old explanations to new issues is endless.

However, besides the crucial FCO warning, another significant factor in the construct of Nigeria as news in the British press is traceable to sources. Sources, as noted earlier, are hugely influential in defining the news. Indeed, news has no intrinsic value unless embedded in a meaningful context which organizes and lends it coherence (London 1993). Shanto Iyengar (1991) explains that there are contextual cues in the

news, which readers are sensitive to when they reason about national (and in this case, international) affairs. Their explanations of issues like terrorism or poverty, Iyengar adds, are critically dependent upon the particular reference points furnished in media presentations. Sources are crucial in the process of creating or organising these reference points.

Therefore, to unpack how the reference points embedded in the representation of Nigeria are created, this chapter examines the major sources quoted in each of the story published on Nigeria by the five UK samples during the period under study. Thus this researcher embarks on this exercise by interrogating the sources embedded in the coverage of the sample newspapers under two distinct but related categories: informative coverage and evaluative coverage. While informative coverage refers to items which are meant to give information though the concept of neutrality in news has been flawed (van Ginneken 1998, Hall 1981; see also Weaver 1972; Roger 1991), evaluative coverage captures items clearly meant to persuade readers to follow a particular direction. Grouped under informative coverage are news stories including sports, entertainment and other soft contents usually promoted as being apolitical but have been found to harbour ideological traits (Curran et al. 1980: 288-305). Conversely, features, signed opinions, editorials and letters fall under evaluative coverage.

This researcher adopts the simple method of accounting for the primary or major source used in a particular story or article. Thus where the major or primary source of a story or article is the Nigerian government or a Nigerian government official or citizen, such a source is coded as 'Nigerian (N).' But where the major or primary

source is British, European, western or foreign citizen, such a source is classified as ‘external (E)’ and where a story is based on anonymous, unnamed or a secondary source, such a source is identified and coded under ‘blind sources (B).’ The idea of focusing on sources is to identify which voices largely shape the construction of Nigeria as news in the British press.

### **3. Nigeria: *Whose voice is in the news?***

Between 1997 and 1999, and as indicated by the discussion in chapter four, the five newspaper samples pay considerable attention to democracy in their coverage of Nigeria. The attention given to democracy is justified by the fact that Nigeria, as mentioned earlier, has had a debilitating political logjam and was then returning to democratic governance. Thus, focus on democracy waned between 2000 – 2002 and 2003 – 2007 as attention is directed towards other issues. However, the interrogations of the distribution of sources used by the five samples in their construction of Nigeria as news reveals that majority of the sources who define Nigeria are non-Nigerians (see Table 10 below).

During the entire 10-year period under study, the five samples give access to a total of 876 Nigerian sources compared to 2,102 European or foreign sources and 149 blind sources. This means only 28 percent of the primary sources who play a pivotal role in the definition of Nigeria are Nigerians. By contrast, majority of the voices or 67 percent of the sources, which define Nigeria as news during the period under study, are foreigners or Europeans while blind sources otherwise known as anonymous or unnamed sources constitute the remaining five percent. Similarly, a breakdown of the characteristics of sources accessed by the five samples shows that while there are 160

Nigerian sources or 23 percent of the total haul between 1997 and 1999, European or foreign sources accessed during the same period are 458 representing 67 percent. Only 65 or 10 percent of the total haul is attributed to blind sources. In general, the distribution of sources is similar amongst the samples during the three periods under study. The pendulum of sources' preferences tilts heavily towards the use of European and foreign sources. Though this is understandable as the news outlets would most likely rely on 'expert' sources close to base it is however of considerable significance in how mediated realities are framed. Also significant is the fact that all the samples rely less on blind sources, which does not only underscores concern for factual reporting but also highlights the strive for professionalism on their part.

Table 12: **Distribution of sources in the five UK samples**

(Percentages refer to the proportion of coverage during the different periods)

<b>The Samples</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>B</b>
1997-1999	160 (23%)	458 (67%)	65 (10%)
2000-2002	230 (27%)	586 (70%)	28 (3%)
2003-2007	486 (30%)	1058 (66%)	56 (4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>2102</b>	<b>149</b>
Percentage % ( <b>3127</b> )	28%	67%	5%

Overall, there are a few differences in the distribution of sources across the periods under study. In the first period, 1997-1999, there are more records of news items classified under informative coverage than evaluative (see Tables 13, 14 and 15 below). As mentioned in the previous chapters, *Financial Times* with highest numbers of stories offer more access to Nigerian sources even though it still gives twice as much access to European or foreign sources. *Daily Telegraph's* records has zero coverage during the period thus supporting the theory that Conservative news media outlets are less likely to have interest in the coverage of Africa.

Although the pattern observed in the distribution of sources is similar across the periods under study, it is significant that access given to Nigerian sources in the category of items that constitute evaluative coverage is minute. Nigerian sources are almost entirely not represented in the powerfully influential opinion articles segment of evaluative coverage. Though a couple of Nigerian voices such as that of Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka and writer Chinua Achebe, are prominent in most of the coverage, it is in letters' column that the few opinions allowed Nigerians found accommodation. For example, the complaints by the then Nigerian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Prince Bola Ajibola, about UK authorities' insufficient efforts at repatriating Nigerian money laundered in British banks and titled: 'Stolen funds may soon be lost forever,' was published by *Financial Times* of February 6, 2001 in the 'Letters to the editor' column. Similarly, the rebuttal by four Nigerians (Femi Awotesu, Bunmi Ajayi, Segun Faniran and Barry Osilaja) and titled: 'Nigerians not all fraudsters,' was also published on March 11, 2003 by *Financial Times* on the letters' page.

**Table 13: Distribution of coverage in the individual UK samples**  
(Percentages refer to the proportion of coverage during the different periods)

Total per sample														
		Informative Coverage 1997-1999				Evaluative Coverage 1997 - 1999				Grand Total		Percentage %		
		Total	N	E	B	Total	N	E	B	Inf + Eva	N	E	B	
1	The Times	26	3	15	8	14	3	3	8	40	6	18	16	
2	Telegraph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
3	F/Times	300	97	179	24	246	12	226	8	546	109	405	32	
4	The Guardian	31	16	13	2	20	9	8	3	51	25	21	5	
5	Independent	32	16	6	10	14	4	8	2	46	20	14	12	
	Total	389	132	213	44	294	28	245	21	683	160	458	65	
	Percentage %		<b>34.0</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>11.3</b>		<b>10.0</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>		<b>23.0</b>	<b>67.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	

However, the fact that the samples overwhelmingly accessed foreign sources did not only draw attention to whose voice dominates the news about Nigeria, it also brings into focus the issue of how journalists select which source to access. There are diverse sources even in respect of international news and such sources, who may be experts on foreign affairs or governmental relations, specialists in international trade and commerce, relevant top politicians or interested advocacy or pressure groups including non-governmental organizations, use different strategies to court the journalists. Bell (1991) suggests that the purpose of such strategies as ‘pre-existing text’ is to encourage the journalists to see the world through their (the sources’) eyes (p: 57). Several studies on sources-media relations (see Tiffen 1989; Eldridge 1993; Keeble 1994; Negrine 1996; Niblock 1996; Wilson 1996; Franklin 1997 and McNair 1998) have offered varied explanations for why journalists select one source over the other. But Ericson et al. (1987) pinpoints ‘vocabulary of precedents,’ as a very important factor in choosing sources.

Ericson and his colleagues (1987: 348) explain ‘vocabulary of precedents’ thus: “The ongoing articulation of precedent in the working culture of journalists provides them with recognition knowledge (that this is a story of a particular type), procedural knowledge (how to get on with contacting and using human and documentary sources), and accounting knowledge (how to frame and formulate the story; how to justify the chosen approach to others).” Allan (1991:78) contends that the “vocabulary of precedents” thus profoundly shapes who the journalists speak to, what they talk about, and how such discussion is represented. Therefore, even if the journalists writing for the five samples are desirous of accessing local sources in Nigeria, they

**Table 14: Distribution of coverage in the individual UK samples**  
(Percentages refer to the proportion of coverage during the different periods)

<b>Total per sample</b>													
		<b>Informative Coverage 2000-2002</b>				<b>Evaluative Coverage 2000 - 2002</b>				<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>		
		Total	N	E	B	Total	N	E	B	Inf + Eva	N	E	B
1	The Times	20	12	6	2	11	4	2	5	31	16	8	7
2	The D/Telegraph	6	1	5	0	3	1	0	2	9	2	5	2
3	F/Times	444	122	318	4	317	72	233	12	761	194	551	16
4	The Guardian	10	3	5	2	7	3	4	0	17	6	9	2
5	The Independent	19	10	8	1	7	2	5	0	26	12	13	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>Percentage %</b>		<b>29.7</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>1.8</b>		<b>23.8</b>	<b>70.7</b>	<b>5.5</b>		<b>27.0</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>

**Table 15: Distribution of coverage in the individual UK samples**  
(Percentages refer to the proportion of coverage during the different periods)

<b>Total per sample</b>													
		<b>Informative Coverage 2003-2007</b>				<b>Evaluative Coverage 2003 - 2007</b>				<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>		
		Total	N	E	B	Total	N	E	B	Inf + Eva	N	E	B
1	The Times	34	12	14	8	15	1	5	9	49	13	19	17
2	The D/Telegraph	23	16	5	2	12	1	4	7	35	17	9	9
3	F/Times	828	282	528	18	600	141	453	6	1428	423	981	24
4	The Guardian	30	7	18	5	23	8	14	1	53	15	32	6
5	The Independent	31	15	16	0	4	3	1	0	35	18	17	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>Percentage %</b>		<b>35.1</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>		<b>23.5</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>		<b>30.0</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>

appear constrained due to a couple of distinct but related factors. One, fear of safety in a place the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has classified as dangerous and strongly warned against, constitutes the first barrier. Second, the herding together of journalists in expatriate communities creates its own discourse. The nuance of that discourse supports the idea of ‘vocabulary of precedents.’ Third is what Gans (1979) terms ‘geographic and social proximity of the sources to the journalists’ (p: 117). These constraints have a huge effect on the massive difference between Nigerian and

European or Foreign sources as both the journalists and the media outlets would routinely access sources that are socially and geographically close by.

As Tables 13, 14 and 15 show, though there's a marginal increase in the access given to Nigerian sources, which stands at 30 percent in 2003 – 2007 from 23 percent in 1997 – 1999 and 27 percent in 2000 – 2002, it is insufficient to create any significant shift or act as a counterbalance on the dominant voices in the news on Nigeria. This is so because news itself, as Fishman (1980) has argued, plays a crucial part in the process of normative order. Journalists, as earlier mentioned, do not just report any event as news. They do so only when they are satisfied that the event fits into news discourse. Ericson et al. (1987) put it succinctly: "Journalists believe something is reportable when they can visualize it in terms of news discourse" (p. 348). The process of visualization, Allan (1991) posits, does not constitute a reflection of the world out there. Rather, he explains further, it works to reaffirm a hegemonic network of conventionalized rules by which social life is to be interpreted (p. 87).

Therefore, the choice of sources as well as the frame of the story is part and parcel of the journalists' visualization process from the onset. In respect of international news, geo-politics plays a crucial role as each region of the world has its own place in the scheme of things. Journalists are aware of this fact. Policy frameworks such as the FCO travel guides serve as constant reminder of the huge cultural and social differences between the developed and the developing worlds. Since it is common sense for any reporter to know this; the knowledge of the status of each region thus creeps into the visualization process.

Amidst claims of objective reporting, journalists often dismiss connections between regional influence and the frame of news but some studies have brought the link between the two into sharper focus. For instance, a DFID research project titled **‘Viewing the world: A study of British television coverage of developing countries,’** published in 2000, corroborates the influence of geo-politics in media coverage. Though the project’s focus is limited to television coverage, its findings are no less instructive. The project finds that “overall, the structure of attention of British television news is skewed towards the richer and more economically powerful countries.” To further illustrate its points, the report states: “For instance in Asia, coverage focused on the south-east Asian ‘tiger economies’ rather than the poorer nations like Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia, Bhutan and Nepal...” and, most importantly, it adds “Most of the poorest and least developed African countries in the Sahel and across central sub-Saharan Africa were not mentioned. The exceptions to this related most noticeably to political conflict and natural disasters.”

With regards to television, Peter Gill has also come to similar conclusion. Television producers, in Peter Gill’s experience (cited in Harrison and Palmer 1986), have an inbuilt resistance to programmes about the Third World: “There is a weary and unjustified cynicism about public interest in this issue that is widespread within the media. I think a lot of television producers underestimate the genuine public concern and interest in this area” (p. 138). However, this skewed pattern of reportage is not limited to television. With media mogul Rupert Murdoch once quoted as saying, according to Colin Legun, that the Third World doesn’t sell newspapers (Harrison and Palmer 1986: 77), it is clearly indicative of the nature of policy directive in operation at the newspaper outlets within his group and more so, the kind of sources such

newspapers would routinely accessed. Nevertheless, in spite of the news media's preference for a particular kind of stories, as the DFID project has stated, the individual samples, as this study has shown; sometimes give more access to Nigerian sources than European sources. Table 13 reveals that both *The Guardian* and *The Independent* access more Nigerian sources between 1997 and 1999, even though the difference is too marginal to make any appreciable dent on the source distribution configuration. Also, *The Times* and *The Independent* give more access to Nigerian sources, as Table 14 shows, between 2000 and 2002 while *The Telegraph* records a higher access for Nigerian sources as against European or Foreign sources in the 2003-2007 period of the study as Table 15 shows.

However, the general lack of interest in the coverage of Third World countries by western media necessitates their passive pursuit or low utilization of sources from that region of the world. Thus the preference for non-Nigerian sources ensures that the voices ringing out loud in the construction of Nigeria as news belongs to foreigners whose perspectives are not only culturally at variance with Nigerians but are mostly in tandem with the long-established pre-colonial and colonial construction of Nigeria. Such circumstance best explains why most texts on Africa in the west are mostly in the negative light (De Beer 2005: 601) in spite of strides by many African countries to be more open and democratic (Hunter-Gault 2002) in recent times.

#### **4. Sources: *The discourse of Colonial texts and NGOs***

In his discussion of the principal sources drawn upon by newspaper journalists in New Zealand, Bell (1991) highlights the significance of what Allan (1999) terms 'copy ready' materials. 'Copy ready,' Allan notes, is an easy option for the time-

pressured journalist (p. 75). Therefore, Bell (1991: 59) explains that a 'copy ready' material which is obviously marginal in terms of news value may be selected ahead of a much more newsworthy story which still needed to be researched and written up from scratch. If there are certain sectors of the public who are adept at providing the journalists with such copy ready materials, they are the advocacy and pressure groups or civil society groups in the realm of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Non-governmental organizations are thus a constant and powerful news sources. The success of these organisations in getting their messages across, Allan (1999) posits, is tied to their capacity to routinize their own copy in line with the needs of the time-pressured journalist (p. 74-5). Therefore, the relationship between the NGOs as a news source and the journalist becomes one of mutual dependence. When the journalist thus has space to fill, he invariably turns to the readied copy from this interested source.

In terms of international news, there are various NGOs doing social and humanitarian works on Africa and in Africa as well as in most of the other Third World countries. As mentioned earlier, the NGOs' senior expat staffs like the foreign reporters or correspondents, form part of the closed communities of expatriates in Third World capitals. As such their interpretation of events and issues follows the typical 'Othering' pattern. Notwithstanding, because these NGOs are generally considered as neutral, and more so, understand the need to couch their humanitarian messages in copy-ready format, they function as the source of a substantial amount of news generated on foreign countries. For example, the International Red Cross, a well-known global NGO, play a crucial role in informing the outside world about the plights of Biafrans during the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970. Harrison and Palmer

(1986) underscore the role played by this acclaimed NGO in bringing the abysmal effects of the Nigerian civil war particular on women and children to the knowledge of the world through the news media.

Charlie Beckett (2009) also recounts how during the 2008 Myanmar disaster, the international health charity Merlin gathered news materials, which was broadcast on the BBC. According to Beckett, Merlin sent Jonathan Pearce, its communications officer, to gather material and make videos for a film for the UK public broadcaster. “This film,” Beckett contends, “was a classic piece of networked journalism. The NGO did the news gathering while the media organization provided the editing and a platform. Neither could have secured the resultant material and impact without the other” (p. 4). These are evident instances of NGOs influential role in making the news. Congruent with that role, as noted above, is the widespread belief that the NGOs are trustworthy because they are non-partisan. Appreciable as that role or their interventions might be, they are far from being a disinterested party as far as the news agenda is concerned.

Therefore, the question of neutrality regarding NGOs’ intervention in the news agenda is gradually coming into sharper focus. In their essay titled: “NGOs as newsmakers: A news series on the evolving news ecosystem,” Monroe Price, Libby Morgan and Kristina Klinkforth (2009) note that “the NGOs have their own agendas” (see *‘NGOs and the News: Exploring a Changing Communication Landscape,’ a part of collaborative workshop sessions organised by the Center for Global Communications Studies (CGCS) at the Annerberg School, University of Pennsylvania and the Neiman Journalism Lab at the Harvard University in the United*

*States for further details*). Price and his colleagues observe that the NGOs are, in particular, “becoming increasingly involved in the gathering and delivery of international news, using a range of communication channels and technologies” thus corroborating Beckett’s (2009) account. Indeed, new communication technologies and, more especially, the social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter afford the NGOs increasing latitude to influence the news. This is in addition to their adoption of various communication strategies aimed at providing easy option for the time-pressured journalist, as Bell (1991) and Allan (1999), have pointed out.

Thus the NGOs are not just actively involved in shaping international news; they are invariably linked to the representation of Africa and the Third World in the western news media. In doing their humanitarian works, the NGOs often plan campaigns to elicit donor’s sympathy. Such campaigns, embedded with telling texts and catchy images, are carefully framed into copy ready news structure, which reinforce rather than challenge certain misconceptions. By influencing the publication of such copy, the NGOs -as news sources- make an indelible mark on the process of media representation. Once published, such texts and images, which are pure campaign materials become archival resources because they fit into pre-existing knowledge frame and thereafter get reproduced thus reinforcing certain pre-colonial image of Africa. For example, because distinctions are rarely made as to the exact location when discussing conflicts in Africa as Denselow has pointed out in chapter 4, or when campaigning for relief materials for the victims of such conflicts, the impression is created in the west that the whole of Africa is constantly engulfed in endless conflicts. Also, consistent with that belief is the reductionist approach to explain such conflicts away as tribal warfare based on primordial instinct. Berkeley (2001: 147) dismisses

such belief as baloney. Berkeley, a former human rights investigator who has covered African events for more than a decade for a number of American newspapers and magazines, argues that talk of ancient tribal hatreds ripping Africa asunder is a convenient short-hand often employed by western reporters who barely understand what the issues are.

Many critics claim the NGOs, in a bid to sustain donor's interest for their works, are partly responsible for the image of an Africa engulfed in endless crisis. Writing in *The Observer* of February 20, 2011, Ian Birrell says: "Journalists seeking stories look for death, decay and destruction while charities seeking donations reinforce the stereotypes with pictures of malnourished children and dying adults. Often, they work and travel together, reporters rarely subjecting charities to the level of scrutiny applied to other vital institutions." Their strategy creates donor fatigue as incessant campaigns fuels the assumptions that Africa's problems are insurmountable and as such, attempting to take action in resolving them, is a sheer waste of time and resources.

For example, Oxfam is already sensitising the public ahead of a possible food crisis in the Sahel region of West Africa in 2012. The charity ran the same campaign in 2005, 2008 and 2010 using the standard picture of starving African children. Save the Children, another popular NGO, which claims that it has been working in Africa since 1963, asserts that its work in Africa is "in response to the dire needs of African people." The organisation avers that its work has expanded to include different kinds of programmes throughout the continent even though it listed only 11 out of 54 African countries as locations of its work.

With such a huge area of coverage and millions of needy people, critics would rather these organisations concentrate on a particular part of the vast region and achieve sustainability rather than spreading scarce resources too thin without sustained positive effects. Also, the NGOs, no doubt, provide genuine and very important help to Africans, but their communication strategies inadvertently portray Africa as a malignant problem defying solutions, which is counter-productive. For example, in an article titled: “Stop trying to ‘Save’ Africa,” published in *The Washington Post* of July 15, 2007, Uzodinma Iweala decries the language used by the charities to describe Africa as being saved while noting that the west self-image in spite of its own problems is markedly different. Iweala points attention to the ‘Keep a Child Alive’ and ‘I am African’ ad campaigns, which feature portraits of primarily white, western celebrities with painted tribal marks on their faces above the insignia ‘I am African’ in bold letters with the message ‘help us stop dying’ below as an example of condescension. “Such campaigns,” he argues, “however well-intentioned, promote the stereotype of Africa as a black hole of disease and death.”

In the same vein, ceaseless campaigns for donations, which ignore frank explanations as to why previous programmes or interventions fail to meet set target, are a big part of the problems. Both the NGOs and, of course, the aid agencies take a reductionist approach to project failures. They blame ‘corruption’ in Africa. While acknowledging corruption as an impactful element, Carol Lancaster (1999) blames misdiagnosed problems mostly for poor performance records of NGOs and aid agencies in Africa. In her book, *Aid to Africa: So much to do, so little done*, Lancaster examines the impact of bureaucratic politics, special interest groups, and public opinion in aid-giving countries and the circumstances in the recipient region. Noting the difficulty in

designing appropriate programmes that address local socio-political conditions, she explains that a situation where the donor identifies, plans and implements a project with minimal input from the Africans themselves is a recipe for failure (1999: 224).

Consistent with this is the fact that often the voices involved in shaping the interventions as well as discourses on these issues are genuinely concerned about Africa but their efforts have attracted little success because their analyses and solutions tend towards remaking Africa in the image of Europe. *The Guardian* (19/02/2011) underlines the need to let Africans speak for themselves. Drawing conclusions from an event organized by the group ONE in Johannesburg, South Africa, where participants listened to African activists, entrepreneurs, students and business leaders talk of their continent, their mission and their vision, the newspaper notes in its editorial: “Here was a new set of 21st-century African storytellers. These were not victims. Their stories were ones of confidence, action, self-assertion, impatience, innovation, determination – and success.” Indeed, as Tables 12-15 have shown in respect of Nigeria (see also Figures 32 and 33 below), the voices shaping the news discourse on Africa have largely been foreign voices.

Figure 32

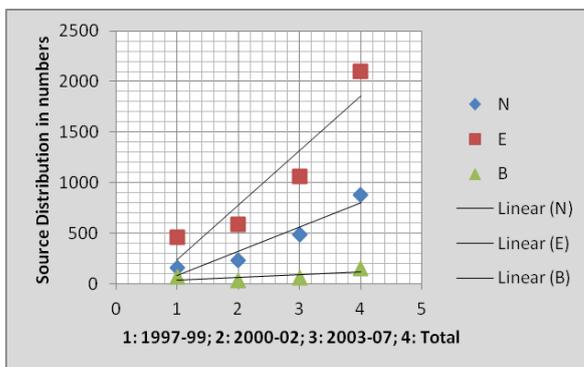
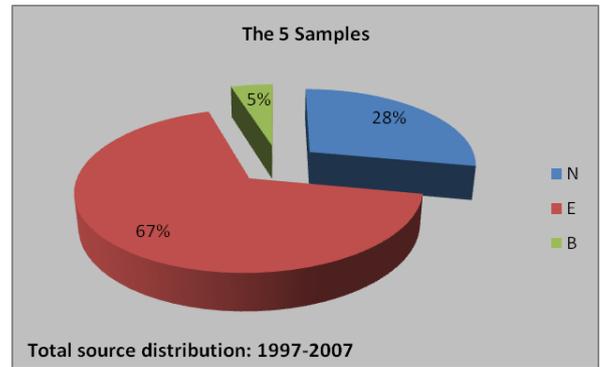


Figure 33



Correspondingly too, the debates about development in Africa have also been largely foreign dominated. The result of that approach so far has not been outstanding. Therefore, there's a possibility that the collective desire to see sustainable growth in Africa could be achieved if, as *The Guardian* editorial has noted, more African sources are given access to speak for their region in the news.

### **5. Between *Informative* and *Evaluative* Coverage: *More news, muted voices***

As mentioned earlier, informative coverage includes, as far as this study is concerned, news, sports, entertainment and all other soft news contents. Evaluative coverage, on the other hand, includes feature articles, signed opinions, editorials, letters and all other current affairs contents. Though the ideological or subjective nature of the latter is not in doubt, the former is presumed to be neutral, or is promoted as being apolitical, as Allan (1999) has argued, but many researchers have pin-pointed informative coverage as the locale where 'ideological significance is most successfully concealed and therefore demands most analysis' (Curran et al. 1980: 305). Furthermore, the presumed neutrality or objectivity of informative coverage reinforces the dominant political consensus (Allan 1999: 93) essentially because it is assumed to be a reflection of reality.

Although studies by such scholars as Trew (1979), Love and Morrison (1989), Bell (1991) and Fowler (1991), which assessed editorials, feature articles including op-ed and opinion columns, have critiqued the notion that these subjective or interpretative materials help to underwrite or counterbalance the objectivity of news accounts, many a journalist still hold the news accounts they transmit to be apolitical. The journalists,

argues Allan (1999), 'may instead be understood to be transmitting or providing ideological construction of contending truth claims about reality' (p. 4).

However, the distribution of sources by the five samples under investigation shows consistently that they rely, for the most part, more on European sources whether the coverage is informative or evaluative. It is also noticeable that there are more voices in the informative cadre than the evaluative cadre during the three periods under investigation (see Tables 12-15 and Figures 32 and 33 above for details). Thus the fact that informative coverage is consistently higher can easily lead to the assumption that the coverage is balanced as one is 'neutral' while the other acts as its counterbalance. Whereas the one assumed 'neutral,' as Curran et al. (1980) have observed, does harbour ideological undertones. Similarly, the more news reports there are, the more the voices of the subject of the reports are muted as majority of the sources accessed in both coverage categories are people of similar cultural background.

Hence, unpacking the nature of primary or major sources accessed is necessary as it does not only reveal that one set of sources is over-accessed to the detriment of the other, it also signifies how the news media reinforce the dominant discourse in geopolitics through the news. Conversely, it can be argued that the disparity between Nigerian and European sources is traceable to enthusiasm of the sources to make their voices heard. As Gans (1979) has noted, enthusiasm on the part of sources is significant in journalist-sources relations. He explains that "sources become eager, either because they benefit from the widespread and legitimated publicity the news media supply or because they need the news media to carry out their duties" (p. 117).

Thus critics contend that since neither the Africa Union nor the Nigerian government, in this particular circumstance, or any other Africa-focused socio-cultural organization is eager to constructively engage in this sort of proactive media activities on behalf of Africa or Nigeria, the NGOS are left to occupy the available space.

For instance, “there’s no Africa House in London that could advance Africa’s perspectives on issues or where journalists could go for resource materials on Africa,” argues Nick Cull, a professor of public diplomacy at Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA during an interview. As pointed out by Gans (1979), journalists are not averse to sources coming to them. They are equally receptive to ‘copy-ready’ materials from sources (Bell 1991). Therefore, as far as there is no proof that the Africa Union or Nigeria has been denied opportunity to explore these windows, some critics argue, there’s really no basis for complaints, though others assert that the cost involved in getting media access is far too exorbitant for poor African countries.

Jonathan Clayton, *The Times* correspondent in South Africa, concedes that lack of resources is a part of the problems. “At the moment,” Clayton says during an interview, “Africa is responsible for just 3% of global trade. It is not part of international trading fraternity. Thus it is a marginal story now.” However, Clayton who has reported Africa for almost 25 years dismisses complaints of lack of access to western news media by Africans. He argues that Africans must take responsibility for their own continent. According to him, “I don’t think it is really up to the west and the western media to report Africa. It is up to Africans to take up ownership of their own continent and report it themselves.”

The issue, Clayton contends, is linked with the democratic credentials of most of the African governments. “Why is it,” he asks, “that there are no good newspapers in Africa reporting these things?” Clayton continues “It is because as soon as they do, they are closed down by African governments themselves.” Though African leaders of post 2010 era are gradually making efforts to follow the path of responsible and accountable leadership, the old guard are indeed afflicted with AIDS, which stands here for Acquired Integrity Deficiency Syndrome. And as such they ignorantly impoverish their own people by mismanaging their country’s resources and siphoning their loots abroad as the case of the late Nigerian military dictator, General Sani Abacha has shown. Such corrupt leaders are intolerant of the mildest form of criticism.

Thus they respond to local agitation against their penchant for mismanagement and looting with repression of the opposition, which includes closure of news media outlets and universities. They jail labour leaders and the vocal members of the progressives who usually represent the critical segment of the society. While the consequence of such brutal repression has been insecurity, violence, disruption of economic activities as well as exile of many professionals including top rate academics, the conflicts thus generated have been good copies for many a foreign journalist. Though consistent focus on such conflicts by western news media thus reinforces certain constructs of Africa, critics argue that the nature of news does not present the journalist any alternative.

Jerry Timmins of the BBC’s Africa Region concedes that the news media do focus on conflicts. Timmins, who has had over 30 years experience with the BBC World

Service, says: "It's actually true that the BBC has covered a lot of disasters, famines, wars and breaches of human rights, in all parts of Africa." But he insists that the "BBC on a whole has reported what has happened; it's not making the stuff up." Similarly, Clayton agrees that media coverage, which continually focuses on conflicts in Africa, reinforces stereotypes. "There's no doubt about that," he says, "but at the same time, these things are happening." Clayton explains further that the nature of news makes it expedient for the journalist to look for the abnormal, the disagreements or the conflicts. "We don't write stories about planes that don't crash;" he argues, "we write stories about planes that crashed. We don't write stories about politicians who are not corrupt and hard-working.... We don't write stories about doctors who don't kill their patients; we write stories about doctors who killed their patients. We don't write stories about people who don't rape their children; we write stories about people who rape their children. ...This is the reality."

The notion of the nature of news is very significant in news discourse. It brings into sharper focus Hartley's (1982) thesis on the use of news. In his work, *Understanding News*, Hartley underlines three distinct but related points on news and its purpose that is relevant to this discussion. First, whether news reports events which are meaningful in themselves. Second, whether news does 'translate' the events into its own meaning system. And third, who benefits most from this translation of events. To drive home his points, Hartley further asks "why does a society like ours need it (news) and invest such a large amount of money and prestige in it? What is the use of news?" (1982: 8). Indeed, the news culture ensures that news renders accounts of events. News certainly makes an event meaningful though that account may not necessarily be the exact reality of the event. Jean Baudrillard (1994) renders news account of an event as

*simulacrum*: the image of an image. Baudrillard's contention is that a media report of an event is usually a corrupted version or form of the real event (cited in Allan 1998: 25). The news account, contends Allan (1999: 87), far from simply reflecting the reality of an event, is actually working to construct a codified definition of what should count as the reality of the event. Hall and his colleagues (1978) have also come to a similar conclusion. News of an event will make sense, they argue, only when it can be situated within 'a range of known social and cultural identifications' or 'maps of meaning' about the social world. An important passage from their work, which brings the issue into proper perspective, is worth quoting at length:

*The social identification, classification and contextualization of news events in terms of these background frames of reference is the fundamental process by which the media make the world they report on intelligible to readers and viewers. This process of 'making an event intelligible' is a social process – constituted by a number of specific journalistic practices, which embody (often only implicitly) crucial assumptions about what society is and how it works. One such background assumption is the consensual nature of society: the process of significations – giving social meanings to events – both assumes and helps to construct society as a consensus. We exist as members of one society because - it is assumed – we share a common stock of knowledge with our fellow men (and women): we have access to the same 'maps of meaning.' Not only are we able to manipulate these 'maps of meaning' to understand events, but we have fundamental interests, values and concerns in common, which these maps embody or reflect. (Hall et al. 1978: 54-5)*

Consensus implies that there's an ordered world of meaning and values, which underpins the journalist's efforts to codify unfamiliar, 'problematic' realities into familiar, comprehensible definitions of how the world works (Allan 1999: 88). Thus the process of codification allows the definitions, interpretations and inferences of the powerful to be embedded in the news. It is news, argues Hartley (1982) that

determines what it is that the event means – its meaning results from the features of the sign-system and the context in which it is uttered and received (p. 15). Therefore, news serves the purpose of power within national boundary and at the international levels; it legitimates the status-quo, by processing the ideology of the dominant powers in geo-politics as common sense. This does not only explain the significance of the idea of the news centres and the peripheries — although new news and media centres, outside of the original western conclave, have started emerging — it also underscores the reason for imbalance in international news flow.

To properly explore the idea of imbalance in international news, it is pertinent to return to Hartley's (1982: 8) questions: "why does a society like ours need news and invest such a large amount of money and prestige in it? What is the use of news?" First of all, news provides us with the information we need to understand the world around us. Michael Schudson (1995) recognizes the power of news and explains the source of that power thus: "The news gains power not in its direct impact on audiences but in the belief, justified in viable democracies, that the knowledge of the citizens can from time to time be effective." "The power of the press," Schudson continues, "grows in a political culture characterized by this belief" (p: 21). Hence, there's enormous power in the news also because the news confers on news-workers the authority to make a claim on the definition of reality. Though the news may not tell people what to think, it is powerfully instrumental in telling people what to think about (Cohen 1963: 13).

Thus, the news has tremendous impact on shaping public opinion as reflected in the ways the news media were used to galvanise public support for the Iraqi war (see

Robinson 2002). Also, if as Sir Winston Churchill said during his speech at Harvard University on September 6, 1943, “the empires of the future are the empires of the mind,” then no social institution is more equipped than the news media to the building and sustenance of such empires. German newspaper, *Berliner Tageblatt* puts it succinctly when it says of UK-based news agency, Reuters, in its September 1918 comment: “Mightier and more dangerous than fleet or army is Reuter” (cited in Mankekar 1978: 22). However, Sir Roderick Jones, Chief Executive Officer of Reuters has a fitting answer to Hartley’s questions. He says: “...Reuter’s news in some form or another finds its way without a single exception, into every country in the world – literally from China to Peru... I do not think there is any other factor that has been consistently working directly and indirectly throughout that period (60 years) with such effect for the advancement of British influence<sup>14</sup>.”

It is obvious from the foregoing why “a society like ours needs the news and invests large amount of money and prestige in it” (Hartley 1982: 8). News, as Molotch and Lester have said, is not a reflection of a world ‘out there’ but a product of the ‘practices’ of those who have the power to determine the experience of others (cited in Schudson 1991: 148). As Harrison and Palmer (1986: 3) have observed, Britain, for several reasons, is the hub of international news. Such position of enormous influence, particularly on the world stage, confers the powers to determine the experience of others. In the early days of the struggle over media space, Kent Cooper, the head of United States-based Associated Press, (AP) recognizes the *pros* and *cons* of these enormous powers. Taking a swipe at Reuter’s Sir Roderick, Cooper (1942: 32) responds: “Aside from the pursuit of wealth, his (Sir Roderick’s) policy was two-

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<sup>14</sup> -Sir Roderick Jones, the chief executive of Reuter speaking at the Institute of Journalists in London in 1930; (see Mankekar (1978) for details).

fold: to maintain British prestige abroad and to prevent other agencies such as AP from getting a foothold in Reuter's domain *so they could tell the news of all countries in their own way.*" Cooper's response highlights a key issue: that the news is told in a particular way. That particular way is tied to the culture of both the journalists and the sources accessed and this produces a huge effect on representation. Cooper insists that effect is negative, particularly on the distant 'Other.' He puts it thus: "international attitude have developed from the impressions and prejudices aroused by what the news agencies reported" (cited in Mankekar 1978: 20). But journalists hardly agree that cultural perspectives mix with meanings of the news account.

Highlighting journalists' dilemma over concerns on the types of event covered in respect of the Third World, Clayton says: "it is like we, in the western media, are damned if we do, and damned if we don't. If we don't cover the downside of these countries then we are accused of given these countries a clean slate by ignoring the problems they themselves or their elites have created and of being unnecessarily politically incorrect." Schudson's observation brings the dilemma into sharper focus. The journalist's act, which infuses the news accounts with meanings, is neither ill-motivated nor intentional. The news, Schudson posits, is produced by people who operate often unwittingly, within a cultural system, a reservoir of stored cultural meanings and pattern of discourse (1995: 14).

Consequently, these cultural meanings and pattern of discourse, no doubts, do have historical underpinnings especially because every society, as mentioned earlier, operate on consensus (Hallin 1986; Hall et al. 1978); and because of that societal consensus, which Hartley (1982: 3) renders as "an ordered world of meaning and

values” is imbibed from speech-making right from birth and built upon overtime, we take its meanings as natural. Anything that goes against those meanings already defined or, according to Walter Lippmann, ‘stereotyped for us’ by our society creates charged feelings of resistance. Lippmann (1922) puts it thus:

*Any disturbance of the stereotypes seems like an attack upon the foundations of the universe. It is an attack upon the foundation of our universe, and, where big things are at stake, we do not readily admit that there is any distinction between our universe and the universe (p.95).*

Thus both the journalist and his sources have their universe, with its own cultural values and upon which the language of their news depends. In that universe, Lippmann explains further, “*people and things have their well-known places, and do certain expected things*” (p.95). That universe is managed, or made sense of, argues Fowler (1991), by categorizing phenomena, including people (p. 2). Categorization, Fowler further adds, is a basis for practices of discrimination (p. 3).

## **6. Why the news is the way it is: *The insights of the interviewees***

This section shall apply the perspectives of the interviewees to enrich this study and, in so doing, address the issue raised in research question three, which is focused specifically on the major factors that influence or shape the representation of Nigeria in the UK news media. As Gillham (2005:160) has noted, “the essential character of writing up interview data is to weave a narrative which is interpolated with illustrative quotations.” Newson and Newson (1963) and Burghes and Brown (1995) have applied this technique in the past. Thus this section adopts this technique as the interviewees are allowed to speak for themselves while the researcher only provides

necessary linking materials simply to ensure continuity and underline the significance of the discussion.

Though interviewees agree that the representation of Nigeria in UK news media is far from being flattering, they offer different explanations for why it is so. Jerry Timmins, head of Africa and the Middle East region of the BBC World Service, attributes the representation to media outlets' desire to reflect the true picture of Africa rather than anything sinister. "If news organisations are to reflect the true Africa," Timmins explains, "they have to reflect both sides...it's a set of mixed pictures." What Timmins means by both sides is not just the diversity of the continent or Nigeria, for instance, but the social dichotomy in most parts of Africa where one part is serene and the other is in turmoil. "It is a set of mixed pictures," he says, "because if you go to one part of the country [Nigeria], you're extremely impressed by what is going on and when you go another part of the same country, you see a huge difference."

Jonathan Dimbleby, a high-profile journalist and TV presenter, believes the problem has to do with reporting, which is done without context. "When we report Africa, [a] very diverse [continent]," Dimbleby begins, "we rarely offer context." Dimbleby qualifies his assertion by exonerating specialist writers from the misdeed of writing about Africa out of context. He also underscores the points that most of the reportage on Africa is not factually incorrect. He puts the issue thus: "what we are reporting in the west is not untrue in itself. But since it is out of any context, the images that are left powerfully in the mind, not just on television but also in the print media and radio as well, are very acute, very sharp, often very pungent, and often very harsh."

Jonathan Clayton, *The Times* correspondent in South Africa who has covered Africa for almost 25 years, agrees that media coverage reinforces stereotypes. “Obviously, media coverage reinforces stereotypes, there’s no doubt about that,” he says and adds, “but at the same time, these things are happening.” Clayton argues that such stereotypical coverage is not unique to Africa and contends that the nature of news leaves western media little option. “The same problem is encountered by countries like China.” Clayton argues. “The image given of China [in the western media] is that of pollution, child-labour, drug smuggling, people working for more than 14 hours a day etc.... that’s not fair either. So, it is not a unique problem to Africa. That is number one. Secondly, we have to look at the nature of news itself.”

The nature of news, Clayton argues, means that the media focus attention on the ‘man-bites-dog’ definition of news. Clayton puts it thus: “...because of the nature of news. We don’t write stories about planes that don’t crash; we write stories about planes that crashed. We don’t write stories about politicians who are not corrupt and hard-working....We don’t write stories about doctors who don’t kill their patients; we write stories about doctors who killed their patients. We don’t write stories about people who don’t rape their children; we write stories about people who rape their children....This is the reality!” Clayton contends that same is true of even domestic news in almost all countries. According to him: “All I’m saying is that by the very nature of news, even in domestic news, if you read the newspapers of almost any country, you get a very distorted views of what is really happening in that country.” Compared with other regions of the world, Africa’s image is the most distorted. Robin Denselow, who has done a lot of work on Africa for both the BBC and *The Guardian*, explains that Africa’s image is distorted for two different but related reasons. One is

because it is sometimes hard for reporters covering Africa for the first time to get things right. The other is problem-focused reporting.

Denselow explains the first reason: “When people go to Africa for the first time, of course, it’s very different to Europe; there’s always a clash between the politics, which are very chaotic and the people and the culture, which are very positive. I think it’s quite difficult to get that right.” The other reason, he says, is a bit complex. Denselow explains: “The problem, I suppose, is that people go somewhere when there’s a problem and there have been lots of problems in Africa but because of the expense of going there and the rest of it, they tend to ignore places where things are going on well. So, you have a problem in one country and assume that it’s the entire continent. For instance, when there was a problem in Yugoslavia, it was incorrect to assume that the whole of Europe was in chaos. It was not; it was just only a small part of Europe that was the problem. So, I think for the public and people, who haven’t been there, it is easy to get the wrong perception.”

Similarly, Michael Peel, former *Financial Times*’ correspondent in Nigeria says part of the problem is the fact that people take Africa as a block instead of a diverse continent of 53 countries and play up stereotypes in media texts. “There are certain stereotypes about African abroad and some parts of the media do clearly reinforce those things and play up to them.” Peel points out and adds, “People talk about Africa the way they wouldn’t talk about Europe. They talk about Africa, which has about 53 countries, as a block.” Peel exonerates himself from such practices arguing that his views are different because he had lived in and visited a couple of African countries. He says: “I suppose, especially because I have lived in Nigeria and travelled to a few

other countries on the continent, I try to look at things differently from the way some of the other people in the British media might look at it. Peel's argument is that first-hand experience of Africa by journalists is necessary to eradicate or minimise the circulation of distorted views about Africa. His argument coheres with Robin Denselow's.

Denselow explains that his experience of Africa was different because he was fortunate to have been exposed to Africa from a very young age. He opens a window into his long relationship with Africa and why he thinks he has a different attitude to a lot of people about Africa: "when I left school I had a year between leaving school and going to [the] university. So, my headmaster suggested that I went to Burundi to work in a refugee camp. I didn't really know anything about Africa at all and I didn't know anything about African politics. So, as an 18-year-old who hadn't really been out of England very much, I suddenly found myself in Burundi for a year looking after Tutsi refugees following the first attack in Rwanda. So, I just got absolutely fascinated by Africa. I thought it was fantastic, the people, the whole culture, politics and everything else. That's when I realised I knew nothing about it at all and I then travelled around a bit before I went to university."

Denselow continues: "I went down to Kenya and was involved in a car crash and had to go to hospital and recovered. It was Ok...I have a friend in Mombasa and he said, let's hitchhike to London. So, we hitchhiked from Mombasa back to England. We went across Kenya, Uganda and up to the whole of Sudan. We were given a lift by the Sudanese army going to the south. They went through villages and I was ignorant as I didn't even know there was a war going on there. It was quite crazy. When I got back,

I was determined to learn as much as I could. So, the first job I got when I left university, where I did African Studies and English, was with the BBC African Service. They gave me the job a week after I left university. So, I started going back to Africa straight away. So, I think my attitude to Africa is probably different from other people as I was really a huge enthusiast and wanted to find out more about it and enjoy going there.”

The BBC and *The Guardian* journalist concludes his personal story thus: “After that, I was very closely connected in a way, as I lived in a house that was the London HQ of a committee for independence in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea. Consequently, I was able to witness all the different liberation leaders or their supporters as they come into the house and I was there. It was quite interesting.” However, Denselow believes the image of Africa is changing fast because of its music and culture. “I think there’s fascinating interest in African music and culture. That has been very positive. I think the whole image of the continent has been improving a lot now...As a journalist, I went to Sierra-Leone, when it was horrible. I was in Rwanda during the killings, South Sudan, Darfur, Liberia and a lot of places, there were a lot of horrible things. At that time, it’s easy to get a depressing image of Africa. But at the same time, the cultural side is a reminder that there’s another Africa and hopefully one would get a chance to go back there on holiday and travel around when there aren’t as much problems...”

Denselow’s optimism about Africa’s improving image is yet to reflect in the coverage of western media. The coverage, Derin Mustapha, a current affairs commentator, says “is same old discourse reproduced with modern euphemisms. It is still dominated by

the so-called Africa's 4-Ds while the coverage of Nigeria specifically is corruption-focused." Some people in Nigeria have also argued (see p. 291-298) that such coverage is a deliberate campaign to diminish Nigeria. Eniola Bello, managing director of Lagos-based *Thisday* newspaper, sums up the thought of those Nigerians thus: "If God seeks the opinion of the western press," Bello says, "Nigeria would be destroyed like the Biblical Sodom." Clayton disagrees with such notions arguing that it is not the responsibility of the western press to polish Nigeria's image. Clayton says: "I don't think it is really up to the west and western media to report Africa. It is up to Africans to take up ownership of their own continent and report it themselves." Clayton thinks African elites living abroad often complain about their continent's image while they live in western capitals. "African intelligentsias don't like those things being talked about because they are offended by that image of their own continent," Clayton says and adds, "but why are they not doing something about it instead of living in Washington and elsewhere. Why are they not organizing newspapers and writing in magazines?"

The issue, Clayton contends, is linked with the democratic credentials of most African governments. "Why is it," he asks rhetorically, "that there are no good newspapers in Africa reporting these things?" Clayton continues, "It is because as soon as they do, they are closed down by African government themselves." Zenab Yessuf, a social-activist, corroborates Clayton's point. She argues that the blames for Nigeria's image problems should rest squarely on the laps of the country's leaders. "Fifty-one years," Yessuf argues (in reference to how long Nigeria has been independent), "is enough to correct whatever wrongs the British colonialists had committed." She further argues that "if countries such as India, China and Brazil, who were also colonised, could

have gotten over the trauma of colonialism, there's no reason for Nigeria to still be whining about its colonial past." Though Yessuf admits that there's sometimes racial and cultural condescension in the way the UK news media represent Nigeria, she believes it is a challenge for Nigeria to put its house in order.

Exploring the issue of whether the historical relationship between Britain and Nigeria plays a role in the way the UK news media represent Nigeria, Peel says it does to a certain extent: "I think to a large part of the media, there is this view of Nigeria and Africa in general as something to be patronised, as a recipient of aid." Pin-pointing the aid industry as a factor in this regard, Peel asserts: "There's also this sort of very tenacious strength with the aid industry, which I think is about the notion of 'let's just help them,' and this idea has led to charity, which is actually not kind of different from the missionary stuff or paternalism you saw during colonial times," but adds that "in terms of relationships today, I suppose it inevitably means that there are more Britain's writings about Nigeria than Nigerians writing about Britain." Clayton says such condescension could be true of some newspapers but not *The Times*: "Yes, there could be a legacy of condescension and misunderstanding. But I don't think it is strictly true of my own newspaper *The Times*, because they do try to move above that; maybe they are guilty of it sometimes. I think it is also true of newspapers like the *Daily Telegraph* as they are very condescending. They are old fashioned with imperial legacy which still pervades some of their reporting."

Dimbleby puts the issue in sharper focus: "I think there has been a sense of 'we were the masters.' Now, we are the wise men. These new kids on the block are doing quite well or not very well. Therefore, there would be an inevitable slight sense of

superiority and, therefore, patronizing Nigeria and other countries,” he says noting that there is now a gradual change: “But I think that is shifting and it’s shifting for generational reasons apart from anything else.” Nevertheless, Dimbleby thinks the media is partly to be blamed for the way people view Africa. He says: “It is our fault as communicators because we have created the environment in which people see Africa.” Dimbleby explains this point further: “there’s a presumption that people don’t want to watch programmes about Africa unless they are wild-life programmes, Safari-type programmes. That they don’t even want to watch programmes which deliver bad news about disasters because there’s a theory that people are weary of disasters and so there’s a reluctance therefore to engage with yet another disaster. That theory I think is false. But, in so far as things are, there’s some element of truth in it. It is our fault as communicators because we have created the environment in which people see Africa.”

That media coverage creates the way people see Africa is not due to any sinister agenda is explored in this discussion. Interviewees dismiss such notion. For instance in the BBC, Timmins says, it is impossible for anyone to instruct that a particular story be done in certain ways. “The cultural values of the BBC,” he contends, “are built around its editorial principles... It is inconceivable that a Director-General of the BBC will turn to any of its journalists and say ‘do this’ or ‘don’t do that,’ It is not just going to happen. And if it did happen, the Director-General would get a very rude reply. This isn’t like some state media in some parts of the world where you just get directed to do things. BBC is founded on its charter of independence and culture of that in the organisation is extremely profound...” Denselow corroborates Timmins’ assertion. “I have never been asked to change anything whether at the BBC or *The*

*Guardian*,” he says adding that both organisations are “very good news outlets to write for. So, I just write about the way I see things. I may be right or wrong. No one tells me what to do when I write about Africa or about anywhere else.” Peel echoes similar point: “one of the reasons I work for this newspaper is that I have certainly never been told, via proprietary interference, that I should cast the story in certain ways...and would be outraged if I was asked to do what you’re suggesting, which is let’s pick this up so as to make Nigeria look more corrupt. I mean that is not how it works in the *Financial Times*; I can’t speak for other papers, but that’s not how the FT operates.”

However, Timmins says news outlets need to engage in constant dialogue with the public to ensure that their coverage is good. “There is need to be a constant dialogue about whether the coverage is good enough or not...by engaging in dialogue with the public,” the BBC manager says. Engaging with the public is necessary if some of the stereotypes in media texts are to disappear. However, Timmins thinks the trends look better for Africa: “At the moment, there’s fundamental change happening in Africa generally. There’s enough data and information around now to show there’s a positive story to tell about Africa, the trends look better now more than, say five years ago.” In respect of Nigeria, the BBC manager says, “Well, as for Nigeria particularly, it’s an enormous and complex country. But it still has a massive issue with corruption; very huge issue and that affects a lot of people’s perception of Africa.” Timmins thinks the perception of Nigeria would change if its government embraces openness and transparency: “Honestly, I think there’s a lot the Nigerian government can do in terms of learning how to deal with the media and communicating with the people... the

electorates about what it is doing...as well as embrace accountability and transparency.”

Peel also believes that the perception of Nigeria would change if certain result-oriented policies were pursued as it has happened in such countries as India. Peels says “India is also a former British colony. At the moment, India is clearly changing before our very eyes. It is now a global player economically. I think it is important to find policy initiatives that would encourage individual Nigerians to grow businesses and play at the global level. That would implicitly change the perception of Nigeria.”

Dimbleby also canvasses openness, equitable distribution of resources and the rule of law as panacea for Nigeria’s problems. He believes if these are in place the perception of Nigeria would change even though stereotypes are difficult to break. “To break stereotypes is quite challenging.” Dimbleby says, “It takes ingenuity. It takes time and commitment. It also takes a shift of mindset on the part of those who have the responsibility to cover the world in whatever way,” and adds that prior to that Nigeria needs to “throw open your door and show people the reality particularly if you’ve got compelling evidence. That is the most important way. It is also important that resources are going more equitably to the population from the income the state receives. Nigeria has squandered over the years so much wealth. It has been exported out. It’s been consumed by a few at the expense of the many. The wealth is so enormous. And it continues to be enormous not only oil but other mineral resources in the ground that Nigeria has; plus the intellectual resources. The other is, the rule of law, which is quite improving sharply must be maintained. The independence of the judiciary in Nigeria is fundamental to its image. The polity should be very open.”

Clayton's panacea is different. "I was talking to some Nigerians the other time," he reveals and adds, "they said: 'why is it that Nigeria, a country full of so many clever people, which has produced a Nobel Laureate in Literature; would have low standard of education?'..." Clayton continues: "It is because the schools are so bad. But there is one very easy answer to this. You have to pass a law that everyone who is a government minister must have to send their children to schools in Nigeria...When these people are not allowed to send their children to school in Eton and British public schools, Oxford, Harvard; then you watch, the state system in Nigeria will improve overnight." Clayton thinks Nigeria needs to act fast and change fast. "I think Nigeria is a ticking bomb," he says and asks rhetorically, "Why do I say that? I think at the moment, there are about 180 million Nigerians. By 2050, there will be 360 million, out of which 75% will be under the age of 25. No society can survive with that many young people unemployed. So, I think Nigeria has to change and it has to change fast."

Another important issue, Clayton argues, is the fact that Africa, at the moment is a marginal story in global business as such interest in Africa is not very high compared to other regions of the world. Clayton says: "one of the problems with Africa is that at the moment, Africa is responsible for just 3% of global trade. It is not part of international trading fraternity. It is a marginal story now. That's not to say that there's no interest in Africa, of course, there's interest in it, but the interest is not necessarily that high up." Added to that is the fact that African governments underplay the importance of public diplomacy. The lack of a concerted effort to push the African perspectives is costly both economically and image wise. Nick Cull, a professor of public diplomacy at Annenberg School of Communication and

Journalism, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA, puts it in proper perspective: “there’s no Africa House in London that could advance Africa’s perspectives on issues or where journalists could go for resource materials on Africa. That’s also a huge factor.” argues Cull.

However, Clayton who says he is fairly ideologically unsympathetic to African elites because of the sufferings of the common man in Africa, says amplifying their point of view is not being objective. “When I began in journalism,” Clayton begins, “there was this concept of neutrality or objectivity; which people no longer subscribe to in the same way... that you give both sides equal amount of space; you talk to the other side...the concept of balancing. But if you’re covering something like the Rwandan genocide as I did, then balancing, in fact, is clearly unbalance because giving a dictatorship balance, which he did not deserve and when he is clearly wrong and clearly evil, is unbalance. Then, you are not being neutral or objective, at all.” Clayton insists: “Certain pre-conditions must be in place before objectivity can be exercised. In many African countries, those pre-conditions are not in place....[and as such], I am now fairly ideologically hostile to African elites, but that does not mean that every time, I go to interview an African president or prime minster, I am going to necessarily be unfairly critical of them.”

From the insights of the interviewees above, it is apparent that the factors influencing or shaping the representation of Nigeria in the UK news media are complex and diverse. These include, media outlets’ desire to present a ‘mixed pictures’ of the country, the ‘nature of news,’ which makes reporters to look for the abnormal, the absurd and the ugly, reporters’ (especially those coming to Africa for the first time)

inability to 'get things right,' reporting out of context as well as problem-driven reporting. Other factors include the widespread and far-reaching activities of the aid industry, the democratic credentials of the governments across the continent, the tendency to 'play up stereotypes in media texts' as well as the attitude of western reporters to Africa, which thus makes "people to talk about Africa the way they wouldn't talk about Europe." Others are a 'legacy of condescension and misunderstanding' arising from the historical relationship between Britain and Nigeria, low status of the country, or Africa generally, in global trade fraternity, the lack of concerted engagement with the global media by African governments themselves in terms of pushing the African perspectives as well as the assumption that Africa is one homogeneous state instead of 53 diverse countries and also the conjecture that what happens in one is applicable to the whole - the entire continent.

## **7. Conclusion**

The evidence presented in this discussion shows, from the perspectives of the interviewees, some of the factors that influence or shape the news in terms of the representation of Nigeria in the UK news media. Furthermore, it also shows the level of importance sources occupy in the hierarchy of news construction as well as how over-accessing of certain category of sources impact heavily on the character of news. Michael Schudson (1995) rates the importance of sources so high that he places it a little above that of the journalist. He remarks: "news is as much a product of sources as of the journalists." Schudson continues, "Indeed, most analysts agree that sources have the upper hand" (1995: 14). Hallin (1994: 50) compares the importance of sources in the modern age to the unquestioned rights possessed by the church in medieval Europe to interpret the scriptures. Similarly, besides the influence of socio-

cultural and historical influences, the link between economic powers and sources' activities has been identified as one of the major reasons for the huge disparities in the category sources accessed. Also, eagerness on the part of the source to push his (or her) own viewpoint has been found to be of great essence. One cadre of sources, as the evidence presented shows, lacks the eagerness to provide information while the other is enthusiastic. Thus news, as Gans (1979) has noted, is weighted towards sources which are eager to provide information (p. 117).

## *Chapter 8:* **Conclusion: Why there are no skyscrapers in Nigeria**

*“...despite Nigeria’s importance in the world there has been insufficient international coordinated will or action in engagement with the country. Issues are addressed piecemeal... patient and willing engagement is lacking. A Nigeria that does not function as it could or should is costly to its people and to the world.  
**British APPG Report (2009:5)***

### **1. Introduction**

*“Is this where you live in the United States?”* the girl, a white middle-class standard grade pupil asks, holding out a coloured photograph that has just dropped to the floor from the book of her classmate.

*“No, that’s our residence in Nigeria,”* replies the black boy as he explains the features of the building and introduces the people in the picture.

*“Oh! It’s Nigeria. So, it’s not really how it is on television”* the girl remarks.

*“No. It’s not.”* The boy replies.

This brief dialogue<sup>15</sup> between these two innocent teens does not only illustrate the myth and reality of news and the effects of news media’s coverage on representation; it also indicates that Nigeria is a differentiated ‘Other.’ The picture contrasts with the general idea of housing in Nigeria, which has been projected by television footage. Thus for the innocent girl, who has never set foot on Nigeria’s soil, as so many of us, the idea of black people living in decent accommodation can only be connected to Europe and America. Africa, we have been told, is a ‘hopeless continent’ (*The*

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<sup>15</sup> *The conversation between the teenagers took place at Alva Academy, Clackmannanshire, Scotland in May 2011.*

*Economist* 2000; Saul 2002) or “a basket case” (Ramos et al., 2007; Chabal 2008). Though some parts of Africa are war-ravaged and political conflicts reducible, for the most part, to ‘tribal warfare’ in western media are manifest but they do not constitute the entire story of Africa. So how much news about Africa is myth? How much is reality? How much of it is influenced by ideology or geo-political power relations?

It is possible to argue that ‘myth’, as Barthes uses it in *Mythologies*, functions as a synonym of ‘ideology’ (for a more detailed discussion of this complex issue see Brown 1994: 24-38). As a theoretical construct ‘ideology’ is notoriously hard to define. However, one of the most pervasive definitions of the term holds that it refers to the body of beliefs and representations that sustain and legitimate current power relationships. Ideology promotes the values and interests of dominant groups within society. In his book, *Ideology: An Introduction*, Terry Eagleton (1991) explains:

*A dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it; naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; denigrating ideas which might challenge it; excluding rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and obscuring social reality in ways convenient to itself. Such ‘mystification’, as it is commonly known, frequently takes the form of masking or suppressing social conflicts, from which arises the conception of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions (p.5-6).*

This particular definition of the workings of ideology is essentially relevant to *Mythologies*. Common to both Eagleton’s definition of ideology and Barthes’s understanding of myth is the notion of a socially constructed reality which is passed off as ‘natural’. The opinions and values of a historically and socially specific class are held up as ‘universal truths’. Attempts to challenge this naturalization and universalization of a socially constructed reality (what Barthes calls *le cela-va-de-soi*)

are dismissed for lacking '*bon sens*', and therefore excluded from serious consideration. The real power relations in society (between social classes, between men and women etc.) are obscured as references to all tensions and difficulties are blocked out or glossed over while their political threat is defused. Beyond national borders, the same frame of power relations applies as certain socially constructed realities are constantly produced and reproduced as universal truths while references to all tensions and difficulties are either blocked out or glossed over.

The news media, along with other elite groups, have been identified as a powerful force in the reproduction and reinforcement of these socially constructed realities as universal truths (see Entman 1979, Hall 1990, Hartley 1992 and van Dijk 1995). As Hartley (1992) has pointed out, the news media pass off these 'universal truths' through reporting practices. These reporting practices, as van Dijk (2009) has argued, are embedded in the reporter's own mental model, which is an integral part of his or her cultural model (see Holland and Quinn 1987, Shore 1996). In his work titled, *Power and the news media*, Teun van Dijk argues that the news media are the 'most effective and successful actors in managing the ethnic consensus and in manufacturing public consent,' which eventually evolve as universal truths. "They do so," he explains, "by supporting or legitimating the ethnic policies of other elite groups, such as the politicians, the police, the judiciary, scholars, or the social bureaucrats" (1995: 21).

Similarly, Hall (1990) also identifies the news media as the place where ideas about race are articulated, worked on, transformed and elaborated' (p: 11-12). Using the coverage of immigration as illustration, van Dijk notes how the news media legitimate

racial practices through the use of such inclusive and exclusive terms or well-known phrases as ‘they’ should be treated in a way that is ‘strict, but fair,’ if not in a way that is ‘for their own good’(1995: 22). Also, in his discussion of news representations of Aborigines in Australia, Hartley (1992) notes how the Aboriginal people and their actions are constitutive of a ‘they,’ located in ‘theydom’ of media reports while Caucasians are located within the domain of ‘wedom’ (p: 207- 9).

Reporting practices that entail these strategies of inclusion and exclusion, argues Hartley (1992) are so naturalized that they have become common sense. Similarly, Entman’s (1979) study of television news production in the United States finds that African-Americans are routinely represented as ‘they’ who are ‘violent,’ ‘self-interested,’ ‘threatening toward whites,’ ‘causing problems for the law abiding, tax-paying majority’ (1979: 29). The construction of the dominant ‘in-group’ (white) and ‘out-group’ (blacks) has over time become common sense. This journalistic ‘common sense,’ argues Les Payne of *Newsday Magazine*, informs the disproportionate representation of blacks negatively as ‘prostitutes, drug dealers, welfare recipients, second-story men and unwed mothers’ (cited in Dates and Pease 1997: 79). The cultural politics of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ argues Allan (1999) saturates news discourse in ways which help to create and reinforce the fears of predominantly white audiences towards other ethnic groups (p. 164).

Thus, the news media, even on the global scale, have become the purveyor of a monolithic point of view. As a *Times-Picayune* editor puts it: ‘we don’t realize how much our newspapers reflect one point of view – the white point of view’ (cited in Gissler 1997: 111). Along with the news media, Teun van Dijk (1995) posits that

scholars in the mainstream social research are equally implicated in the reproduction and reinforcement of socially constructed realities as universal truths. “If mainstream social science research, especially by white scholars, focuses on those properties of ethnic groups that are consistent with prevailing stereotypes (crime, deviance, drugs, ethnic culture, etc.),” van Dijk argues, “the serious press prominently display such results.” Thus, van Dijk continues: “reports that confirm negative stereotypes are often front-page news, even if most scholarly work hardly reaches the inner pages of the newspaper. On the other hand, the little critical research on discrimination or racism will either be fully ignored or explicitly attacked as exaggerated, ridiculous, methodologically flawed, or simply as politically biased” (1995: 22).

However, these reporting practices organised around taken-for-granted journalistic common sense find their way into international news where the powerful combination of colonial discourse and geo-political power relations also impact hugely on current news media narratives. Thus, this research work has sought to explore how news media reporting practices work to reinforce certain images of Africa and, by so doing, obfuscate the real issues behind Africa’s political, social and economic problems. Whereas it is plausible that a shift in these reporting practices, given the immense powers of the media, would not only engender better cultural understanding, it would also propel our collective resolve to tackle development issues in Africa rather than remain what Chouliaraki (2009) terms ordinary spectators of the suffering in that region. Thus using Nigeria, the most populous Black country in the world as a case study, this research work has explored the notions of representations as they relate to a former colonial master and its former colony; a developed European country and a developing African nation; a major global player (both militarily and economically)

and a Third World country; two culturally and racially different countries who became historically linked many centuries ago, though through domination and conquest of one by the other. By applying relevant tools of analysis, this study has interrogated the contents of five major UK newspapers for a period of 10 years, the findings did not only reveal a pattern of representation, they also shed light on why representations take a particular form, as well as the impact of journalist-sources relations on the texture of representation. First, what have we learnt in terms of the representation of Nigeria in the UK news media?

## **2. Nigeria and the pre-existing news frame**

As earlier discussed in chapter 2, the spread of democracy across the world, posits Barry Elliot, former head of BBC Central European Services, is central to the core operational values of the UK news media. *“In terms of keeping hope alive and spreading democratic ideals, of really putting it to the people that there were alternatives,”* argues Elliot, *“yes, I think we did have a role.* He continues: *“We were not propounding a change of regime – that wasn’t part of our job – but we were stimulating the democratic process, and providing a whole new range of views’* (Taylor 1997: 53). Similarly, former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in a 1999 speech in Chicago, USA, insists that the pursuit of global justice and democracy is chief amongst reasons for turning western attention to any troubled spot around the world. *“...our actions are guided by,”* Blair contends, *“...the spread of values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society...”* (cited in Robinson, 2002: 9). These assertions reinforce the importance of democracy to both the British government and the UK news media. They represent a commitment to democracy across the world. Therefore, to interrogate how this commitment plays out in respect

of a racially and culturally different former colony, the first research question: *does the stride by Nigeria toward a more open and democratic governance reflect in the way Nigeria is represented*, was formulated.

Although the findings reveal that the coverage, especially between 1997 and 1999, is focused on democracy; for the most part, there is no substantial change in the way the country is represented as the coverage reflects the existing frame of reporting a ‘differentiated Other.’ Out of a total of 3,127 articles coded, those linking Nigeria to democracy, infrastructure and sport constitute only 41.1% while a larger percentage of 58.9% links Nigeria to corruption, fraud and crime thus leading to the conclusion that the west African country is still framed in a negative light. Specifically, while coverage’s focus on democracy, infrastructure and sport records 34%, 11% and 13% respectively in terms of numbers of articles published between 1997 and 1999, corruption, fraud and crime record 20%, 7% and 15% respectively in terms of numbers of articles during the same period. The trend is similar in terms of the numbers of words published during the same period. While democracy, infrastructure and sport record 31%, 14% and 16% respectively; corruption, fraud and crime garner 20%, 6% and 13% respectively.

However, the interest in the coverage of democracy waned significantly between 2000 and 2002 and 2003 and 2007 respectively. In terms of the numbers of articles published between 2000 and 2002, while democracy, infrastructure and sport record 15%, 10% and 16% respectively, a reduction from 1997 – 1999 figures; corruption, fraud and crime coverage receive 21%, 13% and 25% respectively, which represents an increase from the 1997 – 1999 figures. The trend is similar in terms of the numbers

of words published. While democracy, infrastructure and sport record 18%, 12% and 16% respectively; corruption, fraud and crime receive coverage attention of 22%, 11% and 21% respectively. Similarly, records for the 2003-2007 period show that democracy, infrastructure and sport receive 10%, 15% and 9% coverage attention respectively in terms of the numbers of articles published. But the figures rise during the same period for corruption, fraud and crime, which record 26%, 15% and 25% respectively. Also, the trend is similar in terms of the numbers of words published during the same period. Democracy, infrastructure and sport record 12%, 17% and 11% respectively whereas corruption, fraud and crime record 26%, 13% and 21% coverage attention respectively during the same period. The trend of this coverage suggests that Nigeria's stride toward a more open and democratic governance has little or less impact in the way the sub-Saharan African country is represented in the UK news media (*see chapter 4 and Appendix for further details*).

Furthermore, while the coverage generally thus suggests that the virtue of democracy is not congenial with African culture in view of incessant vote crises such as allegations and counter-allegations of vote riggings, violence, threat of violence and general instability as some of the excerpts presented have shown, we have also learnt that the representation of Nigeria in UK news media follows a particular pattern. This directly speaks to the second research question: *what sort of trend or pattern, if any, is identifiable in the way Nigeria is represented*. The output of news media outlets under study during the 10-year period as stated show that though efforts are made to spread coverage over several areas of human endeavours, majority of the coverage is devoted to the issue of official corruption such as bribery, embezzlement or stealing of public funds and lack of transparency and accountability or weak corporate governance in

the public sector. The coverage is often less critical of western companies' involvement (Halliburton and Siemens, for example) in some of the public sector corruption cases. Similarly, coverage attention is also focused on fraud and crime; especially email scams otherwise known as 4-1-9 scams while a whole range of other issues including such medical feats as successful separation of co-joined twin, kidney transplants, heart operations, stem-cell transplants are given little or no coverage attention. The focus on these obviously negative criminal activities of a minority of Nigerians inadvertently helps to construct Nigeria as a haven for corruption as depictions such as '*a country much known for its kleptocratic tendencies*' (*The Times* 4/12/1998); and "*Nigeria, after all, is the Vatican of the international church of theft and fraud*" (*Daily Telegraph* 7/12/2003) become symbolic of the country's narratives in the UK news media.

Though such depictions help to create a certain image of the West African country while cross-referencing of 'facts' works to reinforce and sustain such image, there's no evidence that it is as a result of deliberate bias on the part of the journalists. The third research question: *what major factors influence or shape the representation* is addressed here. Interrogating this issue reveals that several factors, rather than individual journalists' bias, combine to shape or influence the representation of Nigeria in particular (and Africa in general) in the UK news media. These include the social and cultural background of the foreign correspondents and their editors; the sources who provide news feeds such as the NGOs, the donor agencies and the experts who offer analyses and volunteer comments and the ubiquitous archival materials. Other important factors include news outlets' organisational philosophy, professional and operational constraints, mental and cultural models embedded in

society's shared beliefs in relations to race, culture and history as well as geo-political power relations. These factors impact on the tone of reporting, language choice as well as the rhetorical devices used in news writing, which in this particular instance, have been magisterial or sometimes condescending and thus represent Nigeria as a differentiated 'Other.' Most importantly, the findings did not only reveal that sources play a hugely significant role in how the news is shaped, they show that Nigerian voices are muted in the telling of Nigerian stories as the Nigerian stories are dominated by the voices of European sources.

Specifically, the findings reveal that only 876 (or 28%) of the sources quoted in the 3,127 articles coded on Nigeria are Nigerian sources. Majority of the sources, 2,102 (or 67%) are European, Foreign or non-African/Nigerian sources while only 149 sources (or 5%) are blind sources. This suggests that Africans have no voice in their own stories in the western news media. Western "experts" speak for them. The "knowledgeable" western "experts" analyse their development problems for them and proffer the "necessary solutions." Due to the divergence in culture amongst other differences, these "analyses" and proffered "solutions" tend to construct Africa from western European perspective, which inadvertently amplifies dissimilarities and differences.

Indeed, as has been earlier emphasised, news is about differences and such differences are often expressed in terms of binary oppositions. There is nowhere this is more evident than in the construction of news where the positive 'self' and the negative 'other' (van Dijk 2009) representation is pervasive. Often embedded in the excerpts presented in this discussion is the construct of difference between an organised

modern western society and a backward socially, economically and politically unstable former colony. The device adopted is to naturalize that construct (of the backward 'Other') using various concepts including that of presuppositions, which as Ruth Wodak (2004) has noted, imply that people see certain assumptions as "common sense beliefs" or "shared truth" (p.208).

As the teens' dialogue recounted above shows, there's a particular image of Nigeria in Britain that is seen as "shared truth" and, of course, traceable to the news media. The image subsists because, as earlier stated, news about Nigeria in the UK news media is never varied to include other worthy events or happenings (such as various medical feats, for example). Thus, a particular kind of news has nonetheless become the main narrative of Nigeria in the UK news media. Though that particular kind of news has become pervasive enough to be the definer of Nigeria, it does not constitute the whole story about Nigeria. Although Nigeria shares a part of the blame for not properly engaging with the news media in respect of its own image in views of its own strategic interest, the remaining part belongs to the news media. Michael Schudson (1995) underscores why the news media are culpable in this respect. "If the phenomena to be explained are large and pervasive enough," Schudson contends, "then the media can be found responsible for it, no matter what the features of the media are" (p. 21). Thus, the news media which report more often on a particular type of events, as van Dijk (1988) has pointed out can be held responsible for the distorted image that thus emerges.

Dardenne (2006) posits that the news media have no imperative to focus on certain types of story over the other, arguing that such practice speaks of the health of the

news media themselves. “A healthy press,” according to Dardenne (2006), “makes few distinctions; it reports impartially.” Dardenne explains further: “A healthy press celebrates the good as much as it condemns the evil; and reports what’s done well as much as what’s done badly...it has no imperative to focus on the negative, to favour the dirty over the clean.” Therefore, what are the implications of focusing on a few types of stories; of favouring the dirty over the clean? What do these findings mean to journalism, and to the political and economic survival of Nigeria (or Africa and the Third World, in general)? First, let’s begin with the issue of Nigeria’s image and the idea of conspiracy theory.

## **2.1 Nigeria’s image problem**

In 2004, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) at a public forum in Lagos, Nigeria concluded that Nigeria’s poor external image is denying it much needed foreign investment (FDI) to accelerate its economic growth. According to the 2004 UNCTAD report, FDI flow to Nigeria was 1.2 billion dollars in 2003 and 1.3 billion in 2002. A pittance for such a country with huge potentials and prospects, Nigeria is also bogged down by its image as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. The British All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) expresses similar fears in its 2009 Report. The APPG report concludes that Nigeria’s dream to be among the ‘top twenty world economies by 2020 will not happen unless its leadership – at all levels, including federal, state and local government and civil society leaders – becomes organised and takes direct responsibility for the people...” (2009: 5) Indeed, Nigeria’s challenges are myriad. Some of these challenges have been identified as including but not limited to poor infrastructural development, over-

dependence on oil, unemployment and poverty as well as insecurity. These problems combined have continued to fuel the battering of Nigeria's image.

Though successive Nigerian governments, as a result of the realisation of the negative effects of these problems on Nigeria as a potential investment country, have made efforts to address the image issue, critics believe the western news media give little or no attention to such efforts. Within a space of five years, Nigeria has launched two major rebranding projects. The first was in July 2004 and the other in March 2009. Comparing the projects to India's 'Incredible India' campaign, Derin Mustapha<sup>16</sup>, a communication specialist, argues during an interview that the projects failed woefully because of poor strategy and inadequate funding. "Incredible India," Mustapha contends, "succeeds because of correct mix of funding and strategy. Since 'Incredible India' campaign broke," Mustapha adds "the number of negative reports on India in the western press has reduced." Although there was no way of measuring the link between branding projects and positive media reports in this circumstance, Mustapha insists that Nigeria's image would have been hugely burnished had Nigeria adopted India's template in the 'Incredible India's' campaign.

However, there are concerns over the way Nigeria is represented in the UK news media. Some Nigerians reason that the UK news media's portrayal of Nigeria's political class as corrupt and incompetent and Nigerians, as fraudulent and criminals is not just a means to conceal colonial Britain's role in planting the seed of tribal distrust in the new nation at independence but also a way to justify colonialism. In an

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<sup>16</sup> Derin Mustapha, UK-based Nigerian and an avid follower of current affairs spoke during an interview with this researcher.

interview published in Lagos-based *Vanguard* newspaper (04/10/11), Odia Ofeimun<sup>17</sup> expresses the minds of conspiracy theorists. According to Ofeimun, “the British had created deliberately a society that would live in division, a society that will always be against itself.” Chief Richard Akinjide<sup>18</sup>, a prominent Nigerian lawyer and politician, corroborates this assertion in an interview published by *Sun* newspaper (04/03/12). “The British,” he argues, “created Nigeria and with it a structure, which suited their economic interest as well as the interest of the Royal Niger Company.” Akinjide insists that the British colonialists “deliberately structured the country to make the north dominant and the south subservient. That is the origin of our problem.” Also, Leonard Shilgba,<sup>19</sup> a popular columnist, describes Nigeria as a “British-induced union...that is fashioned on falsehood—false population figures, false constitution, false federalism, and ultimately false democracy, which is devoid of accountability, the rule of law, and good governance.”

Those who believe in this conspiracy theory point to Awolowo’s assertion in his work, *The People’s Republic*, that the British colonialists deliberately ceded power to a weak leadership in order to continue exercising their authorities through remote control. The statement by Awolowo, who once referred to Nigeria as a mere geographical expression, reads:

*On their (the British’s) departure, the plants of public order were in the process of being choked by weeds of insensate intolerance, the forces of progress were deliberately subordinated to the dead-weight of decadence and unsophisticated reaction/native tyranny was enthroned as the protector of*

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<sup>17</sup> Odia Ofeimun is a well-known Lagos-based journalist, political scientist and poet.

<sup>18</sup> Chief Richard Akinjide was Federal Attorney-General & Minister of Justice during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic – 1979-1983.

<sup>19</sup> Leonard Karshima Shilgba is an Associate Professor at the American University of Nigeria, Yola.

*human freedoms, and the country, though politically emancipated, was firmly held in leash by foreign economic interests (Awolowo 1968: 61).*

To further support the conspiracy theory, they reference Lugard's (1926) demeaning characterization of the African personae. "In character and temperament," Lugard asserts, "the typical African of this race-type is a happy, thriftless, excitable person." Lugard, who was colonial first Governor-General of Nigeria, continues: "(he is) lacking in self control, discipline, and foresight. Naturally courageous, and naturally courteous and polite, full of personal vanity, with little sense of veracity, fond of music and loving weapons as an oriental loves jewellery." Lugard says further as he compares the African to animals, "his thoughts are concentrated on the events and feelings of the moment, and he suffers little from the apprehension for the future or grief for the past. His mind is far nearer to the animal world than that of the European or Asiatic, and exhibits something of the animals' placidity and want of desire to rise beyond the State he has reached." "Through the ages," the colonialist contends, "the African appears to have evolved no organized religious creed, and though some tribes appear to believe in a deity, the religious sense seldom rises above pantheistic animalism and seems more often to take the form of a vague dread of the supernatural."

This colonialist's construct is engrained in the discourse that has reduced the Africans to sub-humans. It is not only dismissive of African religious beliefs to the point of absolute derision, it also highlights two "perceived" lacks: "lack of organized religious creed" and "lack of organisation and management." The first "lack" became fundamental in the justification of forceful colonial occupation, and the second, is the

fulcrum for the rationalization of current interventions. Lugard (1926) further makes it more explicit:

*He lacks the power of organization, and is conspicuously deficient in the management and control alike of men or business. He loves the display of power, but fails to realize its responsibility ....he will work hard with a less incentive than most races. He has the courage of the fighting animal, an instinct rather than a moral virtue..... In brief, the virtues and defects of this race-type are those of attractive children, whose confidence when it is won is given ungrudgingly as to an older and wiser superior and without envy.....Perhaps the two traits which have impressed me as those most characteristic of the African native are his lack of apprehension and his lack of ability to visualize the future (p.70).*

What is exceptionally interesting, argues Mustapha, is how those same discourses are reproduced using modern euphemisms in current news media reports. “The use of terms such as ‘lack of good governance’, ‘humanitarian intervention’ and ‘failed states’ in the media narratives or by ‘expert’ news sources,” Mustapha insists, “are modern synonyms for the old idea.” However, antagonists of the conspiracy theory dismiss such arguments as lacking merit. Zenab Yessuf<sup>20</sup> during an interview puts the blames for Nigeria’s problems squarely on the laps of the country’s leaders. “Fifty-one years,” Yessuf argues (in reference to how long Nigeria has been independent), “is enough to correct whatever wrongs the British colonialists had committed.” She further argues that “if countries such as India, China and Brazil, who were also colonised, could have gotten over the trauma of colonialism, there’s no reason for

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<sup>20</sup> Dr. Zenab Yessuf, a Jos, Plateau State-based university teacher and activist spoke during an interview with this researcher.

Nigeria to still be whining about its colonial past.” Though Yessuf admits that there’s racial and cultural condescension in the way the UK news media represent Nigeria, she believes it is a challenge for Nigeria to put its house in order. Awotesu and his collaborators also contend that most reports in the UK news media seek to “demonise Nigerians, however inadvertently, based on the malfeasance of a tiny minority living abroad, many of whom have probably acquired dual citizenship in their country of residence.” In a letter titled “Nigerians not all fraudsters,” published by the *Financial Times* (11/03/2003; p.18), Awotesu and co urge the news media “to be more judicious in their use of language,” noting that “contrary to what most reporting on Nigeria would have readers believe, Nigeria does not have a monopoly on sophisticated criminal fraudsters and indeed the vast majority of Nigerians at home and abroad are hard-working and upstanding citizens.”

Although western journalists and a section of western scholars are always quick to deny it, the idea that Nigeria is regularly diminished in the international media is no longer news. Foreign companies operating in Nigeria as well as their expatriate officials have also taken notice. Some of these concerned officials have even taken actions aimed at addressing the country’s image problem. One such official is Nick Hales, managing director of British American Tobacco (BAT) whose company, at the formal opening of its new factory in Ibadan, took several pages of newspaper advertisements with the theme ‘proudly Nigerian.’ In an interview with *Financial Times*’ Michael Peel, (24/02/2004; p. 4) Hales explains the rationale behind his company’s action thus: “The idea was: everybody is very quick to demean Nigeria,” Hales argues. “Let’s look at the good things.” Hales further tells the *Financial Times* that BAT’s Nigerian investment has been smoother than others he has superintended

in Africa. Though he admits that the country's slow and corrupt port system is "not for the faint-hearted", he insists that the problems are not as bad as some people claim.

Similarly, another report by Harvey Morris published in the *Financial Times* (24/10/2007; p. 4) corroborates Hales' positive assertions. According to the report, "Kemal Dervis, head of the UN Development Programme, said on his return from a tour of southern and eastern Africa that gross domestic product south of the Sahara had risen by an average 5.6 per cent last year and was heading for 6 per cent growth this year, more than one percentage point above the world average. He said it could amount to the most rapid growth in the region for decades." The report states further: "Mr Dervis acknowledged that growth was patchy and said countries experiencing internal conflict were growing more slowly than those that were at peace. Where conflict is overcome, it's the first condition for progress. If you take out the conflict zones, growth is even higher," the report notes. Echoing Mr Dervis's upbeat assessment of one of the world's poorest regions, Patrick Hayford, a senior UN adviser on Africa, said: "Africa is not all civil war and famine, chaos and fighting. There are developments of a more positive nature."

Although it is not that positive reports of this nature are not published in the western news media about Africa or specifically Nigeria, their publication are only irregular and far in between. A comment<sup>21</sup> published in the *Financial Times* (15/05/1998) offers reasons why there's indifference about Africa in western media:

*Africa lies beyond our horizons. It flickers before our consciousness only as a sporadic sequence of uncomfortable events. Once in a while, television*

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<sup>21</sup> *Financial Times' Comment & Analysis Column, P.20; May 15, 1998.*

*confronts us with the grisly images of another war, another famine. Or we hear of a bloody coup in a country we could never quite place on the map. We slip a small donation into an envelope and close our minds to the continuous tragedy of the continent.*

The comment does not just bears witness to why western news media are insensitive to the plights of Africa's poor but also underscores the west's lack of concern to helping Africa achieve economic growth thus strengthening the position of those who urge Africa to form closer socio-economic ties with China and other BRICS nations as such relationship would be far more beneficial than hundreds of years of attachment to the west, which has produced debts and more debts, poverty and suffering. The *Financial Times*' comment states further:

*Who cares if Africa has fallen off the edge of the global marketplace? With the end of the cold war it has lost its strategic significance. And it is too poor to matter otherwise. Africans do not have the money to buy Coca-Cola. They lack the education to use Windows 95. The continent cannot pay its debts. Measured in today's dollars the output of Africa south of the Sahara is less than that of Switzerland. Save for the beacon at its southern tip, it is a place best left to mercenaries and missionaries.*

This argument serves two purposes. First, it provides insight into the idea of Africa that predominates in the news discourse; and second, it serves to obfuscate the real reasons why Africa is either too poor to buy Coca-Cola or lacks the education to use Windows 95. Challenging such established 'belief' is an arduous task as it is seen as "common sense" but sometimes, it necessary to deconstruct "common sense" in order to make opaque power relations manifest (Wodak 2004). Thus, the pertinent question at this juncture is: why does this line of inquiry matter?

### **3. Hope of advance lies in ‘thinking outside the box’**

As Orville Wright has said, ‘if we all worked on the assumption that what is accepted as true is really true, there would be little hope for advance’(McFarland 2001: 314). Indeed, the general assumption or “common sense” renders Africa as incomprehensible. The whole continent, especially sub-Sahara Africa, occupies a space in the distant past. Its space and place in the world, first of all, are marked by the notions of the ‘tribal,’ ‘primitive’ and ‘savage.’ The fact that ‘tribal’ peoples are often stereotyped and rendered as close to nature leads to the second marker, which identifies Africa as ‘traditional’ and not ‘modern.’ It is often depicted in western news media with ancient huts and wild animals instead of modern skyscrapers. A skyscraper is modern and western. Huts and wild animals are primitive, rural, natural and African. Thus, Africa is different from us. Africa is not part of ‘our’ time (Fair 1993).

“Africa,” as Jonathan Clayton reminds us, “is a marginal story. It is not part of the global trading fraternity.” While we occupy a ‘modern’ space, Africa remains in our past (Fair 1993). We are in Africa’s future and thus, Africa’s present is largely irrelevant to us. “It is a place,” as *Financial Times* comment (15/05/1998) says, “that is best left for missionaries and mercenaries.” Indeed, the idea of ‘missionaries and mercenaries’ predominates the news discourse about Africa today. It is so powerfully overwhelming that it inadvertently obfuscates the real issues surrounding Africa’s development problems. For as long as the news media’s coverage of Africa is still dominated by these old pre-colonial concepts, for so long would wrong diagnosis of Africa’s development problems lead to the application of wrong development antidotes.

Currently for Africa, the statistics are gloomy: out of 32 countries officially classified as severely indebted, 25 of those countries are in sub-Saharan Africa. As at 2010, the region's external debt stands at \$204.7 billion, according to WDI/GDF figures. Though this debt portfolio looks quite burdensome but a different picture begins to emerge when compared with other regions. The external debt of Brazil, a single country in Latin America, stands at \$346.9 billion during the same period while the total for Latin America and the Caribbean is \$1,064.5 billion, and of the South as a whole, it is \$3,509.6 billion. Furthermore, the accumulated debt of the world's richest country, the United States is \$14.71 trillion as at 2011, according to CIA's *The World Factbook*. Against this backdrop of rising global indebtedness where daily foreign exchange transactions have jumped from \$800 billion in 1992; to \$1.2 trillion and \$1.6 trillion in 1995 and 1998 respectively; Africa's debt, as Capps (2005) has argued, is still a tiny drop in the ocean of international finance.

Therefore, if Africa's debt is minute compared to other regions where else lies its problems? The answer is located in the debt repayment regimes, which consistently suck greater volume of scarce resources out of Africa while further impoverishing the people. According to US-based NGO, Africa Action, only 12 of 44 African countries are able to regularly service their debts without debt relief. The others are mired in the vicious cycle of additional borrowing, compounding interest and accumulation of debt stock and arrears. At the core of Africa's problem are the escalating debt burden and the attendant massive outflow of resources to foreign creditors. Sub-Saharan Africa's annual debt service payments (that's the money spent paying back the debt and the interest on it), argues Capps, rose from an average of \$1.7 billion between 1970 and 1979 to \$14.6 billion between 1997 and 1999. The huge outflows were neither

matched by increased trade nor inflow of new loans. Between 1970 and 2002, Africa received total loans of \$540 billion and paid back \$550 billion while retaining a total debt of \$295 billion. Similarly, African countries paid out \$60 billion more than they received in new loans in 1990 and by 1997 this had increased to \$259 billion. The 1990s witnessed huge resource transfers, a trend which continued into the new millennium. In 2001 sub-Saharan Africa borrowed \$11.4 billion, but paid back \$14.5 billion, thus representing a net transfer of \$3.1 billion. Damien Millet and Eric Toussaint's (2004) summary of the entire situation is apt: "debt is a powerful mechanism for the transfer of wealth from small producers in the South to the capital-holders of the North, with the dominant classes of the developing countries skimming off their commission along the way" (p. 87).

Indeed, members of Africa's ruling class are complicit in the capital flight. Also, a number of African leaders are repressive and corrupt. But as Mankekar (1978) has observed, corruption is rife in the Third World because most developing countries are beset by scarcity economy. "Scarcity economy," Mankekar explains, "calls for controls; controls bring in bureaucracy, and bureaucracy breeds corruption. And corruption feeds on corruption." Mankekar continues: "That is one explanation, though not justification, for its large scale prevalence in the developing countries" (p. 14). Therefore, scarcity economy creates the environment for corruption to thrive; not African culture as some media narratives suggest.

While tackling corruption is important to Africa's growth, the stumbling block to development in Africa is its excruciating debt burden. It is a trap, which works as a resource-transfer mechanism. According to Millet and Toussaint (2004: 87), the

Marshall Plan for the construction of Europe, which was financed by the United States, cost about \$12.5 billion at that time or less than \$80 billion of today's values. Conversely, between 1980 and 2001 the developing countries have dispatched \$4,500 billion as debt repayment to their creditors, the developed countries. This means, argue Millet and Toussaint, that the poor countries have parted with the equivalent of fifty-six (56) Marshall Plans to their creditors, the already developed affluent countries of northern hemisphere. The developing countries cannot possibly continue to afford such magnitude of resource outflow. Thus, there is an urgent need to shift attention to trade and debt issue if we are to avoid impending large-scale human catastrophe in Africa. There are not too many social institutions best placed to act as a change agent in this cause than the news media.

As presented in the preceding chapters, the image of Africa or Nigeria (in this particular circumstance), projected so far by the news media obfuscates the significance of the issues of trade justice, fair pricing and the danger of debt to the survival of Africa's teeming population. Indeed, certain assumptions organised around reporting practices make current representation of Africa in the western news media irrefutable. These assumptions do not only render Africa as incomprehensible as earlier mentioned but have over time, through constant reproduction and reinforcement, invite the rest of humanity to view human suffering in Africa as both cultural and natural.

Thus this creates a sense of frustration or what Susan Moeller (1999) terms 'compassion fatigue' amongst those desirous of helping Africa and a sense of hopelessness amongst young Africans themselves. Africa's population, according

UNPF figures, is expected to hit 1.9 billion by 2050<sup>22</sup>; nearly 55% of which would be young people. Majority of them would also be Nigerians. The danger such huge army of hungry and frustrated youths pose to global socio-economic interest is better imagined. As the British APPG Report has noted, "...a Nigeria that does not function as it could or should is costly to its people and to the world (2009: 5).

Therefore, while this inquiry has sought to disrupt or render problematic those assumptions that make Africa conforms to existing definitions of situation in the western news media, it has also hoped to highlight how a shift in reporting practices could help engender cultural understanding, promote global harmony and help to activate concrete actions geared toward addressing the deplorable human conditions in Africa. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this kind of critical attention, as Hartley (1982) has enthused, is not just to draw attention to a problem but most importantly, to 'put things right' (p. 9). Putting things right, Hartley further adds, requires series of negotiations. This inquiry has sought to jumpstart a renewed debate in the process of negotiations leading to that much desired change. However, one issue that is clearly not explored in this work relates to counter-representation, that's how Africa or the Nigerian news media represent Britain or the western world. It is a very important issue that requires critical attention as part of the process of change envisioned. Thus, this researcher does not only hope to focus on this area as the next research project but also sees it as an area of research interest for other researchers.

Congruent with it is the issue of representation of poverty in Nigeria, Africa or the Third world, which requires further study. Since our world is interconnected by the

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<sup>22</sup> *United Nations Population Funds' (UNPF) Report 2009.*

threads of common humanity, such line of inquiry will further help the goal of advancing cultural understanding and regional co-operation and development. This assertion is based on the conviction that the news media is, no doubt, crucial to the process of change given their key role in today's modern world, which is increasingly becoming a global village. As such, it is imperative for the news media (and also academics) to begin to rethink those assumptions around which reporting practices of inclusion and exclusion are organised. These practices, as earlier discussed, give rise not only to distortions and misrepresentations but also cultural misunderstanding and racial tension. In the words of John Kennedy, "the great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie – deliberate, contrived and dishonest – but the myth – persistent, persuasive and unrealistic."

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## Appendix 1: Content Analysis

### Frequently Mentioned Issues

- List of frequently mentioned issues revealed in the five UK samples' coverage of Nigeria's election campaigns of 1999, 2003 and 2007, which were grouped and categorized under:

**Democracy**  
**Infrastructure**  
**Sport**

**Corruption**  
**Fraud**  
**Crime**

- return to democracy
- commonwealth
- corruption, lack of good governance
- bribery, 'crumbling infrastructure
- election, poll, campaign
- Niger Delta, oil bunkering, oil spillage, oil prices
- sport, football, world cup
- Olympic game, athletics
- crime, 419 criminals
- email scams, forgeries
- vote-rigging, electoral fraud
- religious dichotomy, Christian south, Muslims north
- political violence, tribal tensions
- Political violence, instability
- GDP, poverty, underdevelopment,

## Content Analysis

### **A: Nigeria & Democracy, 1997-2007\*(Major mentions)**

1. The Times (London):	23	The Sunday Times (London):	1 = 24*
2. The Daily Telegraph (London):	5	The Sunday Telegraph (London):	2 = 7*
3. Financial Times (London):	414*	...	= 414*
4. The Guardian (London):	44	The Observer:	3 = 47*
5. Daily Independent (London):	28	The Independent on Sunday	8 = 36*

### **B: Nigeria & Infrastructure, 1997-2007\*(Major mentions)**

6. The Times (London):	6	The Sunday Times (London):	0 = 6*
7. The Daily Telegraph (London):	0	The Sunday Telegraph (London):	0 = 0*
8. Financial Times (London):	390	....	= 390*
9. The Guardian (London):	1	The Observer:	0 = 1*
10. Daily Independent (London):	0	The Independent on Sunday	0 = 0*

### **C: Nigeria & Sport, 1997-2007\* (Major mentions)**

11. The Times (London):	22	The Sunday Times (London):	5 = 27*
12. The Daily Telegraph (London):	3	The Sunday Telegraph (London):	- = 3*
13. Financial Times (London):	306*		306*
14. The Guardian (London):	7	The Observer:	2 = 9*
15. Daily Independent (London):	14	The Independent on Sunday	4 = 18*

### **D: Nigeria & Corruption, 1997-2007\* (Major mentions)**

16. The Times (London):	25	The Sunday Times (London):	2 = 27*
17. The Daily Telegraph (London):	10	The Sunday Telegraph (London):	6 = 16*
18. Financial Times (London):	630	...	630*
19. The Guardian (London):	28	The Observer:	9 = 37*
20. Daily Independent (London):	15	The Independent on Sunday:	3 = 18*

### **E: Nigeria & Fraud, 1997-2007\* (Major mentions)**

21. The Times (London):	17	The Sunday Times (London):	1 = 18*
22. The Daily Telegraph (London):	4	The Sunday Telegraph (London):	2 = 6*
23. Financial Times (London):	355	...	= 355*
24. The Guardian (London):	8	The Observer:	3 = 11*
25. Daily Independent (London):	9	The Independent on Sunday:	2 = 11*

### **F: Nigeria & Crime, 1997-2007\* (Major mentions)**

26. The Times (London):	15	The Sunday Times (London):	3 = 18*
27. The Daily Telegraph (London):	6	The Sunday Telegraph (London):	6 = 12*
28. Financial Times (London):	640	...	= 640*
29. The Guardian (London):	12	The Observer:	4 = 16*
30. Daily Independent (London):	18	The Independent on Sunday:	6 = 24*

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				1997 – 1999				2000 - 2002				2003 - 2007			
		TOTAL Words	Total Articles	No. of Articles	%	No. of Words	%	No. of Articles	%	No. of Words	%	No. of Articles	%	No. of Words	%
The Times	Dem	11,617	24	19(0)=19	79.2	8,942	77	3(1)=4	16.7	2,533	21.8	1(0)=1	4.1	142	1.2
	Infr	1,989	6	2(0)=2	33.3	177	8.9	1(0)=1	16.7	699	35.1	3(0)=3	50	1,113	56
	Spo	32,116	27	4(0)=4	14.8	1,763	5.4	10(4)=14	51.9	9,794	30.5	8(1)=9	33.3	20,559	64
	Cor	17,215	27	7(2)=9	33.3	6,201	36	5(0)=5	18.6	3,695	21.5	13(0)=13	48.1	7,319	42.5
	Fra	9,767	18	5(0)=5	27.8	2,419	24.8	3(1)=4	22.2	2,335	23.9	9(0)=9	50	5,013	51.3
	Cri	7,903	18	1(0)=1	5.5	451	5.7	3(0)=3	16.7	1,619	20.5	11(3)=14	77.8	5,833	73.8
The Telegraph	Dem	3,936	7	0(0)=0	0	0	0	2(1)=3	42.9	1,258	32	3(1)=4	57.1	2,678	68
	Infr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	2,819	3	0(0)=0	0	0	0	1(0)=1	33.3	102	3.6	2(0)=2	66.7	2,717	96.4
	Cor	11,217	16	0(0)=0	0	0	0	2(1)=3	18.8	1,909	17	8(5)=13	81.2	9,308	83
	Fra	3,029	6	0(0)=0	0	0	0	2(0)=2	33.3	147	4.9	2(2)=4	66.7	2,882	95.1
	Cri	8,263	12	0(0)=0	0	0	0	0(0)=0	0	0	0	6(6)=12	100	8,263	100
The Financial Times	Dem	323,641	414	149	36	95,673	29.6	116	28	84,619	26.1	149	36	143,349	44.3
	Infr	340,330	390	70	18	64,911	19.07	80	20.5	65,062	19.12	240	61.5	210,357	61.81
	Spo	251,763	306	83	27	71,988	28.6	107	35	74,721	29.7	116	38	105,054	41.7
	Cor	474,789	630	113	18	79,591	17	163	26	113,009	24	354	56	282,189	59
	Fra	226,587	355	38	10.7	26,391	12	103	29.0	56,732	25	214	60.3	143,464	63
	Cri	404,355	640	93	14.5	57,503	14.2	192	30	110,714	27.4	355	55.5	236,138	58.4
The Guardian	Dem	36,724	47	34(2)=36	76.5	25,834	70.3	4(0)=4	8.5	6,879	18.7	6(1)=7	15	4,011	11
	Infr	637	1	1(0)=1	100	637	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	3,039	9	2(0)=2	22.2	426	14	2(1)=3	33.3	1,781	58.6	3(1)=4	44.5	832	27.4
	Cor	26,136	37	7(1)=8	21.6	4,250	16.3	6(1)=7	19	5,113	19.6	15(7)=22	59.4	16,773	64.1
	Fra	7,186	11	2(0)=2	18.1	934	13	0(0)=0	0	0	0	6(3)=9	81.9	6,252	87
	Cri	8,844	16	2(0)=2	12.5	3,589	40.6	2(1)=3	18.75	1,417	16.0	8(3)=11	68.75	3,838	43.4
The Independent	Dem	21,700	36	24(7)=31	86.1	16,769	77.3	2(1)=3	8.3	2,434	11.2	2(0)=2	5.6	2,497	11.5
	Infr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	9,051	18	3(0)=3	16.7	1,161	12.8	6(3)=9	50.0	2,866	31.7	5(1)=6	33.3	5,024	55.5
	Cor	9,326	18	5(2)=7	38.9	3,660	39.25	3(0)=3	16.7	1,140	12.22	7(1)=8	44.4	4,526	48.53
	Fra	5,341	11	2(0)=2	18.2	1,334	25	1(0)=1	9.1	499	9.3	6(2)=8	72.7	3,508	65.7
	Cri	9,753	24	2(1)=3	12.5	1,525	15.6	8(2)=10	41.7	4,589	47.1	8(3)=11	45.8	3,639	37.3
TOTAL		2,269,073	3127	668(15)683		476,129		827(17)844		555,666		1560(40)1600		1,237,278	

No. of Articles & Words							
		Nigeria		Libya		South Africa	
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words
The Times	Democracy	23(1)24	11,617	10(1)11	6,661	36(6)42	29,557
	Infrastructure	6(0)6	1,989	6(0)6	2,657	9(3)12	6,530
	Sport	22(5)27	32,116	4(0)4	1,668	259(86)341	216,978
	Corruption	25(2)27	17,215	1(0)1	1,363	45(9)54	27,669
	Fraud	17(1)18	9,767	0	0	21(3)24	10,227
	Crime	15(3)18	7,903	5(1)6	3,045	46(18)64	47,064
The Telegraph	Democracy	5(2)7	3,936	0	0	21(2)23	11,745
	Infrastructure	0	0	1(0)1	216	0(2)2	1,669
	Sport	3(0)3	2,819	2(0)2	1,070	62(30)92	63,583
	Corruption	10(6)16	11,217	0	0	27(8)35	17,435
	Fraud	4(2)6	3,029	0	0	9(0)9	3,590
	Crime	6(6)12	8,263	0(2)2	1,284	29(10)39	19,940
The Financial Times	Democracy	414	323,641	150	144,835	0	0
	Infrastructure	390	340,330	119	105,945	806	677,641
	Sport	306	251,763	82	73,651	1,986	1,451,795
	Corruption	630	474,789	76	88,735	601	476,525
	Fraud	355	226,587	36	41,868	357	254,414
	Crime	640	404,355	203	147,852	987	707,111
The Guardian	Democracy	44(3)47	36,724	6(2)8	7,403	50(11)61	59,456
	Infrastructure	1(0)1	637	1(1)2	1,031	3(0)3	2,373
	Sport	7(2)9	3,039	0(1)1	1,360	124(96)220	160,360
	Corruption	28(9)37	26,136	1(0)1	1,953	45(10)55	32,855
	Fraud	8(3)11	7,186	0	0	10(2)12	6,446
	Crime	12(4)16	8,844	0(1)1	766	98(12)110	110,343
The Independent	Democracy	28(8)36	21,700	4(0)4	4,137	68(1)69	48,471
	Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	5(2)7	4,632
	Sport	14(4)18	9,051	1(0)1	461	113(53)166	101,517
	Corruption	15(3)18	9,326	3(0)3	2,271	35(5)40	17,713
	Fraud	9(2)11	5,341	0	0	16(3)19	7,628
	Crime	18(6)24	9,753	6(0)6	4,356	53(20)73	49,759
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,269,073</b>		<b>644,588</b>		<b>4,625,026</b>

Total per category							
		Nigeria		Libya		South Africa	
		No. of Articles / %	No. of Words/ %	No. of Articles / %	No. of Words/ %	No. of Articles / %	No. of Words/ %
1	Democracy	528 (59%)	397,618(56%)	173 (19.3%)	163,036(23%)	195(21.7%)	149,229(21%)
2	Infrastructure	397(29.3%)	342,956(30.0%)	128(9.4%)	109,849(9.6%)	830(61.3%)	692,845(60.4%)
3	Sport	363(11.0%)	298,788(12.6%)	90(3.0%)	78,210((3.3%)	2,805(86.0%)	1,994,233(84.1%)
4	Corruption	728(45.7%)	538,683(44.6%)	81(5.1%)	94,322(8.0%)	785(49.2%)	572,197(47.4%)
5	Fraud	401(46.7%)	251,910(43.7%)	36(4.1%)	41,868(7.3%)	421(49.1%)	282,305(49.0%)
6	Crime	710(32.2%)	439,118(28.7%)	218(10.0%)	157,303(10.3%)	1,273(57.8%)	934,217(61.0%)
		<b>3127 (31%)</b>	<b>2,269,073 (30%)</b>	<b>726 (7%)</b>	<b>644,588 (9%)</b>	<b>6,309 (62%)</b>	<b>4,625,026 (61%)</b>

Average per title							
		Nigeria		Libya		South Africa	
		No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words	No. of Articles	No. of Words
1	Democracy	105.6	79,523.6	34.6	32,607.2	39	29,845.8
2	Infrastructure	79.4	68,591.2	25.6	21,969.8	166	138,569
3	Sport	72.6	59,757.6	18	15,642	561	398,846.6
4	Corruption	145.6	107,736.6	16.2	18,864.4	157	114,439.4
5	Fraud	80.2	50,382	7.2	8,373.6	84.2	56,461
6	Crime	142	87,826.6	43.6	31,460.6	254.6	186,843.4

Total per category							
		Nigeria		Libya		South Africa	
		No. of Articles / %	No. of Words/ %	No. of Articles / %	No. of Words/ %	No. of Articles / %	No. of Words/ %
1	Democracy	528 (59%)	397,618(56%)	173 (19.3%)	163,036(23%)	195(21.7%)	149,229(21%)
2	Infrastructure	397(29.3%)	342,956(30.0%)	128(9.4%)	109,849(9.6%)	830(61.3%)	692,845(60.4%)
3	Sport	363(11.0%)	298,788(12.6%)	90(3.0%)	78,210((3.3%)	2,805(86.0%)	1,994,233(84.1%)
	Total		<b>1,039,362</b>		<b>351,095</b>		<b>2,836,307</b>
4	Corruption	728(45.7%)	538,683(44.6%)	81(5.1%)	94,322(8.0%)	785(49.2%)	572,197(47.4%)
5	Fraud	401(46.7%)	251,910(43.7%)	36(4.1%)	41,868(7.3%)	421(49.1%)	282,305(49.0%)
6	Crime	710(32.2%)	439,118(28.7%)	218(10.0%)	157,303(10.3%)	1,273(57.8%)	934,217(61.0%)
	Total		<b>1,229,711</b>		<b>293,493</b>		<b>1,788,719</b>
		<b>3127 (31%)</b>	<b>2,269,073 (30%)</b>	<b>726 (7%)</b>	<b>644,588 (9%)</b>	<b>6,309 (62%)</b>	<b>4,625,026 (61%)</b>

1997 - 1999																						
		Informative Coverage					Evaluative Coverage															
		Total	News	Sources			Features	Sources			Signed Op	Sources			Editorial	Sources			Letters	Sources		
				N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B
The Times	Dem	19	12	1	7	4	7	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Infr	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	4	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Cor	9	5	2	3	0	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Fra	5	4	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cri	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Telegraph	Dem	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Fra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
The Financial Times	Dem	149	99	31	55	13	14	3	9	2	12	0	12	0	20	0	20	0	4	0	4	0
	Inf	70	34	6	24	4	31	1	26	4	3	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	83	27	2	25	0	51	1	50	0	4	0	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	113	60	27	29	4	25	1	22	2	10	0	10	0	13	0	13	0	5	2	3	0
	Fra	38	24	10	13	1	12	1	11	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Cri	93	56	21	33	2	25	2	23	0	9	0	9	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	0
The Guardian	Dem	36	25	12	11	2	8	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
	Inf	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	8	4	2	2	0	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Fra	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cri	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
The Independent	Dem	31	25	14	3	8	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	3	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	7	5	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	
	Fra	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cri	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Total		683	389	132	213	44	191	20	149	21	41	0	41	0	45	2	43	0	17	5	12	0
Percentage %		683	389	33.9	54.8	11.3	191	10.5	78.0	11.0	41	0	100	0	45	4.4	95.6	0.0	17	29.4	70.6	0.0

2000 – 2002																								
		Informative Coverage					Evaluative Coverage																	
		Total	News	Sources			Features	Sources			Signed Op	Sources			Editorial	Sources			Letters	Sources				
				N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B		
The Times	Dem	4	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Infr	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	14	11	6	3	2	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cor	5	2	2	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fra	4	3	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cri	3	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Telegraph	Dem	3	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cor	3	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fra	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Financial Times	Dem	116	69	16	50	3	26	13	11	2	8	0	8	0	8	0	8	0	5	2	3	0	0	0
	Inf	80	43	12	31	0	30	15	13	2	3	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
	Spo	107	54	8	45	1	49	5	43	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
	Cor	163	88	40	48	0	48	21	22	5	8	0	8	0	13	0	13	0	6	1	5	0	0	0
	Fra	103	66	14	52	0	20	7	13	0	7	0	7	0	6	0	6	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
	Cri	192	123	32	92	0	44	7	35	2	10	0	10	0	7	0	7	0	7	0	7	0	0	0
The Guardian	Dem	4	2	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	3	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cor	7	4	1	3	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Fra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cri	3	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Independent	Dem	3	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	9	8	3	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cor	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fra	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cri	10	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		844	498	148	342	9	239	77	143	19	41	0	41	0	37	0	37	0	28	5	23	0	0	0
percentage %		844	498	29.7	68.7	1.8	239	32.2	59.8	7.9	41	0	100	0	37	0	100	0	28	17.9	82.1	0.0	0	0

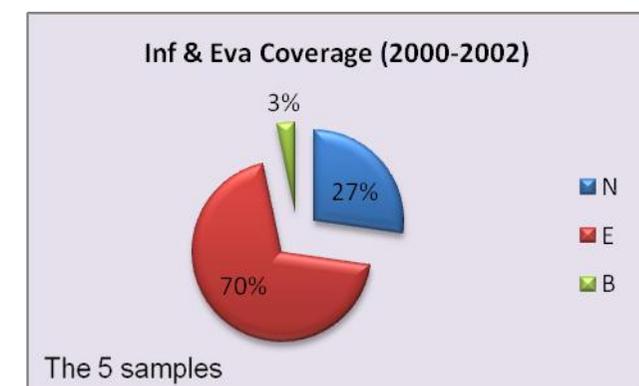
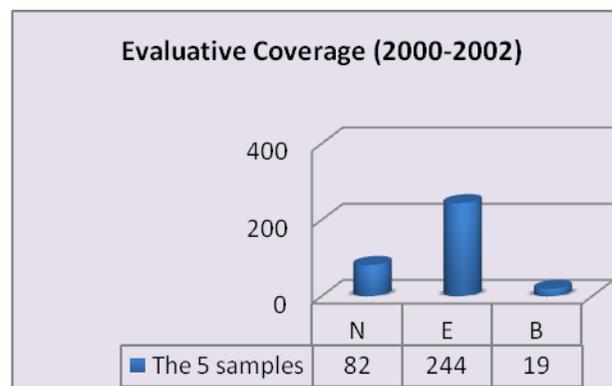
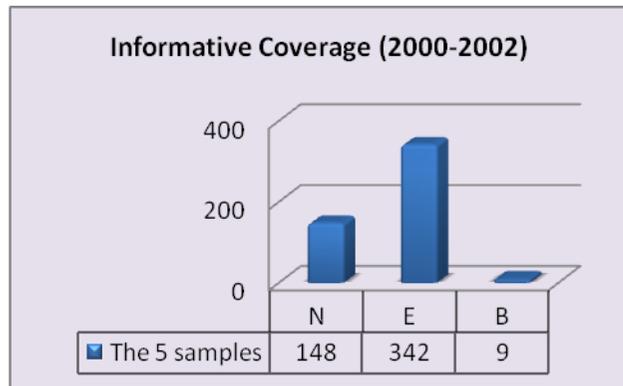
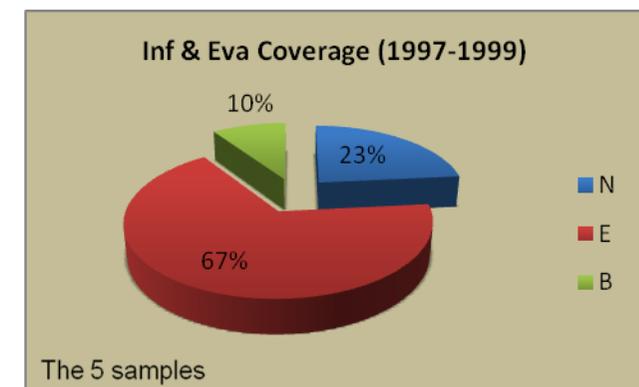
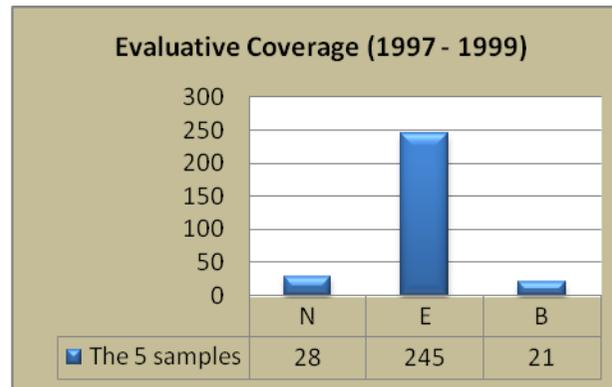
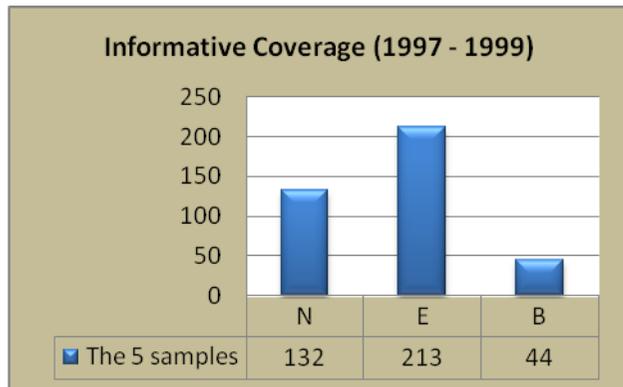
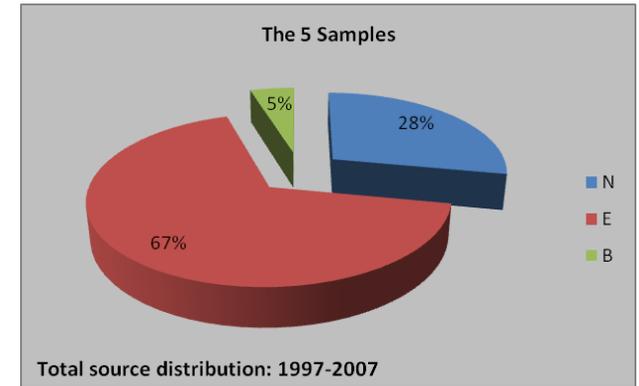
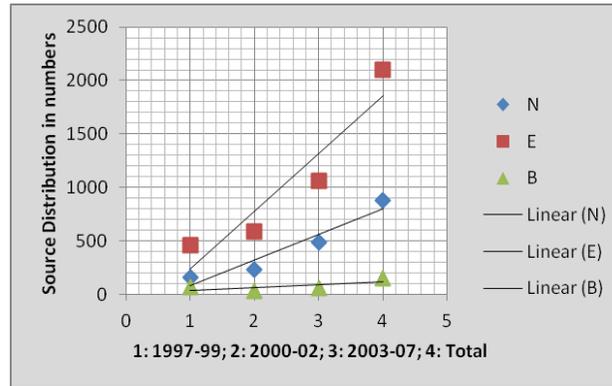
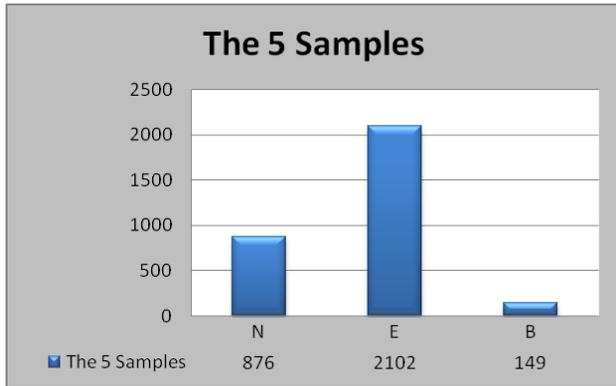
2003 – 2007																							
		Informative Coverage					Evaluative Coverage																
		Total	News	Sources			Features	Sources			Signed Op	Sources			Editorial	Sources			Letters	Sources			
				N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B		N	E	B	
The Times	Dem	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
	Infr	3	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Spo	9	6	4	1	1	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cor	13	10	4	4	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fra	9	6	2	2	2	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Cri	14	10	2	6	2	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
The Telegraph	Dem	4	3	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	13	10	8	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
	Fra	4	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cri	12	7	5	2	0	5	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
The Financial Times	Dem	149	67	26	41	0	43	20	23	0	25	0	25	0	6	0	6	0	8	3	5	0	
	Inf	240	119	24	91	4	80	24	54	2	37	0	37	0	3	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	
	Spo	116	55	2	51	2	57	3	54	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	354	197	87	108	2	97	43	53	1	42	0	42	0	14	0	14	0	4	2	2	0	
	Fra	214	152	70	77	5	36	15	19	2	18	0	18	0	6	0	6	0	2	2	0	0	
	Cri	355	238	73	160	5	76	26	49	1	28	0	28	0	9	0	9	0	4	3	1	0	
The Guardian	Dem	7	2	0	0	2	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	
	Inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	4	3	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	22	9	1	8	0	8	5	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	
	Fra	9	5	2	2	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cri	11	11	3	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
The Independent	Dem	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Inf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Spo	6	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cor	8	7	4	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Fra	8	8	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cri	11	9	6	3	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL		1600	946	332	581	33	432	142	267	23	157	1	156	0	40	0	40	0	25	11	14	0	
percentages %		1600	946	35.1	61.4	3.5	432	32.9	61.8	5.3	157	0.6	99.4	0.0	40	0.0	100.0	0.0	25	44	56	0	

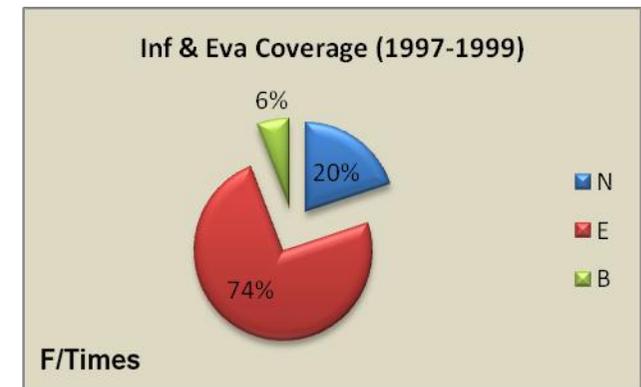
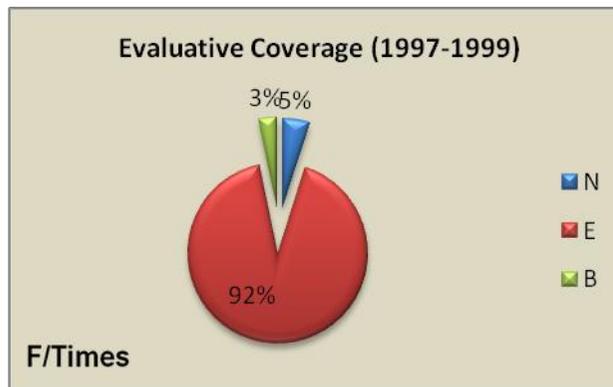
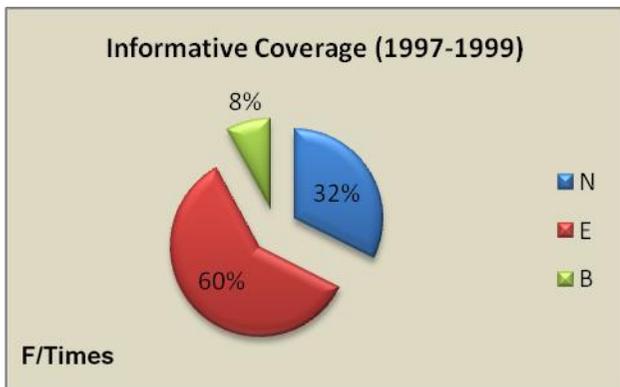
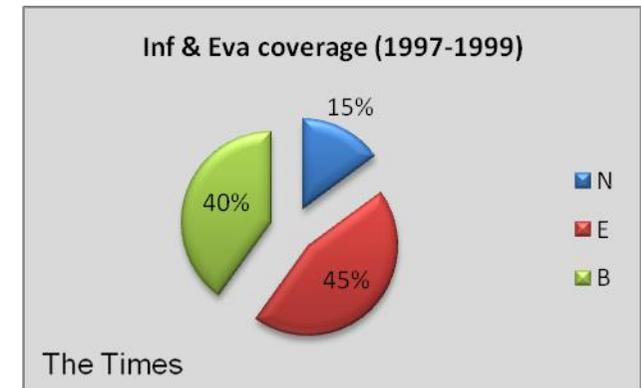
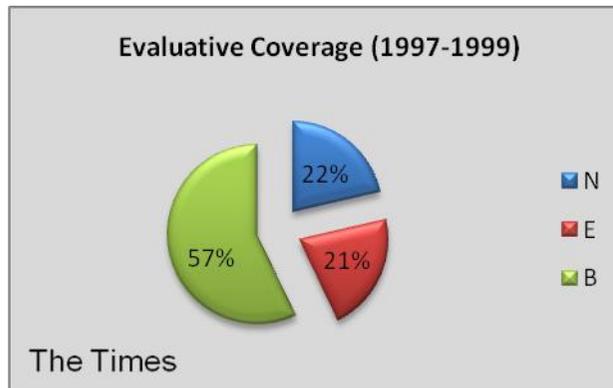
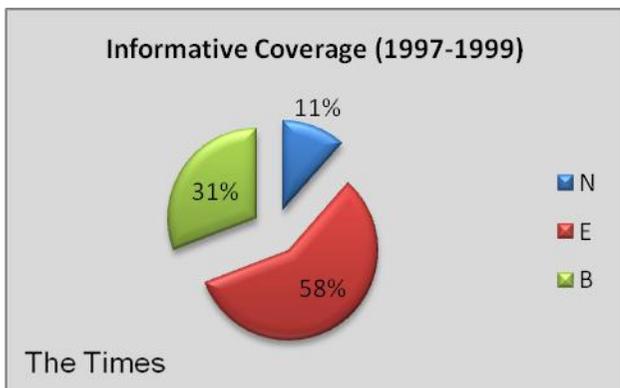
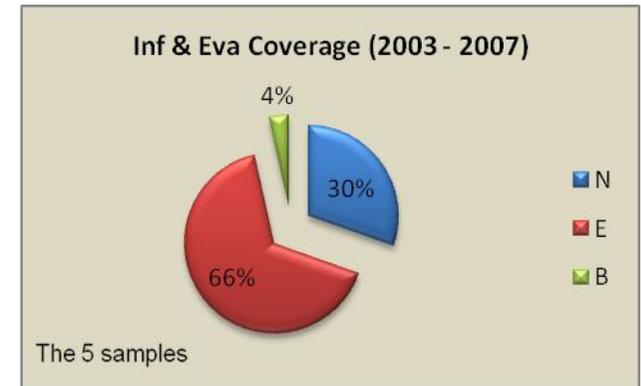
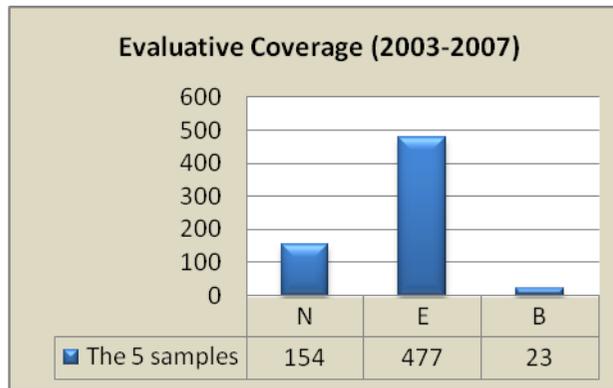
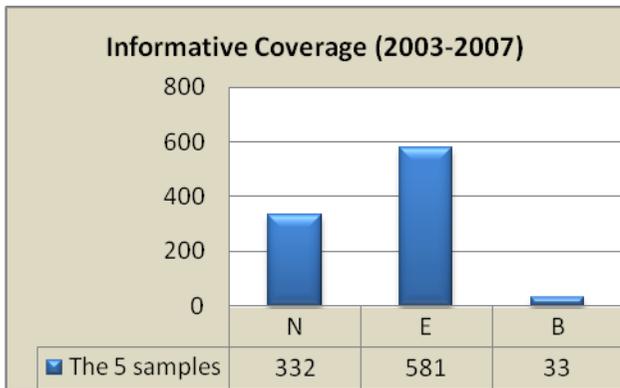
<b>Total per sample</b>													
		<b>Informative Coverage 1997-1999</b>				<b>Evaluative Coverage 1997 - 1999</b>				<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>		
		Total	N	E	B	Total	N	E	B	Inf + Eva	N	E	B
1	The Times	26	3	15	8	14	3	3	8	40	6	18	16
2	The D/Telegraph	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	F/Times	300	97	179	24	246	12	226	8	546	109	405	32
4	The Guardian	31	16	13	2	20	9	8	3	51	25	21	5
5	The Independent	32	16	6	10	14	4	8	2	46	20	14	12
	<b>Total</b>	389	132	213	44	294	28	245	21	683	160	458	65
	<b>Percentage %</b>		<b>34.0</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>11.3</b>		<b>10.0</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>		<b>23.0</b>	<b>67.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>

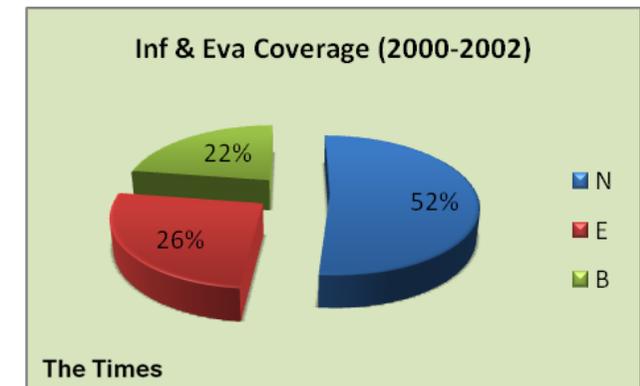
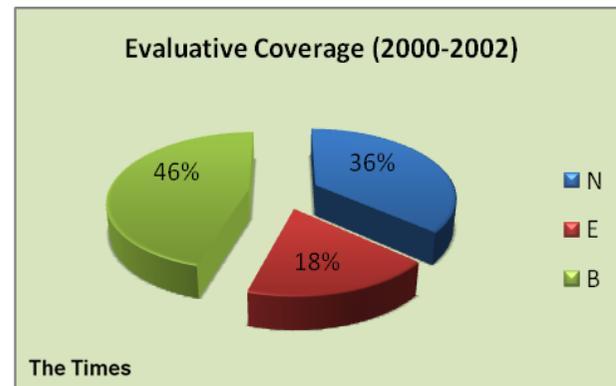
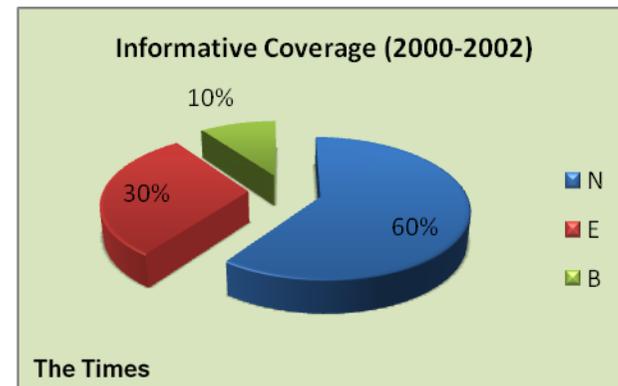
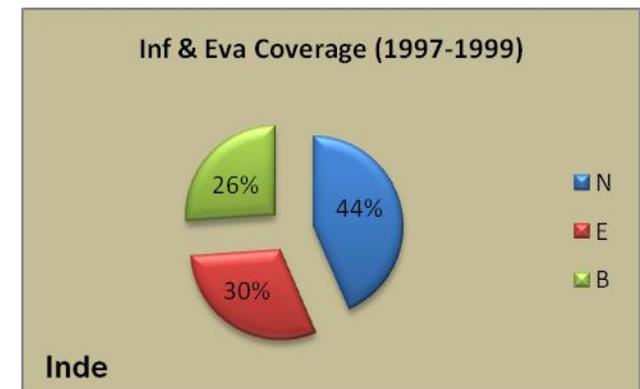
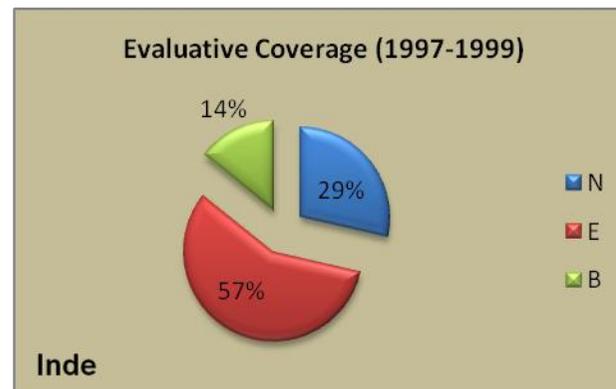
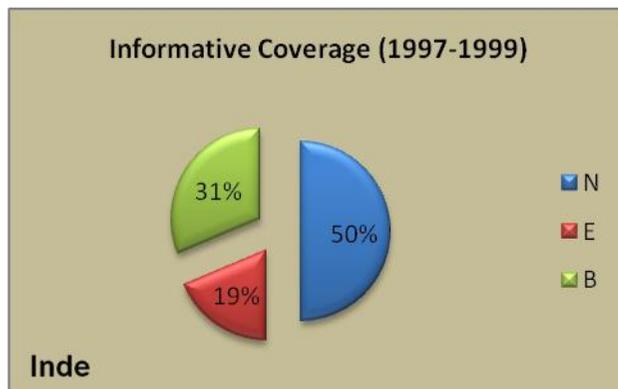
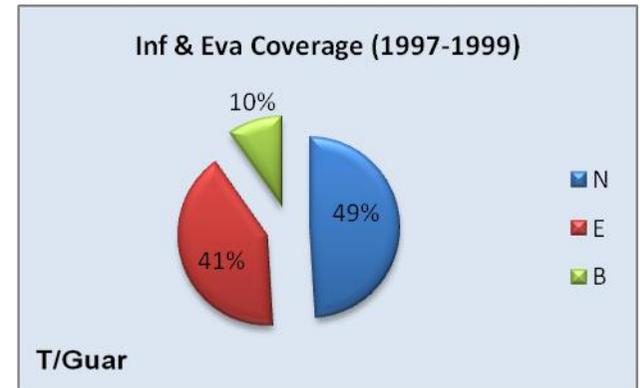
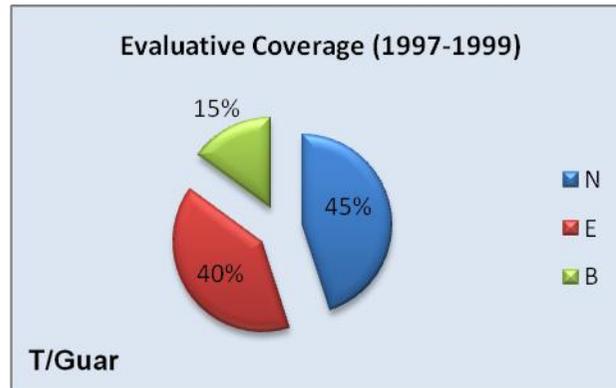
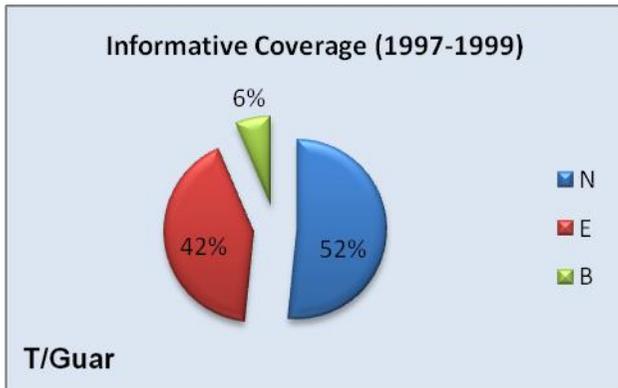
<b>Total per sample</b>													
		<b>Informative Coverage 2000-2002</b>				<b>Evaluative Coverage 2000 - 2002</b>				<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>		
		Total	N	E	B	Total	N	E	B	Inf + Eva	N	E	B
1	The Times	20	12	6	2	11	4	2	5	31	16	8	7
2	The D/Telegraph	6	1	5	0	3	1	0	2	9	2	5	2
3	F/Times	444	122	318	4	317	72	233	12	761	194	551	16
4	The Guardian	10	3	5	2	7	3	4	0	17	6	9	2
5	The Independent	19	10	8	1	7	2	5	0	26	12	13	1
	<b>Total</b>	499	148	342	9	345	82	244	19	844	230	586	28
	<b>Percentage %</b>		<b>29.7</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>1.8</b>		<b>23.8</b>	<b>70.7</b>	<b>5.5</b>		<b>27.0</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>

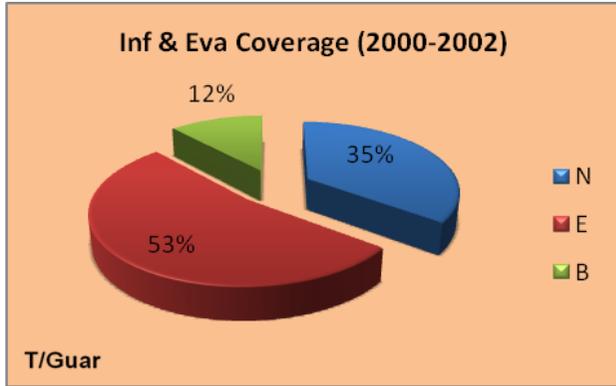
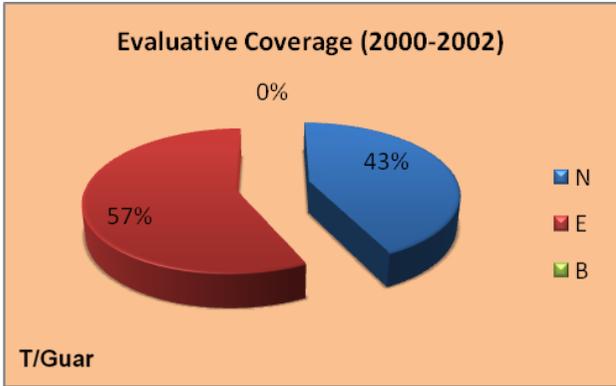
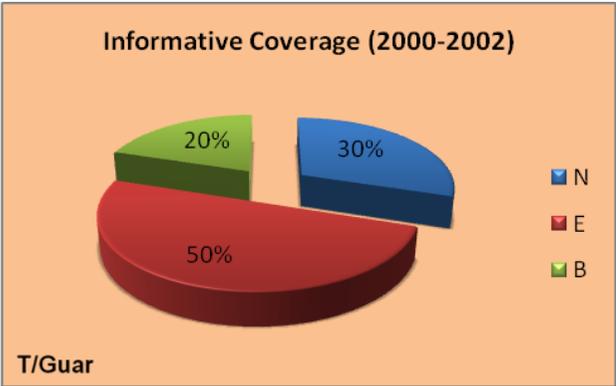
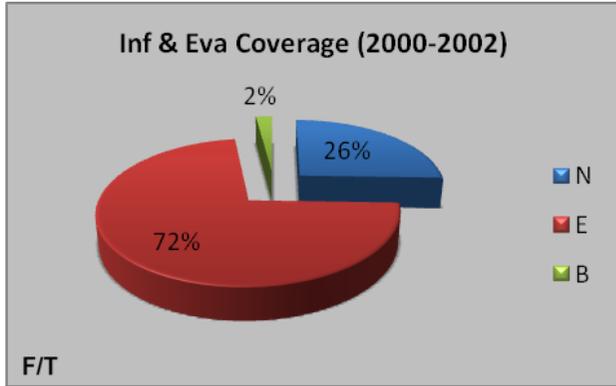
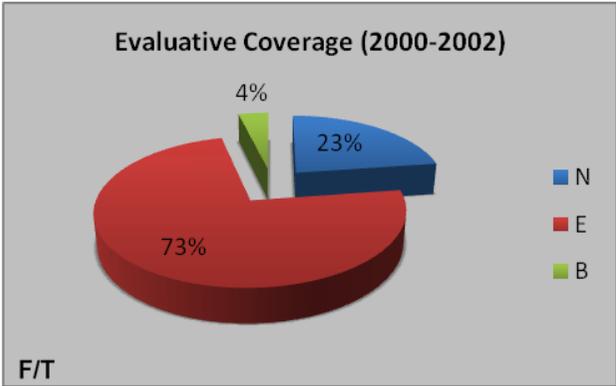
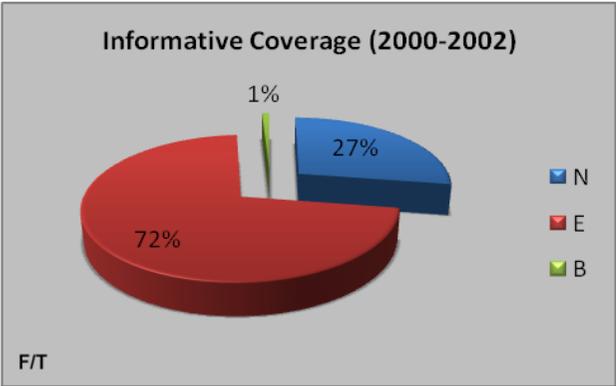
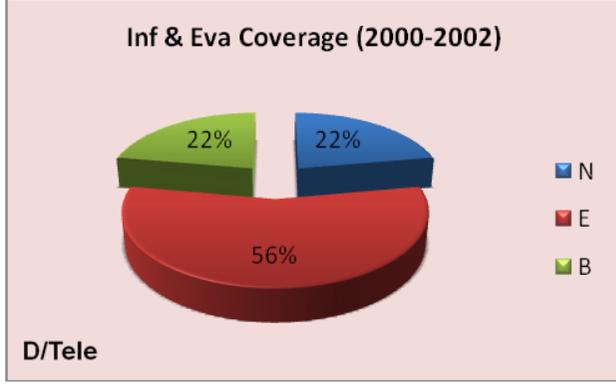
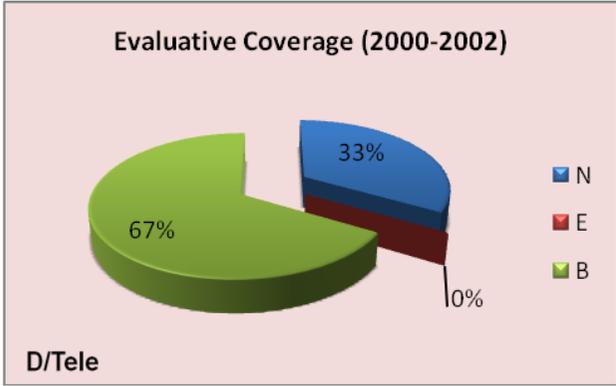
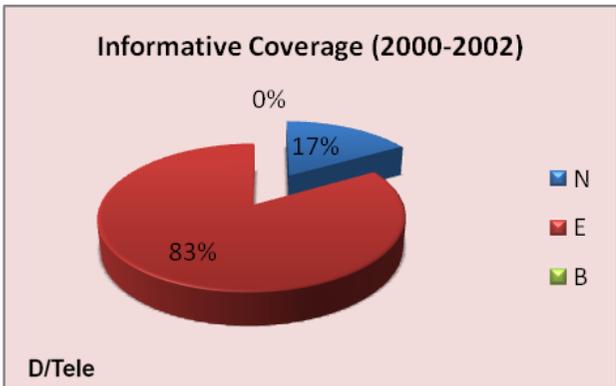
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		<b>Informative Coverage 2003-2007</b>				<b>Evaluative Coverage 2003 - 2007</b>				<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>		
		Total	N	E	B	Total	N	E	B	Inf + Eva	N	E	B
1	The Times	34	12	14	8	15	1	5	9	49	13	19	17
2	The D/Telegraph	23	16	5	2	12	1	4	7	35	17	9	9
3	F/Times	828	282	528	18	600	141	453	6	1428	423	981	24
4	The Guardian	30	7	18	5	23	8	14	1	53	15	32	6
5	The Independent	31	15	16	0	4	3	1	0	35	18	17	0
	<b>Total</b>	946	332	581	33	654	154	477	23	1600	486	1058	56
	<b>Percentage %</b>		<b>35.1</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>		<b>23.5</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>		<b>30.0</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>

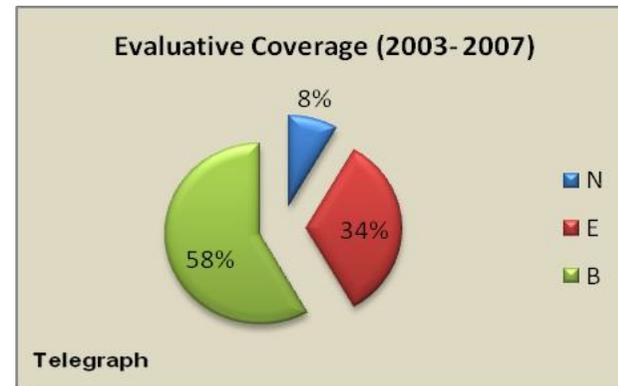
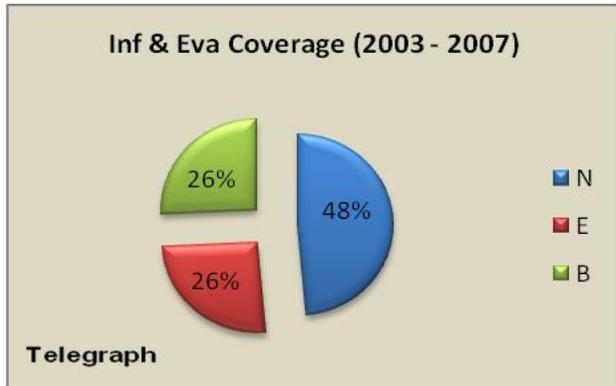
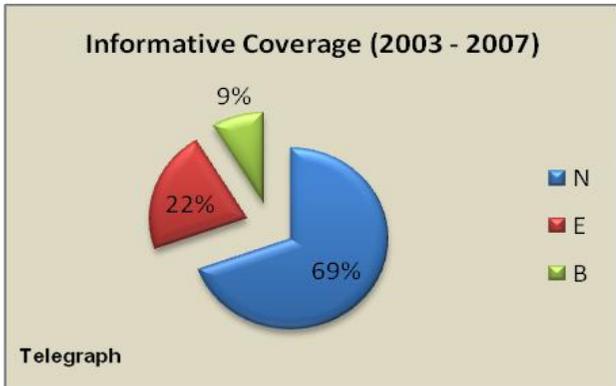
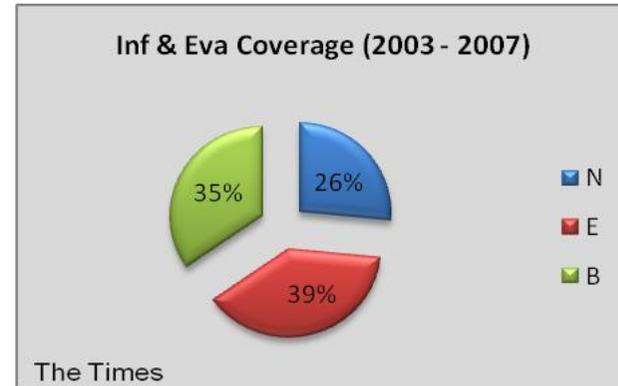
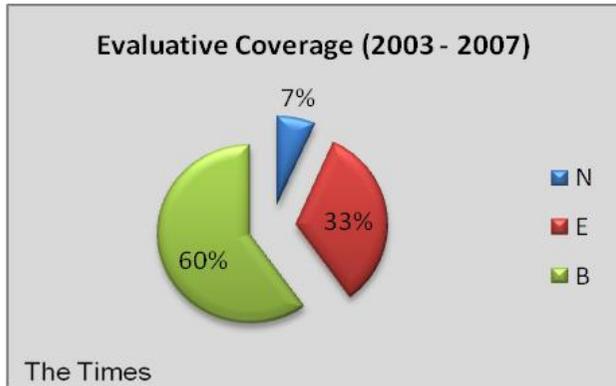
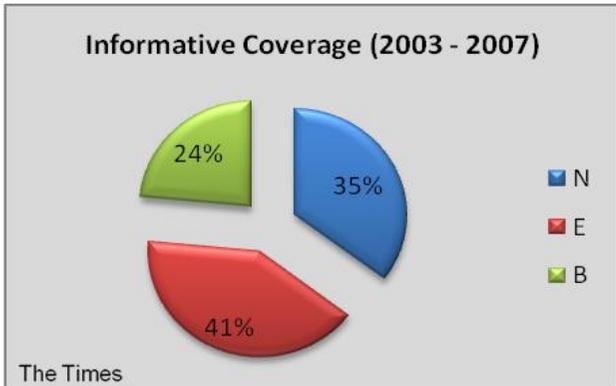
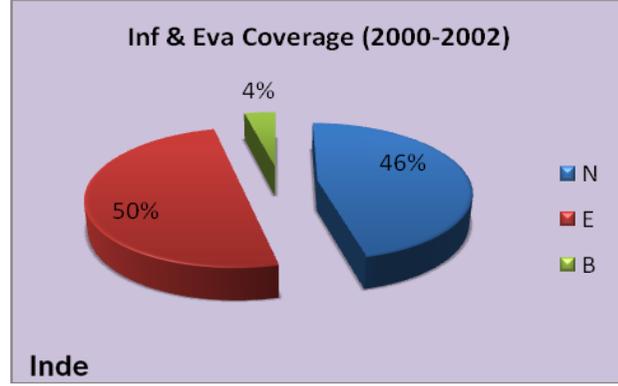
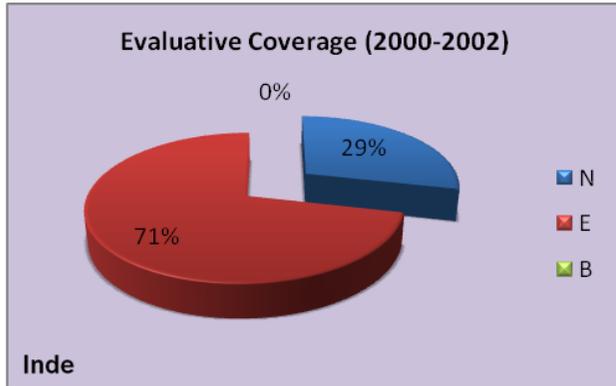
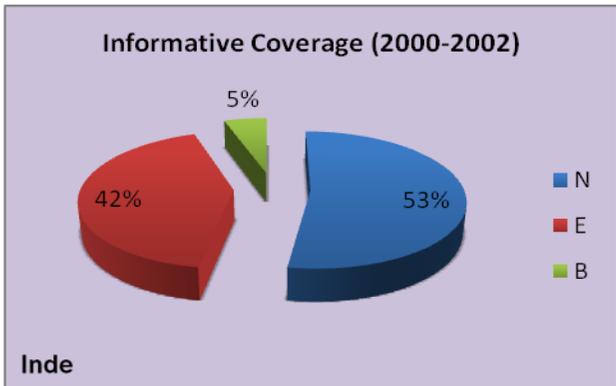
<b>The Samples</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>B</b>
1997-1999	160 (23%)	458 (67%)	65 (10%)
2000-2002	230 (27%)	586 (70%)	28 (3%)
2003-2007	486 (30%)	1058 (66%)	56 (4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>2102</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Percentage % (3127)</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>5%</b>

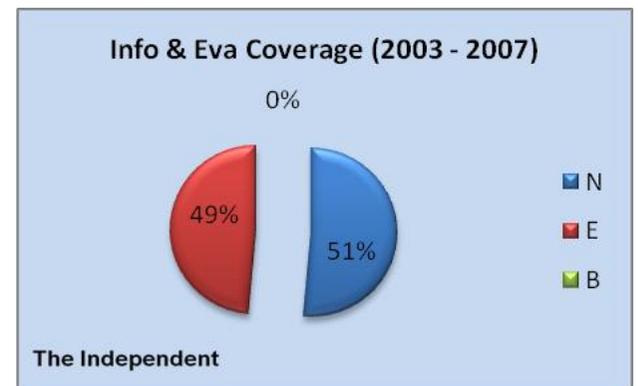
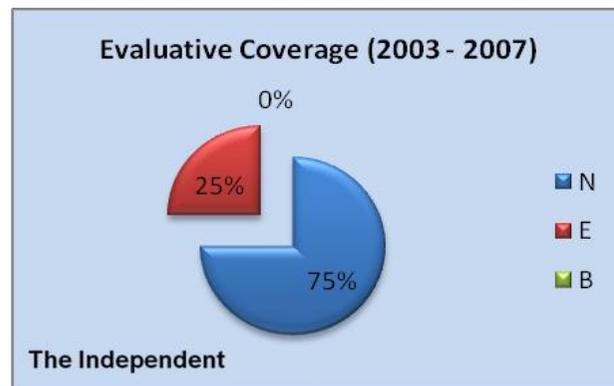
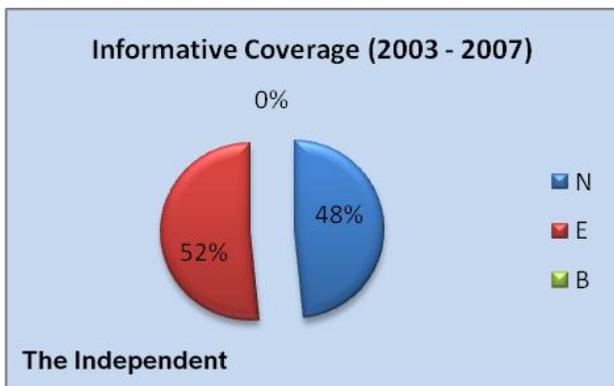
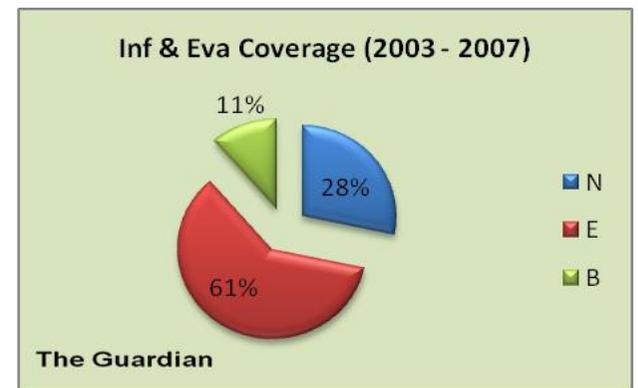
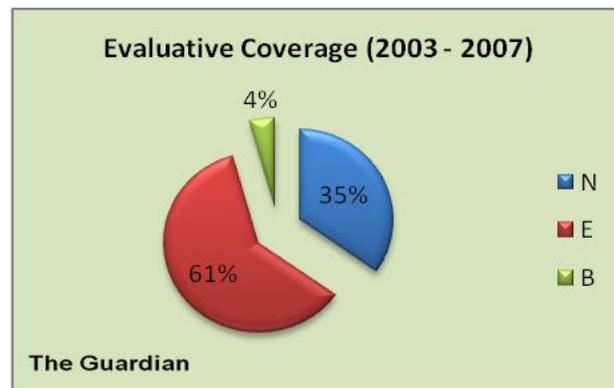
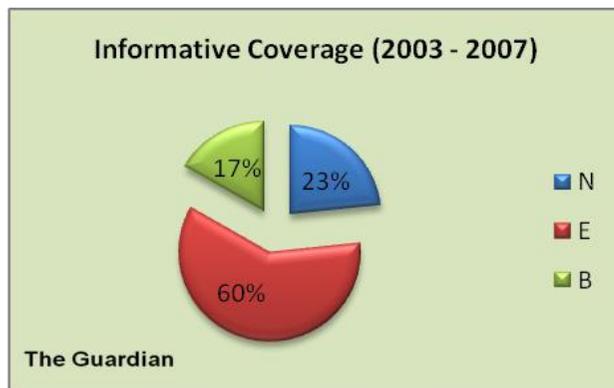
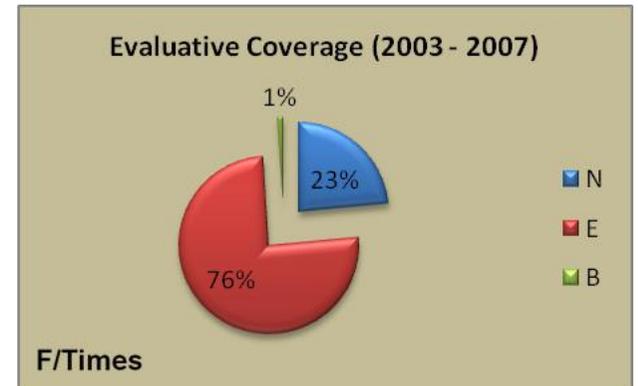
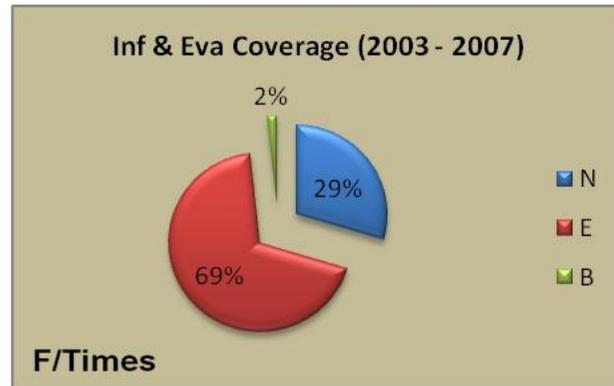
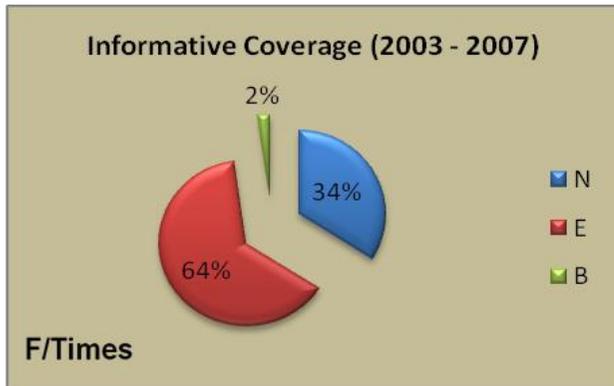












## Appendix 2: Interviews

### Interview Guide

1. In November 2006, Chatham House, a London-based organization which is also known as The Royal Institute of International Affairs published a commissioned report on financial activities of Nigerians living in Britain. The 65-page report was titled: “NIGERIA-RELATED FINANCIAL CRIME AND ITS LINKS WITH BRITAIN, An Africa Programme Report.” The Report, authored by Michael Peel did not only generate a lot of controversies; its publication by the British press (i.e. *The Guardian* of Nov. 20, 2006) even generated greater storm with the attendant accusation that the British press is deliberately portraying Nigerians as fraudsters and criminals. In view of the wide publicity given this report, not a few Nigerian accused the British press of a grand plot to undermine Nigeria’s fledging democracy. What do you think of these accusations?
2. There has been this general complaint amongst Nigerians that BBC coverage of Nigeria as well as the coverage of Reuters and other British news media have been from the point of view of corruption, fraud, famine, violence, political instability etc. What are your perspectives on this?
3. To what extent does news media coverage affect the public perception or image of Africa and Nigeria in particular?
4. From your experience in the media, do the British news media cover Nigeria and Britain from the same perspectives? If not, why and how is the coverage different?

5. Transparency International (TI) has always rated Nigeria as a corrupt country. Giving the methodology of its data collection, which is simply through interviewing foreign businessmen about their perception, do you think the result would have been different if a different method is applied and how do you think this could be done?
6. The image of Nigeria outside of Nigeria is that of a symbol of corruption. One British newspaper refers to Nigeria as the ‘Vatican of the International Church of Theft and Fraud,’ as someone who lives in Nigeria, how true is this referent?
7. Some people think TI’s recurrent branding of Nigeria as a corrupt country is not only responsible for the country’s poor image but it is equally a strategy to explain away the failures of World Bank/IMF and other western intervention programmes (i.e.) SAP by other means; as focus on corruption will divert attention from pointing fingers at some failed programmes. What do you think about this?
8. The coverage of Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers in particular has been described as focusing on corruption, fraud, violence and instability and that accusation of negative coverage by the British media is an unfair attempt at buck-passing. What is your reaction to this?
9. In what area have there been noticeable changes in the coverage of Nigeria by the British news media since May 1999 when Nigeria returned to democratic rule?
10. Compared to British news media, how do the Nigerian news media portray Britain in your opinion?

11. One of the reasons for inaccuracies in news report is some reporters' tendencies to pass their personal opinion as news, define their news subjects through age-old stereotypes or through the prism of their own culture. How do you think these issues can be well-addressed?
  
12. Academics oftentimes view news as a social construction, which is understandably affected by the constructors' cultural and ideological perception; as a professional in the business of news writing; what roles do you think these cognitive attributes play in Europeans or British representation of Africa or Nigeria respectively?
  
13. Reporters, or more properly, newsmen from the western hemisphere always lay claim to objectivity and never admitted to being ideological; whereas it has been argued that it is almost impossible for anyone to function without some forms of ideology; do you think it is possible to function as a news person in the west without leaning towards the capitalist ideology and other attendant social values?
  
14. If you have the powers to make the world better, what exactly would first occupy your attention?
  
15. Briefly, can you say something about yourself in say, two or three paragraphs?

**Sample of Interview transcription** [Jonathan Dimpleby, North London; 29/10/2010]

*Q: There are not too many journalists who know Africa and report Africa with as much passion as you do; your recent series, “An African Journey,” is a testimony to this assertion. Now, what actually is the real motivation?*

A: Well, I've been going to Africa for quite a long time, since 1972. My first experience of Africa was a terrible disaster, the famine in the region of Wollo in Ethiopia. Oh, that's not true! My first experience was actually a much more political one. It was in Zimbabwe, where I was covering the attempt by the Peace Commission, which was to come up with a solution to White rule. It was clear to me very quickly while I was there that they were trying to foist on the African majority a solution which would actually leaves the Whites with a blocking power indefinitely. I felt it was wrong and so we did a very simple film titled: '**The Blacks say No,**' even before they said anything because it was clear that was what they were going to do. That was for me very instructive. Also, I was in Uganda in 1972, when Idi Amin was expelling the Asian population, which was a very nasty, very ugly and very insecure period. And then, I was in Senegal; and was struck just looking at the environment. I got very intrigued as a young journalist, by the dramas of Africa, the extraordinary intensity of life, often very unpleasantly dangerous, often very exhilarating. And I then went to Ethiopia. I felt that we make huge assumptions when we look at Africa. I thought about this for a long time. I think if the coverage of these countries from abroad was exclusively in terms of child-molesters, knife-crimes ...and official corruption we might say this is a slight distortion from what the reality is back in the United

Kingdom. Yet, when we report Africa, very diverse, we very rarely offer context. Specialist writers do, of course. What we are reporting in the west is not untrue in itself. But since it is out of any context, the images that are left powerfully in the mind, not just on Television but also in the print media and radio as well, are very acute, very sharp, often very pungent, and often very harsh. I've always been aware of this. And I have also been, over the years, a guilty party of that too, as I reported the dramas. For instance in Ethiopia, though I am glad I reported what happened in Ethiopia in 1973, I was aware that in a nearby town, three miles away from where the crisis took place, people were getting on with normal life. So, you had scores of thousands of people on the verge of death from disease and starvation here and three miles away, you have a town of 100,000 people living their normal daily life. So, reconciling the reality of daily life with the intense drama of horror is always very difficult. I think sometimes if you understand the context, it is okay to do that. So, if you were an Ethiopian, a Nigerian, or a Ghanaian and you were reporting your own country, people know the context generally. If there's a headline story about a knife crime or shooting of a policeman in London, people know it's unusual and that's why it gets headline coverage. But if it is in the context of Nigeria that a policeman has been shot or a policeman shot an innocent person and I see the report. There's a temptation to believe that well, that's Nigeria. The police are always shooting innocent people every day; you can hardly walk down the streets in Lagos. So, my motivation for my most recent works come from the awareness that there's much more to Africa than disaster, disease, corruption, war, famine, extreme poverty. My desire is to say that there's much more to this continent than all those things. And all those issues are important to the people living in that continent as well. There's a perception that these people are victims or are totally indifferent to what is happening

in their continent. These are people living in different countries; people with very different set of talents. It is a continent, which vibrates with energy. There are entrepreneurs, a wide range of individuals leading fascinating lives. That's the essence of my report. It is a very long one, I'm sorry...

*Q: Do you have problems convincing your organization to broadcast such programmes because there's a theory that the British public is not interested about programmes on Africa except they are about the so-called 'Africa's 4Ds?'*

A: There's a presumptions that people don't want to watch programmes about Africa unless they are wild-life programmes, Safari-type programmes. That they don't even want to watch programmes which deliver bad news about disasters because there's a theory that people are weary of disasters and so there's a reluctance therefore to engage with yet another disaster. That theory I think is false. But, in so far as things are, there's some element of truth in it, it is our fault as communicators because we have created the environment in which people see Africa. For me, BBC needed some persuading. They were helped, without doubts, by the mood music of the time, which was South Africa at the World Cup. I think that made the BBC commissioners more responsive than they might otherwise have been. The success of my earlier series (programme) on Russia also helped. What has been fascinating to me is the response to the programme across the board. I expected lots of criticisms. I expected criticisms from aid agencies, unilateral organizations and from Africans who might say, 'this is soft soap.' On the contrary, most African people, whether their particular countries featured in the film or not, were incredibly enthusiastic about it. The response to the programme was tremendous. It is actually rather humbling or rather hopeful that that

should be the case; that you have to do a programme like that about a great continent, which is very necessary and people should be pleased that someone has done it. The British aid agencies were all really enthusiastic. I got letters from about four of them. I got very positive response. The general viewers just enjoyed it. They said they never seen a programme like that. For me, I hope it has opened the door for other people to look at things from different perspectives as regards Africa; not when it is bad but to put it context.

*Q: As a human being, what kind of emotion did you feel when you return to Ethiopia during your recent journey?*

A: It wasn't the first time since 1973. What happened was that the 1973 film was used by the dogs (the military), who overthrew Haile Sellassie. It was used by them as a means of securing their hold on power. Haile Sellassie was an extremely popular individual. My film had nothing political in it. I think the strongest statement at the end, apart from simply reporting the situation, was: 'one day they'll have to be answers to the questions it poses but at the moment, what the people need is....' Witnessing that was a devastating experience. I've been there several times until I was barred by the dogs [in 1978] because I was extremely critical of the terror campaign they waged against students who happened to have a different ideology. It was a ludicrous appropriation of Russian revolutionary history. I was very angry about that and I went on BBC World Service and denounced what they did because they used my film. They were doubly outraged. So, I was regarded as a traitor. And they banned me from coming in. I was banned in 1978. I kept very close interest because I had friends who kept telling me things were getting worse and worse. I tried to get

permission to get back in just to report and encouraged others to go there when I knew I couldn't go in. Anyway, I was back there in 1987 when I filmed in Ethiopia and around Eritrea and I was banned again until 1999. And since then I had been there several times partly for broadcasting, partly for film-making, partly for VSO's work. For me, I was quite affirmative because going back to the north where things were bleak for people in 1973 and 1974, I found there were real projects underway, which are quite sustainable. Food production has increased. Land reform has taken place. It may not be the right solution in view of the big debate as to whether it should be a free market or the present rent system should continue but all the reputable Aid Agencies regard what is happening in Ethiopia as positive. On that tract, I felt pretty encouraged. Although, as I said, when I was there I found that there were still some people in need of food over and above what could buy or what they grew because of the problem of distribution in the country. If we look at the issue of food production on per capital basis, we'll find that they have a surplus but they couldn't move the surplus... [and is not the right kind of food for other regions of the country]. It is a very inaccessible country but now, they've built 40,000 kilometres of good roads. Also, they got plans in the next five years, which are funded, to build another 40,000 kilometres. That's 80,000 kilometres of good roads. Their economy is growing very fast. The IMF figures show their economy growing at 8.5% this year. Though as characteristic in Africa, there's the failure in getting taxes paid on what is known to be the gross incomes, but they are improving on that sharply. That plus donor' loans and other incomes mean the infrastructure is being improved. So, I feel in economics terms or in developmental terms, quite optimistic but you cannot ever, as any serious observer knows, separate the capacity economically from the will politically. In my point of view, the will politically involves some criteria by which we assess the way

people live there: transparency, accountability and the rule of law are the key contexts. Of course, in terms of Africa generally, where are we, in the west incidentally, to be critical of Africa? Where is the rule of law in relations to the possibility of war crimes being committed in Iraq and Afghanistan? Where is the rule of law when Enron is able to get away with it? Where is transparency when our politicians were free to exploit the system to increase their incomes without anyone knowing? So, I think we have to be very careful about being judgmental. Nonetheless, I am with those in Africa who want radical improvement in terms of accountability. Whatever form democracy takes, it is accountability that matters whether it is western form, American style or an African form of democracy; it is fine by me so long there's genuine accountability. Yet, there's a long way to go. However, if you look at Africa generally, we always do snapshots. If you do a snapshot now and compared with a snapshot of say 40 years ago, 30 years ago, 20 years ago or even 10 years ago, you'll find that despite everything, the situation is much better. African societies are more open. There's a more sustained economic development taking place. Take your country, Nigeria, which is a byword for corruption for example, Transparency International has rated some of the banks in Nigeria as being perfectly suited for investment by the west and able to open their offices in western countries and function without people saying 'don't go through that door unless you have money to launder...' That is an indication of positive change.

*Q: Let's talk about reporting in context. From the example you gave, your film was latched on to by the military in Ethiopia to secure their hold on power. Something similar had happened in Nigeria. The Financial Times did a survey, in which they wrote that Nigeria has had a lavish party but the lenders have come to collect their*

*payback. That report was also used by the military to take over power in 1983. If Nigeria had been a democracy since then, the system would have found a way to correct itself but then, the military came in and took the country back some 40 years, which led to the emergence of people like Babangida, Abacha and so on under whose leadership corruption and other ills fester. Now, talking about context of reporting: do people here [journalists in Britain] really know that reporting out of context on Africa precipitate problems?*

A: They don't.

Q: *Why don't they?*

A: Because they are...I think it's very different if you are a Nigerian or a Ghanaian and you're living here, you will know the context and therefore, can judge things by yourself because you're familiar with the context. But if you are a middle class, white Anglo-Saxon English person who has a vague sense that Nigeria was a once a British colony that got independence, you'll have a vague sense that it was struggling internally in the late 60s as a result of the Biafran war, you'll know it had a military dictatorship; you'll know that the country is a byword for political corruption; you'll know that Shell is in the eye of the storm because of its treatment of people in the Niger Delta; you'll know that probably or you'll have a sense of that. But what you won't get or have a sense of is that people in Nigeria are aware of these things and that there's internal struggle as well to deliver good governance. For example, you have a radio station in Nigeria, which is open and available and provides people with the platform to ask questions, and as such, people do aspire to have a healthier and

more accountable society. It is very difficult to get that because the analysis or the commentary is always just looking at the central problem rather than who is seeking out ways of dealing with that problem or who did find a solution to those problems. So, people don't know....

*Q: Who might have changed that or make people aware or know these things...*

A: I think it is very difficult because you need the space, you need the knowledge. Also, there's the issue of resources. It is a great paradox of our time that as our capacity to communicate more effectively has been made easier and easier, our ability to do so is actually sharply reduced. This is particularly with reference to the mainstream media. Resources are out there but you can't plough them into looking at these kinds of issues. *Financial Times* is actually one exception because it does have a special status in Nigeria. I'm not too sure, if the BBC has a permanent correspondent in Nigeria. Well, Nigeria is a special case; it is one of the three or four most important countries on the continent think about the other countries, which are smaller. I just think this is sort of overload of potential information much of it un-sieved, unmediated, which is what happens on the internet, which is discounted on the one hand. On the other hand, there's increasing squeeze on resources to do proper interpretations, commentaries, analyses and so on... Now, if we put the question in reverse, do people in Africa have the context about issues in this country? I don't know the answer but they'll probably have more of the context because it [Britain] is still one of the important G8 countries. Therefore, people will know....

Q: *If you remember, when you were in Ghana you spoke to the young boy who won the football contest in your recent series. As the boy said, people in Africa even smaller African countries know a lot about what goes on here [United Kingdom] especially the football teams like Chelsea, Liverpool etc. They seem to know almost the entire team including those who are not playing regularly. You see them wearing the jerseys of the teams like Chelsea, Arsenal etc...*

A: Yes. ...And you can go into most Bars in Accra and that's also true of Nigeria, and you'll find a big TV set outside just like here and you'll hear people say: 'hey, come on boss, it is Arsenal against Chelsea this afternoon.' I said to the coach who was teaching these young men: do you get a sense of different national talents and characteristics? He said yes, yes and I said what I would like is to wedge together the twin qualities of drive and velocity of the Nigerians and the elegant delicacy of the ball control of the Ghanaians to make a world winning team... [Laughter!]

Q: *In Harrison and Palmer's 1986 book, **News Out of Africa**, you were quoted as saying: 'You listen to the BBC World Service bulletin and you find out what's happening in the world. You listen to a BBC or ITN news bulletin and you discover what's happening in the rest of the world only if there has been a major disaster, a mega death of some type, the overthrow of a government, or a visit by the Royal Family. So, you get very little considered news. It is very depressing and increasingly it is almost impossible -for me- to understand the criteria, which determines the news agenda.'* Do you still hold the same views today? If yes, why is the coverage pattern like that?

A: [Laughter] Oh! You've done your research. Broadly speaking, the answer is yes. I do think, for instance, that if you're interested in the financial world, then that's no longer the case because people who are interested in financial news could do so online. Everyone knows what's happening in the Nigerian Stock Market as soon as they want to know it and vice versa. There's a certain level of transmission of information in that respect. There's a greater sense that the culture of nations is important to understand but... if you look at general reportage, you'll still find that it is heavily focused on individual crisis of one kind and another. And now, I'm going to argue against myself. If you take Iraq and Afghanistan, because we are covering it so much of the time although the focus is nearly always on suicide bombing, there are occasional films that look outside the conflicts. I don't object to that because I think what is most important to know about Afghanistan at the moment is what's going on in that struggle between the opposing parties. So, I don't really object to that. Now, because the coverage has been going on for such a long time, we have acquired a sense of Afghanistan's central dilemma and the same with Iraq. It may be a distorted picture though. But if you take the hotspots in terms of the quality of the coverage, it is true. If you take such hotspots as the Israeli-Palestine issue: what is happening in Gaza or West Bank for instance, we have a lot of the social portraits of the happenings there and we know a lot about Israel anyway because Israel is treated as a western nation though wrongly. Now, if you take other countries such as Libya for example. We only know Libya for three things: Lockerbie, Oil and Gaddafi. There's no more to Libya than that. If you take Algeria, we know nothing. If you take Morocco, you've got holiday destination, a King and financially and economically, they're doing quite well. Those are all countries on the Mediterranean coast and are all quite close. But in

Europe, it is different. It isn't a problem because there's a lot of movement in Europe. It is very difficult...

*Q: Why is it so? Why is there lack of focus on these countries you've mentioned?*

A: Because they aren't a problem. When a country or an area becomes a problem to your own interest, they then shoot up in the news agenda. Take a country like Yemen for instance, it shoots up and down. It was a terrorist attack on a British consulate official and then it stops. We don't have any understanding on why that happened in Yemen. We don't have any historical perspective. I remember long time ago, on a television programme, which is meant to celebrate the 25 or 20 years of the existence of BBC 2; David Frost was hosting a programme. We had a major crisis on our doorsteps day after day in the form of Northern Ireland conflict. We know nothing about the history of this conflict. It was just like it started yesterday. The next day, the then head of ITV, [Jeremy...] commissioned the history of Northern Ireland. So, it is when things happened that you want to know why. My understanding of the public and television (let's leave the BBC out of this, for now). The pressure in the commercial sections is to hold the audience in a fragmented environment where entertainment is of importance. The idea is that people work very hard; they worry about money; they worry about their children education sort of way; and so, they want to be entertained. They don't want to know, except the big stories in the news. The big stories are probably chosen, if you like, it's a vicious circle. Domestic issues are always first like in any other country. Housing benefit, in this country, is going to be far in front of the daily problems. That's the nature of communication. It is the nature of the relationship between those who control the means of communication and the

public. I don't see an easy way out of this problem. I think individuals can do their best. I think it is important that we are aware of the absence of the full picture or the context. I'm not sure we can re-order the nature of communication in this respect.

*Q: If it's in the academic world, it would be said that 'considered news' is a concept developed by Jonathan Dimbleby. Could you please define 'considered news'?*

A: I think it's the news that explains the impact of a news event or what are the ripples of this stone that has been thrown into the pond. Consider what the impact is. And what are criteria by which you judge the priority of the news stories. These should relate the character and the scale of the ripple. It doesn't have to be a huge ripple to be a very important story. If you have an earthquake, for instance, there's used to be this black humour of the earthquake: 'small earthquake in Latin America- no English killed.' So that's sort of a crude version of what I called 'considered,' but it's not very well-considered journalism. I remember going to Guatemala in 1976, when there was a very severe earthquake in which 20,000 people died and 200,000 people were rendered homeless. So, 'considered news' is this has happened and there were emergency services trying to find solution and so on. There's also the question of why was it that the earthquake affected this sort of people here specifically rather than people there. It was because all the banks in Guatemala City were built to a standard that meant that the earthquake didn't affect them. It was the poor who were living at the edge of the city where the ground was... There's a reason for that and the reason is poverty, inequality underline injustice, racial differences. In Guatemala, it's the Indians who live in extreme poverty at the edge of the City while the Europeans, the Spanish off-springs of the original colonizers, live secured in the other part of the

City. 'Considered journalism' is providing context in this kind of story. And it is about eliminating the disaster not just saying 'there's disaster' as if nothing can be done about it whereas there are preventive measures that could have been taken. Take for instance the Tsunami or the Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans; it is generally the poor people that suffer most. Of course, there are natural eruptions but as for disaster, it's tempting to think 'well, nothing can be done,' whereas some preventive measures could have been taken. That's a version of what 'considered journalism' is. I don't say nothing can be done but I think we need to remind ourselves that we are supposed to do it.

*Q: Do you think individual journalists can create an avenue where the concept of 'considered news' is applied in their work and thus change the way reporting is done?*

A: Thoughtful is a word I think I would use now because there's a danger in the way 'considered' is. Although I know it is my word, it sounds as though it can be manipulated or controlled...

*Q: The point is most people including academics such as Stuart Hall and Herbert Gans, have said at different times that news is an institutional thing [product] and that the individual reporter can barely influence or change it...*

A: I think to a large extent, that is true but the weakness of that analysis is the assumption that institutions can't change...that institutions are somehow fixed. But the thing we know about the world is that institutions dramatically change and they

change as people change for one reason or the other. Yes, of course, there's a framework. Look at the internet, for instance. The internet is free for anyone to say whatever they like about anything whether it is true, false, thoughtful, or ignorant. Then, of course, there's institutional framework in which certain values apply. BBC's framework is one amongst its other qualities where impartiality is regarded as being of absolute importance; where facts are checked and double-checked; where balance is important. Though some of that can be frustrating for any intelligent human-being because you can reduce the concept of balance and sometimes this happens, to say he said this and he said that and you must hear someone who said something different, let me get the balance. That's not what journalism is about. I think how much weight and strength of belief you give to what a person said is also important. For instance, in the case of terrorism, we quite rightly don't give equal balance to the victim of a terrorist atrocity and the terrorist because the values of our society and institutions are such that the terrorist has behaved outrageously; which does mean that we don't need to glamorize the terrorist's behaviour however complicated and very often politically sensitive, that is. But if you have an institution, which has fairness, built into it [very muddy concept there as well]; then the journalists work within that structure and journalism training, in western countries on the whole as in other places, has a set of assumptions like that. This is what you get in Fox News for instance, which says this is an institution, come work with us. We basically have a very large axe to grind, come and grind the axe with us. That [axe] is anti-Democrat and pro-Republican right. That's fine. It's a free society. It pays you money and you take the choice. That happens in Fox News. But BBC takes public funds. So it has a set of values that are important...that it seeks to maintain and I think quite rightly.

*Q: Let me take you back to reporting the Third World. Peter Gills says, from his own experience, TV producers in the UK have an in-built resistance to programmes about the Third World- that there's a weary and unjustified cynicism about public interest in such programmes in the media; whereas it's simply an under-estimation of genuine public concern and interest in such programmes. What's your take on this?*

A: I agree largely with Peter. I think we are pretty timid and we under-estimate our audiences at all times. So, I go a long way with Peter on that. There's an organization called International Broadcasting Trust (IBT). In this context, it would be interesting for you to see their report, because they do... There's also another one called the 'World...'. Anyway, there's a series of studies, which shows the proportion of materials that is transmitted on mainstream media. It shows a decline on...this year because of my series. There's a measure of how little there is...my three programmes. The other series was done in Lagos - the Lagos series, which was bumped up that proportion. And they divided it into sport, drama, news and so on. It shows a steady decline and it also breaks it down to different media outlets such as BBC, ITV, Channel One etc in this country. It shows you what the numbers of hours are on the subjects.

*Q: In the western media, Africa is still being viewed in the media from stereotypical perspective in spite of efforts by people like you to present a different Africa. Why do you think it is very difficult to dent these stereotypes?*

A: People are comfortable with stereotypes. It is very simple. I think it is very damaging. It takes a long time to break through stereotypes. Ethiopia suffers

enormously from this. Ethiopia means hunger. We are comfortable with stereotypes. We like our policemen to behave in certain ways. We like our crooks to behave in certain ways and we like our politicians to behave in certain ways. To break stereotypes is quite challenging. It takes ingenuity. It takes time and commitment. It also takes a shift of mindset on the part of those who have the responsibility of cover the world in whatever way. For instance, when you look at soap operas, people are stereotyped but you have a strong debate about that, which shapes the stereotypes. Until recently, gays are portrayed as very feminine in soap operas, which is ridiculous but that would be impossible now unless it is by someone who was gay and was playing around on purpose. It took a long time to break that particular stereotype. As regards Africa, you'll notice that at first, Africa was lumped together as one country. But Africa is actually more diverse than Europe is, in a lot of ways environmentally - dramatically more diverse than anywhere else - culturally, historically and ethnically; very, very diverse continent. People see Africa as one. It is also true because the Americans see Europe as one. They don't distinguish at all and if you check, you'll find that Africans are all black as it were, even though that's a very crude way to look at it. Of course, the Europeans are all white as it were. So, they do see Europe as one. I was in the Midwest (in the US) and I remember saying I live in England and someone asked: 'Is that where the Volvo comes from?' It is difficult to break through stereotypes. That's my simple answer. We just have to work at it. Stereotype is a lie though it may have some elements of truth in it but it is a lie. We are getting there slowly. I think we have been taking two steps forward one step backward. That's how I see our ability to deal with stereotypes.

*Q: Let's talk about Nigeria. When you hear Nigeria, what comes to your mind?*

A: What comes to my mind now is music, energy, political-religious conflict, oil, potential power, genuine attempt to combat the worst corruption, desperate poverty inside huge wealth, an extraordinary degree of acceptance and aspiration by those who have less as well as the entrepreneurial qualities in the people. The sort of survival talents you see on Lagos streets where people engage in small real-time repairs or trade such recharging is entrepreneurial; though quite abrasive. I think the national characteristic is abrasive as in most African countries. There's some abrasiveness rather like you get in America or in Russia. Again that is a dangerous generalization as I can also say I met people who are extraordinarily gentle. There's extraordinary creative energy too, not necessarily in the film industry (though it's there as well) but in literature. The great writers in Africa come from Nigeria. Huge talents!

*Q: Following the media in the UK, one comes with this impression that Nigeria is all about corruption but surprisingly, the media always blot out the fact there are western companies involved in perpetuating the corruption. Why do you think this is so? For instance, someone wrote a book about the whistle-blower in Kenya and the reviewer of the book in The Guardian says that 'if there's an African head of state taking bribe, there's a western company offering it.' But we don't get to read about western companies involved in these corrupt practices in the western media...*

A: That's very important. I do know that it's true. Though I don't know the detail but if you take our dealings with Saudi Arabia, the degree of corruption that has been identified involving our own companies with the fact of it being suppressed or an attempt to suppress it because to expose the details will do damage to our big

relationship with Saudi Arabia. That's a tip of the iceberg, I'm sure. I know that in the case of Russia, which I wrote about in my book, you have to pay someone to smoothen the way if you want to do business. The UK in transparency term has fallen from No. 3. We are now No. 20 in transparency term because of politicians' alleged corruption. In Russia, it is virtually impossible to do business without buying your way through. You have to pay someone to circumvent a problem. Otherwise, you have a problem and someone else comes and gets your business. So, corruption is huge and it's widespread. It ought to be the case that we remember what you said but if we don't, then our journalism or our reportage is not 'considered.'

*Q: Nigeria until 1960 was a British colony, which connotes historically an unequal relationship. To what extent does this historical fact affect the portrayal of Nigeria in the British news media?*

A: That's a very interesting question. I think there has been a sense of 'we were the masters.' Now, we are the wise men. These new kids on the block are doing quite well or not very well. Therefore, there would be an inevitable slight sense of superiority and, therefore, patronizing Nigeria and other countries. But I think that is shifting and it's shifting for generational reasons apart from anything else. It's shifting because of movement of the people. So I think it diminishes the issues because your generations now you don't remember; except what history taught you about that era. If you ask some undergraduates to mention about six countries which were British colonies, it would be quite interesting to find anyone who would name up to five whereas we entered the Second World War with over 60 colonies.

*Q: In your interview with Dangote, one of Nigeria's businessmen, you asked him about corruption; what did you take out of his response?*

A: Well, I took from it that it is not a question that he would expect necessarily to be asked. It is like you go to a huge business office in London, to go back to your point, and say: 'you are the chairman of this bank; are you corrupt?' Of course, I asked the question because of the perception because if I hadn't asked the question, I would have been nagging myself and others would be saying; of course, this is part of stereotyping, that 'he went to Nigeria and didn't touch corruption.' They won't say the same thing about Ghana or Mali or Kenya or Ethiopia even if there were cases of corruption there. I don't have any knowledge except the general gossip to suggest that he is implicated in any illegal activities in the past. I took from it that he is a big and powerful man, one of the richest men in Africa. He is used to people who do his bidding. I imagine occasionally he gives press conferences in a different environment about turnovers and profits as well as plans to build more projects and so on. That would be a different context. So, I guess maybe he was disconcerted by the fact of that question.

*Q: In your own view, how can Nigeria clean up its battered image internationally?*

A: The image in reality has to coincide. Once you throw open your door and show people the reality particularly if you've got compelling evidence. That is the most important way. It is also important that resources are going more equitably to the population from the income the state receives. Nigeria has squandered over the years so much wealth. It has been exported out. It's been consumed by a few at the expense

of the many. The wealth is so enormous. And it continues to be enormous not only oil but other mineral resources in the ground that Nigeria has; plus the intellectual resources. The other is, the Rule of law, which is quite improving sharply must be maintained. The independence of the judiciary in Nigeria is fundamental to its image. The polity should be very open. The governor of Lagos is someone who is revered because he is obviously a doer and there's no evidence to link him to organized crime or corruption. We need more individuals like him who are genuinely responsive to public needs; people who are doing something and are seen to be doing it. These changes can actually take place very quickly between five and 10 years. Though stereotypical attitudes take some times to change but the real changes can take place remarkably quickly. Look at what happened to Brazil in 10 years. Lula (da Silva) and those around him have achieved miracles. And from other countries' perspective, given you said, not sounding or acting like a super power in the region, even though you are, a great deal of public modesty is necessary. Also important are elections. The elections that are credible and acceptable are necessary because everybody builds on that. The external community builds on that. Nigerians themselves build on that. People want it to work.

*Q: If I meet you on the stairwell and say who are you? What would say to me?*

A: I'll say I am Jonathan Dimbleby. My trade is journalism. I am torn between wanting to be, all the time, at home with my family, with my little children and my big children. That's the most important thing in my life. I want them to have security. I want them to live in a world that is at peace. That means I am intensely curious and engaged in that world and the huge issues that are facing us: climate change question,

bio-diversity issue, all these take my time outside broadcasting. The huge challenges they pose, which leads to other issues such as justice, equality and recognizing that we all inhabit this planet together and we'll all perish or we'll all make it. That's a big issue. My older children, who are in their 30s, they will reap the consequences of us getting things wrong. My young children, because of the advancement of healthy living, will live very long lives. We'll reap a nightmare. The world will reap horror if we don't take the right actions. That puts huge responsibility on those elected to lead or appointed to key roles but we are so far doing very badly. So, from my perspective, as a journalist –someone who writes and broadcasts- I feel as much as possible to use that awareness just as I'm doing now in my conversation with you. And that's just one small voice. There are a lot of other voices, more powerful, more articulate than mine. But I feel like a part of a growing number of people who are aware that we just can't go blind into the future.

*Q: Thank you very much for your time. I'm very grateful.*

A: It's been a real pleasure. [The End]