NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS' FRAMING OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY

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Abstract
Since 2009, when Boko Haram thrust itself into global consciousness, it has attracted the attention of the media and media (and other) researchers. Given the crucial role that the media play in the society, especially in times of conflict, this paper examines how Nigerian newspapers have covered the Boko Haram insurgency by looking at the contexts and angles used by the newspapers in reporting the sect with a view to determining if they have contributed to the solution of the Boko Haram insurgency. The paper used framing theory as its theoretical background, and content analysis as its methodology. Six frames were designed for the study; the frames served as content categories. They are responsibility, conflict, human interest, political, economic consequences and religious frames. The unit of analysis was the news article. Using purposive sampling; four newspapers served as study population- two in the north of Nigeria and two in the south. They are Daily Trust and Leadership; and The Nation and The Vanguard in the north and south respectively. Period covered by the study is two years, January 2014 to December 2015, being the peak of Boko Haram activities. Constructed week sampling technique was applied to choose the newspapers' content-analyzed. The number of articles analyzed was 3,360. Responsibility was the dominant frame adopted by the newspapers (46.8%), followed by conflict frame (22.7%), human interest frame (18.1%) and political frame (7.8%). Economic and religious frames had 2.6% and 2.0% respectively. The study found that newspaper framing of Boko Haram likely did not exacerbate the crisis but contributed in finding solution to it.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Nigerian newspapers, news frames

Introduction

Boko Haram means "Western Education is forbidden" in the Hausa language and is the name that was given to the sect because of its rejection of aspects of Western education and western culture that are contrary to what the group perceived to be the true teachings of Islam. The name the group gave itself as it evolved is "Jama'atu Ahlus Sunnah wal Lidda'awati wal Jihad" which is an Arabic expression for "People Committed to the Removal of Innovation and to Jihad". According to Ibrahim (2015), Boko Haram's emergence as a sect can be traced to 2002 when they were known as the Taliban, and were based in Yobe State, Nigeria, on the border village of Kanama which the group renamed Kandahar after a city in Afghanistan. In 2002 members of the group had a violent clash with security forces. In 2004, they again clashed with security forces in Bama and Gwoza Local Government Areas of Borno State. In 2007, "they appeared in Kano around Panshekara, attacking police stations. Again, soldiers were deployed and they fled with some killed" (Ibrahim, 2015:43) Writing on the origins of Boko Haram, Cook (2011) agrees with this position on the time of emergence of Boko Haram. Also, Guitta and Simcox (2014:6) assert that Boko Haram "was created in 2002 by the now deceased Islamic cleric Muhammad Yusuf, though forms of it had existed under a variety of names since the late 1990s".

Boko Haram gradually evolved to the stage of having its principal aim and objective as the establishment of Islamic rule in all its ramifications. The central figure and original leader of Boko Haram, Muhammad Yusuf, not only condemned those elements of Western education

and culture that he perceived to be anti-Islamic, but also particularly and vehemently opposed the idea of secularism, democracy and institutions of state that perpetuate these ideas. Consequently, he opposed working for the government that he considered established not according to Islamic norms. His central thesis is that as Muslims, obedience is owed only to Allah and government and laws cannot be established except they are in accordance with what is expressly decreed by Allah. Otherwise, such government and laws stand rejected as a duty by Muslims. He adjudged democracy, secularism and the present system of government as not according to the laws of Allah (Sharia). He was opposed, sometimes vehemently, by Islamic scholars and sects in his local environment, Borno State, especially by the Izala Islamic group. As noted by Muhammad (2014:15):

The main planks of Yusuf's narratives were framed, though not exclusively around the following issues or variants of them: (1) the concept of taghut (idolatory) including secularism, democracy, and partisan politics; (2) Western education and Westernisation; (3) working for unislamic governments; and (4) repudiation of the charge of Kharijism leveled against them by the local Ulama especially his former colleagues in the Wahhabi group in Borno. The fight with the local Borno Izala in the run-up to the 2009 crisis was extremely acrimonious…

Kharijism is a historic Islamic sect that was quick to declare other Muslims as unbelievers, justifying killing them. Yusuf describes any form of executive, legislative or judicial function derived from the constitution, and not from Sharia, as unbelief; and "anyone who superintends or abides by the laws and regulations within Nigeria's secular system is an unbeliever *simpliciter.* This was the cause of the protracted and often acrimonious debate with the Izala in the run-up to the 2009 violence" (Muhammad, 2014:16).

Between 2003 and 2005, the group engaged in clashes with security forces and was suppressed. From then till 2009, the group engaged in intense preaching, recruitment and indoctrination of its members. In July 2009, the group was crushed by security forces, its headquarters was destroyed and its leader Muhammad Yusuf was killed in police custody. By 2010, the group resurfaced with a vengeance, beginning with targeted killing of traditional ward and village heads, security officials, prominent politicians and Islamic scholars opposed to the sect (Muhammad, 2014).

According to an analysis done in a background report by an arm of the United States Department of Home Security, between 2009 and 2013, Boko Haram attacks on targets are: private citizens and property - 25% of attacks; police - 22% of attacks; government targets - 11%; religious figures and institutions - 10% and the military - 9%. We also have businesses - 8%; education - 7% and others 8%. (START, 2014).

The Australia-based Institute for Economics and Peace (2015), in its global terrorism index report for 2014, ranked Boko Haram as the deadliest terrorist group on earth directly responsible for the death of 6,644 people in 2014. The sect is even more lethal than the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), otherwise known as the Islamic State. The activities of Boko Haram have negatively placed Nigeria on the world map as the same report lists Nigeria as the third most terrorized country on earth, after Iraq and Afghanistan.

What then is really responsible for the emergence and flourishing of the Boko Haram phenomenon? A number of reasons have been given as being responsible ranging from politics (Neiji, 2015) to corruption (Anaedozie, 2015). Class theory has also been used to explain the Boko Haram phenomenon (Ogunrotifa, 2013). While it can be argued that social, political, economic and other factors made the phenomenon possible and explain its nature and

activities, it is perhaps not arguable that the sect's interpretation of Islamic teachings and their application in the contemporary world is the primary trigger of the Boko Haram phenomenon.

Theoretical Background
Framing, on which this study is anchored, is a media effects theory that focuses on how issues are characterized as they are presented in the media, the contexts provided and the angles from which they are presented. It is the highlighting, or the emphasizing of aspects of an issue and the ignoring of other aspects; and the building of contexts to help in providing particular interpretations of an issue. Framing highlights some specific aspects of reality so as to advance a specific "problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993:52). Framing theory posits that the way a media presents a story has an effect on the perception of the audience reading/hearing/viewing the story. If the media presents a conflict as religious, for example, the consumers of the story are likely to view that conflict in the same way. Framing also involves particular contexts provided in the presentation of a story. These contexts make the interpretation of the story easier for the audience as it links the story to their previous store of knowledge and experiences. Gamson (2004) likens media frames to photo frames. Media frames do just as picture frames do. They place borders around something or object, distinguishing and highlighting it from what is around. Journalists too, through media frames, are able to highlight a particular aspect of an issue, have audience attention focus on it, ignoring other aspects. This study looked at how the Nigerian media has characterized Boko Haram, the aspects of Boko Haram the media highlighted, and the contexts it provided in explaining Boko Haram to their audience. Did the media emphasize that the sect's motivation is religious, or political or economic? What, according to Nigerian newspapers, is actually the Boko Haram story about? As Matthes (2009:349) posits, framing "examines selection and salience of certain aspects of an issue by exploring images, stereotypes, metaphors, actors, and messages". It is this theory of framing that this study used as its theoretical background.

Statement of the problem
Since framing by its nature involves the highlighting and selection of particular aspects of reality in the presentation of news, and the provision of context to aid interpretation, how newspapers have framed their reports on Boko Haram is of particular interest in order to establish if this framing may have exacerbated the situation or helped to solve an existential threat to the society. Studies have been done on the news framing of wars (Luther & Miller, 2005, Dimitrova, 2006; Esser, 2009); natural disasters (Borah, 2009; Houston, Pfefferbaum & Rosenholtz, 2012) and terrorism (Conway & Mclnerney, 2002; Rill & Davis, 2008; Lewis & Reese, 2009). On the Boko Haram insurgency, studies on Nigerian newspapers' framing of the coverage of the sect and its activities have been carried out examining the different perspectives from which the papers have reported the sect. (Okoro & Odoemelam, 2013; Ngwu, Ekwe & Chiaha, 2015; Odoemelam, Ebeze & Okwudiogor, 2015; Amenaghawon, 2015).

Most of the studies on news framing of Boko Haram by the Nigerian print media have examined coverage for one month (Amenaghawon, 2015; Ngwu, Ekwe & Chiata, 2015; Suleiman & Salau, 2012); a few have examined framing of Boko Haram for upward of one year (Ita & Ita, 2016; Okoro & Odoemelam, 2013). The study by Okoro and Odoemelam (2013) has as its study population four national newspapers all southern based and owned. The study population of this paper is four national newspapers, two each based and owned in the north and south. This is more representative. The time frame covered by this study is two years thus providing a more comprehensive perspective.

Research Questions

(i)   What frames did Nigerian newspapers use in reporting Boko Haram stories in terms of specific characterization of their activities?

(ii)   What are the dominant frames used by each of the four newspapers?

(iii)   Did the four newspaper framing of Boko Haram help in exacerbating, or in resolving the crisis?

Methodology

This paper employed content analysis to examine news framing of Boko Haram in four Nigerian newspapers covering a period of two years. The population of this study is made up of national newspapers and the period covered by the study is 1 January 2014 to 31 December, 2015. This period was chosen because it marked the peak of Boko Haram activities. Newspaper issues falling within this period were content analyzed for their framing of Boko Haram; the population is thus all newspapers published in Nigeria, particularly those with any semblance of national outlook.

Sampling techniques

Purposive sampling was used to select the newspapers that were content analyzed in the study. Out of the many Nigerian newspapers with national circulation, four were selected for this study for their geographical spread which is a fair representation of the geopolitical structure of Nigeria. Also considering the subject of this study, Boko Haram (which purports to be a religious group), the papers selected also fairly represent Nigeria's ethnic and religious realities. The *Vanguard* and *The Nation* were chosen because they are located in the South of Nigeria. *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers were selected because of their location in the North of the country. *The Nation* and *Daily Trust* are owned by Muslims (Chief Bola Tinubu and Mallam Kabiru Yusuf respectively), while *Leadership* and *Vanguard* are owned by Christians (Chief Sam Amuka and Sam Nda Isaiah respectively). On the ethnicity criterion, the proprietor of *Daily Trust* is Hausa and that of *The Nation* is Yoruba, two of the three major ethnic groups, one in the North and one in the South of Nigeria; the proprietor of *Leadership* is Nupe and that of *Vanguard* is Itsekiri, minority ethnic groups in the North and South of Nigeria. These are crucial factors when assessing representativeness in Nigeria and considered very important because the subject of the research, Boko Haram, is rooted in religion. All four newspapers are also privately-owned and therefore presumed to be more objective and independent than any government-owned medium.

Sample size

This study used the constructed composite week for each month. This means that since there are four or five Mondays (and other days of the week) in each month, newspaper issues for the four or five Mondays in the month were grouped together making four or five issues. One of the issues was then chosen at random to represent Monday. Other days of the week were similarly treated. Seven newspaper issues, representing each day of the week, were finally chosen and these seven issues then represented the month. Seven issues only were therefore examined instead of thirty issues. Riffe, Aust and Levy (1993) demonstrated that composite week sampling technique is better than simple random and consecutive day sampling when dealing with newspaper content as it is more efficient without sacrificing representativeness. This was affirmed by Wimmer and Dominick (2011). The study therefore examined 84 issues of each newspaper for each year making a total of 672 issues for the four newspapers for two years.

Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis of this study was the newspaper article. Each news article, including news features, reporting Boko Haram and/or its activities constituted the unit of analysis and was

coded into the relevant category. Editorials, being an important framing instrument of newspapers, were counted. The study did not count interviews, letters to the editor, advertisements and opinion pieces. Visuals were also counted if they were pictures of activities carried out by the sect.

In choosing the unit of analysis, great care was exercised to ensure that only stories on the activities of Boko Haram were chosen. This was necessary because the sect was referred to by such terms as 'insurgents', 'gunmen' among others. There were also bloody civil disturbances going on such as the herdsmen/farmers clashes, the religious/ethnic, and indigene/settler clashes. All these were sometimes referred to and reported by the media under the general term 'insecurity'. When a report combines activities adjudged as that of Boko Haram sect with those of farmers/herdsmen clash for example, the dominant report was counted and, if possible, only the part of the report on Boko Haram is measured.

Content categories

The content categories into which the units of analysis were counted are six. These content categories are equivalent to the frames in this study. Accordingly, the content categories are itemized as follows.
(a)   Human interest frame category
(b)   Conflict frame category
(c)   Responsibility frame category
(d)   Political frame category
(e)   Religious frame category
(f)   Economic consequences frame category

In coding the frame of a story, as this determines its category, the dominant frame of a story was the deciding factor as a story may contain more than one frame. A random sample of 5% of the original sample was used to test for intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability using Scott's *pi* was 0.7.

Frames

Frames are the contexts and angles from which stories are reported as has been earlier discussed. They can be issue-specific/unique or generic/consistent (Borah, 2011; Matthes, 2009). Issue-specific frames are generated from each study and are usually arrived at from a prior exploratory analysis. They are thus specific to the issue under study. Generic frames on the other hand are frames that can be generalised across studies and are clearly defined before the issue under study is content-analysed. As Matthes, (2009:350) points out, "generic frames transcends thematic limitations as they can be identified across different issues". This study mostly used generic frames and some issue-specific frames as a method of data analysis adapting from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) who proposed five generic frames. These generic frames are conflict, morality, human interests, responsibility and economic consequences. It was from these that the frames used in this study were adapted. Frames are the categories for this study into which the unit of analysis was coded.

Human interest frame

Human interest frame focuses on articles and visuals that portrayed personal stories of individuals and their experiences at the hand of Boko Haram. Stories on losses suffered by individuals, of lives, limbs and properties, and their heroic survival were treated under human interest frame. Also coded into this frame were stories on experiences of refugees or internal displaced people (IDPs) in or out of IDP camps.

Conflict frame

Articles under the conflict frame include stories and pictures on battles between Boko Haram insurgents and the Nigerian military; of Boko Haram attacking cities, towns and villages; Boko Haram killing people and setting ablaze whole communities. Also under this frame were stories reporting bombings by Boko Haram with attendant loss of lives and property. Stories on Boko Haram seizing towns and local government areas and the government recovering them were also coded into the conflict frame.

Responsibility frame

Under this frame were stories that provide contexts as to the reason that the Boko Haram crisis occurred and is persisting as regards to who was responsible, whether it was the government, traditional or religious leaders etc, through acts of commission or omission. Also under this frame were stories suggesting solutions to the crisis, including the various demonstrations staged to sensitize and mobilize the nation on the one hand, and pressurize the government to act to solve the crisis on the other. Reports of condemnation of Boko Haram and its activities by individuals and groups were coded into this category. However, when the crisis is presented as having been caused by political/religious/ethnic reasons, it was coded elsewhere.

Political frame

Units of analysis that fall under political frame include articles and pictures that attributed the cause of the crisis and its persistence to the political machinations of the opponents of the federal government. The argument is that because these opponents lost power, they were determined to make the government ungovernable for the president. Stories framed along these lines were categorized here as were stories that dealt with extension of emergency rule in the northeast, and whether 2015 elections should be held in the region or not.

Religious frame

News articles that presented Boko Haram as an attempt by Muslims to Islamize Nigeria were coded into this category. Stories presenting Christians as the only targets and victims of Boko Haram atrocities, with Muslims being only incidental victims, belonged to this frame. Coded into this frame were also stories that viewed the Boko Haram crisis as being caused by the sect's perversion of Islam as well as stories that gave the crisis an ethnic coloration.

Economic consequences frame

Stories that were reported within the context of the impact of the activities of the Boko Haram sect on the livelihood of the people affected were categorized under this frame. Articles and visuals that portrayed the devastating impact of Boko Haram on farming, trade and other businesses, big or small; on travels and education all belonged to this frame.

Findings

A.   What frames did Nigerian newspapers use in reporting Boko Haram stories in terms of specific characterization of their activities?

A total of 996 articles were content-analyzed in *Daily Trust*, 1020 articles in *Leadership*, 793 in *The Nation*, and 551 in *Vanguard* newspapers giving a total of 3360 units of analysis examined in the four newspapers. Out of those, 1576 belonged to the responsibility frame. This represents the single largest frame category and was 46.9% of all the units analyzed. It is significant that for all the four newspapers, the responsibility frame was the single largest content category. For the *Daily Trust* it was 38.7%, for *Leadership* it was 57.8% and for *The Nation* it was 45.9% while *Vanguard* had 43.2% of all its units of analysis belonging to the responsibility frame category. *Leadership* newspaper had the most percentage of the frame

and *Daily Trust* the least. *The Nation* and *Vanguard* had almost the same percentage at 45.9 and 43.2 respectively.

Table 1: Frame distribution, frequency and percentage in Daily Trust, Leadership, The Nation and Vanguard

Newspaper Frames	Daily Trust	Leadership	The Nation	Vanguard	Total frequency count	% Percentage
Human Interest	236	166	125	80	607	18.0655
Conflict	250	159	197	156	762	22.6786
Responsibility	385	589	364	238	1576	46.9048
Political	85	68	65	44	262	7.7976
Religious	17	15	21	15	68	2.0238
Economic Consequences	23	23	21	18	85	2.5297
Total	**996**	**1020**	**793**	**551**	**3360**	**100**

The conflict frame came second for three of the four newspapers namely, *Daily Trust, The Nation* and *Vanguard.* Human interest frame was second for *Leadership* newspaper with the conflict frame a very close third. For the three other newspapers the human interest frame placed third. The human interest frame placed second in *Leadership* newspaper and third in *Daily Trust, The Nation* and *Vanguard.* The political frame placed fourth in frame usage by all the four newspapers with about 8% in three newspapers and 6% in *Leadership* newspaper. The economic consequences frame placed fifth of the six content categories examined with over 2% of the units of analysis in three of the newspapers examined and 3% in the fourth. The religious frame had the least percentage of units of analysis in all the newspapers with less than 3% of the units of analysis.

B. What are the dominant frames used by each of the four newspapers?

Out of the six frames designed for the study, the responsibility frame was the most dominant in all the four newspapers. As indicated earlier, *Leadership* had the most units of analysis (589) categorized as responsibility frame. This represents 57.8% of its articles on Boko Haram. In terms of percentage *The Nation* is next with 45.9% of its units of analysis (364) classified into the responsibility frame; *Vanguard* had 43.2% of its units of analysis (238) in the same category and *Daily Trust* came last in terms of percentage with 38% of its units of analysis (385).

Table 2: Frame distribution, frequency and percentage in Leadership

	Marginal total2014	Marginal total2015	Total	%Percentage
Human Interest	85	81	166	16.2740
Conflict	73	86	159	15.5882
Responsibility	292	297	589	57.7450
Political	21	47	68	6.6667
Religious	4	11	15	1.4706
Economic Consequences	7	16	23	2.2549
Total	**472**	**527**	**1020**	**100**

Table 3:   Frame distribution, frequency and percentage in Daily Trust

Frames	Marginal total 2014	Marginal total 2015	Total	%Percentage
Human Int.	139	97	236	23.6948
Conflict	150	100	250	25.1004
Responsibility	263	122	385	38.6546
Political	60	25	85	8.5341
Religious	14	3	17	1.7068
Economic Cons.	16	7	23	2.3092
Total	**642**	**354**	**996**	**100**

Table 4:   Frame distribution, frequency and percentage in The Nation

Frames	Marginal total2014	Marginal total2015	Total	percentage
Human Interest	61	64	125	15.7629
Conflict	112	85	197	24.8424
Responsibility	255	109	364	45.9016
Political	60	5	65	8.1967
Religious	16	5	21	2.6482
Economic Con	18	3	21	2.6482
Total	**522**	**271**	**793**	**100**

Table 5:   Frame distribution, frequency and percentage in Vanguard

Frames	Marginal total2015	Marginal total2015	Total	%Percentage
Human Int	43	37	80	14.5190
Conflict	96	60	156	28.3122
Responsibility	178	60	238	43.1942
Political	34	10	44	7.9855
Religious	11	4	15	2.7223
Economic Con	13	5	18	3.2668
Total	**375**	**176**	**551**	**100**

For three of the four newspapers namely, *Daily Trust, The Nation* and *Vanguard* the next most dominant frame was the conflict frame. *Vanguard* had the highest percentage with 28.3% of its units classed into the conflict frame, *Daily Trust* was second with 25.1% of its frames in the conflict frame, *The Nation* and *Leadership* followed with 24.8% and 15.6% respectively. Human interest frame was second for *Leadership* newspaper (16.3%) with the conflict frame a very close third. For the three other newspapers the human interest frame placed third with the following percentages: *Daily Trust*, 23.7%; *The Nation,* 15.8% and *Vanguard*, 14.5%.

The political frame was fourth in frame usage by all the four newspapers with about 8.5% in three newspapers and 6.7% in *Leadership* newspaper. The economic consequences frame was fifth with about 2.3% of the units of analysis in three and 3.2% *Vanguard*. The religious frame had the least percentage of units of analysis in all the newspapers. *Daily Trust* had 1.5%, *Leadership*, 1.7%, *The Nation,* 2.6% and *Vanguard,* 2.7% of their units in the religious frame category.

C.   Did the four newspaper framing of Boko Haram help in exacerbating, or in resolving the crisis?

From the preceding analysis, the category that was the most used by far was the responsibility frame category. This means that the newspapers focused on and mostly framed their stories with a narration providing contexts as to whom and/or what is responsible for the Boko Haram phenomenon. Mostly, they did not glamorize or justify the sect's activities but reflected the general condemnation of the sect by a cross section of Nigerians and foreigners including the various demonstrations staged to sensitize and mobilize the nation on the one hand, and pressurize the government to act to solve the crisis on the other.

The finding ultimately reflects the nature of Nigerian society and what have triggered the occurrence of Boko Haram as found in the literature. For instance, Effiom and Effiong (2005), were of the opinion that there was disenchantment among Nigerians as a result of youth unemployment, mass poverty and pervasive corruption. Statistics from National Bureau of Statistics (2015), for instance, indicates that unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of Nigerians, as 78 percent of persons aged 15 – 35 were unemployed in the third quarter of 2015, against 70.2 percent in the first quarter of the same year (NBS, 2015:6). Similarly, in a report released in December 2017 for the third quarter of the same year, unemployment rate in the country stood at 18.8 percent with an underemployment rate of 21.2 percent, youth unemployment stood at 52.65 percent (NBS, 2017). This scenario ultimately causes frustration, dejection and absence of social capital from family members and friends, who also have their own problems to contend with (Ajufo, 2013). Nigeria social landscapes are in traumatized conditions. These are staircases to aggression and violence. Borum, (2011:83) believed that the "social causes of shame leading to violent crimes like Boko Haram include low status, poverty and unemployment which lead to feelings of inequality and inferiority." Nigerians confronted with these myriad of problems would want to know the causes and solutions, thus the dominance of responsibility framing. The newspapers also reflected the general solutions proffered to end the BH crisis.

The second and third most dominant categories were the conflict and human interest. The conflict frame is the content category into which is placed stories on fights between BH insurgents and security forces, stories of atrocities committed by the insurgents and stories of BH fighters taking over towns and then local government areas and security forces recovering those towns from them. The human interest frame was the category into which were stories of individuals and their experiences; losses they suffered of lives, limbs and properties; and how they have survived and retained their humanity in the face of Boko Haram atrocities. This includes stories on experiences of refugees or internally displaced people (IDPs) in or out of IDP camps.

Political and religious frame categories were the least used of the categories. These were the categories into which were coded stories that attributed Boko Haram insurgency to political and religious motives. This paper shows that Nigerian newspapers largely refrained from attributing the Boko Haram crisis to political and religious factors despite attempts by a vocal minority to make it seem so. It can therefore be stated that the framing of Boko Haram by Nigerian newspapers in their reporting of the activities of the sect was done not to exacerbate the crisis but to contribute in helping in solving the crisis.

Conclusions and recommendations

As was demonstrated, the Nigerian media have reported Boko Haram largely through the responsibility frame and, to a lesser extent, the conflict and the human interest frames. This reporting has shown that the media have contributed in deescalating the Boko Haram crisis by giving scant attention to political and religious frames. Considering the diversity of Nigeria

and the combustible nature of religion and ethnicity in its polity, emphasizing the political and religious angles of the Boko Haram insurgency will, no doubt, have compounded an already tense situation. These findings belie the popular position that the media mostly exacerbates a conflict situation through their reporting. This study has shown that the media in Nigeria have framed their report on Boko Haram in a manner that has deemphasized viewing the crisis as being politically or religiously motivated.

The implication is that the media should be seen as an important partner in the search for resolution of conflict situations instead of being looked at with suspicion and even disdain. The common view of the media as being part of the problem in crisis situations has been disproved in the study. It is suggested that there should be a deliberate policy of making the media an active participant in the mobilization of the populace to key into practical solutions that would engender and sustain peace. The media should be regarded as a key partner in the search and sustenance of peace.

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