THOUGHTS ON MANAGING NIGERIA'S INTRACTABLE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

A study on the coverage pattern of Conflict and Humanitarian issues by the Nigerian Media

PREMIUM TIMES CENTRE FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

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Prefatory Notes: Journalism and Armed Conflict in Nigeria

By Dapo Olorunyomi

In most Nigerian professional and academic discussions around the role of journalism and media in the outcome of conflict situations, from basic protests and riots to outright wars, commentators devote more concerns to the consequential dimensions of media practice. In other words, they emphasize more on the dual capacity of the media [and journalism] to mediate negative socio-political conditions that enable conflict, and on the need for media to stimulate that power towards the promotion of peace or conflict-sensitive narratives.

The pervasive reality of conflict in Nigeria, their devastating and tragic consequences, make this preoccupation a logical one, however, to my mind, we now need a sustained exploration of the reality of conflict that focuses more on the intrinsic dimension of journalism – the discussion and investment in journalism as journalism, rather than in its capacity to help promote values in human rights, conflict, corruption, rural development, healthcare, education or even financial inclusion and agriculture among multiple possible extensions.

Humanitarian coverage in journalism can help us to do this to the extent that it not only beams a critical searchlight on official behaviour like corruption, procurement fraud, nepotism in hiring, and mismanagement in emergency situations of conflict and wars, but it helps us review properly and offer unvarnished audit on the conditions of state-citizens relationship during conflicts and emergencies when the state is known to engage in wanton power grab that constrains journalistic practice of a watchdog and accountability nature.

Through the academic exploration of the intrinsic status of journalism in conditions of emergency, we are able to galvanise the ethos that ensure the protection of fundamental liberties of journalism, ensuring in that way that the protection of the rights to free expression and the safety of the news provider earn a prominent role such that it becomes apparent that the attack on the news provider is thus an attack on society and the ability to dig deeper into the implications and dimensions of conflict than we have often done.

The opportunity of this media monitoring study, on the patterns of covering the debilitating Nigerian humanitarian crisis, in some select 10 local media organisations, therefore offers a prudent opportunity to attempt the twofold exploration of how these intrinsic and the consequential principles co-occur at the interface of journalism and armed conflict in Nigeria.

The awkward puzzle of how, to take just one of the manifold conflicts, the Boko Haram insurgency in the Nigerian north east, gets only a modest coverage space and air time, in percentage media terms, point to one of the current challenges in our newsrooms. For just in this one conflict, no fewer than 20,000 people have been killed in a decade,

and over 2 million internally displaced citizens, with an estimated 7 million in desperate need of humanitarian assistance are just part of the heart wrenching humanitarian story of the past decade in Nigeria.

The larger narrative that explains this study, however, is the important point that, whereas ¾ of the country's geo-political zones is embroiled in conflict, the priority of our major news organizations is evidently not conflict and humanitarian issues. As readers of this study will therefore see, the central concerns of the study itself lend more to the consequential implications of media and journalism with regards to conflict situation. How media appreciates the reality of conflict in our community and what can be done to ameliorate this situation for the health and progress of the Nigerian community.

In the next few pages therefore I wish to dwell on the complementary discourse of what happens to journalism as journalism when it comes in contact with situations of conflict and particularly those of armed conflict. This is the intrinsic dimension, the core of which is the "health" of the news provider, the protection that the law offers the practice of journalism in conditions of armed conflict. This concern helps to respond to the risks that journalists face in contemporary Nigerian conflict zones, just as it helps understand, clearly, the true interrelationship of journalists, as the news providers, in the terrain of conflict and to the state, as an enforcing mechanism, in creating the environment, through regulation and policy, for good journalism to thrive in the first place.

Data is showing that in the period from 2011 in Nigeria to 2015 there were about 65 violations against journalists in the line of duty. These violations were mostly in the nature of arrests, threats, restrictions on access, as well as confiscation of working tools and equipment. Contrastively, in the period 2015 to the first quarter of 2019, the violations have spiked alarmingly to 256. Only a minor part of these violations occurred in the terrain of armed conflict but it nevertheless triggers the question of what policy instrument offers a shield and remediation for journalists in the event of violations in armed conflict situations?

In conflict that are not of an armed nature, the combination of municipal powers of the court, and the regional courts, victims can base their hope of potential remedies for violations and protection through the prism of local and international human rights protocols. The real problem is in the context of armed conflict, the new normal in Nigeria's conflict pattern these days, where human rights instruments are inadequate to address violations and abuses.

Historically, since they have become global norms, the Geneva Convention [1949] and its additional protocols [1977] have been the instruments designed, through the mechanism of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as a set of rules which place restrictions on the use of weapons and methods of warfare; to protect people who are not, or no longer, participating in hostilities; to protect human dignity and to limit

suffering during times of war. It is for this reason that the IHL is otherwise known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict.

The risks that journalists encounter while covering war or armed conflict are evident as many of those covering the 10-year Boko Haram insurgency can fully attest to today, such as dangers arising from military operations, disappearances, violence, torture, and not to talk of myriad expressions of psych-social illnesses, triggered by the actions of state and non-state actions of which bomb raids, mine explosions, and direct enemy fire are only a short list.

After years of advocacy for a special status for journalists in situations of conflict the dial is moving but just too slowly in evolving a norm that addresses the special needs of news providers. What started in 2007 in the UN Resolution 1738 on the obligation to protect journalists continue to be limited by the inadequate range of its sight. This was the lacuna that the 2011 UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity sought to address, and which the 2012 security council resolution minimally addressed by inserting language that acknowledged attacks against journalists in its list of emerging concerns for the protection of journalists in armed conflicts.

After all is said and done, IHL offers one of the most powerful norms in the global system for guaranteeing the safety and dignity of people in times of armed conflict. To say armed conflicts must not be confused with international armed conflicts, which involve at least two countries. It also indicates armed conflicts that take place in one country (such as those between a government and rebel forces like Boko Haram, and at one point the forces of the Niger Delta insurgents). It is therefore the availability of IHL to protects those who are not, or no longer participating in hostilities [like POWs], civilians, medical and religious military personnel, as well as in granting women and children additional protection that a case could be strongly made for journalists in situations of armed conflict.

Balguygallois advances a compelling argument and justification for this when he said: "The illegality of attacks on journalists and news media derives from the protection granted to civilians and civilian objects under international humanitarian law, and from the fact that the media, even when used for propaganda purposes, cannot be considered as military objectives except in special cases. In other words, while no specific status exists for journalists and the equipment they use, both journalists and their equipment [should] benefit from the general protection enjoyed by civilians and civilian objects unless they make an effective contribution to military action."

To make this possible, there is a need to look in two directions: explore the windows within treaty framework in the West African community, and in the Nigerian policy canvass. Thankfully, since 2001, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission have collaborated on implementation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in ECOWAS Member States. PTCIJ is working now with a number of like-minded media groups

in developing a case for special status for journalistic protection that can be taken forward.

Secondly, there is a need to build on the domesticated instruments like the Geneva Conventions Act of 20 June 1960 that enables the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 for local judicial remedies. This Act provides for the punishment of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and permits the President to provide, by order, for the punishment of all related breaches.

The point of extension to this now is to work on expanding all the draft legislations pending at the Federal Ministry of Justice such as the re-submission of a bill to domesticate the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to the National Assembly (previous draft bills have not been adopted), support for the Nigeria Police in its effort at reviewing its Force Order 237 on the use of force and firearms, which has support from the Swiss Government, the UNODC and the ICRC. Relatedly, there is need for media push for pending draft legislation regarding children in combat which has come to the National assembly as the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) that had previously passed the second reading in the House of Representatives.

That aside, it is urgent to arm journalists covering armed conflicts with the capacity to appreciate the content and context of the total ramification of IHL as well as the emerging instruments within the ECOWAS framework. Some of these include the adopted Nigerian legislations. For instance, no knowledgeable coverage can be offered to the ongoing deadly farmers-headers conflict without an appreciation of the Firearms Bill 2014 which amends the Firearms Act of 1959 which seeks a joint domestication the ECOWAS Convention on Small and light Weapons and the ATT.

Currently 23 Nigerian universities work with the ICRC towards integrating IHL into academic teaching, and armed forces and police formations learn relevant humanitarian principles but journalist must be literate and armed with these developments as well as be able to layer their conflict coverage with references, always, to instruments at the ECOWAS Regional Level if they want to offer context, analysis, and insight to readers and media product recipients that will lead to sound judgement and informed choices. Some of such instruments that have been domesticated in Nigeria includes the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, June 2006, the ECOWAS Code of Conduct for the Armed Forces and Security Services, August 2011, the ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy, March 2012, the ECOWAS Plan of Action of the Humanitarian Policy, 2012 – 2017, the ECOWAS Plan of Action on the Implementation of IHL, 2009 – 2014, the Model for National Disaster Management Agencies, October 2015, and the ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance June 2016.

Section One

Introduction

In the last 10 years, conflict and humanitarian crises have become a constant reality in Nigeria with varying degrees of conflict happening in at least four of the country's six geo-political zones. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, farmer/herder crises in the North Central, militancy in the South-South are some of the major conflict zones in the country. Over 20,000 deaths can be directly linked to conflict and over 2 million people have been displaced with an estimated 7 million in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

The boundaries of conflict are shifting from country borders to non-defined lines within them as is the case with the unrest within the country, and the public understanding of these conflicts is mainly shaped by the way the media report them. This media coverage holds the potentiality of setting the agenda for the promotion of peace, lasting resolution to conflicts, conceptualizing and tackling the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict. The coverage of these issues also underscores the journalist's responsibility of holding government and its actors to account, especially as it concerns possible humanitarian abuses, military budgeting and spending and other such matters.

At different points in the history of conflicts and wars, the media has contributed to how these conflicts are understood and oftentimes play a key role in the resolution of such conflicts. According to Howard, author of the popular handbook on Conflict Sensitive Reporting, there is an emerging belief that the media may well be the most effective means of conflict resolution and preventing new wars.

If the media will perform this very important role effectively then their own comprehension and conceptualization of the different conflicts in the different regions must be up to snuff. This will no doubt be reflected in how the issue is covered, how much time is given to it, the diversity of voices in coverage and the proper representation of all sides of the issue.

The Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism set out to examine media narratives on conflict and to highlight the reportage of conflict and humanitarian issues with the goal of identifying areas of strength that can be consolidated and weaknesses that require intervention. To achieve this, 10 news outlets, selected for their wide reach and pedigree in the media space were monitored and the insights from this exercise form the core of this report.

At the end of the presentation of the findings, specific themes that are central to good journalistic practice especially as it concerns conflict and humanitarian reporting are explored to provide a path to rethinking journalistic practice in light of the results of the monitoring.

Research Methodology

The research sought to answer the question of how the media covers conflict and the extent to which it covers it with a derivative of eliciting media disposition to conflict and humanitarian issues as well as its understanding of these issues. The methodology was designed to find answers to these questions.

Method

This research uses content analysis of media materials within a three-month period (January – March) and across 10 media organizations. This content analysis is done through the instrumentality of media monitoring, where news items are examined and specific types of data extracted from these news items. The types of data extracted is explained in a different section.

The 10 media houses monitored include:

Print	Online	Broadcast
Daily Trust	Premium Times	Radio Nigeria
Nigerian Tribune	ICIR	Channels Television
Punch	Cable	-
Guardian	Sahara Reporters	-

These media have national coverage and are representative of both private and government owned media organizations.

Data Collection Process

All news reports relating to conflict and/or humanitarian issues in the selected media houses were manually collected and examined by monitors trained to extract pre-set data from these news items. These monitors were trained on the methodology of the project and used the codebook that had been designed for that purpose to extract the necessary data sets. These data were then imputed into a specially designed database.

The data collected on each news item include:
Total Count: This is the total number of stories in a newspaper or a news bulletin. This total count is important for the comparison of what percentage of news coverage conflict and humanitarian issues receive in comparison to other issues covered in the news.

Summary: A brief summary of the news item being monitored.

Type of story: This is the different types of news products used in covering conflict and humanitarian issues e.g news story, opinion, feature etc. This sometimes reflect the dedication of a medium to coverage of the issue as some instruments will automatically

mean depth and more time in exploring the issues.

Author: The journalist or person who wrote the news item and where it is from a publication, an agency report etc. this is also recorded.

Sex of Author: Where the sex of the author of the piece can be identified this is also captured. This has implications for gender perspectives especially because it is important in conflict and humanitarian issues.

Topic: A cluster of possible topics that are consistent in conflict and humanitarian issues are identified and each news item is captured according to the topic that best represents its content.

Origin: This captures the location from which stories are originating.

Sources: Who is speaking in news reports and who they are speaking to is captured along the lines of sex, function, occupation, ethnicity, access, role and religion.

Ethical principles: The principles of conflict reporting are listed and each news item is captured as either supporting, violating or as neutral to these principles.

Quality of Information: This is captured along the depth of coverage, objectivity of the report, gender perspectives.

Visual Analysis: This captures the visual content of news reports and examines how the images or videos are presented.

Central Focus: This captures what the news report is largely focused on; conflict and/or humanitarian issues.

Further Analysis: This captures if the news reports require more work or are well reported.

Research Limitations

There were a few limitations to this research, one is the length of time of the media monitoring and analysis. A longer period might have yielded even more insights in possibly identifying the influencers of each medium's focus on different issues. The manual nature of the monitoring exercise also limited the number of participating media houses as the volume of news items were it to be more, might have significantly increased the possibility of error in collection and analysis. Also in capturing total count of news items per medium, the online media was hard to capture because of the share volume that is published daily and the transiency of news items in online news platforms.

Context

In January 2019 the country was preparing for the 2019 elections and the Nigerian media's focus shifted accordingly towards coverage of political campaigning towards the February presidential and national assembly elections as well as the March governorship and state parliament elections. Although elections dominated the discuss in the, other key happenings around this time are worthy of note:

>> The President's suspension of the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Walter Onnoghen over alleged fraudulent declaration of assets.

>> The opposition party's push against any thoughts/plans by the President to extend the outgoing Inspector General of Police, Idris Kpotun's tenure.

>> Terrorism, armed banditry and allied conflicts in the northeast, north-west, and north-central regions of the country.

>> The Minimum Wage increase debates in the parliament and between the labor union and the executive arm.

All these, coupled with sustained consumer inflation and increased panic exit of the elites and middle class ahead of the February and March elections, made January a particularly politically-charged month. The Nigerian media prioritized reporting of campaigns and related political issues and in February 2019 with the Presidential elections, they produced far less number of conflict and humanitarian reporting. The postponement of the presidential election by a week furthermore heightened tension and political conversations in the public space and by extension, increased media reporting of the issues. The election was fully covered, and so was the extensive collation and announcement of results.

Notably, the election was marked by violence and allied electoral malpractices thus there was an increase in media focus on these conversations. February was also the anniversary of a Boko Haram attack on Dapchi, where schoolgirls were captured but later rescued by the Nigerian government except a certain Leah Sharibu who was withheld upon her insistence not to denounce her Christian faith. This event also attracted some reflections in opinion pieces, and scarce instances of media reportage by few media houses.

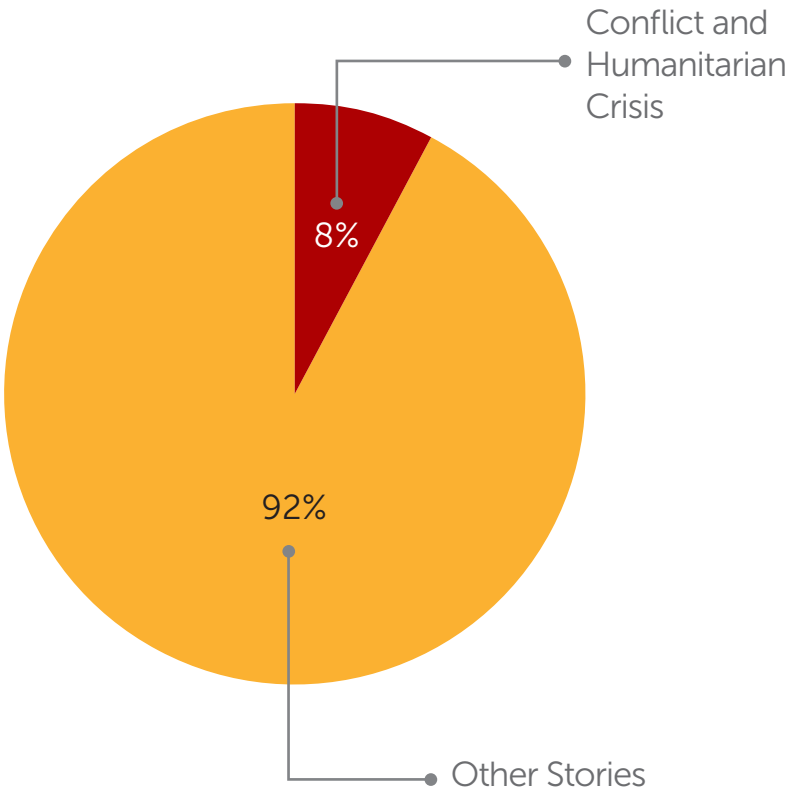
The governorship and state house of assembly elections held in March amidst the controversies trailing the February Presidential elections which was marked by violence, ballot-snatching and allegations of election rigging. Thus these two elections and the attendant issues were mostly the focus of media reporting in March. In the same month there were pockets of violence across the country: increased banditry in Zamfara, Boko Haram activities in Borno; herders' violence in Benue, killings in Kajuru-Kaduna. Other events during the monitoring period which captured national attention include the death of a renowned Nigerian-Canadian professor and social commentator, Pius Adesanmi, in the ill-fated Ethiopian airline crash. Also in March, the media was awash with coverage of a school building collapse in Lagos and the resultant effects on families and the community as well as commentary on the state of emergency response and regulatory bodies responsible for averting such mishaps.

Findings

The findings will be examined based on the data elements captured:

Media Count

Overall, the coverage of conflict and humanitarian issues in comparison to other issues in the news reports is staggeringly small. This result is representative of all media organizations coverage of conflict and humanitarian issues. Although for online news platforms the total count number is an estimate, the coverage of conflict issues is disproportionate. Giving that ¾ of the country's geo-political zones is embroiled in conflict, the assumption is that the coverage will be higher. Despite the grievousness of conflict and humanitarian challenges and its impact on the socio-political and economic stability of a country, the results indicate that the priority of news organizations is not conflict and humanitarian issues.

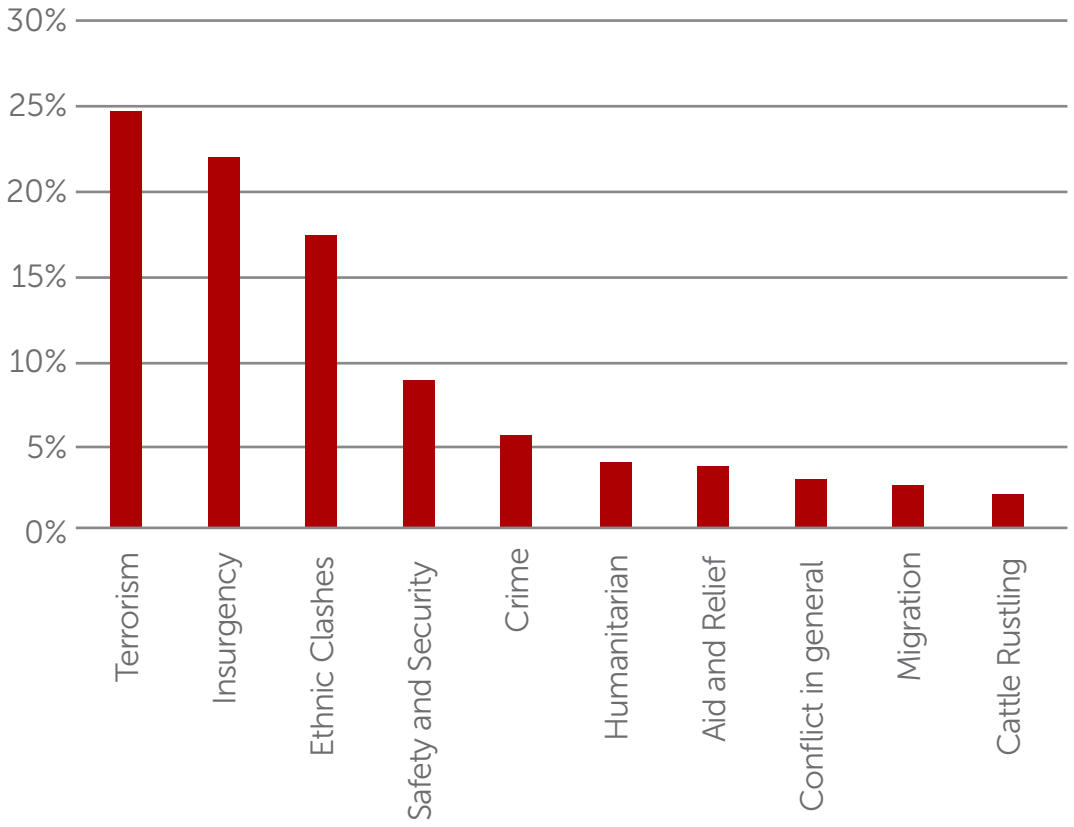


Graph 1: Coverage of Conflict and Humanitarian Crisis

Topics

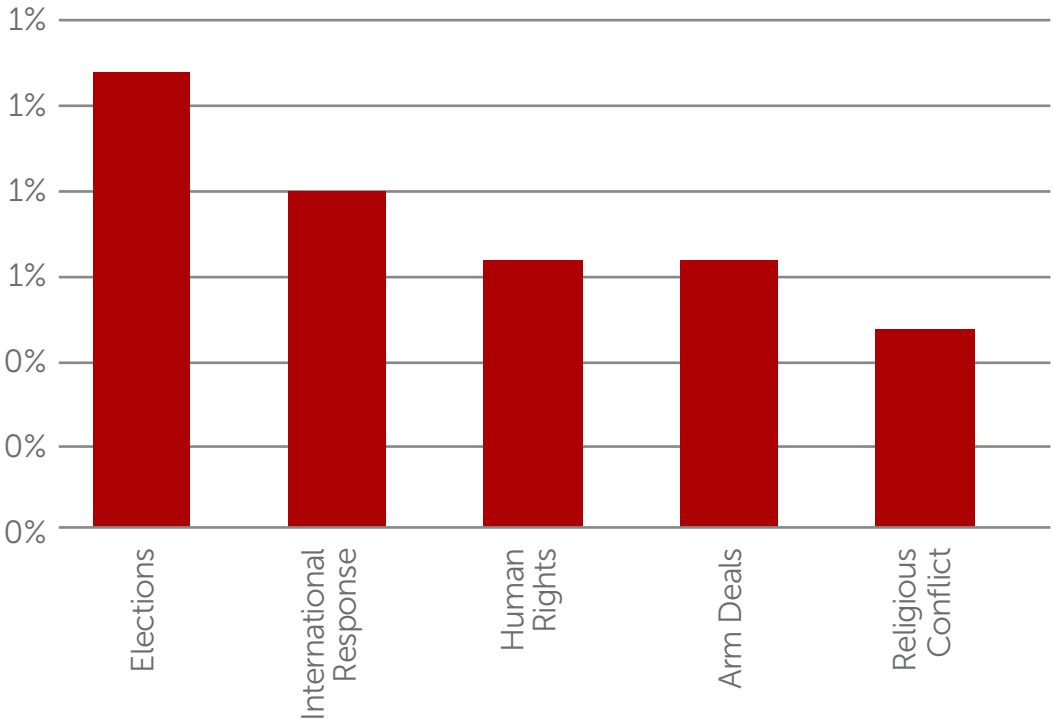
The topics cluster in this research was categorized into three, conflict related topics, humanitarian topics and human rights topics. The total number of topics across each categorization was 34. This section presents the top 10 topics covered by all media and the 5 least covered topics.

Topic	Number of Stories /across medium	Percentage (%)
Terrorism	185	25%
Insurgency	164	22%
Ethnic clashes	130	17%
Safety and Security	65	9%
Crime	41	5%
Humanitarian	28	4%
Aid and relief	27	4%
Conflict in general	21	3%
Migration	19	3%
Cattle rustling	16	2%



Graph 2.1: Top 10 Topics

Topic	Number of Stories/across medium	Percentage (%)
Elections	8	1%
International response	6	1%
Human Rights	5	1%
Arms deal	5	1%
Religious conflict	4	1%



Graph 2.2: Poorly Covered Topics

The top 10 topics account for 92% of all stories. Terrorism accounts for a large chunk of that coverage while castle rustling receives the least coverage of the top 10 topics covered. Most of the topics in the top 10 look like they are driven by events. The lack of diversity of topics could mean that there is not enough coverage on the drivers or influencers of these events and the media is not necessarily unpacking deeper issues as to why conflict exists. Important conflict drivers such as border disputes, food security, religion and a host of other issues were not sufficiently addressed.

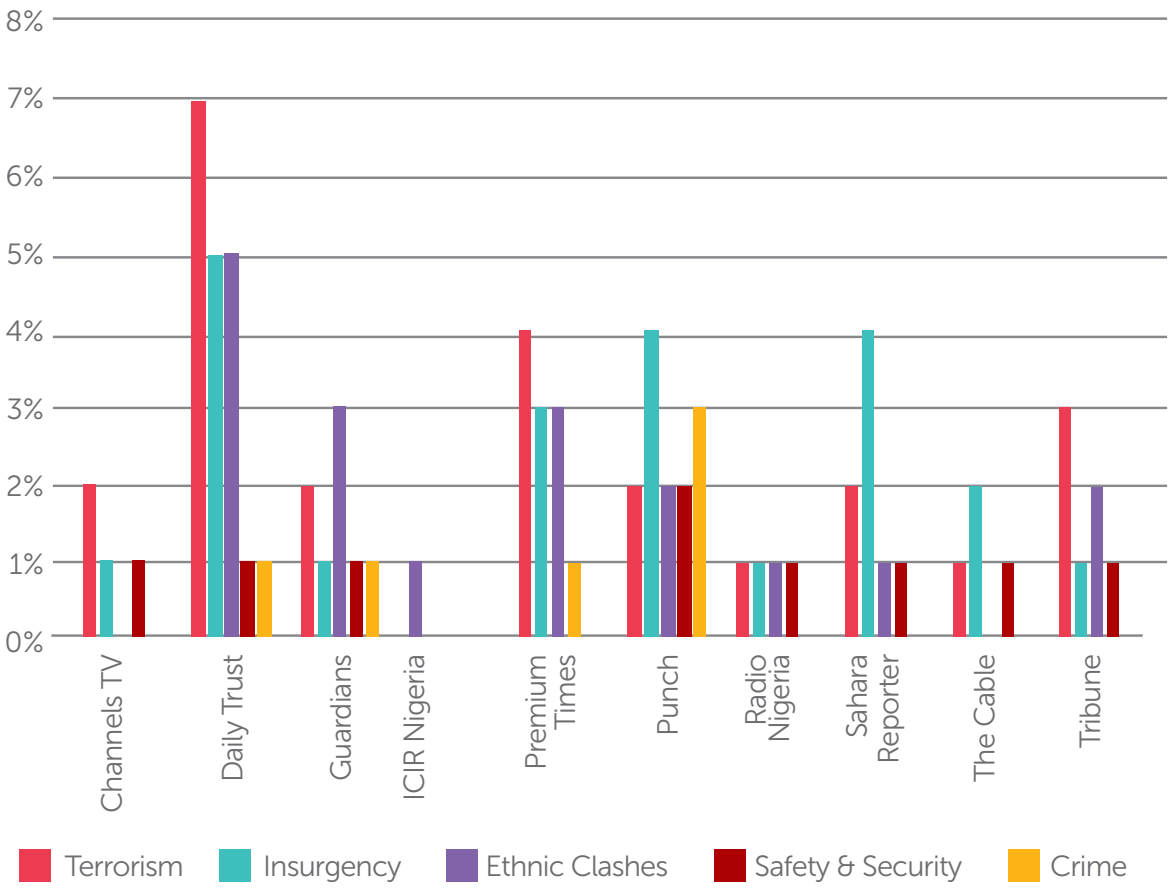
It is important to note that reportage of elections in relation to conflict and humanitarian issues received little attention during the period of the monitoring. The election season and the attendant political campaigning provided unique agenda-setting opportunities for the media, in the reporting period however the media failed to make the conflicts across the country an important agenda in conversations about the choice of elected leaders. The reportage of conflict and humanitarian issues and the elections appeared to have run parallel to each other with no points of convergence.

Most of the stories monitored during this period were event-reporting and appears to be narrated from the angle of and through the eyes and/or mouths of the army and government officials. The media appears to have shirked its agenda-setting function on a matter of such grave importance and might have unwittingly provided the space for the politicization of conflict and humanitarian issues.

After the elections, reportage on conflict and humanitarian issues dropped significantly across all media houses being monitored. Again in this, the media failed to set conflict and humanitarian issues as an important agenda for newly elected officials.

This is bothersome because the context of the country during the periods monitored was elections. Perhaps this result is not unconnected with the priority given to conflict and humanitarian crisis reportage in the news as well as the media's seeming inability to connect dots and reflect relativity between or among issues so as to provide enlightenment for the listening or reading public.

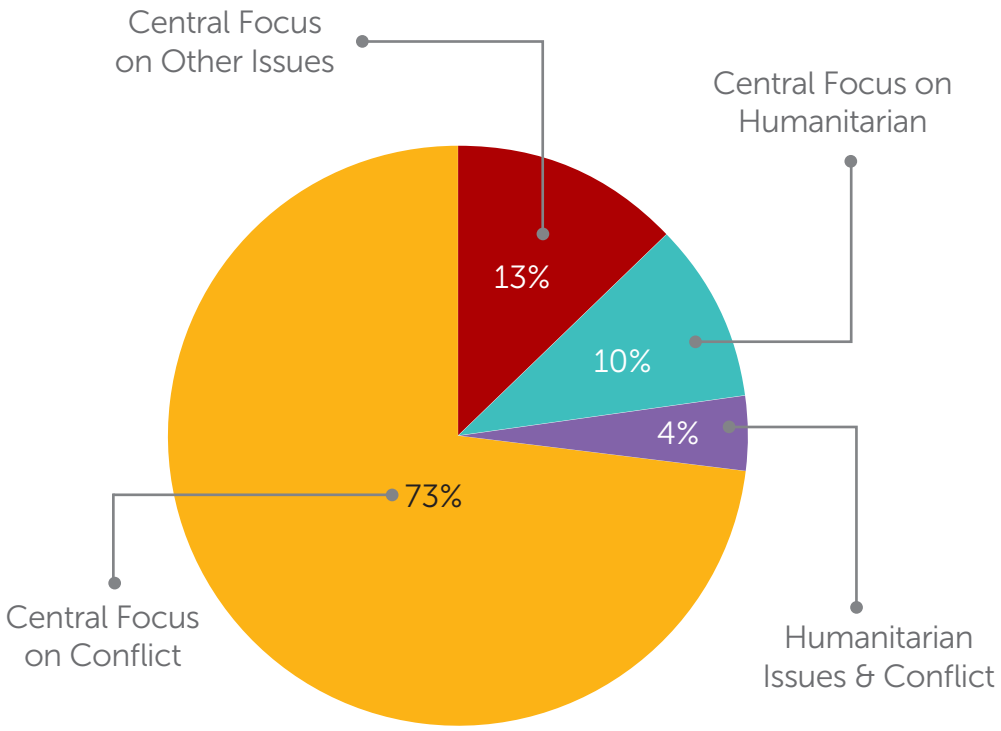
Below is a graph of how each medium covered the top 5 topics:



Graph 2.3: Top 5 Topics as covered by media

Central Focus of Stories

What did the news items across all media platforms focus on?



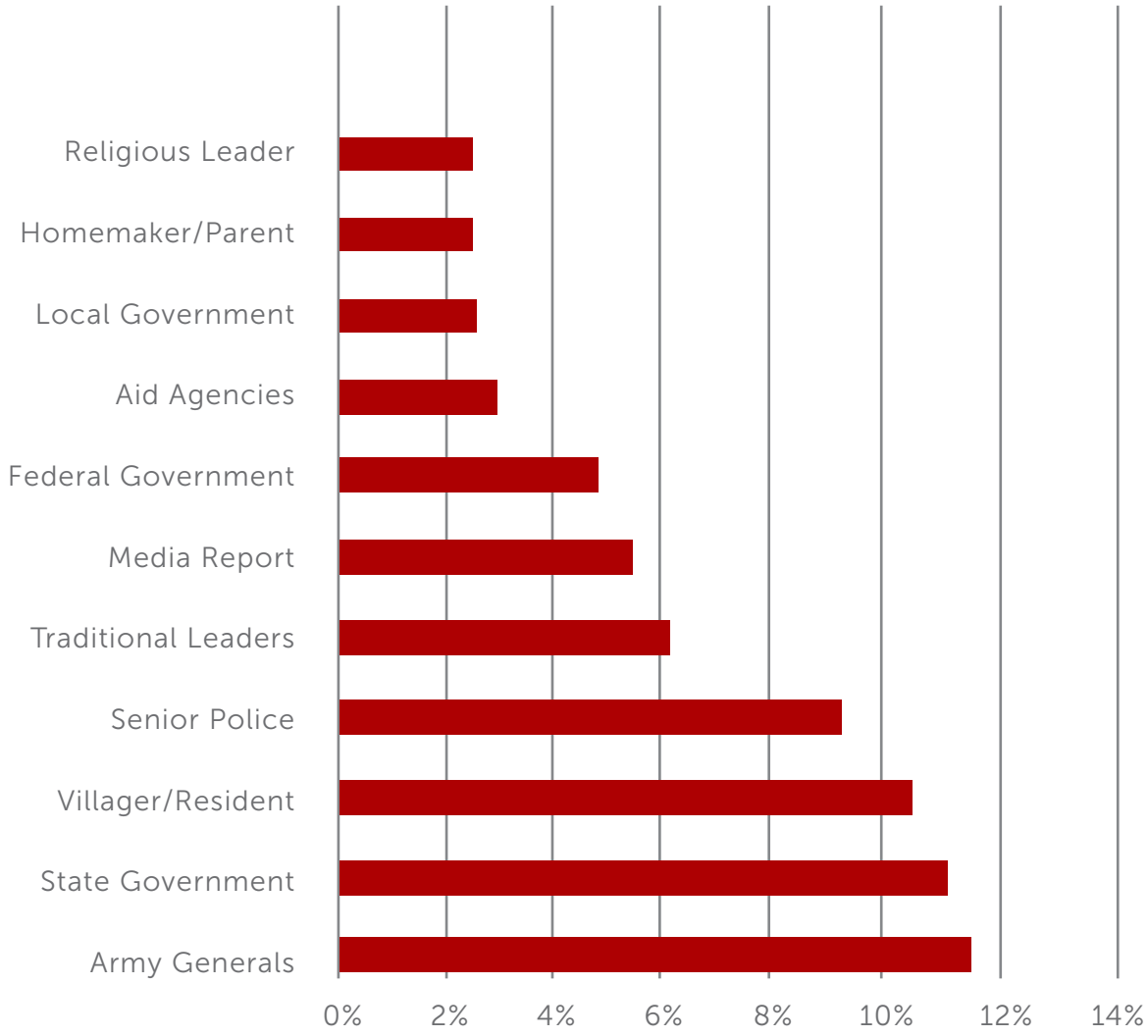
Graph 3: Central Focus of Stories

73% of total news coverage of conflict and humanitarian issues focused on conflict and a mere 10% on Humanitarian. The intersection of conflict and humanitarian is even lower at 4% which again raises the question of journalists' ability to connect the dots between the two issues. The predominant focus on conflict is perhaps not surprising given the media's pre-occupation with event-based reporting. Also the media appear to focus inordinately on deaths as a result of conflict while overlooking the casualties of conflict incidences, typically referencing the casualties and displaced as "scores of people". This is especially worthy of note because it is the casualties of conflict that make-up the burden of humanitarian crises and where these people are unmentioned in reports of conflict, the question of what data is available for tackling the humanitarian crisis is raised. And also, how does the media hold the government to account for a group they have themselves overlooked?

Sources

Who are the journalists talking to, who is shaping and/or dominating the narrative on conflict and humanitarian issues? What is the occupation of sources? What gender are the sources? What topics are these sources focusing on? How are these sources portrayed?

Occupation of Sources



Graph 4: Top 10 Occupation/Position of Sources

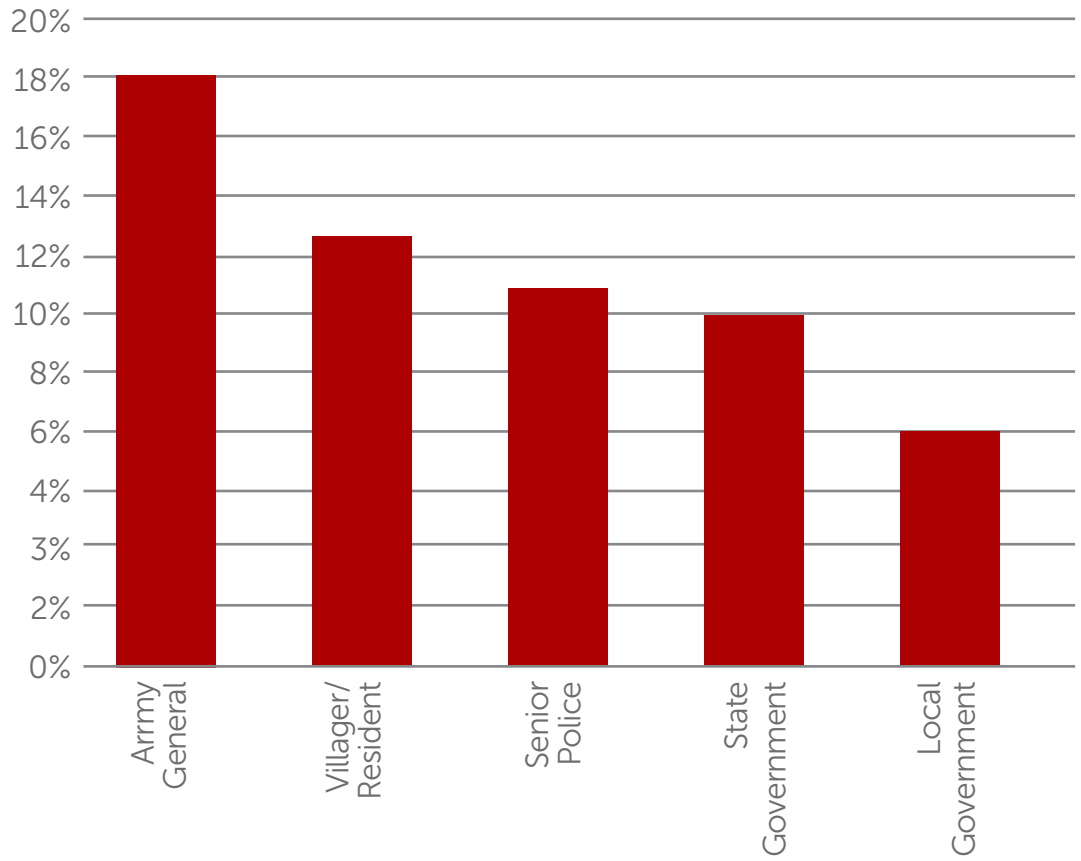
Army generals and state governments are the top occupation of sources, state- actors in fact make up 40% of the sources quoted in news reports. There are not many sources in the top 10 list that can sufficiently challenge official voices. Aid agencies make up only 3% of sources and experts and academics do not make it into the list of top 10 sources as they represent 1% of sources used in reports.
It is interesting that Villager/Residents feature so evidently in the source list. At the surface, it appears as if ordinary citizens are contributing to the conflict narrative and that is a positive indication. However, as the role of sources is examined, it will become clearer the extent and weight of each source's contributions.

Another interesting element is the absence of federal government and law makers in this list of sources, how is government policy regarding conflict communicated?

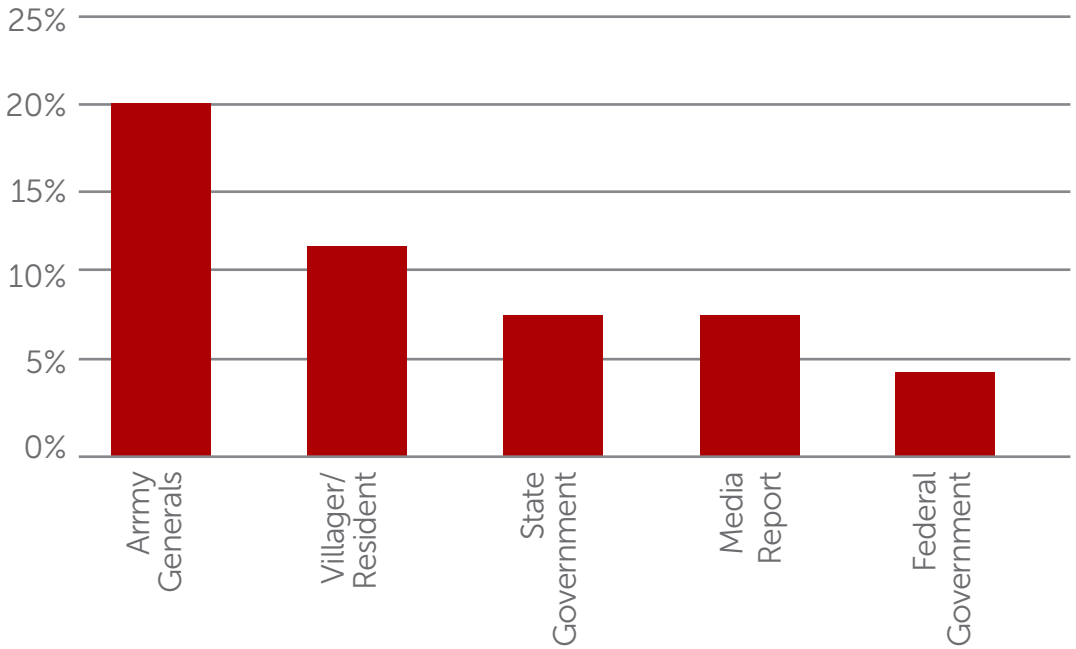
who is questioning the presence, effectiveness or absence of policy directions to conflict and humanitarian issues? Why is the central government silent? What are the views of lawmakers on conflict and humanitarian issues? This index lends credence to the predominance of event coverage in news reporting and an absence of in-depth analysis as reflected in graph

Media reports also appear as predominant sources of news pieces and may be pointers to an over-reliance on agency reports as against on-the-ground reports.

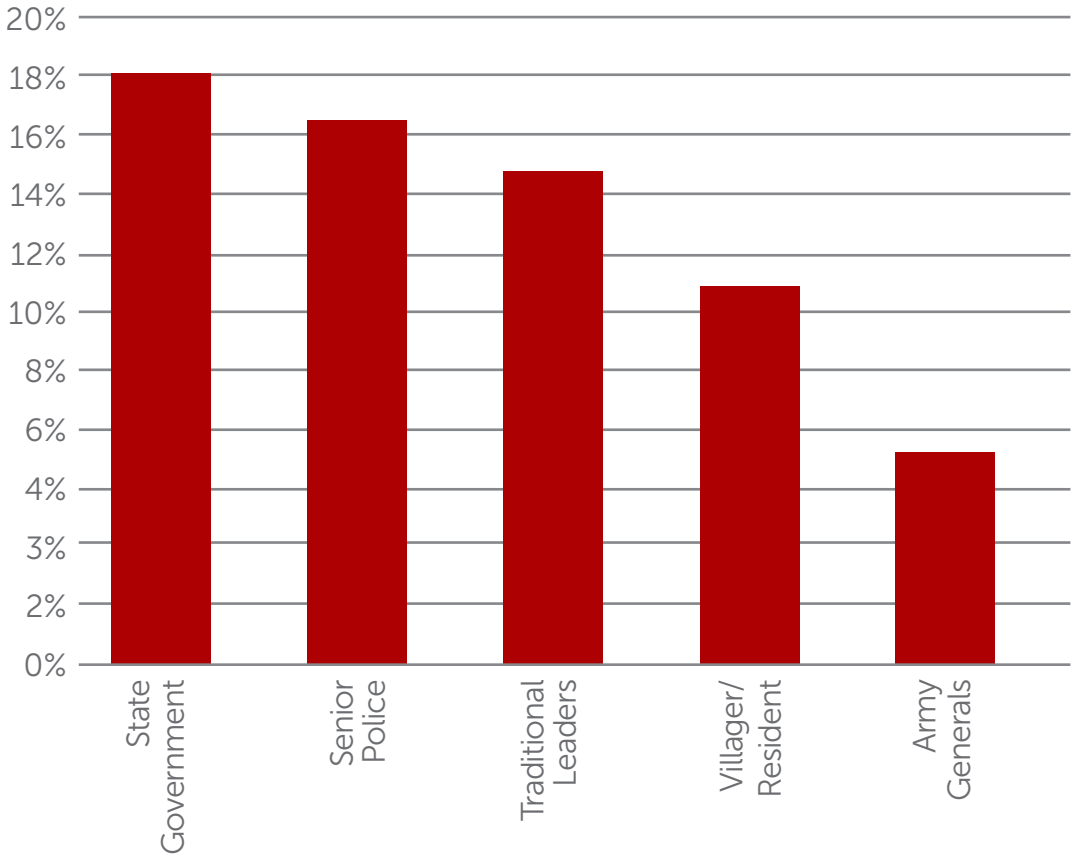
Sources on Top 5 Topics



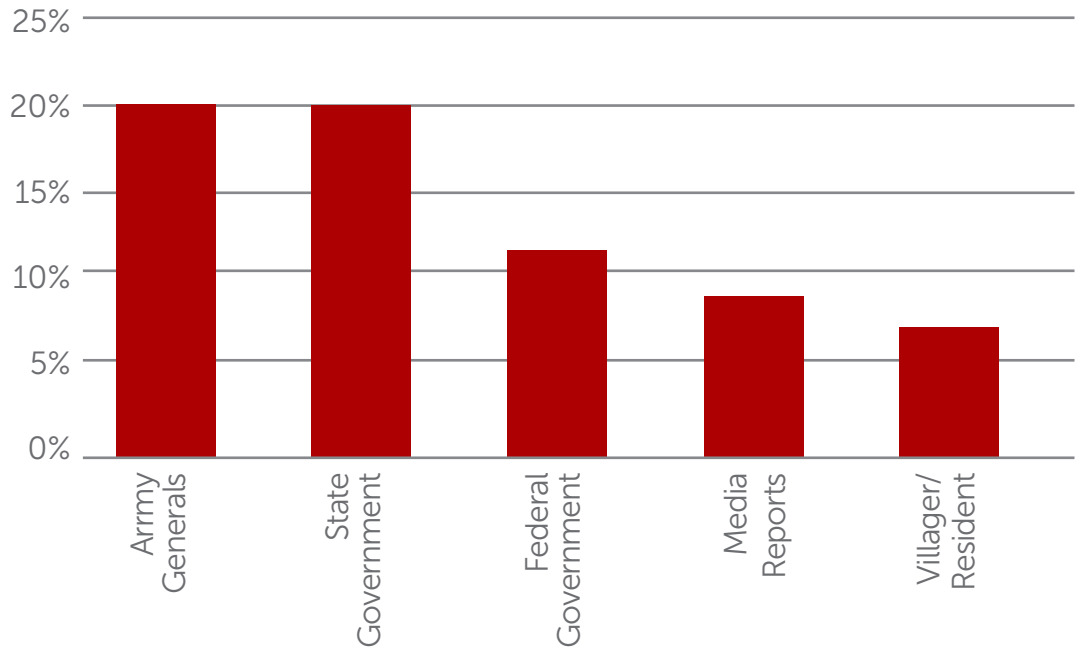
Graph 4.1: Top 5 Sources Speaking on Terrorism



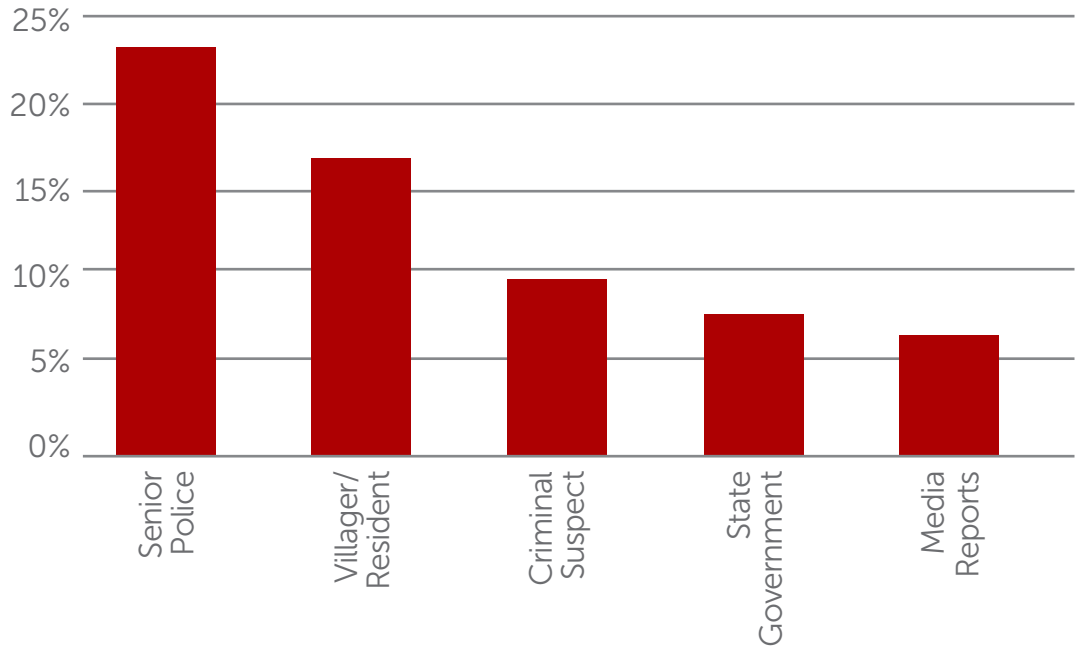
Graph 4.2: Top 5 Sources Speaking on Insurgency



Graph 4.3: Top 5 Sources Speaking on Ethnic Clashes



Graph 4.4: Top 5 Sources Speaking on Safety & Security

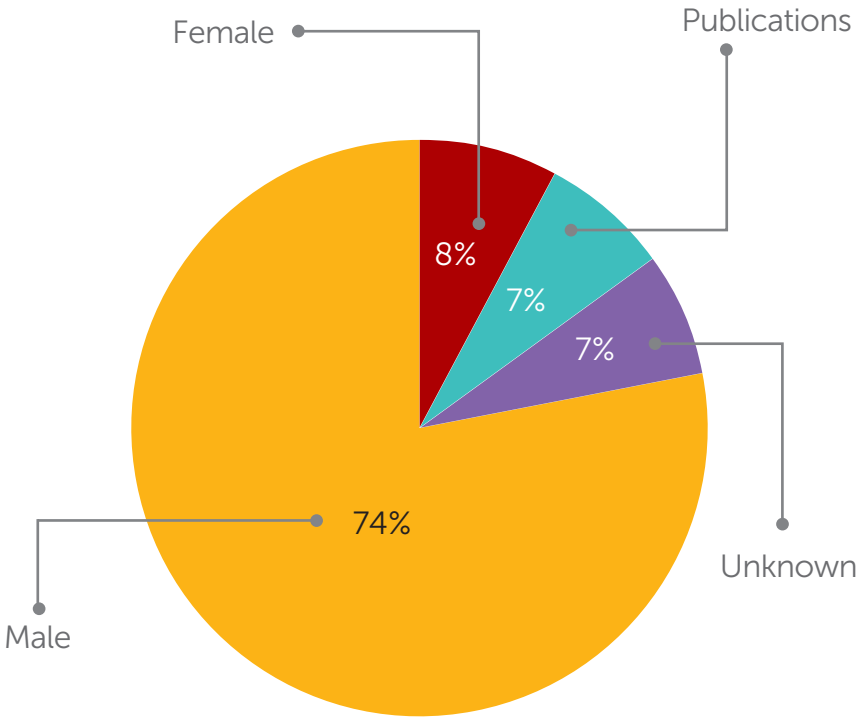


Graph 4.5: Top 5 Sources Speaking on Crime

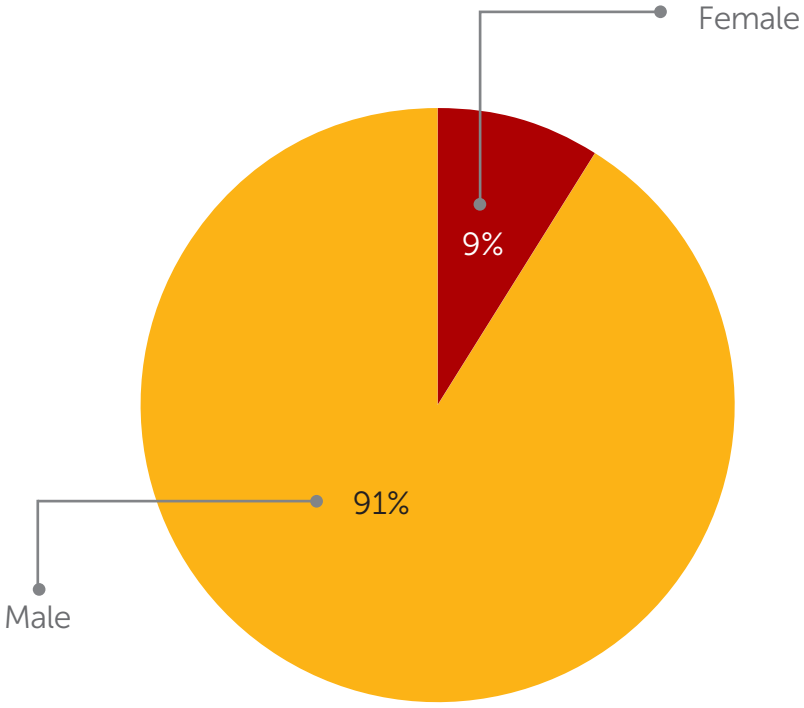
Consistently, the results show that state actors have the loudest voices in all of the top 5 topics. This is indicative of the media's reliance on official voices and state voices to tell conflict and humanitarian stories.

Sex of Sources

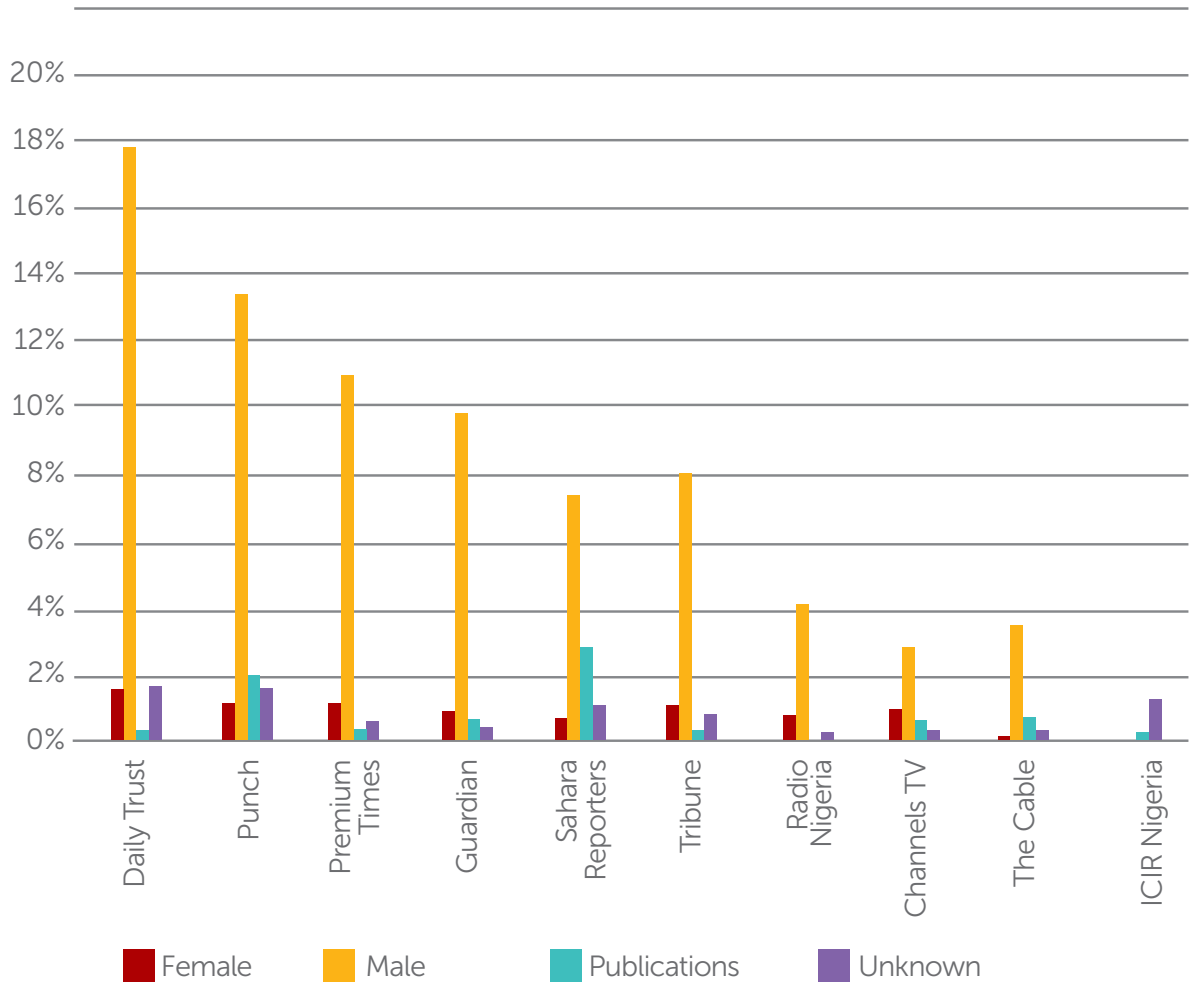
How balanced is source representation along gender lines



Graph 4.6: Sex of Sources



Graph 4.7: Male vs Female Sources



Graph 4.8: Sex of Sources by Media

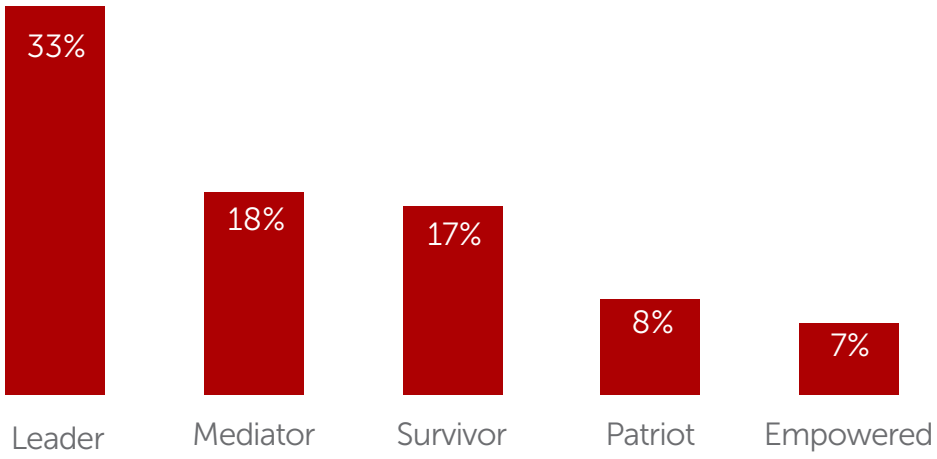
The voices in news narratives are predominantly male. This is especially important because of the importance of gender perspectives in conflict and Humanitarian situations. Often times women bear the brunt of conflict, when the men are killed or conscripted, women take on the burden of the family becoming bread-winners. In a June 2018 report by Displacement Tracking Matrix, 79% of the IDP population are women and children with women making up 54% and children under 5 making up 27% of the total population of IDPs. Publications and unknown sources are likely to be quoted as sources in news coverage than women.

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project Report 2015, 24% is the global standard of female representation in sources and so 9% is a dismal result and an indictment on the Nigerian media.

This poor performance cuts across all media that was monitored in this research.

Role of Sources

In what ways are sources portrayed?



Graph 4.9: Top 5 Roles of Sources

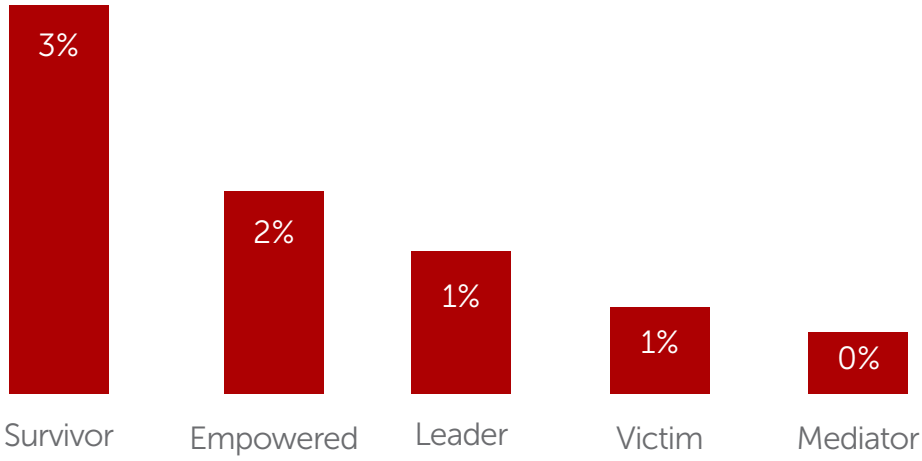
The portrayal of people as survivors rather than victims is a positive index, especially with survivors being in the top 5 roles; the chances are that the villagers/residents voices reflected in Graph 4.1 are the survivors in this graph.

There is a heavy reliance on leaders as sources which is unsurprising given that state-actors (army generals, state government, local government) have the loudest voices in news reports (40%) according to Graph 4. This is a clear indication that conflict is defined by those in power.

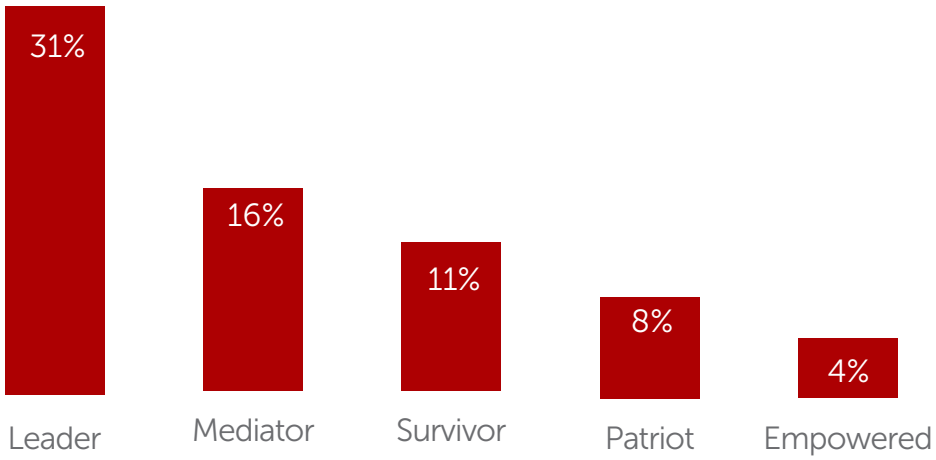
On the down side the 5 roles represent 83% of the sources which doesn't reflect diversity or the accommodation of a wide array of views and opinions.

Roles by Sex

What roles did men and women sources play?



Graph 4.10: Top 5 Roles of Female Sources (Against all Sources)

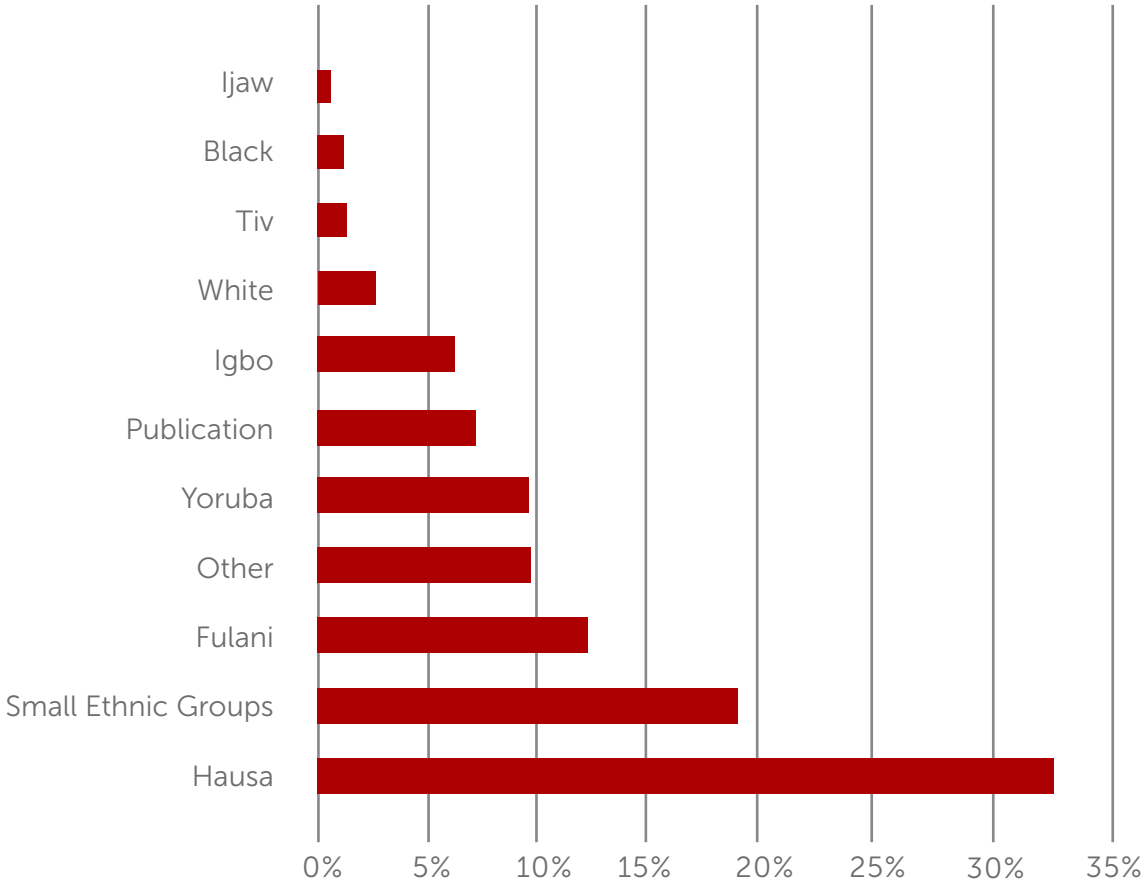


Graph 4.11: Top 5 Roles of Male Sources (Against all Sources)

Not only are women's voices rarely heard, they are often cast in the role of a survivor. In fact, the analysis of the data on sources show that no woman is quoted as a leader in any of the news reports and are only reflected as empowered 2% of the time. Again this is a dismal portrayal of women's roles in conflict.

Ethnicity of Sources

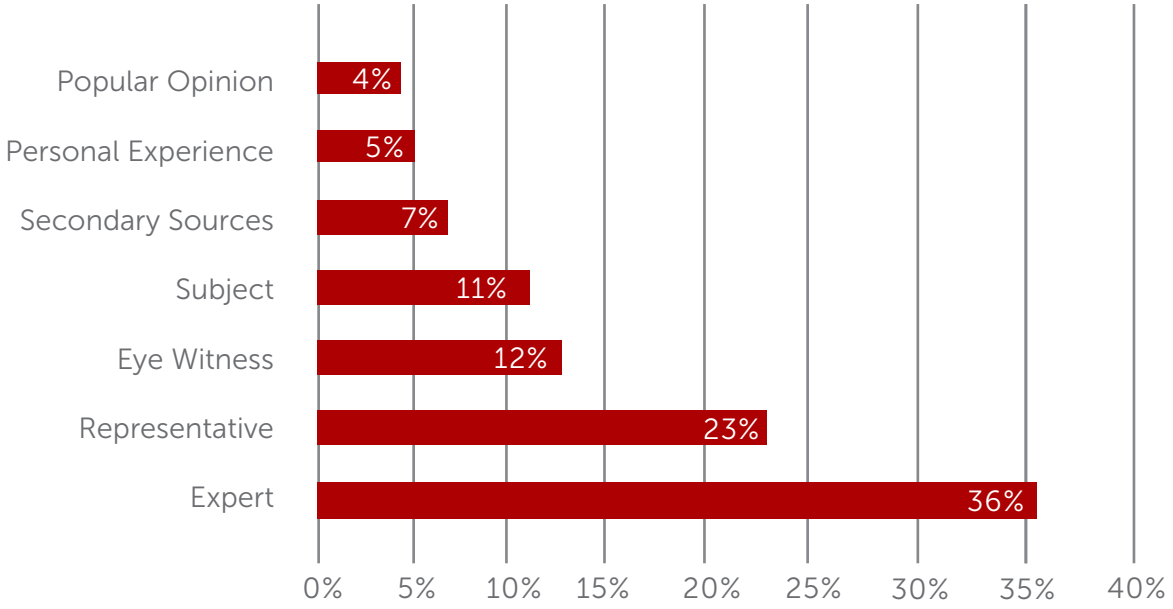
What is the ethnicity of the source quoted?



Graph 4.12: Race & Ethnicity of Sources

The highest ethnic representation is Hausa; it could however be positive that smaller ethnic groups feature prominently in source ethnicity.

Sources' Function

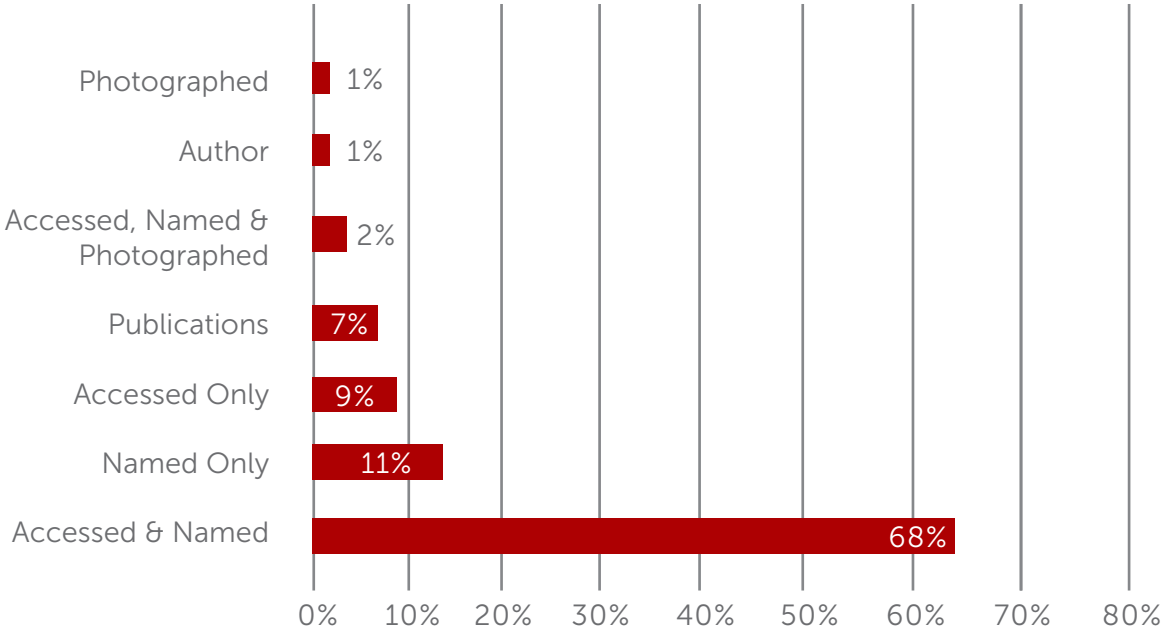


Graph 4.13: Sources' Function

This confirms what we see in Graph 4 where officials are accessed the most. Even though there are many sources who are villagers and residents the fact that personal experience is low show that majority of ordinary citizens are accessed as eyewitnesses providing facts about the account but not relaying their lived experiences. Thus the people on the ground appear not to be contributing to the shaping of conflict beyond corroborating an event. This again reflects the event-propelled reporting pattern of news mediums.

Sources' Level of Access

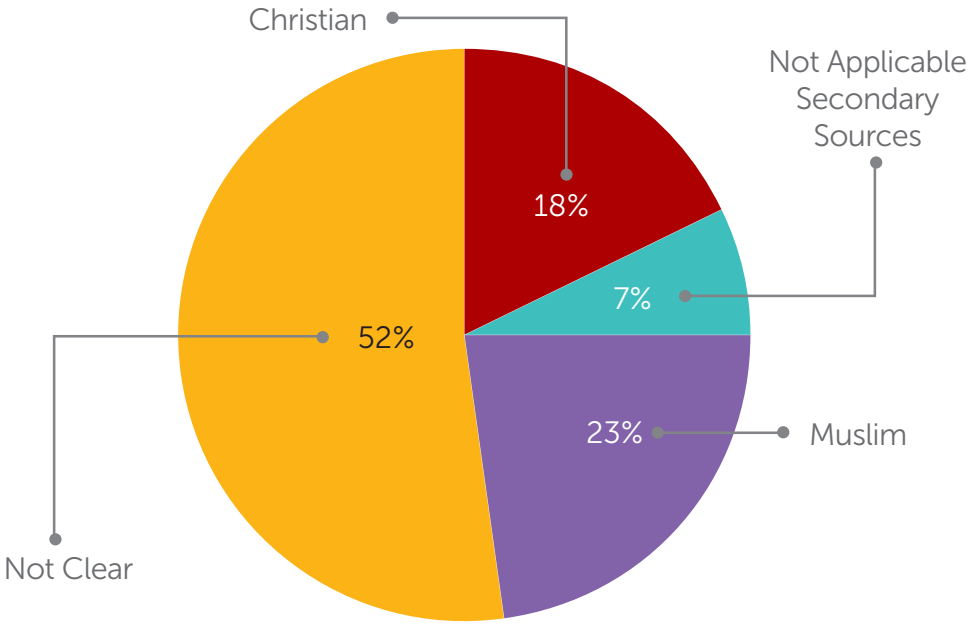
How were the sources accessed?



Graph 4.14: Sources' Level of Access

80% of the sources were quoted directly or indirectly. This is a positive finding, but it also shows that the media missed an opportunity to interrogate people's experiences and reflect that in their reporting (as outlined in Graph 5.15). There is very little use of visuals and this may not be unconnected to a dirge of on-the-ground reports and reliance on publications and other media (agency) reports.

Sources' Religion

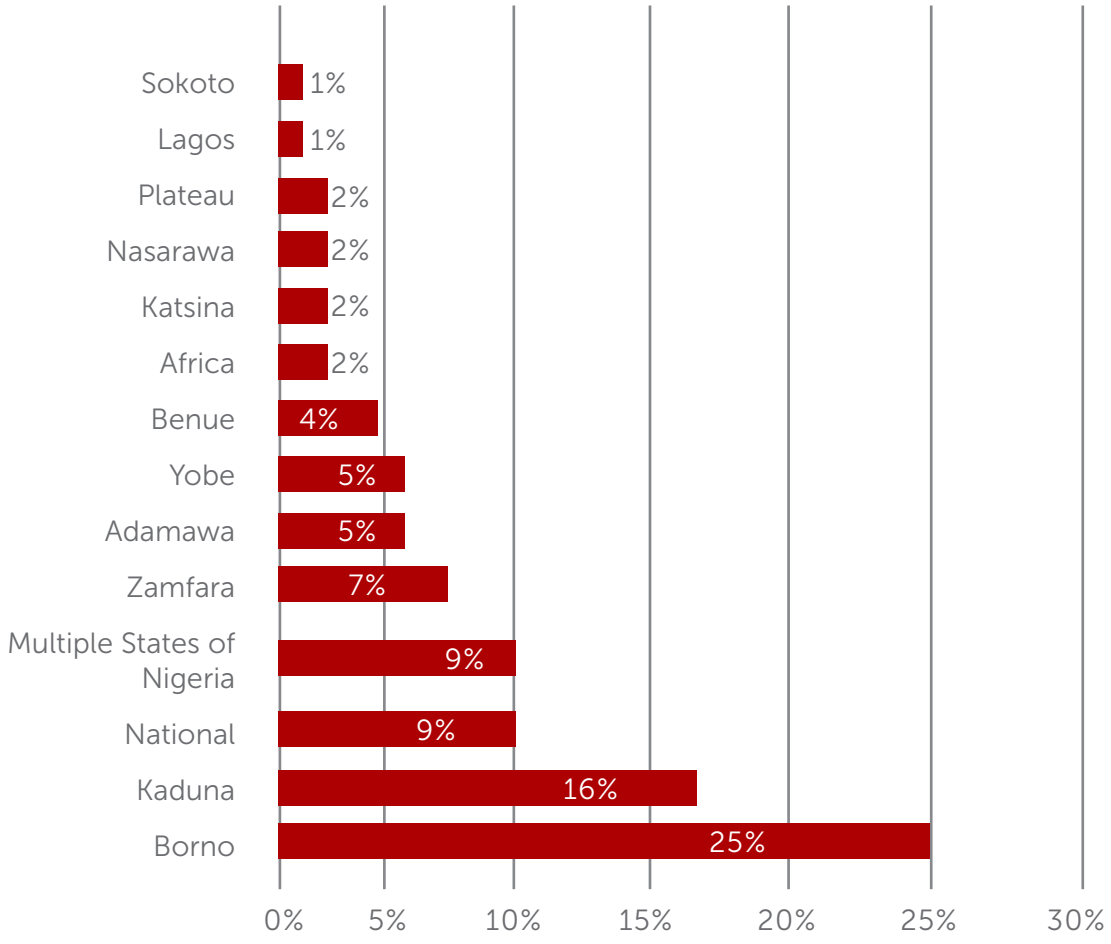


Graph 4.17: Sources Religion

It is significant that 52% of the time religion of sources was unclear, it could mean that religion has no significant connection with conflict and this will be corroborated by the fact that religion received very little attention as a topic as seen in graph 2.2. It could also mean, however, that the media are missing the opportunity to draw important connection between religion and conflict especially considering the ideology of the deadly Boko Haram sect ravaging the North eastern region of the country.

Origin of Stories

What region is mostly covered by news reports?

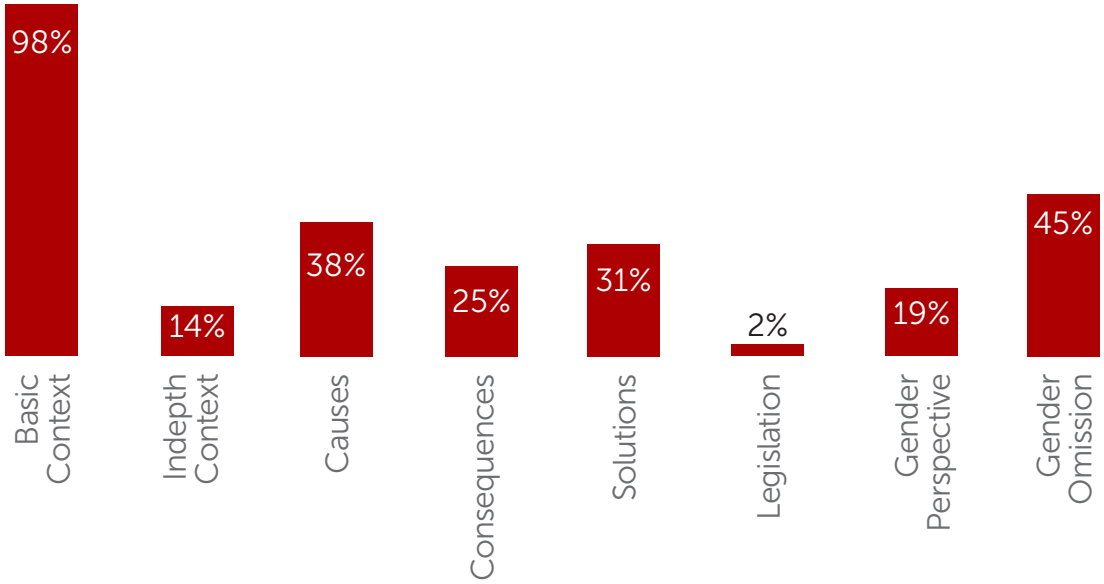


Graph 5.1: Origin of Stories

Borno in the North Eastern region of the country is the most covered region. Considering that there is conflict in at least 4 of the six geo-political zones, this result raises questions of imbalanced focus on one type of conflict above others. Also, since the region is still mostly under Boko Haram, a lot of incidents happen in that region and this again corroborates the event-driven coverage pattern of media houses as has been repeatedly re-enforced in other sections of this report.

Quality of Stories

How good are these news reports? How much context and in depth reporting is done on stories.



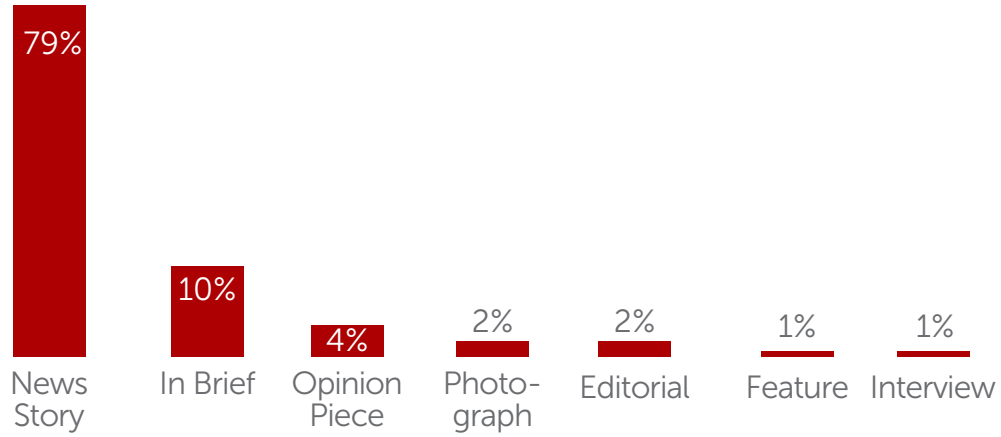
Graph 6: Quality of Information

98% of reports are basic, a mere recounting of an event that has occurred. Here again, the event-centric ideology of reportage is reinforced. 98% of the time the media missed out on opportunities to provide context, connect the dots and fresh perspectives to issues all of which put in doubt their ability to critically perform their accountability and education function. On a positive end 31% of the stories attempted to do solutions journalism but it must be noted that the bulk of these reports are opinion pieces. Gender omission is unsurprisingly at a high 45% although the fact that so many stories had opportunities to present gender perspectives but failed to do so is still worrisome. Legislation at a low of 2% and this is corroborated by the fact that the executive arm of government features very low as sources in news reports.

It must be stated however that issues of press freedom and lack of access to information would have contributed to this poor showing by media organizations. The lack of access to information is paradoxical considering that state-actors are the loudest voices in news coverage of conflict.

Types of Stories

How well did the media explore the different formats and to tell conflict and humanitarian stories?

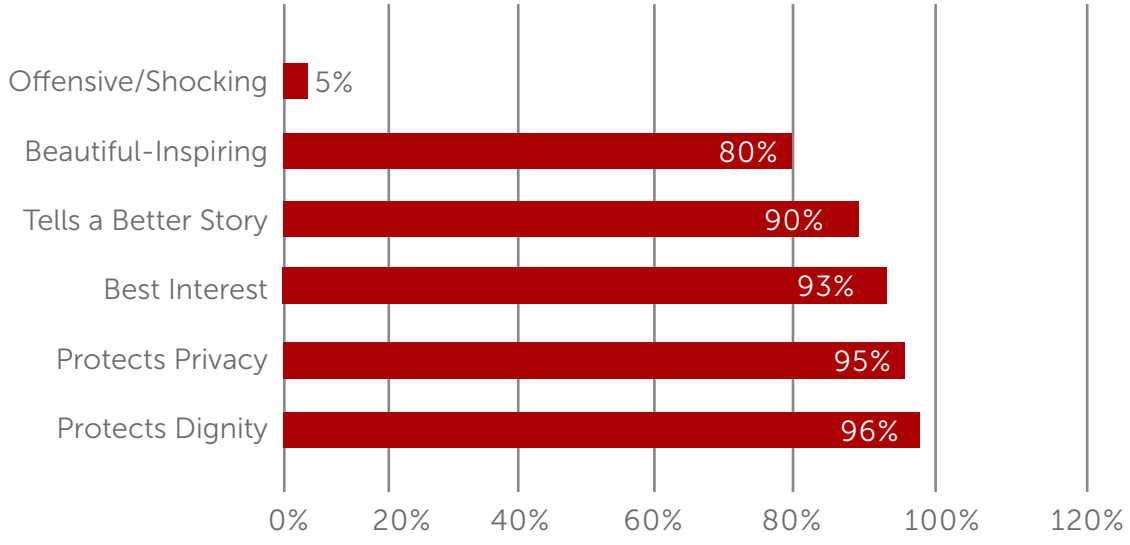


Graph 6: Type of Stories

News story, news in brief and photographs makeup 91% of all the news report monitored within this period. These formats leave the least room for in-depth analysis and often don't carry a lot of information. Features, which present the best opportunities for in-depth reporting and context, on the other hand had just 1% of the story share. Editorials had a 2% share, again bringing up the question of priorities and where conflict and humanitarian issues lie in the priorities of media organizations. The favored news type (news story) again gives credence to the media's preference for event-based reporting and this fact has been corroborated throughout this report.

Visual Analysis

What is the quality of the visuals used in stories?

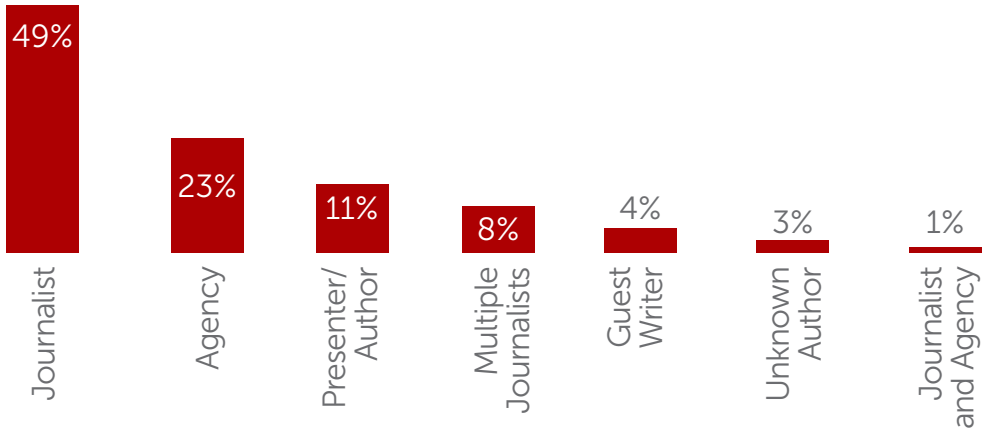


Graph 8: Visual Analysis

Even though there were few photos/visuals those that were present seem to be of good quality and did not violate the right to dignity and privacy of the sources. Only 5% of visual content were offensive and this is a positive result. Whether these stats will stay the same if there is an increase in visual elements of stories is something to consider.

Author

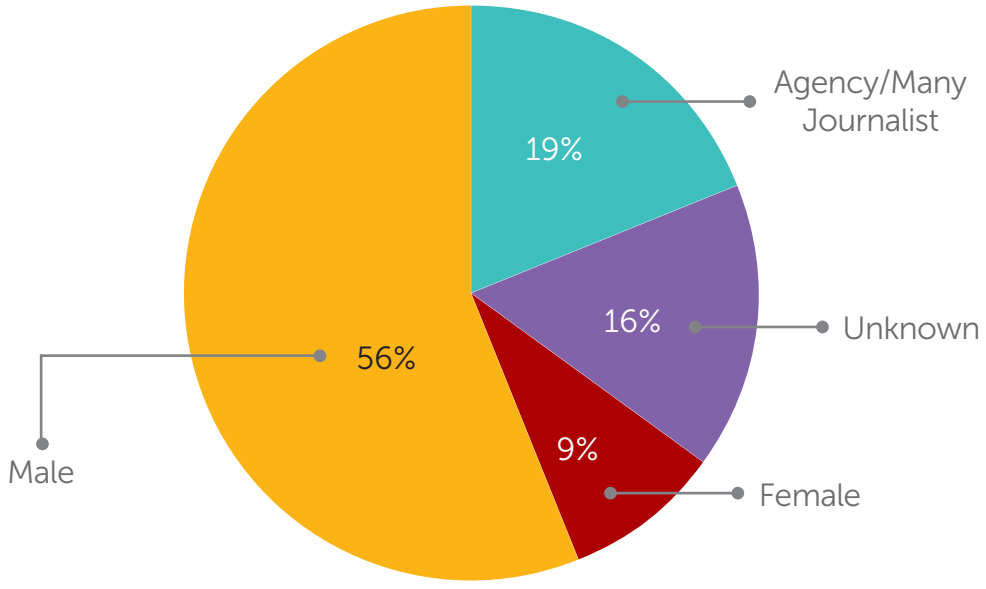
Who wrote the stories?



Graph 9: Who wrote the Stories?

49% of the stories are written by journalists but 23% of the stories are from agency reports which reflects a disproportionate reliance on agency reports. Again it raises the question of media organizations' investment in investigative journalism or the dedication of journalists to doing original stories. This has implications for the quality of stories produced by media organizations.

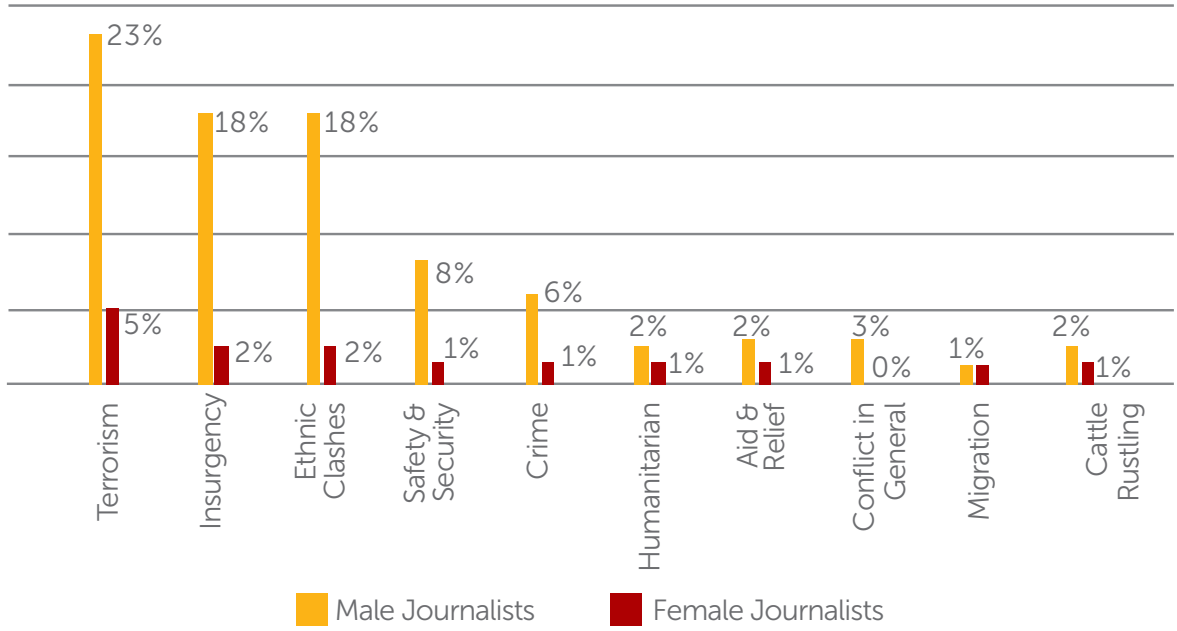
Sex of Authors (Journalists)



Graph 9.1: Sex of Journalists

There are more agency reports (19%) and unknown authors (16%) than there are female authors (9%). This speaks to the broader issue of hiring patterns of media organizations and the gender bias in assigning reporters to desks where females are put on softer beats while the men get the tougher beats. This result may also explain the absence of gender perspectives in news reports although every journalist should pay attention to gender issues irrespective of gender.

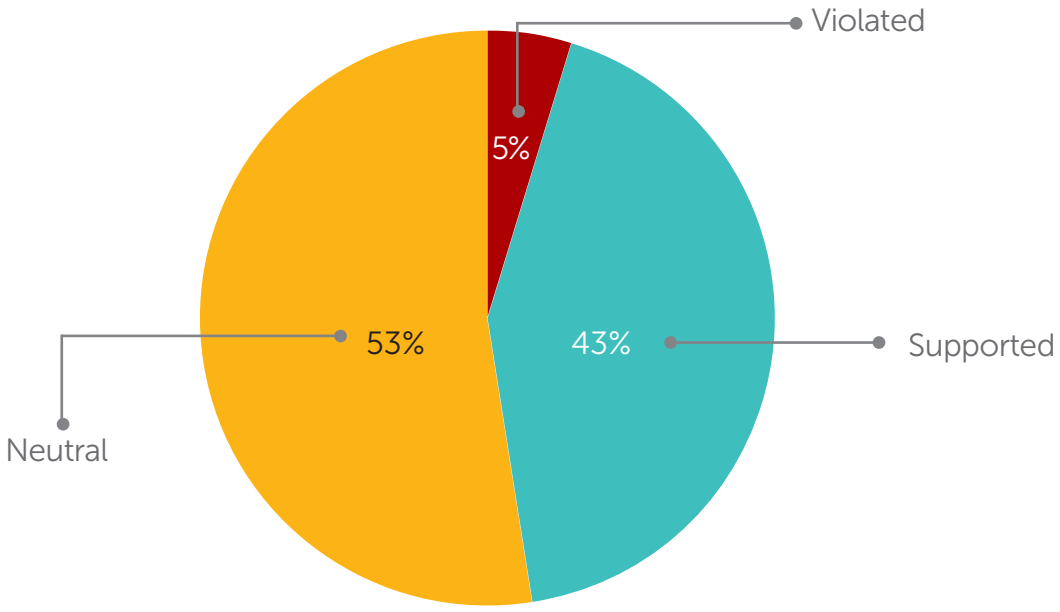
What did male and female journalists write about?



Graph 9.2: What did Male and Female Journalist write about?

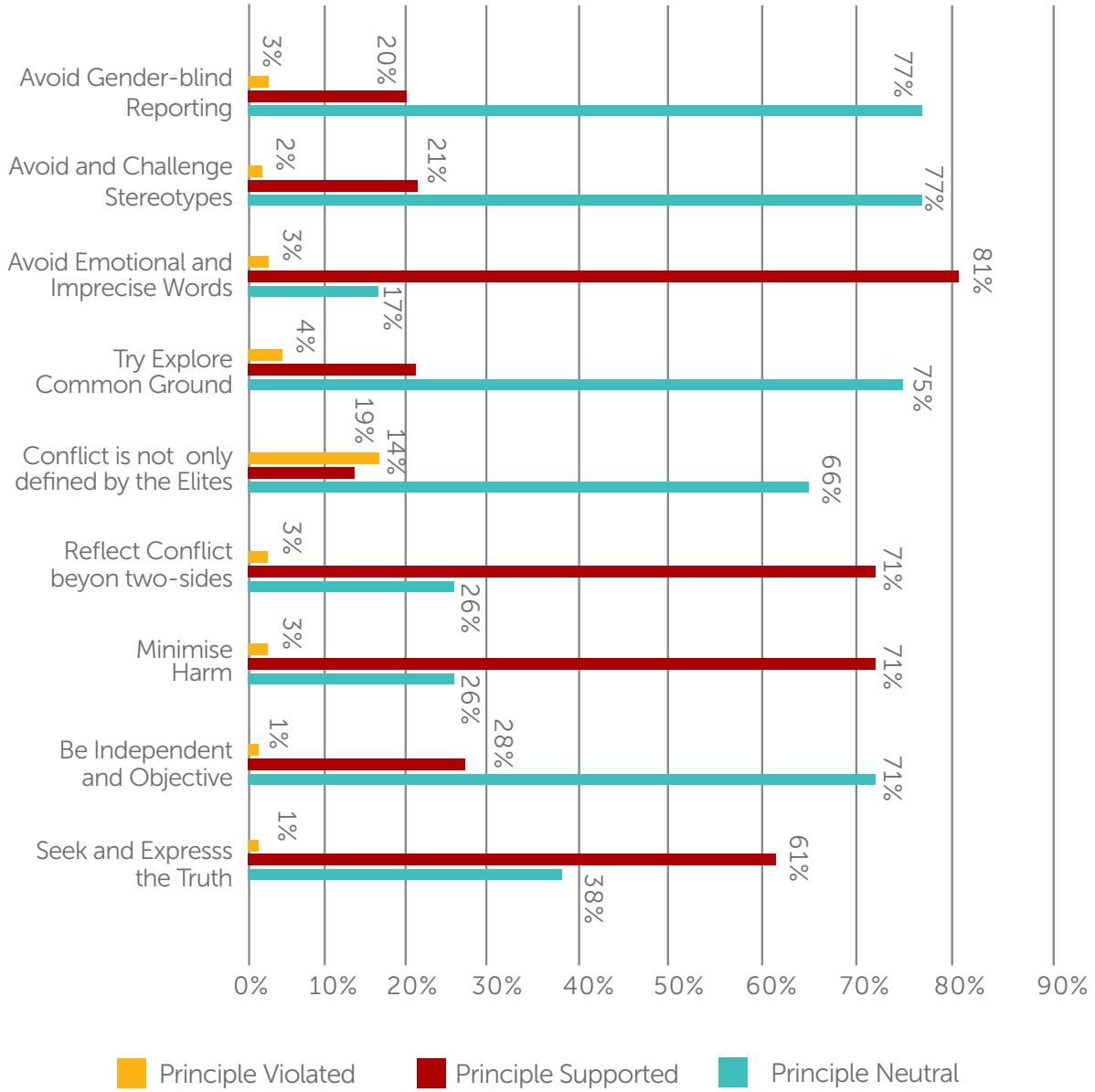
Adherence to Ethical Principles

How well did the stories adhere to ethical principles?



Graph 10: Overall Breaakdown of Ethical Principles

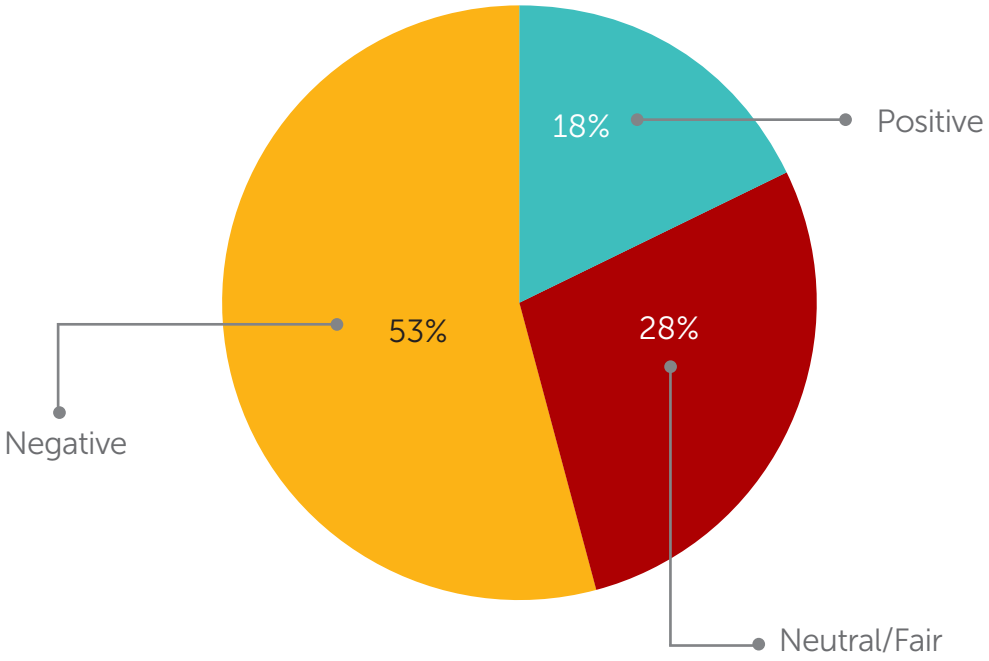
Only 5% of stories violated ethical principles and that is a good result. It is however worrisome that 53% of news reports were neutral, that is, a determination could not be made if these stories adhered to ethical principles or not. Journalism has to attempt to be clear on its ethics at all times. While this result does not directly indict the press, it is a cause for concern.



Graph 10.1: Breakdown of each Ethical Principle

Tilt of Stories

Were the stories positive or negative?



Graph 11: Positivity vs Negativity Stories

Most of the stories covered within this period had a negative tilt (54%). Where news stories are mostly centered around events then the tilt is likely to be negative. A variety of formats that can give room for solutions-driven reporting and thus a more positive tilt is missing is missing.

Conclusion

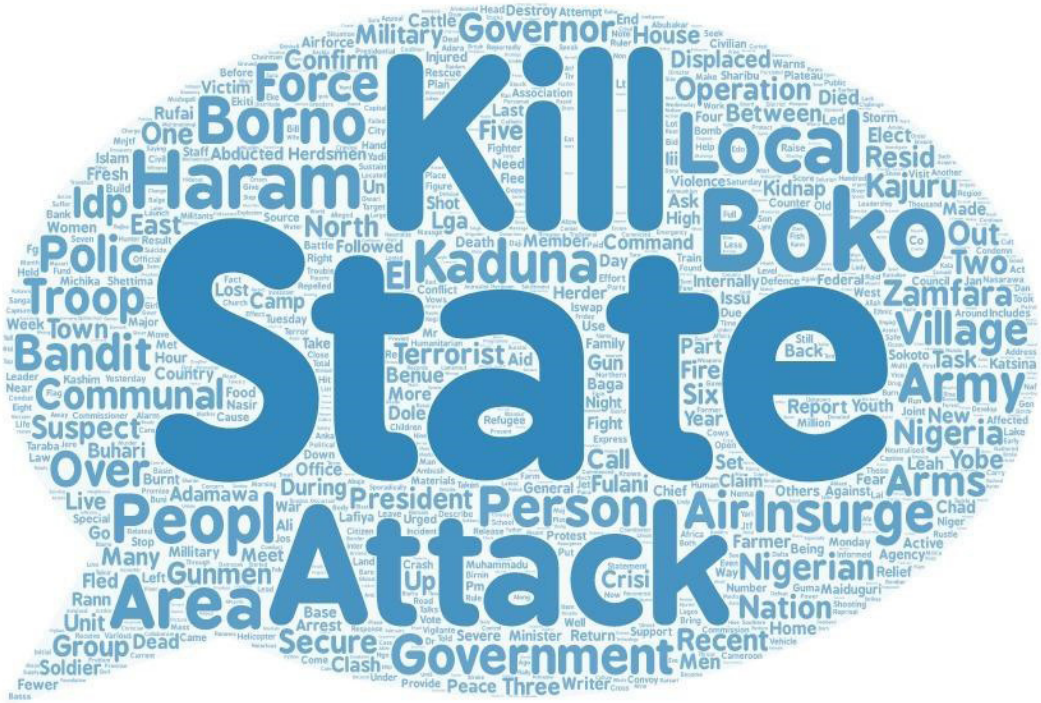
This media monitoring exercise has shown that the media has not particularly prioritized conflict and humanitarian reporting, the loudest voices shaping conflict is that of state-actors, the full range of media formats is not being explored and that has an impact on the quality of stories. Women representation in the media is below par both as sources and as authors, opportunities to explore gender perspectives are often missed. The tilt of stories is often negative and media organizations have an event-centric approach to reportage and the news reports are often not able to connect the dots between issues and provide intelligence beyond the obvious. There is a disproportionate focus on some topics and themes at the expense of other equally important themes.

Over all media needs to re-think its approach to and role in conflict and humanitarian crises, especially considering its very important role of public education and holding governments to account. Both roles require that the media itself has full grasp of the issues so that they can interrogate and ask the right questions and bring enlightenment to issues that are complex or easy to misunderstand.

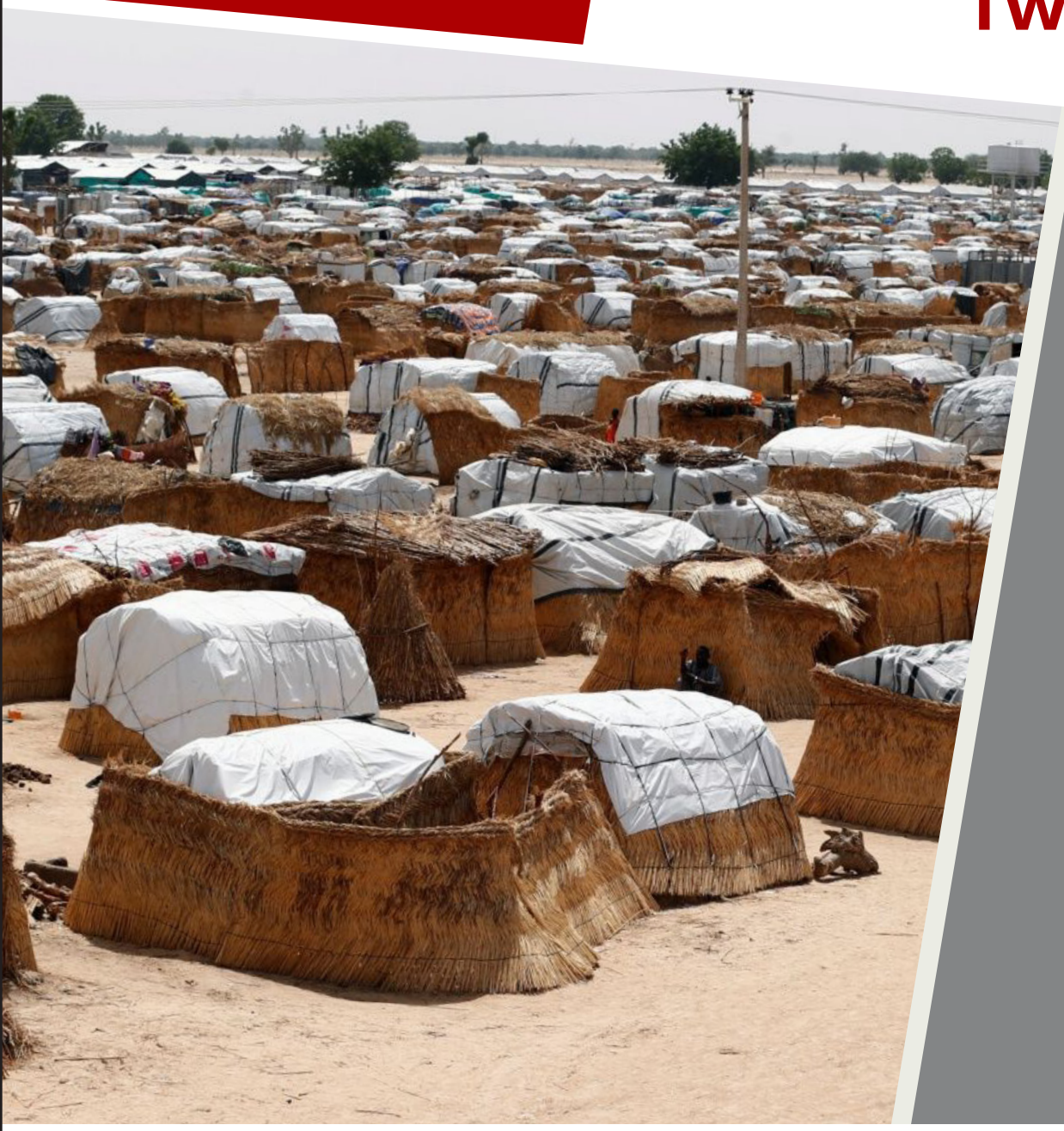
Certain themes are evidently problematic for the media and these themes include its agenda-setting function, gender representation and sourcing among others. An understanding of the body of laws around conflict and humanitarian issues and the reporting of it will also greatly benefit the media.

These themes are explored in the next section of this report.

Key Words in Media Report



Section Two



Sourcing and Use of Contents on Nigerian Conflicts in the Media

Taiwo Hassan Adebayo, PREMIUM TIMES

Executive Summary

Nigeria is caught in deepening conflicts trap. Violent conflicts, of varying degrees and ramifications, are active in four of the country's six regions. Fed by weak governance, environmental pressures, state legitimacy crisis and extreme ideology, the conflicts have caused humanitarian crises and posed risks to food security, national economy and unity. For contents - information, facts and perspectives on the conflicts - the news media are the chief agent and depend on sources to deliver its mandate. However, in performing their role as an agent conditioning the conflicts, the media can either exacerbate the conflicts or be instrumental to resolution. Which role the media play depends on how contents are sourced and used as well as the media's independence as an agent. In Nigeria's conflicts, evidence from monitoring news reports on conflicts suggests a preponderance of dependence on official and agency sources. The implications are risks that the media promotes single-narrative, inflames passions, de-facilitates truth and accountability, and consequently further draws out the conflicts. To halt this trend, the media needs an integrated push and has to be capacitated for balanced reporting and on-the-ground sourcing.

Introduction

Nigeria is significantly affected by conflicts involving active engagement of the country's armed forces in four of the six geo-political zones. Boko Haram Terrorism, BHT, has devastated the North-east, Nigerian part of the Lake Chad region. The North-west, the latest addition to the zones where troubles have risen beyond constabulary role of the police, is the subject of daily reports on the menace of rampaging bandits and kidnappers operating from the Kaduna-Abuja Highway to rural communities across the region. The oil-rich Niger Delta is still volatile with some barely governable spaces as a spinoff of the oil war. Then, the North-central or the Middle Belt, is the zone worst-hit by the farmers-herdsmen conflict, a unique one with implications for the country's unity as it involves belligerents from different ethnic-religious sections with a history of distrust and tensions.

The conflicts, put together, have precipitated large scale humanitarian disaster and posed threats to the country's food security, economy and unity. As an agent, the media have a public duty to provide content - information, facts and perspectives - on these conflicts and their impacts. The PREMIUM TIMES Centre for Investigative Journalism has been monitoring how the media source and use these contents, which determine role in either alleviating or exacerbating the conflicts.

The reports on the monitoring project show contents are heavily sourced from official sources (or NAN) in 10 Nigerian news organizations surveyed between January and March 2019 (Table 1). This finding is critical. Without witnessed reporting, that is not only on-the-ground but affords the public access to non-official yet true accounts and exposes abuses and failures, the media may inadvertently be investing in supporting

injustice and abuses, covering truth, and further drawing out the conflicts

S/N	MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS	TYPE
1	Premium Times	Online
2	Sahara Reporters	Online
3	The Cable	Online
4	ICIR	Online
5	Radio Nigeria	Broadcast
6	Channels	Broadcast
7	Punch	Print
8	Tribune	Print
9	Daily Trust	Print
10	Guardian	Print

Table 1: 10 Media Organization Surveyed

Therefore, capacitating the media for balanced, witnessed and on-the-ground reporting on humanitarian and conflict issues is imperative

Sourcing and use of contents on conflicts and humanitarian situations in Nigeria

Gathering news on the conflicts requires presenting contents on situations through the accounts of sources. As the reports on the media monitoring suggest, the media have heavy dependence on official sources. These sources, mostly associated with state organizations like the security forces or non-state organized actors like socio-political organizations, commonly have vested interests in news reports which they purpose to shape public opinion.

Most of the violent incidents happen in rural and remote places far removed from centres where media bureaus are based. Also, access to displaced persons' camps, for instance, to capture humanitarian situations, may be restricted by officials. Thus, the media find themselves in a situation they have to depend on press releases from official sources for news. While the challenge of access is noted, official sources could downplay or overstate impacts of incidents for their set agenda which may run in variance with the media's mandate of purveying the truth and upholding accountability.

Daily Trust does far more than any of the media organizations surveyed in terms of using non-official sources for reports on the conflicts. But even so, as for other organizations too, contents on the conflicts, even when sourced from non-official sources, are commonly not humanized, thereby hiding human-term impacts of violence. So, while reports on conflicts daily appear in the news, they are barely enough to evoke affective attention in the public and elicit action from the authorities.

Also, contents on the conflicts show knowledge gap and ill-preparation for solution journalism in Nigeria. For instance, the herdsmen-conflicts' is usually framed in the media as an activity of irrational perpetrators on territorial and ethno-religious expansionist agenda against victims. This dominant narrative buries ecological and sustainability dimensions, which form the roots drivers of the conflict. It, therefore, further draws out the conflict instead of helping to illuminate the nature of the problem through sound investigative journalism. Also, in the Niger Delta, the impacts of environmental degradation, which devastates livelihoods of the populations who depend on natural capital for survival and primarily makes the region volatile, is decidedly underreported in the media.

Summary and Recommendations

The media are described as a parasitic institution given that news gathering depends on the deeds and words of others. But this parasitism should be expressed through a carefully negotiated relationship such that the media do not become tools of furthering vested interests in conflicts with implications for humanitarian situations, economy and national stability. The media should reckon that as they need sources for their news, the sources, especially those associated with organizations, also have vested interests and high stakes in news. Therefore, to promote truth, accountability, justice and facilitate solutions, the media should refocus and scale up capacity on more on-the-ground and balanced reporting on the conflicts through sound investigative journalism.

>> Media-focused not-for-profit like the PREMIUM TIMES Centre for Investigative Journalism should commit to conversation with media managers on sourcing and use of contents on the conflicts.
>> Capacity building training should be organized for journalists covering the conflicts to capacitate them for cultivation of sources other than officials, witnessed and balanced reporting, and humanitarian/conflict reporting.
>> More philanthropic investment/funding should be made in the media to strengthen the capacity to cover conflicts and humanitarian issues on-the-ground.

Gender Representation In Media Reports On Conflict And Humanitarian Issues

By: Caroline Anipah

Summary/ Introduction

The media are a powerful force capable of shaping how we perceive the world and how we act. Their power lies in their ability to frame, that is, to select, shape and present our social and political realities in particular ways. Through framing, the media legitimize or reinforce existing social and political relations and this includes gender relations. As a result of this powerful role of the media, concerns have been raised about gender representations especially of women in media. It is not surprising therefore that portrayal of women by and in the media was a primary concern at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women also known as the Beijing Conference in 1995. This culminated in Section J, Items 234-258 of the Beijing Declaration, which identified the media as an area of urgent priority for action if the goals of gender equality, peace and development of women everywhere is ever to be attained. Yet, over two decades after the Conference and numerous forums and policies on media and gender, concerns remain about the role the media is playing in entrenching inequalities between women and men in all spheres of life.

This policy brief is based on the Media Narratives on Conflict and Humanitarian Issues Project of the Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism's (PTCIJ) findings from a three-month media monitoring of 10 media houses in Nigeria. The research aimed to establish how the media in Nigeria reports conflict and humanitarian issues. One of the key themes identified in our findings was gender. The brief therefore explores stereotypical portrayals of women in the media (including portrayal of women in conflicts), representation of women in media organizations and the role media can play in championing gender equity in their own workplaces.

Representations of Women by the Media

Conflicts and humanitarian crises continue to receive significant media attention across the globe. From the Syrian Civil War to Boko Haram attacks, the media has reported several atrocities that happen in conflict zones. In Nigeria, reports have been rife about attacks and activities of Boko Haram fighters and cattle herdsmen especially in the northern part of the country. These reports have highlighted the devastation that conflicts have left in their wake with loss of lives and properties being at the fore of some of the reports. But how do women and men experience conflict and what roles do they play?

In their report titled 'Gender in Conflict," Christian Dietrich and Clodagh Quain assert individuals experience and act differently in times of conflict. In Nigeria and indeed in other conflicts zones, while men and boys have been victims of forced recruitment to join militant groups, women and girls have been vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence including rape. In most cases, the performance of 'ideal' or traditional gender roles change with women heading households and in some cases becoming

combatants or fighters in the absence of male relatives. Gender roles are therefore very fluid in conflict situations – women and men can be breadwinners, civilians, victims, peacekeepers and combatants – depending on the situation they find themselves in. However, media representations of women in conflict and humanitarian situations, and in fact, on all other subjects have not reflected these multiplicity of roles that women can and do play. For the most part, media representations of women can be studied in two ways:

1. The absence of women in the media (where are women)
2. Stereotypical portrayal of women when present in the media (when women are in the media).

Absence of Women in the Media (Where are the Women?)

Women constitute more than half of the population of many African countries. Yet, they are almost invisible in media of all forms – online or offline, entertainment or in the news. This has been especially so in the last decade. The under-representation of women is even greater in conflict reporting than in any other news topics. The under-representation and consequent invisibility of women is seen in the number of female reporters, presenters and the number of women used as sources of information. Thus, there is an over-reliance on men to speak almost on all issues; men interpret the world from their view point thereby overshadowing the perspective of women on several subjects.

The 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), which measures the pace of change in women's media representation and participation at a five-year interval, revealed that worldwide, women represented only 24% of persons who were heard, seen or read about in traditional media. For new media (internet news stories and tweets), the numbers are the same – just 26% of people in the media were women. The story is no different for Africa (See table 1). Coming home to Nigeria, only 18% and 25% of women were news subjects and reporters respectively in the media per the findings of the 2015 GMMP report. There were only 27% of women subjects in reports on crime and conflicts evidence of how little attention is given to women in reports on same.

These numbers are buttressed by the recently concluded media monitoring exercise which examined the reportage of conflict and humanitarian issues in the media by 10 media houses over a three-month period. This report found that out of a possible 100%, women representation as sources in media reports about conflict and humanitarian issues is a disheartening 9% and these are often portrayed not as leaders or empowered but as survivors. Only 19% of stories had gender perspective and 45% of stories missed opportunities to include gender perspective.

A constellation of factors including the argument that most cultures in Africa bar women from certain roles and obvious the dominance of men of men in top positions may account for the invisibility of women in the media. However, times have changed. A number of women have ventured into sectors or fields hitherto solely male-dominated

and are making waves. Very strict cultures are changing to allow women assume roles that were previously forbidden. The media will therefore need to make a deliberate effort to change the status quo and include women.

Table 1: Women sources in Africa

	2015 (%)
No of African countries participating	32
% women in the news	22
% women sources in politics and government	16
% women sources Economy	19
% Women sources sciences and health	37
% women sources social and legal	26
% women sources crime and violence	28
% women sources celebrity, Arts, Media and Sports	15
% women sources other	22
Women are reporters	35
Women as presenters	50

Source: Global Media Monitoring Project 2015. Who Makes the News?

Stereotypical Portrayal of Women when Present in the Media (When Women are in The Media)

The media can play two roles in their representations of women; they can act as protagonist or antagonist. This is to say that the media can either challenge or reinforce existing stereotypes of women. Currently, studies reveal that media have mainly played the role of the antagonist as portrayals of gender have mostly been to reinforce negative stereotypes of women across all media forms. Women are sexualized and often defined by their physical attributes. They are often shown as victims of violence (sexual, physical etc.) who need constant protection and as home-makers who nurture and keep their homes in good order. Portrayals of women as dependent on men for survival is also rife. Men on the other hand are portrayed as strong, virile, powerful, aggressive, decisive and intelligent.

These stereotypes are not missing in conflict reporting. According to the GMMP, more than half of stories on conflicts reinforce stereotypes. When they are not afterthoughts, women are portrayed as victims who need to be protected. In the just concluded media monitoring exercise of the Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism, women are portrayed as Leaders 1% of the time which in the real sense is inconsequential because of the limited sample size. Consequently, women are often mentioned in the same breath as other minority groups – "women and children", "women and the aged.'' Also disturbing in the representation of women in conflicts is their absence as information sources even in matters that concern them. Males are often sought after to speak on issues concerning women with women usually seen crying and calling for help in the background. The utilization of men used to explain and interpret conflicts, even on issues concerning women, implies that they are the only ones with the ability to explain the world around us.

It is true that women suffer in conflicts, however, their roles as breadwinners, combatants and in some cases peacekeepers must not be relegated to the background. The agency of women and their ability to influence and be influenced by the outcome of conflicts must not be forgotten.

Implications

The absence of women and stereotypical portrayals are misleading of women and have the potential to do a lot of harm. The following are a few:

>> Women are not challenged to go beyond how the media portrays them. As such, young girls and women seeing these images will not aspire to be more but to settle for being who the media says they are.

>> Lack of women in reports and media robs society of the contributions women could make to national development

>> Issues of importance to women are neglected

Gender Distribution/ Parity in Media Organisation (Women as Media Practitioners)

The media has become increasingly feminized over the past couple of years. This 'feminisation' of the profession has meant an increase in the number of female journalists in a field that was hitherto dominated by men. In spite of this very significant progress that has been made, diversity in the profession is still a problem. In some cases, even the lower level of reporters and presenters is still dominated by men. When women are highly represented quantitatively, they cover soft news beats such as entertainment whereas hard news beats (politics and business) are left for the men (See Table 1). Findings from our report, similar to that of the 2015 GMMP which notes that only 37% of reports in traditional media were by female journalists, shows that the majority of reporters who covered conflicts within the three-month period were males. (Female authors had a 9% share, lower than publications and agency reports 19% and unknown authors 16%).

Additionally, there seem to be an invisible barrier or glass ceiling hindering women from advancing in the profession although as noted earlier there has been an increase in the number of women in journalism. Very few women make it to top or management positions, that is to the positions of producers, executives, chief editors, publishers etc. These very sensitive and critical positions are still male- dominated implying that control over the definition of news, over hiring and promotion practices are left in the hands of the dominant male managers.

Implications

The absence of women in media organizations is worrying for a number of reasons. First, policies and programs are bound to lack the gender sensitivity they would have had with women at the table. Thus, the diverse perspectives that women would have brought to bear is lost and the world is treated to only one side – the male version. Emphasis will therefore continue to be on negative stereotypical portrayals where there should have been progress. Also, the absence of a large group of women in news organizations means the few that are there must be cautious in order not to be alienated, typecast or marginalized. This may mean that female journalists will have to self-censor themselves in order to fit into the male-dominated field which may perpetuate the stereotypical portrayal of women by the media.

Role of media as champions of gender equity (what can the media itself do?)

For there to be a change in the current narrative on media representation of gender (women), the media itself needs to be deliberate and conscious in changing some of its practices. They can do this by ensuring that:

>> Journalists who cover beats are as heterogeneous as possible for issues to be covered from all angles
>> The agency of women is respected and encouraged. Women must be given the opportunity to accept or decline assignments to cover hard news beats such as conflicts and other 'dangerous' beats regardless of their gender. If a female journalist qualifies to cover a conflict zone, gender must not prohibit her from doing so.
>> Shaping public opinion and attitudes through realistic representation of gender
>> Setting the agenda and influencing public policy on gender issues
>> Challenging gender stereotypes by presenting the different forms/ types of gender. This can be done through the provision of diverse sources or inclusion of female sources
>> Serving as an example by holding itself accountable and practicing what they preach by ensuring gender equality in media organisations

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The Importance of the Agenda Setting Role of the Media in Conflict

Author: Adenike Aloba

Background

The key issue from the just concluded 2019 general elections in Nigeria is not so much as the dominance of electoral politics in news coverage pre and post the elections themselves but at what expense? At whose expense, and to what effect?

The nation's security situation appears to be worsening with 4 out of its six regions experiencing conflict at near-war proportions and the relative peace and tranquility in the other regions precariously upheld because of simmering issues of corruption, injustice and compounded by harsh economic realities. With over 20,000 deaths and over 2 million internally displaced persons since the start of the boko haram insurgency. the expectation would be that security issues should dominate conversations in the build up to an election.

So how well did security, conflict and humanitarian issues feature in elections coverage by the media in this election cycle? According to the just concluded media monitoring of 10 major news organisations in Nigeria by the PTCIJ, not very well. Coverage of these issues continued in the media but ran parallel to the coverage of election issues with the two issues barely connecting despite the relevance of the elections and Nigeria's choice of a new government to the nation's security. In fact the monitoring report revealed that elections was one of the least covered topics, receiving just about 1% of attention in news reports about conflict and humanitarian issues.

This finding raises questions about the agenda-setting role of the media. Has the media relinquished this role to newsmakers or power blocs who control the narrative? Is the relegation of this role a conscious ceding of its agenda-setting powers or is it a sign of a more debilitating illness the cause of which may not be unconnected to the daunting economic and technological challenges facing today's media?

The Agenda-Setting Role of the Media

The power of the news media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well-documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. This bestows a responsibility on the media but it is a responsibility well suited to the fourth estate of the realm.

The placement of stories, length of time or space devoted to a particular story etc are means by which the media can set an agenda for the public. The media helps present to its audience a world that would otherwise be out of reach, in its coverage of public affairs, the actions and inactions of elected officials, events in regions that are far removed from each other and other such issues. A good example that reflects the Nigerian situation is that the constituents in a local community may have no idea

what their elected representative is doing at the national assembly except that the regional media makes it a priority to cover his/her activities. This role presupposes that whatever the media gives priority and prominence gains prominence and becomes priority to the public; this power, properly used, elevates the accountability role of the media and satisfies the public education responsibility of the media.

Agenda Setting also goes beyond giving importance to certain topics, the second level of it is the shaping of perspectives and opinions about these topics. This considers not just what is being presented but the attributes of these topics. Just as the public agenda consists of a set of public issues, an issue consists of a set of attributes that can be employed to evaluate or think about the issue so that certain issue attributes emphasized in the media become salient in the public mind. This means that a certain attribute or aspect of a story can be given more prominence than other aspects thus pointing the audience in the direction of what the media considers important about a subject. Which aspects of an issue are covered in the news – and the relative emphasis on these various aspects of an issue -- makes a considerable difference in how people view that

issue. From the pattern of the total news coverage, the public learns what journalists consider the important issues are and who the prominent public figures of the day are. From the details of this coverage, the agenda of attributes presented by the news media, the public forms its images and perspective about these issues and public figures.

The third level of Agenda Setting is the network agenda setting proposed in 2014 by McCombs and other authors. It assumes that the media agenda can transfer into the public debate not only the salience of issues and their attributes, but also the sets of attributes (bundles), sets of related attributes and issues, or bundles of several issues. The idea of this third level arose from the research on cognitive processes which assumes that we perceive the world in terms of a network, rather than in a linear manner. The cognitive network created by media recipients also originates from the fact that in the process of absorbing new information, we refer it to and link it with the information already stored in our long-term memory.

All three levels of agenda setting exists concurrently, that is, the media can determine what topics to give prominence to, what attributes or aspects of this topic to focus on as well as draw connections between these topics and other topics.

The word agenda in agenda setting is descriptive only with no pejorative implication that a news organization "has an agenda" that it relentlessly pursues as a premeditated goal. Real time and current realities however mean that media organisations require a conscience that scrutinizes what it focuses on and how it focuses on these things. The danger of vested interests pushing a deliberate agenda is real, irrespective of the "goodness" of said agenda. Present day delineation of American media along left and right is clear indication of this. In Nigeria, it suffices to say the ownership of

media houses influences the issues that such news organisations focus on.

The question of the validity of Agenda Setting in the age of new media, the internet and social media is the subject of numerous researchers. How does new media and the consequent blurring of lines between content producers and consumers affect the agenda setting role of the media? Does it erode its validity or solidify it? The main questions to be answered here include what is the significance of technological changes for the relationship between the traditional and the new media channels, which of those channels plays the dominant role in public agenda-setting; as well as whether and how the effects of agenda-setting differ depending on the media type and the type of media channels.

For now, the validity of the agenda-setting theory appears to be intact, no determination has yet been made on the reduction of its relevance in the new age. If anything, most research show that the voice of new media in the media sphere is increasingly stronger. In the light of the studies carried out so far, it is not possible to unequivocally conclude that online and social media contribute to the strengthening of the media agenda-setting power in relation to public opinion, but it seems that there are strong arguments to support that view. Concepts like the network agenda setting, intermedia agenda setting and agenda melding which means the mutual impact of media agendas, the mixing of agendas and mutual complementation of their content and reduced agenda-cutting lend credence to the power of agenda-setting.

On the other hand, concepts like reverse agenda-setting, a situation where the hierarchy of issues that are popular among the online public affects the subject of interest and the hierarchy of issues in the media agenda, and search agenda which explains how the public's most searched items on search engines like google impact media agenda appear to undercut the power of agenda-setting.

It seems therefore legitimate to say that the impact of the media agenda on the public agenda was not significantly weakened as a result of the development of new media.
Challenges Facing the Media in its role as Agenda Setters

Understanding the power that the media holds in shaping public opinion, it is then puzzling why the media, Nigerian Media, in this case is not taking advantage of this power to draw attention to issues of grave importance. Conflict is one such grave issue among other issues for Nigeria, 4 of the 6 geo-political zones are embroiled in conflict with the humanitarian casualty numbering in millions.

How then does this issue get lost among the noise of political gimmicks and skirmishes during an election year? Why did the media fail to set this conflict, its impact on elections and its resolution as an agenda for candidates both at the national level and even more alarmingly at the regional levels in sub-national elections?
This failure may not be unconnected to the peculiar challenges confronting the media world over. It is important to note that while these challenges are not peculiar to

Nigeria, they are more acutely felt in a developing country with nascent democracy and a poor record of press freedom.

Two of these challenges appear to form the nexus of the media's problems and they are examined below.

Economic

Hitherto trustworthy business models are failing and the media is flailing trying to cover its costs. The failing media business has been described as "Media Apocalypse" and one publication described 2017 as "a uniquely miserable year for media business. A study by the Pew Research center focused on newspapers in the united states shows that digital revenue does not quite make up for print ad revenue losses and that the search for a new revenue model to revive the newspaper industry is making only halting progress.

Nigerian news media industry is deemed as one of the leading media industries in Africa. But, in spite of its leading status on the continent, the industry is plagued with multifaceted challenges of sustainability that is rooted in the socio-economic and political contexts.

This has led to the rise of a shadow model which is unacknowledged but real nonetheless, "The Piper Podel", playing the tunes of dictators with money. Despite the plurality of media organisations in Nigeria, it's one true claim to a truly free press, most of these organisations are owned by politicians or business moguls with political exposure. Consequently, the bent of these media houses tend to be towards the interests of the owners.

The advertising revenue model for media, which is still the prevalent model of funding despite its worldwide decline, poses its own challenges, where big advertisers control covertly the content of the media organisation, the double jeopardy for media organisations is there is no separation between private business concerns and the political class, not even a pretend china wall as we have in the more developed countries of the world. Thus, the political class in Nigeria holds a power over the media that has the potential to cripple its ability to effectively set agendas. When these powers are exercised, which is often, the media become toothless dogs unable to bite or even bark in some cases; the Press Freedom implications are gaping.

For example, in Radio Nigeria's report of the bomb blast that happened on the day of the presidential election (23rd February) in Borno state, the blast was reported as an event with no impact on election activities. The report filed by Premium Times however suggested that the attack was more serious than the radio Nigeria report suggested and a source for the paper said there were "about 11 explosions". The tilt of this news report by Radio Nigeria is not surprising, it is a federal government owned media organisation and that in itself speaks volumes.

For as long as the media remains limited by its economic realities, their agenda-setting role may continue to be relegated to the background, a relic of times past when the media was really and truly a fourth estate of the realm.

Technological

Technology has thrown a big challenge to the media despite its many benefits. At the surface, the proliferation of information facilitated by tech giants appears to want to make the role of the media redundant. Where information gathering and dissemination had been the exclusive role of the media, tech advancements have made it so that information is now readily accessed and shared in a speedy cyclical manner than the media can realistically keep up with because of the ethics that guide its practice.

On a deeper level, these tech innovations affect not just the media's relevance but the media's revenue. All the ad money that is drying up from the media appears to head straight into the coffers of tech giants like Google and Facebook. According to a News Media Alliance report released in June, Google generated an estimated $4.7 billion in revenue from news content in 2018; revenue that might have solely belonged to the media in the pre-technology days. According to this report, 39% of results and 40% of clicks on trending queries are news results, 16% of results and 16% of clicks on the "most-searched" queries are news results. This reflects the importance of news to google search, although these importance does not reflect in media organisation's bottom lines.

Ad revenue increasingly going to tech companies was predicted in a Forbes report of 2012. At the time, tech companies were taking 68% of ad revenue according. Google has protested these figures although it has not produced counter figures to back up its protests.

The effect of these is many sided but the one that most affects the agenda-setting role of the media is the struggle of the media to compete with tech organisations' deep pockets and products.

Technology organisations have become the media's new puppet masters because they dispense ad revenues. This is however not the only control tech companies exert; for media to earn these ad dollars, they have to measure up to metrics like time spent on page, number of visits, number of clicks, website traffic, traffic sources, bounce rate etc.

These metrics have become the media's new bible and dictates the type of stories newsrooms pursue. Where issues of national interest conflict with the number of eyeballs on a website, there is scarce any media organization that will not choose eyeballs. These metrics have come to define success for media organisations rather than actual impact on the audience and/or the state. Successful stories are judged by how many hits it gets on the website and tilted towards the scandalous rather than substance. There is more and more focus on intentionally pursuing these scandal-

like investigations because more people will read them than on more serious but less scandalous ones. Where the media should shape the public's tastes with its responsibility of educating its public, the reverse appears to be the case in the new age of technology.

One problem with focusing on reach (which these metrics largely focus on) is that it tends to favor offbeat or feel-good stories over more substantial reporting and analysis. Another problem is that reach-oriented metrics are ones that people can easily manipulate. If the number of clicks on a given article is the measure of its reach (and if advertising revenue derives from this "reach" data), then those who manage websites will devise ways to increase that number. Hence the emergence of "clickbait" stories that carry attention-grabbing headlines and of "bots" that click on stories automatically.

Media has a lot more responsibility than being on trend allows for, the argument about what ethical responsibilities tech companies should have in the aggregation, management and dissemination of information is front and center at the moment as the TechLash being faced by Facebook and its creator shows, it will however be foolhardy for the media to assume that an ethically conscious technology sector will somehow tip the scales in their favor or level the playing field. If anything, it is likely to cement their place at the top of the information food chain.

Recommendations

The challenges facing the media are enormous but not insurmountable, the media has to commit to taking on the challenges with the aim of preserving its unarguably important role as fourth estates of the realm.

The conversation on new business models is finally gaining more interest in Nigeria. These conversations should be advanced beyond talk to action, media organisations have to be willing to try new models despite the risks because staying on the side-line is no less risky. A Reuters Institute report on Journalism, Media and Technology Trends and Predictions 2019 based on a survey, predicts that media will focus on membership and subscription models. Although these report surveyed U.S based respondents, research such as these could form a basis for homegrown conversations on the issue of sustainability of the media.

Metrics are powerful tools for insight and decision-making, media however needs to develop better ways of measuring its impact beyond metrics that appear to be revenue-driven to that which is impact driven. One question that every media organisation needs to always ask is "How do we measure the impact of our work? Not the economic value, but the democratic value". Measuring how many people read a story is something any web administrator should be able to do. Audience doesn't necessarily equal impact." Impact is hard to track and measure especially for the media, policy change may not be solely dependent on media's focus on the issue, behavioral change among the audience is even harder to track but the conversation must always be on the table. We have to be willing to think of metrics in the context of real impact. If this is the approach to the data gathered from applications such as Chartbeat, google analytics then conversations at editorial meetings will move from celebrating clicks to considering how these clicks can turn to real on-the-ground impact.

In maintaining its agenda-setting role, media must measure not just reach but also influence and impact. Perhaps taking the long view of metrics and what it should mean will loosen the vise-like grip of tech on media organizations necks and prepare a path to leveling the playing field where media can hold its own despite the increasingly ubiquitous nature of technology.

Conclusion

Media should be in the laboratory rethinking its existence and continued relevance in light of all the other players on the field. That will likely mean new business models and a redefinition of parameters of success based off of its ethical and constitutional responsibilities rather than those defined by competitors.

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Media Monitoring Africa (MMA)

Media Monitoring Africa are strategic partners on this project and developed the methodology for the media monitoring, designed the database, trained the media monitors, provided technical support through the duration of the media monitoring as well as assisted with data analysis.

MMA is an innovative organisation which implements successful media strategies for change using technology, social media and data tools to make their work more efficient and effective. MMA is based in Johannesburg South Africa and acts as a watchdog, taking on a role to promote ethical and fair journalism which supports human rights. George Kalu led the MMA Team on this strategic partnership.

Media Monitoring Team

Akinniyi Toyin
Kayode Iyalla

Appendix

Table 1: Breakdown of Topics

Description	CountOfidx	Per
Terrorism	185	25%
Insurgency	164	22%
Ethnic clashes	130	17%
Safety and Security	65	9%
Crime	41	5%
Humanitarian	28	4%
Aid and relief	27	4%
Conflict in general	21	3%
Migration	19	3%
Cattle rustling	16	2%
Elections	8	1%
International response	6	1%
Human Rights	5	1%
Arms deal	5	1%
Religious conflict	4	1%
Civil war	3	0%
Poverty, Social Welfare	3	0%
Protests and demostrations	3	0%
Border Disputes	3	0%
Gender based violence	2	0%
Corruption, Scandals and Controversies	2	0%
Disaster, accident	2	0%

Food security	2	0%
Diplomacy	1	0%
Economics	1	0%
Other - LAST RESORT	1	0%
Party Politics (Local)	1	0%
Child Abuse	1	0%
Peace Keeping	1	0%
Public disorder riots	1	0%
Service Delivery	1	0%
Health	1	0%
Total Number of Stories	**753**	

Table 2: Top 5 Sources by Media

Channels TV			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	4	6%
State Government	State Government	8	11%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	8	11%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	3	4%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	2	3%

Daily Trust			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	46	14%
State Government	State Government	41	13%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	38	12%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	30	9%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	35	11%

Guardian			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	22	12%
State Government	State Government	26	14%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	8	4%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	26	14%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	5	3%

ICIRNigeria.org			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	4	19%
State Government	State Government	3	14%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	3	14%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	2	10%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	1	5%

Premium Times			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	31	16%
State Government	State Government	19	10%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	32	17%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	23	12%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	15	8%

Punch			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	19	7%
State Government	State Government	28	10%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	30	11%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	24	9%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	13	5%

Radio Nigeria			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	10	14%
State Government	State Government	8	11%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	8	11%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	9	12%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	9	12%

Sahara Reporters			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	11	6%
State Government	State Government	16	9%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	21	12%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	7	4%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	5	3%

The Cable			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	7	
State Government	State Government	8	
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	2	
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	2	
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	1	

Tribune			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	27	18%
State Government	State Government	17	11%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	14	9%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	18	12%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	9	6%

Grand Total			
	Sources	**Count**	**%**
Army Generals and Commanders	Army generals	181	12%
State Government	State Government	174	11%
Villager or Resident engaged in Unspecified Occupation.	Villager or resident	164	11%
High Ranking Police Officers	Senior Police	144	9%
Clan Elders and Traditional Leaders	Traditional Leaders	95	6%

Table 3: Top 5 Origin by Media

Channels TV		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	13	34%
National	7	18%
Kaduna	6	16%
Zamfara	2	5%
Africa	2	5%

Daily Trust		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	40	23%
Kaduna	39	22%
Zamfara	18	10%
Yobe	12	7%
Katsina	11	6%

Guardian		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	14	19%
National	11	15%
Kaduna	10	13%
Multiple States of Nigeria	9	12%
Yobe	4	5%

ICIRNigeria.org		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Kaduna	4	44%
Borno	1	11%
National	1	11%
Zamfara	1	11%
Africa	1	11%

Premium Times		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	30	30%
Kaduna	17	17%
Zamfara	13	13%
Multiple States of Nigeria	9	9%
National	6	6%

Punch		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	26	22%
Multiple States of Nigeria	17	14%
Kaduna	12	10%
Adamawa	11	9%
Benue	9	8%

Radio Nigeria		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	10	21%
Kaduna	7	15%
National	6	13%
Multiple States of Nigeria	6	13%
Zamfara	3	6%

Sahara Reporters		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	19	28%
Adamawa	10	14%
National	9	13%
Kaduna	7	10%
Zamfara	4	6%

The Cable		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	15	43%
National	5	14%
Multiple States of Nigeria	3	9%
Zamfara	2	6%
Adamawa	2	6%

Tribune		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Kaduna	18	21%
Borno	17	20%
Multiple States of Nigeria	10	12%
National	9	11%
Benue	6	7%

Grand Total		
Origin/State	**Count**	**%**
Borno	185	25%
Kaduna	121	16%
National	66	9%
Multiple States of Nigeria	65	9%
Zamfara	51	7%

Table 4: Quality of Stories

Basic Context	741	98%
Indepth Context	106	14%
Causes	285	38%
Consequences	186	25%
Solutions	232	31%
Legislation	14	2%
Gender Perspective	144	19%
Gender Omission	342	45%

Table 5: Ethical Principles

Code	Graph 18.2: Breakdown of each ethical principle	Neutral	Supported	Violated
1	Seek and express the truth	38%	61%	1%
2	Be independent and objective	71%	28%	1%
3	Minimise harm	26%	71%	3%
4	Reflect conflict beyond two-sides	26%	71%	3%
5	Conflict is not only defined by the elites	66%	14%	19%
6	Try explore common ground	75%	21%	4%
7	Avoid emotional and imprecise words	17%	81%	3%
8	Avoid and Challenge stereotypes	77%	21%	2%
9	Avoid gender-blind reporting	77%	20%	3%

Table 6: News Types

Description	Count	
Shorter title for the graphs		
News Story	591	79%
In brief	77	10%
Opinion Piece	33	4%
Photograph	17	2%
Editorial	12	2%
Feature	10	1%
Interview	8	1%
Cartoon/Graphic	2	0%
Other (Last Resort)	1	0%
Documentary Insert	1	0%
Total	**752**	