

Revisiting the New World Information and Communication Order dialectic using Nigerian newspapers directional focus as case study.

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Abstract

Investigated is the directional focus of the major front page headlines and news focus of two of Nigeria's daily newspapers (*The Nation* and *The Punch*) within the backdrop of the stillbirth NWICO contention between the West and the developing countries. Primary data for this study was raised via content analysis and discussed with the input of literature survey. The appositeness of content analysis as the deployed research method is ingrained in the fact that it can be used to quantitatively measure the manifest content of the media. Out of a plethora of national daily newspapers in the country, the purposive sampling technique was applied in choosing the two newspapers that were studied. Analyses and findings indicated that the perceived negative portrayal of the Third World by the Western Press is real with a caveat: the Third World's media (in this instant case, the Nigerian press) is as culpable as its western counterpart on the alleged perception of negative portrayals. This is because about 84% of the fifty four editions of the newspapers whose major front page headlines/news focus (a critical element in the agenda setting function of the mass media) were content analyzed dwelt on negative directional focus.

Key words: Jackal syndrome/reporting, news value, directional focus, news focus, NWICO debate, good/bad news, gatekeeper.

1.0 Introduction

Transnational communication with its toga of power struggle is one which gives, enforces and reinforces an exchange between two protagonists without necessarily having to compete, but instead allows the predominance of the more powerful, the richer and the better equipped more so in respect of communication infrastructure to continue to monopolize the flow of global information (MC Bride et al, 1982). It is within these concentric circles of trans cultural exchanges that it has been noted that about 80 percent of world news emanates from the four major international news agencies (sometimes called the arteries of the international communication) of the West namely: Reuters, Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Agence France Presse (Udeze,2005; Udoakah, 1998; Asadu and Usua, 2011, Amakiri, 2009). This is expected because these news agencies have stringers and equipment that enable them to get news as such news is breaking. They usually gather news of the world and process them within a framework of what is 'fit' for the different worlds before dissemination

A wide range of issues were raised as part of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debate by the Third World and they include the following:

- (1) There is imbalance in global communication flows. Schramm (1964) comments that the flow of news among nations is thin and that much attention is given to developed countries and little to less developed ones. In this light, Schiller (1969) concurs. According to him, developing countries had little meaningful input into decisions about radio frequency allocations for satellites which has several military applications.
- (2) News mainly reported about the Third World by the West concerns those that revolve around natural disasters, military coups, corruption, conflicts, crises, etc. As Momoh (1988) cited in (Udeze 2005) remarks, it is common knowledge that news from the Third World countries usually make their appearance in the media of developed countries only when they are sensational and border on drama strong enough to arouse their sensibilities and sense of curiosity' (P. 125). Ebo (1999) furthered that the continent (Africa) is often portrayed as a crocodile-infested dark continent where jungle life has perpetually eluded civilization' (p. 15).
- (3) That the developed regions dominate and control the entire world in terms of the infrastructure for information gathering and dimension even through 75 percent of the world population is made up of people in developing nations but less than 30 percent of world news coverage was devoted to them (Okigbo,1990).
- (4). The existence of unidirectional flows of international news (Vertical downwards) as opposed to a 'desirable' horizontal flow (Masmoudi, 1979).

(5) Information was treated by the transnational media as a commodity and subjected to the rules of the market (Masmoudi, 1979).

It was in a bid to halt this downward trend and thus, redress the lopsided news flow, that the developing countries under the umbrella of the Non-Alligned Movement, demanded for a New World Information Order. Oledski (1981) acknowledged by Thussu (2000) pens down that this call was first made at the 4th Summit Conference of the Heads of States and Governments of the Non-Alligned countries in Algiers in 1973 that climaxed in the setting up of the McBride Commission (also known as the Commission for the Study of Communication Problems) in 1976, in Nairobi by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 19th General Assembly. However, to the developed or 'First World' led by the U.S.A. and Britain, the whole idea of the debate as pushed by the South amounts to an attack on the West's principal economic ideology: capitalism. Amakiri (2005) further clarifies on the allegation of a frontal attack on the mantra of capitalism by the Third World via the push for a NWICO by commenting that to the West, the whole idea of NWICO amounts to a negation of capitalism's ideology of open competition in the market place of ideas as the demand connotes official control of information. The West insists on free flow, which it argues, sustains objective journalism, free press and democracy. Thussu (2000) toes this line of thought. According to the author:

The opponents of NWICO argued that the demand for NWICO was a pretext for Third World dictators to stifle the media freedom to impose censorship and keep away foreign journalists. Such slogans as 'cultural self determination', media imperialism and national sovereignty over a country's communications, they argued, were designed to control channels of communication. The western news organizations strongly fought any change in the old information order. They maintained that they were only reporting the reality of life in the Third World –political instability, economic backwardness, human and natural disasters and that this objective journalism was disapproved of by undemocratic governments in the South (pp.47-48).

Former President of the U.S.A., Ronald Reagan, links the demand of the Third World as a decoy for governmental control of the press. As he noted in the *New York Times* of September 22, 1987, 'We cannot permit attempts to control the media and promote censorship under the ruse of a so-called New World Information Order. Also, on the alleged bad/negative reportage of events by the West against the South, the West fired back as elucidated by Sharpe (1987) and Atwood (1982) who accused the media of the less developed countries of giving the United States a bad press. Sharpe enunciated for instance, that a study of international news in four Nigerian newspapers indicates that negative coverage of the United States exists and in fact, predominates in the Nigerian press (quoted in Okoro and Obeni, 2007). It is within the framework of these vituperations from both sides of the divide that Atwood (1982) declared that the NWICO debate is a 'dialogue of the deaf'. In September 1996, about 30 information ministers from the Non-Alligned developing countries including Malaysia, Colombia, Egypt, Bangladesh, Iraq, etc revisited the NWICO dialectic more than a decade after the UNESCO discontinued the discussion of it. According to Bullen (1997), the information ministers reanimated the UNESCO debate and after their deliberations, made the following resolutions (these could effortlessly pass as a duplication of the issues raised in the blame game between the North and the South in the heat of the NWICO debate):

- Developed countries are employing their media to disseminate false and distorted information of events taking place in developing countries.
- The struggle for the NWICO should be intensified in spite of the end of the Cold War.
- The long history of the efforts for a NWICO notwithstanding, the salient objectives are yet to be realized.
- NWICO should be promoted both within the UN and UNESCO (Bullen, 1997).

As discussed and re – echoed by Okoro and Obeni (2007), the above declarations by the Information Ministers from the Non-Alligned nations further catalyzed the interest of scholars and researchers in the once abandoned debate on a New World Information and Communication Order. It is therefore within the lineament of the above assertions that this researcher revisits the NWICO contention some decades after the UNESCO abandoned it with a rider that this paper will not be fixated on the strait jacketed and 'regular' lamentations of the Third World against the West in respect of alleged underreporting, misreporting, etc by the western press but a look inward using directional focus of Nigerian newspapers with particular reference to the major front page headlines and news focus as

template/mirror. Therefore, the underlying questions this paper intends to provide answers to will include the following:

1. What is the directional focus of Nigerian newspapers' major front page headlines and news focus?
2. In what ways are the allegations of negative reportage by the countries of the South against the media of the West reflected in the directional focus of Nigerian newspapers in contemporary times?
3. What are the news value criteria used by Nigerian newspapers and how are they at variance with what obtains in the West some decades after the NWICO disputation?

1.1 Theoretical framework.

This paper is situated within the bowels of the gate keeping theory with its siamese twin equivalent: news value. McQuail and Windahl (2004) comment that the concept or theory of gate keeping originated in a work carried out by Austrian psychologist, Kurt Lewin (1947) dealing with decisions about household food purchases. They noted that,

Information has always to flow along certain channels which contains gate areas, where decisions are made, either according to impartial rules or personally by a "gatekeeper" as to whether information or goods will be allowed to enter in or continue in the channel. In a side reference, he invoked a comparison with the flow of the news in mass communication. This idea was taken up and applied by White (1950) in a study of the telegraph wire editor of an American non-metropolitan paper, whose decision to discard many items was seen as the most significant gate keeping activity (P.166).

This is shown in the diagram below:

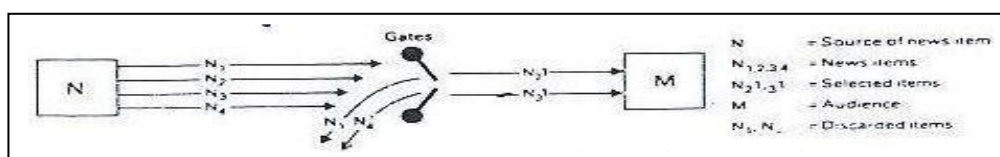


Fig 1: A model of gate keeping process. Gleaned from McQuail and Windhal (2004:p.166).

Juxtaposing the above theory with the theme of this paper, we could state that there are so many news items to be handled by gatekeepers. While some of these items are accepted to be published by the gatekeepers (e.g. editors) and thus reaches the audience, others are discarded. Now, the rudimentary question to ask is: what will make news and on what touchstone are such news items screened by the gatekeeper(s)? The answer is not too far to fetch. Here the concept of news value (a term first used by Walter Lippmann in 1922 and which in its unclad form can be defined as the criteria by which news is selected (Folarin, 2005) or as Kunczik (1998) puts it 'News values are nothing but the more or less intuitive assumptions of journalists about what interests their audience'. Therefore, what appears as news in the media on a daily basis could pass as what in the thinking of journalists and other gatekeepers are supposed attention catchers of the audience and hence of prime value to the audience/gatekeepers. The chart below arrays the different parameters for judging news values:

Table 1: Summary of 20th century news values. Extracted from Lule et al (1987:p. 23).

First world news values	Second world news values	Third world news values	News supplementary values
Timeliness	Ideological significance	Development	Interpretation
Proximity			Self criticism
Personality	Party/ govt. concerns	Social significance	Timeliness
Responsibility		National interest	Proximity
Prominence	Education	Education	
Human interest	Human interest		Openness (Glasnost)
Integration			Personal interest
Conflict			

1.2 Methodology

Primary data for this study was produced by the adoption of content analysis and its appositeness is embedded in the fact that it can be used to quantitatively describe in an objective and systematic way, the manifest content of communication or the media. The major straight news headlines and the corresponding news focus published on the front pages of *The Punch* and *The Nation* is the unit of analysis. The raison d' être for content analyzing the main news stories which appear on the front pages of the selected newspapers is rooted in the agenda setting function of the mass media. Citing Maxwell MacCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) on the one hand and Shanto Iyengar on the other hand, Baran (2010) remarks that readers not only learn about a given issue but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. Hear him:

For the broadcast media, the position of a story affected the agenda setting power of television news.... The lead story on the nightly newscast had the greatest agenda setting effect, in part because first stories tend to have viewers full-attention. They come before interruptions and other distractions can occur. The second reason is that viewers accept the broadcaster's implicit categorization of the lead story as the most important (p. 369).

The content category is made up of portrayals or directional focus (favorable/ positive or unfavorable/negative or neutral). Coverage period for this study is made up of one month each for the two newspapers under study. For *The Nation*, it's edition for the month of September 2012 were studied while that of *The Punch* includes its editions published in the month of October 2012. Coding was made possible by the utilization of the code sheet. On the other hand, the purposive sampling technique was deployed in determining the newspapers to be studied out of all the newspapers in the country which is the population of study. This sampling procedure entails the researcher to pick up the specific characteristic in the population he intends to study. Thus, the researcher eliminates other members of the population and works with those that meet his requirements (Ohaja, 2003; Ozogwu, 1992). So, what are the characteristic which endeared this researcher to the two newspapers for this study? They have easy accessibility, wide circulation (they are both national newspapers and have on-line editions); are credible, etc. *The Nation* boasts in its tagline 'Nigeria's widest circulating newspaper' with an appealing motto: 'Truth in defense of freedom'. *The Punch* on the other hand, rodomondates: 'Nigeria's most widely read newspaper'. Data are presented in tables and analyzed using descriptive statistics employing simple percentages and averages.

Table 2: Major front page headlines from The Nation newspaper displaying the directional and news focus.

S/N0	Headline	Date	News focus	Directional focus
1	Worries as killers, terrorists run amok	1/9/12	Nigeria gradually turning into a Hobessian state with the astronomical rise of terrorism and killing with the perpetrators getting away with their crimes	Negative
2	North, South divide deepens	2/9/12	The furore generated by some governors of the Northern Governors from (NGF) on the need to review the revenue allocation formula and onshore dichotomy may have moved from the political to the intellectual realm, and a hardening of positions.	Negative
3	Worries over greater reliance on oil, neglect of real sector	3/9/12	Although Nigeria's revenue from oil is still rising, some key players in the economy have expressed concern over the nation's increased dependence on oil and called for an immediate diversification of the economy.	Negative
4	Doubts, over government, Boko Haram talks as blast rocks Gombe	4/9/12	After a lull, terrorists yesterday struck in Sabonlaye, the Gombe capital, where they exploded a bomb.	Negative
5	Fears over food shortages as floods hit states	22/9/12	There are fears that the flooding ravaging some parts of Nigeria, especially the North, could lead to crop losses and possible food shortages in the country	Negative
6	Terrorists bomb telecom firms' offices, mess in Bauchi, Borno	6/9/12	Terrorists struck at unusual targets in Bauchi and Borno States as the raging violence in Maiduguri escalates as they torched the reginal office and equipment of five Global	Negative

			System of Mobile communications (GSM) firms in the state.	
7	Banks, brokers, others to face trial for N85.8b stock fraud	10/9/12	Banks, stock broking firms and registrars accused of committing or aiding insider fraud running into billions of naira and other sharp practices in their organizations are to be brought to book by the federal government.	Negative
8	Anxiety rises as Nigeria records 18 failed airlines	11/9/12	The worry over Nigeria's aviation sector is not only local but international as financial institutions and international lenders now view the nation's aviation industry with caution because majority of the airlines have lost steam and can fly no more.	Negative
9	Terrorists shift attacks to phone structures: Threaten communications nationwide	8/9/12	The Boko Haram sect appears to have shifted its attacks to telecommunications infrastructure in the North	Negative
10	Obasanjo, N5,000 critics, are bad economists, says Sanusi	12/9/12	All critics of the planned N5,000 note are bad economists, according to the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria.	Negative
11	Electricity Supply: Government may miss 2012 target	9/9/12	The target of 9,000 megawatts of electricity by year end may not be realized, according to the chairman of the National Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Dr. Sam Amadi	Negative
12	Presidential retreat rejects single term, okays national dialogue	7/9/12	Participants at a presidential retreat organized by the Federal government to herald activities to mark Nigeria's 52 nd independence anniversary via electronic voting opted for a continuation of national dialogue under the current constitution.	Positive
13	Jonathan, at UN, restates steps to end violence	26/9/12	President Jonathan gives a run down of the steps his administration had taken to run the war against terrorism	Negative
14	Search begins for Nigeria's own HIV/AIDS Vaccines	14/9/12	Instead of relying solely on the efforts of other countries to end the HIV/AIDS menace, the Federal Government is developing a new vaccine plan to boost research into drugs for the HIV strains peculiar to the country and the West African sub-region	Positive
15	PDP plans reforms, plans summit of elders, governors	13/9/12	In the search for a new order, the leadership of the ruling Peoples Democratic party (PDP) has reached out to its estranged founding fathers and members	Positive
16	Three states fight over Anambra oil	15/9/12	Anambra, Enugu and Kogi states lay claim to oil well as president Goodluck Jonathan declares Anambra state as the 10 th oil producing state in Nigeria	Negative
17	Collapsing Northern Economy: Blame governors, not revenue allocation	16/9/12	A consensus of opinion has put the blame of collapse of the economy of Northern Nigeria on the doorsteps of past and current leaders of the region	Negative
18	Government stops flight tickets, perks for national honours awardees	17/9/12	Eminent Nigerians and friends of the country named by the federal Government as awardees of the 2012 National Honours will foot their hotel bills and flight fares to Abuja where they will mount the dais to receive their medals.	Negative
19	Jonathan vows to strip discredited awardees of national honours	18/9/12	For Nigerians, who made the National Honours list but with questionable character, the federal government will revisit their recognition	Negative
20	Airlines decry loan ban, CBN to probe N91b aviation fund	25/9/12	With the prospect of getting loans locally no longer bright, following a policy by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), to shut out non-paying debtors from further credit, airlines in the country are now considering finance options overseas.	Negative
21	Nigeria at 52: We must return to parliamentary system, says Ango	29/9/12	Former Vice Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, Professor Ango Abdullahi, said rather than taking on specifics at this point, Nigerians should rather address the	Neutral

	Abdullahi		more fundamental question of whether the presidential system adopted in 1979 has helped the country to achieve its socio-economic and political goals and aspirations after three decades.	
22	969 Nigerians deported in one week	30/9/12	A total of 969 Nigerians have been deported from several countries including South Africa, Italy, Canada and United States of America (USA). Reasons for their deportation are chequered including, immigration default, drug trafficking, and related issues.	Negative
23	Government halts N5,000 note, senate decries stance on its resolution	21/9/12	The senate expresses displeasure over the way the executive arm handles the resolutions of the upper chambers saying it threatens the mutual respect and understanding with which the two arms of government are expected to perform their constitutional duties for the progress of the country. Coincidentally, the government disclosed that it was stepping from the introduction of the N5,000 note by the Central Bank of Nigeria	Negative
24	Presidency, PDP govts opt for dialogue on state police, oil revenue crises	5/9/12	The presidency, the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and governors elected on its platform have accepted to play down the ongoing debate on state police and the on-shore off-shore oil dichotomy	Negative
25	Assembly rejects N5,000, bemoans nation's huge debts	19/9/12	The two chambers of the National Assembly has rejected the planned introduction of the N5,000 note by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in addition to bemoaning the huge debts owed contractors	Positive
26	Government to cut recurrent expenses in 2013 budget	20/9/12	President Goodluck Jonathan is planning to spend less on recurrent expenditure next year while targeting a boost in oil production that may increase progress in capital projects.	Negative
27	Impeachment threat bad for Nigeria, says Presidency	24/9/12	The presidency has asked the National Assembly to tread softly in its bid to impeach president Goodluck Jonathan over his alleged failure to implement the 2012 budget and resolution of the legislature.	Negative
28	PIB stirs fresh row as government, others list gains	28/9/12	The provision of the draft Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) have stirred a fresh controversy as stakeholders have again articulated the policy's likely gain and draw backs.	Negative
29	Senate asks government to appeal ceding of Bakassi Peninsula	27/9/12	Faced with the grim prospect of permanently losing Bakassi in less than two weeks unless Nigeria takes a decisive step to intervene, the Senate yesterday urged the Federal Government to appeal the judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in Hague, ceding the area to Cameroun.	Positive
30	2015: Politicians in underground moves	23/9/12	Contrary to the pronouncements that 2015 is still far, and admonitions that elected officials would be allowed to concentrate, investigations reveal that politicians who are interested in the Presidency, have earnestly commenced groundwork that would give them some advantage ahead of others.	Negative

Table 3: Major front page headlines of *The Punch* newspaper showing directional and news focus

s/n	Headline	Date	News focus	Directional focus
1	I shall not fail-Jonathan	2/10/12	President Goodluck Jonathan Promises Nigerians that he would not fail as President, but challenged the citizens to renew their hope and faith in the possibilities that lie ahead.	Positive
2	Gunmen kill 23 students, others in Adamawa	3/10/12	Gunmen stormed an off-campus residence of students of the Federal Polytechnic, Mubi Adamawa State and shot dead 23 students. Also three other persons, including a retired soldier, a guard and father of a student lost their lives in the orgy of killing with a total of 25 felled victims.	Negative

3	Mubi Massacre: more victims die	4/10/12	The number of casualties of the Mubi, Adamawa state massacre increases from 25 to 40.	Negative
4	FG in Bakassi U-turn	5/10/12	There are indications that the federal government was set to ask for a review of the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which ceded the oil rich Bakassi Peninsula to neighbouring Cameroun.	Positive.
5	Terrorism: Jonathan to mark independence within villa	1/10/12	President Goodluck Jonathan is to mark Nigeria's independence anniversary within the confines of the presidential villa, Abuja contrary to the previous practice of holding such events at the Eagle Square in Abuja. The indoor independence celebration started last year when the president opted for a brief ceremony within his official residence in the face of the prevalent insecurity in the country.	Negative
6	Ondo poll: IG, GOC declare war on armed thugs.	19/10/12	Ahead of the Ondo State governorship election to be held on 20/10/12, the Inspector General of Police Mr. Mohammed Abubakar, and the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 2 Division Nigerian Army, Major General Mohammed Abubakar have warned trouble makers to stay away from the state.	Negative
7	I didn't go abroad for cosmetic surgery- Patience.	18/10/12	Wife of the president, Dame Patience Jonathan who recently arrived the country after about seven weeks abroad had denied the reports that she went abroad for cosmetic surgery. She also denied being an in-patient in a German hospital on account of a terminal disease	Negative
8	Police arrest debtor who set up UNIPORT students	17/10/12	The Police had announced a major breakthrough in their investigation into the lynching of four University of Port Harcourt students. The videotaped lynching of the students sparked outrage nationwide and the clip of the killings went viral on the Internet	Negative
9	Budget: FG to splash N5.5bn on ex-presidents, ex-VPs	16/10/12	The federal government is to spend N5.5bn for former heads of state/Presidents and Vice presidents/Chiefs of General Staff in 2013. The emoluments of past Heads of State and their deputies have always been a controversial issue.	Negative
10	Suicide bomber hit US during Holy Communion - Survivors	29/10/12	The suicide bomber who killed eight Catholic worshippers in Kaduna on Sunday...drove into the church as worshippers knelt praying and the priest was serving the Holy communion, eye witnesses and survivors said.	Negative
11	Aftermath of flooding: Food prices rise by 200%	27/10/12	Prices of food stuffs especially garri, yam, beans, rice have risen to 200% as a result of flooding witnessed by some states in the country.	Negative
12	Senator told Boko Haram to threaten Adoke-SSS	25/10/12	The State Security Service (On Wednesday) told an Abuja Federal High court that Senator Aliyu Ndume standing on trial asked a high ranking Boko Haram member to call and threaten the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Adoke.	Negative
13	Lynching: UNIPORT students burn houses, cars in protest	10/10/12	Angry students of the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Rivers State (on Tuesday) invaded Aluu community, burning houses and cars where four of their colleagues were killed on Friday.	Negative
14	FG to service debt with N591bn in 2013	15/10/12	The federal government will spend N591.76bn on the servicing of domestic and foreign debts in 2013.	Neutral
15	Taraba government, five others survive plane crash	26/10/12	The governor of Taraba State, Mr. Dambaba Suntai, survived a plane crash in neighbouring Adamawa State on Thursday, but his condition and those of other passengers, including the governor's security detail for the journey is critical.	Negative
16	Labour, NARTO fault budget 2013 proposal	13/10/12	Due to the "lopsided" nature of the 2013 budget proposal, the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) have faulted the budget	Negative

			which as usual allocated more funds to recurrent rather than capital expenditure.	
17	Budget: Education, Defence, Police get lion share	11/10/12	Education, Defence, Police get the greatest chunk of the 2013 budget proposal by the federal government.	Neutral
18	Mark, Tambuwal unfair to Jonathan – Presidency	12/10/12	The presidency on Thursday slammed the leadership of the National Assembly describing the budget – related criticisms levelled against president Goodluck Jonathan as an attempt to rubbish the 2013 budget proposals.	Negative
19	Soldiers go haywire	9/10/12	Soldiers kill 30, burn 50 houses in Maiduguri in reprisal for the attack on their patrol van in the town.	Negative
20	Senator accused of Boko Haram link says JTF killed 15 innocent boys playing football	23/10/12	Embattled Senator Ahmad Zannah has accused the Joint Task Force (JTF) in Borno State of killing 15 boys playing football on a field in the city.	Negative
21	PDP, others congratulate Mimiko, ACN cries foul	22/10/12	Top party executives of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) including President Goodluck Jonathan congratulate Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State on re-election even as the ACN cries foul.	Neutral
22	We are going after corrupt govts-Jonathan	31/10/12	President Goodluck Jonathan says no corrupt governor or subsidy thief would go scot-free and assures that the federal government would go after them and ensure their prosecution.	Positive
23	Onaiyekan, Sultan nominated for Nobel peace prize	6/10/12	Roman Catholic Arch Bishop of Abuja, John Onaiyekan, and the Sultan of Sokoto, Sa’ad Abubakar III have been nominated for the award of the 2012 Nobel peace Prize.	Positive
23	No merger will succeed against us in 2015	24/10/12	The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) says that no mergers and alliances planned to defeat it in 2015 will succeed. This comes against the back ground of plans by the opposition parties to form mergers and alliances to battle its candidates in the 2015 general elections.	Negative
25	Ondo governorship election battle: Mimiko, Oke, Akeredolu in 3 Horse Race	20/10/12	Battle for Ondo State is filtrated to include principally the PDP, CAN and LP.	Negative
26	24 hours to deadline, FG yet to file Bakassi review	8/10/12	Barely 24 hours to the expiration of the deadline for Nigeria to appeal for a review of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment on the Bakassi Peninsula, there is no indication that the Federal Government has done so.	Negative

TABLE 4: Summary of directional focus of the newspapers’ negative, positive or neutral news stories at a glance

NEWSPAPER	NO. OF NEGATIVE NEWS STORIES	NO OF POSITIVE NEWS STORIES	NO OF NEUTRAL STORIES	TOTAL
The Nation	25 (83.33%)	4 (13.33%)	1 0.33%	30 (100%)
The Punch	19 (79.17%)	4 (16.66%)	1 4.17%	24 (100%)

An express narrative of the data presented on table 4 shows that *The Nation* recorded a total of 25 news stories representing 83.33% while also accounting for 4 news stories that were judged as positive representing 33.33%. This is in addition to recording only one neutral news headline/directional focus which accounts for 3.33%. On the other hand, as we shift our attention to *The Punch* newspaper, we find out that out of a total of 24 major front page news headlines/news focus, 19(79.17%) were adjudged negative while 4(16.67%) are positive portrayals

and 1(4.7%) is neutral. It therefore follows from the above analysis that the principal depictions of news by way of directional focus of the major headlines by the 2 newspapers under study is overwhelmingly negative. Both newspapers however, had a tie on neutral stories by recording one apiece.

1.3 Discussion of findings

Former Tunisian Information Minister, Mustapha Masmoudi who was later a member of the Mac-Bride Commission outlined several complaints of the Third World in respect of their demand for a NWICO debate which included that the developing countries are usually portrayed in bad light by the developed countries news agencies and their conventional mass media. Masmoudi is not the only person to so accuse the North for such reportage. Udoakah (1998) opines that ‘news with silver linings are disseminated about western industrialized countries while news with black and red linings are disseminated about other countries especially the developing (a pseudonym for poor countries)’ (p.6). For instance, news of scientific advancements, superlative management of all sectors of the economy and high living standards are reported about the West whereas, news about the developing countries are centred more on crises, corruption, failures of policies than on achievements and development needs. For Badawi (1988), ‘Africa becomes news in the Western Press when there is some sort of spectacle to behold’ (p.139). Fergal Keane, cited in Philo et al (1999) remarks that ‘too much of reporting Africa has been conditioned by a view of its people as an eternally miserable smudge of blackness stretching across the decades...’ (p.225). Michira (2003) conjures up non-edifying adjectives used in describing Africa in the western media: dark continent, hunger, famine, starvation, endemic violence, conflicts and civil war, political instability, AIDS, coups, etc. In line with the thoughts of Michira, Omenugha (2005) states that “there is a voyeurism implicit in the manner of reporting Africa by the Western Media. Africa seems to be told as a “story” the use of many literary devices serving to bring the gaze unto Africa” (p.25). Maynard quoted in Omenugha(2005) declares: ‘excerpts from novels, screenplays, movies reviews and screen advertising demonstrate the vast propaganda our society has witnessed during the past fifty years about Africa as a “savage” place in the need of conquest, colonization and Christianity’ (p.18). In fact, there is a superabundance of literature which brims and dwells on the purported negative representations of the Third World (including Africa) in the mass media from the North e.g Ebo (1999); Achebe (1997); Amakiri (2009); El Zein and Cooper (1992); Schramm (1969); Okigbo (1998). However, this researcher’s attention deflects from the grueling lamentations to the realities through empirical evidence. Therefore, the critical fundamental questions delineated in the research questions posed in this paper and which pops up like cork in water become a natural take off point.

In the first instance, from the analyses of data from this study shows that some decades after the NWICO debate, the mass media in the Third World (in this case Nigeria) is almost as culpable as their western counterparts in respect of negative portrayals of the Continent. For example, it was found out as depicted and discussed in table 4 and by extension, that out of a total of 54 issues of both newspapers under study, a total of 44 (81.50%) of such major headline and stories dwelt on negative portrayals while 8 were positive news stories and only 2 were neutral. This is in consonance with the comments offered by John Bogart, city editor of *New York Sun* in the 1890’s that ‘When a dog bites a man, that’s not news; when a man bites a dog that’s news’. Bogart’s maxim clearly suggests that it is the unusual and negative story that makes news (Strentz, 1989). Udeze, (2005) strengthened this view. To him, ‘It is still bad news at home and abroad. Journalists like vultures descend on negative issues the way vultures attack decaying corpse by converging round it and disappearing once it is finished. This is called “vulture reportage or jackal syndrome” (pp. 73-75), emphasizes his. Amakiri (2009) gives a palpable push : ‘The media feeds on conflict...’ (p.20). Visionary media Seer, Marshall McLuhan (1964) confirms these propositions by noting: ‘Real news is bad news - bad news about somebody or bad news for somebody’ (p. 294). Folarin (2005) further ventilates the assertions made by Marshall McLuhan by noting that for McLuhan, the press is “a group confessional form that provides communal participation”, just as a book is “a private confessional form”, that provides “a point of view”. Both book and newspaper, he says, are confessional in character, creating the effect of “inside story” by their mere form, regardless of content. As book page yields the inside story of the author’s mental adventures, so the press page yields the inside story of the community in action and interaction. According to McLuhan, it is for this reason that the press seems to be performing its function most when revealing the seamy side.

Jacob Scrampical and Arul Aram in introducing their co-edited book monickered *Understanding development communication* wrote:

Development communication was initiated in academia by American media scholars like Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, Paul Lazarsfeld, H.D. Lasswell, David McClelland,

Everette Rogers and many others. Obviously, they proposed the modernization theory or transplanting American ways of modernizing in every sphere using modern technologies. Clearly this turned out to be a failure in most developing countries as was heavily criticised by Andre Gunter Frank and Paul Prebisch who proposed the dependency theory and suggested that this theory is purely to make the Third World dependent on the advanced countries. The Brazilian, Paolo Frie's conscientization culture based developmental theories definitely provided a clearer indigenous orientation to the development debate. So, it is not the western model but alternative indigenous models that are more suited to developing societies for rapid development (pp.8-9). Underlined mine.

One of such models that is 'more suited' to developing societies for rapid development which appears to be well supported by the Third World countries was the utilization of development communication (its sub-set are development theory and development journalism) defined by the originator of the concept Professor Nora Quebral of Philippines as 'the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential' (Quebral, 1975:p.3). 'Tacit in this definition' Amadi (2013) noted, 'is the recognition that communication can emancipate the deprived, transform a person, show such transformed person how to organize themselves anew in a way capable of encouraging them to develop their full potential' (p.41). Kunczik (1995) in Amadi (2013) in explaining the development hunch of the critical ideas of development journalism states that it defines 'a notion of journalism according to which reporting event of national and international significance should be constructive in the sense that it contributes positively to the development of the country concerned' (p.36). Development journalism is the journalism relating to the projects and programmes launched in an economically background country to provide certain minimum living standard to its people (Vilanilam, 1979: p.33). In summary therefore, the development theory of the press posits that the media are basically used to highlight efforts being made by the communities in building health centers, federal roads, civic centers, etc. They are also used to focus attention on government efforts in the areas of provision of basic amenities.

An enduring peep into Lule et al (1987) taxonomy on the paramount ingredients for the different 'Worlds' in relation to judging news values as graphically illustrated in table 1 indicates that development, social significance, national interest and education are key for Third World news values. Based on the foregoing, the cardinal question which stands out at this point is: has the media in the Third World (in this case the Nigerian mass media) latched onto the gospel of developmental journalism within the framework as espoused by Lule et al (1987)? The answer is not too far to fetch: It is in the main No. Reason? There appears to be a deviation from the idea of the Third World's media philosophy of developmental journalism. This is because a staggering 88.4% of the major front page news headlines and news stories from the newspapers content analyzed do not show the idea of government efforts at providing social infrastructure and other 'positive' activities of government but rather harps on the First World's criteria of news value (oddity, personality, conflict, etc) which is skewed towards the libertarian press philosophy. The implication? Several decades after the UNESCO abandoned discussion on the NWICO debate during which the USA and Britain quit the agency, we have since returned to *status quo*. The Press in the West still reports the developing countries in the negative with a new dimension added to the dynamics: the press in the developing countries also takes the direction of negative portrayals.

1.4 Conclusion

Based on our discussions and findings, this paper concludes by noting as follows:

1. Several decades after the NWICO debate had a still birth, it was found out that Africa (by extension, the Third World is still under reported and misrepresented) by the Western Media, thus re-echoing the facts and fears of the formal position of the thirty Ministers of information from the Non- Alligned Nations who met in Abuja, Nigeria in September, 1996.
2. The Press in the Third World (in this case, Nigeria) is almost as culpable as the Western press in respect of the alleged negative representations of the Third World countries. This is because about 84% of the total number of major front page headline/news focus (a critical factor in agenda setting) of the newspapers content analyzed in this study had negative directional focus.
3. The above is further exacerbated by the fact that the press in the Third World have not been properly latched onto the media philosophy of developmental journalism but rather principally toe the line of the Western media philosophy of libertarianism with its spin-offs of oddity, strangeness, conflict, personality etc as major determining factors of news values.

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