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AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE NIGERIAN MILITARY AND MEDIA REPORTAGE

By

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian Military is usually rated high in international peacekeeping around the world. Nigeria through this institution is regarded as one of the highest contributors of troops to peacekeeping efforts. Aside from the military's involvement in international peace efforts around the world, it is also charged with the responsibility of protecting the territorial integrity of the country. The concern is how the institution can succeed in securing the country from both internal and external aggressions. In doing this, the institution is also expected, according to the nation's constitution, to respect the rights of every individual and protect citizens from human rights abuses. The paper relied on qualitative data collected from secondary sources. This paper, which is descriptive in its approach, argues that the institution is also expected to be submissive to civil rule and all its tenets. The theoretical framework adopted is the agenda setting theory. It also deals with media reportage of the military between 1993 to 2018, how well the media and the military co-existed during the period and reveals the relationship between the media and the military. Because the relationship between the two is germane to Nigeria's national security, it is important to conclude that the workings of the military and its perceived intolerance of the civilian population, which also includes the media should be tailored towards the pursuit and achievement of the Nigerian core interest. It recommends the ways by which the military and the media could improve their relationship in the interest of the Nigerian state.

Keywords: Media, Nigeria, Reportage, Military, Institution.

Introduction

The media provides a pool of resources from where the government can easily tap into the desires of the people. According to Akinfeleye (2003) "There is no doubt in the minds of communication scholars, strategists, and politicians alike as to the potency of the mass media in national development. Just as it is in the economic theories of development, where the essence of economic theory is in the productivity of the society, so also is it in the case of the mass media as tools for national development". In 1791, the American Congress due to the potential exhibited by the media, implemented an amendment to the Federal Constitution a portion which reads: "The American Congress shall make no law … abridging the freedom of speech or the press' (Richards, 2017). This laudable step later received an emulation in Germany's 1919 Weimer Constitution, which provided that "Every German has the right within the bounds of the general law, to express his opinion freely in words, writings, picture, print or any other manner … there is no censorship" (Onuegbulam, 2015). Similar provisions are contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the constitution of many sovereign states, including Nigeria (Hannum,1995). Thomas Jefferson, a one-time American President once painted a picture of how powerful the media can be. He wrote;

> *… Were it left for me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter (Jefferson n.d.).*

In 1974, Richard Nixon resigned as America's President not because he fell out of favour with the masses, but because of the scathing views generated by the Watergate scandal, which was initiated and pursued to a favorable conclusion by the media. In an interview conducted immediately after the 1992 American

Presidential election, George W. Bush (Snr.) said that he did not lose to Bill Clinton, but to the "hostile American press" (Jenkins et. al, 2004).

One thing that is very clear is that effective governance in any society is built on vibrant and solid communication networks, whether in a democracy, autocracy, or military regime. Therefore, an effective mass media system is always the central control mechanism for meaningful and sustainable democracy (Voltmer, 2013). In Nigeria, the reality of the commanding effects wielded by the media is not lost on the people. This is demonstrated by the uncompressible zeal with which successive governments have attempted to subjugate the media under the control of the state. This is indicated by a submission by Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka that: Let me seize this opportunity to stress that the press has been magnificent, heroic and one of these days, when there's more pleasure; we are going to erect a statue (Akinfeleye, 2003). I'm going to see personally to this, that a statue for heroism of the press is erected at a prominent place in the country (Marks, 1998). "The freedom of the ordinary citizens and that of the media is interwoven. If the media loses its freedom, citizens soon lose theirs. In a society where the press is restricted and censored, there is bound to be a restriction of free thoughts, ideas, and speech" (Ekiert and Kubik, 2001). Notably, the Nigerian press is often acclaimed as the most vibrant and freest in Africa, Dele Omotunde, in an article in *Tell magazine* of 10 April 1992, remarked that "…it is not as free as the outside world is made to believe, because of fear of extra-judicial repercussions" (Keane, 2013).

According to the social responsibility theory however, it is pertinent for media professionals to reconcile their professional obligations with the aspiration of the large society. This leads to the inference that, despite relative freedom that the media crave issues and topics initiated and discussed by the media should not be treated in a manner that will jeopardize the bright prospects of large society (Sadurski,1985). The people are also of the opinion that the military authorities often contravene the rule of law and disregard the fundamental human rights of the civilian populace in simple cases of peace protests or civil disobedience and that the only word the military understands according to many people is "aggression" against unarmed populace (Osumeh, 2013). This has made a lot of people lose confidence in the military, and to see them as enemies of the people (Branch, 2007). It is against this background that, this study would therefore examine the fears towards the military and whether the Nigerian military lacks decorum as being expressed by the people.

Theoretical Framework

The agenda-Setting Theory comes from a scientific perspective because it predicts that if people are exposed to the same media, they will place importance on the same issues. The Agenda Setting Theory was first discussed "during the 1968 presidential election". According to McCombs, "Agenda Setting is a robust and widespread effect of mass communication, an effect that results from specific content in mass media". Agenda-setting as a theory of mass media was developed in 1972. The theory was propounded by McCombs and Shaw. It captures a situation whereby news items about current events are assigned varying degrees of importance by the media. The postulation of this concept led to the conclusion that the media present the public with a picture of what it wants the public to know, through the selection of news items. The media in other words, beam their searchlight on current events depending on how they want the public to perceive such events (McCombs, 2005).

In relation to this study, the concept is highly essential in that the media will have to think in that particular direction. In that case, the media will have set an agenda for the public to view the issue based on the certain aspects presented or emphasized. This theory believes that the agenda set by the media would have effects on the members of the public who have been exposed to it. Issa (2016), asserts that agenda settings imply putting an issue to public through framing, calling of well-known individuals (opinion leaders) to talk about the issues and stimulating audience to think about the issue so that it become subject of interest. The agenda settings refer to total operation of the media which result in prioritization of issues that arise and

engage the attention of the society (Issa, 2016). The theory provides us with the basis to examine how the media has been able to set agenda for national security issues by assigning relative importance to them, through frequency of reporting. According to Mrogers and Wdearing (1988) criteria for scientific theories, Agenda-Setting is a good theory. It has explanatory power because it explains why most people prioritize the same issues as important. It has predictive power because it predicts that if people are exposed to the same media, they will feel the same issues are important. It is parsimonious because it isn't complex, and it is easy to understand. It can be proven false. If people aren't exposed to the same media, they won't feel the same issues are important. Its meta-theoretical assumptions are balanced on the scientific side. It is a springboard for further research. It has organizing power because it helps organize existing knowledge of media effects. The strengths of this theory can be analyzed by looking at Baran (Bridges, 2004). The theory focuses attention on audience interaction with the media. Empirically demonstrate links between media exposure, audience motivation to seek orientation and audience perception on public issues. Integrate a few ideas including framing, story positioning and story vividness. The limitation of this theory is that the audiences of mass media are heterogeneous in nature. Therefore, the media is expected to look inwards. That is to say before setting any agenda the audience must be studied, if they are not well informed or they already makeup their minds.

Media in Nigeria

There are various views about the origin of the media in Nigeria. However, it is widely agreed that the Nigeria media started with the publication of *Iwe Iroyin* in 1859. The publication was published by a Briton, Reverend Henry Townsend. The publication, which was in Yoruba, was published in Abeokuta in South-west Nigeria. The *Iwe Iroyin* became the very first newspaper published in Nigeria Other newspapers were established after the Iwe Iroyin such as the *Anglo-African*, *Lagos*

Times, Gold Coast Advertiser, *Lagos Observer*, *The Eagle, Lagos Critic*, *The Mirror*, *The Nigerian Chronicle*, *The Lagos Standard*, *Lagos Weekly Record*, *African Messenger*, *The West African Pilot* and the *Nigerian Tribune.* The media later became a veritable tool used by Nigerian nationalist movements who fought the colonialists (Yushau, 2018).

The pre independence era not only resulted to the emergence of newspapers in Nigeria but emergence of vibrant journalists who made judicious use of this created institution (press) to fight British colonialists during the nationalist struggle which gradually led to Nigeria's independence in October 1960. As a matter of fact, the media is generally regarded as a major force in the development of Nigerian politics before independence and has continued to play a major role since then. Corroborating this, M. H. Kukah stated that journalism was the major vehicle through which the anti-colonial struggle in Nigeria was carried out (Ismail, 2011). Many of the Major figures in this struggle are Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ernest Ikoli, Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, Dutse Mohammed Ali, Mokwugo Okoye to name but a few who were newspaper publishers, journalists, commentators and or editors. Their newspapers served as platform for mobilizing the people, spreading nationalist awareness and for opposing the worst manifestation of colonial subjugation and the racialism which is customary to them. Also, Fred Omu the pre-eminent historian of the Nigerian Press said the early Nigerian Press provided the most distinguished intellectual forum in Nigeria history (Ugondo, 2018). One in which the high standard of debate, discussion, the quality of thought and expression cannot fail to fascinate the modern reader.

Military in Nigeria

The Nigerian Army

The history of the Nigerian Army dates to 1863, when Lieutenant Glover of the Royal Navy selected 18 indigenes from the Northern part of the country and organized them into a local force, known as the "Glover Hausas". The small force was used by Glover as Governor of Lagos to mount punitive expedition

in the Lagos hinterland and to protect British trade routes around Lagos. In 1865, the "Glover Hausas" became a regular force with the name "Hausa constabulary". It performed both Police and Military duties for the Lagos colonial government. It later became "Lagos Constabulary". On incorporation into the *West Africa Frontier Force* (WAFF) in 1901, the 'Lagos Constabulary' became "Lagos Battalion". In addition to this force, the British government included the *Royal Niger Company* (RNC), Constabulary Force in Northern Nigeria in 1886, and the Oil Rivers Irregular in 1891. In 1889, Lord Fredrick Lugard had formed the incipient body of what was to be known in 1890, as the West Africa Frontier Force (WAFF), (Petranick, 2021).

By the end of 1901, all paramilitary units in the other British tendencies have been incorporated into its command. The establishment of West Africa Frontier Force (WAFF) led to the merger of all units into regiment in each of the dependencies. The merger in Nigeria produced the Northern Nigerian Regiment and Southern Nigerian Regiment. The first Commander of the Southern Regiments of WAFF were: CHP Carter (1899 - 1901) and Colonel J. Wii Cox (1900 - 1909). The two regiments were later used for expeditions during the annexation of Nigeria by Frederick Lugard between 1901 and 1903(Omeje, 2006).

With the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the unification of the Northern and Southern Regiments came into being and this witnessed the birth of the Nigerian Regiment. The Northern Regiments became the First and Second Battalions while the Southern Regiments became the Third and Fourth Battalions. With the visit of Queen Elizabeth in January 1956, the Nigerian Regiment was renamed the Queens Own Nigerian Regiments (QONR). Also in the same year, the regionalization of the WAFF came into existence and each military force became independent of the other. As a result, the QONR became the Nigerian Military force (NMF)(Dauda,2015).

By 1 June 1958, the British Army Council in London relinquished control of NMF to the Nigerian government. In 1960, when Nigeria became Independent, the NMF became known as the Royal Nigerian Army (RNA), when Nigeria became a republic, the RNA changed to the Nigerian Army. In the same year, the Army changed its uniform, rank structure and instruments from those of RWAFF to new ones (Deji, 2019).

The Nigerian Navy

The Nigerian Navy owes its origin to the Nigerian Marine. The Nigerian marine, on the other hand was formed in 1914 after the amalgamation of the then Northern and Southern Nigeria.

But before the amalgamation, what became the Nigerian Marine had expanded to become the Southern Nigerian Marine in 1893. And seven years later, in 1900, the Northern Nigeria equivalent was formed only to be amalgamated fourteen years later (Arize and James, 2023). It is important to note that then the responsibilities of the marine included administration of the ports and harbours, dredging and lightings. However, it was not until 1956 that a policy was made by the government for the establishment of the Nigerian Naval Force (Deji, 2019).

The NNDF began operation on the 1 of June 1956 with eleven assorted ships and crafts which compromised two survey vessels, two training boats, one patrol craft, three VIP boats, one tug and one general purpose launch. After the first Naval legislation was passed on 1 August 1956 by the House of Representatives, this Naval legislation was titled the Nigerian Navy Ordinance. The constitutional task of the Nigerian Navy was expanded in 1964 and the new law, which is known as the Navy Act of 1964 tasked the Navy with the "Naval Defence of Nigeria" (Adewopo, 2012). Other tasks assigned to the Navy by the 1964 Act were essentially coast guard duties, namely assisting in the enforcement of customs laws, making hydrographic surveys, and training officers and men in Naval duties (Dauda, 2015). In addition, the Nigerian Navy provides assistance with enforcing pollution laws, fishery protection, bunkering laws, immigration and custom laws. The Navy also enforce all international and national maritime laws that are agreed to or ascribed to by Nigeria.

Nigerian Air Force

The idea of establishing an Air Force for Nigeria was first mooted in 1961 following the country's participation in peace keeping operations in Congo and Tanzania. During this peace keeping operations, foreign Air Forces Aircraft were employed to airlift the Nigerian Army Regiment to and from the theatres of operation. The Nigerian government at the time, no doubt, recognized the urgent need to establish an Air Force actively supported by modern facilities to provide full complement offers to enhance the nation's military posture. Early in 1962, the government agreed in principle that the Nigerian Air Force be established. The Nigeria Parliament, therefore, approved the establishment of the Nigerian Air Force and recruitment cadets commenced in June 1962.

The NAF was officially established by a Statutory Act of Parliament in April 1964 to serve four main purposes namely (Nzemeka, 2015):

a) To achieve a full complement of the military defense system of the Federal Republic of Nigeria both in the air and on the ground.
b) To ensure a fast versatile mobility of the Armed Forces.
c) To provide close support for the ground-based and sea borne forces in phases of operations and to ensure the territorial integrity of a United Nigeria.
d) To give the country the deserved prestige that is invaluable in international matters.

However, it was in 1962 that the drive for the required manpower for the planned Air Force started. Simultaneously with this development, government was in dialogue with friendly nations on the possibility of training Nigerian Air Force personnel in various specialists' fields (Dii, 2016).

The first batch of ten Cadets was enlisted to undergo training with the Ethiopia Air Force, while the second set of sixteen Cadets was enlisted in February 1963 to undergo training with the Royal Canadian Air Force; six Cadets were also sent to the Indian Air Force. Following the expansion of the Nigerian Air Force overtime and the need to enforce all international conventions relating to air space activities in the Nigerian air space, the Federal Government promulgated Decree 105 (Armed Forces Amendment Decree) of 23 August 1994, which provided additional roles for the Air Force (Deji,2019). These additional roles include:

a) Enforcing and assisting in coordinating the enforcement of international law, conventions, practices and customs ascribed and acceded to by Nigeria relating to aerial or space activities in the Nigerian air space.
b) Coordinating and enforcing all national and international air laws acceded or ascribed to by Nigeria and
c) Delineating, demarcating and coordinating all aerial surveys and security zones of the Nigerian air space.

Media in the Military and Democratic era

The Military Coup of 15 January 1966 marked the advent of the Nigerian Military class into the political leadership of the Nigerian nation. Prior to the coup that saw General Aguiyi-Ironsi emerged as Head of State, the political atmosphere in Nigeria had deteriorated into a crisis situation which some believes demanded military action to restore and maintain law and order (Siollun, 2009). The first direct effect of military government on the Nigerian media was the proclamation of a state of emergency and the suspension of the 1963 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. With this situation, the rights of the Nigerian media and the rights of the Nigerian people as guaranteed in the 1963 Republican Constitution were put in abeyance (Elaigwu, 1988). Sequel to the unfortunate events of 15 January 1966, when some elements within the Nigerian military truncated the pioneer democratic leadership; the country was ruled by a succession of Military heads of State. This continued till 1979 when General Olusegun Obasanjo handed over power to the democratically elected government led by Alhaji Sheu Shagari. In 1983, a military coup ousted the

Shagari administration, and General Muhammodu Buhari took over power, to return Nigeria to yet another era of military rule. During the Buhari regime, a draconian decree, meant to gag the Press was promulgated. Decree 4 of 1984 was part of measures at that time to oppress the media and ensure they did not publish anything against the military administration (Oluwabiyi, 2021).

The Journalists, Nduka Irabor and Tunde Thompson, were both sent to jail for violating decree 4. The Babangida government that came after Buhari, however abolished decree 4 to the relief of the media, but the administration was not different in its dealings with the media. During the Babangida regime, media houses were shut down with magazines and newspapers confiscated. Journalists were harassed, detained and draconian decrees enacted to curtail Press freedom (Adeyemi, 1995).

In October 1987, Dele Giwa, one of Nigeria's finest brains in journalism was killed by a parcel bomb. From then on, it was the closure of "one newspaper house or the other numerous detentions without trials, numerous death threats, and countless physical harassment (Kpalukwu, 2002).

Following an interview granted by Mrs. Braithwaite, wife of Tunji Braithwaite, a frontline politician on July 7, 1990, the office of TSM Magazine was ransacked and the entire week's publication seized. The editorial staffs were arrested and the Publisher, Mrs. Chris Anyanwu began her march to a subsequent seven years imprisonment. Several Journalists were arrested and detained in similar circumstances including Chris Maman, Egbosa Aimufu, Toye Akinjode, Emma Agu, Dan baba Abu and a host of others. None of these Journalists was arraigned before a civil court or charged with any offence. Similar and countless number of arrests were recorded for notable friends of the Press, such as Human Rights Crusader, late Gani Fawehinmi, Femi Falana, late Beko Ransome Kuti and Olisa Agbakoba among others (Otiono,2011).

The oppression of the media was not limited to print media alone, it transcend all segments of journalism from print media, to photojournalism and electronic media. On July 22, 1993, the premise of Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation was shut down alongside the premises of *Sketch*, The Punch and concord Press. On August 11, of the same year, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN, dismissed Ladi Lawal a Newscaster for casting the day's news without prior vetting by the military. Overall, members of the media were arrested or killed for exposing the corruption, nepotism, insecurity, and brutality of the military (Ismail, 2011). Apart from caging the media by way of denying press freedom, government licensing of the electronic media, that is Radio and Television was a very strong control mechanism, considering the potency of both media in mass education and mobilization among Nigerians. The situation was not different under the Abacha regime as more Journalists were clamped into jail on framed up charges (Abraham, 2010). The role of the media is reflected in Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution as an institution that is charged with the responsibility of policing over the fundamental human rights. Throughout the military rule in Nigeria, the media obviously became the last hope of the common man on the street. This was because the military rule by decree, had the power to override the law courts in the land.[41]The media then became the only institution in the land that rallied different voices to speak-the truth to the military and dared to ask them to return to the barracks (Ojo, 2006). However, there is no doubt that the media paid a high price for attempting to speak up for the people.

Despite the various challenges, it faced during the military era, the media did not shy away from its aim and objective of returning Nigeria to a constitutional democracy. They made use of the print and electronic media to prevail on the military to return the country to civil rule. The hard work of years past finally materialized with the handover to civilian rule in 1999. After securing the hard-earned democracy, the Nigerian media has continued to play a role of protector of democracy (Santas, 2016). This is even more so, with the arrival of the social media. Since 1999, the media has played a key role in ensuring that the politicians do not take undue advantage of the opportunity that they have been given to hold public office by holding them accountable for their actions. Whenever a public figure does something wrong, the media raises up to challenge such actions and the public figure is called to order. Constructive criticisms are the order of the day in a democracy, and the media has never shied away from raising its voice to challenge arbitrariness

by government or even highhandedness by security agencies in a civil rule. The media has served as an important check on the political class, ensuring that they are now more careful with their actions.

While there is no gain saying that the media play very important roles in Nigeria's democracy, it is also important to guide and regulate activities in order to prevent it from being used as a propaganda tool to cause havoc or disaffection in the society.

Indeed, it should be stated that the military's return to the barracks on 29 May 1999, offered another opportunity for a more liberal and conducive democratic atmosphere for the media to hold those government accountable to the people. Media plays a pivotal role as agenda setter and provides the forum for raising conflicts to the level of discussion (Diamond, 1997). A guaranteed media plays a watchdog function in a democratic society, bringing to the people the information they need to exercise independent judgment in electing public officials of their choice.

Military and the Defense of Nigeria's Territorial Integrity

One of the core responsibilities of the military is to protect lives and property of a nation and further defend its sovereignty and integrity. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides for the military in its Section 217, makes it clear the duties of the military, that is the Army, Navy and Air Force to defend Nigeria from external aggression, maintain its territorial integrity and securing its borders from isolation on land, sea and air, suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President according to the law (osiyale, n.d.).

The military is also to perform such other functions as prescribed by the National Assembly. Although, the main functions of the military are to protect the nation against external aggression or threats, occasionally the military may be required to assist authorities to deal with internal violence and suppress internal tension. For instance, the military may be required to assist the Police in restoring law and order in any part of the country. A Joint Task Force (JTF) was established to respond to terrorism and other threats in the Niger Delta. Defence spending has been growing in recent years, in response to the numerous security challenges the country is facing, notably the Boko Haram insurgency, piracy in Gulf of Guinea, and oil related crimes in the Niger Delta, and most recently, the herdsmen's atrocities (Yoroms, 2010).

The Nigerian Army is the largest of the three branches of service, and it's facing the brunt of the country's security challenges, notably, the Boko Haram insurgency. A large portion of the army's budget has been spent' on improving military facilities and supporting internal security and foreign peacekeeping operations. Nigeria has been trying to modernize its Army by making it more professional, more sustainable, and more rapidly deployable to be able to cope with whether internal or external threats. The Navy on the other hand is embarking on a highly ambitious expansion programme that aims to acquire 49 naval vessels and 42 helicopters over the next decade (Pion-berlin,2003). A number of vessels have been delivered over the last several years, such as the ex-US Coast Guard Hamilton Class Cutter NNS Thunder, and dozens of inshore patrol vessels. The Nigerian Navy received two more ex-United States vessels in 2014, the US Navy Survey Ship, John McDonnell and China Ship Building and Offshore International Limited have delivered two 95 metre 1,800-ton offshore patrol vessels. After years of neglect, which saw dozens of aircraft like the jaguar and M19-21 fleets grounded, the Nigeria Air Force has refurbished existing air frames and acquiring new types. It has, and continues to reactivate stored C-130s, L-39s, Alpha jets, Pumas and G,222s, using domestic and foreign companies like the local Aeronautical Engineering and Technical Services Limited (Salaam, 2012).

Nigeria is slowly growing its local defence industry to be able to withstand any act of aggression from outside or any internal strife that might want to disrupt the sovereignty of the country. Nigeria has also positioned its military as an African peace keeping force. It has been, and remains, one of Africa's leading peacekeeping nations, and has spent over ten billion dollars contributing personnel and equipment over the

last fifty years. Since 1995, Nigeria has deployed peacekeepers to Liberia, Cote d'lvoire, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Mali and Somalia (Petranick, 2021).

Military Structure in the Democratic Era

Military rule often involves complicated attempts to secure some measure of consent from the people. Some military regimes, for example, have permitted elections, while others have used the judiciary, of varying degrees of independence, to approximate or simulate the rule of law. Others have promulgated, and sometime actually adhered to constitutions (Howe, 2001). Even so, the application of military law to civilians and the threat or use of extra judicial repression by State Security Forces is common practices during the military rules. The military is hierarchically divided between high command, junior officers, and enlisted personnel and rivalry between the different service branches can be intense (Fitch, 1998).

Military rule increases the probability of subsequent military coups. The reward of direct rule often increases competition and conflict within the armed forces. Some military regimes attempt to manage that competition by allocating the spoils of office equitably between the different services branches. But one universal belief is that military rule is dictatorial and tyrannical as it suppresses the will of the people. By suppressing the people's constitution, it denied them their fundamental rights while also disregarding court judgments and rulings. In Nigeria for example, during military rule, the constitution becomes non-existence, while the power of the court is dramatically watered down (1989). The highest decision-making body is the Supreme Military Council or has the constitutional right to determine its use. The 1999 Constitution states in Section 217 that one of the fundamental objectives of the armed forces of Nigeria Is "suppressing insurrection and acting in aid to civil authorities to restore order when called upon by the President, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly" (Alagappa, 2001). Section 218(1) similarly underscores the President's Supremacy and Constitutional power over the military, "The Powers of the President as the commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation shall include power to determine the" operation of the Armed Forces". It is also pertinent to know that the President in a democracy also possesses the power to appoint and fire service Chiefs (Igbuan, 2011).

Finally, however, the concept of democratization ensures that the constitution is -expected as the Armed Forces Ruling Council, a body of just about twenty senior military officers. However, in a democratic setting, the military becomes subordinate to civil authorities who have the people's mandate to govern. Though the military is required to provide input in form of advice as well as implement defence policy, the formulation of policy in the realm of defence is to be the sole responsibility of the civilian authority. During democratic rule, strict political neutrality is expected of the military as a means of ensuring its loyalty to the government of the day, irrespective of the political party that constitutes the government. The contention that the military should be subordinate to civil authority is predicated on the premise that the military is an arm of state and an important tool of state policy. Hence, it is to serve as an instrument of political authorities which a fundamental principle that is binding on all, irrespective of class. It is also clear that democracy cannot be instituted by conducting an election to replace military dictatorship with civil rule (Serra, 2010).

Media Reportage of Conflict in Nigeria

The Nigeria Media has a long history of conflict reporting. The media has suffered deprivation in the hands of both military and civilian regimes. However, this has not in any way diminished the growth of the media in all ramifications. Traditional media like Newspaper, Radio and Television has received much recognition, but social media, such as twitter, facebook, blogging and other internet-based media are becoming more popular means of information dissemination especially in conflict situations across the country. The media is a powerful tool of communication in peace and conflict situations (Mietzner, 2006). It can be used positively to promote peace and resolve conflicts at appropriate times. It can also be used

negatively to initiate, escalate, and sustain conflict covertly or overtly. The potential of the media as a means of communication to promote peace or conflict cannot be over emphasized. As a matter of fact, social media has further enhanced the capacity of the media to either destroy or build humanity through the stock in trade. It is against this backdrop that a critical examination of the media reportage in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram, Jos crisis and the Farmer - Herdsmen conflicts that have had the most caustic impact on the Nigerian social formation in the 21st Century, readily come to mind (Akinboye, 2004).

The Media and Security in Nigeria

In a work of this nature, an attempt should be made to provide an operational definition of security. There are many definitions of security depending on the focus. Security can be defined as the degree of protection against danger, damage or loss and criminal activity. Security can also be described as a form of protection, where a separation is created between the asset and the threat. This includes but is not limited to the elimination of either the asset or the threat. Security can also be compared to related concepts: safety, continuity, and reliability. The key difference between security and reliability is that security must consider the actions of people attempting to cause destruction.

National Security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the national state through the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy. The concept of National Security was developed mostly in the United States of America after World War II (Yarger, 2006). It initially focused on military might, but now it encompasses a broad range of facets, all of which impinge on economic security of the nation and the values espoused by the national society. Accordingly, in order to achieve national security, a nation needs to possess economic security, energy security, and environmental security etc. Security threats involve not only conventional foes such as nation states but non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, narcotic cartels and hostile multi-national organizations. Some people may include natural disasters and events causing severe environmental damage in this category (Jordan, 2009).

Conclusion

The Nigerian media have rarely been found wanting in their coverage of the military and in the way and manner to contents of presentation. Because the Nigerian media were actively involved in pre-independence struggles, they became part of the politics of military involvement in governance and conflict resolutions. Since then, the media has found it difficult to alienate itself from military activities and conflicts do arise from them. What is glaringly noticed in media coverage of the military is the use of the media to sometimes achieve public sympathy at the detriment of the military. The fact that most of the thriving media organizations in Nigeria are individually owned, editorial independence in most cases is subjected negatively to ownership influence. Some are even established to achieve the political objectives of their publishers. The present situation in Nigeria, where only individuals own and control the media industry has given rise to many unprofessional conducts and abuse, not only against the military, but also against perceived media owners. After the struggle for independence, it is obvious that there was no proper re-orientation of the Nigerian media away from militant and partisan journalism. The pattern of reporting crises and the military by the Nigerian media since independence persists.

It is however obvious that the press, under a democracy, enjoys more freedom to publish what it perceived to be the right information, whether such is against the government or the military. Apart from what was witnessed during military rule, where the press was gagged, democratic governance has ensured that the press can publish any information, as far as it is the truth. The freedom of Information Act is part of efforts to ensure that the press does her job without the fear of being arrested by the military of the civilian authorities,

Also, the military, through the media seems to have cued into democratic norms, by not only respecting civil authorities, but also following due process to denounce reports it felt was not the true state

of things. It is now a common trend to see the military taking legal action against publications that was false. For some of the media coverage, it is obvious that the Nigerian Military is now a force to be reckoned with, whether in dealing with conflicts or in human relations. All arms of the Nigerian Military have continued to display high sense of professionalism in their relationship both with the public and the media. Defense Correspondents now interact freely with Senior Military Officers, sharing ideas without fears of being bullied or harassed. The military also on numerous occasions organizes workshops for defense correspondents on "Reporting Conflicts" and other areas of military adventure. It is therefore obvious that the media-military relationship has gone from mutual suspension to a cordial one.

From the look of things, however, there seems to be more grounds to cover, before we attain what is been witnessed in the western world. But so, far so good, the media coverage of the military has improved drastically from what it used to be, because the military itself now values the need to be projected positively.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to further improve media coverage of the military, in reporting crises and conflicts in order to enhance press freedom in Nigeria, the following steps should be taken; An unambiguous constitutional provision should be made in line with the first Amendment of the American constitutions which states clearly inter-alia that “Congress shall make no laws abridging the freedom of the press.

The Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) and similar organizations should work hard to professionalize and sanitize the profession to give it the needed integrity.

There should be continuous intensive training and retraining for journalists to make them more professionally competent and globally competitive and those in position of authority must be more tolerant of the press, knowing that the Press is contributing its own quota in national development. The media and the military should know that collective national interest must supersede parochial ethnic and personal interests. Sensationalism that could possibly blow up crises should be avoided by the media, while the military on its part, should avoid suppression of the truth as it will escalate crisis and conflicts and create a false sense of security. The press media should display high sense of professionalism and ethical considerations in the management and coverage of conflicts and crisis. The media should also maintain a healthy skepticism and provide socially responsible criticism to avoid relentless hostility.

Another solution is public enlightenment. This can be carried out by the military, based on information at their disposal. The National Orientation Agency and the Ministry of Information could place adverts on radio TV, newspapers and work hand in hand with the media. Schools, especially primary and secondary school students should be targeted, once a person becomes security conscious at a young age, he is conscious forever. Security agencies also need to brief the media and the public from time to time on security threats and measures to take to avoid such threats. There is need for more workshops and seminar by non-Governmental organizations and others in the private sector to sensitize people on security awareness. All the above mentioned will go a long way in raising the level of national security consciousness among Nigerians.

Furthermore, the Nigerian media must rise above petty reporting and face the challenges of constructive and balancing reporting especially during crisis and conflicts. The media should not support evil or help to perpetuate it and should therefore always take a stand against it. This must be done professionally, ethically, objectively, and cautiously. Media organizations should ensure that only experienced and highly competent media professionals or journalists are assigned to cover the Defense Beat. This is very important, especially in developing societies like Nigeria, as anything short of this could be dangerous due to the complex nature of the military. Conflicts reporting should also be taught in institutions

of higher learning, where mass communication, journalism, broadcasting, or media studies are taught. This will help the Journalist to become professional in his handling of sensitive and conflict-based reports.

The media must rise to the challenge of combating rising insecurity in the nation by embarking on communication-based approaches that would effectively stigmatize such acts in society. While journalists and media workers are urged to engage in responsible journalism committed towards discouraging the acts of insecurity in the nation, the public should also step-up the use of citizens combating insecurity in the nation. The welfare of journalists should be given serious attention, especially the provision of an insurance package, which would encourage them to engage in dare-devil conflict reporting in the interest of the public. Regular workshops on conflict reporting, journalism ethics, mass media in a multicultural society, reporting terrorism, professionalism, among other topics are essential to continually keep media workers abreast of trends in mass media use in combating insecurity in Nigeria. This would ensure that the media are not used to worsen the problem of insecurity due to lack of knowledge on how to handle this specialized journalism area.

Finally, the military on its part should continue to re-orientate officers and men of the force about been media friendly and subservient to civil authority. More trainings and workshops should be organized for Defense Correspondent on how to ensure and obtain credible information without fear or favor. While there is no gain saying that the military-media relationship has been positive so far, it is however important that the Nigerian media rise above petty reporting and face the challenges of constructive and balance reporting, especially during conflicts and crisis situations.

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