

# **Reporting Terrorism**

Boko Haram in the Nigerian press

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bournemouth  
University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2018

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## Abstract

Scores of studies have explored the news media representation of terrorism in the last ten years. Much of this scholarship, however, has been from a western perspective, mostly relating to the international media. This study shifts the focus to the Nigerian press to consider the representation of Boko Haram in its national media. Boko Haram is one of the most violent groups in the world currently and has officially been designated as a terrorist organisation by every major government in the world. The study aims to show how an African press has reported terrorism within its national borders. Through an analysis of 851 news stories from three Nigerian newspapers, the thesis examined the portrayal of Boko Haram focusing on three main aspects: the news framing of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press, the sourcing patterns present in the news reporting of Boko Haram and the challenges Nigerian journalists face in reporting Boko Haram. Semi-structured interviews were used to provide further insights into major trends determined from the analysis of news texts. The study found that the news coverage predominantly focussed on two aspects: government response to Boko Haram and Boko Haram as the other. Boko Haram was also framed, in descending order, as a political conspiracy, as prevailing, and as instilling fear. Ethnicity, regionalism and religious affiliation appeared to be a significant determinant of the reportage, with journalists legitimising violence against the group and failing to promote or explore non-violent approaches. The study also showed that newspapers preferred official sources, especially from the security forces, while other key actors such as Boko Haram received little news space. Religious sources were given priority in most newspapers and used differently, depending on the ethnoreligious leanings of editors. Daily Trust, for instance, showed a significant statistical difference in its preference of Muslim sources over Christian sources. News reports of Boko Haram, thus, were largely presented from a political and ethnoreligious understanding. Alternative narratives like radicalisation were absent likely because of the absence of source groups such as experts who are not interested parties in the conflict. Thematic analysis of journalists' interviews showed that inadequate funding, safety concerns and ethnoreligious politics were factors contributing to the news trends. The study underlined the need for media training for journalists to foster a more nuanced and conflict-sensitive news coverage in the Nigerian context.

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## Acknowledgement

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my thesis supervisors, Dr Chindu Sreedharan and Dr Einar Thorsen, for their patience and guidance during this research. I am grateful for their attention to details and for ensuring that I did not neglect other aspects of my professional development.

I also extend my thanks to Allwell who is amazing in many ways, to Fortune who tries to be a mystery and fails at it, and to Young, who doesn't understand *football heritage*.

I am also grateful to several people who came along the way and made it easier: to Pam, who tried to stay out of the way and failed, to Tinuke, who makes the best *efo riro*, to Rutendo, who made sure I remained on the path, to Jimmie, Efe, Grace, and Kate, who ensured it was not all work and no play, to Kwasi, John, and Ezra, who first were roommates and, then, brothers, and to Saba, my Starbucks companion, who takes her coffee black.

Finally, my deepest gratitude to my parents, Ijele and Omekadiya, for their relentless support and deepest love, which I may never be able to repay.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

In 2014, Boko Haram had its most expansive media coverage in the international press. The group, at that time, kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls from a secondary school in Chibok, northeast Nigeria. News of the abduction trended on Twitter with the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls which also became a movement, outside the online space, that demanded answers from the government relating to the safe rescue of the abducted schoolgirls. At the time, prominent political figures and celebrities including the United States President Barack Obama and the British Prime Minister David Cameron supported the online movement using the hashtag. The massive media attention given to this Boko Haram attack has since placed the schoolgirls at the centre of the conflict involving Boko Haram, such that any claim by the government as to the subduing of Boko Haram is critiqued with the continued detention of the schoolgirls. In fact, Nigeria's current president Muhammadu Buhari insists that Boko Haram cannot be said to be defeated until the schoolgirls are rescued (Guardian 2017). The number of kidnapped girls and the fact that they were schoolgirls are undoubtedly important factors that make the Chibok schoolgirls' abduction central to the Boko Haram conflict, but so also is the media attention the abduction received (especially internationally) which arguably amplified its importance. To put this in context, the military has rescued more than 700 women and children kidnapped by Boko Haram—234 of them in one operation—who were not prioritised as much as the Chibok schoolgirls (Guardian 2015). There have also been other severe acts of violence committed by the group that are not as referenced because they did not enjoy wide international publicity as much as the Chibok schoolgirls' abductions. For instance, while there is a daily countdown of

days the Chibok schoolgirls have been abducted and yearly remembrances since 2014, there is no yearly commemoration of the victims of the Madalla Christmas Day bombing of 2011 nor the Baga massacres of 2015 with an estimated 2000 deaths. Such is the relevance of the media to determining what is important in a conflict. In theorising on the place of the media in conflicts, several scholars (e.g. Cottle 2006, Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2015) speak of a shift from mediation to mediatisation:

We take mediatisation as the process by which warfare is increasingly embedded in and penetrated by the media, such that to plan, wage, legitimise, assuage, historicize, remember, and to imagine war requires attention to that media and its uses. It is a means of understanding shifting media powers on and its uses by a range of actors. This is different from "mediation" (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2015 p 1323).

Thus, the place of the media is not one of merely informing audiences of conflicts through news reports, rather the media are very central to the planning, understanding, reach, legitimisation and execution of any conflict. As Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2015, p. 1323) put it, "war and conflict ... are not simply mediated (relations sustained via media as medium);" the media, rather, play a much more active and central role including the legitimisation of conflicts. This centrality of the media to conflict is even more pronounced following the emergence of the digital new media technology that has resulted in a "structural shift from a multipolar to a heteropolar global media landscape," in which new voices including non-state actors contest state narratives of conflicts (Kaempf 2013, p. 586) and ordinary citizens can curate news as-it-happens in conflict zones, using amateur videos and pictures on video sharing sites such as YouTube or blogs. Some of these amateur materials, some documenting official abuses, have been used in mainstream news, amplifying their reach and relevance (Ali and Fahmy 2013).

The relationship between the media and conflict is not a one-way experience, however. Conflicts have news values that the media tend not to overlook—drama, violence, negativity, impact, audience identification, threat to public safety, and an ability to register on the public agenda—thus, there is a symbiotic relationship between the media and conflicts, such that relevant actors in conflicts cannot ignore the media and the media cannot ignore conflicts.

Although usually studied separately from other acts of violent conflicts, actions deemed as terrorism have a similar symbiotic relationship with the media, in that the centrality of the media to terrorism cannot be overemphasised and the allure of terrorism to the media is similarly high. More than mere publicity, groups associated with terrorism need the media for several communicative needs including recruitment, propaganda, and radicalisation. In fact, terrorism has been referred to as a mass-mediated phenomenon (Nacos 2003a). Most definitions of terrorism emphasise the media's role as if to suggest that an act is only indeed terrorism if it can attract the attention of the media, as Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) argue, the media moderates not only the public understanding and perception of terrorism but also its public appearances.

Boko Haram, regarded as a terrorist organisation by every major government in the world, has shown similar affinity for “favourable” media coverage, sending videos containing its ideology or its reactions to events to news wires especially the AFP for a broader range of coverage than can be obtained from the national press, and attacking media houses and journalists for reporting it wrongly (BBC 2012). Indeed, what a public knows about a conflict, it knows from reports in the media, thus, the effort from most actors in a conflict to attract not only coverage but also the right kind. There is thus a contest among major actors in a conflict to influence the

media agenda and in turn the public agenda. This thesis critically assesses the media reporting of Boko Haram, owing to the aforementioned relevance of the media to terrorism. The study focuses on the media coverage of the group in the Nigerian press concentrating on three national newspapers and seven significant events between 2009 and 2015 that follow the evolution of the group. Most studies on the media reporting of terrorism have often looked at it from a western perspective; however, Africa has unique sensibilities that mean that representations of violent conflicts in western media might not necessarily be applicable in an African context. Thus, this study adds to the body of knowledge by showing how an African press, Nigeria in this case, might represent violent conflicts (especially those represented as terrorism by political actors) within its borders to a mainly national audience. There are studies that have looked at the profiling of Boko Haram in the press but some of these usually concentrate on the international press (e.g. Yusha'u 2012, Musa and Yusha'u 2013) and those that have considered the profiling of the group in the national press have sometimes dwelt on using it to assess other issues such as the presence of ethnicity in the press (e.g. Yusha'u 2015). No study has taken several events (right from the start of Boko Haram's violence) to assess how the group has been portrayed in the Nigerian media from its initial presence in news reports and its subsequent evolution through the years.

This study draws from framing theory which deals with the study of how news stories can be written and organised such that they make certain aspects of an issue more salient than others (Entman 1993, Reese 2010). Through selection, emphasis, and exemptions, news media moderate the perception of news events by audience members, persuading them to read news stories, and consequently understand news events, in a particular way. Thus, frames make sense of relevant issues and

suggest what is at issue. As “organising principles” (Reese 2001, p. 11), frames are socially shared, draw boundaries, set up categories and define what is in and what is out in an active process (Reese 2007). Effective frames are tied to culture and thus appeal to the cognitive schema of audiences (Scheufele 2006). In fact, Entman et al. (2008) argue that if a message does not have repetitive pointers to a cultural schema, then it is not a frame. Some framing devices are so potent that a single reference to them is sufficient to activate a schema (Van Gorp 2007) and the framing process is usually complete when a framing effect is produced, for example in the mind of audience members. Thus, in this research, framing theory is used to assess the issues emphasised, made salient and those exempted from the news reports of Boko Haram and how these issues are organised to produce framing effects.

An essential part of the framing process is the role of news sources. Sources set the tone for the framing of news events especially conflicts, as various actors in a conflict try to influence the media reports about that conflict. Thus, while the first part of this study looks at the framing of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press, the second part looks at the sourcing patterns present in news stories that might have some influence on the usage of news frames. The role of sources in news framing does not undermine the active roles journalist play in frame building as journalists choose the sources to approach, relevant questions to ask them, and quotes to use in news stories. As the role of journalists in frame building cannot be overlooked, perspectives of journalists collected through semi-structured interviews are used, in this study, to examine frames that emerge from news texts, for instance, through journalists opining on why certain frames were relied on in the representation of Boko Haram. The interviews were also used to examine the challenges that Nigerian



journalists might face when reporting Boko Haram. Thus, three research questions guided this study:

1. What are the dominant news frames used in the press coverage of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers?
2. What are patterns of source usage in the coverage of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers?
3. What are the challenges Nigerian journalists face when reporting Boko Haram?

The following section of this chapter introduces Boko Haram—its history, ideology, and evolution—and its relationship with the media. It then introduces the seven events involving Boko Haram chosen for analysis in this study and states the rationale for their inclusions.

### 1.1 Boko Haram—from preacher sect to violent jihadists

Boko Haram is currently one of the most dangerous violent groups in the world. In 2014, the group killed more people than ISIS—while Boko Haram caused 6,644 deaths, ISIS was involved in 6,073 deaths (Buchanan 2015). Since its inception, it has killed more than 20,000 people (Reuters 2017), carried out noteworthy attacks including bombing the United Nations building and the Nigerian Police Force headquarters in Abuja, and even annexed portions of northern Nigeria as part of its caliphate. Its most reported attack was the kidnap of more than 200 schoolgirls from a secondary school in the northeast of Nigeria, popularly associated with the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. These and many other similar acts prompted its blacklisting as a terrorist organisation by the Nigerian government, other major governments in the world, and the United Nations in 2013.

Boko Haram, however, has not always been a violent group; its violence began in 2009 following clashes with the Nigerian police. The immediate cause of the violence was the raiding of the hideout of the group at the Dutsen Tanshi area of Bauchi on 26 July 2009 by Nigerian security forces during which some of its members were arrested, and materials for bomb making and arms were confiscated (Adesoji 2010). Members of the group carried out reprisal attacks on police formations in Bauchi, Kano, Yobe, and Borno (Adesoji 2010). The subsequent riots by members of the group and the clampdown on its members by the police led to the death of more than 700 people including the group's leader, Mohammed Yusuf. Before then, however, its activities had been mainly restricted to promoting its brand of Islam through preaching, although this sometimes led to disputes with the state as it viewed the existing political structure as corrupt. The group attempted to set up a puritanical Islamic community for its members in Kanama, Yobe state. Its leader at the time (although it was not known as Boko Haram) Mohammed Ali encouraged dissent from the official authority of the state and urged Muslims to join the community and live according to the "true" dictates of Islam. In December 2003, following a community dispute over fishing rights in a local pond, members of the group overpowered a police squad, ridding them of their weapons (Walker 2012). These events led to the involvement of the military who laid siege to the group's mosque that lasted into the New Year, culminating in a shootout in which most of the group's seventy members were killed, including its leader (Walker 2012). The survivors, under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, returned to Maiduguri and were simply called the *Yusufiya*—the followers of Yusuf. In fact, several sources point to Mohammed Yusuf as the founder of Boko Haram possibly because of the recruitment and expansion across the north-eastern state of the *Yusufiyya*

movement under his leadership. Yusuf established the Ibn Taimiyyah Masjid Islamic compound which housed among other things a mosque and an Islamic school through which students were recruited and indoctrinated into Boko Haram (Gray and Adeakin 2015).

Its original name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* which translates to "People Committed to the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad" or "Movement for the Propagation of Tradition and Struggle" (Musa and Yusha'u 2013) shows its original intention as propagating and living out its version of Islam. The appellation Boko Haram—Western Education is Sinful—was a rather dismissive and derogatory name used to refer to the group when they proselytised in villages (Musa and Yusha'u 2013). The group has also operated under other names including *Ahlusunna wal' Jamma Hijra*, the Nigerian Taliban, and the *Yusufiyya* (Adesoji 2010). In fact, there is a clear evolution of the group from missionary activism to its current transnational violence, sometimes blamed on the counterstrategy of the Nigerian state (Gray and Adeakin 2015). Gray and Adeakin (2015) have divided the evolution of Boko Haram from missionary activism to its current transnational violence into four major stages: substate missionary activism, substate jihadist and an al-Qaeda connection, nationalist jihadist and al-Qaeda affiliation, transnational jihadist and the integration into AQIM and ISIS. What is relevant here is the purely missionary activism state of its origin, its subsequent evolutions and the corresponding waves of violence which have largely been blamed on the counterstrategy of the Nigerian state (Gray and Adeakin 2015). What has been constant in Boko Haram's evolution is its adherence to Salafism—"a puritanical brand of Islam that preaches the total rejection of religious innovations and a return to the observance of Sunni orthodoxy, the literal adherence to Quranic injunctions, the prophetic traditions and the consensus of the

pious predecessors who are revered for learning Islam directly from the Prophet Muhammed and are thus epitomised as the followers of pristine Islam” (Kassim 2015, p. 175)—and, more specifically, jihadi-Salafism—a distinct form of Salafism that shares an ideological propensity for violent rebellion (Kassim 2015). This study adopts this standpoint and views Boko Haram as primarily a jihadi-Salafist group; the terrorist appellation and understanding of the group are used only to the extent of the group’s official designation as a terrorist organisation. The study recognises that terrorism is a politically charged term and adopts a neutral perspective in its use of the term.

The origin of Boko Haram is not very clear in the literature. Some accounts claim that Boko Haram was founded as a non-violent socio-religious movement in 1995 called *Ahl al-Sunna wa Jama’a al-Hijra*— “The People Committed to Hijra and the Prophet’s Teachings” (Barkindo 2013). In 2002, as already stated, the group embarked on hijra, like the Prophet, from Maiduguri to Kanama in Yobe state after declaring the city of Maiduguri as intolerably corrupt and irredeemable (Walker 2012). In Kanama, they established a community called “Afghanistan” intended as an Islamic state, and as its inhabitants refused to obey local laws such as wearing helmets, they frequently clashed with local authorities. In December 2003, its leader at the time, Mohammad Ali, was killed in a shootout with the Nigerian military. The new leader of this anti-establishment group following the death of Mohammad Ali, Mohammed Yusuf, is widely regarded as the founder of Boko Haram. In 2009, Mohammed Yusuf was also extrajudicially killed by the police following renewed altercations between members of his group and the Nigerian police. Although police narratives claimed he was legitimately killed during a shootout with members of the group or killed while trying to escape from prison, evidence of his extrajudicial killing

were recorded on cell phones and were accessible on the internet. This increased his martyrdom status in the eyes of his followers (Zenn and Pearson 2014). In fact, in 2011, five police officers were tried for murder over the death of Yusuf although they were freed by the court in 2015 for lack of evidence linking them to the act (Bamgboye 2015).

Following the death of Yusuf and a clampdown on members of the group, the group withdrew from the public sphere for a few months and re-strategised in two main ways: first, it adopted Yusuf's deputy Abu Mohammad Abubakar ibn Mohammad al-Shakwi (Abubakar Shekau) as its new leader; second, it revised its strategy to reflect a more violent form of jihad including suicide bombing (Onuoha 2012). Under Shekau's leadership of Boko Haram, the group has been involved in several high-profile attacks including the bombing of the United Nations building and the Nigeria Police Force headquarters in Nigeria's capital Abuja in 2011, various violent attacks that have resulted in more than 20,000 deaths as at September 2017 (Reuters 2017), and annexation of some parts of northern Nigeria as part of its caliphate. Some of its attacks have been suicide bombings, which no group in Nigeria, despite its many ethnoreligious crises, has ever carried out. Some of these suicide bombings have also been carried out by women, which represents a marked difference between the group and similar jihadist groups, such as ISIS and al Qaeda. For many reasons, including parochial male domination and power structure, women members in ISIS are not allowed combatant roles (Peresin and Cervone 2015); in fact, some have referred to the reports on female suicide bombers in ISIS as a myth (Cottee and Bloom 2017). As Cottee and Bloom (2017) argue, the proactive role created for women in al-Qaeda in Iraq was a tactical innovation and was used to shame wavering male supporters into action. In addition to its use of female suicide

bombers, Boko Haram under Shekau also “indiscriminately” kills Muslims not actively opposed to the group. These have been the major basis for rifts among commanders of the groups such as Mamman Nur and Khalid al-Barnawi who were instrumental in the formation of Ansaru, a breakaway faction of Boko Haram formed in January 2012. The Jama’atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis Sudan (“Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa) or Ansaru, since its formation, has been involved in several high-profile kidnappings of foreigners and has extensive links with AQIM. Al-Barnawi who became the leader of Ansaru was repeatedly critical of the modus operandi of Boko Haram, condemning the group in several publications. Writing for the Long War Journal on a video message by Ansaru, Thomas Joscelyn notes:

The Ansaru speaker then shifts his attention from the Nigerian army, the main villain of the production, to another foe: the jihadist group commonly referred to as Boko Haram. Ansaru’s jihad “is different from Boko Haram[’s],” which “launches physical and bomb attacks at Muslims and public places such as mosques, markets, and motor parks,” the speaker says. “These acts are contrary to the teachings of Islam. In fact, jihad is prescribed to assist the wounded.”

To underscore Ansaru’s denunciation, the video shows Abu Bakr Shekau, Boko Haram’s emir, grabbing his crotch in an undignified manner. Not that Shekau has ever been accused of being dignified (Joscelyn 2015).

Thus, Shekau’s leadership style and his understanding of jihad are unconventional and fractious even among members of his group. The Nigeria military claims to have arrested Ansaru’s leader Khalid al-Barnawi in April 2016 have been disputed by analysts especially as the military has not provided any proofs to justify their claims (Gaffey 2016).

Although scholars have always postulated on the presence of factions within Boko Haram, the most definite sign of a division within the group was the naming of Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the new leader of the group by ISIS, whom Boko Haram had pledged allegiance to, on August 3, 2016. Shekau debunked this claim in an audio message. Al-Barnawi is the son of Mohammed Yusuf and is less extreme than Shekau in his interpretation of acceptable levels of violence; he, for example, would not target Muslims who do not actively oppose the jihad (Zenn 2016). ISIS preference of al-Barnawi over Shekau could be due to Shekau's leadership style including the targeting of Muslims and use of girls in combat. Boko Haram's ex-Chief Intelligence Officer, Abdulkadir Abubakar, who was arrested by the Nigerian military in June 2017 offered insights into the in-group fighting in Boko Haram and why some of Shekau's top commanders have created other factions of the group:

"Shekau has continued to demonstrate his cruelty and atrocities against humanity. He had killed a lot of souls, destroyed homes and rendered people homeless. He continued to exercise God's authority to himself by killing innocent souls at will without any justification.

"This was the why all his commanders left him. He doesn't have pity for the aged, women, children as well as young girls, who are mostly suffering and dying in his camp.

"His followers are raping and committing all sort of atrocities under his nose while he continued to show no concern. Many who dared to question his dastardly acts, were promptly eliminated on his orders (Abdulkadir Abubakar as cited by Odunsi 2017).

The in-group fighting was also, sometimes, violent as factions typically engaged Shekau's group. Abdulkadir Abubakar claims to have taken part in nine of such violent conflicts against Shekau's led Boko Haram, before his arrest in 2017 (Odunsi 2017). Besides al-Barnawi, other factional leaders of the group include Mamman Nur and Abbor Minok although Shekau still commands the most adherents (Zenn 2016).

Similar disagreements over the tactics of Boko Haram notably the killing of Muslims had led to the formation of the splinter group Ansaru in 2012, as earlier stated.

The appeal of Boko Haram as a group has been linked to several factors; two of which—relative deprivation (Agbiboa 2013) and ideology (Barkindo 2014, Kassim 2015)—stand out. The relative deprivation perspective argues that the socioeconomic deprivation of the northeast is fodder for dissatisfaction with the state and in turn could lead to political violence as currently the case with Boko Haram. However, as Kassim argues, Boko Haram does not promise or offer a better life to its adherents nor is its intent directed toward poverty eradication but rather a “puritanical Islamic state” (Kassim 2015, p. 191). While both arguments—relative deprivation and ideology—have merits and might be influential among the ranks of Boko Haram’s faithful, the more plausible explanation for Boko Haram’s violence lies in its ideology. Zenn et al. (2013) argue that ideological radicalisation, especially in the northeast of Nigeria, has been ongoing and intensified by the 1979 Iranian revolution, the implementation of Sharia law in twelve Nigerian northern states since 1999, and the 9/11 attacks in the US. Thus, Boko Haram leaders are able to take advantage of an already radicalised population (Zenn et al. 2013). Indeed, the effects of socioeconomic deprivations cannot be ignored but only secondary to the ideological issues.

The appeal of Boko Haram’s Jihadi-Salafism is not only based on the ideology itself but also on the careful streamlining of these beliefs with local history and memory—a reframing and intertwining of the history of Islam, the Kanem-Bornu empire and corruption in Nigeria (Kassim 2015, Barkindo 2016).

If told in isolation, the story of the Kanem-Bornu Empire might not have been sufficiently relevant and appealing to listeners. However, Boko



Haram's leaders shrewdly link the empire's success to the prolific expansion of Islam and Islamic values. They relate how the Islamic state founded by the Prophet Mohammed in Medina was rooted in shari'a and founded on principles of justice and equality; how this Islamic state ultimately grew to become the Ottoman Empire; and how Western pressure led to its dissolution in 1924 by Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey. Since then, according to the narrative, Western civilisation—whose agents also destroyed the Kanem-Bornu empire—has been imposed on Muslims, and Islam has found itself subjugated by the Christian West (Barkindo 2016).

Interpreting Boko Haram's viewpoints in light of Jihadi-Salafism ideology offers a more precise understanding of several Boko Haram standpoints, much better than the relative deprivation perspective offers on its own. For instance, its opposition to democracy stems from the Salafi-jihadi belief that replacing the Sharia with the secular law is significant disbelief in all circumstances and takfir (declaration of infidelity) can be pronounced on any political leader (Muslim or not) who governs by un-Islamic laws (Kassim 2015). First, this clarifies its opposition, and continuous threat to Islamic leaders whom it believes are in bed with democracy and, second, it clarifies the killings of Muslims by Boko Haram as anyone who opposes the ideology of the group can be denounced as kafir (infidel).

Although the focus of Boko Haram's action has mainly been Nigeria-centric, several actions of the group have had international dimensions. Actions such as the bombing of the United Nations building are primarily aimed at international targets and garnering international attention even by the group's admission. There have also been links with groups such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) who helped the group with the training of fighters especially after the death of Yusuf. Members of Boko Haram also fought alongside al Qaeda affiliated groups in Mali in 2012 and

2013 before returning to Nigeria, and communications retrieved from Osama bin Laden showed that Shekau made several advances towards some partnership with al Qaeda (Joscelyn 2017). In March 2015, the group pledged allegiance to ISIS and renamed itself Islamic State West Africa. Since then, it has also intensified its operations in the neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger, and Cameroun.

#### 1.1.1 Boko Haram and the media

Boko Haram has repeatedly shown that it considers its profile in the media as important. It has attacked and issued threats to newspaper houses on account of their reporting. On one occasion, Shekau berated the media for reporting what he claimed was a bombing by his group in Lagos as a cooking gas explosion.

“A bomb went off in Lagos. I ordered the bomber who went and detonated it,” Shekau says in the video, which shows him flanked by at least 10 gunmen in front of two armoured personnel carriers and two pick-up trucks. “You said it was a fire incident,” he added. “Well, if you hide it from people you can’t hide it from Allah” (*Vanguard* 2014).

The quote arguably illustrates how much the coverage of a seemingly strategic attack—Boko Haram has not succeeded in attacking any southern state in Nigeria—is essential to Boko Haram. The group, since Shekau, has sent their videos to Agence France-Presse (AFP), a news agency that gathers news reports and transmits them to news organisations worldwide. Thus, showing the international dimension of Boko Haram communication needs even though the group mainly maintains a Nigeria-centric focus.

Boko Haram’s first sustained mentions in the media were in 2009 following altercations with the police which culminated in the death of Yusuf. Since its adoption of violence in 2010, it has attacked newspaper houses, e.g. *Thisday* in 2011, for reporting it in a bad light and killed journalists, e.g. a Channels TV reporter killed in 2012 who mistook Boko Haram fighters for bystanders after a bomb attack. Its social

media use has however been limited. A Twitter account it started in 2016 was hardly used before it was shut down by Twitter. Its limited use of the online space might be due to operational difficulties as the Nigerian military often disrupts internet and mobile facilities in the parts of Nigeria with Boko Haram's presence and, in any case, the primary audience that Boko Haram attempts to appeal to, at least for recruitment, are more easily reached through traditional means especially the radio. Its broader audience needs are fulfilled through YouTube, AFP, and preferred local journalists.

## 1.2 The North-South divide of Nigeria

Boko Haram is based primarily in northern Nigeria and most of its violent actions, to date, are carried out in that part of the country. The group has so far not been able to carry out attacks in the south of the country although Shekau claimed that an explosion in Lagos reported as a cooking gas explosion was a bombing orchestrated by his group (*Vanguard* 2014). More than merely a geographical differentiation, the north-south divide of Nigeria is pivotal in understanding the threats Boko Haram pose to the stability of the Nigerian state. Politically, Nigeria practices a federal system and is currently divided into 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The federal system practised by Nigeria has frequently been criticised for several inconsistencies, especially its close resemblance to the unitary system which the military, before Nigeria's latest transition to democracy in 1999, relied on for governance. Thus, for instance, states or federating units in the country do not have control over resources (such as oil) in their regions or authority over security agencies (such as the police), which places the federal government at the centre of most activities in the country.

Despite the federal-state arrangement in the country, the most used division for understanding Nigeria's political and economic landscape is the north-south

dichotomy. This binary division of the country has its origins from the 1914 amalgamation of the so-called British southern protectorate and northern protectorate as Nigeria, during the British colonisation of that region. Since then, it has proved difficult, both to British colonialists and Nigerian leaders, post-independence, to make a nation out of the created Nigerian state. Nigeria was a colony of the British from 1900 to 1960; at independence, it became a federation with three regions and became a republic in the Commonwealth in 1963 (Kirk-Greene 1967). The amalgam Nigeria has more than 200 ethnic groups, three of which are classified as “major”—Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa. Most efforts at nation-building have been frustrated by several separatist agitations right from 1914, especially amongst the three major ethnic groups (Tamuno 1970). Although most of these separatist agitations are mainly verbal threats to secede a part of the country, one of its most violent manifestation was a civil war between 1967 and 1970 in which parts of southern Nigeria, led by the Igbos, created a new country, Biafra.

Hostilities among the major ethnic groups were heightened during the Biafran war mainly between the Igbo and Hausa. In fact, Kirk-Greene (1967) states that the view held in both the Nigerian and British press at that time was that “the root cause of the trouble is the long-standing jealousies and suspicions between the two big tribes, the Hausa and the Ibo” (p.4), and there was a general evaluation at the time that the Igbos of the Eastern Region and the Hausas of the Northern Region could not live amicably side by side. Thus, the most significant obstacle to nation building in this west African country lies in its more than 250 ethnicities, many of which can make valid claims to be nation-states of their own, and indeed, people talk of nationalities such as the Igbo nation, the Yoruba nation, the Ijaw nation. These ethnicities have diverse cultures, languages, and religions to which citizens have

strong affinities. Thus, there exist multiple group identifications in one person—an ethnic identity, a state identity, and a national identity. This shows how problematic the north-south dichotomy can be as multiple ethnicities with multiple histories and complexities are polled together into a binary division.

There have been efforts to group the various ethnic groups into more manageable units, for instance through the division of the country into six geopolitical zones—the southeast (comprising mainly of the Igbos), the southwest (comprising mainly the Yorubas), the Niger Delta or south-south (comprising various ethnicities chiefly the Ijaws), the Middle Belt or North Central (containing several ethnic group like the Tivs), the Northeast (e.g the Kanuris), and the Northwest. Thus, in the north-south narrative, currently the north of the country is made up of the Northeast, Northwest, and North-central and the south is made up of the Southeast, the South-south and the Southwest; each of which is not an ethnic entity but instead has several minority tribes in them, based purely on proximity to each other rather than any objective similarity in culture or value.

Religion adds a further layer of diversity to these ethnic configurations. Most citizens of the northeast and northwest are Muslims with a Christian minority whereas there are large concentrations of Christians in the northcentral region. In the southwest, the population is evenly divided among Christians and Muslims while the southeast is almost entirely Christian. Thus, in using the north-south binary divide, references made to a Christian south and a Muslim north are simplistic and do not entirely reflect the ethnic and religious complexities in the country. For instance, the so-called Muslim north does not immediately account for the vast Christian population in the Middle Belt as much as the Christian south narrative does not account for the vast Muslim population in the southwest of the country. Practitioners

of various indigenous religions are not also included in this prominent distinction as well as minority practitioners of other global religions. The layering of religion into ethnicities is crucial in understanding certain discourses in Nigeria, for example violence attributed to Islamism. Various incidents of violence among ethnic groups have had religious undertones; for example, the caricature of the Prophet made in a Danish cartoon in 2006 led to protests in the northeast of the country targeted at the minority Christian population in that region of the country. The protests against the cartoon in Maiduguri resulted in at least 16 deaths and 11 torched churches (BBC 2006). A New York Times report claimed that reprisals as a result of this attack in the southeast led to several deaths in the hundreds and targeted arson attacks on properties owned by Muslims who are almost entirely northerners, in that region (Polgreen 2006). Thus, the north-south understanding of Nigeria is one polarised along religious and ethnic lines, and conflicts can easily assume this ethnic-religious polarisation depending on origins of conflicts, actors involved, and the kind of narratives that they employ. Distinctions are not particularly made between religion and ethnicity in the context of the north-south divide hence there is no distinction between a religious conflict and an ethnic one. Karpov et al. (2012) refer to this homogenisation of ethnicity and religion as *ethnodoxy*—the inseparability of *ethnos* and *doxa* (belief, in Greek) in identity creation.

One implication of the north-south divide is the disparity in economic and literacy levels between the north and south of Nigeria. The south following colonisation embraced western education and has become more educated—at least in the western sense—than the north. Because of the dominance of Islam in the north, most northerners around the time of colonisation preferred Islamic studies and referred to the elites who through the policy of indirect rule were used by the British

to colonise northern Nigeria as *yan Boko*, “child of the book”. It was used derogatorily to refer to these elites as those ‘who have had their heads turned away from Allah by easy money and corrupting Western values’ (Walker 2012, p. 7). Thus, there has always existed a suspicion of western education in most parts of northern Nigeria.

### 1.3 The Nigerian media ecology

The disadvantages conferred on the north through this initial rejection of western education extend to journalism, as the correspondents of most national newspapers as well as the ownerships of these newspapers are southern. While this in itself might not be problematic, there are existing distrusts and polarisations among regions such that scholars have argued that the southern-based national press are biased on matters that relate to the north and are more likely to present the north poorly when reporting divisive issues (Yusha’u 2015). This study thus concerns itself with how a group like Boko Haram, based in the northeast of Nigeria and whose actions at several points in its evolution have been adjudged as targeted at specific ethnic groups, is profiled in the Nigerian media that has similarly been accused of bias in reporting conflicts with ethnic colouration, especially in the way it reports northern groups or issues having to do with northern Nigeria.

The Nigerian media ecology mirrors the polarising north-south dichotomy of the Nigerian state. As people of the South are more educated (Walker 2012), at least in the western sense, most news organisations are either owned by southerners or primarily based in the South, especially the Southwest. Scholars argue that the national media are rooted in ethnic prejudice (Udoakah 2015) and bias against the north, especially in matters of ethnic conflicts and politics (Ojo 2003, Yusha’u 2015). In fact, Ojo (2003) suggests that the southern-based news press, prevalent in the

southwest, are biased in favour of the southwest especially on issues of politics. For example, in 2000, the southwestern-dominated media disparaged an MP, Senator Arthur Nzeribe, referring to him as having ‘devilish antecedents,’ for initiating impeachment proceedings against the then President Olusegun Obasanjo because “Mr President comes from the south-west, which dominates the ‘commanding heights of Nigeria’s mass media” (Ojo 2003, p. 834). Thus, scholars of the Nigerian media ecology mostly agree that the southwest controls the mainstream news media in Nigeria as currently structured. As a political scientist puts it, “the mass media is neither pluralistic nor complex; it is an institutional monopoly of the south-west” (Oyovbaire 2001 cited by Ojo 2003, p. 834). The newspaper most recognised as representing northern views, Daily Trust (Yusha’u 2015), is widely circulated in print form in the north but not in the south. Thus, the ‘northern views’ presented by this newspaper might not be accessed in the south.

The online media has changed some of these realities especially in terms of access to multiple news media organisations online because in theory one might be able to access any newspaper’s website online; however, the trend observed in the print media continues in the online space. For instance, web ranking of newspapers shows that the southern-controlled press is the most visited in the country. For example, data from alexa.com (Appendix A), show that the website of Daily Trust is not even among the 10 most visited online newspapers in Nigeria. In fact, the southern-based newspapers Vanguard ([vanguardngr.com](http://vanguardngr.com)) and Punch ([punchng.com](http://punchng.com)) are the fifth and sixth most visited website in Nigeria respectively (Appendix B). Daily Trust, again, is not in the top 50 most-visited websites. Thus, the mainstream press is influential, at least in terms of audience reach both offline and online.



The new media ecology has created room for various forms of alternative media which are mostly online-based. These, however, do not still have the reach, prestige, size or budget to compete with the mainstream especially in matter relating to politics. The mainstream also utilises the online environment and most news stories publicised in these newspapers appear online first, especially breaking news. In most cases, the content of print and online versions of the same newspaper are the same, including headlines.

#### 1.4 Introduction to events analysed in this study

To study the news framing of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press, this thesis analysed seven high-profile events associated with the group. They include:

1. The extrajudicial killing of Yusuf (2009)
2. The bombing of the Nigeria Police Force headquarters in Abuja (2011)
3. The bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja (2011)
4. The Madalla Christmas Day bombing (2011)
5. The designation of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation by the United States (2013)
6. The Chibok schoolgirls abduction (2014)
7. The Baga massacre (2015).

In addition to being high-profile, these events were chosen as they give a spread over several years to study and understand possible evolution in the news frames used in representing the group. Events were chosen from the first sustained media coverage of the group in 2009 to the Baga Massacre of 2015, in such a way that a high-profile event from every year under consideration is chosen.

Thus, possible changes in the framing of the group in the news texts over time are identified during analysis.

#### 1.4.1 The extrajudicial killing of Yusuf (30 July 2009)

Mohammed Yusuf was the leader of Boko Haram in 2009 when the group first made it into mainstream news following series of violent uprisings targeted at security agencies, especially the police. Several accounts consider him to be the founder of the group in 2002. In 2009, he was extrajudicially killed by the police although the police claimed, at the time, that he was killed while escaping from prison. The accounts of the police that sought to legitimise his death were contradicted by several sources including the army colonel in charge of the military operation against Boko Haram who reported that Yusuf was handed to police authorities alive. The claim that he was killed while escaping prison was also countered by a video showing police officers dancing around his body with one of them claiming the legal system would have set him free (Gorman 2009). At the time of his death, government narrative dubbed him a leader in the “mould of Osama Bin Laden” and that his death was a positive development for Nigeria (Gorman 2009). Several news reports referred to him as a Taliban leader and he referred to a community founded by the group as Afghanistan.

The killing of Yusuf was the first significant news coverage of Boko Haram and thus relevant to understanding the overall framing of Boko Haram.

#### 1.4.2 Police Headquarters Bombing (16 June 2011)

Following the death of Yusuf, Boko Haram was temporarily “inactive” due to the clampdown on its members by security forces. In fact, official reports claimed its current leader, Abubakar Shekau, was killed at the time (Akinyelure 2017). From 2010, under the new leadership of Shekau, the group adopted a more violent

approach to its agitations with the police as its primary target, partly in revenge for the killing of Yusuf and other commanders of the group. One of its earliest definitive show of power especially over the security architecture of the state was the bombing of the police headquarters in Abuja. The suicide bomber gained entrance into the police headquarters by tailing the convoy of the Inspector General of police and with fake identity cards. The bomb was detonated at the visitor's car park as the bomber was turned back from the car park reserved for the IGP (Ajani and Omonobi 2011). There were about six confirmed deaths during this attack with the police chief narrowly escaping.

The 16 June 2011 bombing of the police headquarters is significant for at least three reasons. First, it was acclaimed to be the first suicide attack in Nigeria; second, it was targeted at the heart of Nigeria's security architecture only days after the IG of Police had visited Maiduguri and assured residents of the impending defeat of Boko Haram, and finally it proves the reach and capacity of the group which was questioned by many people at that point (BBC 2011a).

#### 1.4.3 UN House bombing (26 August 2011)

The United Nations house bombing was orchestrated through another car explosion in Abuja on 26 August 2011 in which at least 21 people died and 60 people were injured. In this case—unlike the police headquarters bombing that had the semblance of elaborate planning, on how to beat security, for instance—a Sedan simply rammed its way through two gates into the building. Like the police headquarters attack, this attack was very symbolic. One of the witnesses said: “If they can get into the UN House, they can reach anywhere” (Guardian 2011). Boko Haram claimed that it attacked the UN House because the United Nations and the United States were supporting the Federal Government in the persecution of

Muslims in Nigeria (Marama 2011); thus adding a religious undertone to what might simply be understood as political or even criminal. The UN house bombing is also one of the earliest evidence of the group's aims to internationalise its acts (Onuoha 2012).

#### 1.4.4 Christmas Day (Madalla) bombings – 25 December 2011

The Christmas Day bombings was a coordinated attack on at least four churches on 25 December 2011 by Boko Haram, with the highest fatality count at St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla in which at least 32 people died (Mark 2011). This violent act of Boko Haram is significant as it was understood as Boko Haram attempting to stock the embers of a “sectarian civil war” (Onuah and Eboh 2011). Other churches bombed on the same day were the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church in Jos and a church in Gadaka, northern Yobe. There were at least two other bombing incidents in Yobe, of which one targeted the State Security services in the north-eastern town of Damaturu (BBC 2011b, Onuah and Eboh 2011). Of these, the church attacks were more significant, at least in the news reports, and were very instrumental in cementing Boko Haram's posturing as anti-Christian and anti-south.

#### 1.4.5 The designation of Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (13 November 2013)

On 13 November 2013, the United States designated Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO). The designation was against initial reluctance and resistance from several quarters including the Nigerian government to do so. The argument against naming Boko Haram as an FTO was that such an action would give the group international legitimacy among similar groups such as Al Qaeda. Actions of Boko Haram and increasing collaboration between the group and

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), however, soon made these reasons untenable.

This was Boko Haram's first ever listing on the terror list of a foreign government and paved the way for the blacklisting of the group as terrorist in other countries and the United Nations in 2014. Placing an organisation on the US terror list prohibits the organisation from doing business with any group in the United States, cuts off access to US financial institutions, and stigmatises and isolates the group (Rogin 2014). The United States is also a strategic partner with the Nigerian government in its fight against Boko Haram; thus, the designation was perceived as supportive of the Nigerian government's efforts against Boko Haram and was a symbolic event in the evolution of the group.

#### 1.4.6 The Chibok schoolgirls' abduction (14 April 2014)

The Chibok schoolgirls' abduction is one of the well-known attacks of Boko Haram. Commonly associated with the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag, used by celebrities and popular global politicians, it gave Boko Haram an unprecedented level of coverage and audience reach, such that the success of Nigeria's counter Boko Haram drive is largely predicated on the successful rescue of the schoolgirls.

On the night of 14 April 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from a secondary school in Chibok, Nigeria. They have since been held hostage and only some of them released. There are a few speculations as to why the schoolgirls were kidnapped among which are Boko Haram's insistence on western education as haram (forbidden) especially for girls (BBC 2017) and Boko Haram's retaliation for government's arrests of wives of members of the group (Zenn and Pearson 2014). During the reporting around the Chibok abduction, Chibok was presented as a Christian town and Shekau, in a video, claimed that several of the kidnapped girls

were Christians and had converted to Islam and married off (BBC 2017). This attack also reflects the religious undertones present in news reporting of activities involving Boko Haram and adds to the suitability of the inclusion of this attack in the dataset used in this study, in addition to its popularity as a news event.

#### 1.4.7 The Baga massacre (3 January 2015)

The Baga massacre refers to a series of mass killings between 3 January 2015 and 7 January 2015 carried out by Boko Haram in the northeast towns of Baga and Doron Baga in Borno state. The exact number of fatalities remains unknown and ranges from 150 (the official number given by the military) to 2000 (a figure supported by Amnesty International). Boko Haram at this stage even annexed parts of northern Nigeria as part of its caliphate. Soldiers were reported to drop their weapons, strip off their military garb to avoid recognition, and flee during battles with Boko Haram. Eyewitnesses spoke of the corpses during the Baga massacre as “too many to count”, and more than 15,000 villagers fled into neighbouring Niger and Chad, the highest mass displacement of people as a result of one single event since the Boko Haram conflict (Fessy 2015). Members of the group set houses ablaze and drove over corpses and people in their way. The number of houses destroyed is estimated at about 3,700. The Baga massacre and the subsequent annexation of Baga are also crucial in analysing the evolution of Boko Haram because Baga is the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Military Taskforce comprising soldiers from Nigeria, Chad, and Niger. In overpowering the security machinery in this area, Boko Haram made a statement as to its strength and resourcefulness. This attack, dubbed Boko Haram’s deadliest by Amnesty International (Shearlaw 2015), did not receive a lot of international media attention for several reasons, one of which is the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris which happened at almost the same time.

## 1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One is an introduction to the thesis aimed at analysing the framing of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press. The chapter gives an overview of the primary focus of the thesis, Boko Haram. It also discusses the north-south configuration of Nigeria and the seven events analysed in the thesis.

Chapter Two is a critical analysis of scholarly literature relevant to the study. The chapter explores four main areas: Media and political violence (especially terrorism), ethnicity and ethnic violence, news framing, and journalistic practices such as sourcing patterns and objectivity in news reporting.

Chapter Three explains in detail the research methods adopted in the thesis including sampling techniques, inclusion criteria, and the significance of each method used to the research.

Chapter Four explains the research findings and how they correspond to the research questions. The findings are presented under three sections, corresponding to the three research questions. The first section presents the results of the framing analysis, the second section presents the results of the source analysis, and the third presents the result of the thematic analysis of journalist's interviews that coded for challenges faced by journalists in reporting Boko Haram.

Chapter Five which is the conclusion of the thesis gives a summary of the findings, recommendations, and discusses possible areas for further research.

## Chapter Two

### Political violence, ethnicity, and the news media

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature for this study and is divided into four parts. The first part examines the literature on political violence and terrorism, ethnicity and ethnic violence, and the role of the media in terrorism, constructing identities and ethnic violence (especially in Africa). In reviewing the literature on terrorism and media, the chapter also examines the new media, especially its role in radicalisation, and prevailing stereotypes in the media reporting of terrorism including representation of women and Muslims in terrorism discourses. This is of relevance to this study because of the widely held view of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation, Boko Haram's utilisation of female combatants, and the group's reliance on the media for its communication needs.

The second part of the chapter reviews the literature on news framing, the theoretical framework of this study, and, as framing is a multifaceted field, outlines the framing theory the study aligns to. It also discusses the relationship between framing and agenda-setting and makes the claim that framing is a media effect theory on its own rights as opposed to the understanding of framing as second level agenda setting.

The third part of the chapter deals with journalism practices that affect the news framing of conflicts. These include journalists-sources relationships in news stories, embedding journalists in conflict situations, and objectivity as a journalism norm. The literature show that reliance on official sources not only affects the framing of conflicts in news stories but also the subsequent understanding of the conflict by audience members. The literature also show that rather than a rigorous



pursuit of facts, objectivity, as practised by journalists, equates merely to neutrality and does not fulfil the burden of an efficient way of doing journalism, especially in conflict situations.

## 2.2 Violence

Most theorisations of violence in the academic literature link violence to political power. Carl von Clausewitz's classic dictum that war "is the continuation of political intercourse by other means" suggests that the most important type of socially organised violence is connected to political power (Shaw 2009). Thus, states have traditionally maintained a monopoly on legitimate violence, especially in wars. This status-quo has however been challenged in modern armed conflicts with non-state actors taking up arms against states in circumstances that are different from the traditional understanding of wars in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Kaldor (2013) in referring to these new forms of armed conflicts as "new war" differentiates them from "old war" in four ways: actors, goals, methods, and forms of finance. New wars, she argues, are fought by a varying combination of state and non-state actors and fought in the name of identity; violence in these wars are mainly targeted at civilians as battles are rare and forms of finance are predatory including kidnapping and smuggling.

There is thus an expansion of the traditional understanding of political violence to include forms of organised violence carried out by political actors, including governments, rebel groups, insurgents, or terrorist organisations (Valentino 2014). In these new forms of organised violence, violence against civilians, once an inevitable side effect of war, are now part of the deliberate strategies of belligerent groups (Valentino 2014). Terrorist methods, for example, involve targeting civilian populations, usually through publicised killings, to produce a political effect as

terrorist groups lack the might to take on states directly. In fact, it has been referred to as the warfare of the (militarily) weak (Shaw 2009). Tsfati and Weimann (2002) proffered four rhetorical structures used on terrorist's websites to justify the use of violence—no choice, demonising of the enemy, weakness, and claim of persecution. Three of these—no choice, weakness, and claim of persecution—show that terrorist organisations themselves view and use violence as an inevitable tool considering their disadvantaged military position.

### 2.2.1 Terrorism as political violence

Terrorism, as a form of political violence, is often considered apart from other forms of political violence usually because of the understanding of terrorism as symbolic politics and the extreme asymmetry of power between a terrorist organisation and the state (Sánchez-Cuenca and De La Calle 2009, Shaw 2009). The symbolic attacks preferred by terrorists not only compensate for their inability to inflict military damage but also aim at coercing a target government to change policy, attract new members to the group, or gain financial support (Pape 2003). These symbolic violence are also a way of making a statement; they are thus often deliberately exaggerated and macabre (Kaldor 2004). The deliberate macabre violence of terrorist groups are sometimes targeted at specific groups perceived as “outsiders” or “other” to make them hate and feel unsafe in their homes and subsequently remove any trace of the culture of that group (Kaldor 2004) especially when the aim of the terrorist group is territorial. Relying on this perspective, Boko Haram's bombing of churches or sports bars where alcohol are consumed is not merely a side effect of its violence but a deliberate strategy aimed at making a particular demography of the country hate their homes and feel unsafe.

One significant dimension of the symbolic violence of terrorism is suicide attacks which, for many terrorist groups, are becoming the coercive instrument of choice (Pape 2003). Indeed, suicide, especially before the current era where it has a majorly negative connotation, has played significant roles in politics throughout history—rallying future resistance, reinforcing the self-esteem of the protagonists, validating the identity and ideology of the protagonists, and a cost-effective use of resources (Silke 2006). Similarly, terrorists' use of suicide attacks is aimed at making demands through the targeting of several people with as little resources as possible. In fact, members of these groups might not hold the negative connotations associated with suicide in modern society especially when used in furtherance of their cause. Jihadists have been known to refer to suicide bombing positively as martyrdom. Boko Haram, as a group, engages in suicide bombings. Its first violence using suicide bombing was the bombing of the Nigeria Police Force headquarters in Abuja. Since then, it has attacked bus parks, markets, churches, and mosques through suicide bombings, targeting many people with as little resources as possible. Although, suicide bombing is a dicey strategy as the terrorist group risks losing support from within its own community or losing sympathy for their demands from the wider community, the use of suicide bombings by these groups might not be as inexplicable, irrational or fanatical as conventionally presented. As already stated, suicides have sometimes been considered an effective strategy for showing dissent especially against a militarily superior state (Pape 2003, Silke 2006). Thus, the use of suicide attacks by terrorist groups might be a well-considered strategy towards fulfilling their aims.

### 2.2.2 Terrorism and news media

Terrorism is a politically charged term and thus a difficult concept to define. Maxims like “terrorism is in the eyes of the beholder” and “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” are pointers to this definitional conundrum. Although a generally satisfactory objective definition of terrorism is still elusive, several attempts have been made. Examining 109 different definitions of terrorism, Schmid and Jongman (1988) formulated a definition of terrorism which included key elements from definitions they studied. They concluded that,

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspired method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-)clandestine individuals, groups, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperilled) victims, and the main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought (Schmid and Jongman 1988, p. 28).

In a more recent attempt at a consensus definition, Weinberg and colleagues analysed 73 definitions from 55 articles in three leading academic journals on terrorism and concluded that terrorism is,

a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role (Weinberg et al. 2004, p. 786).

Both consensus definitions point to the centrality of the media to terrorism and, indeed, historically, mainstream news media have moderated not just the public

perception and understanding of terrorism, but also the public appearances of terrorism (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2007). It is accepted, especially from early works in media and terrorism studies, that publicity is a key terrorism strategy. This seems the case as acts of terrorism are symbolic and their primary objective is to make an impact on political elites, the public or both (Lewis 2012). Thus, terrorists choose newsworthy actions that the press cannot ignore and, as a result, create symbiotic relationships with the media as acts of terrorism contain elements that feature on most definitions of news value: violence, conflict, drama, a threat to public safety, and an ability to register on the political agenda (Wilkinson 2006, Lewis 2012). As Miller (1982, p. 1) puts it,

Terrorism and the media are entwined in an almost inexorable, symbiotic relationship. Terrorism is capable of writing any drama—no matter how horrible—to compel the media's attention

As a result, terrorism has been portrayed as “theatre” (Weimann 1990, Weimann and Winn 1994) and terrorists as “super entertainers of our time” (Laqueur 1977, p. 223). Terrorists, Weimann (2005) argues, see the media as powerful tools in their psychological warfare; they use terrorist attacks to promote their cause on the media agenda and thus on the public agenda. They can also use media appearances to seek legitimacy, support, funding, and recruitment among their people.

Nacos (2003a), in pointing to the centrality of the media to terrorism, refers to terrorism as a “mass-mediated” phenomenon — “signifying the centrality of media considerations in the calculus of political violence that is committed by non-state actors against civilians” (p. 23). The media, she argues, is not a neutral bystander but rather strategically placed to “magnify and minimise, include and exclude” (Nacos 2003b, p. 11). The media, thus, can either amplify terror through “inflating the

seriousness of its threats, by connecting a single threat to others or by representing threats in vague, indefinite terms through speculation, linguistic imprecision or loose use of numerical, quantitative indicators of ‘terror’ or contain terror by making it watchable “through sanitation, repetition, and contextualisation” (Al-Lami et al. 2012, p. 239). As a result, while publicity might not be the ultimate objective of terrorism, terrorists recognise its importance as the means to advertise and further their larger political ends; because, regardless of the act and its severity, the terrorist’s media goals are always the same: attention, recognition and legitimacy in their target public (Nacos 2003a). In fact, Weimann (2005) argues that media-wise, terrorists plan their actions with the media as a major consideration, selecting targets, locations and timing that satisfy media criteria for newsworthiness. They even provide visual aids for the media including video clips of their actions, taped interviews, and declarations of the perpetrators (Weimann 2005). Boko Haram, for example, sends video clips to news stations aimed at showing its military might, captured territory, kidnapped citizens, or refute government’s positions such as refuting government’s claims on the death of Shekau. They also monitor news reports concerning them and have severally reacted to reports they deem inaccurate. Governments also depend on the news media for enlisting public support for counterterrorism policies (Bloch-Elkon and Nacos 2014). Thus, the media are strategic in terrorism discourses, not only to the terrorist but also to other actors such as government officials.

Owing to this central position of the media, certain conservative studies on terrorism suggest that the media can even promote terrorism—for example, through the contagion effect (Midlarsky et al. 1980, Tan 1989, Norris et al. 2003) or by spreading the terrorists’ message of fear and their political demands (Laqueur 1977, Miller 1982, Picard 1986). The contagion hypothesis holds that the media, through

the attention it gives to terrorism, can provoke terrorism, create a culture of terrorism, provide lessons on how to carry out terrorism and therefore spread terrorism even further (Tan 1989). These positions, Carruthers (2011) argues, has led in some cases to media self-censorship or government imposed censorship on terrorism reportage. Such claims assume that media coverage, simply by providing terrorists with the opportunity to 'communicate' with the public, favour the terrorist over the government (Stohl 2008). Research, however, shows consistently that the media provide significant coverage for official positions and present voices that support particular narratives that their government provides as seen, for instance, in the coverage of 9/11 (Jackson 2005, Brinson and Stohl 2009, Lewis 2012). The contagion hypothesis particularly is simplistic as it ascribes more power than necessary to the media and overlooks the heterogeneous nature of audiences and their ability to make their own meaning out of news texts (Picard 1986, Tan 1989, Archetti 2013). What is more likely is that the media mirror and follow the evolution of terrorism and frame discourses on terrorism by giving salience to certain aspects of an event (Tan 1989, Matthews 2015).

### 2.2.3 Terrorism as communication

Not all forms of terrorism seek publicity. State terrorism, for instance, employs media censorship and disinformation to avoid publicity or conceal a regime's repressive activities (Schmid and Jongman 1988). There are also acts of terrorism that do not make it to mainstream news and are thus less visible but not necessarily less terrifying; some of these happen daily. In fact, the notion that terrorists are seekers of publicity for its own sake is simplistic as it ignores the terrorists' significant efforts to direct news coverage to present their cause in good light (Picard 1986) and ignores the several communication targets of terrorism: evoking fear, polarising

public opinion, making converts, attracting new members, misleading enemies, announcing further actions and gaining a certain image (Falkheimer 2014). As a result of these, coupled with advances in new media, satellite television and 24-hour news, 'terrorism as communication' is now an increasing part of contemporary terrorism studies (Turk 2004, Hoffman 2006, Archetti 2013). Archetti (2013, p. 33) argues that communication as the enabler of social interaction is far more relevant to the understanding of terrorism than existing literature acknowledges.

The violence in acts of terrorism are distinct from other acts of violence in that they are 'communicatively constituted'—intended to transmit a message of fear and to show that more terrorist attacks will follow if certain policies do not change (Stohl 2008). Thus, the communication intent of terrorism, as direct victims are rarely targeted; they are attacked to send a message to the main target, the government or the culture and values of that country (Powell 2011). Tuman (2010) refers to this as persuasive communication with multiple targets. Most Boko Haram's activities are often unreported; thus, while the publicity targets of these specific events might not be met, other communicative and economic needs are arguably met—for example, kidnapping for ransom, polarising public opinion, radicalisation, and recruitment of members. Fear is also evoked in members of attacked communities who, in turn, make demands of the government or seek safer havens.

#### 2.2.4 Radicalisation, terrorism, and the new media ecology

The communication options available to terrorists about a generation ago were insufficient and, thus, the emphasis was on exploiting traditional mass media. Though this afforded the terrorist exposure, it only partially served their wider communication needs (Hoffman 2006) as they relied on the media to shape their image to the public. Often, terrorists could not reach the selection threshold of



traditional media and their acts were completely left out of news reports (Weimann 2004). The new media ecology has reduced this reliance on traditional media as media thresholds, and gatekeeping functions do not apply to terrorists' own websites which allows them direct control over the content of their messages, the image of themselves, and the image of their enemy (Conway 2006). New media combine reach and timeliness with increased anonymity, ability to circumvent government censorship, and cost-effectiveness (Hoffman 2006). Using the tools offered by new media, terrorists can manage their own perception and, through their own sieve, filter the information they disseminate (Hoffman 2006). Thus, modern-day terrorism utilises new media as mass communication tools and take advantage of their uniqueness to reach audiences without communicating with journalists (Falkheimer 2014). As Awan (2007) notes, the internet is increasingly becoming the jihadist communication medium of choice.

In scoring the importance of new media to contemporary terrorism, prominent jihadist Ayman Al-Zawahiri asserts,

We must get our message across to the masses of the nation and break the media siege imposed in the jihad movement. This is an independent battle that we must launch side by side with the military battle (Al-Zawahiri 2001 cited by Awan 2007, p. 389).

Thus, communication through the new media presents a new form of [online] jihadism whose importance is in the ease of information gathering by potential recruits and a global reach (Conway 2006). As such, most terrorist organisations have online presence on the major social media networking sites—YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—for news, propaganda, psychological warfare and weapons tutorials (Awan 2007, Weimann 2014) creating the possibility of

interactive communication and increasing the prospect of debates with members of the public whether supporters or detractors (Conway 2006). The nature of new media means that the reach of extremist groups is global and not limited to their immediate audience. Also, there is evidence that new media tools aid in the internal operational communications of terrorists (Seib and Janbek 2010). In the case of Boko Haram, until 2015 when it pledged allegiance to ISIS and attempted operating a twitter account, it mainly stayed away from the internet, probably because of its Nigeria-centric focus. Most of its use of new media was limited to posting videos on YouTube although its preferred mode of sharing its video messages is through the Agence France-Presse (AFP). New media use for the group might be more with internal operational communications especially following its merger with ISIS in 2015.

The borderless nature of new media creates the possibility of recruiting and radicalising individuals from any part of the globe. For instance, groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda have successfully recruited fighters from the West though actively operational in other parts of the world. In fact, since 9/11, radicalisation has emerged as part of a discourse that seeks to understand the process by which individuals come to hold extreme ideas and often advocate or commit violence based on these ideas (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010). Although there is nothing new about 'radicals' advocating certain political, economic or religious ideas in a society or even taking up arms against a state (ibid), the new radicalisation debate is fuelled by the perceived role of the internet in radicalising (young) people. An example is Younis Tsouli, a British citizen convicted in 2007 for inciting terrorism, whose radicalisation and activities began and were confined to the cyberspace (Archetti 2013). Increasingly, new media technologies (especially mobile recording devices) are

implicated as the facilitators of situations like Younis's because they allow groups such as al Qaeda unmediated access to audiences. They also create a virtual space where radical teachers, financiers, and radicalised individuals can meet, safe from detection. Awan (2007) however argues that the radicalising effect of jihadist sites have been vastly over-inflated by media and scholars, particularly as regards western audiences. First, it is not easy to find high-quality English language jihadist sites and, moreover, it is reductive in the extreme to assume that radicalisation with its complex processes and problems arise principally from media effect (Awan 2007). Also, regions of the world with the most incidence of terrorism might not even have electricity and a high illiteracy rate (Archetti 2015). Archetti (2015) thus argues that the availability of a message—for instance, an online jihadi video—does not necessarily equate reach and does not equate impact—for instance leading to radicalisation. While this is true, it also remains true that certain individuals take steps towards radicalisation after accessing materials online. Archetti (2013, p. 123) links this susceptibility to the individual's "interpretative prism... that results from the individual's constellation of relationships—the individual narrative". Thus, the radicalising narrative must be such that activates the schema of the individual and corresponds to his own narratives. Scholars have argued that the northeast of Nigeria where Boko Haram operates, for instance, has an already "radicalised" population such that the proper narrative tied to history and memory is sufficient for a group such as Boko Haram to garner support from that population (Zenn et al. 2013). Terrorist action, therefore, is the outcome of an identity and a corresponding narrative that legitimises violent action (Archetti 2015).

Boko Haram has seemingly not relied a lot on the new media for its recruitment and radicalisation activities. This might be because of the nature of its

primary audience that might lack access to the internet or not adequately educated to use them. This makes the traditional media central to understanding Boko Haram. In fact, despite the new opportunity for unmediated communication provided by the new media, it still builds upon long-standing dynamics between media and terrorism (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010). Using their websites, for instance, terrorists present themselves as freedom fighters, dehumanise, blame and present violence as the only way to deal with the opponent. They also try to appear to be impartial and telling the other side of the story as they are aware of the ease of access that audiences have to opposing viewpoints (Awan 2007). In fact, the influences and impacts of new media to terrorism cannot be understood in isolation from other media (Al-Lami et al. 2012). Online terrorist media and mainstream news media have to be viewed as just two of the co-producers of meaning, with each selecting, translating, reframing and remediating from the other in an ongoing fashion (Al-Lami et al. 2012). In any case, traditional news media continue to be central to the terrorist publicity calculus despite the increasing use of the internet (Nacos 2007, Bloch-Elkon and Nacos 2014). Publications on the websites of such groups are usually targeted at journalists in addition to potential supporters and the public (Weimann 2005).

#### 2.2.5 Stereotypes in media reporting of terrorism: representation of women and representation of Islam

In news and popular culture, the image of the terrorist is “a fanatical male, bent on destroying whatever stands in his way” (Berkowitz 2005, p. 607). This image is also enhanced by groups such as ISIS that does not allow women to take up combat roles as members. The fanatical male stereotype has however been challenged by terrorist activities including suicide bombing perpetrated by women. Scholars (e.g. Nacos 2005) have argued that although there are no evidence that male and female terrorists are fundamentally different in terms of recruitment,

motivation, ideological fervour, and brutality, female terrorists are treated by the media in ways that are consistent with patterns present in societal gender stereotypes. Thus, news reporting of female terrorism presents the female terrorist as an interloper in an utterly male domain despite the presence of women in leadership and followership positions in terrorist groups throughout history (Nacos 2005). This is very similar to the representation of women in political offices. Representation of women involved in terrorist activities in the media are likely to include descriptions of the terrorist appearance, family status, biological details, and social circumstances (Yarchi 2014); the news dwells on the looks, ready smiles, or the clothing of female terrorists which are in sharp contrast to the image of the tough male terrorist (Nacos 2005). The focus on personal aspects of the female terrorist attributes the female terrorist's behaviour to external factors rather than personal motivation (Yarchi 2014). Thus, issues that the attack was meant to bring to fore might go undiscussed as discourses focus on the personal characteristics of the 'deviant' woman. For example, the reports around Muriel Deganque, the so-called first female European bomber, focused on her sexual deviance and her promiscuous past, placed her in a support role to her husband and presented her as manipulated by her husband (Brown 2011). She could not, therefore, have arrived at any meaningful conviction that would make her set off a bomb on her own volition. No explanations were given for why the reports on her sexual deviance and promiscuous past were necessary details in the discourse around her suicide act in Iraq. What this does is deny political agency in her decision to be a 'martyr' (Brown 2011). As Brunner (2005) argues, news reports focus on women's private motivations and domestic lives rather than the public and political contexts of their actions.

Suicide terrorism, especially, is taken as an exclusively male domain thus there is no “male suicide bombing” as opposed to “female suicide bombing,” as being male is part of the understanding of suicide bombing to the extent that it does not require visible recognition (Jaworski 2010). Due to existing stereotypes and the presentation of women involved in terrorism as an anomaly, women receive significantly more press coverage and are framed vastly differently from their male counterpart, at least in the US press (Conway and Mcinerney 2012). The coverage female terrorism receives is likely to promote more messages about the society within which the terrorist is embedded and focuses more on the terror organisation’s side of the conflict story as stories are focused on detailed information about the perpetrators (Yarchi 2014). Nacos (2005) argues that the current media profiling of female terrorists does not reflect reality and thus can negatively affect implementation of counterterrorism policies. This mass-mediated profile of the female terrorist also influences the public perception of female terrorists. Boko Haram, for example, in recognition of this skewed understanding of the female terrorist have disguised male terrorists as women and gained access into guarded places; the group has also increased its use of women in combats including suicide attacks.

Another stereotyped group in terrorism reportage are Muslims, especially Arabs. After the 9/11 attacks, the US government changed its handling of terrorism, moving it from a minor concern to a ‘war on terror’ (Powell 2011). Since then, the most dominant discourse of terrorism in the media is the Islamic version which fits in with the global ‘war on terror’ narrative (Lewis 2012, Thussu 2012). In the UK press, for example, an analysis of the coverage of Islam between 2000 and 2008, shows that Islam is increasingly identified as a “problematic religion, a sinister force driving—

and explaining—the terrorist threat" (Lewis et al. 2009). The study shows that while stories about Islam or British Muslims increased after 2001, the second half of the decade (2005 – 2008) contained twice as many as the first half (Lewis et al. 2009). In fact, the 'war on terror' has had an Islamic connotation (Freedman and Thussu 2012). It was the beginning of an us vs them—the United States vs. Islam—that has created rancour between East and West (Powell and Abadi 2003). This is regardless of studies (e.g. Hassan 2010) that show that terrorists' activities, like suicide bombings, have diverse motives behind them, especially the political situation of countries. Powell (2011, p. 91) shows that there is "a pattern of media coverage of terrorism in which fear of international terrorism is dominant, particularly Arab Muslims working together in organised terrorist cells against a "Christian America" while domestic terrorism is cast as a minor threat that occurs in isolated incidents by "troubled individuals." As Islamist terrorism gets the majority of the attention in the global news, Islam is implicated as the problem. Terrorism, however, has multiple dimensions: social, geopolitical, and cultural; Islamism is just one of such factors and not necessarily the prime one (Thussu 2012).

Boko Haram's violence is also associated with Islam with both the press in Nigeria and scholars from Nigeria referring to the group as a sect or as an Islamic group. This is consistent with what Boko Haram says of itself and the nature of its attacks—most Boko Haram's attacks, especially at its early stages, seemed targeted at Christians and southerners. The extent, however, that some of these studies and reports have investigated other underlying factors for Boko Haram's activities appears negligible. Abdulla's (2007) study shows that although the 9/11 attacks were claimed as acts of Islam by the terrorists responsible, the majority of online posters on three of the most popular Arabic-language online message boards rejected this

claim. In fact, more than 30% stressed that these attacks were against the spirit and teachings of Islam (ibid). Thus, it is not uncommon for terrorists to make claims about Islam that a majority of the Muslim world reject. In studying news frames of Boko Haram, this study will also determine how Islam is linked to the Boko Haram's activities if such links exist. Communities, where terrorists emerge from, are generally demonised and painted as "the other"—for example, Arab Muslims in the western media (Said 1978, Altheide 2007). News frames of Boko Haram will show if similar "othering" exists in the Nigerian press, especially as certain scholars (e.g. Yusha'u 2015) argue that the Nigerian press is predominantly in the south-west with northerners and Muslims more likely to be portrayed in a negative light.

### 2.3 On ethnicity, nationalism and ethnic violence

Most conflicts in Africa, including that involving Boko Haram, have been linked, sometimes incorrectly, to ethnicity, and indeed the question of identity has been paramount in Africa since colonisation. In fact, several cases of armed conflicts in most African states have been brought down to two interrelated aspects: identity and socioeconomic marginalisation (Madibbo 2012). The Boko Haram conflict has also been understood, sometimes, through the lens of ethnicity. The first attempts to conceptualise ethnicity referred to ethnicity as primordial (Isaacs 1975) and some scholars still hold this opinion (e.g. Esan 2015). In the primordiality argument, ethnicity refers to the identity a person is born with or gets at birth; that is, the identity of a person is innate and unchanging. Constructivist conceptualisation of ethnicity, which this research subscribes to, however, presents ethnicity as socially constructed; that is, far from being primordial, natural, or biological, ethnicity is the "socially constructed relationship between groups, often expressed in the form of conflicted social boundaries" (Allen and Seaton 1999, p. 3). Thus, ethnic identities



might be lost or formed as boundaries become broader or narrower, for example through assimilation of groups (Horowitz 1975). Assimilation might either be through amalgamation (two or more groups uniting to form a new group, larger and distinct from the component parts) or through incorporation (one group incorporates into another group which keeps its identity).

Nigeria is an amalgam of various ethnic groups. The amalgamation of the so-called north and south of Nigeria alongside several other politically foisted identities have created several group identities in the country. For instance, during colonisation new identities were created through administrative units that were especially relevant when ethnic migrants met in urban settings. For example, in the former Eastern region, the Igbos identified themselves in the urban Port Harcourt (a majority Igbo town at the time, most indigenes of the city no longer accept the Igbo label) setting by reference to places of origin which were arbitrarily imposed by colonial boundaries rather than cultural variations (Horowitz 1975). Thus, in Nigeria there are multiple competing identities in every individual—first, there is the individual identity, the ethnic identity, the political identity (foisted by state boundaries), and the national identity. Some of these identities, in turn, has further groupings; for instance, one's ethnic group can be a "major" or a "minor" one. Of the more than 250 ethnic groups in the country, only three—Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa—are regarded as major ethnic groups mainly because of size.

An almost direct effect of these multiple group identities is the lack of a Nigerian identity because amalgamation does not necessarily produce fusion, thus, more often than not, nation states have to live with incomplete results (Horowitz 1998). To produce cohesion among citizens, such nation-states, like Nigeria, try to create national identities which are supposedly non-ethnic, usually expressed through

multiculturalism or a depiction of the nation as supra-ethnic or non-ethnic, which transcends ethnicity (Eriksen 2010). Nigeria tilts towards the latter presenting itself as supra-ethnic through symbols such as a national language (English) which is not peculiar to any one ethnicity and the adoption of concepts such as wazobia, initially an attempt at creating a unified Nigerian language but now used as a term to promote unity. Wazobia combines the words for 'come' in the three dominant ethnicities in the country—Yoruba (wa), Hausa (zo), and Igbo (bia).

Other African states have also experimented with ideas that might foster more national cohesion, some of which have not been very successful; Zimbabwe's nationalism attempts, for example, failed to unite different ethnic groups into a common Zimbabwean identity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). The situation is the same in Kenya where ethnic grievances and tensions are precipitates for electoral violence. The commonality among these countries is the re-tribalisation of politics in which the society is fragmented along ethnic lines, post colonisation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). This trend in postcolonial Africa shows that what was understood as nationalism in the days of the anti-colonial struggles was mainly a desire for self-determination (Mlambo 2013); thus political actors united by a common desire to be free of colonial influence, revert to ethnic group identification instead of creating a new national identity. Mlambo (2013) argues that unlike the nationalism in Europe in the nineteenth century where nationalism emerged as an aggressive assertion of citizen's need to establish and claim territories that reflected their oneness established over centuries of sharing a common language, history, and culture, African countries were created by external forces who had no knowledge of the realities in the continent. Thus, there is a country like Nigeria with 250 different ethnolinguistic group. This fact was not lost on political leaders who played critical

roles in the independence movements across the continent. One of such nationalist, Obafemi Awolowo, speaking of Nigeria in his book, *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, said:

Nigeria is not a nation: it is a mere geographical expression. The word Nigeria is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not. It stands to logic that if the Nigerian project was perceived as unworkable from the onset, the form of government to sustain it has no foundation to rest on and therefore, was bound to be a stillborn (Awolowo 1947 as cited by Bamidele 2015).

Although ethnic identities are constructed, they thrive because they provide grounds to pursue political and economic interests, seek or offer patronage, and revise collective world-making (Fardon 1999). While communities with people of different ethnicities can experience conflicts with one another including armed conflicts as has been the case in Sri Lanka, Fiji, Congo, and Rwanda, a shared ethnic identity in itself is not sufficient to foster nationhood as in the example of Somalia which though monoethnic is one of the few African states to have collapsed institutionally in the post-colonial era (Eriksen 2010).

The distinction between an ethnic identity and a national identity depends on who is defining. In countries with supra ethnic identities, nationalism is usually presented as a solution to ethnic strives. Sometimes groups referred to as ethnic, speak of themselves as nations. In Nigeria, there are talks of a Yoruba nation, an Igbo nation, an Ijaw nation among others. Thus, nationalism and ethnicity could be said to be two sides of one coin. Nationalism, like ethnicity, is a “political process, a subjective affirmation and re-affirmation” (Kaldor 2004, p. 162). At the centre of nationalism is the agenda of specifying who belongs to a nation and defining the criteria of citizenship (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). According to Kaldor (2004), both the

idea of the 'nation' and the idea of the 'other' are given substance in war. War, for Kaldor, is a violent enterprise framed in political terms (Kaldor 2013). Similarly, Allen and Seaton (1999), while rejecting a special category of ethnic wars, argue that all war have an ethnic aspect since in war is the idea of organised violence against an enemy group. Thus, there are links between strategic aspects of the construction of ethnic and national identities to violence (Eriksen 2010). Large-scale ethnic violence are usually provoked by elites seeking to gain, maintain, or increase their hold on political power. Violence has the effect, intended by elites, of constructing group identities in more hostile and rigid ways. These newly constructed (or reconstructed) ethnic identities serve to increase support for the elites who provoked the violence while favouring the continuation or escalation of violence. Ordinary citizens can also strategically construct ethnic boundaries; violence, in this case, arises out of dissatisfaction with assimilation or by marginal members of a group who want to gain status with those whose membership is not in doubt (Eriksen 2010).

While there is no robust evidence that civil war is more likely in a heterogeneous ethnic setting, Sambanis and Shayo (2013) showed in their study that there is a positive relationship between civil war incidence and ethnic polarisation. Thus, countries like Angola, Burma, Burundi, Chad, Indonesia, and Sudan have spent half or more of their post-independence years fighting civil wars at least partly along ethnic lines; whereas Benin, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Malaysia, Niger, and Zambia have avoided the escalation of ethnic conflicts to civil war (Sambanis and Shayo 2013). In Darfur, a person may be killed if he or she reveals their identity in the wrong place to the wrong people (Madibbo 2012). In attempting to define ethnic violence, Brubaker and Laitin (1998) state:

Ethnic violence is violence perpetrated across ethnic lines, in which at least one party is not a state (or representative of a state), and in which the putative ethnic difference is coded—by perpetrators, targets, influential third parties, or analysts—as having been integral rather than incidental to the violence, that is, in which the violence is coded as having been meaningfully oriented in some way to the different ethnicity of the target (Brubaker and Laitin 1998, p. 428).

Thus the ethnic quality of ethnic violence is not intrinsic to the act itself but a resultant of interpretations given to the act (Brubaker and Laitin 1998). Herein lies the importance of the media to such violence as most interpretations of violence emanate from media's profiling. As Allen and Seaton argue, 'wars are partly what the media makes of them' (1999, p. 3). Despite this apparent importance of the media to profiling what is indeed ethnic violence or not, several scholars argue that most conflicts in Africa are attributed to ethnicity in the media in a simplistic manner. The media reports on ethnicity often lack contexts which lead to misinformation on the causes of conflicts in Africa (Mano 2015). According to Seaton (1999), relying on ethnicity as an explanation for the origin of conflicts depoliticises them as the social, economic, and complex historical realities that underlie these conflicts are reduced to "ethnicity". In constructing ethnicity as a cause of war, media rely on the primordial understanding of ethnicity. 'Media concentration on primordial ethnic identity as a cause of war helps to obscure critical political and economic factors driving the violence. It contributes to increasingly popular misconceptions of African wars as being fought for primitive causes beyond the understanding or influence of the West' (Atkinson 1999, p. 192). The primordialist's understanding of ethnic violence is that conflicts between ethnic groups are inevitable because of unchanging essential characteristics of the members of these categories (Eriksen 2010).

The misrepresentation of conflicts in Africa as ethnic is not limited to the international or Western press as African journalists themselves practice 'patriotism to the home village' (Nyamnjoh 2015, p. 36). For African journalists, there is the tension between journalistic professionalism and attachment to cultural and ethnic communities. In conflict situations especially, newspapers become ethno-regional champions and promote regional and ethnic interests depending on ownership (Yusha'u 2015). Yusha'u's (2015) study on the news frames used to profile the Niger Delta in Nigerian newspapers found that newspapers reported along regional lines when framing the Niger Delta thus readers who read only one section of the press are more likely to receive a partisan view of the crisis. In furtherance to the influence of the media in perpetuating an ethnic stereotype, Jacob (2015) show that in the Congo, although Congolese autochthons lived close to and had regular interactions with Hutus, perceptions of Hutus seem to be influenced more deeply by media representations of the Hutus than by their day-to-day interactions with them. Media are perceived as more reliable sources of information because of their expertise in matters that are beyond the realms of citizen's personal experiences (Jacob 2015). In fact, as Omanga (2015) argues, the media can even help build an ethnic identity around certain subject matters, e.g. Luhya ethnic identity around the prophecy of Elijah Masinde. Thus, the influence of the media (especially the national media) on ethnicity and ethnic violence cannot be overemphasised.

#### 2.4 News framing

This chapter, so far, has discussed the concept of political violence and terrorism, ethnicity and ethnic violence and the role of the media in these. As this study deals with the profiling of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press, this section introduces news framing which this study adopts in its assessment of the representation of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press. In one of its earliest definition in communication research, the frame is defined as:

a central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them (Gamson and Modigliani 1987, p.143).

A frame thus makes sense of relevant events and suggests what is at issue (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). Therefore, its role as an “organising idea”. This role of organising, according to Reese (2001), is one of the central purposes of a frame. He defines frames as,

organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world (Reese 2001, p. 11).

Thus, a frame does not just provide meaning; it is socially shared, persistent and structures. It, therefore, draws boundaries, sets up categories, defines what is in and what is out in an active process (Reese 2007). Other genres of frame definition specify what a frame generally does. In Entman’s words,

“to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (1993, p. 52).

Although this emphasis based definitions of frames have been criticised for, among other things, presenting framing as being too similar to other media effects theories such as priming and agenda setting (Tewksbury and Scheufele 2007), they clarify how journalists might create frames (through selecting aspects of reality and making them salient) and the functions of frames—defining a problem, appealing to moral principles, identifying causes and recommendations. Although the definition does not show how a frame is *organised* to promote the aforementioned effects (Reese 2007).

Critics of Entman's salience-based definition of frames argue that media effects theories such as framing depend on an audience member's pre-existing schema (Scheufele and Iyengar 2017). Thus, regardless of the journalist's exclusions and inclusions, if a message does not resonate with a society's pre-existing schema, it is not a frame. A message is significantly more likely to have an impact if it resonates with an audience member's mental schemas. In other words, for a message to be a frame, it has to be presented in such a way that it invokes these interpretive schemas—usually culturally shared—which determine how information is processed (Cacciatore et al. 2016). Although proponents of salience-based definitions do not allude to cognitive schemas such as culture in their definitions, they, however, acknowledge its importance in achieving a frame. According to Entman, for instance, a framing message has particular cultural resonance and calls to mind elements of schemas stored in the past (Entman et al. 2008). In fact, if a message does not have repetitive pointers to a cultural schema then it is not a frame (Entman et al. 2008). Some framing devices are so potent that only a single reference to them is sufficient to activate a schema (Van Gorp 2007); for example, 9/11. Thus, a frame should usually produce an effect. According to Price et al. (1997), a “framing effect is one in which salient attributes of a message (its organisation, selection of content, or thematic structure) render particular thoughts applicable, resulting in their activation and use in evaluation” (p. 486)

Although the role of culture in a frame cannot be overemphasised, there are other *locations* integral in the process of framing—the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (Entman 1993, de Vreese 2005). Thus, the process of framing consists of distinct steps: frame-building (at the level of news production, a continuous interaction between journalists and social actors), frame-setting



(interactions between media frames and individuals' prior knowledge and predisposition), individual level consequence (e.g. change in attitude on an issue upon exposure to a frame) and societal level consequences of framing (e.g. shaping political socialisation) (de Vreese 2005). Journalists play a significant role in the news framing process. Journalists routinely use frames to present complex occurrences into newsworthy events through a process of selection of the observed reality and organising them into a comprehensible story format (Van Gorp et al. 2009). Thus, when producing news frames, journalists usually draw on the frame repository in a given society (Brüggemann 2014). As citizens do not acquire most of their political knowledge from personal experience but rely on the media, the media have a significant influence on the perceptions, opinions, and behaviours of audience members (Entman et al. 2008). However, framing is not just limited to media actors but applies to social actors as well. Relevant actors in an event—political parties, pressure groups, and elite groups—have an interest in the promotion of interpretive frames in order to confer agreeable meaning to political events and issues (Van Gorp et al. 2009).

Scholars have argued that news texts are not limited to written words but extend to visual imageries, sounds, and language. As Fürsich (2009, p. 241) posits, text, in social science research, is used in a “broader, poststructural, sense as any cultural practice or object that can be ‘read’”. However, the dominant practice in communication research focuses on the verbal dimensions of news texts, whilst ignoring the visual components (Gamson et al. 1992, Abraham and Appiah 2006). Even though this is the prevalent practice in communication scholarship for certain reasons, some of which are highlighted below, it must be acknowledged that words in news texts are part of some larger system of meaning or frame which

encompasses the layout or organisation of news texts on the page, photographs, and words themselves. There are debates, however, on the extent to which an image can alter the framing of a news story. Several prominent communication scholars resist the sometimes popular assumptions on the power of media images, arguing that photographs in the press are typically generic symbols that serve to support dominant news discourses (see Andén-Papadopoulos 2008). Griffin, in fact, refers to images as “simple thematic cues” and argues that “news organisations emphasise pictures ... that symbolically support the verbal text, often as a prompt or lead-in for the reader’s eye. As easily recognised symbols and cues, they ‘stand in’ for the more elaborately detailed and specific reporting and descriptive visualisation that one might imagine in idealised news coverage” (Griffin 2004, p. 384). Images, thus, might not necessarily have different frames from the more detailed verbal component of news stories.

Andén-Papadopoulos's (2008 p.9) criticism of such stance that seemingly negates the importance of analysing pictures lies mainly in the “possibility of resistance of the visual image to the dominant news narrative”. She further argues that in wartime journalism, photographic and textual messages are often dissonant to each other. This could however be as a result of a number of factors including the researchers own subjective interpretation of what an image denotes which might differ from the journalist’s intended frame, routine practices in news room that might simply use any related image to support a story, and the sources of images. For instance, Ojala et al. (2017) study on the visual coverage of the Ukraine Conflict in Western European newspapers showed that most images used in newspapers were sourced from international photo agencies. One wonders how patterns of representation dictated in part by Western news values and professional routines in

covering international events contribute to possible dissonance in visual frames and verbal (written words) frames in local news media (Ojala et al. 2017). There are several reasons why newspapers might rely mainly on photo agencies for images: convenience, expertise, lack of access etc. Thus, if the aim of a study is to understand the national framing of a conflict, the best approach might be to analyse the written aspects of news text as they are more likely to reflect newspapers' own news frames. This study adopts this position as access to conflict zones in the Boko Haram conflict are very limited and frames unique to the conflict in the Nigerian press are more likely to be in the written component of the news texts.

Frames are understood to be of two types—generic and issue-specific. Issue-specific frames refer to frames that are relevant to specific events while generic frames transcend thematic limitations and apply to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts (de Vreese 2005). Some generic frames include episodic and thematic frames (Iyengar 1991) and the human interest, conflict, responsibility, morality, and economic consequences frames (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). While it is possible, in theory, to clearly differentiate between these two types of frame, they tend to overlap in journalism practice.

#### 2.4.1 Framing and agenda-setting

Framing and agenda-setting are often discussed together especially as they mark a transition away from media effects theories that assume unidirectional and unmediated media effects (Scheufele and Iyengar 2017). Sometimes, however, the lines between them are blurred. In fact, some scholars subsume framing under agenda-setting, arguing that framing is second level agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw 1993) or that framing is simply an agenda-setting effect (McCombs 1992). As

McCombs and Ghanem (2001) argue, since salience is the key feature of framing, framing is a subset or an extension of agenda-setting. In their seminal work on agenda-setting, McCombs and Shaw (1972) argue that the mass media may set the agenda of a society through a selection of what the important issues are. Audience members, in turn, do not only learn about issues from press coverage but also about the salience of that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its placement in the news article. A distinction has since been made between first level and second level agenda-setting wherein the first level of agenda setting focuses on the relative salience of issues while the second level examines the relative salience of attributes of issues (Weaver 2007). The argument of scholars who opine that framing is not different from agenda-setting is that both framing and second level agenda setting do the same thing, as journalists simply position certain attributes of issues when using frames. As McCombs (1997, p. 37) suggests, “framing [as second level agenda setting] is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed.”

The argument has been made, however, that framing is a media effect theory in its own rights. In fact, Scheufele and Iyengar (2017) argue that unlike priming and agenda-setting that are based on salience, framing is an applicability effect which assumes that the effect of a message depends on the degree of its resonance or its applicability to a recipient’s existing cognitive schema (Scheufele and Iyengar 2017). Thus, the theoretical premise underlying framing and agenda-setting are distinctly different (Price et al. 1997). The idea of applicability assumes that the effects of particular frames are strengthened or weakened depending on how applicable they are to a particular cognitive schema (Scheufele and Iyengar 2017). In other words, a framing effect depends on the extent of resonance with an audience’s cognitive

schema. Similarly, Van Gorp (2007) shows two ways in which framing differs from agenda setting and priming. First, while agenda-setting studies the extent to which audiences regard an issue as important because of emphasis placed on these issues in the media, frames refer to the various ways, the news media can report an issue and takes into account the role of the journalistic production process and an interpreting audience (Van Gorp 2007). Thus, framing incorporates a wider range of factors than agenda-setting. Second, agenda-setting and priming are concerned with issues. An issue might be covered from multiple angles or frames, and the same frame can be used to cover diverse issues (Van Gorp 2007).

## 2.5 Sources and their effects on news stories

An important part of the framing process, especially frame building, is the interaction of journalists with sources. As most hard news stories, especially those about political disputes, have opposing sides, political actors with more compelling frames are more likely to influence the public agenda. The journalist actively mediates this process. The relationship between journalists and sources has been well researched and, often, sources are believed to play the more prominent role in determining what finally becomes news. As Gans argues, “although it takes two to tango, either sources or journalists can lead, but more often than not, sources do the leading” (Gans 1979 p. 116). The source-journalist relationship is particularly significant in politics since the public's knowledge and understanding of political events are tied to media presentation of these events (Davis 2009). Political sources, therefore, have vested interests in how news is reported. The vested interests of sources especially politicians who seek favourable media coverage, however, often conflict with the objective of journalism to hold power to account and journalists have

their credibility to protect. Yet, both sides need each other as journalists want high-level access and politicians want publicity (Davis 2009, Cheng and Lee 2015).

Gans's assertion that 'sources do the leading' could be due to journalism's paradigm where reporters gather authoritative data and present it without taking sides in the discourse. Of course, journalists object to the perception of being led by sources on two grounds. First, it implies the supremacy of sources in the news making process, and second, it goes against the professionalism of journalists which emphasises independence and editorial autonomy (Lewis et al. 2008). Reich (2006), in evaluating the journalist-source relationship, posits that the formation of a news item is a two-phase process, in which sources dominate the first stage (or the discovery phase) and journalists dominate the second stage (or the newsgathering phase). The interaction, therefore, between journalists and sources has, in the long term, the ability to shape ongoing meanings in a culture (Berkowitz 2009).

Despite the presence of the journalist in both phases of the news production system, many researchers hold the view that sources, in most cases, are in control of what finally becomes news, as sources instigate most stories through press releases, news conferences, leaks, and planned events (Sigal 1973, Reich 2006, Berkowitz 2009, Davis 2009). Thus, the influence of the source in the discovery phase of news might not necessarily wane through the news production cycle. For instance, Lewis and colleagues (2008) show that almost one in five newspaper stories and 17 percent of broadcast stories in the British press were verifiably derived mainly or wholly from PR material or activity (Lewis et al. 2008). This not only skews the news making process in the direction of sources but also favour those, notably businesses and governments, best able to produce strong and effective PR material (Lewis et al. 2008).

Scholars, therefore, argue that sources shape the news more strongly than journalists as more than half of all news stories emanate from the efforts of sources to have their voices heard in the media, and the highest proportion of news is about government and draw heavily on official sources (Reich 2008). Journalists' preference of official sources, it has been argued, is probably due to the semblance of credibility and authority that official sources bring to news stories (Herman and Chomsky 1988, Davis 2002). Thus, even news outlets that present themselves as alternative or oppositional emphasise elite sources over ordinary citizens, although these elite sources are usually outside the dominant mainstream (Berkowitz 2009). Reporters feel the need to get their information from authoritative sources whom audience members might recognise as legitimate bearers of "facts" (Berkowitz 2009). Thus, sources with access to the media are generally from institutions that wield power in society such as the police, the government, or large corporations (Matthews 2013). This is consistent with earlier studies (e.g. Hall 1978) that refer to these institutions as the primary definers of news. Official voices are also easier to find as opposed to searching for silenced, conflicted voices (Dolan 2005), and relying on official sources is also part of several news organisations cultures in which the accuracy of information is judged according to the official status and rank of the source rather than according to the investigation of the individual journalist (Soffer 2009). Consequently, the expectation in the source analysis in this study will be a high presence of government and security sources in news stories while other source groups especially those affected by the conflict such as victims of Boko Haram and their families might be overlooked. How newspapers use sources can be very important in conflict situations especially in polarised communities. Sources, even official ones, have identities that they subscribe to and in such situations, can

sometimes be polarising. The news media, simply through source selections, can fan local discontent rather than shed light on underlying issues and problems if the focus of news reports is on primary players usually at the edges of debates (Dolan 2005).

Berkowitz and Beach (1993) show that journalists are more likely to use a wide variety of sources when reporting proximate news stories as they develop a more diverse pool of sources in their own communities. When reporting stories in places far removed from them, however, they use the most visible sources which are usually elite sources (Berkowitz and Beach 1993). Conflicts also create room for a higher proportion of unaffiliated sources as journalists feel the need to search out and report on both sides of a conflict (Berkowitz and Beach 1993). These sources are however still high-status affiliated sources as parties involved in conflicts would present their most trusted representatives to the press (Berkowitz and Beach 1993). The preponderance of elite sources in news reports means that most information audience members take away from engaging with the media represents a relatively small range of source-defined alternatives.

Interested actors in conflict situations actively seek to direct the media narratives around a conflict. More powerful official sources such as the military might employ strategies such as censorship of the media to restrict information flows (Brandenburg 2007). Following the Vietnam War in which there was little or no interference in the activities of the media, there were criticisms of journalists by political and military leaders. The media was accused of contributing to anti-war sentiments and undermining the war efforts through news reports (Carruthers 2011). It is not unusual for official sources to perceive a direct media influence in war reportage. The US government, for instance, imposed restrictions on news organisations reporting from Grenada in 1983 and implemented press pools in the



First Gulf War in 1991 to manage information flow, partly due to the perception of direct media effect on audience members, especially following the distrust between the media and the military following the Vietnam war (Carpenter 2007). The presence of alternative international news outlets such as Al Jazeera and online news sites and communities make censorship more difficult to achieve in current times. Thus, more recent compromises have resulted in the practice of embedding journalists with fighting troops, as was the case in the Iraq war of 2003, so that journalists might report conflicts without undermining national interests, and national audiences might be spared the “misinformation” of international news outlet (Carpenter 2007, p. 762). The Nigerian military has also employed the embedding strategy to get journalists close to the strongholds of Boko Haram. For instance, in 2015 Vice News correspondent Kaj Larsen embedded with the Nigerian military to report on its efforts against Boko Haram (Vice News 2015).

When journalists are embedded with military units, they get access to parts of war not ordinarily accessible to them. Embedding has, however, been said to alter the nature and accurate coverage of wars as stories from embedded journalists offer a narrow slice of the broader war and, thus, lose sight of the broader issues—in particular, the purpose of war and the impact of specific operations on that broad design (Pfau et al. 2004). It has also been criticised for reducing the coverage of war to a military operation and generating publicity *for* military operations not publicity *of* military operations (Brandenburg 2007). Aday et al. (2005), however, claim that stories from embeds about war efforts were not necessarily supportive of the military units they were embedded in as in the case of the Iraq war where embeds produced ‘neutral’ and ‘objective’ stories during the Iraq war. Journalists themselves who were embedded claimed they found it a useful way to report conflicts as they had access

to the battlefield and produced accurate, trustworthy, and fair reports (Fahmy and Johnson 2005).

Besides individual sources, news media also rely on news agencies as sources of news. Fahmy's (2005) research on the use of visual images during the coverage of the 9/11 attack and the Afghan War showed that the vast majority of images used in the media were from three main western news agencies: AP, AFP, and Reuters even in the Arabic press (the Arabic newspaper Al-Hayat was used in the study). This is almost similar to press usage of individual sources which rely mainly on mainstream sources with little recourse to alternative competing news sources. The limited number of images from Arab sources is noteworthy especially as some Arab media, such as Aljazeera, had unique access in covering the Afghan war (Fahmy 2005). Similarly, a study of the elite news media in Britain (Lewis et al. 2008) show that 30% of a selection of British news press replicated agency service copy almost verbatim with a further 19% mostly dependent on such copy. Thus almost half of all press stories appeared to have come wholly or mainly from agency services, and when direct replications are used, they are rarely attributed (Lewis et al. 2008). This raises questions about the extent of the influence of news agencies in shaping news contents and media agenda, and on the plurality of news stories as newspapers, source reports from the same agencies. It also questions claims of journalistic independence and the role of journalists as fourth estate (Lewis et al. 2008).

## 2.6 Objectivity

The pattern of source usage by journalists are not necessarily intentional but largely a product of routine journalistic practices, such as reliance on a regular pool of official news source for expedient reporting and "objectivity" (Berkowitz and Beach

1993). By focusing their coverage on official pronouncement from both sides, journalists can lay claim to objectivity; this narrow focus is even more prevalent in the reporting of controversial and emotional issues (Dolan 2005). Although objectivity has sometimes been described as an impossible ideal, it still has a substantial impact on western journalists' understanding of journalistic practices and functions in society (Blaagaard 2013). The objectivity norm essentially guides journalists to separate facts from values and to report only facts (Schudson 2001); the question, however, is how journalists can know facts and report them without interpreting (Muñoz-Torres 2012). Also, conceptualisations of news as a construction rather than a reflection of reality (Shoemaker and Reese 1991) also reduce the possibility of objectivity in journalism.

Streckfuss (1990, p. 973) argues that the attack on journalistic objectivity as prevailing on reporters “to balance the remarks of a wise man with those of a fool” or producing superficiality instead of neutrality, flays a shadow of the actual original concept of objectivity. Objectivity, he argues, in its original sense meant finding the truth through the rigorous scientific methodology; it was not thus pallidly neutral but a demanding, intellectually rigorous procedure aimed at social change (Streckfuss 1990). The problem, however, is that in journalism practice, objectivity is not used or understood in this way; the journalist is expected to exclude his opinion from reports and balance his sources. Perhaps, as Boudana argues, objectivity has been mistaken for neutrality because of an existing definitional gap; thus it is viewed as either an unattainable standard or an undesirable norm (Boudana 2010). Boudana's study with French journalists reveals three different conceptions of objectivity-as-neutrality: a separation between facts and commentaries, cautiousness in labelling, and as a balance between the parties (Boudana 2010). This is different from “finding

the truth through the rigorous scientific methodology” (Streckfuss 1990, p. 975) advocated by theorists.

Proponents of objective journalism, however, do not see it as an unattainable ideal but as an indispensable journalism tool. Ryan (2006) argues that the scepticism around journalistic objectivity and its subsequent absence during the coverage of the prelude to the War in Iraq led to a lack of diligence in journalist’s reports which led them to accept military and official reports due to existing predispositions on their parts. He argues that:

Journalists committed to and able to use an objective approach would have, first, examined (a) their own predispositions about a possible war against Iraq and (b) the extent to which they were predisposed to believe whatever the president and other official sources said and not to believe or question what dissident voices said. They would have been sceptical of sources and every story and commentary would have reflected that scepticism (Ryan 2006, pp. 19–20).

He also argues that journalists in an era of objectivity would have consulted sources in the scientific or scholarly community and interviewed the marginalised who were being ignored by the war advocates (Ryan 2006). Interestingly, critics of objectivity can blame this form of reporting on an objective press who in suspending their own beliefs relied heavily on official sources as purveyors of facts. What is apparent is that both critics and proponents of objectivity dismiss the notion of objectivity-as-neutrality. However, as Streckfuss (1990), a proponent of objectivity, observes, much of what passes as objective journalism is synonymous with objectivity-as-neutrality.

There is, however, a gradual shift from the focus on objectivity as neutrality to an understanding of objectivity as accuracy, balance and fairness (Durham 1998).

These, nonetheless, still demand a separation of the journalist from news stories which might present the same problems as neutrality (Durham 1998). For instance, [false] balance can weaken accuracy, especially in scientific discourses if journalists do not ensure that perspectives with the most supporting evidence are conveyed (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). False balance might suggest that opposing forces are equally well supported by evidence when that might not be the case and could lead to bias; for instance in the debate around climate change (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004, Dixon and Clarke 2013). This would have effects on audience perception of and reaction to issues. In Boudana's (2010) study on French journalism, interviewed journalists quoted accuracy and fairness as useful criteria for the evaluation of journalistic performance. '*Etre juste*' – meaning both to be accurate (*justesse*) and to be fair (*justice*) – is what is expected of a professional journalist (Boudana 2010 p. 293).

A significant criticism of Nigeria's journalism has been around bias, usually resulting from a lack of objectivity (Yusha'u 2015). In fact, Nigerian journalists interviewed as part of this study pointed at objectivity as the criteria on which they judge their works. Research, however, shows that the nature of conflicts makes objective reporting unattainable (Carruthers 2011). Patriotism, propaganda, national interest, ethnic solidarity are all elements of conflicts, such as that involving Boko Haram, that make objectivity impossible especially in an ethnically diverse country like Nigeria. The framing analysis in this research shall show if the adherence to objectivity by Nigerian journalists leads to accuracy and fairness in the reporting of Boko Haram.

## 2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature on media and terrorism, partly because of the official designation and widespread perception of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation. Also, as Boko Haram carries out most of its violent activities in Nigeria which is ethnically diverse, its actions are bound to have ethnic undertones especially as some of its goals are territorial. Thus, part of this section reviewed the literature on ethnicity and ethnic violence. These reviews are necessary to this research as they provide the relevant scholarship on media representation of terrorism and ethnic conflicts and thus provide the theoretical basis on which the findings of the framing analysis can be examined.

Similarly, journalistic practices such as sourcing patterns and objectivity in reporting were reviewed. These also provide a conceptual basis on which the findings of the sourcing pattern can be examined. The review shows that elite sources are usually the most used source groups as they tend to offer some credibility and authority to news stories that ordinary citizens might not be able to. The next chapter discusses the methodological approach to the framing analysis and source analysis used in this study. It also discusses the thematic method used in evaluating journalism challenges when reporting Boko Haram.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

The study, so far, has introduced Boko Haram and reviewed relevant literature on media and terrorism, ethnicity and ethnic violence, framing theory, and journalism norms such as sourcing patterns and objectivity. In this chapter, the methods employed to answer the research questions set out in the introduction are examined. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the research questions of the study and the second part discusses the research methods adopted in the study: framing analysis, source analysis, and thematic analysis of interviews with journalists.

#### 3.1 Research questions

As stated in the introductory chapter of the thesis, the primary aim of this research is to analyse the portrayal of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press using a news framing approach and to interpret isolated frames in light of studies on mediated conflict especially ethnic conflicts and terrorism. The study also utilises interviews with journalists to help the reader understand the context that frames emerge from. Therefore, three research questions form the crux of this study:

1. What are the dominant news frames used in the press coverage of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers?
2. What are patterns of source usage in the coverage of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers?
3. What are the challenges Nigerian journalists face when reporting Boko Haram?

RQ1 interrogates the news frames in the Nigerian media used in the portrayal of Boko Haram. It analyses the organising ideas or principles (Gamson and Modigliani

1989, Reese 2007) that are present in news texts that discuss Boko Haram. RQ2 examines the sourcing patterns present in news stories, their possible influence on news stories, and their prominence in news stories. It also explores the manner of source usage (especially key sources in the reporting of Boko Haram) by each analysed newspaper. RQ3 explores the journalistic practices that informed the framing of Boko Haram as present in news texts and analyses the possible challenges journalists in Nigeria face when reporting Boko Haram.

### 3.2 Research methods

To answer these questions, the research adopted a framing analysis of news texts, a source analysis and a thematic analysis of interviews with journalists. The framing analysis and interviews with journalists were used to answer RQ1; the source analysis was used to answer RQ2 while the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews was used to answer RQ3.

#### 3.2.1 Framing analysis

As framing theory is one of the most used media theory in recent communication research (Cacciatore et al. 2016), the framing literature is rife with several conceptualisations of frames and framing. In fact, Druckman (2001) lists seven of such conceptualisations. Owing to this popularity, there is a lack of consistency as to its operationalisation (de Vreese 2005). This section, therefore, discusses how the framing analysis in this study has been operationalised.

This research, in conducting a framing analysis, follows the constructivist approach to framing and relies on Reese's definition of frames as:

organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world (Reese 2007 p.150).



Thus, the frame analysis in this study examines how realities are organised in such a way as to promote certain interpretations of events, capture a more dynamic process of negotiating meaning, and highlight relationships within discourse (Reese 2007). The definition advances Gamson and Modigliani (1989, p. 143) definition of a frame as “a central organising idea” for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue, which has been dismissed as too broad and as such provides insufficient criteria for consistent measurement (Scheufele et al. 2002, Entman et al. 2008). It also reduces the theoretical pitfall arising from salience-based definitions of framing that do not explicitly differentiate news framing from seemingly overlapping conceptual models such as agenda setting and priming (Scheufele et al. 2002, Cacciatore et al. 2016). Thus, rather than approach framing from the perspective of salience, this research approaches framing from an applicability perspective which posits that a frame depends on the degree to which some aspects of a news text resonate with (or are applicable to) a recipient’s existing underlying cognitive schemas (Tewksbury and Scheufele 2009). Or, as Reese puts it, how salient aspects of a perceived reality are organised (2007), as the purpose of a framing analysis, Van Gorp (2007) argues, is to assess the impact of the implicitly present cultural phenomena conveyed by elements in a text and to relate them to the dynamic processes in which social reality is constructed.

As citizens knowledge of events are primarily through the news media, frames are potent tools that can help define and solve problems and shape public opinion (An and Gower 2009). Thus, as several studies have argued, effective frames are rooted in culture as the potential effects of frames depend on the degree of resonance between the news frame and the cultural schema of the reader (Chong and Druckman 2007, Van Gorp et al. 2009). In fact, Entman et al. (2008) argue that if

a communication does not have repeated words or symbols that connect with cultural associations of citizens, then it is not a frame. Therefore, the framing analysis in this study is approached from a constructionist perspective which places the effectiveness of a frame to its resonance with familiar cultural symbols (Van Gorp 2007). Also, constructionism supports the integration of several aspects of the communication process in a frame analysis instead of a limitation to media content or to forms of media effects (Van Gorp 2007). For instance, the framing analysis of news text in this study is supported by interviews with journalists, to understand their roles in frame building.

Although framing analysis have been conducted by quantitative and qualitative methods, this research relies on the interpretative prospects of qualitative methods for two reasons: first, the strongly abstract nature of frames makes a case for qualitative methods; second, if only the countable framing devices are analysed (as in quantitative methods), the actual frame may not be determined as subtle aspects of messages that framing analysis considers may be lost in such quantifications (Van Gorp 2007). Thus, the study employs an inductive approach to news frame in line with several recent studies on news frame (e.g. Reese and Lewis 2009, Matthews 2015).

### *3.2.1.1 Operationalising framing analysis*

#### *Data collection*

The sampling period for this study was from 2009 to 2015. The first extensive coverage of Boko Haram in the media was in 2009, following altercations with security agencies. This initial violence of 2009 was mainly the efforts of security agents to curtail the activities of Boko Haram which infamously led to the death of Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram. Most of the violence of Boko Haram

(as perpetrators) were from June 2010 following the emergence of Shekau as leader of the group. As such, all the period of Boko Haram's violence under review in this study were under the same political leadership<sup>1</sup>, with six of the seven events under the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan, a southern Christian from a minority tribe. Having the period of analysis under the same political leadership is relevant because of the political and ethnic associations of Boko Haram. The federal government (from 2010, following Boko Haram resurgence) was southern-led and Boko Haram is sometimes presented as having northern allegiance.

Owing to a vast number of news reports on Boko Haram, news stories analysed in this study were drawn from seven high-profile events involving Boko Haram. The study, therefore, employed a purposive sampling strategy that was guided by the high-profile nature of news events and the corresponding media spotlight on Boko Haram during those events. Thus, the data are not representative of every action of Boko Haram but designed to elucidate the dominant portrayals of Boko Haram in the Nigerian media. Therefore, the purposive data sampling was also designed to include data across the period under analysis to monitor evolution in framing, if any, of the group that may be present during the period under analysis. These events include<sup>2</sup>:

1. The extrajudicial killing of Yusuf, the leader and supposed founder of Boko Haram, 30 July 2009 (30 July 2009 – 13 August 2009).
2. The bombing of the Nigerian Police Headquarters in Abuja, 16 June 2011 (16 June 2011 – 30 June 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from a southern minority tribe was president from 6 May 2010 – 29 May 2015. He was vice president in 2009 during the death of Yusuf.

<sup>2</sup> Dates shown in brackets represent the two-week period from the first day of each event in which the data used in this research were sourced.

3. The bombing of the United Nations House in Abuja, 26 August 2011 (26 August 2011 – 9 September 2011).
4. The coordinated bombing of churches on Christmas Day 2011 (25 December 2011 – 8 January 2012).
5. The blacklisting of Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation by the US government, 13 November 2013 (13 November 2013 – 27 November 2013).
6. The abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls 2014, 14 April 2014 (14 April 2014 – 28 April 2014).
7. The Baga massacre 2015, 3 January 2015 (3 January 2015 – 17 January 2016).

Data from each news event were limited to a two-week period from the day of the event mainly to manage the total sample size of the study while still capturing the dominant frames used in portraying the group. News reports on Boko Haram from these events were isolated from three Nigerian newspapers—*Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Thisday*. All three newspapers publish in English and have a national spread although *Daily Trust* caters mainly to a northern audience. It has been argued that the Nigerian media space is southern dominated (Yusha'u 2012, 2015), rooted in ethnic prejudice (Udoakah 2015), and thus the North or affairs relating to it are reported unfairly (Yusha'u 2015). Thus, *Daily Trust* is used in this research to create a balance and possibly represent this “northern view”. *Daily Trust*, with its northern focus, has been said to project the views of the North and Muslims in Nigeria's affair (Yusha'u 2012). The framing analysis, however, does not necessarily compare the reports in analysed newspapers to look for biases in news reports except in cases where these disparities cannot be overlooked and add to the study. Also, as the aim of this thesis is to analyse the portrayal of Boko Haram in the national press, I

analyse only the written components of news text. First, as discussed in section 2.4, newspapers most times rely on photo agencies for images which may be influenced by western news values and professional routines. Second, incorporating image analysis in this study will require a multimodal analytical approach which the framing method adopted in this study might not support.

This study exclusively focuses on online versions of print newspapers as the print media is influential in determining what news in Nigeria is. Radio and TV programs in the morning all still review key stories in newspapers every day. These, in turn, define the agenda throughout the day even on social media. Campaigns on social media might take a life of their own, for instance the #BringBackOurGirls movement, but still rely on the mainstream press for spread and relevance. Despite the increase in use of social media, its spread is still limited to mainly urban areas and the youth population. Data from alexa.com (Appendix B) show that online versions of popular print newspapers are among the most visited websites in Nigeria—Vanguard and Punch are the tenth and eleventh most visited news websites from this data. In any case, areas of Boko Haram conflict are not readily accessible, thus, most available news on the group are from the more established mainstream press. Other studies have also similarly relied on newspapers in assessing the framing of conflicts (e.g. Maslog et al. 2006, Dimitrova and Strömbäck 2008, Musa and Ferguson 2013, Ojala and Pantti 2017).

As stated, one inclusion criterion for the newspapers in this research was the editorial focus in terms of the deep northern-southern divide of Nigeria with *Daily Trust* representing the northern and Muslim voices. Other inclusion criteria included audience reach and availability of news reports. Based on audience reach, all three newspapers are national newspapers and have a wide readership. *Vanguard*, for

example, is the most read newspaper online in the country, and *Daily Trust* is the most read newspaper in the north. *Thisday* is also widely read, though directed at the business class. Other researches have also used these newspapers in analysis of this kind (e.g. Ette 2012, Yusha'u 2015). Newspapers that cater for a national audience were chosen over the broadcast media because the broadcast media, except those owned by the Federal Government, do not have as much national spread as the national dailies. The chosen newspapers are also very popular online—*Vanguard*, for example, is the most read news website in Nigeria and gets about 372,000 visits daily as at 2012 (aabNigeria.com 2012). The newspapers also reflect the various social classes in Nigeria—while *Thisday* is targeted at the business class, *Vanguard*, and *Daily Trust* are targeted at the middle and lower classes. The middle class alone in Nigeria is estimated at 12.9 million people (Gupta 2014).

To extract relevant stories from the three newspapers, the keyword “Boko Haram” was entered on the advanced search menu of the *allafrica.com* database. The *allafrica.com* database archives about 2000 news stories (including its own news reports) daily from more than 130 African news organisations. News stories were extracted from the *allafrica.com* database instead of the websites of the individual newspapers or Google for three main reasons. First, the search engines on the websites of the individual newspapers are very basic and only return relatively recent stories; second, using a database such as *allafrica.com* allows for rigour in the data collection process, thus a newspaper such as *Vanguard* which backs up its news stories would not return more stories than *Thisday* whose archived stories are not accessible online; third, it returned more relevant stories (in terms of published dates) than an advanced Google search as the Google search of most Nigerian

newspapers including the three newspapers used in this study do not return stories before 2013 (at the time of data collection); thus it'd be impossible to study stories before this date without the database.

As indicated above, the analysed newspapers except *Vanguard* do not back up old stories or at least take them out of public circulation. Thus, the relevance of *Allafrica.com* database that backs up news reports of Africa newspapers. This allowed news reports of Boko Haram from 2009 to be read and analysed. The advanced search option of the database and same search parameters were used on every newspaper—same keyword and same date range. The date range option was used to extract stories involving Boko Haram in the two weeks following each of the seven events chosen for analysis. Table 1 shows the number of extracted stories for each newspaper. Some news stories were exempted right from the collation stage as they were not relevant to the study, for example, interviews. Interviews are a different genre to the news articles considered in this study and interviews with elites usually touch on several aspects of society and not restricted to any one topic. The number of stories extracted from each newspaper across the seven events is shown in table 1.

*Table 1 News stories extracted from three newspapers across seven high-profile Boko Haram events*

	Yusuf	Police	UN	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga	Total
<b>DT</b>	50	29	21	70	19	63	41	293
<b>Vanguard</b>	27	39	41	75	20	71	24	297
<b>Thisday</b>	30	21	20	45	25	77	43	261
<b>Total</b>	107	89	82	190	64	211	108	851

### Interview data

The second source of data used in this study was interviews with journalists. These interview data were collected to serve a dual purpose: first, to aid in providing insights into the perceptions of journalists on isolated news frames and their role in frame building, and second, to answer RQ3 which examines the challenges Nigerian journalists face in reporting Boko Haram.

While coding news stories, some journalists whose news reports were part of the analysed data were noted and contacted through LinkedIn or, when available, official email addresses. Interviews were conducted with nine of such journalists to gain insight into their understanding of terrorism and conflict reporting, their views on why certain frames were dominant in news reports and how they cope with the various challenges involved with reporting a polarising issue such as Boko Haram. Interviews were semi-structured and ranged between 30 – 45 minutes. The themes explored with journalists include terrorism, Boko Haram, and style guide on terrorism reportage. A sample of the core interview questions can be found in Appendix C. As the interviews were semi-structured, I asked follow-up questions when necessary either for clarity or to explore useful perspectives.

Also, interviews in this study was secondary to the analysis of news text and used mainly to provide appropriate contexts to aid the reader's understanding of emerging frames. Therefore, the sample size of nine journalists suffices. The purposive sampling techniques included journalists of varying editorial positions, experience, newspapers and ethnicity. For instance, five of the journalists had some level of editorial functions, e.g. a political editor or news editor, while four of the journalists did not have editorial duties. The years of experience of the nine journalists were also diverse with the oldest having 20 years of journalism



experience and the youngest with two years of journalism experience. The interviews were face to face and semi-structured and conducted in Lagos, Nigeria in September 2016. In this research, face to face interviews was preferred to other interview techniques as they can take advantage of social cues such as voice, intonation, and body language of the interviewee which can give a lot of added information to the verbal answer of the interviewee (Opdenakker 2006).

The journalists were given participants information sheets, the purpose of the research was explained to them, and consent forms were signed by journalists before interviews. All the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The audio files were deleted as stated in the participants information sheet and journalists were anonymised in the transcribed file. Transcripts were coded and analysed as shown in section 3.2.3.

#### *Operationalising news frames: framing analysis*

This study developed an inductive approach to determine news frames used in the Nigerian press to report Boko Haram, in line with recent studies relying on framing analysis (Reese and Lewis 2009, Matthews 2015). The unit of analysis used in this study was a complete news story comprising the headlines and the main body of the texts.

The framing analysis proceeded through three interrelated stages. First, the researcher read through news articles and noted the central topic, narrative structure, recurring themes and framing devices—metaphors, exemplars (historical examples), catchphrases, depictions, visual images (Gamson and Modigliani 1989). The researcher then reread the stories to note for reasoning devices—roots (causal analysis), consequences (effects or problem definition), appeals to principle (moral

judgement of those involved in the matter), and remedies (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, Entman 2003). The type of sources and their use in the news text were also coded. As part of the coding process, the parts of news stories (headline, lead paragraph etc) where sources, framing devices, and reasoning devices were placed in news stories were noted. These were then interpreted in light of relevant historical contexts, cultural norms, and political events to generate frames. When more than one frame was present in a news story, the main frame in the news story is referred to as the primary frame while the alternative frame is referred to as the secondary frame. Although the framing unit was a complete story, primary frames tended to be in the headlines and initial paragraphs.

While the generation of the frames was qualitative, some quantifications were used in the findings for clarity. Several experts have argued that in some instances, simple quantifications and statistics are valuable in qualitative research (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000, p. 4, Schedler and Mudde 2010, pp. 418–419).

### 3.2.2 Source analysis

The literature is replete with claims on the influence of sources on news frames (de Vreese 2005, Van Gorp et al. 2009, Brüggemann 2014). For instance, de Vreese (2005) argues that the frame building process takes place in a continuous interaction between journalists and elites. This study, therefore, analysed the sourcing patterns present in news stories of Boko Haram. It analysed their bearing on news frames and their positioning in news stories. When sources were coded, their positions in news stories (lead, second paragraph etc.) were noted.

To answer RQ2 using this approach, sources in news stories were grouped into the following categories: Boko Haram, residents, family, security, federal government, state government, opposition politicians, Christian religious leaders,

Islamic religious leaders, civil rights group, ruling party (PDP), ethnic sources, experts, citizens, foreign governments, others, government agencies.

- **Boko Haram:** This category mainly included members of Boko Haram, usually its spokesman or leader. Suspected members of the group (shown to the public by the police and accused of being members of Boko Haram) were placed in this category even if they denied direct membership the few times they appeared in news texts.
- **Residents and eyewitnesses:** Residents of areas attacked by Boko Haram and eyewitnesses were placed in this category. The 'Civilian Joint Task Force' was placed in this group as they were mainly indigenes of the community they worked in and not part of official security agencies of the Nigerian state.
- **Family:** This category comprised victims, families of victims, or survivors of Boko Haram attacks.
- **Security:** The various security agencies of the Nigerian state were placed in this category. They typically included the police and the military. When other security services like the Nigerian Immigration Service were used as news sources, they were also grouped in this category. Private security personnel or the 'Civilian Joint Task Force' were grouped as eyewitnesses or residents so as not to be confused with the official security forces of the country.
- **Federal Government:** The Federal Government category was used to group the president of Nigeria or one of his cabinet members. Members of parliament at the federal level of government were also included in this group.
- **State government:** This category had the various governors of states in the country and their commissioners. Members of parliament at the state level were also included in this category.

- **Opposition:** This category was used to code for opposition politicians. This included both official statements and personal comments by leading opposition figures.
- **Christian:** Christian leaders were placed in this category. This also included official statements from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).
- **Muslim:** This category coded for Islamic religious and traditional leaders, e.g. the Sultan of Sokoto. Muslim groups such as Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa Iqamatis Sunnah (JIBWIS) were also included in this category.
- **Rights group:** In this category were groups interested in civil rights and liberties. These groups included international organisation like Amnesty International and civil groups within Nigeria.
- **PDP:** The People's Democratic Party was the party in government during the period under analysis. This category was used to group stakeholders of the party, not in government.
- **Ethnic:** Given the perceived ethnic undertones of some Boko Haram actions and utterances, this was an important source category to code for. This category coded for groups that supported particular ethnic groups or interests.
- **Expert:** This category was used to code for the opinions of experts in politics or conflicts, usually academics or specialists in issues dealing with security.
- **Citizens:** This included ordinary citizens of the country. Political leaders that had left office or the elites that were used in news sources because of their unique status were placed in this group.
- **Foreign:** This category was used to code for officials of foreign governments.
- **Others:** This was used to group every other source that could be fitted into any of the above groups including wire services like the AFP.

- **Agency:** This was used to code for national agencies such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA).

The source analysis tracked the level of source usage across analysed news events and newspapers. It also analysed the level of prominence accorded each source group in news reports.

#### 3.2.2.1 Source prominence

This part of the source analysis coded for sources in the first nine paragraphs of news stories. The first nine paragraphs were chosen as the analysis was aimed at examining the level of prominence given to each source group in news stories. The inverted pyramid, which guides the writing of most news stories, dictate that the most relevant pieces of information in news stories be written first. Thus, sources driving news frames are more likely to be in the paragraphs that begin the news story. Analysing the first nine paragraphs allows for not only the identification of the primary definers of news on Boko Haram but also those source groups that might inadvertently be used mainly for balancing the opinions of primary definers.

#### 3.2.3 Interviews with journalists

As previously stated, interviews with journalists were used in this research to examine journalist's views on media portrayals of Boko Haram and to analyse the challenges journalists might face in reporting Boko Haram. Interviews are useful supplements to analysing news texts as the texts are connected to actual human actors (Lewis and Reese 2009). Interviews have also been used in some media research to understand how journalists approach their work (e.g. Deuze 2004; Lewis 2008).

### *3.2.3.1 Thematic analysis of interviews*

The research inductively employed open-coding in thematically analysing the interviews of journalists; thus, themes emerged from the interviews. The thematic analysis procedure adopted was adapted from Ritchie and Spencer (2002) framework method for thematic analysis. In this method, there are five key stages to arriving at themes in qualitative data analysis: familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation.

**Familiarisation:** In this stage, I listened to the audio recordings of the interviews, listing key ideas and recurrent themes. I also made a transcript of each interview.

**Identifying framework:** After the review of data from the familiarisation stage, I identified key issues, concepts and themes on which the data can be examined and referenced. These were used to create a thematic framework or index within which the materials can be sifted and sorted. In the interview stage, interview questions included typical issues emerging from previously reviewed literature.

**Indexing:** The thematic framework at this stage was applied to the data in its textual form. All the interviews were read and annotated manually according to the thematic framework.

**Charting:** Here data are taken from their original contexts and rearranged according to the appropriate thematic reference. In this process of abstraction and synthesis, relevant data (distilled summary of the journalist views) were charted under the various subject headings they fall under.

**Mapping and interpretation:** After having identified important characteristics of challenges faced by journalists, I created typologies where these characteristics are linked at different points. Themes emerged from these typologies.

### 3.3 Summary

In this chapter, the methods used in data collection during the research, the methods of analysis, and how frames isolated in this study were operationalised, are discussed. Data were collected from the advanced search option of the *allafrica.com* database using the keyword 'Boko Haram' on three Nigerian newspapers—*Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Thisday*. 851 stories relevant to this research were collected using this method. The specific form of the framing analysis used to operationalise frames was also discussed, as well as parameters for source coding and analysis. Finally, it discusses the thematic method used in analysing the interviews conducted with journalists to create typologies of challenges faced by journalists in reporting Boko Haram.

The next chapter presents the findings of the framing analysis, sourcing analysis, and thematic analysis of interviews with journalists.

## Chapter Four

### Findings: Reporting Boko Haram in the Nigerian press

This research set out to answer three research questions on the frames present in the Nigerian press in the reportage of Boko Haram, the sources used in stories involving Boko Haram and the challenges Nigerian journalists face when reporting a polarising and violent group like Boko Haram. To explore these questions a framing analysis—which was complemented with interviews from journalists—was used to isolate dominant frames present in news reporting of Boko Haram, a source analysis was conducted to examine the source patterns present in news reports, and a thematic analysis of journalists' interviews was conducted to understand the challenges Nigerian journalists face in reporting Boko Haram.

The second part of this thesis presents the findings of these analyses and is presented in the next three chapters: analysing the news frames of Boko Haram present in news reports, analysis of sources used in Boko Haram reportage, and challenges journalists face when reporting Boko Haram. This chapter presents the analysis of the portrayal of Boko Haram in news texts.

#### 4.1 News Frames of Boko Haram present in the Nigerian press

This section presents the findings of the frame analysis of Boko Haram in three Nigerian newspapers—*Daily Trust*, *Vanguard*, and *Thisday*. As previously shown in Table 1 in the methods chapter, 851 news stories across seven events in three newspapers were analysed. The framing analysis isolated five dominant frames used in the reporting of Boko Haram in the analysed newspapers:

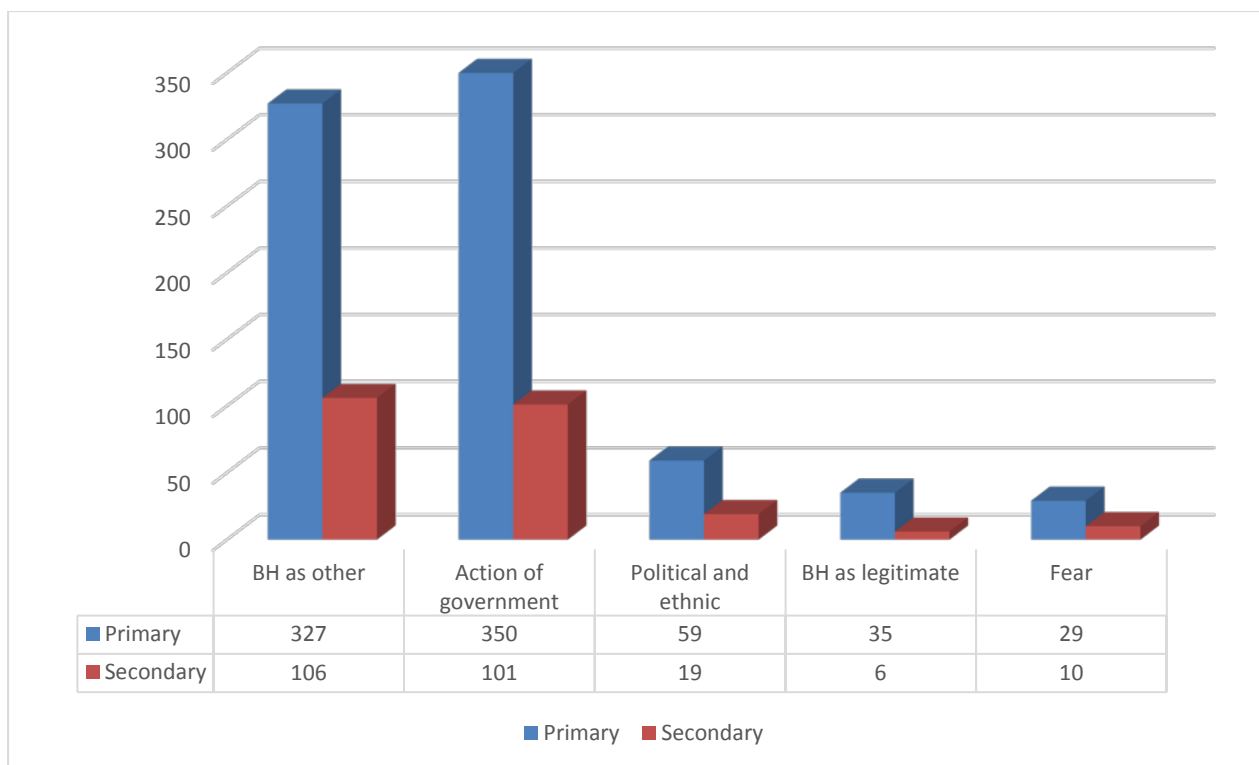
1. Boko Haram as *other* (enemy of the Nigerian state)
2. The reaction of government and security agents to Boko Haram
3. Boko Haram as political/ethnic conspiracy



4. Boko Haram as legitimate
5. Fear and residents fleeing

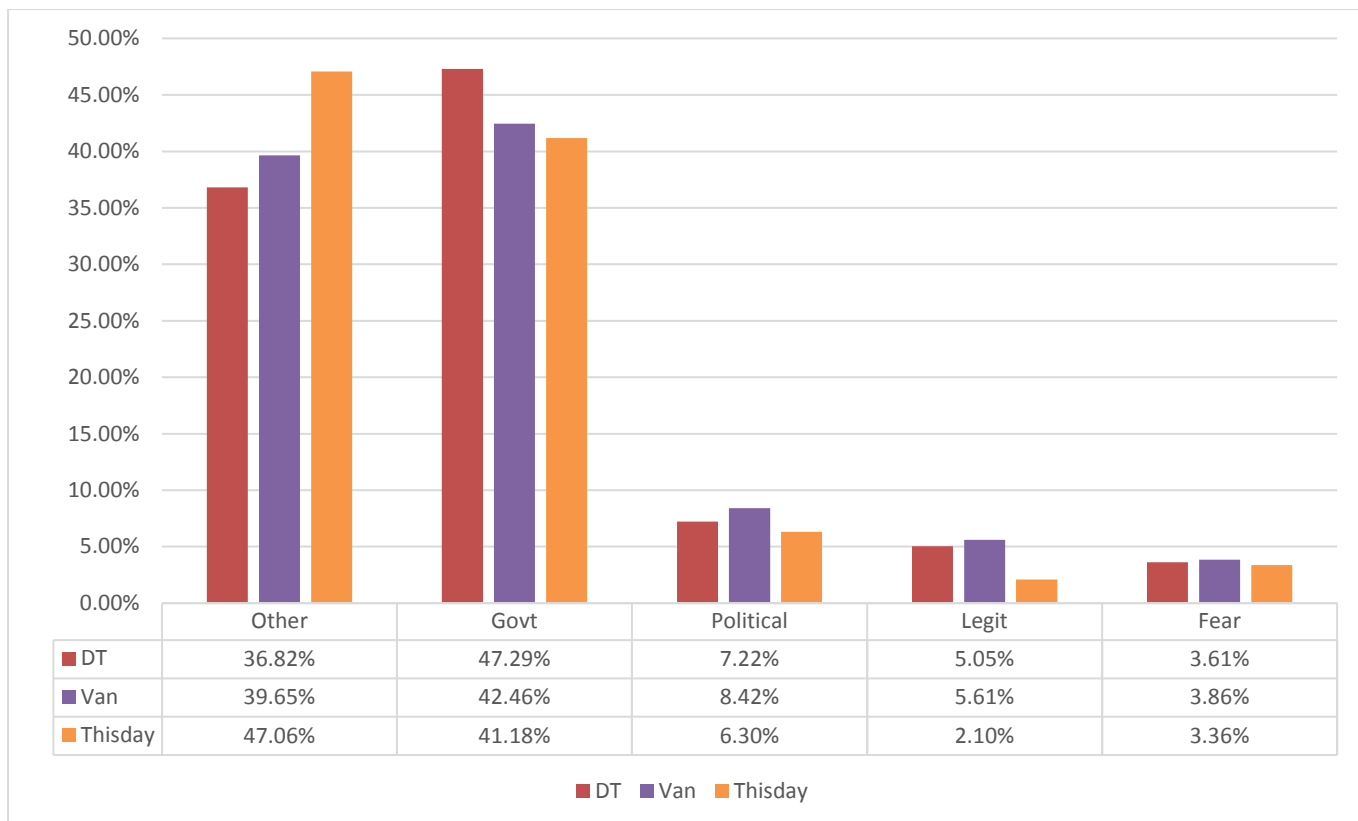
Of the 851 news stories used in this study, 51 did not fit into one of these five dominant frames. 800 stories had at least a primary frame, and 242 stories had a secondary frame as well. Cumulatively, there were 1042 frames isolated from news stories in this study sample. The distribution of these frames is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows the frequency of the frames across all analysed events and newspapers. The two most prominent frames used in presenting events around Boko Haram are the *Boko Haram as other* frame (primary frame in 327 stories, 38%; secondary frame in 106 stories, 12%) and the *Reaction of Government* frame (primary frame in 350 stories, 41%; secondary frame in 101 stories, 10%). Other frames—*Boko Haram as political conspiracy* (primary frame in 59 stories, 7%; secondary frame in 19 stories, 2%), *Boko Haram as legitimate* (primary frame in 35 stories, 4%; secondary frame in 6 stories; 1%), *Fear and residents fleeing* (primary frame in 29 stories, 3%; secondary frame in 10 stories; 1%)—were less used in the analysed news stories. Every frame was used more as a primary frame than as a secondary one.



*Figure 1 Frames used in the coverage of Boko Haram in Vanguard, Daily Trust, and Thisday newspapers*

Frames were used in similar ways across the analysed newspapers (Figures 2 and 3). Figure 2 shows how the primary frames were used in the three newspapers. All newspapers had, as their most prominent frames, the *Boko Haram as other* and the *Reaction of government* frames. Of the three newspapers, *Daily Trust* used the *Boko Haram as other* frame the least (102, 37%) and used frames that presented government's reactions the most (n=131, 47%). *Thisday* used the *Boko Haram as other* frame the most (n= 112, 47%) and presented government's reactions the least, of the three newspapers (n=98, 41%).



*Figure 2 Primary frames in news text analysis across news events. Percentages are derived from each newspaper's total of primary frames (Daily Trust=277, Vanguard=285, Thisday=238)*

Figure 3 shows how the secondary frames were spread across the analysed newspapers. The spread was similar to that of the primary frames as news stories were primarily framed around the othering of Boko Haram and the reaction of the government to actions of Boko Haram across the newspapers used in this study.

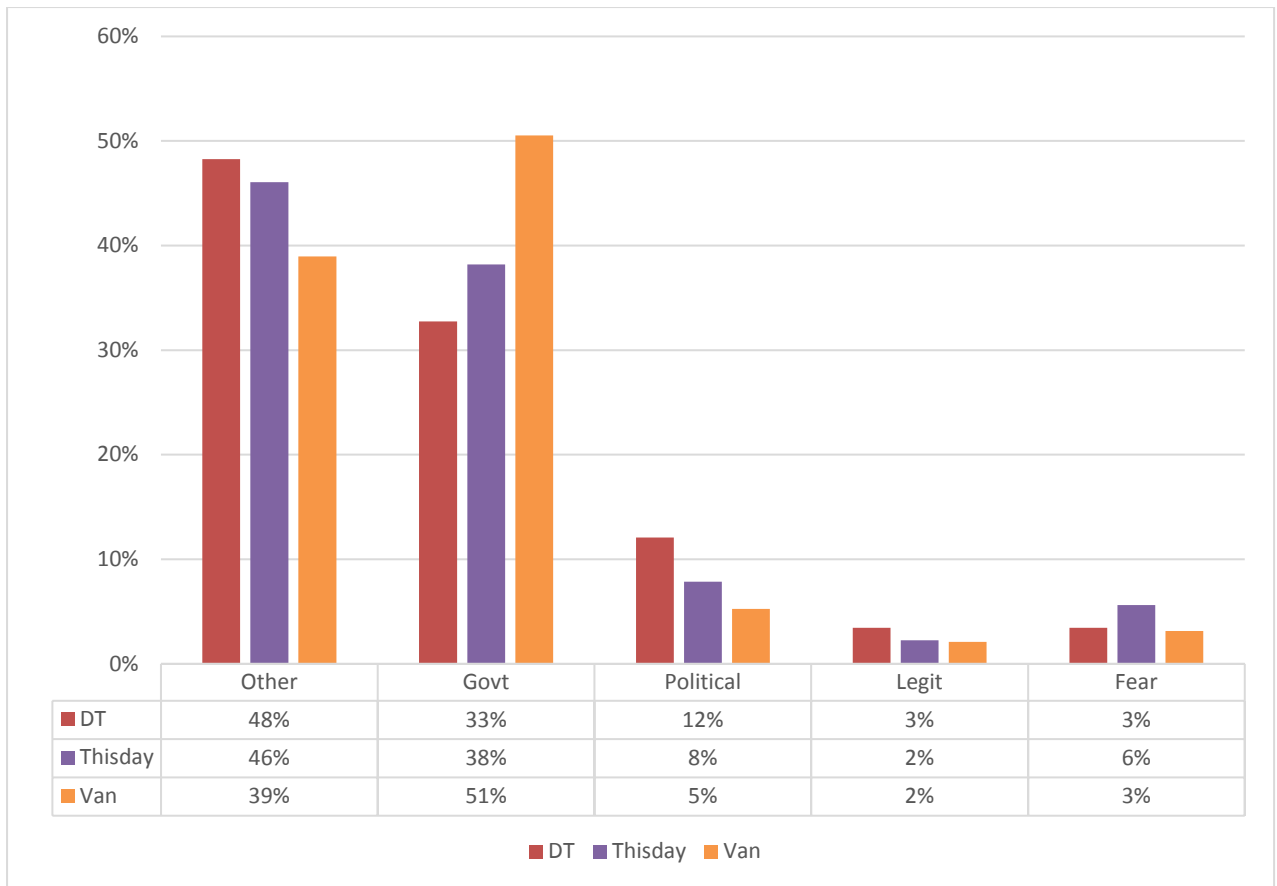


Figure 3 Secondary frames as used across newspapers. Percentages derived from individual newspaper's total for secondary frame usage (Daily Trust=58, Thisday=89, Vanguard=95)

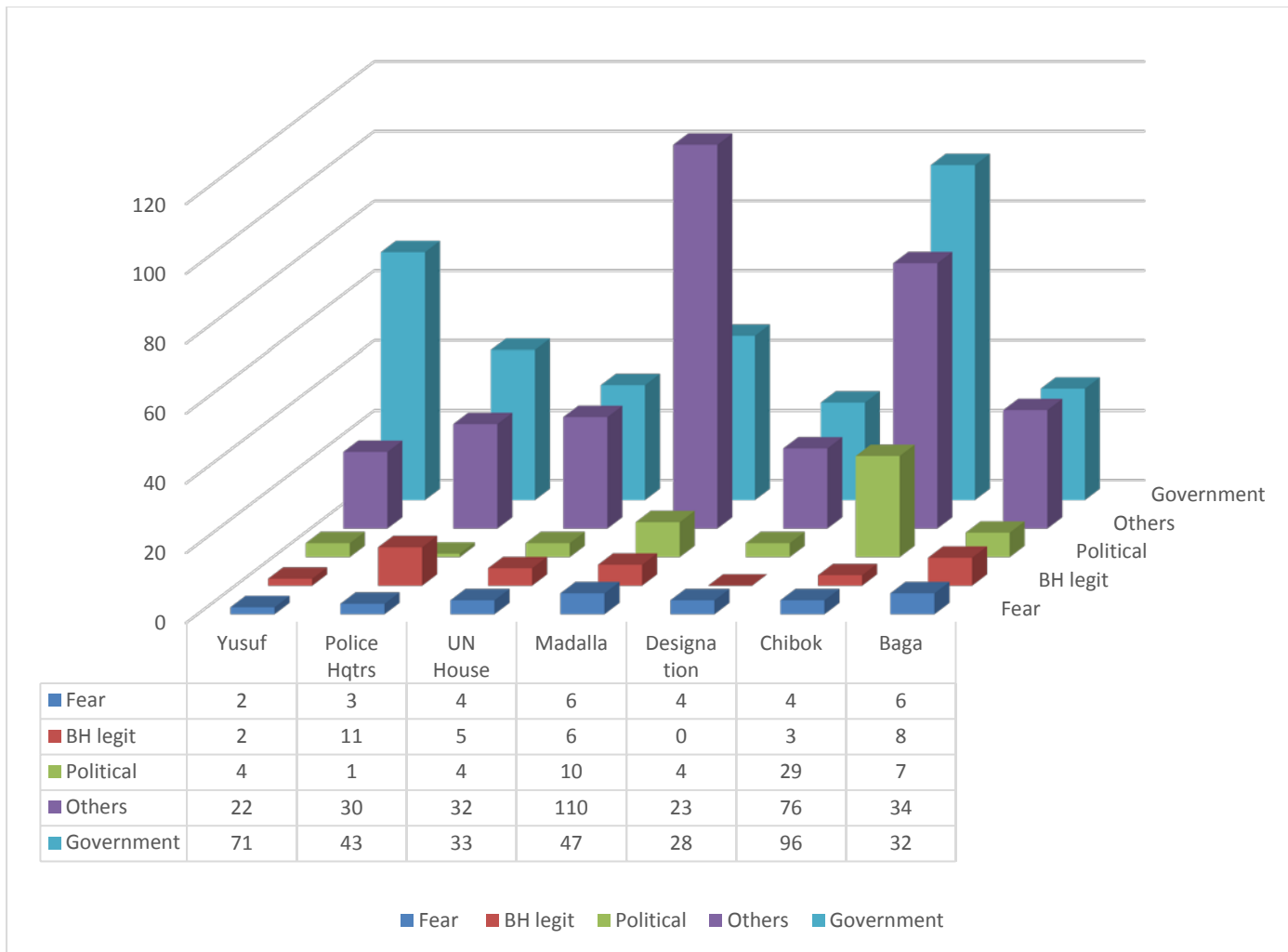


Figure 4 Primary frames used across analysed events

The preference of the *Boko Haram as other* frame and the *government reaction* frame was consistent across news events (Figure 4). For every analysed news events (from *Yusuf* to *Baga*), the preferred frames were the *Boko Haram as other* frame and *the Response of government* frame. Events around *Madalla* and *Chibok* had the most frames associated with the othering of Boko Haram while events around *Yusuf* and *Chibok* had the most frames that dealt with the response of government (Figure 4). The othering of Boko Haram was more pronounced around *Madalla* and *Chibok* because of the specific targets of these attacks—Christians in

*Madalla* and schoolgirls in *Chibok*. The schoolgirls and defenceless worshippers are vulnerable victims; thus, there is a sense of cruelty to the attacks targeted at them, such that people naturally want to distance themselves from the perpetrators, which is reflected in the greater prominence of ‘othering’ of Boko Haram during these events. The response of government was prominent in *Yusuf* as this was the period of Boko Haram’s first violent actions which largely targeted security officials. Thus, references to government’s response included military operations targeted at strongholds of the group, the arrests and killings of prominent members of the group, and the condemnation of the group by government officials. The political conspiracy frame was also pronounced around *Chibok*. The peculiarity of Chibok—timing (its proximity to an election year), popularity, and target—meant that several frames and sources (e.g. opposition politicians) that were hitherto ignored were given more visibility in the media discourse around Boko Haram. Chibok is uniquely the only event to have three competing frames: Boko Haram as *Other*, response of government, and political conspiracy, while others have two: usually government action and Boko Haram as *Other*.

#### 4.2 Frames and subframes

Some of the frames isolated in this study were further categorised into subframes to encompass the broad range of narratives within each frame fully. The frames and their subframes are listed below:

- Boko Haram as Other
  - Violent
  - Foreign
  - Ethnoreligious
- The response of government and security forces

- Government as acting
- Government laxity
- Political and ethnic conspiracy and Nationalism
  - Political and ethnic problem
  - Nationalism
- Boko Haram as prevailing and legitimate
  - Powerful
  - Winning
  - Peaceful resolution
- Fear and residents fleeing

#### 4.2.1 Boko Haram as Other

The *Boko Haram as Other* frame mainly contained news stories that alienated Boko Haram from the Nigerian people and generally presented them as the enemy of the Nigerian people. It is one of the most used frames in the profiling of Boko Haram in this study. It was used 433 times as a frame (42%) (primary and secondary) across all seven news events. It was a prominent frame in *Madalla*—used in about 60% (n=140) of stories as either a primary or secondary frame during this period—in *UN House*—used in about 46% (n=46) of stories with either a primary or secondary frame in this period—and *Designation*, used in 41% of stories (n=28) with either a primary frame or a secondary frame in this period (Table 1). It also appeared in considerable high numbers in the other events—37% in *Baga* (n=45), 34% in *Yusuf* (n=51), 34% in *Police* (n=34), and 34% in *Chibok* (n=89). Thus, it is an important frame in understanding the reporting of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press.

*Table 2 Boko Haram as Other frame across news events and its usage as primary frame (percentage in total calculated from the sum of individual news events cumulatively, percentage of primary frame calculated from news events as used in this frame)*

	<b>Yusuf</b>	<b>Police</b>	<b>UN House</b>	<b>Madalla</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Chibok</b>	<b>Baga</b>	
<b>Total</b>	51	34	46	140	28	89	45	433
	34%	34%	46%	60%	41%	34%	37%	42%
<b>Primary</b>	22	30	32	110	23	76	34	327
	43%	88%	70%	79%	56%	85%	76%	76%

Across the news events, most of its occurrence in news stories were as primary frames except in *Yusuf* where it was used as primary frame in 43% (n=22) of stories where it was used as a frame (Table 2). It was used as primary frame in 88% (n=30) of its occurrence in *Police*, 85% (n=76) of stories in *Chibok*, 79% of stories in *Madalla* (n=110), 76% (n=34) of stories in *Baga*, 70% in *UN House* (n=32), and 56% (n=23) in *designation*.



Table 3 BH as Other frame (primary and secondary) across newspapers (% calculated from total number of frames across news events)

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga	Total
<b>Daily Trust</b>	16 27%	10 34%	14 54%	49 57%	3 18%	20 29%	18 38%	130 39%
<b>Thisday</b>	20 41%	11 39%	11 50%	45 75%	14 44%	37 38%	15 38%	153 47%
<b>Vanguard</b>	15 34%	13 29%	21 40%	46 53%	11 55%	32 33%	12 34%	150 39%

The highest concentration of stories using this frame was in *Madalla* (*Daily Trust* 57%, *Thisday* 75%, *Vanguard* 53%) and *UN House* (*Daily Trust* 54%, *Thisday* 50%, *Vanguard* 40%) in all three newspapers (Table 3). One noticeable disparity in how this frame has been used across analysed newspapers was in *Designation* where the *Daily Trust* reported with this frame in only three stories (18%) as opposed to 14 stories (44%) in *Thisday* and 11 stories (55%) in *Vanguard*. Of the three newspapers, the frame was most used in *Thisday* (n=153, 47%) and used 39% of the time in both *Daily Trust* (n=130) and *Vanguard* (n=150).

As stated earlier, this frame deals with the othering of Boko Haram in three main ways: Boko Haram was presented as engaging in “senseless violence” capable of threatening the unity of the country, as un-Nigerian (foreign), and as falsely pursuing an ethnoreligious agenda (aimed at disunity). Thus, this frame has been divided into three subframes in this study (Table 4):

- Boko Haram as violent
- Boko Haram as un-Nigerian (foreign)
- Boko Haram as ethnoreligious conflict

Table 4 *Boko Haram as Other* subframes

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga	
<b>Violent</b>	16 11%	27 27%	29 29%	76 33%	20 29%	69 26%	42 34%	279 27%
<b>Foreign</b>	2 1%	4 4%	6 6%	2 1%	2 3%	10 4%	2 2%	28 3%
<b>Ethnoreligious</b>	33 22%	3 3%	11 11%	62 27%	6 9%	10 4%	1 1%	126 12%

From Table 4, the two most used of the three subframes are the violent and ethnoreligious subframes. The *Boko Haram as violent* subframe was used in 279 (64%) stories where *Boko Haram as Other* is used as a frame (both primary and secondary) while the *ethnoreligious* subframe was used in 126 (29%) stories where *Boko Haram as Other* is used as a frame. Thus, the othering of Boko Haram was principally based on its violent actions. Boko Haram as un-Nigerian was used in 28 (6%) stories where *Boko Haram as Other* is used as a frame.

In the *Boko Haram as violent* subframe, the violent actions of Boko Haram were presented as disruptive to the communities it attacked, as senseless, and as audacious. Some of its violence was framed as having the capability of threatening national unity. The Boko Haram as un-Nigerian subframe presents Boko Haram as *Other* through its actions such as suicide bombings, the composition of its membership, having foreign backing, and requiring foreign intervention, while the ethnoreligious subframe covered the ethnic and religious aspects of Boko Haram's actions.

Table 5 “Boko Haram as Other” subframe across newspapers

	DT	Thisday	Vanguard	
<b>Violent</b>	83 64%	109 71%	87 58%	279
<b>Foreign</b>	5 4%	10 7%	13 9%	28
<b>Ethnoreligious</b>	42 32%	34 22%	50 33%	126
	130 100%	153 100%	150 100%	433

The distribution of the subframes is similar across newspapers used in the study. In all newspapers, the most used subframe is the *violent* subframe—83 (64%) stories in *Daily Trust*, 109 (71%) stories in *Thisday*, and 87 (58%) stories in *Vanguard* (Table 5). There is also an emphasis on the *ethnoreligious* posture of Boko Haram across the three papers—42 (32%) in *Daily Trust*, 34 (22%) in *Thisday*, 50 (33%) in *Vanguard* (Table 5). Similarly, across all three newspapers, the *foreign* subframe was the least used.

#### 4.1.2.1 Boko Haram as violent

The *Boko Haram as violent* subframe is the most used frame of Boko Haram in this study. It was used in 279 stories out of the 433 times Boko Haram was framed as Other. Thus, it is an important frame in understanding the position of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press.

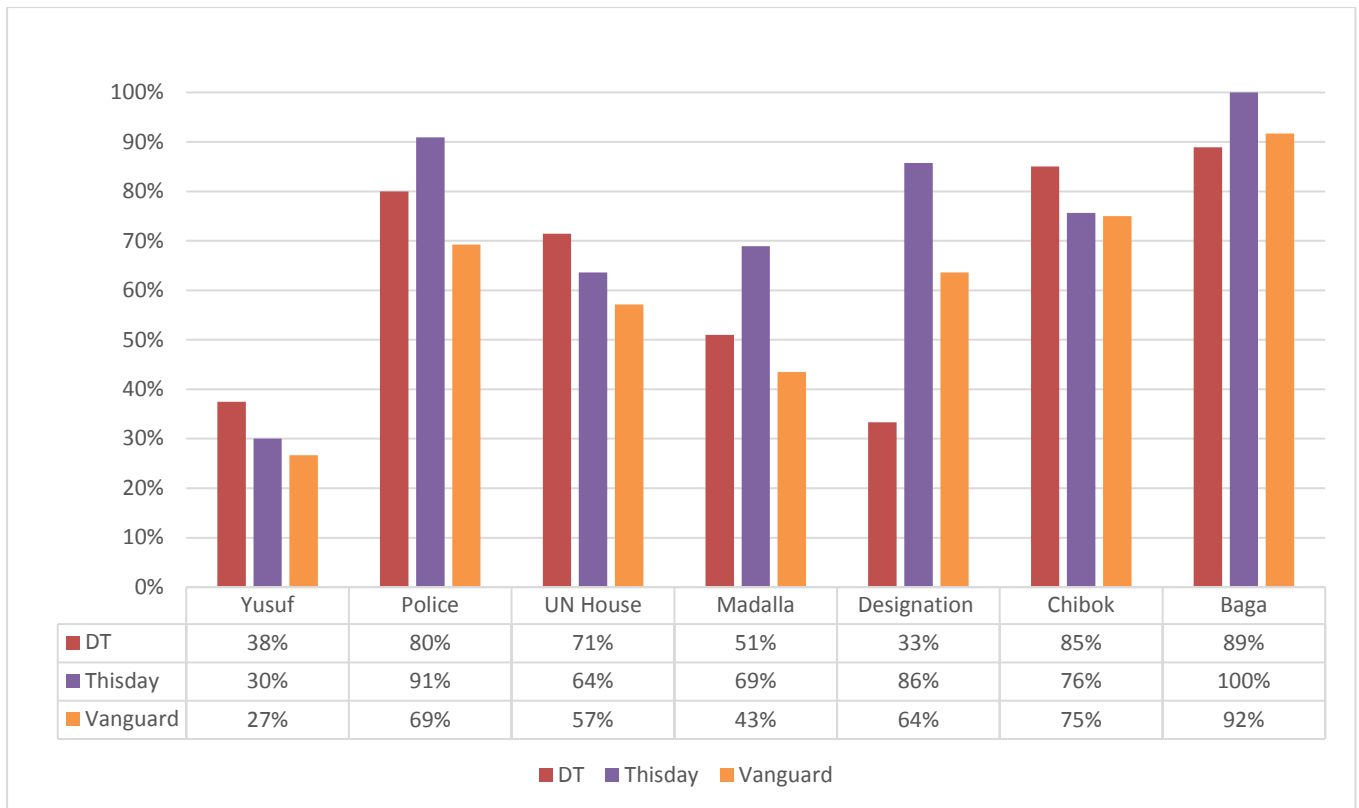


Figure 5 Boko Haram as violent as used in the Boko Haram as Other frame

As Figure 5 shows, the othering of Boko Haram as other is mainly around its violence across the newspapers and news events except in *Yusuf*. The violence in events around the death of Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, were mainly targeted at Boko Haram members. The Nigerian security forces at the time attacked members of Boko Haram, arresting and killing many, in a bid to eradicate the group. Thus, most violence perpetrated at this time were not attributed to Boko Haram. The marked difference in usage across analysed newspapers was in its usage in *Designation* where the *Daily Trust* used the subframe 33% of the time as opposed to 86% by *Thisday* and 64% by *Vanguard* (Figure 5). *Daily Trust*, having pro-northern and pro-Muslim views, critiqued the designation of Boko Haram as terrorist as detrimental to northern Muslims who might not be separated from

members of Boko Haram. Thus, in othering Boko Haram during this period, it relied mainly on the *false* ethnoreligious claims of Boko Haram.

This subframe was used in the othering of Boko Haram and in presenting it as an enemy of the Nigerian people, through the profiling of Boko Haram as aggressor and the demonising of its violence as “senseless and unwarranted,” as a “killing spree,” as amounting to war, as outrageous, or as condemnable. Actions of police were not given the same level of scrutiny as they were presented as more reactive than aggressive and sometimes justified even when they equally result in fatalities. The following is an example that shows Boko Haram’s depiction as the aggressor.

In a wave of violence that began last Sunday, in Bauchi and quickly spread to three other northern states including Borno, the sect **Boko Haram** - the name means "Western education is sacrilege"- **attacked police stations, churches, and government buildings** (Boko Haram - Death Toll now 700, says security commander, *Thisday*, 02 August 2009).

Boko Haram is here presented as the aggressor—attacking police stations, churches, and government buildings. When this aggression results in deaths, these deaths are qualified using words such as “slaughter” and “slaughter chamber” even in its earliest violence, before its now established notoriety status. As its earliest violence was against the police, this primarily referred to deaths of security officers blamed on the group.

The commissioner for Health [Borno state] ... said in Abuja that the state government have also discovered Mohammed Yusuf's **slaughter chamber** from where many corpses of police officers and security operatives were retrieved.

Most of the photographs brought to Abuja showed that many of the police officers were **slaughtered like goats in their uniforms** with their name tags clearly showing on their chests (Corpses retrieved from Boko Haram slaughter chamber, Emma Ujah, *Vanguard*, 12 August 2009).

“Slaughter chamber” and “slaughtered like goats in their uniforms” are emotive and aimed at demonising the group. Similar words such as horror, massacre, and senseless were used to qualify violence and deaths resulting from actions of the group.

We watched as **horror** unfolded' (Headline, *Thisday*, 26 Dec 2011)

Barely 48 hours after suspected Boko Haram terrorists **massacred** more than 200 persons including students who were writing their Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, UTME, in Borno, the insurgents, yesterday, continued their **killing spree** as they killed no fewer than 60 persons in Ngoshe and Kaigamari villages of Borno close to the border with Cameroon (Bloody weekend in Borno: 60 killed in fresh Boko Haram attacks, Kingsley Omonobi and Ndahi Marama, *Vanguard*, 14 April 2014)

U.S, UK condemn '**senseless**' Nigeria bombing (Headline, *Vanguard*, 15 April 2014)

The impression the texts suggest is that Boko Haram engages in large-scale killings and is inhumane. Events from 2011, following the emergence of Shekau as the new leader of the group, present the group as expanding the scope of its violence (Boko Haram dares state of emergency, steps up attacks, Headline, *Thisday*, 07 January 2012). Thus, terms like war (due to the scale of attacks) and terrorism (due to methods and utterances) were further used to reflect the group's increasing violence.

One of the attackers was shot dead by the army, said witnesses, who also claimed that the whole **town was turned into a war theatre** during the rampage with **many policemen running for their lives** (Gunmen kill 16 in Adamawa, Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, Ibrahim Abdul'aziz, 26 August 2011)

ICC declares conflict in N'eastern Nigeria civil war (Tony Soniyi, *Thisday*, 25 November 2013)

In referring to the attacks as a civil war, the understanding of Boko Haram's violence was equated to (or at least evoked sentiments that suggested such equation) the civil war between the southeast of Nigeria and the rest of the country between 1967 and 1970. This cemented the place of Boko Haram as the enemy. The war-like

nature of the conflict was also framed in the news texts through reports of “refugees” created because of the conflict.

2,600 refugees in Potiskum seek relocation to Maiduguri (Hamisu Kabir Matazu, *Daily Trust*, 27 August 2011)

Allen and Seaton (1999) argue that in referring to conflicts as war, journalists accord them a degree of status that often implies that killings are, at the very least, partially acceptable. This probably accounts for why government’s attacks on Boko Haram are not equally scrutinised as those by Boko Haram. The othering of Boko Haram as engaging in war legitimised the use of violence in curtailing their activities. The understanding of the violence associated with Boko Haram as war may further explain the increased negative perception associated with the kidnap of the Chibok schoolgirls and the Madalla Christmas Day bombings, as both events were targeted at non-combatants.

Journalists who were interviewed as part of the study also referenced the activities of Boko Haram using terms suggestive of war. Thus, in the opinion of journalists, as in the news texts, Boko Haram is the distant Other waging war on the country. Therefore, it was patriotic ‘to rally round the flag’ as evidenced by the demonisation of Boko Haram. As Wolfsfeld et al. (2008) argues, in conflicts where the journalist’s perception is that the journalist’s own people are victims, news stories that demonise the enemy are prevalent, and the political leadership are the most prominent sources of vilifying messages (using dramatic terminologies such as ‘cold-blooded murder’ or as in this study ‘killing spree’) to describe attacks and the perpetrators.

If you take me to a **war zone** to report Boko Haram...’ (J3)

‘You see this particular issue of “you kill”, “you kill”, some of them are media propaganda. Why? Because **propaganda is part of war**’ (J4)

'A channels television reporter about three years ago was killed on the spot when he was reporting Boko Haram .... Do you think another Channels person will like to go to the thick of the **war front**? (J4)

'The media also joined in this **war** because it was a **war** that consumed everybody. Nobody was insulated from Boko Haram attack' (J5)

Some of the quotes above show that journalists were aware of their framing choices of Boko Haram's violence as war and showed that, for the most part, journalists in Nigeria aligned with the position of the Nigerian government. The cementing of Boko Haram as engaging in warfare against the Nigerian state cemented their place as 'other', as Kaldor argues, it is in war that the idea of the Nation and the other are formed (Kaldor 2004). Similarly, the reference to the group's activities as terrorism followed this othering of Boko Haram. It was a theme favoured by the government which was aimed at showing government's effort against a new and global threat (this theme is discussed more in the Government Reaction frame):

Terror attack - we now have strong leads, says Jonathan (Onwuka Nzeshi and Dele Ogbodo, *Thisday*, 30 September 2011).

The president said, "one thing is very clear, terrorist attack on any individual or group is a terrorist attack to the rest of the world (UN Building Bombing - Jonathan vows to track down bombers, Nuruddeen Abdallah, Mohammed Shehu, Ismail Adebayo, Misbahu Bashir, Romoke Ahmad, *Daily Trust*, 28 August 2011)

Terrorism soon became shorthand for Boko Haram attacks in the press especially after the Madalla attacks and following certain tactics of the group such as suicide bombings as the following headlines show.

The suicide bomber is finally here... (*Thisday*, 17 June 2011)

**Terror**: 40 killed in Christmas Bombings (*Vanguard*, 26 December 2011).

Two years after, **terror** strikes again in Abuja (Jaiyeola Andrews, Yemi Akinsuyi, Senator Iroegbu, *Thisday* 15 April 2014)

The suicide bombing tactic adopted by Boko Haram was especially important in the Boko Haram narrative as resort to suicide bombing was a definitive sign (in the texts)



of Boko Haram's extremism and terrorism. Also, the inclusion of suicide bombing in Boko Haram's violence contributed to the effectiveness of the othering of Boko Haram as a frame because of its cultural connotation in most Nigerian communities. There is a strong negative attitude towards suicide in Nigeria with respondents in a study affirming that they will be ashamed of family members who commit suicide (Lester and Akande 1994). This probably accounts for the low suicide rates in Nigeria (Asuni 1962). Suicide is seen as taboo in Nigeria even pre-colonially, and in some communities, the stigma associated with suicide had consequences on family members of the deceased such that female members of a family with an incident of suicide may find it difficult getting married (Ritter et al. 2008). As Afe (2013) states:

“Suicide was a taboo [pre-colonial]; it was not common among the people to see people commit suicide by hanging. Anybody found to have done this, was believed to have committed great offence against the gods, humanity, and the community....The bodies of those that committed suicide were usually handed over to the priest for burial. The denial of the family to give the victim a proper burial was viewed as a grievous penalty because it was viewed as a disgrace to the family and the victim in which generations yet unborn would still refer to” (Afe 2013 p105-106).

Thus, the suicide bombing activities of Boko Haram and its framing in the news texts activates a cognitive schema in audience members. Also, suicide bombing was probably instructive in the labelling of Boko Haram as terrorist because of the influence of western frames of terrorism that depicts suicide bombing as a terrorist tool.

Also, the group's shift from attacking security personnel to civilian targets contributed to their terrorist tag.

26 persons killed in Boko Haram night raids on Borno villages (*Thisday*, Michael Olugbode, 15 November 2013).

Journalists interviewed during the study pointed to the killings of civilians as an important criterion in labelling the group as terrorist and its activities as terrorism. They also pointed to the lack of an agenda as a reason to profile the group as terrorist. This probably accounts for the kind of coverage Boko Haram received especially the description of violence linked to Boko Haram as senseless and the presentation of the group as terrorist.

For you to call BH terrorists is for you to understand what terrorism is—terrorists are destroyers, they are killers. They will always destroy without just cause. Terrorists don't have a particular agenda. Their only agenda is to destroy, is to pass information through destruction and killing of innocent citizens (Interview with journalist 4)

Terrorism, to a large extent, has to do with life (J5)

They are just terrorists. They are fighting for nothing as far as I am concerned. Terrorists are people, who go about killing people for no reason. They are not even fighting for Islam (J3)

They are terrorist in the sense that terrorists have no particular mission, they are out to destroy. They are out to cause crises everywhere. That is why we call Boko Haram terrorist. If you look at Niger Delta guys, they also use guns, but they are not referred to as terrorists because they are agitating for something (J7)

The conclusion by journalists that Boko Haram has no mission or agenda is interesting as Boko Haram always stated its agenda, including the creation of an Islamic caliphate. Perhaps, claiming that Boko Haram, presented as *Other*, has no agenda may also be a (subconscious) way of delegitimising the group.

Boko Haram cast doubts on its claims as a group interested in the welfare of northern Muslims by bombing mosques and attacking northern communities especially those that it felt were not sympathetic to its cause, thus creating a climate of fear and intimidation among residents and further narrowing the framework of reference that journalists could rely on in reporting the group.

Four killed as blast rocks Maiduguri mosque (*Vanguard*, 31 December 2011)

He [survivor] said the insurgents accused the villagers of divulging information to security agencies (Gunmen attack Borno village, kill 12, Hamza Idris, *Daily Trust*, 24 November 2013).

In every stage of its evolution, the group was presented as committing a violent act not previously experienced in the country despite Nigeria's history with regional conflicts of various kinds; thus, such headlines as "Nation's blackest Christmas ... ever!" (*Thisday*, 26 December 2011). Similarly, a story that chronicled the "acts of Boko Haram since April polls" (Omololu Ogunmade, *Thisday*, 26 December 2011) profiled a history of violence and death. Some of its actions under this subframe were presented as targeted at destroying the unity of the country.

Jonathan to Boko Haram: No criminal group can divide Nigeria (Senator Iroegbu, *Thisday*, 20 Apr 2014).

Igbo Youth Movement IYM yesterday lamented what it described as attempts by Boko Haram Islamic to cause disintegration in the country with the "Christmas (day) massacre" of Christians, saying the incident has put question to the survival of Nigeria as a country (Boko Haram planning to disintegrate the country - Igbo youths, Emeka Mamah, *Vanguard*, 28 December 2011).

Cross River State Governor, Senator Liyel Imoke, described the Christmas Day bomb explosion at St. Theresa Catholic Church at Madalla, Suleja Niger State as an extreme act of terrorism and a distraction to national unity and corporate existence of Nigeria (Mark, Tambuwal, Imoke, Tinubu, Oritsejafor, others condemn attacks, *Thisday*, 27 December 2011).

Boko Haram did not contest these narratives or show any displeasure but was happy to be associated with the tags, referring to suicide bombers as martyrs. This situates well with Boko Haram's primary audience in terms of recruitment. Individuals that the group manages to radicalise, or those that share its interpretation of Islamic laws would typically abhor suicide except in *martyrdom* (Kushner 1996).

The group claimed responsibility for the UN blast...in a telephone call put to Weekly Trust by Imam Muhammed Shekau, where he said the attack was "carefully scripted and executed." ... He [Abu Dardam, senior

counsellor of Boko Haram] said details of the suicide **bomber whom he described as a martyr** will be made available soon." (UN Headquarters bomb - More attacks underway - Boko Haram (Abdulkareem Baba Aminu, Hussain Ibrahim, Amina Alhassan, Solomon Chung, Adie Vanessa Offiong, Ronald Mutum, Abdulwasiu Hassan, Yahaya Ibrahim, *Daily Trust*, 27 August 2011).

Suleja Xmas Day Blast - We are responsible, says Boko Haram (*Vanguard*, 25 December 2011).

Groups such as Boko Haram use violence as a central strategy for political mobilisation. Thus its violence are directed against symbolic targets and civilians (Kaldor 2004). Thus, it is not unsurprising that Boko Haram does not reject violence attributed to it or refer to members who carry out suicide bombings as martyrs. Given the effectiveness and the non-contestation of this frame by Boko Haram, most violence in areas with Boko Haram's presence were linked to the group in the press even before official confirmation and, sometimes, wrongly so, at least by police accounts.

Gunmen suspected of being members of Boko Haram bombed a police station and robbed two banks yesterday killing 16 people, according to various reports (16 Gunned down in Adamawa bank robbery, *Thisday*, 26 August 2011).

Police: Kastina Attackers weren't Boko Haram (Lawal Ibrahim, *DT*, 22 June 2011).

Newspapers framed the reaction of stakeholders (northerner leaders, elder statesmen, governments, and supranational organisations) to the violence associated with Boko Haram as negative, usually one of condemnation.

US, EU condemn spate of bombings (*Daily Trust*, 29 June 2011).

AU condemns bombings (*Daily Trust*, 27 Dec 2011).

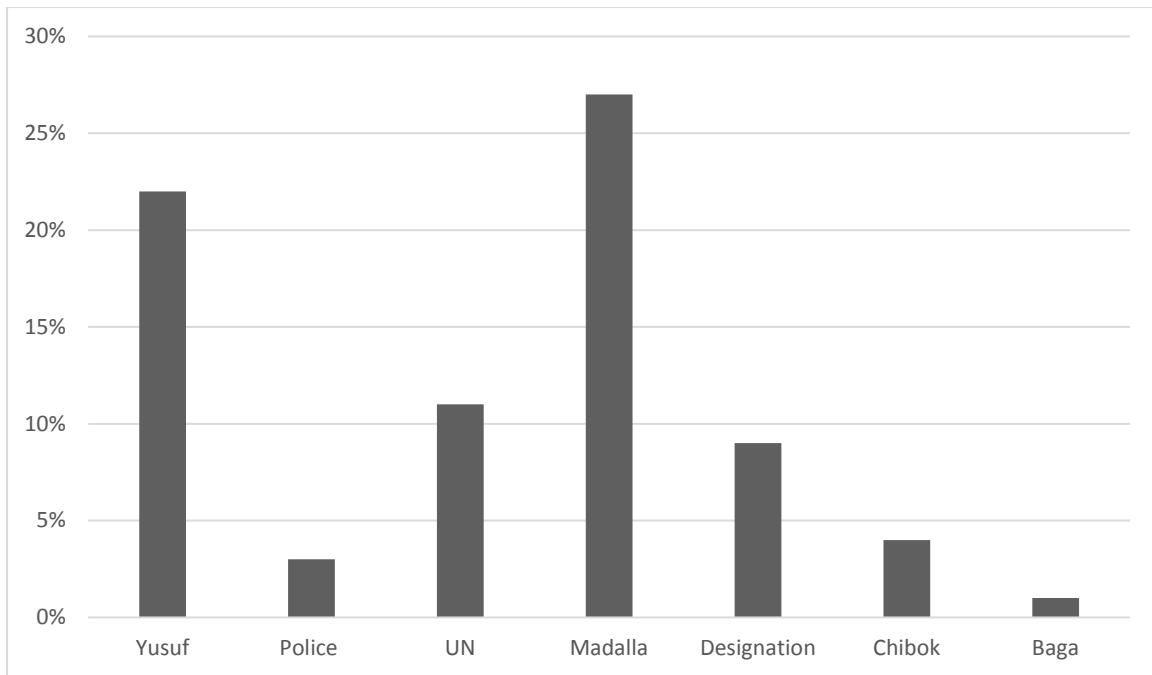
Suicide bomber hits Maiduguri market as **global outrage** trails Baga massacre (Damilola Oyedele, Senator Iroegbu, Michael Olugbode, *Thisday*, 11 January 2015).

This condemnation was to present the violence of Boko Haram as illegitimate and thus further reinforce Boko Haram as the enemy.

In summary, this subframe *others* Boko Haram, mostly through presenting the group as an enemy of the Nigerian people. Boko Haram is presented as the aggressor, and in line with the victim's mode of reporting conflicts (Wolfsfeld et al. 2008), the group's violence is demonised as senseless and inhumane. The group was referred to as terrorists using this subframe for its role in killings (especially of civilians), suicide bombings, and a lack of agenda. This study argues that in reaching the definition of terrorism for Boko Haram, Nigerian journalists relied on news frames from western media who profile groups similar to Boko Haram as terrorists. The agitations of the group are referred to as war which arguably legitimised violence against the group (Allen and Seaton 1999), and more important, as civil war which activates a familiar schema in audience members in Nigeria. Referring to Boko Haram's activities as war also marks the group as 'Other'. Boko Haram, on its part, did not contest these frames and referred to members who kill themselves in bomb attacks as martyrs; this probably points to the assertion that groups like Boko Haram use violence as a tool for political mobilisation (Kaldor 2004).

#### *4.2.1.2 Boko Haram as ethnoreligious*

The ethnoreligious subframe comprises news stories that present the actions of Boko Haram along religious and ethnic lines. In this subframe, Boko Haram is presented as un-Islamic, and Christians are framed as victims of Boko Haram attacks; Boko Haram is also, sometimes, profiled as pro-Islam, and its actions as targeted at specific ethnic or religious groups. The profiling of Boko Haram as pro-Islam was mostly dependent on sources used in news stories, notably the Christian Association of Nigeria, as discussed later in this chapter.



*Figure 6 Occurrence of the ethnoreligious subframe (including primary and secondary) across news events*

Figure 6 shows how the frame progressed across the news events analysed. It was most used during the Christmas day bombings at *Madalla* (2011), reflecting the religious and ethnic connotations of the attack primarily targeted at Christians of whom a majority were assumed to be southerners. It was also prominent around the death of Yusuf (n=33, 22% of frames used to represent *Yusuf*) as these were the earliest violence associated with the group which was initially believed to be a purely religious group. The chart shows a gradual decline in usage of the frame as the activities of the group became better known, and the group evolved in its tactics.

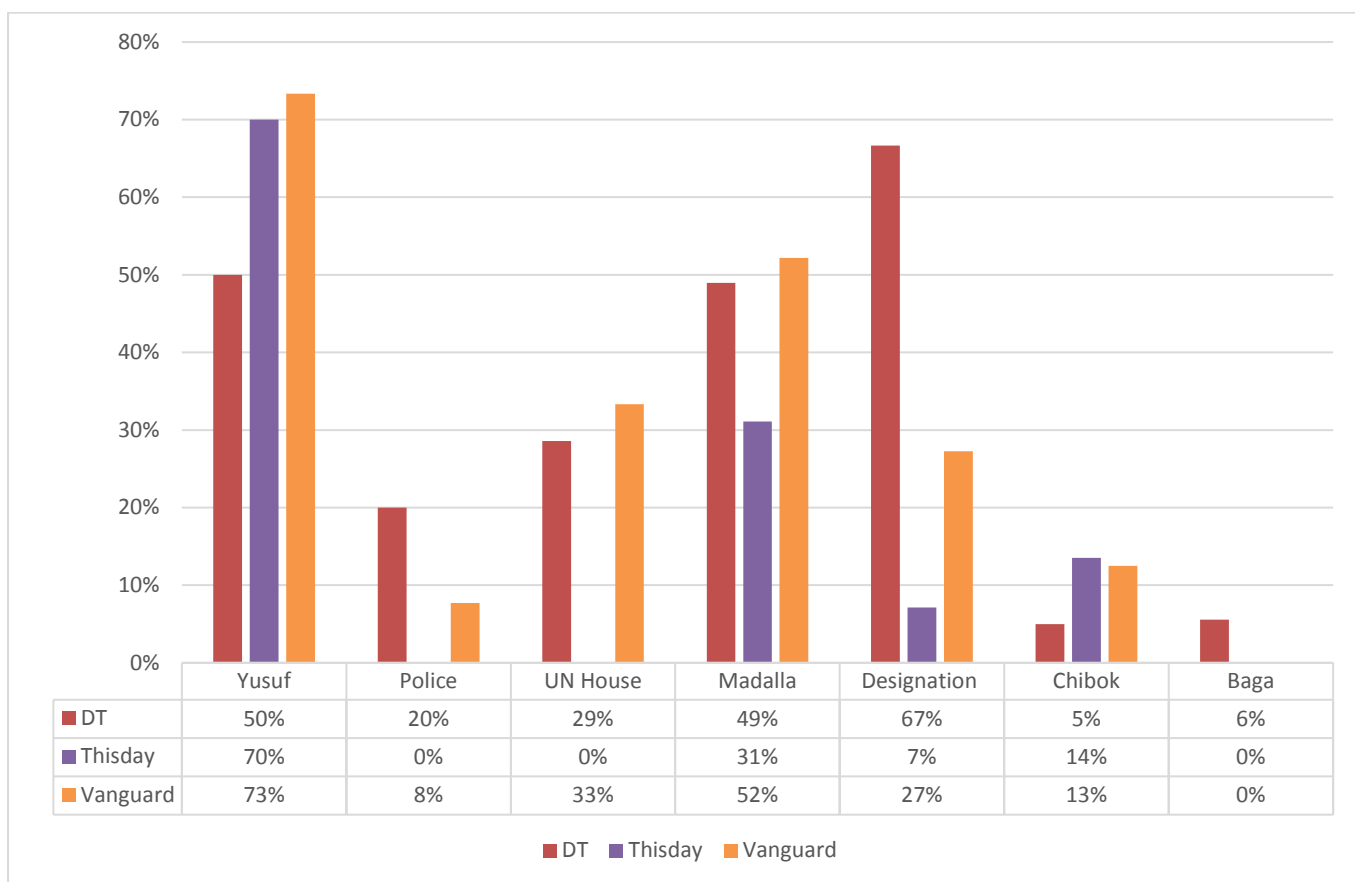


Figure 7 Ethnoreligious subframe as used in the Boko Haram as others frame across newspapers

The various newspapers reflected similar trends in the usage of this subframe. As in the cumulative data on Figure 6, the subframe was prominent in *Yusuf* and *Madalla* across all three newspapers (Figure 7). Its lowest use as a subframe was in *Baga*, used in only *Daily Trust* (6%), probably because of the growing understanding of journalists of the group’s tactics. *Daily Trust’s* pronounced use of the subframe in othering Boko Haram around the *Designation* was based on its critique of the designation of Boko Haram as affecting all northern Muslims and thus othered Boko Haram as a false ethnic champion. The pronounced use in *Yusuf* across all newspapers reflects the initial understanding of Boko Haram as having ethnoreligious interests.

Boko Haram's initial attacks on churches and its claim to adhere to the tenets of Islam couched some of its violence as having religious and ethnic undertones, and as journalists are known to fall back on familiar frames to report new conflicts, Boko Haram's violence was first likened to that of Maitatsine:

Mohammed Yusuf - Life and Times of New 'Maitatsine' Leader (Uduma Kalu, *Vanguard*, 31 July 2009).

The Maitatsine riots (1980 – 1985) were the first religiously inspired violence in northern Nigeria. Thus, Boko Haram was seen with the same lens as a domestic religious group motivated by Islam to perpetuate violence. As effective frames should resonate with audience's existing cognitive schema (Tewksbury and Scheufele 2007), the referral to Maitatsine profiles Boko Haram as a violent ethnoreligious group. In fact, so linked was Boko Haram to Islam that some gunmen were dissociated from Boko Haram because they ate bananas during an attack linked to Boko Haram in the Muslim month of fasting.

There were claims that the attackers were members of the Boko Haram sect, **but claims by witnesses that some of the attackers were seen eating banana and drinking water during the operation cast doubt on any link to Boko Haram, since this is the Muslim month of fasting** (Gunmen kill 16 in Adamawa, Abdullahi Tasiu Abubakar, Ibrahim Abdul'aziz, *Daily Trust*, 26 August 2011).

When sect was thus used to refer to Boko Haram in its early violence, it was used to present it as one of the various authentic Muslim groups in northern Nigeria. This appellation of sect stuck to the group even as its violence increased, and the group was repeatedly divorced from Islam even by Islamic leaders. Boko Haram, also, maintained its pro-Islam stance even in matters outside Nigeria.

Shekau insisted that the Charlie Hebdo newspaper cartoons that depicted Prophet Muhammad was published "in bad faith and a clear provocation against the Muslims."



He also promised "serious reprisals against France" if its government allows the newspaper to release new cartoons (Boko Haram taunts France in new video, Hamza Idris, *DT*, 15 January 2015)

The initial framing of Boko Haram as purely religious mirrors the understanding of most journalists at the time who linked the actions of Boko Haram to religion because of its utterances and religious targets. As one journalist said:

Initially, some people thought they were actually burning down churches in the North and killing Christians and their clerics, but it turned out to be across board. They also burn mosques and kill their fellow Muslim brothers (J6).

*Boko Haram and Islam in the ethnoreligious subframe*

As Boko Haram's violence increased along with its association with Islam, the profile of Boko Haram became one of championing religious conflict in Nigeria. In the news texts, two dominant associations were used in relation to Boko Haram and Islam. First, the violence of Boko Haram was presented in news reports as targeting Christians and second, Boko Haram was presented as not representing Islam nor the Islamic community. In framing Christians as victims, news reports also, sometimes, quoted security sources that accused the group, among other things, of planning a "jihad".

Meanwhile, security sources have disclosed that **the sect actually planned a jihad (a war in which non-Muslims are forced to accept Islam or are killed)** in the country and that members of the sect were still in Kaduna, Kastina and Gombe states (Yar'Adua orders probe of Boko Haram leaders' killing, Emma Ujah, Emeka Mamah, Kingsley Omonobi, Chioma Obinna, Daniel Idonor, *Vanguard*, 04 August 2009)

The definition of jihad here as 'a war in which non-Muslims are forced to accept Islam or are killed' is misleading. It fits with the "Christian as victim" narrative, however, and positions Boko Haram as a violent pro-Islamic ethnoreligious group.

Several news stories are framed in such a way that drives this narrative. For example:

Two gunmen from Boko Haram had seized the Christian teenager in July (Boko Haram, take to hills, kidnap slave 'brides', *Thisday*, 19 November 2013).

In the quote above there is the careful qualification of the seized teenager as Christian. The same can be seen in the Chibok schoolgirls' abduction where most of the girls are presented as Christian schoolgirls and Chibok as a Christian town. On the surface, and utterly devoid of context, these actions of Boko Haram could be correctly interpreted as the abduction of Christian girls to reinforce the narrative of the group as targeting Christianity. Listening to Boko Haram, however, the reasons for these abductions are more apparent. One plausible reason for the abductions was in response to the Federal Government's strategy of arresting the wives of Boko Haram members (Zenn and Pearson 2014). However, as the position of Boko Haram is mainly silenced in news reports, the reasons for the abduction of "Christian girls" are not in news texts. These presentations of Boko Haram's violence as targeting Christians were probably espoused because they fit existing narratives in the Nigerian media circle and are more newsworthy, but then they also perpetuated the existing religious polarisations in the country.

Nigeria has seen scores of attacks claimed by Boko Haram, but some analysts said the Christmas bombings **marked a dangerous escalation in a country divided between a mainly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south** (There is no conflict between Muslims and Christians – Sultan, *Vanguard*, 27 December 2011).

An Islamic group, Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) has said that the Christmas day bombings by Boko Haram sect were **calculated move to ignite religious war between Christians and Muslims in the whole country** (Christmas Day bombings were designed to cause religious wars' - Muslim Group, *Daily Trust*, 26 December 2011).

In framing Christians as victims, the media encouraged the possibility that Boko Haram was deliberately carrying out actions that could start a war along religious and ethnic lines. Thus, in presenting Christians as victims, northern and Islamic leaders were accused of complicity in the actions of Boko Haram through their inaction. Northern leaders, on their part, rejected the complicity accusations and tried to douse the growing Christian- Muslim polarisation.

President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, yesterday **described the Christmas Day attacks on churches as a declaration of Islamic Jihad in Christians**

Oritsejafor said last night in Abuja when he led a CAN delegation to President Jonathan that **Islamic religious and traditional rulers were to blame for the attacks because of their failure to publicly condemn the activities of the sect**. He said Christians have no option but to fight back (Boko Haram is jihad on Christians, Mohammed Shehu, Ben Atonko, *DT*, 29 December 2011).

The problem with the Christian as victim narrative is that similar actions were also meted out to Muslims. For instance, four days after the first bombing of churches on 25 December 2011, Boko Haram attacked a Mosque, killing four people.

Four people were killed in Maiduguri, Borno State, following a bomb blast near a mosque yesterday. The blast was said to have taken place as Muslims left a mosque after Friday prayers (Four killed as blast rocks Maiduguri mosque, *Vanguard*, 31 December 2011).

In fact, as research has shown, Boko Haram viewed everyone opposed to its ideology as enemy (kafir, infidel) including Muslims (Kassim 2015). Thus, a fair and balanced reporting of events would not perpetuate the Christian as victim frame. The literature is however rife on the problematisation of Islam in media discourses on terrorism especially since 9/11 (Reese and Lewis 2009, Lewis 2012, Thussu 2012). When asked in interviews on why the religious violence of Boko Haram was presented as primarily targeted at Christians, the thoughts of interviewed journalists exactly mirrored the news texts and put the bombing of mosques as a latter

development in Boko Haram's evolution. What is interesting in some responses, is the acceptance that they concluded that Christians were victims somewhat erroneously.

Initially, some people thought they were actually burning down churches in the North and killing Christians and their clerics, but it turned out to be across board. They also burn mosques and kill their fellow Muslim brothers (Journalist 6).

What is likely is that the utterances of Boko Haram couched in anti-Christian narratives, the utterances of the Christian Association of Nigeria, the scale of the Madalla bombings, and the familiarity of the Christian-Muslim conflict narrative tilted the reporting towards a Christian as victim narrative.

The second problem with the Christian as victim narrative is that there were no distinctions between Christians and southerners or Muslim and northerners in the news text. Although inaccurate, the dominant narrative in (and about) Nigeria is one of a Christian-south and a Muslim-north. Thus, ethnicity and religious beliefs are sometimes so closely tied together that a distinction, as to which is a reason for conflicts, cannot be made between them; this situation has been referred to as ethnodoxy (Karpov et al. 2012). Ethnodoxy refers to the inseparability of ethnos (ethnic) and doxa (belief, in Greek) in identity creation (Karpov et al. 2012).

"We also wish to call on our fellow Muslims to come back to the north because we have evidence that they would be attacked. We are also giving three days ultimatum to the southerners living in northern part of Nigeria to move away", Qaqa said (Boko Haram: state of emergency meant to attack Muslim, Hamza Idris, 02 January 2012).

In this quote, Boko Haram asks Muslims to return to the north and southerners (not Christians) to leave the north. This shows how interchangeable the ethnic and the religious identities are in Nigeria especially when used in conflict situations. Thus, one possible consequence of the Christian as victim narrative is reprisals in the south of the country for crimes committed against Christians; and indeed, news

reports showed that the association of Boko Haram with Islam (a religious concept) led to reprisals against Muslims (not necessarily northerners nor members of Boko Haram and even targeted at children) in some southern states.

Six children and another person were injured on Tuesday night when assailants threw a homemade bomb in the midst of about 100 kids taking lessons at an Islamic school in Sapele, Delta State, witnesses and police said (Shehu Abubakar, Vincent Egunyanga, Islamic school bombed in Delta, *DT*, 29 December 2011).

A militant group from the Niger Delta **claimed responsibility for the attack in an apparent reprisal for the deadly Christmas day bombings by Boko Haram.**

The incident occurred at the Quranic School and Islamic Centre on Urhobo Road adjacent to King Street, **less than 200 meters away from the central mosque where a blast was reported on December 10** (Pupils hurt as blast hits Islamic school in Sapele, Paul Ohia, Omon-Julius Onabu, Seriki Adinoyi, *Thisday*, 29 December 2011).

The second theme that discusses the place of Islam in Boko Haram's violence dissociates Boko Haram from Islam. This was mainly supported by the views of prominent Islamic and northern leaders who claimed Boko Haram was not acting on behalf of Muslims. It was also mainly reported by *Daily Trust*.

Top Muslim leaders and Islamic scholars across the country yesterday rose in **condemnation** of the Christmas Day bombings in parts of the North, **saying such attacks were un-Islamic and that the Boko Haram sect which claimed to have executed them was not doing so on behalf of Muslims** (Christmas Day Bombings: Muslim leaders disown Boko Haram, Sultan: attack on churches un-Islamic, Isa Saidu, *Daily Trust*, 27 December 2011)

Sultan: Nobody can Islamise Nigeria (*Thisday*, 15 April 2014)

News stories espousing these views sought to similarly show greater cooperation between Islamic and Christian leaders. Islamic leaders were also presented as not only rejecting the actions of Boko Haram as Islamic but also rejecting the notion of a religious war against Christians, in one case referring to the actions of Boko Haram as "irrational provocations".

The group urged Muslims and Christians to ignore the "irrational provocations of Boko Haram", and forge greater unity for the progress of the country (Boko Haram not fighting for Muslims', Muideen Olaniyi, *Daily Trust*, 27 December 2011).

The umbrella Islamic body for Muslims in the North, the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), yesterday condemned the bombing of St Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, Niger State and another church in Jos, Plateau State, saying it is not in a religious war against Christians (Muslim leaders condemn Christmas day bombings, Kunle Akogun, Damilola Oyedele, John Shiklam, Tunde Sanni, Mohammed Aminu, Hammed Shittu, *Thisday*, 27 December 2011).

Thus, there was an othering between Boko Haram and mainstream Islam in the press. Boko Haram's Islamic ideology was framed as faulty and in contravention of the teachings of the Quran. Its founder was presented as a university dropout whose religious theories have repeatedly been debunked.

Sheikh Siraj who spoke through Engineer Abdurrahman Hassan of the Council after condemning the activities of the sect said **their acts contravened the teaching of the Holy Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Mohammed (SAW)** (Ulama Wants Governor, JNI to Meet on Boko Haram, Ismail Mudashir, 31 July 2009, *Daily Trust*)

Muslim clerics in Nigeria also slammed the fundamentalist sect as criminal and as an **embarrassment to the religion** (Nigeria: OIC Slams the Country's Radicals, *Daily Trust*, 31 July 2009)

Not much is known about his (Yusuf) educational pursuit though he is thought to be a theology undergraduate university drop-out from the Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia. **It was obvious from the debate that his theories were faulty and easily debunked by his opponents** (Profile of a Troublemaker, *Thisday*, 02 August 2009).

Islamic leaders, also, faulted media presentation of Boko Haram as Islamic and advocated for perspectives in media reports that differentiated the Muslim from members of the group, whom they also referred to as criminals and heretics.

Speaking on extremism and violence in the country, he [sultan] said Islam was never in support of those who use violence to achieve their

aims. **He said the media were not helping matters as they were always quick to label any act of violence as handiwork of Muslims** "without waiting for investigations to be concluded" (Sultan decries lack of unity among Muslims, *Vanguard*, 26 December 2011)

**At best, they are heretics, whom the Holy Quran describes as "munafeequns" for their queer belief is a complete negation of the principles of Islam** and the teaching and practices of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W). For his reason, **I take serious exception to the description of the Bauchi rioters by sundry newspaper reports as "Islamic fundamentalists"** (Heresy and the Bauchi Mayhem, *Thisday*, 03 August 2009)

Thus, in Islamic circles, there is the rejection of Boko Haram as an Islamic sect and its profiling instead as the outsider, the Other. In fact, in the last quote, for instance, there is a rejection of the term "Islamic fundamentalists" being applied to Boko Haram in news reports. In news discourse and among certain experts, the term along with similar others such as Islamists is assumed to point to a distinction between extremists and Muslims. This, however, does not consider the ordinary reader of news that might not necessarily make any distinction between Islamic fundamentalism and Islam.

As Islam was in the forefront of the narratives in this frame, there were several contests in this frame among actors: Islamic and Christian leaders, Islamic leaders and Boko Haram, and Boko Haram and government. There is in the news texts a contest between Christian and Muslim leaders over the role of Islam on Boko Haram and the influence of Islamic leaders on activities of the group. As shown earlier, CAN accused Islamic leaders of complicity and not doing enough to address the violence of Boko Haram. This created a conflict between these two actors:

According to him [JNI secretary], Oritsejafor's statements imply that the responses of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and other Islamic bodies on the incidents are unacceptable. He described the statements as dangerous and asked the Federal Government to call the CAN president to order (**You can't intimidate us, JNI tells CAN president**, Maryam Ahmadu-Suka, *Daily Trust*, 02 January 12).

But The Arewa Renaissance Group (TARG) has cautioned Christian leaders against utterances that may further complicate the security challenges (Madalla Catholic Churches cancel new year service, Aisha Wakaso, John Shiklam, *Thisday*, 30 December 2011).

The evidence from analysed news texts show that contrary to insinuations by CAN, Muslim leaders not only condemned Boko Haram and denounced them as un-Islamic, but also refer to them as “our enemies” in reference to northern Muslims even before the Madalla church bombing on Christmas Day, 2011.

"We hereby call on Muslims not to allow themselves to be used by **our enemies** in achieving their desired goals," he [sultan] added (Sultan flays UN House blast, *Vanguard*, 31 August 2011).

Such categorisation of Boko Haram as the enemy of northern Muslims whom they claim to represent was the bedrock of the contest between Boko Haram and northern Islamic leaders. Boko Haram presented prominent Islamic clerics of being incapable of protecting the interest of the Nigerian Muslim, placing themselves as the new, authentic voice of the northern Muslim.

Imam Abu Muhammad Shekau, the leader of the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnati Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, also known as Boko Haram, yesterday said **Muslim clerics under the umbrella of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) and the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) are not competent to speak on behalf of the Nigerian Muslims.** Shekau in a statement which was made available to newsmen yesterday wondered why the clerics and Muslim leaders will speak when Christians were attacked on Christmas day but refused to take similar action when many Muslims were surrounded and killed in a mosque in Jos during Sallah celebration in September 2011 (Boko Haram: Sultan, clerics can't speak for us, *Daily Trust*, 30 December 2011)

In placing themselves as the authentic and new voice for northern Muslims and as an authentic Muslim group, Boko Haram also placed the government as the enemy of the northern Muslim. In this instance, Boko Haram initiates the othering and creates an enemy of the Nigerian government. Unlike the government who profiled Boko Haram as enemy to rally the citizens against a divisive enemy, Boko



Haram presents government as enemy in line with the tactics of similar groups like ISIS who create enemies against Muslims usually for its radicalisation needs.

Abdul Qaqa, the spokesperson of the Jama'atu Ahlis Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, also known as Boko Haram yesterday said the declaration of state of emergency by the Federal Government on some selected Local Government Areas of northern Nigeria was meant to attack Muslims and not to restore normalcy.

Thus, in this subframe, the media creates or at least accentuates several contests between actors in the coverage of Boko Haram. There is the web of contests between Christian and Islamic leaders, Boko Haram and Islamic leaders, and Boko Haram and government. While this contest among actors might be useful for news traffic, it simplifies events and creates polarising narratives.

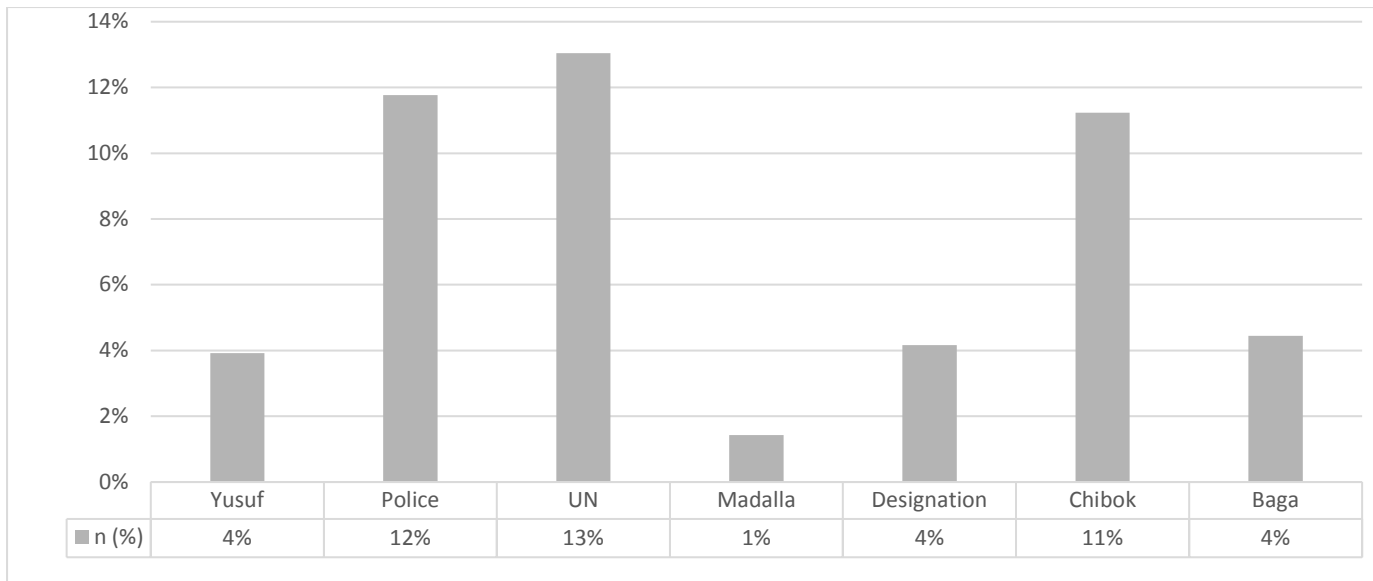
In summary, this subframe comprised news reports that profiled Boko Haram along ethnic and religious lines. The initial understanding of the group, in news texts and among journalists, was that the group was a violent Islamic sect and its actions mainly targeted Christians. Thus, it was likened to the Maitatsine group, the first case of religiously motivated violence in northern Nigeria. Maitatsine acts as an effective framing device as those that are familiar with the Maitatsine riots in the 1980s have a cognitive schema the frame could activate. The Christian as victim narrative was however erroneous as news texts show that Boko Haram similarly targeted mosques and Muslims even as early as 2011. Journalists identified that their initial perceptions and reports of the group as targeting Christians were erroneous. The north-south narrative of Nigeria creates a situation where the Christian might not be differentiated from the southerner and the Muslim from the northerner. Reprisals are therefore not uncommon in conflicts couched under ethnoreligious lines, and, indeed, news reports indicated reprisals in parts of southern Nigeria for the acts of Boko Haram against Christians. The religious focus of this subframe created multiple contests in

the news texts between Christian and Islamic leaders, Islamic leaders and Boko Haram, and Boko Haram and the government.

In this subframe, Boko Haram was framed as Other through its presentation as attempting to widen the already existing ethnic and religious polarisations in Nigeria through actions targeted at southern Christians.

#### *4.2.2.3 Boko Haram as foreign*

The Boko Haram as foreign subframe comprises stories that framed Boko Haram as un-Nigerian. Thus, this subframe is centred on the question of identity. Although the definition of a Nigerian identity is elusive and has been at the centre of several conflicts in the country, the *un-Nigerianess* of Boko Haram was propagated in news texts. Thus, Boko Haram is framed as Other in the real sense of not being Nigerian. Boko Haram was presented as un-Nigerian in three main ways: carrying out actions divergent from the Nigeria spirit such as suicide bombing, having foreign memberships especially from neighbouring countries like Chad, and courting foreign groups such as Al Qaeda, AQIM and ISIS.



*Figure 8 BH as foreign subframe across analysed news events*

Although it was not a very prominent frame in this data set in terms of number, it is an important frame in understanding an aspect of the othering of Boko Haram. As Entman et al. (2008) argue, a frame does not need to be repeated nor elaborated once it is stored in the citizenry's schema system. Analysing its usage as a subframe within the *Boko Haram as Other* frame, it was mainly used around Chibok (n=10, 11%), UN House (n=6, 13%), and Police (n=4, 12%) and appeared in all analysed news event (figure 8). Its relatively high frequency in Police and UN House is most likely because these acts were carried out through suicide bombing.

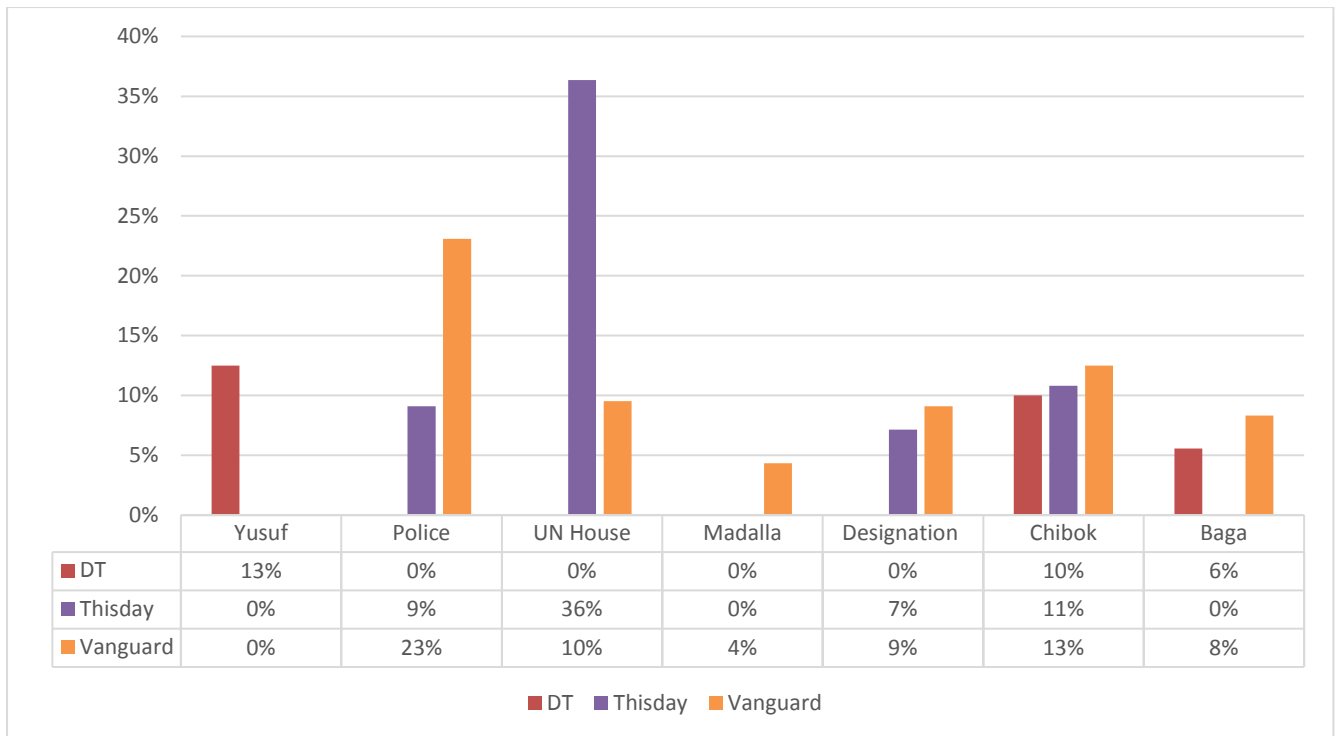


Figure 9 Boko Haram as foreign subframe as used in the Boko Haram as Other frame across newspapers

Across the newspapers, there is a sustained presence in *Vanguard* as it appears in all events except *Yusuf* in the paper (Figure 9). Of the three newspapers, *Daily Trust* used it the least; it is used in *Yusuf*, *Chibok*, and *Baga* in *Daily Trust*, and does not appear in any of the events between *Yusuf* and *Chibok*. *Daily Trust*, much closer to the troubled spot, concentrated on more local interpretations of the group’s actions as opposed to foreign.

As already stated, in the *Boko Haram as Other* frame, it was not widely used (at least in the sample used in this study) but it is a significant frame in the othering of Boko Haram. Part of its low usage as a frame is due to newspapers preference of other frames such as *security effective* instead of *Boko Haram as foreign* for activities that could as well be framed as *Boko Haram as foreign*. For example, “Boko Haram: Immigration beefs up security at borders” (*Vanguard*, 17 Jun 2011) was framed along the lines of security as effective but also implies *Boko Haram as*

*foreign* (and not in a way sufficient to be termed a secondary frame). In fact, a couple of stories following the bombing of the Police Headquarters had *Boko Haram* as *foreign* as a secondary frame to the primary frame of security agencies as effective (e.g. Force Headquarters Bombing: 58 suspects arrested, Kingsley Omonobi, Jimitola Onoyume, Evelyn Usman, Abdulsalam Muhammed, Victoria Ojeme, *Vanguard*, 20 January 2011).

The primary usage of the frame was to present Boko Haram as un-Nigerian through several narratives, one of which points to the foreign influences that Boko Haram has, usually Al Qaeda, Al Shabab, AQIM or ISIS.

Nigeria under siege: Al Qaeda, Al-Shabab backing Boko Haram - American security expert (*Vanguard*, 20 April 2014)

Here, Boko Haram is presented as colluding with foreign groups against the interest of the country. Thus, it is not just an enemy within but a foreign one as well. Within this frame, some actions of the group were linked to foreign actors or, if Nigerians, culprits were described as trained abroad usually Somalia. This relationship with foreigners against the interest of the country rids Boko Haram of its *Nigerianness*.

UK-based Daily Star links Samantha Lewthwaite, White Widow, to Abuja bombing (*Thisday*, 6 April 2014)

Therefore, when the Department of State Service DSS last weekend issued a statement declaring one Mamman Nur wanted in connection with the penultimate Friday's bombing of the United Nations, UN, House in Abuja, **explaining further that Nur had just returned from Somalia**, it only went further to corroborate Sunday *Vanguard's* story of July 18, 2011, **that the sect was in collaboration with foreign terror organisations such as al-Shabab and al-Qaeda in Maghreb, AQIM** (UN House bombing: The hunt for Mamman Nur, Jide Ajani, *Vanguard*, 04 September 2011).

Another important factor behind the categorisation of Boko Haram as foreign is the belief that despite the many peculiarities of Nigeria, several values are important

across ethnic and cultural groups such as fraternity and respect for one's life. It is, therefore, absurd for a Nigerian to kill 'his brothers and sisters' or worse still himself (through suicide bombings). As President Jonathan said of the actions of Boko Haram: aftermaths of suicide bombings:

When in 2009, a Nigerian was caught in a flight to US, we were all surprised and embarrassed. **We thought such people were not living with us**, that probably he was contaminated outside. Now we have come to meet the reality that we have terrorists and even suicide bombers among us (Daniel Idonor, Boko Haram is jihad on Christians, *Vanguard*, 28 Dec 2011.)

Less reflective statements were along the lines of: "we are Nigerians, we are not terrorist" (Ike Abonyi, Boko Haram: SSS bursts new cells in Kogi, *Thisday*, 21 November 2013) and "terrorism is not the way of life of Nigerians" (Ike Abonyi, Boko Haram: SSS bursts new cells in Kogi, *Thisday*, 21 November 2013). Thus, this subframe was used as a denial frame to create distance between the "terrorist" or suicide bomber and Nigerians.

The foreign influences on Boko Haram were not limited to international groups such as Al Qaeda and Al-Shabab but even more regional associations within West Africa.

The Niger insurgents told the BBC Hausa radio yesterday that they are based in parts of Diffa in the south-eastern part of that country, and that they routinely offer help to Boko Haram in its campaign of violence in Nigeria (Niger Republic group claims B/Haram links, Musa Abdullahi Krishi, Ronald Mutum, *Daily Trust*, 23 April 2014).

This frame was also advanced by the portrayal of members of the group as foreigners usually from Chad or Somalia. This served two purposes. One, it made Boko Haram appear more formidable than a mere national group and, thus, requiring more planning, collaboration, and time. Two, it presented the security services as effective in tracking down members of the group. Thus, it was, sometimes, used as a secondary frame when the primary news frame was security effectiveness.

SMARTING from the bombing of Police Headquarters in Abuja, Thursday, the police authorities, yesterday, **arrested 58 sect members including some Somalis** when its crack investigating team stormed Maiduguri, the Boko Haram headquarters.

The Federal Government in its determination to crush the Islamic sect **also directed the embassies of Somalia, Niger and Sudan to compile a comprehensive list of all their nationals in the country in a bid to move against those who were in the country illegally.**

Security sources told *Vanguard* that the **arrest of the 58 Boko Haram members with Somalis found in their midst, confirmed the suspicion of the investigating team that Somalia and Sudan nationals who had sympathy for the Boko Haram cause, were working in tandem with the Islamic sect** to perpetrate havoc in the country (Force Headquarters Bombing: 58 suspects arrested, Kingsley Omonobi, *Vanguard*, 20 June 2011).

The importance of this frame in the othering of Boko Haram and in government's attempt to defeat the group is in the effort to limit migration across the border from Niger and Chad. Government and security forces talked of the borders between Nigeria and neighbouring countries as a conduit for members of Boko Haram coming into the country.

Parrandang [Comptroller General of Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS)], who was a guest at the National Conference Committee on Immigration, **lamented the existence of well over 1,400 illegal borders in Nigeria, a situation he said contributes to the spate of insurgencies in the country** (Insecurity: FG approves new border posts in north-east, Onyebuchi Ezigbo, *Thisday*, 24 April 2014)

Thus, in this subframe, the othering of Boko Haram is not in line with targeted violence against an ethnic group or a religion but on the claim that some of its members are not Nigerians or are heavily influenced by foreign groups. This was especially reinforced as Boko Haram evolved to suicide bombing, an act hitherto believed could not be committed by a Nigerian. This subframe, thus, dwells on identity and questions what it is to be a Nigerian.

It is strongly believed in security circle that many of the "suicide bombers" trained by Boko Haram are not Nigerians and the country's porous borders as well as **the cultural affinity between cross-border towns may have blurred the true identities of the extremists** (Jonathan fires adviser on counterterrorism, Ahamfeula Ogbu, Ibrahim Shaibu, *Thisday*, 05 Sept 11)

The specific areas the American terror experts are expected to beam their searchlight to help the Nigeria Police in the investigations, according to sources, include the true identity of the suicide bomber, believed to be a foreigner from Sudan, Somalia or Niger, and the manufacturer of the bombs (CIA investigators arrive as probe begins, Kingsley Omonobi, *Vanguard*, 19 June 2011).

Further evidence of this "invasion of foreigners" to propagate violence and discord in the country aided by the blurred identity of their real persons was the fact that some of them could neither speak English nor Hausa. Countries neighbouring Nigeria (Cameroun, Niger and Chad) are French-speaking. The logic here is that citizens of those countries would most likely not be able to speak Hausa nor English. Thus, members of Boko Haram who cannot speak either language were most likely from these countries.

The minister also explained that some of the people arrested during the crisis in Wudil, Kano State, could hardly understand Hausa or English, stressing the need for members of the Immigration Service to open their eyes to the movement of illegal arms and people into the country (Nigeria: Federal Govt to Investigate Source of Weapons, Muhammad Abubakar, *DT*, 11 August 2009).

The same, however, can be true for many northern Nigerians who are from ethnic groups that spoke languages other than Hausa and cannot also speak English. This further demonstrates the use of this subframe as primarily a denial frame. While several members of the group might indeed be foreign, most members were Nigerians (Zenn et al. 2013).

Members of the Boko Haram sect that unleashed terror in some states in the country are Nigerians and not aliens as being speculated Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service Mr Chukwurah Udeh has said.



Udeh told House of Representatives Committee on Interior that the sect leader Mohammed Yusuf used almajiris as recruits. "In Maiduguri, we discover that he used children under the guise of teaching them Holy Quran but ended up brainwashing them," he said. (Boko Haram Members Are Citizens, Tashikalmah Hallah and Nasidi A. Yahaya, *DT*, 30 July 2009).

Apart from debunking the BH as foreign narrative, the quote shows that radicalisation is a more plausible explanation for the membership and virulence of Boko Haram members. Radicalisation is entirely absent from the Boko Haram narrative in the Nigerian press, however.

The final theme in this subframe proposes international cooperation as a way of defeating Boko Haram especially as Boko Haram was presented as having foreign backing.

In light of these, two strategies proposed both by civil society and government were more international involvement (Terrorism: NUPENG wants FG to seek foreign help, Mohammed Shosanya, *DT*, 28 April 2014) and building of border posts (Insecurity: FG approves new border posts in north-east Onyebuchi Ezigbo, 24 Apr 2014)

Besides showing the growing extent of Boko Haram's attack, it also shows the perception of the citizenry on its activities as inimical to the country and needing foreign attention.

In summary, the subframe others Boko Haram through the lens of identity, presenting the group as foreign. It could be likened to Ette's (2012) denial frame in which the Nigerian media in her study denied any links between the suicide bombing attempt of Farouk Abdulmutallab (the underwear bomber) and Nigerian values. In this case, this subframe was used in denying that the Nigerian can be a suicide bomber or a "terrorist" even though most of the perpetrators of these attacks were homegrown as opposed to Abdulmutallab who arguably could have been radicalised outside the country. Thus, at the centre of this frame is the question of identity which has been at the centre of several conflicts in the country. Acts used to label Boko

Haram as foreign include foreign membership, alliances with foreign groups such as Al Qaeda, and acts considered un-Nigerian especially suicide bombing.

#### 4.2.1.4 Conclusion

The *Boko Haram as Other* frame presents Boko Haram as an enemy of the Nigerian people. The othering of Boko Haram was done in three dominant ways in analysed news texts: Boko Haram was framed as a violent group threatening the national unity, Boko Haram was framed as an ethnoreligious group, and Boko Haram was framed as foreign. These were discussed as subframes in this section. In the *Boko Haram as violent* subframe, Boko Haram was framed as Other through demonisation of its violence as senseless, inhumane, and, more important, as warfare and terrorism. Thus, Boko Haram is depicted as a distant enemy that citizens could unite against and, thus, military action against the group is legitimised, for instance, through the referral of Boko Haram's violence as war. Similarly, framing Boko Haram as foreign also excuses military action against warring outsiders. The Boko Haram as foreign subframe others Boko Haram by presenting the group as un-Nigerian through its association with groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda, through foreign membership, and through the adoption of violent means such as suicide bombing which are considered un-Nigerian. In the *Boko Haram as an ethnoreligious group* subframe, the group was initially framed as engaging in religious violence especially targeted at Christians and churches. Islamic leaders rejected Boko Haram's actions as Islamic, faulting the groups understanding of Islamic laws and principles. The group was framed as Other in this subframe by its presentation as pursuing ethnoreligious conflict.

#### 4.2.2 Government action and inaction frame

The *government action and inaction* frame refers to stories that profile Boko Haram through the perceptions of government's efforts against the group. It was the most used frame in reporting Boko Haram in this study. Present in all seven news events, its lowest occurrence as a frame was in *Madalla* where it was used in 28% (n=64) of news stories containing frames (both primary and secondary) in that event. It was the most dominant frame among the frames (secondary and primary) used in *Yusuf* (61%, n=93), in *Police* (49%, n=49), in the *Designation* (46%, n=32), in *Chibok* (48%, n=127) and *Baga* (38%, n=46) (Table 6). Thus, most reports profiled Boko Haram through the lens of government's response to the group.

*Table 6 Government response frame (primary and secondary) across newspapers and across news events*

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga	
<b>DailyTrust</b>	37 63%	14 48%	8 31%	27 31%	9 53%	37 53%	18 38%	150 45%
<b>Thisday</b>	28 57%	12 43%	9 41%	12 20%	16 50%	43 44%	12 31%	132 40%
<b>Vanguard</b>	28 64%	23 51%	23 44%	25 29%	7 35%	47 48%	16 46%	169 44%
<b>Total (n)</b>	93 61%	49 48%	40 40%	64 28%	32 46%	127 48%	46 38%	451 43%

In the majority of the report that this frame (as secondary and primary) was used in, it was used as a primary frame (Table 7). Its least occurrence as a primary frame is in *Baga* where it was used 70% of the time as a primary frame. This is partly due to the prominence given to official narratives in the reporting of Boko Haram as official

sources generally talked of their responses to the violence. As Table 6 shows, it was present in all analysed newspaper and across all events analysed.

*Table 7 Government response primary and secondary frames*

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga
Primary (n)	71	43	33	47	28	96	32
Primary (%)	76%	88%	83%	73%	88%	76%	70%
Secondary (n)	22	6	7	17	4	31	14
Secondary (%)	24%	12%	18%	27%	13%	25%	30%

In this study, the frame was divided into two subframes:

1. Government action frame
2. Government inaction frame

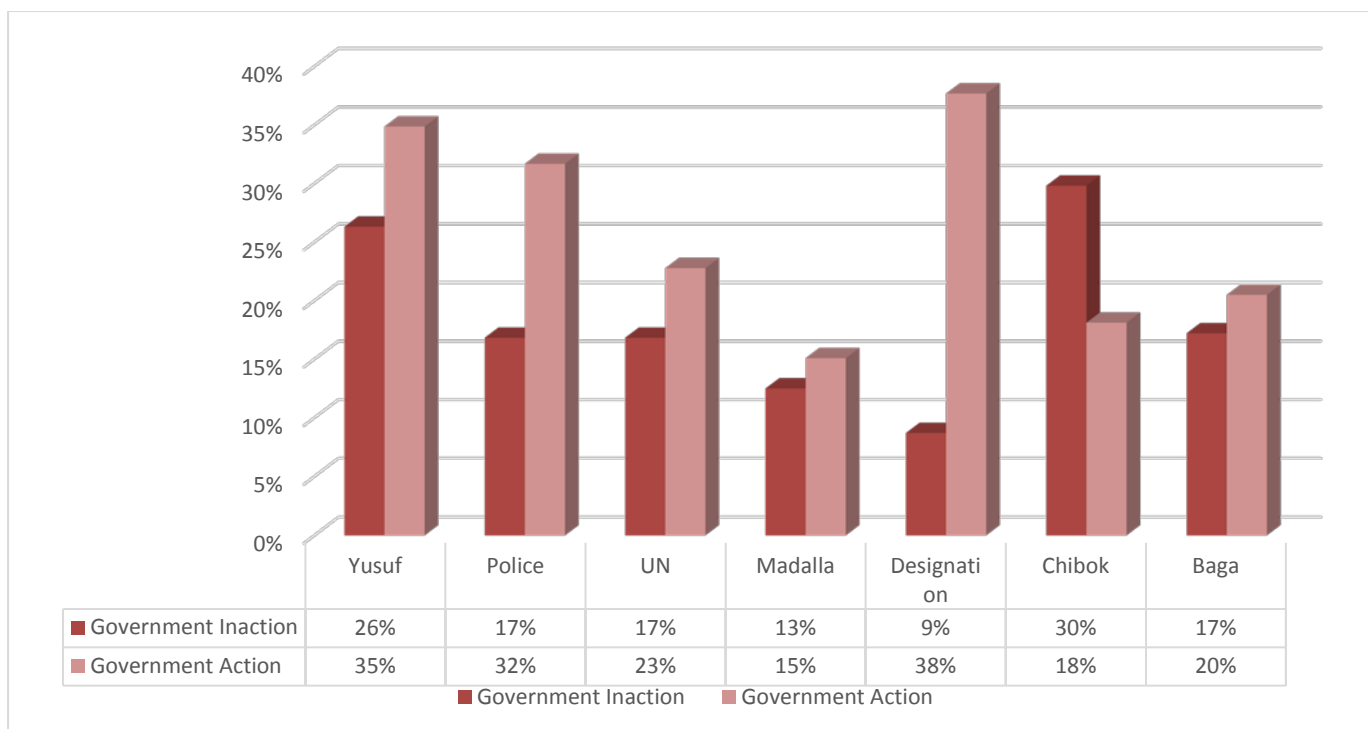


Figure 10 Government action and inaction frame across analysed news events

Reports that emphasised government’s efforts as positive are placed in the government action subframe while those that profiled it as negative are placed in the inaction frame. From the figure above, more pro-government frames were used in all analysed news events except *Chibok*, as opposed to anti-government frames. Events around *Chibok* especially the abduction of the schoolgirls and the failure of the government to rescue them from Boko Haram meant that the citizenry’s confidence in government and security actions were deeply eroded. Most government frames during the *designation* were pro-government because of the momentum gained by the blacklisting of Boko Haram.

Table 8 Subframes of the government response frame across newspapers

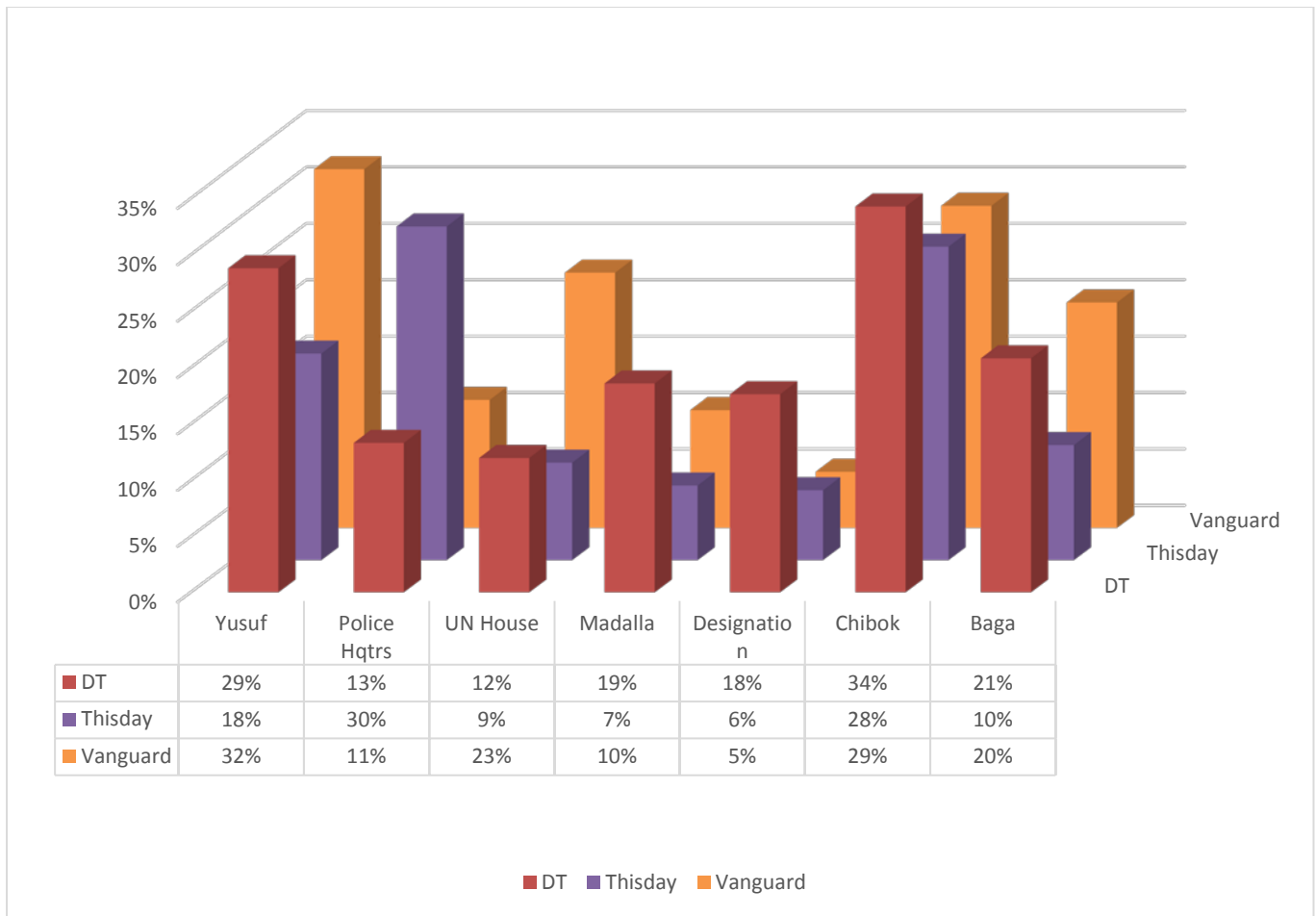
	DT	Thisday	Vanguard	
<b>Action</b>	73	76	93	242
<b>Inaction</b>	77	56	75	208

Similarly, across newspapers, more stories were framed as pro-government (54%, n=242) than anti-government (46%, n=208). *Vanguard* and *Thisday* follow this pattern and have more stories framed as government action (*Thisday* 58%, n=76; *Vanguard* 55%, n=93). *Daily Trust* reported more stories with the inaction frame (51%, n=77).

#### 4.2.3.1 Government inaction frame

This frame comprises stories that refer to the actions (especially successes) of Boko Haram as a failure of government and criticises the performance of the military.

Figure 11 shows the distribution of the frame across news events and newspapers.



*Figure 11 Government inaction frame across events and newspapers*

The government inaction frame was a popular frame, present in all newspaper in every news event, especially in Yusuf and Chibok. Its usage in Yusuf is centred around the extrajudicial killings of Yusuf and members of his family by the Nigerian police which was framed negatively in the press. In Chibok, its usage was mainly due to the distrust in the military and the inferred lack of government's effort in rescuing the kidnapped girls.

There are two recurring themes in this frame:

1. Government failure in addressing the threat from Boko Haram
2. Military failures against Boko Haram

In framing Boko Haram as a failure of government, the successes of Boko Haram were blamed on the incompetence of the president and the weakness of the response of the Nigerian government to the threat of the group. The government and the ruling party were also profiled as insensitive to the plight of citizens directly affected by Boko Haram (APC: Jonathan, PDP Kano rally insensitive, *Thisday*, 17 April 2014) and only interested in politics. The source group that championed this viewpoint was mainly opposition politicians (especially around *Chibok* and *Baga* which were close to an election year).

It [APC, main opposition party in 2015] also said the President missed a golden opportunity to take on and defeat the Boko Haram insurgency in its early stages, and instead chose to engage in shadowboxing. When he was not blaming everyone but his administration for the insurgency, he was playing primordial politics with it, **to such an extent that the terrorists became strengthened and emboldened to strike at times and places of their own choosing** (Jonathan lacks capacity to fight insecurity, terrorism, corruption – APC, *Vanguard*, 02 Jan 15).

Dying daily due to Jonathan's incompetence – Buhari [Presidential candidate of the APC in Nigeria's 2015 election and current Nigeria president] (Nuruddeen Abdallah, *DT*, 13 January 2015).

The president, as the above quotes show, was mainly responsible for the *strengthening and emboldening* of Boko Haram and his inaction was mainly for political reasons and his incompetence. Thus, in this frame, Boko Haram is presented as a political issue. The politicisation of Boko Haram was not only argued by politicians but also by residents of areas where Boko Haram thrived and civil rights groups in the country.

Locals in Maiduguri have decried what they called **"flagrant politicization" of the lives of innocent girls** (Military lied over Chibok abducted girls' - school principal, Hamza Idris, *DT*, 17 Apr 2014)

The subframe was also used to present the opinions of foreign governments that criticised government's reaction to Boko Haram.



Terrorism: Nigeria's response extraordinarily weak – UK (Romoke Ahmad, *DT*, 15 January 2015)

Nigeria 'neglects' offer on Chibok girls – Australia (Romoke Ahmad, *DT*, 15 January 2015)

Thus, viewpoints in this frame that sought a solution to Boko Haram emphasised a political one especially one that demanded more from the government.

Sani [President of the Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria] suggested that the solution to the Boko Haram uprising lies in the **creation of a ministry for peace and religious harmony** as well as compensation and formal apology to the family of the slain Boko Haram leader (How to stop Boko Haram, by Shehu Sani, Andrew Agbese, *DT*, 27 June 2011).

Insecurity: Nigeria needs competent leaders, says Soyinka (Gbenga Olarinoye, *Vanguard*, 15 Apr 2014).

As the successes of Boko Haram were blamed on the government in this frame, protests against the government were also recorded here.

Meanwhile, parents of the abducted girls yesterday staged a protest in Chibok town's market area over the handling of security issues by the Federal Government (FG under pressure to find missing girls, Hamza Idris, Yahaya Ibrahim, Ibrahim Sawab, Isiaka Wakili, Ibrahim Kabiru Sule, Ronald Mutum, John Chuks Agu, Eugene Agha, 17 April 2014)

The government inaction frame was mainly reserved for the Federal Government and security forces as the Federal Government had control over the military and police, and the actions of Boko Haram were not limited to a single state in the country. Notwithstanding, few news stories pushed the focus to the state governments, but these were mainly informed by Federal sources.

For instance, the director general [SSS] said while Bauchi state governor was quick to act on the security report presented to him, the Borno state government was reluctant to do so (Nigeria: Boko Haram Leader killed, Isa Umar Gusau, Tashikalmah Hallah and Nasidi A. Yahaya, *Daily Trust*, 31 Jul 2009).

The second theme in this frame profiled the failures of the Nigerian military in defeating Boko Haram. Soldiers were presented as fleeing (B/Haram: soldier flees

battlefield over obsolete weapons (Ibrahim Sule, *Daily Trust*, 7 January 2015), refusing to fight (Army dismisses 227 soldiers for 'refusing to fight Boko Haram' (Lawan Danjuma Adamu and Ronald Mutum, *Daily Trust*, 14 January 2015) or simply defeated (Wike: Boko Haram overwhelmed security team at girls' school, Damilola Oyedele, *Thisday*, 17 April 14). News reports presented parents as dissatisfied with the efforts of security agents to engage Boko Haram. The focus in this frame was not the sophistication of Boko Haram in terms of strategy or arms, but rather the Nigerian security unwillingness to confront Boko Haram. This was more pronounced around Chibok and Baga.

The affected parents, who were visibly angry and dejected have therefore mobilised themselves, insisting that they were prepared to sacrifice their lives and storm the Sambissa forest in search of their children, **if the military would not be of help** (Student abduction saga: Girls yet to be rescued - Borno Govt, Principal, (Ndahi Marama, *Vanguard*, 16 April 2014).

Locals in Chibok allege that since the day of the incident, **there was no girl that was officially rescued by security forces**. They pointed out that all the 44 girls that are back returned in trickles after escaping (14 schoolgirls escape from Boko Haram, Hamza Idris, *DT*, 19 April 2014).

The resident, an uncle of one of the abducted girls, **said instead of taking action, the security men in Damboa told their colleagues in Chibok to run away** since they did not have the weapons to fight the Boko Haram members (We told security agents about impending attack - Chibok resident, Musa Abdullahi Krishi, 17 April 2014)

Apart from the wiliness to confront Boko Haram, security agents were presented as being ill-equipped, not proactive and lacking intelligence. Thus, Boko Haram was thriving because of attacks that could be stopped but were not, due to security laxity.

The source said the attack on the UN building in Abuja could have been averted if the security and intelligence communities have been proactive and global in their interpretation of the events around them (Blast could have been averted – experts, *Vanguard*, 28 August 2011).

The effectiveness of this frame lay in the existing distrust of governments in Nigeria.

Those in power are often perceived as corrupt, interested in personal enrichment,

and uninterested in development and serving the interest of the people (Fagbadebo 2007). Thus, frames that pointed at this disinterest of the government in the well-being of the people as responsible for the successes of Boko Haram can be powerful, especially as this ineffectiveness of government in providing development is a major factor of political instability in the country (Fagbadebo 2007). In fact, as the literature show, most conflicts in Africa are as a result of ethnicity and poverty, often attributed to government failure (Madibbo 2012), and citizens often fall back to ethnicities because of the failure of the national government to protect their interests, at least in Nigeria (Ihonvbere 1994).

A significant part of this subframe that looks at the failure of security agencies critiqued the extrajudicial killings of Boko Haram members by police especially at the inception of Boko Haram's violence. Yusuf and members of his family were reported as killed by the police after they were captured alive. This was the only time that extrajudicial actions against Boko Haram were profiled as police failure possibly because Boko Haram was not associated with terrorism or "senseless" violence at that time and the capacity of the police to contain Boko Haram was not in question.

*Daily Trust* has obtained a video footage showing what the source of the clip said was Buji Foi, ex-Borno commissioner and the alleged financier of the Boko Haram sect, being **summarily executed by the police**.

Buji Foi was shown in one of two clips, which lasted 40 seconds, being taken out of a white Toyota Hilux (pick up van) by an unidentified mobile policeman. Seconds later, Foi who was wearing a long white gown, with both hands and legs chained, was deserted by the mobile police and left to walk alone.

Suddenly, the sounds of gunshots (about 53) apparently directed towards Foi rent the air. Foi, who was still standing after six shots, slumped after the 10th shot. As the shooting continued words such as "kill him," "ba an bada ode ba?" in Hausa meaning 'haven't they given the order?' could be heard amidst the chaotic situation (Nigeria: Video Shows Ex-Commissioner's Execution, Nasiru L. Abubakar, *Daily Trust*, 04 August 2009).

The extrajudicial killings of Boko Haram members were condemned and presented as a failure of the security forces especially as the treatment was extended to most Muslim male in the north who wore beards or had their trousers above their ankles (Nigeria: Muslims shaved beards to stay alive, Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Ahmad Salkida, and Hamza Idris, *Daily Trust*, 05 August 2017). The police were referred to as exhibiting "incompetence and lack of professionalism"

The (MULAN) has condemned the Nigerian Police over extra judicial killings of suspected leaders of the Boko Haram sect that clashed with security forces in some parts of the North recently

MULAN National President Adekola Mustapha said in a statement that "the Nigerian Police has once again exhibited their incompetence and lack of professionalism when it mattered most."

The association warned the police against indiscriminate arrest of Muslims saying MULAN will "stand up against injustice being meted out to innocent Muslims." (Nigeria: Muslim Lawyers Condemn Police Over Extrajudicial Killings, Abdul-Rahman Abubakar, DT, 06 August 2009).

The actions of the police were mostly condemned by northern Muslims and reported mainly by *Daily Trust*, and created the air of protectionism around Boko Haram by northerners and appeared to give an ethnic slant to the profiling of police as failing.

Sheik Abubakar [Chief Imam of Fibre mosque in Jos] further stated that what the Boko Haram members did was not in the same magnitude to what OPC, Bakassi Boys and the Niger Delta militants did, asking, "Why is this one taking a different dimension?" He therefore opined that the Borno State Commissioner of Police, the DPO in the area as well as the Inspector General of Police have a case to answer (Nigeria: It's Extra-judicial, Barbaric - Sheikh Khalid, Andrew Agbese, Ahmed Muhammed and Mahmud Lalo, 03 August 2009).

However, if placed in context, perhaps this *protectiveness* can be understood, as Muslims felt threatened by security agencies who did not necessarily differentiate between Boko Haram members and ordinary Muslim males.

**Hundreds of bearded Muslims in different parts of Maiduguri, Borno State capital, went about shaving their beards to avoid being killed**

**by security men at the heat of the Boko Haram conflicts which resulted in the death of over 700 people, amongst them, persons presumed innocent.**

The mass shaving began after it became clear that bearded men, irrespective of their ideologies, affiliations, occupation, or ages, were not safe at the heat of the crisis.

Many adherents of the Islamic groups Ahalil-Sunnah Waljama'a and Izala shaved their beards and pulled down their trousers below their **ankles to avoid death in the hands of security men who were said to have regarded every bearded man as a member of the radical sect because the sect members wear beards** (Nigeria: Muslims shaved beards to stay alive, Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Ahmad Salkida, Hamza Idris, *Daily Trust*, 05 August 2009).

When not interpreted with this perspective (and given that this stories mostly appeared in *Daily Trust* which does not have a pronounced southern spread and the possibility of audiences sourcing news online was low due to low internet penetration in the country at this point), the impression that can be inferred is that northern Muslim groups are protective of Boko Haram and, thus, that their criticisms of the southern-led government's handling of the conflict were based primarily on ethnicity. Interviewed journalists confirmed the distrust of news coming out of the north and their beliefs of the tacit support for Boko Haram among northerners, which influenced the framing of news reports especially in newspapers with southern ownership.

Every paper has its interest. Most times the northern papers may not be giving the correct information. There is discrepancy in reporting even in fatalities, that could be attributed to the various interests. There was a time one of these northern papers said it was an attack against the north. There is various bias in the reportage of what is really happening.... To a large extent, politics play a part in how the group is being reported. The just concluded elections really pointed to the fact. The media has political interests (Journalist 1).

Journalists played a part in the current level of Boko Haram especially journalists who were reporting that Boko Haram had an ethnic coloration. **I have a lot of difficulties convincing my colleagues that Boko Haram is not a northern agenda.** It is purely terrorism. They have threatened to kill lots of emirs, only that emirs were provided with lots of securities (Journalist 4).

The present government is successful in the fight against Boko Haram because northern leaders cooperate with him in that fight. When Jonathan brought Ihejirika [a southerner], Ihejirika descended heavily on Boko Haram. We remember that some northern leaders even the present government said, “stop killing our people” .... When you talk of Boko Haram, there is the religious and the political aspect; the religious aspect died with Yusuf. ... The only time some northern leaders started talking about Boko Haram condemning it was when Boko Haram started attacking some of their own (Journalist 5).

The above quotes show that journalists did indeed recognise the political underpinning of Boko Haram but did not divorce it from ethnicity. Thus, in this frame, as in the Boko Haram as violent frame, ethnicity plays a crucial role. During the events around the designation, four years after the extrajudicial killings of 2009, the perception of the Muslim as a member of Boko Haram was still a security narrative—a university lecturer was arrested and paraded as a leader of Boko Haram and emphasis were around him having a PhD in Islamic Studies from a University in Saudi Arabia (Ike Abonyi, Boko Haram: SSS bursts new cells in Kogi, *Thisday*, 21 November 2013), even though members of the Islamic community claimed he was a critic of the methods and actions of Boko Haram (JIBWIS expresses surprise over arrest, Hassan Ibrahim, *Daily Trust*, 22 November 2013).

#### 4.2.3.2 Government Action

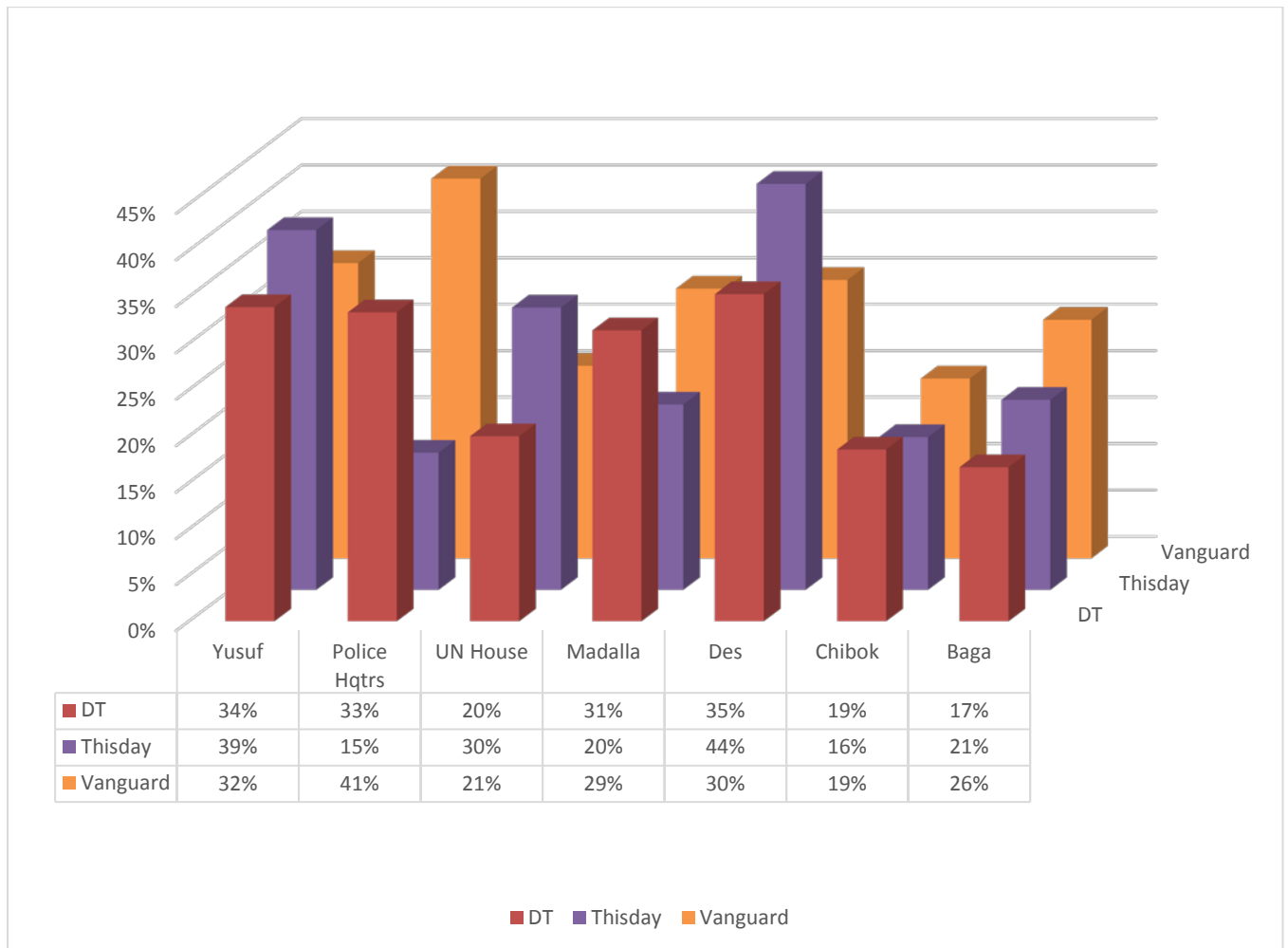


Figure 12 Government action across newspapers

The government action subframe is one of the most used subframes in the reportage of Boko Haram. It comprises views that consider government’s approach to Boko Haram as adequate. Its popularity as a frame could be due to the significant amount of coverage government sources had in the news. Figure 13 shows the spread of the frame across all three newspapers and seven events. From figure 12 there is a noticeable decline in the usage of the frame around Chibok and Baga across the three newspapers. The magnitude and popularity of Boko Haram’s actions (kidnapping the schoolgirls and killing a large number of people) and the

incursion of new narratives and sources (e.g. opposition politicians) are probably some of the reasons this frame was unpopular in these events.

The primary theme in this subframe profiles the government and security agents as taking proper steps against Boko Haram and details the efforts and successes of the government.

However, the military action which had been on for two days finally yielded fruits

Our correspondent who went out found the streets littered with corpses

Yusuf and members of Boko Haram, meaning western education is sin, have been tormenting some parts of the north since last Sunday (Boko Haram Leader Killed, Juliana Taiwo, Michael Olugbode, *Thisday*, 31 July 2009)

In the military fail subframe, one of the failures of the military was the extrajudicial killing of Yusuf. Otherwise, as the quote above shows, the deaths of Boko Haram members (including during events around Yusuf especially before reports of his death as extrajudicial) were framed as successes for the military. The military was not queried for the “streets littered with corpses” which was simply described as “yielded fruits”. Similar actions that clamped down on the group even at its early stage were reported positively: Ammunition, Military Uniforms Discovered in Bauchi (Segun Awofadeji, *Thisday*, 31 July 2009). Some of these positive actions included government’s proactive steps to check radicalisation like regulating preaching of imams and demolishing mosques that were spreading the Boko Haram ideology.

Cleric in the North will require approval of councils of religious leaders before preaching, according to resolutions announced yesterday by governors in the region, as parts of efforts of preventing a repeat of the Boko Haram violence that killed close to 800 people (Nigeria: North Govs Move to Regulate Preaching, Ismail Mudashir, *Daily Trust*, 04 Aug 2009)

Our correspondents who were at the house and the mosque yesterday gathered that the state government ordered the demolition to stop the propagation of the Boko Haram ideology (Nigeria: Kano Demolishes Sect



Leader's Mosque, House, Jaafar Jaafar and Lawan Danjuma Adamu, *Daily Trust*, 30 July 2009).

Security operatives in Jalingo ... are now keeping vigil over an Islamic school; believed to be owned and operated by a disciple of the Maiduguri based leader of the Islamic sect opposed to western education (Nigeria: Boko Haram School Closed in Jalingo, Fidelis Mac-Leva, *Daily Trust*, 30 July 2009).

The close association of the activities of the group with Islam at that time was due to the posture and recognition of the group as a Muslim sect whose radical teachings were turning violent. There was no link to terrorism or any Islamist radicalism. Some of these actions of government were not legal, notably the demolition of houses and mosques but were justified with reasons such as mosques not been in tandem with building codes (Nigeria: 'Kano Received Security Reports on Boko Haram Three Months Ago, Auwalu Umar, *Daily Trust*, 31 July 2009). In the same news story, a Kano state government official gives a conflicting rationale for the destruction of the mosque.

Sule said, when the government realised the ideology of the religious sect after the Wudil incident, it quickly directed that the man's house and adjoining Mosque in Wudil be demolished (Nigeria: 'Kano Received Security Reports on Boko Haram Three Months Ago, Auwalu Umar, *Daily Trust*, 31 July 2009).

Police actions that were also shown to be positive were release of hostages: (Nigeria: 180 Hostages Freed in Maiduguri, *Daily Trust*, 30 July 2009; Police rescues 230 women, children kidnapped by Boko Haram, *Vanguard*, 01 August 2009), arrests of members of the group (Police Parade 18 Members of Sect, Ahmed Mohammed, *Daily Trust*, 31 July 2009), and killing of members of the sect (Boko Haram Leader killed, Isa Umar Gusau, Tashikalmah Hallah and Nasidi A. Yahaya, *Daily Trust*, 31 July 2009). Also, police actions that showed intelligence were also grouped under this frame.

UN House blast - Mastermind, Nur, declared wanted (Jide Ajani, Okey Ndiribe, *Vanguard*, 01 September 2011).

The man who supplied materials for the making of Improvised Explosive Devices, IEDs, to members of the Boko Haram has been arrested by the State Security Service SSS just as it emerged that the sect had sent 270 of its members to Yemen and Sudan for training on terrorism according to security sources trailing activities of the group (Bombing of UN House - supplier of bomb materials arrested, Jide Ajani, Ben Agande, Godwin Oritse, Oscarline Onwuemenyi, Inalegwu Shaibu, Victory Ojeme, *Vanguard*, 02 September 2011).

The narrative in this frame emphasises security dominance over situations. Thus, in cases where Boko Haram is successful—for example, in bombing the UN House—the security agencies were profiled as either on the trail of the perpetrators or arresting them or close contacts.

Two men described by sec agents as "notorious leaders of the Boko Haram extremist sect" are being held in connection with last Friday's bombing of the United Nations House in Abuja (UN building bomb two Boko Haram suspects held, Mohammed Shehu, *Daily Trust*, 01 September 2011).

Journalists are however not allowed access to these suspects and thus have only the military's narrative.

I covered Boko Haram for more than two years, and in that time, BH suspects were never paraded. Sometimes, they will tell you they were taken to DSS [Nigeria's secret service] custody. They call a press conference and tell you they have arrested so and so person. But we keep wondering if you can arrest a person who has stolen a phone in the market and parade the person, why can't you parade someone who has stolen life (Journalist 8).

In news reports that cite the military as successful due to Boko Haram's fatalities, the killings are presented as reactive and in the national interest. Thus, Boko Haram members were typically killed in terrorism attempts (Over 41 Boko Haram terrorists killed in failed attempt to capture Biu, Michael Olugbode, *Thisday*, 14 January 2015) or in battles (Army says 29 Islamists killed in two battles, *Thisday*, 17 Nov 2013) or similar actions intended to undermine the country. There is a consistent reminder in news texts that the army is "in control" especially in response to threats made by the

group: Boko Haram ultimatum, no cause for alarm, police assure citizens (Rotimi Ajayi, *Vanguard*, 02 January 2012).

The Nigerian Army has said the tactics employed by the Islamic fundamentalist sect, Boko Haram, in its operation is strange to it, but assured Nigerians that it is equal to the threat, adding that it will soon unveil strategy to tackle the group (Army: Boko Haram tactics, strange to us, Paul Ohia, Michael Olugbode, Senator Iroegbu, Wole Ayodele, *Thisday*, 28 June 2011).

The military, it would seem, churn out these narratives to counter the possible fear for safety evoked by Boko Haram's actions and thus reassure the people of its commitment to eradicate the group. In this, they were well-supported by the media who bought into the official narrative of war, terror, and war on terror.

So, over time the media also joined in this war because it was a war that consumed everyone. Nobody was insulated from Boko Haram attack. It was a war that was going to consume everybody. So, what do you do? How do you support the troops that are there? By the time, you report BH killed 30 soldiers today, BH killed 20 soldiers the other place, you are more or less demoralising these people. So, what do you do? To a large extent, you shut up Boko Haram. When you shut them out, what you usually get is the government position (Journalist 5).

Thus, the profiling of the activities of Boko Haram as warfare not only legitimised the use of violence by the state but also removed the burden of fairness in journalism reports as journalists saw themselves as part of the war. Wolfsfeld et al. (2008) describes this as the Defensive Mode of reporting—when casualties are on “the other side,” journalists lower the level of prominence or ignore the story entirely and/or use a lot of official sources and create distance between events and their audiences or transform victims on the other side to statistics. The military always positioned itself as ready to protect the people on the one hand and defeat Boko Haram on the other hand. Curfews were introduced in troubled spots, security at borders was tightened, and Boko Haram was a priority at security meetings.

Top security officials, Sunday, rose from a crucial session with a declaration that Boko Haram decision to destroy Nigeria must be urgently

nip in the bud, saying that the menace underscores the budgetary proposal for 2012 fiscal year (Boko Haram Bombings: Presidency to organise security summit, Daniel Idonor, *Vanguard*, 25 December 2011).

He [immigration officer] said that the water-tight security in various border posts was perpetual and stronger to contend with any form of attack by illegal immigrants or the Boko Haram sect (Boko Haram: Immigration beefs up security at borders, *Vanguard*, 17 June 2011).

Boko Haram: security beefed up in Lagos (Femi Akinola, *DT*, 30 June 2011).

Boko Haram: Curfew imposed on Abuja bars, cinemas (Nasir Imam, *Daily Trust*, 30 June 2011).

The military's resolve to dispel fear by asserting control over the situation, possibly leads to several grand-standing and false claims by the military, usually around casualty figures. As journalists had limited access to troubled spots, they relied mainly on military claims. Moreover, when they discover disparities in numbers, they take the numbers given by the military for various reasons including national interests.

I can remember vividly when the second Nyanya bomb blast happened, a particular colleague of mine was close by so he immediately was drafted to the scene of the incident and while at the scene he was able to count a particular number of bodies littered around which he filed in. But just shortly after the report came in the Nigerian security agencies released a statement and the number of bodies was slashed by, I think, 3, do you understand? (Journalist 8)

My experience with government officials giving information is, for example, the army PRO is the image maker of the army. He is not going to tell you anything that will put the army in bad light. If you have 100 lives lost, they are not going to tell you that 100 lives were lost because it will look as if they have failed in their assignment. They as much as possible try to make it look like it's a minimal incident. So, unless you are on the ground or you have eye witnesses to give you the real story. As a journalist, you usually go with the figure that the govt tells you but you also include in the report that the police said, Amnesty said (Journalist 1).

Chibok and Baga, two events during which the government and military were criticised and which had a lot of international spotlights, were however different. The military was called out for lying about the rescue of the Chibok girls and their 150-

fatality figure for Baga was contrasted and placed side by side with the 2000 of Amnesty.

On the government's part, its proactivity was mainly around assurances from the president or members of his cabinet that the government had Boko Haram in check: UN House blast: We are on top of the situation – Jonathan (Daniel Idonor, *Vanguard*, 27 August 2011), Boko Haram - There'll be no reprisal killings in N-Delta - Kuku (Kenneth Ehigiator, *Vanguard*, 03 Jan 2012)

An exasperated President Goodluck Jonathan Saturday went tough, both in words and in action, in combating the spate of terrorism and ethno-religious clashes unleashed on Nigeria by Boko Haram and other disgruntled elements (Jonathan declares emergency within four states, Kunle Akogun, Ahamefula Ogbu, Yemi Akinsuyi, Paul Obi, Christopher Isiguzo, *Thisday*, 01 January 2012).

Specific government's actions, beyond words, were also framed along the lines of strategic meetings with security personnel towards abating the threat of Boko Haram and the declaration of a state of emergency in several northern states: Jonathan declares state of emergency in Borno, others (*Vanguard*, 31 Dec 2011).

Also for the second time in two days, President Jonathan again met with security chiefs in the country apparently to plot strategies on how to combat the Boko Haram menace (Jonathan: it's fight to the finish with Boko Haram, Ahamefula Ogbu, Yemi Akinsuyi, Kasim Sumaina, Charles Onyekanmuo, Segun Awofadeji, *Thisday*, 31 December 2011).

The Federal Government is re-strategising and re-jiggling its security plans in order to tackle the spate of bombings in the country, Interior Minister Abba Moro said in Abuja yesterday, a day after the Christmas Day bombings that left dozens of people dead (Minister: FG reviewing security plans, Abbas Jimoh, Misbahu Bashir, Abdulwasil Hassan, *Daily Trust*, 27 December 2011).

The government efforts to reduce radicalisation by building schools for poor northerners who formed the possible nexus for indoctrination was another government's effort.

Federal government plans to build at least 400 schools for almajiris in the next four years as a way to mop up 9.6 million children from the streets of the country (FG to build 400 schools for almajiris, *Thisday*, 17 June 2011).

By building schools for poor northern children, the government intends to disrupt the readily available source of Boko Haram's foot soldiers and possibly introduce northern youths to education which might counter the radicalising influences of Boko Haram. The direct actions of government were usually nonviolent such as the building of schools or developing strategies towards defeating the group.

#### 4.2.3.3 Summary

In summary, the response of government frame was the most used frame in reporting Boko Haram. It was the most dominant frame in five of the seven events analysed in this study—*Yusuf*, *Police*, *Designation*, *Chibok*, and *Baga*. It was used in two mains or subframes—government action and government inaction. The *government action* subframe was used to categorise news reports that presented actions of governments as positive while the *government inaction* subframe was used to categorise news reports that presented the responses of government as inadequate. The government action subframe was the more used of the two probably for two reasons: government and security officials had a lot of space in the media and generally presented their efforts in good light and journalists, especially in Boko Haram's early violence, took the side of the government in their reports. The inaction frame was well used around *Yusuf*, *Chibok* and *Baga*. Its use around *Yusuf* was centred on the criticism of the manner the Boko Haram founder was killed in, which presented security agents as inefficient. In *Chibok*, it was more used than the government action frame especially as the efforts of security agents to rescue the kidnapped schoolgirls were questioned by opposition politicians, residents, and family members of kidnapped schoolgirls. In fact, unlike previous incidents in which

journalists took the position of the government, the media called out the military on its false statements regarding the rescue of the kidnapped schoolgirls.

In this frame, Boko Haram was presented as chiefly a political problem.

#### 4.2.3 Boko Haram as political/ethnic conspiracy

This frame comprises stories that profile Boko Haram through the ethnic and political configuration of Nigeria. In the dataset used in this research, as regards numbers, this frame was not very popular having been used below 10% as a frame in every news event analysed except Chibok (15%) (Table 9). It is, however, a significant frame because of the ethnic and identity schema it can activate in audience members. The frame does not examine the presentation of Boko Haram’s violence as ethnoreligious (which was covered under the Boko Haram as other frame) but instead concerns itself with the framing of the group as a product of conspiracies associated with various religious and/or ethnic polarisations in Nigeria.

*Table 9 Boko Haram as conspiracy frame across newspapers and analysed news events (Percentages represent usage across news events)*

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga	
<b>Daily Trust</b>	4 7%	1 3%	0	5 6%	2 12%	12 17%	3 6%	27 8%
<b>Thisday</b>	0	2 7%	1 5%	2 3%	0	13 13%	4 10%	22 7%
<b>Vanguard</b>	0	0	4 8%	7 8%	2 10%	15 15%	1 3%	29 8%
<b>Total</b>	4 3%	3 3%	5 5%	14 6%	4 6%	40 15%	8 7%	78 7%

As a frame, it was mostly relied on as a primary frame in this dataset (Table 10). In Yusuf and Designation, it was used 100% of the time as a primary frame. It was used above 70% as a primary frame in four of the analysed events—UN House

(80%), Madalla (71%), Chibok (73%), and Baga (88%)—and below 50% in only one frame—Police (33%).

*Table 10 Boko Haram as conspiracy primary and secondary frames usage across analysed news events*

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga
<b>Primary frame</b>	4	1	4	10	4	29	7
	100%	33%	80%	71%	100%	73%	88%
<b>Secondary frame</b>	0	2	1	4	0	11	1
	0%	67%	20%	29%	0%	27%	12%

It was sparingly used as a secondary frame not appearing at all in *Yusuf* and *Designation*, above 50% in only one frame (Police 67%) and below 50% in *UN House* (20%), *Madalla* (29%), *Chibok* (27%), and *Baga* (12%) (Table 10). Thus, in the majority of stories where this frame was used, it was the dominant narrative. The analysed newspapers show few differences in the usage of this frame. Of the three newspapers used in the study, only *Daily Trust* used the frame in the aftermath of the *death of Yusuf* (Table 9). It was not used in *Vanguard* in the first two analysed news events (*Yusuf* and *Police*). The proximity of *Daily Trust* to the scenes of the violence could account for this early reporting using this frame. The frame was most used by all newspapers during the Chibok kidnapping.

The narratives in this frame were grouped under two subframes in this study:

1. Political and ethnic conspiracy
2. Nationalism



Table 11 Subframes of Boko Haram as political conspiracy (% calculated from cumulative frames across news events)

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga
<b>Political/ethnic</b>	2 1%	1 1%	5 5%	7 3%	1 1%	16 6%	2 2%
<b>Nationalism</b>	2 1%	2 2%	0	7 3%	3 4%	24 9%	6 5%

The numbers show a little more emphasis, in this data set, on nationalism (n=44, 56%) over conspiracy (n=34, 44%) (Table 17). Although, while the political and ethnic conspiracy subframe is consistently present across news events, the nationalism subframe is absent in the bombing of the United Nations building.

Table 12 Subframes of the Boko Haram as conspiracy across newspapers

	DT	Thisday	Vanguard
<b>Political/ethnic</b>	8	10	16
<b>Nationalism</b>	19	12	13

Table 12 shows how each newspaper reported Boko Haram using each subframe. *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* reported more with the nationalism subframe while *Vanguard* reported more using the conspiracy frame.

#### 4.2.3.1 Political and ethnic conspiracy

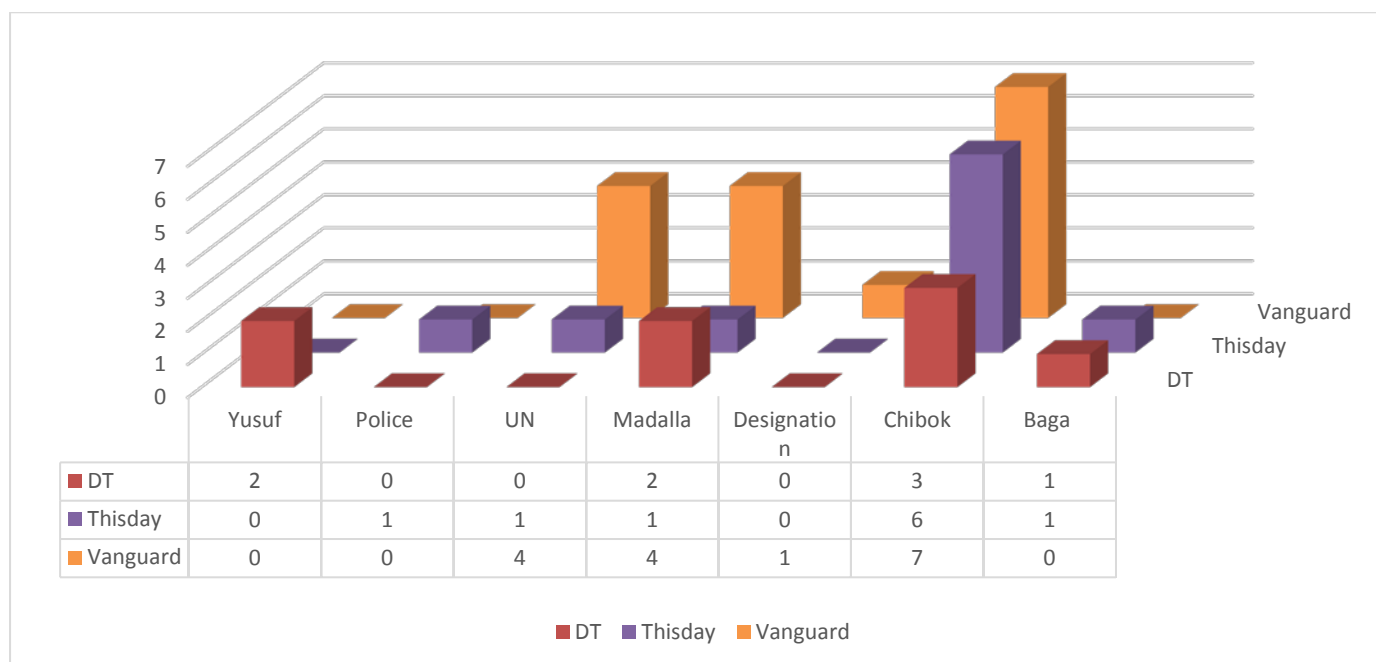


Figure 13 Political and ethnic conspiracy frame across analysed newspapers

This subframe deals with the political and ethnic conspiracies present in the reportage of Boko Haram. Of the three newspapers, it was used the most by *Vanguard* (Figure 13) and appeared in all three newspapers in only one event, Chibok. It was used to speculate on possible political conspiracy around the government’s handling of Boko Haram. For instance, the extrajudicial killing of Yusuf was sometimes framed as an attempt to protect politically exposed individuals who might be implicated as funding the group.

A social critic and former Lagos State police commissioner Alhaji Abubakar Tsav has picked holes in the killing of the Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf by the Police, saying it was culpable murder to cover up some politicians and security officials apparently behind him.

He feared that the Boko Haram may come out again, explaining that his feeling was hinged on the fact that the only persons who could have provided useful information about the organisation and financing of the sect - the leader, Mohammed Yusuf and his lieutenants have been silenced (Nigeria: Tsav Says It's Cover-Up Attempt, Hir Joseph, *Daily Trust*, 03 August 2009).

Acting Director of Media and Publicity of DPP Malam Abubakar Ateeku Yusuf told *Daily Trust* yesterday in Abuja that Yusuf's killing is uncalled for and a deliberate act of cover up (Nigeria: DPP Calls for Inquiry, Abbas Jimoh, *Daily Trust*, 04 Aug 2009)

A significant source group in this subframe are ethnic nationalities who showed the ethnic dimensions of conflicts in Nigeria. In this case, northern leaders are accused of deliberately sponsoring violent attacks through Boko Haram for a purely political reason—making the country difficult to govern for the south-led federal government.

It also accused two former Northern Military Head of States (name withheld) and former Vice President of sponsoring the violent attacks by the group to undermine the government of President Goodluck Jonathan (Ijaw group threatens to tackle Boko Haram, Emeka Amaize, *Vanguard*, 07 September 2011).

Elders and leaders of the South-South region have condemned the activities of Boko Haram, describing it as an orchestrated plot by a tiny minority to make the country ungovernable under President Goodluck Jonathan (Boko Haram, plot to destabilise Jonathan - South South leaders, Jimitota Onoyume, *Vanguard*, 29 August 2011)

Besides southern ethnic groups who accused northern leaders of deliberately orchestrating Boko Haram violence, southern MPs also accused the northern elites including current political leaders of possibly having ties with Boko Haram from an analysis of their actions.

Nyong (Cross River MP) who stated that the governor's relationship with Boko Haram should be thoroughly investigated, said for Kwankwaso to have made such a call, meant that he was complacent about security

matters or in complete support of the unwholesome activities of Boko Haram (Boko Haram - Cross River Deputy Speaker flays Kwankwaso, Jude Okwe, 06 September 2011).

The usage of this frame also shows some level of deviation from the religious narrative of Boko Haram. Certain news stories emphasised the political nature of the conflict and divorce the group and its actions from religion.

While observing that Boko Haram has become 99 percent politics, Bishop Kukah stated: "To get to the bottom of this thing, for me it is not about religion, it is about designing the architecture of governance (Kukah: Boko Haram not properly diagnosed, Rakiya Muhammad, *DT*, 28 December 2011)

He (Chairman of the Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP)] insisted that the Boko Haram sect was established by someone purely for political reasons (Bomb blasts: Politicians advise on security challenges, *DT*, 29-Dec-11)

The ethnic dimension of the reporting of Boko Haram is very apparent in this frame especially as the activities of the group are presented as a northern political conspiracy to get back power. Thus, there is in some news stories, a shift from framing Boko Haram as religious to a political tool.

The operational tactics of Boko Haram (western education is sin), a supposed religious sect with curious objectives changed and has since become a tool to return presidency immediately to a few who claim that holding on to political power in Nigeria is their god given right (Boko Haram - Sharia or Militant wing of northern politicians, Mudiaga Ogberho, *Vanguard*, 05 January 2012)

Following this narrative, northern politicians mainly of the opposition party were presented as not agreeing with the ruling party in tackling the violence of Boko Haram (APC governors shun meeting with Jonathan (Jaiyeola Andrews, *Thisday*, 17 April 2014). The ruling party did take this accusation further sometimes accusing the opposition of direct complicity in Boko Haram's violence.

National leadership of the People's Democratic Party, PDP has alleged that the leadership of the opposition, All Progressives Congress, APC and their governors were responsible for Monday's bomb explosion by the members of the Boko Haram which took place in Nyanya, a suburb of the nation's capital, Abuja, where over hundred persons were feared dead, with several others, injured. (Abuja explosions: APC leadership, governors are responsible, PDP alleges, Henry Umoru, *Vanguard*, 14 April 2014)

APC aids, abets terrorism – PDP (*Vanguard*, 14 April 2014)

The political divide mimics the north-south divide in the country and we see northern politicians accusing “Jonathan” of an anti-northern conspiracy.

Nyako accuses Jonathan of genocide, impunity against northern states (Chuks Okocha, 19 April 2014)

The emphasis on Jonathan is instructive as the federal government is made up of representatives of major ethnic groups in the country. Singling out the southern leader shows how the narrative was meant to reflect the ethnic tensions arising from the violence. Narratives in defence of the government also emphasise Jonathan.

Alaafin blames Jonathan's political foes for Boko Haram (Emmanuel Aziken, *Vanguard*, 22 April 2014)

Boko Haram: Jonathan has stepped on toes, so people are fighting back says Ogbemudia (Simon Ebegbulem, 22 April 2014)

Again, these emphasise the primacy of ethnicity in the understanding of the conflict; news reports sometimes threw a blanket accusation over all northern politicians as collaborating with Boko Haram.

For instance, Saturday *Vanguard* was told that the terrorists have been found to be getting support from politicians of all grades especially from the North East and the larger Northern environment. Governors of these areas were also fingered in the situation accusing them of playing conspiracy including coming out with statements in the day and doing the opposite at night (Insurgency: the security question, Kingsley Omonobi, *Vanguard*, 26 April 2014).

As *Vanguard* puts it “Terrorism: it's a plan to polarise the country” (Aderonke Adeyeri, *Vanguard*, 25 April 2014). Problems arising from security agents handling of the crises were also blamed on sabotage within and outside the security forces.

This attempt by the military working in synergy with other security agencies have however suffered some setbacks due to several factors which **Saturday Vanguard investigation has found out to include sabotage, outright lies, deceit and connivance on the part of vested interest who for reasons best known to them, would not like the carnage of the group to go away just yet** (Insurgency: the security question, Kingsley Omonobi, *Vanguard*, 26 April 2014)

ACF seeks probe of Nyako's claims (Misbahu Bashir, *DT*, 23 April 2014)  
[Support for governor who accused the federal government of conspiracy]

The presidential aide said the governor's letter was extremely divisive and intentionally meant to incite one section of the country against the other. (Jonathan to Nyako: Your memo senseless, unpatriotic, Isiaka Wakili, *Daily Trust*, 20 April 2014).

In the first quote, *Vanguard* claimed that its investigations show that setbacks in military operations are down to conspiracies by “vested interests” who would not like the “carnage” of Boko Haram “to go away yet”. At this time, elections were less than a year away. In the second quote, a leading northern group, the Afenifere Consultative Forum (ACF) supports the stance of a northern governor who accused the southern-led federal government of, among other things, committing genocide against the north in the guise of fighting Boko Haram. The third quote shows the southern-led government's response to the northern governor calling his memo senseless and unpatriotic and designed to incite one section of the country against the other. The three quotes sum up how political and ethnic conspiracies tied up and sometimes drove the narrative on Boko Haram.

To the journalists interviewed, Boko Haram had two distinct aspects: political and religious; and this reflected in their reporting. For some, however, the religious aspect of Boko Haram ended with Yusuf and the political much more at the fore.

When you talk of Boko Haram, there is the religious and the political aspect; the religious aspect died with Yusuf (Journalist 5).

Thus, even serious political events such as the abduction of the Chibok girls were seen through the political conspiracy lens by journalists. As shown above (figure 14), Chibok was the only news event in which this frame was used in the three newspapers analysed in this study.

When you talk about the global affiliation to Isis, I would say that is when you talk about religion. There is a political aspect of BH, there is the ethnic aspect of BH and there is the religious aspect. Because I don't understand why security operatives will tell a particular state that exams cannot go on in your state and you say you can be able to take care of the children in your state and then they are kidnapped and you can do nothing. That, for me, is politics (Journalist 8).

Here, the journalist talks about a widespread conspiracy about the Chibok schoolgirls' abduction which claims that security reports deemed it unsafe to write exams in the secondary school. State officials, however, disregarded this report and opened up the school for exams. The conspiracy, here, is that the state government was working in cahoots with members of Boko Haram to disrupt the workings of the federal government. This view was held by many including members of the federal government at that time (see Yakubu 2017).

In this frame, there, sometimes, was a level of separation between the ethnic and the religious. Boko Haram was thus purely political and had nothing to do with Islam. For instance, a Muslim southern ethnic agitator asking the president to contest for a second term is a clear example of this dissociation of Boko Haram from Islam and cementing it instead as an ethnic conspiracy.

He called on President Jonathan to run for a second term, saying that Boko Haram had nothing to do with Islam (**Insurgency, ploy to disenfranchise northern Christians** – Dokubo, Victor Edozie, *Daily Trust*, 21 April 2014)

Given the closeness of religion to ethnicity in Nigeria, however, this clear separation was scarcely possible. Northern Islamic leaders for example, accused the government of using Boko Haram as a cover for its injustice against northern Muslims

Sheik Lau [National Chairman of Jama'atul Izalatil Bid'ah Wa'iqamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS)] who spoke at a press conference organised by JIBWIS in Kastina said **the Boko Haram insurgency was a thing of the past and that the present situation was part of a malicious conspiracy to eradicate Muslims across the country.**

He said Nigeria was moving in an abnormal manner due to the bias leadership style of the federal government against northern Muslims.

Lau said even the leadership of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has stopped blaming the killings on Muslims, adding that the government is hiding under the umbrella of Boko Haram to kill innocent Muslims (JIBWIS alleges attacks targeted to eliminate Muslims, Atika Balal, *Daily Trust*, 21 Apr 2014)

Thus, here the federal government is the primary beneficiary of the actions of Boko Haram which they use as a guise to attack northern Muslims. In framing conspiracy against the south-led government, there is a change in the existing narrative of Christian as victims with Muslims as victims. What this shows, however, is the north-south divide in the country and how it not only affected the understanding and perception of Boko Haram but also its role in framing Boko Haram as a political conspiracy.



#### 4.2.4.2 Nationalism

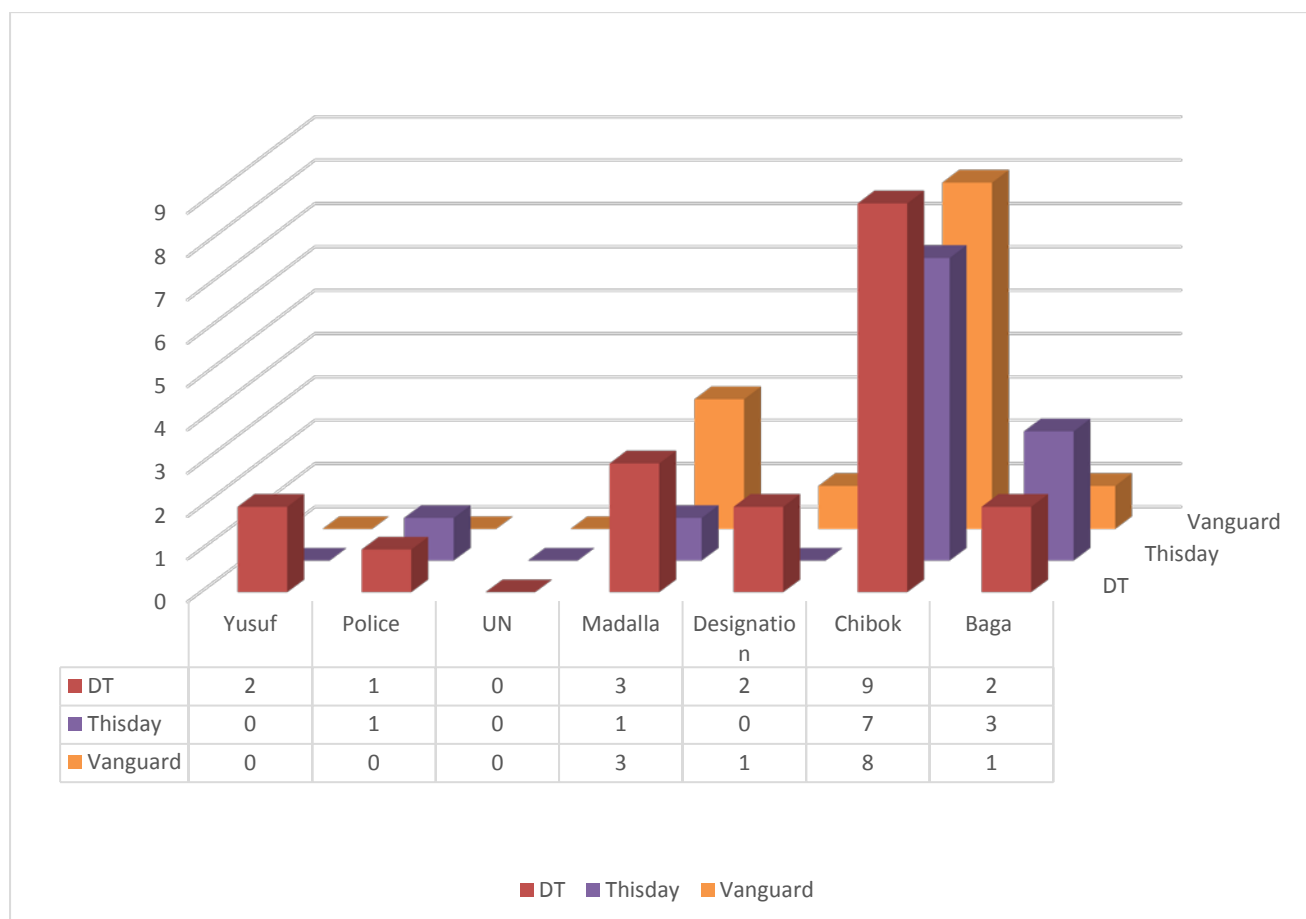


Figure 14 Nationalism subframe across newspapers

The nationalism subframe was a counter frame to the polarising narratives of the political and ethnic conspiracy subframe. Thus, like the political and ethnic conspiracy frame, it was most used in *Chibok*. There are also close similarities around newspaper usage of this subframe (Figure 14); completely absent in the bombing of the United Nations house, its highest frequency was in Chibok in all three newspapers.

One of its primary uses was to rally the citizenry around the flag and emphasise the “unity in diversity” of the country. As most of the reporting around Boko Haram was about identity—especially with the political conspiracy frame—this frame was an attempt to counter this narrative and present the Nigerian people as united. Thus, it was mainly a political frame and canvassed using political actors.

Azazi, for his part, urged Christians not to retaliate over the bombings. **"We are Nigerians.** I don't see any major **conflict between the Christian community and Muslim community,**" he said, "Retaliation is not the answer because if you retaliate, at what point will it end? Nigeria must survive as a nation." (Christmas Day Bombings: Sultan, Jonathan move to douse tension, Nuruddeen Abdallah, 28 December 2011)

Political actors that canvassed this position insisted on the indissolubility of the country and how citizens are all Nigerians regardless of ethnicity or religious beliefs. The government or the party in power in canvassing this position of national unity encouraged opposition politicians to do the same. Thus, supporting government's plans was hailed, for example, as “a show of statesmanship and patriotism”.

The party [PDP] said in a statement: "We call on politicians across the political divide to moderate their comments on sensitive national security matters in order not to further inflame passions and divide the citizenry. **Moments of challenge such as this require a show of statesmanship and patriotism** from all the citizens and not grandstanding and an opportunistic show of brinksmanship aimed at scoring cheap political goals (Nigeria: PDP warns Politicians Against Unguarded Remarks, Muideen Olaniyi, *Daily Trust*, 06 August 2009).

Jonathan hails **Buhari's patriotic call against terrorism** (Jaiyeola Andrews, *Thisday*, 23 April 2014)

As a counter to the political and ethnic conspiracy subframe, the emphasis here was on presenting a “united front” against Boko Haram in the national interest, keeping aside political interests as the contrary will amount to not prioritising the lives and wellbeing of citizens. As Kaldor (2004) argues, both the idea of the ‘nation’ and the idea of the ‘other’ are given substance in war.

They resolved to put aside their political differences and present a united front in the fight against terror, which in recent weeks, has been politicised (Jonathan, Governors agree to unite to fight insecurity *Thisday*, 25 April 2014).

For the umpteenth time, the political class has cautioned against playing politics with the crucial issue of security of lives and property of the citizenry (Stop playing politics with insecurity, Labour tells PDP, APC, Linda Eroke, *Thisday*, 23 Apr 14)

Besides the efforts of politicians in presenting a common front, this subframe also emphasises the role of the ordinary citizen, traditional and religious rulers in achieving a united front. Certain news reports emphasised this collaboration by members of different faiths or ethnicity that was devoid of ethnoreligious divisions.

Chibok: Christian, Muslim youths want abducted girls released (Abbas Jimoh, *Daily Trust*, 27 April 2014).

The Army Chief said traditional institutions and religious leaders have important roles to play in addressing the Boko Haram attacks by counselling their members to be vigilant and to share vital information with the authorities (Army chief: Boko Haram are cowards, Misbahu Bashir, *DT*, 30 June 2011).

The roles of the ordinary citizen in achieving this united front were primarily to supporting government's efforts and providing information on whereabouts of members of Boko Haram.

Unite, defeat Boko Haram, Maku urges Nigerians (Emmanuel Elebeke, *Vanguard*, 22 April 2014)

Representatives tasks locals on information about insurgents (Ismail Adebayo, *Daily Trust*, 13 April 2014)

Terrorists can't defeat collective will of Nigerians' (Balarabe Alkassim, *Daily Trust*, 19 April 2014)

A small part of this subframe critiqued the motives and influences of foreign actors on Boko Haram. There were suggestions that the conflict is seen and treated as purely a national problem especially when the motives of foreign powers especially regarding the unity of Nigeria are supposedly unclear.

We need help, but not at any price (*Daily Trust*, 17 November 2013)

In fact, this suspicion of the motives of foreign powers led to doubts on the culpability of Boko Haram in most attacks attributed it. This was, however, during the early violence of Boko Haram when its level of violence had not been ascertained.

"I doubt if it was Boko Haram because of the attack on the churches. No Islamic organisation can attack churches and inflict so much pain on people on Christmas day because Boko Haram claims that it is an Islamic organisation." (**Balarabe Musa fingers foreign agents in bomb attacks**, Dotun Ibiwoye, *Vanguard*, 28 December 2011).

The news texts show the federal government as happy with foreign involvement in the conflict, in as much as it condemned and blacklisted the actions of Boko Haram.

Boko Haram: FG urges international community to toe U.S. line (*Vanguard*, 16 November 2013)

#### 4.2.3.3 Summary

The political and ethnic conspiracy frame comprised news reports that presented reports on Boko Haram through the ethnic and political configuration of Nigeria. It was not a popular frame in terms of frequency of usage but was very influential in terms of the schema it could potentially activate especially around the area of ethnicity. Most reports using this frame used it as a primary frame and emphasised the political aspects of Boko Haram devoid of religion albeit in a way that showed the north-south divide polarisation in the country. Thus, narratives in this frame were grouped into two subframes, ethnic and political conspiracy and nationalism. While the ethnic and political conspiracy subframe had reports that blamed the success of Boko Haram on members of opposing political leanings or different ethnicities and was polarising, the nationalism subframe contained stories that attempted to promote the supremacy of the national identity and, thus, acted as a counter frame to the political and ethnic polarisation frame.

#### 4.2.4 Boko Haram as prevailing and legitimate

The Boko Haram as prevailing frame comprises news stories that presented Boko Haram as successful in its efforts. As used in analysed newspapers, news articles coded as using this frame generally presented Boko Haram as powerful or as winning or as a group that can be negotiated with. The themes under this frame has been divided into three subframes: *Boko Haram as powerful*, *Boko Haram as winning*, and *Peaceful resolution*.

*Table 13 Boko Haram as prevailing and legitimate across newspapers and news events (Percentages represent usage across news events)*

	Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designat	Chibok	Baga	
<b>Daily Trust</b>	2 3%	3 10%	2 8%	4 5%	0	0	5 10%	16 5%
<b>Thisday</b>	0	1 4%	0	1 2%	0	2 2%	3 8%	7 2%
<b>Vanguard</b>	0	7 16%	3 6%	1 1%	0	2 2%	5 14%	18 5%
	2 1%	11 11%	5 5%	6 3%	0	4 2%	13 11%	41 4%

The frame was used in 4% (41) of the total number of frames isolated in this study (primary and secondary). Its most occurrence was in events around the bombing of the Police Headquarters in 2011 (n=11, 11%) and Baga in 2015 (n=13, 11%). It was completely absent in stories around the designation because the press reporting of the designation presented it as an important moment in the fight against Boko Haram, presented security agents as winning the fight, presented Boko Haram as illegitimate, and favoured security offensives against Boko Haram. The frame was also present in UN House (n=5, 5%), Madalla (n=6, 3%), Chibok (n=4, 2%) and Yusuf (n=2, 1%).

*Table 14 Boko Haram as prevailing and legitimate primary frames across news events*

Yusuf	Police	UN House	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga	
<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>85%</b>

Most of its usage as a frame were as primary frames (Table 14)—It was used as a primary frame in all stories it appeared in, *Yusuf*, *Police*, *UN House*, and *Madalla*. In *Chibok*, it was used in 75% of stories and 62% in *Baga* as primary frames. This is primarily because stories that use this frame are majorly standalone stories except in *Chibok* and *Baga* where the activities of the group became more daring and narratives that presented the group as winning became a part of the general narrative. Due to its low occurrence as a frame in this data set, there are not considerable differences as used in the three analysed newspapers (Table 13). Of the three, only *Daily Trust* had the frame from the first instances of Boko Haram’s violence (death of Yusuf). Newspapers, generally, did not present Boko Haram as illegitimate at that time (preferring to refer to them as a religious sect), instead focusing on the government and military action. In fact, the low occurrence of this frame generally is due to the focus of newspaper framings which were generally around government’s influence and the violent actions of Boko Haram themselves.

*Table 15 Subframes of the Boko Haram as prevailing and legitimate frame*

<b>Subframes</b>	<b>DT</b>	<b>Thisday</b>	<b>Vanguard</b>	
Powerful	1	1	5	7
Winning	6	3	6	15
Peaceful	9	3	7	19
Resolution				

The frame has three subframes: Boko Haram as powerful, Boko Haram as winning, and peaceful resolution (Table 15). The peaceful resolution was the most used of the subframes cumulatively and in all three newspapers. Thus, most frames that used this frame presented Boko Haram as a group that could be negotiated with.

#### *4.2.4.1 Boko Haram as powerful*

This subframe presents Boko Haram as an important northern group speaking and acting in the interest of northern Muslims. Stories containing this frame are usually standalone stories with Boko Haram members, usually its leader or spokesperson, as the source. When used with non-Boko Haram members as the source, it was used to appeal to the group to rescind on some of its decisions in a way that conferred some influence on the group. The frame showed the violent evolution of Boko Haram from an ethnoreligious group “which could be crushed”, to a group whose influence demanded it be listened to, to a group making progress in its quest for an Islamic state, to a group with more regional ambitions. This is similar to the evolution of the group—from substate missionary activism to substate jihadists to national jihadist, to transnational jihadists— postulated by Gray and Adeakin (2015). In presenting itself as representative of northern Muslims, the group presented itself as well equipped and motivated to face the Nigerian military in defence of “our brothers”.

"We [Boko Haram] would confront them squarely to protect our brothers [northerners]." (Boko Haram issues three-day ultimatum to Christians, ready to attack soldiers, Tunde Sulaiman, *Thisday*, 02 January 2012)

To demonstrate their power and influence, the group accrued to itself some level of control in the daily running of the country since their successful infiltration of the police headquarters conferred on them certain superiority over the police. For

instance, it made references to civilian movements even in Abuja, the Capital city of Nigeria.

The organisation [Boko Haram] advised civilians to restrict their movements in Maiduguri and environs as well as other northern states and the FCT, as members of the sect have vowed to explore new strategies which will be very devastating (Boko Haram cautions civilians, Ndahi Marama, *Vanguard*, 17 June 2011).

News reports that also refer to this influence of Boko Haram are those that show the group making demands, usually, of the government. An example is its request for trials of police officers and political leaders involved in the extrajudicial killings of Yusuf and his family before talks of negotiation.

The sect, popularly called Boko Haram had on Monday called for the prosecution of the first-class traditional ruler for his alleged involvement in the killing of its leaders during the crisis (Borno monarch denies role in killing of Boko Haram leaders, *Vanguard*, 17 June 2011)

Rejecting Amnesty, Making demands, what we want, by Boko Haram (*Vanguard*, 26 June 2011)

In recognition of this power (and a show of distrust towards security protection), news reports show stakeholders and residents appealing directly to Boko Haram as a way of guaranteeing peace.

Gujungu (AYF president) also appealed to the leadership of the Boko Haram to rescind their decision of launching more attacks after the Ramadan (AYF to Boko Haram - Stop killing Innocent people, *Daily Trust*, 01 September 2011)

Borno women appeal to insurgents to free abducted girls (*Vanguard*, 23 April 2014)

Thus, this subframe not only recognises the growing influence of Boko Haram but also, sometimes, shows the lack of confidence in the military's role in safeguarding



citizens in troubled areas. The steadily increasing influence and power of the group are also seen in Boko Haram's growing range of influence which created insinuations that it might expand its area of operation to parts of southern Nigeria.

Nyanya: Boko Haram's everywhere now – Igbo leader (Nwabueze Okonkwo, *Vanguard*, 22 April 2014)

#### 4.2.4.2 *Boko Haram as Winning*

The second part of this frame, which is closely tied to the Boko Haram as powerful subframe, presents Boko Haram as winning especially in getting its demands listened to and in gaining territories. One example of Boko Haram being listened to is the trial of police officers accused of killing the leader of the group, two years after the act was committed probably due to the group's insistence of a trial of those officers as a condition for relenting in its violence.

**In what appears to be subtle moves to appease the Boko Haram sect members** who claimed responsibility for last Thursday's bomb attack on police headquarters Abuja, the Nigeria Police said, yesterday, that it will arraign the officers accused of killing the sect leader in court next month

Boko Haram leader, Yusuf, died while in police custody in July 2009 and **one of the conditions given by the sect members to stop the killing of policemen and violence in the northern states was for justice to be done for the killing of their leader** (Boko Haram: Police arraign officers next month, Jimoh Babatunde, Daniel Eteghe, *Vanguard*, 24 June 2011)

News reports did not present the arraignment of these police officers as upholding the rule of law but as a response to the growing influence of Boko Haram to dictate terms of engagement with the Nigerian government. Thus, the group evolved from a group to be crushed by the military to one that is subtly appeased.

Boko Haram as winning is also vividly captured in the several territories it gained in 2015 especially Baga. News reports profiles this as a significant victory for the group not only because of the massive fatality recorded in the city (about 2000 according to figures by Amnesty and local reports, 150 according to police figures) but also because of its significance as the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). The MNJTF comprised soldiers from Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroun.

Boko Haram's seizure of a key town and military base in Nigeria's far northeast has tightened its grip on this region, undermining efforts to tackle the insurgency, experts said on Tuesday.

The capture of Baga and the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) now means the Islamists control all three of Borno state's border with Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

The militants have seized more than two dozen towns in northeast Nigeria in the last six months in their quest to establish a hardline Islamic state (Fears over latest Boko Haram town, military base seizure, *Vanguard*, 06 January 2015).

Boko Haram as winning here comprises annexing Baga as one of the cities in its caliphate, seizing the military base from the military and controlling the border to three neighbouring countries. Thus, in this frame we see, again, the evolution of Boko Haram from one to be crushed, to one to be listened to, to one that is making steady gains in “their quest to establish a hard-line Islamic state”. The victories of Boko Haram were, however, mostly depicted negatively in the press which, for instance, presented Baga as smelling of decomposing bodies.

It is corpses, smells of decomposing bodies everywhere in Baga (*Vanguard*, 12 January 2015)

As news reports showed in this frame, Boko Haram controlled specific areas of Nigeria especially in the northeast; and as the “decomposing bodies” description of Baga, these annexations were equally shown as negative especially with reports

showing “thousands of residents fleeing”. News reports pointed to the annexation as the highlight of Boko Haram’s power and a certain report referred to it as “notoriety” as it was “an affront to Nigeria’s sovereignty”.

With less than 50 days to the start of general elections across the country, the Boko Haram insurgents are still in control of a total of 13 local government areas in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa.

Thousands of residents have fled these areas since the group began capturing territories in August last year. Many others have also been killed

**But the notoriety of the group climaxed on August 23, 2014 when its leader, Abubakar Shekau, declared Gwoza town in southern Borno as the headquarters of what he called "Islamic Caliphate" in a move that was a clear affront on Nigeria's sovereignty.** The sect dislodged the entire population of the town and kept it under its firm control (41 days to elections - 13 Local Govts under Boko Haram, Hamza Idris, Kabiru Anwar, *Daily Trust*, 04 January 2015).

In fact, an editorial referred to pledges of the government to contain Boko Haram as “nonsense” and argued that Boko Haram show more power by hoisting flags and sacking communities and rubbing the promises of the government.

The insurgents reportedly hoisted their flag at the headquarters of the MNJTF and then proceeded to sack many neighbouring communities, making nonsense of the many pledges by President Goodluck Jonathan and his service chiefs that the insurgents would be rolled back from territories they have captured in previous encounters (Baga as turning point for the army (Editorial, *Daily Trust*, 12 Jan 2015).

The insurgents reportedly hoisted their flag at the headquarters of the MNJTF and went ahead to sack many neighbouring communities (Boko Haram seizes Baga, Hamza Idris, Yahaya Ibrahim, *Daily Trust*, 05 Jan 2015).

Like similar reports, which showed the growing influence of Boko Haram, this was framed as negative in the news reports as Boko Haram was depicted as “sack[ing] communities”. Thus, presenting the growing influence of Boko Haram as negative. In

furtherance of its territorial expansion and invariably its power, Boko Haram, at least in its utterances, also threatened neighbouring countries with the example of Nigeria.

Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau last week threatened Cameroon in a video message on YouTube, warning the country would suffer the same fate as Nigeria (Cameroon army repulses Boko Haram attack on military base, *Vanguard*, 12 Jan 2015).

Finally, in this frame, the diminishing ability of the army, around the period of Boko Haram's annexation of territories, to curtail Boko Haram is shown with the successful defence of a territory being referred to as 'rare piece of good news.'

Army appeals for support after 'deadliest' Boko Haram attack (*Vanguard*, 11 Jan 2015)

In a rare piece of good news, military repels attack on Biu (*Thisday*, 15 January 2015)

#### *Summary*

The Boko Haram as powerful and the Boko Haram as winning subframes are two interlinking frames that depict the growing influence of Boko Haram. Boko Haram members were the likely sources when the Boko Haram as powerful frame was used. The group presented itself as a legitimate Islamic sect that worked in the interest of northern Muslims and made demands of government. In recognition of its power, stakeholders sometimes appealed to the group directly when appealing for less violent means to address its agitations. The Boko Haram as winning frame was present in, for example, news stories that showed Boko Haram annexing territories. The victories of Boko Haram were always profiled negatively, for instance, through narratives that show people fleeing which in a way points to a rejection of Boko Haram by inhabitants of the communities they claim as belonging to their caliphate.

#### 4.2.4.3 Peaceful resolution

The peaceful resolution subframe comprises stories that confer some legitimacy on the group by profiling it as fit for forms of negotiation towards a peaceful resolution.

Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State has promised to continue exploring avenues for dialogue with Boko Haram militants in spite of the group's reluctance to negotiate with the government (Borno Governor promises to explore avenues for peace, *Daily Trust*, 27 June 2011).

One form of this profiling presents Boko Haram as similar to the Niger Delta militants who sabotage oil installations in the country. The Federal Government offered members of the various Niger Delta groups an amnesty deal as a strategy towards curbing the violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta region in 2009. Profiling Boko Haram as similar to these groups allowed for the same solution to be proffered.

Magoro calls on FG to consider Amnesty for Boko Haram (*Daily Trust*, 27 June 2011).

Other calls for peace resolutions were from various stakeholders encouraging the government to engage the group in dialogue. This mostly followed from the group's growing violent posture and the inability of security agencies to curtail the group.

Group urges FG to dialogue with Boko Haram (Taye Obateru, *Vanguard*, 27 June 2011).

Don't use force on Boko Haram - Ex Ipman chief (Tina Akannam, *Vanguard*, 30 June 2011).

Certain news reports showed that many ordinary citizens believed dialogue with Boko Haram was the best strategy in combating the sect, contrary to most reports which focused on government's position which mainly prioritised military intervention. The media preference for military intervention can be seen in the space given to stories involving the military.

Although the survey was conducted between August 10 and 16, days before the latest bomb blast, many Nigerians still believe that dialogue

with the sect and other aggrieved militant groups was the best strategy to curb such extreme outrages among sections of the population (Citizens prescribe dialogue with extremist groups, Oscarline Onwuemenyi, *Vanguard*, 04 September 2011).

The preference of the media for military action is likely for two reasons: violence make for more exciting news stories, and the media took the government's position in reporting. As one journalist said:

In this fight taking the side of the government is supposed to be the way it should be. That is the right thing to do. Will you take the side of your enemy? Do you know if it will consume you tomorrow? Government is still government (Journalist 5).

Another form of rejection of the violent stance of government was the rejection by northerners of the government's declared state of emergency in regions controlled by Boko Haram. The state of emergency allowed the federal government to deploy military personnel for a period to areas in which Boko Haram operated in, to help in the fight against Boko Haram. In rejecting its continuation after its initial six months, northerners questioned its effectiveness, as while ordinary citizens suffered deprivations due to the state of emergency, Boko Haram still thrived.

Sheikh Khalid further questioned why such action was not taken when Muslims were affected stressing: "I don't know why they take this kind of action when the incident now involves Christians." (**Borno elders say dialogue is the solution**, Hamza Idris, *Daily Trust*, 02 January 2012).

#### 4.2.4.4 Summary

The *Boko Haram as prevailing and legitimate* frame show Boko Haram as winning. Some stories in this frame confer some legitimacy on Boko Haram partly from Boko Haram claiming that they are legitimate or from reports that present Boko Haram as a group that can be negotiated to arrive at peaceful resolutions. Stories with this frame were grouped into three subframes: *Boko Haram as powerful*, *Boko Haram as winning*, and *peaceful resolution*. The *Boko Haram as powerful* subframe and *Boko Haram as winning* are interlinked, and stories typically showed Boko Haram as making demands of the government or even annexing territories. The victories of the

group were however depicted negatively mostly; towns were said to reek of decomposing bodies or residents were profiled as fleeing, portraying areas dominated by the group as inhabitable even for people it claims to fight for. In the peaceful resolution subframe, news reports legitimised Boko Haram as a group the government could negotiate with. The group was profiled in the mould of the Niger Delta militants whose grievances the government listened to and granted amnesties. This frame shows that peace and peaceful resolution of the conflict involving Boko Haram were sometimes preferred to the war and violent response stance preferred in the media due to the influence of official sources.

#### 4.2.5 Fear

The fear frame was the least used frames in this study and comprised news stories that presented people affected by the violence of Boko Haram as in fear and, sometimes, as fleeing areas of Boko Haram's dominance. The fear frame is different from other frames in that it frames the effects of Boko Haram's actions. It was used 39 times as a frame in the analysed dataset with its most usage in Baga (n=10) and Madalla (n=8) (Table 16). Both acts of Boko Haram are similar in that they were direct violent attacks on civilian citizens.

Table 16 Fear frame as used in newspapers and news stories

	Yusuf	UN House	Police HQ	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga	
<b>DT</b>	0	1 3%	2 8%	1 1%	3 18%	1 1%	4 8%	12 4%
<b>Thisday</b>	1 2%	2 7%	1 5%	0	2 6%	2 2%	5 13%	13 4%
<b>Vanguard</b>	1 2%	2 4%	1 2%	7 8%	0	2 2%	1 3%	14 4%
	2 1%	5 5%	4 4%	8 3%	5 7%	5 2%	10 8%	39 4%

Of the 39 times *fear* was used as a frame, 29 (74%) was as a primary frame (Table 17). In Baga where it was most used, it was used as a primary frame in six stories and a secondary frame in four stories; in Madalla, it was used as a primary frame in six out of eight stories. Yusuf is the only news event in which it was used as a primary event in 100% of its occurrence.

Table 17 Fear frame usage as primary frame

Yusuf	UN House	Police HQ	Madalla	Designation	Chibok	Baga
2	4	3	6	4	4	6

Most of its usage in Madalla was in the *Vanguard* (in 7 out of 8 stories). Besides that, the newspapers used it in reasonably similar ways, with *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* using the frame more around Baga and Chibok (Table 16). The primary use of the frame was to profile the fear of citizens of Boko Haram (Boko Haram: Fear persists over fresh attacks on new year day, Okey Ndiribe, *Vanguard*, 31 December 2011) which sometimes disrupted the lives of residents around areas of Boko Haram's operations.



Bomb blasts - Catholic church cancels Passover night mass (*Vanguard*, 30 December 2011).

Passover night mass refers to the prayers Christians in Nigeria hold in churches before midnight of 31 December 2011 as a way of preparing for the new year. The Madalla bombings, however, created a hostile atmosphere for Christian gathering and the subsequent disruption to what was a frequent practice. The most used manifestation of fear among residents presented residents as fleeing. Kaldor (2004) has shown that the new nationalism sought by groups like Boko Haram use symbolic violence to make those they perceive as others hate their homes. The aim being to make them leave and along with them, their culture.

Boko Haram: Residents flee Borno/Adamawa border (Kabiru Anwar, *Daily Trust*, 13 November 2013).

Residents were forced to flee to Chad Republic over the Lake Chad while others ran southward into other parts of Borno state in search of safety (Boko Haram seizes Baga, Hamza Idris, Yahaya Ibrahim, 05 January 2015, *Daily Trust*).

The fear frame was sometimes used in stories that showed Boko Haram as winning. For instance, the quote above was from a story that had *fear* as a primary frame and Boko Haram winning as a secondary frame. Residents *fleeing* areas where they felt unsafe was not limited to the north; the fear of reprisals led some northerners also to *flee* southern communities where they inhabit.

Northerners flee Anambra over fear of reprisal (Vincent Ujumadu, *Vanguard*, 06 January 2012).

Thus, the disruption to lives was not just around the areas of Boko Haram operation but also extended to far removed places, because of the prevailing polarised narratives on ethnicity. Apart from the direct actions of Boko Haram, reactions of the Nigerian government to actions of Boko Haram were sometimes represented using the *fear* frame especially as it concerned displacement of citizens. Actions of

government such as the state of emergency in places prone to Boko Haram attacks were also sometimes framed as costing citizens.

Nigeria offensive drives 40,000 refugees into Niger – UN (Abdulkadir Badsha Mukhtar, *Daily Trust*, 15 November 2013).

State of emergency: citizens count cost, losses in Borno, Yobe (Hamza Idris, *Daily Trust*, 17 November 2013).

Although these stories were not the primary focus of newspapers who preferred to report on the violence, they were evocative when used and showed the real sufferings and realities of the people who daily experience life under Boko Haram's regime. A young person fulfilling the mandatory one-year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program after undergraduate studies referred to the part of northern Nigeria where she was working as a "foreign enclave".

"I must confess, I was scared stiff just like every other member of the community by the bad news. Here you are in a foreign enclave, surrounded by those you cannot trust because of the ethnic and religious divide." (Terror in North - Fear grip corps members, Abdulsalam Mohammed, *Vanguard*, 01 August 2009).

Here, we see how deep-rooted the north-south divide is and, more important, how acts like those of Boko Haram can accentuate it. A more conflict-sensitive perspective will prioritise this perspective and show how it is in the interest of national cohesion to pursue more non-violent approaches to resolving the conflict. For instance, Galtung (2003), in advocating for what he refers to as peace journalism, argues that a journalism that is conflict sensitive focuses on the peaceful society and is centred on solutions. Thus, effects highlighted in the *fear* frame could be used in news reports to highlight the plight of those affected by the conflict especially the voiceless, women, aged, and children. There are instances when this was the case in the news media; for instance, in a report in *Thisday* (Children now

live in fear in north-eastern Nigeria, Michael Olugbode, *Thisday*, 07 January 2015), the lives of school children were shown to be sharply disrupted as they felt unsafe and were not willing to walk to school. The problem however is that these stories are few and far apart, and most times are not framed to be emotive in such a way that they present the fears of victims to audience members not close to the areas of the conflict. Security operations to forestall Boko Haram attacks were also sometimes framed to show the existing *fear* and disruptions caused by Boko Haram's activities.

Fearful Easter: Police commence special operation at airports, motor parks, others (Soni Daniel, Kingsley Omonobi, Simon Ebegbulem, Favour Nnabugwu, Ndahi Marama, *Vanguard*, 19 April 2014).

Parts of the country, especially in the south, were occasionally framed as panicky especially after high-profile attacks by Boko Haram.

There was panic in some parts of Ogun and Lagos states, yesterday, over reports that 18 suspected Boko Haram members had invaded the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, killing 11 civilians and nine police officers.

This came 24 hours after the Afenifere Renewal Group, ARG, on Tuesday sent a strong warning to the Boko Haram insurgents that any attack on any part of the South-West would be considered a declaration of war on the Yoruba people (Boko Haram scare shuts Lagos-Ibadan Highway, *Vanguard*, 24 April 2014).

Thus, the effects of the violence of Boko Haram was not just in northern Nigeria or among northerners in the south but also among southerners in relatively safe places. This, in a way, showed the influence of Boko Haram and how it grew with its violence. Besides civilians, security agents were also affected by the violence of Boko Haram especially following strategic victories of the group such as the bombing of the Nigerian Police headquarters and the seizure of the Multinational Joint Task Force headquarters in Baga.

Lagos State Command of the Nigerian Police has been gripped by fear of a possible attack by the same group that unleashed mayhem on its national headquarters (The 16/6 Blast - shock and disbelief..., Aisha Wakaso, Seriki

Adinoyi, George Okoh, Ibrahim Shuaibu, Chiemelie Ezeobi, *Thisday*, 17 June 2011).

In summary, this frame is composed of stories that portray the effects of Boko Haram's actions on citizens which were essentially fear and disruption to the daily life of people, including leaving their homes.

#### 4.3 Conclusion: framing analysis

This chapter has looked at the framing analysis of news texts. Five dominant news frames (used either as primary or secondary frames) were identified during analysis of 851 news reports. They include Boko Haram as Other (enemy of the Nigerian state), Reaction of government to Boko Haram, Boko Haram as political/ethnic conspiracy, Boko Haram as legitimate and Fear. Of these, Boko Haram as Other (primary frame in 327 stories) and the reaction of government to Boko Haram (primary frame in 350 stories) were the most used frames in reporting Boko Haram. The Boko Haram as Other frame profiled Boko Haram as an enemy of the Nigerian people through a depiction of its violence as senseless, inhumane, and a threat to national unity as it was seemingly targeted at specific ethnic and religious groups. Actions like suicide bombings were framed as un-Nigerian and used to other the group. The group was framed as engaging in warfare against the country and its acts as terrorism. The group was also framed as Other through its connections with foreign groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda and the presence of foreigners among its membership ranks. This frame legitimised the use of violence against the group especially as the group was profiled as engaging in warfare against the Nigerian state and threatening the country's unity.

The response of government's frame framed the actions of Boko Haram through the lens of government's actions against the group. This frame has two subframes: government action and government inaction subframes. The government

action frame profiled the government and security agents as taking steps towards addressing the problem of Boko Haram and was mainly driven by government sources while the government inaction frame profiled the actions of government as inadequate and the government as insensitive. Ethnicity plays a significant role in the use of these frames as the existing tension in the north-south divide of the country is evident in narratives that faulted the resolve of a southern-led federal government to address a northern problem.

The ethnic and political conspiracy frame comprised news reports that profiles Boko Haram through the ethnic and political configuration of Nigeria. Although, the frame was not a popular frame in terms of frequency, it is a very effective frame because of the cognitive schema (ethnicity and identity) it activates in audience members. Again, ethnicity plays an important role in this frame as Boko Haram is framed as a northern political conspiracy to get back political power. Here, unlike the ethnoreligious subframe in the Boko Haram as Other frame, Boko Haram was purely a political tool. Some northern voices, on the other hand, isolate the southern president in accusing the government of anti-northern conspiracies. A subframe of this frame, nationalism, counters the profoundly polarising narrative of this frame and emphasised the “unity in diversity” of the country, attempting to rally the citizenry around the flag.

In the Boko Haram as legitimate frame, stories that present Boko Haram as winning and powerful in a way legitimised Boko Haram. Boko Haram made demands and was listened to, annexed territories, and claimed to be acting in the interest of “our brothers”. Certain stakeholders in recognition of Boko Haram’s growing influence appealed directly to the group to reduce its violence. A subframe of this frame sought alternative peaceful approach such as dialogue to end the conflict.

Perspectives in this subframe show that this was a popular viewpoint in the country although journalists emphasised the government's violent approach.

The fear frame profiled the effects of Boko Haram's violence on ordinary citizens which showed them in fear and fleeing. Stories in this frame were evocative as they showed the hard reality of those who live side by side with the daily actions of Boko Haram. The *fear* created by acts of Boko Haram were, however, not limited to those within the violent actions of Boko Haram but also extended to citizens in southern cities and northerners living in the south. Security agents were also framed as *fearful* especially after actions of Boko Haram that showed symbolic victories over security agencies such as the bombing of the Nigerian Police Force headquarters.

## Chapter Five

### Findings: Source analysis

In this chapter, the sources present in the news stories analysed in the framing analysis above are coded and analysed for their influence on news frames and prominence in news stories. The first part of this chapter presents the sourcing pattern present in news texts and how sources were used in news texts while the second part examines source usage in the various newspapers especially in the first nine paragraphs of news reports.

#### 5.1 Sourcing patterns

This part of the sourcing analysis examines the sourcing patterns present in the news stories analysed in this study. Following the range of voices present in the news texts, sources were categorised as shown in Figure 15. The cumulative source usage (in percentages) across the seven events analysed is also shown in Figure 15.

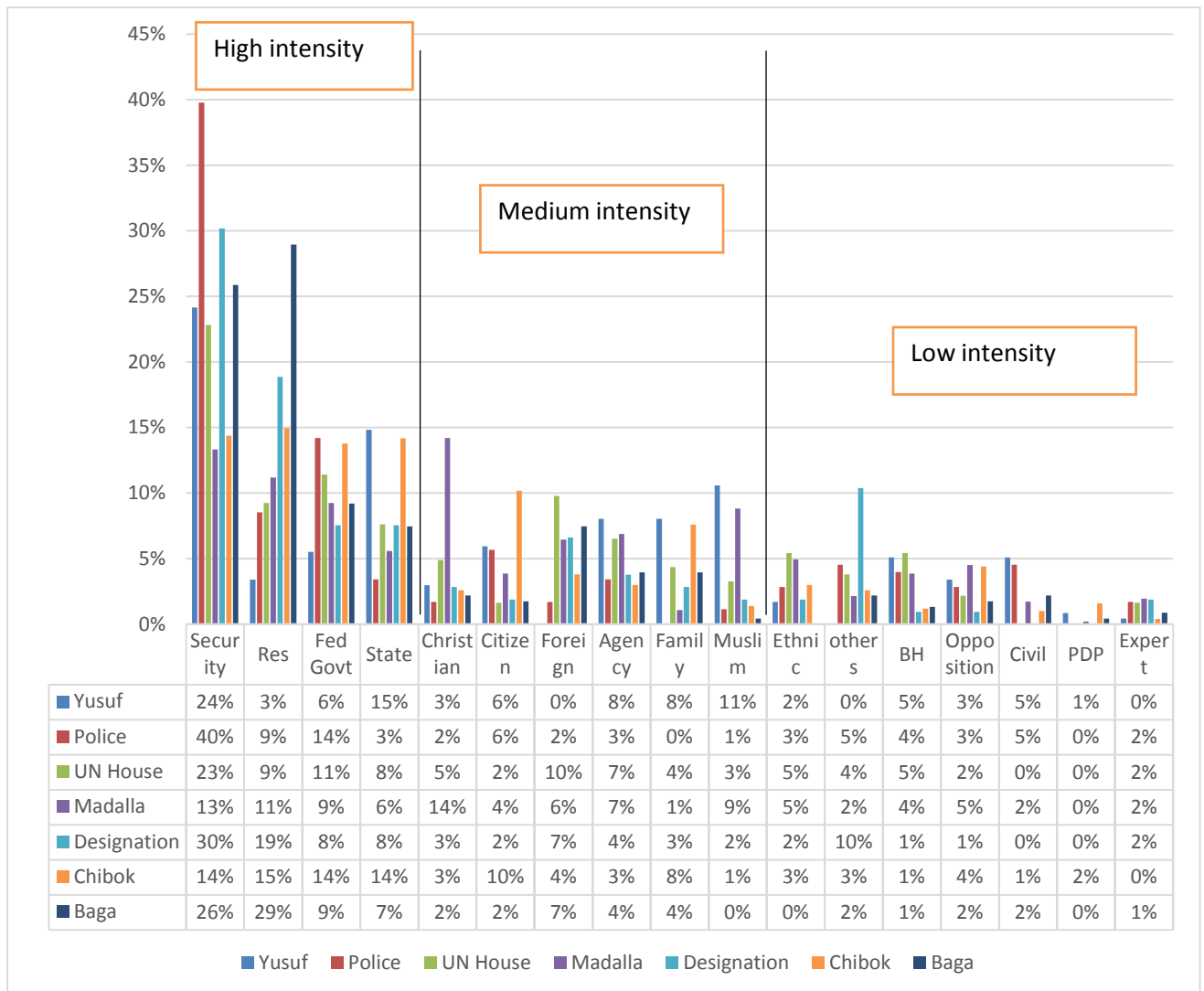


Figure 15 Cumulative sourcing patterns across analysed newspapers and news events in percentages

For ease of analysis and extrapolating from Figure 16, this study divides the source usage into three (varying) levels: high-intensity, medium intensity, and low intensity. The high-intensity source group refer to sources that are highly cited in the discourse of Boko Haram. These include security, residents and eyewitnesses, federal government, and state government. National agencies, foreign governments, and religious leaders are grouped as medium intensity as they were present in all news events but in reduced frequencies when compared to the high-intensity source



group. The third level of source group or the low-intensity source group includes Boko Haram, ethnic voices, opposition politicians, experts and PDP (the ruling political party at that time).

#### High-intensity usage

From the chart (Figure 16), security forces are the most used source group in most of the analysed events. They were the most used source group in five of the seven events analysed—“Death of Yusuf” (24%, n=57), “Police Headquarters Bombing” (40%, n=70), “UN House Bombing” (23%, n=42), “Madalla Christmas Day Bombings” (13%, n=62), and the “Designation of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation” (30%, n=32)—and the second most used source in the other two events—Chibok (14%, n=72) and Baga (26%, n=59). Thus, the popularity of this source group was not just restricted to quantity but spread as well. The dominance of security sources in the reporting of Boko Haram is in line with previous research which suggests a bias for official sources especially security sources (Carruthers 2011, Jackson 2005, Brinson and Stohl 2009, Lewis 2012). In news reports, security agencies portrayed Boko Haram using three of the framing categories discussed above: Boko Haram as foreign, Boko Haram as terrorist, and security as efficient.

Security forces chronicle Boko Haram attacks especially fatality figures and speak of actions taken to curb the activities of the group. They also generally dispel rumours and paint themselves as taking positive actions towards the extermination of the group and the safety of residents.

The Bauchi State Police Command yesterday said it has uncovered a house in the town owned by the Boko Haram Islamic sect opposed to western education stocked with ammunition, bales of fake military and police uniforms, three sewing machines and other sophisticated weapons (Police uncover Boko Haram arms depot in Bauchi, *Vanguard*, 02 August 2009).

Security agents either repeated or informed government narratives and presented members of Boko Haram as foreign and the actions of the group especially suicide bombing as un-Nigerian. In this regard, security operatives alleged that members of Boko Haram might have been recruited from abroad and that actions of the group were un-Nigerian.

Ahanotu [officer commanding of the operation] also said some of the fundamentalists might have come from neighbouring Chad and Niger (More soldiers killed in battle with Fanatics, *Thisday*, 30 July 2009).

Security agents also presented themselves as effective against the threat of Boko Haram, dismissing rumours of attacks in the south, positioning more personnel in threat areas, and recounting Boko Haram fatalities in combat.

The Lagos State Police command yesterday described as baseless, rumours of a bomb planted under the over-head bridge at Oshodi in Lagos by the Boko Haram (Police allay fears over alleged attack in Lagos, *Daily Trust*, 23 June 2011).

They also profile the activities of Boko Haram as terrorism especially as a way of elucidating on the long-lasting nature of the conflict involving the group. They present terrorism as new and global; thus, it was not a failure not to defeat Boko Haram as even advanced democracies suffer terrorism. As it was new, time was needed to understand the group and its tactics and consequently defeat it.

"Terrorism is everywhere all over the world, particularly here in this country, and as you are aware, it is a very new phenomenon here. " (IG) (Boko Haram: Jonathan summons service chiefs, *Vanguard*, 30 December 2011).

Government sources were also recurrent in the reporting of Boko Haram. In the coding categories, there were three government sources: Federal Government, State Government, and Foreign Government. These were consistently present in news reports except for Foreign Government which was absent in Yusuf. Sources in the federal government were more cited than state government sources except in

death of Yusuf; perhaps as Yusuf was one of the earliest major acts involving Boko Haram, it was more under the states' purview than the federal government's.

The federal government's official position saw Boko Haram as a threat to national unity (Boko Haram targets religious war – presidency, *Vanguard*, 30 December 2011) and, thus, always made a case for collaboration and nationalism. They also attempted to divorce Boko Haram from mainstream Islam and encouraged Islamic leaders to do the same. They positioned themselves as being in control of the situation, referred to Boko Haram as terrorists and sometimes suggested that Boko Haram was a product of a political conspiracy.

Fielding questions from State House Correspondents during on-the-spot assessment of the incident, President Jonathan maintained that though the emergence of suicide bombers in Nigeria is disturbing, there is no cause for panic as the ugly trend would soon be nipped in the bud (Suicide bombing: Nigerians should not panic, says Jonathan, *Vanguard*, 17 June 2011).

In referring to Boko Haram as terrorist, they claimed that terrorism was “new” and “global”. Thus, as a new problem it required understanding and time to be eradicated, and as a global one, it was not necessarily any fault of government but a rising phenomenon in the world which Nigeria currently has to deal with.

President Goodluck Jonathan has said that unlike before where states engage in conventional warfare with each other, today's enemies are more complex, sophisticated and lethal non-state actors (Jonathan: Today's security threats more complex, sophisticated, *Thisday*, 24 November 2013).

This position corresponds to Kaldor's definition of new wars as challenging old conceptualisations of war as between states and instead, involving more actors including non-state actors often without uniforms (Kaldor 2013). The federal government also referred to Boko Haram as foreign.

The Federal Government in its determination to crush the Islamic sect also directed the embassies of Somalia, Niger and Sudan to compile a

comprehensive list of all their nationals in the country in a bid to move against those who were in the country illegally (Force Headquarters Bombing: 58 suspects arrested, *Vanguard*, 20 June 2011).

One of the most recurring narratives of the government was nationalism. It was a counter frame to the divisive narrative of Boko Haram which sought to polarise the Nigerian people along ethnoreligious sentiments. In this narrative, the government attempted to unite Nigeria and dispel the religious posturing of Boko Haram as false.

Jonathan pleaded with both Muslims and Christian leaders to close ranks and with the cooperation of all Nigerians, the menace which has been on the increase globally would be contained "as good will prevail over evil". He asked CAN not to see the attacks as being targeted at Christians since a terror attack on one person is a terror attack on all which has to be resisted by all, adding that he also feels the pains of the Christians, the loved ones and the relations of those who dies in the bomb incidents. (President promises security shake up, *Thisday*, 29 December 2011).

Thus, the group was rejected as an ethnic-nationalist group and profiled as terrorist to garner the "us" against a collective enemy.

"The president has said it all, what Boko Haram is doing is pure terrorism. What the sect is doing has nothing to do with Islam neither can anyone say the sect is propagating a northern agenda. It is terrorism, pure and simple," Kuku said (Bombing: No reprisal attack in Niger Delta, *Thisday*, 03 January 2012).

The last narrative of the federal government bordered on a political conspiracy. Some government sources argued that northern elites were fuelling the activities of Boko Haram to undermine the presidency of a southerner. Thus, there is a unifying frame from the government and a divisive one as well, while rejecting Boko Haram as ethnoreligious, they accuse northern leaders of a conspiracy. Consequently, while Boko Haram had a singular narrative, the government's narratives were disjointed.

Most of the state government sources were from the north as Boko Haram operated mainly in this region. The narratives of state officials profiled the actions of Boko Haram as un-Islamic or un-ethnic or soliciting avenues of dialogue with the group.

The governors said that the actions of the religious sect which sought to enthrone the Islamic Sharia code "confirms the level of ignorance of religious knowledge among worshippers in our society" (Northern Govs meet, condemn BH crisis, *Vanguard*, 04 August 2009).

Since 1999, when Nigeria returned to democracy, nine northern states have implemented Sharia law fully for adjudication of civil and criminal matters, three others have implemented it in parts where there is a majority Muslim population, for example, in Kaduna where the north is predominantly Muslim and the south predominantly Christian. In these states, Sharia court and the common court run alongside each other. Thus, in the quote above, Boko Haram (in 2009) was dismissed for its ignorance in asking for Sharia by the governments of states in which Sharia was already operational. State officials, at this stage of the group's evolution, also demonised the group, presenting them as destructive and desperate, including using human shields during combat with the Nigerian military.

He [Governor Sheriff] said the sect members have continued to use civilians as human shields against attacks from the military (More soldiers killed in battle with Fanatics, *Thisday*, 30 July 2009)

After Shekau's new leadership from 2010 and the group's increasing violence, the state government sought peaceful means of ending the conflict with Boko Haram, even releasing arrested members.

Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State has promised to continue exploring avenues for dialogue with Boko Haram militants in spite of the group's reluctance to negotiate with the government (Borno Governor promises to explore avenues for peace, *Daily Trust*, 27 June 2011)

They also sometimes pushed the buck to the Federal Government especially as the conflict escalated and sometimes suggested some level of political conspiracy against the northern people by the southern-led federal government although this was not common.

He [Niger Gov] said the activities of the sect has engaged the country in war, adding that it was time for the federal government to act decisively

in ending the onslaught of the Boko Haram on innocent people (Aliyu to Jonathan: Go after sponsors of Boko Haram now, *Daily Trust*, 28 Dec 2011)

Boko Haram had more visibility in the press at the start of its campaign—Yusuf 5%, Police 4%, UN House 5%, Madalla 4%—compared to the latter stages—Designation 1%, Chibok 1%, Baga 1%. In its early days, the group reached journalists through texts, phone calls, and emails but was constrained to indirect contact through propaganda video and audio messages in the latter part of the study to get its position across. In any case, there was no one time in which Boko Haram was a major news source. When Boko Haram sources were used in media reports, they presented their efforts as pro-northern Nigeria and pro-Muslim (First Muslims in Nigeria, and then Muslims everywhere).

Kakah said the sect considered the US, the UN and the Nigerian government as common enemies and would continue to attack them because they are infringing on the rights of the Muslim (UN House bombing: why we struck - Boko Haram, *Vanguard*, 28 August 2011).

In pushing a pro-northern stance, Boko Haram uses the same form of othering used by Islamic leaders and official sources by creating enemies of the Nigerian government and other foreign governments, especially in the west. This aids their radicalisation drive which argues that there is a common enemy against Islam in westernisation and democracy. In referencing its place as a frontline Islamic group, it also shows solidarity with groups of similar motives as itself such as Al Qaeda, AQIM and ISIS.

Leader of the Boko Haram Abubakar Shekau yesterday released two videos in which he expressed “gratitude” over the terrorists’ attack that befell France last week. Shekau insisted that the Charlie Hebdo newspaper cartoons that depicted Prophet Muhammed was published “in bad faith and a clear provocation against the Muslims.” He also promised “serious reprisals against France” if its government allows the newspaper to release new cartoons (Boko Haram taunts France in new video, *Daily Trust*, 15 January 2015).

Its discourse on Islam and Muslims in Nigeria does not place it as one of several Islamic sects in the country but as the new authentic Islamic voice in the country.

They, thus, denounce Islamic leaders in the country presenting them as incapable of protecting Islamic interests in the country.

Imam Abu Muhammad Shekau, the leader of the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnati Lidda'awati Wal Jihad, also known as Boko, yesterday said Muslim clerics under the umbrella of the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) and the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) are not competent to speak on behalf of the Nigerian Muslims. (Boko Haram: Sultan, clerics can't speak for us, *Daily Trust*, 30 December 2011).

They claimed and threatened violent attacks, did not hide their disdain for democracy, and presented themselves as driven by ethnicity and religion (Boko Haram asks Christians, southerners to leave the north, *Thisday*, 03 January 2012).

Kaldor (2004) argues that this sort of religious fundamentalism is very similar to the 'new nationalism' in its exclusivity, that is excluding others of a different 'nationality'.

The Boko Haram spokesperson, Abu Qaqa said yesterday that his militant group is responsible for the Christmas day attacks across the North. The spokesman who spoke to journalists on phone, said the attacks were meant to tell the security agencies that no amount of surveillance will deter his members from doing whatever they planned to do (Boko Haram claims responsibility, *Daily Trust*, 26 December 2011).

In not hiding its violence and divisive rhetoric, the group makes a case for itself as powerful and superior to the possible actions of the Nigerian security agencies.

Figure 16 also shows a progressive increase in the use of residents and eyewitnesses as news sources in stories involving Boko Haram—Yusuf 3% (n=8), Police 9% (n=15), UN House 9% (n=17), Madalla 11% (n=52), Designation 19% (n=20), Chibok 15% (n=75), Baga 29% (n=66). This not only shows the increasing popularity and relevance of the ordinary citizen as a news source in the reporting of Boko Haram but also shows the evolving tactics of Boko Haram—its first major violent acts of importance were targeted at institutions: the Police Headquarters and

the UN House; while its latter acts were targeted at ordinary citizens: Madalla, Chibok, and Baga. Consequently, residents and witnesses were increasingly relevant to news stories as they were the victims of violent actions and directly affected by the actions of the group—displacement, fear, deaths. Residents talked of attacks they had witnessed and disruptions to their life. They also talked of being let down by security forces.

A resident of the town who gave his name simply as Austin said since last September when five Igbo traders were murdered in cold blood by suspected Boko Haram members for their inability to recite portions of the Holy Koran, the Police had been unable to arrest any suspect in connection with the incident (Boko Haram: Fear persists over fresh attacks on new year day, *Vanguard*, 31 December 2011).

The resident, an uncle of one of the abducted girls, said instead of taking action, the security men in Damboa told their colleagues in Chibok to run away since they did not have the weapons to fight the Boko Haram members (We told security agents about impending attack - Chibok resident, *DT*, 17 April 2014)

Accounts of residents, thus, conflicted with accounts of security officials who claimed to be on top of situations involving Boko Haram. Thus, residents presented themselves as fleeing troubled areas usually out of fear and realisation that the security agencies could not protect them.

Baba added that residents ran to nearby bushes and the hill tops for fear of being caught in the fight (Suspected insurgents kill soldier, two civilians in Adamawa, *Daily Trust*, 24 April 2014).

In areas where there was noticeable security effectiveness (for instance, Abuja), residents also expressed dissatisfaction with the manner and level of security actions.

Some of the residents who spoke to THISDAY, expressed anger and disappointment at the inability of the security agencies to adopt a more humane, but smart and intelligent measure in dealing with the Boko Haram threat (Boko Haram threat: Nyanya gridlock worsens, residents resort to motorcycles, *Thisday*, 23 April 2014).



The high frequency of residents in this study is surprising as studies have argued that the ordinary citizen is still overlooked as a major news source in news reports (Williams et al. 2011, Reich 2015). It is also surprising because the frequency of the *fear* frame, which is essentially a *victim's* frame, is low. The high number of resident sources might be because of Boko Haram's mode of operation which directly targeted residents and how much they were affected including displacements. They, however, were mainly used to support the *Boko Haram as violent* subframe or *security ineffectiveness* subframe. Lee (2010) argues that the inclusion of ordinary people, which is a significant step even in peace journalism approach, might not still take a story significantly beyond reporting the facts especially if journalists adopt a neutral perspective and merely report what citizens say. That seems the case in this study, as for the most part, residents recounted events involving Boko Haram or the ineffectiveness of security in protecting them, although this was useful in counteracting claims of security forces about having the conflict in control.

#### Marginalised sources: Family and experts

Family members of victims of conflicts involving Boko Haram and victims themselves, although classified as medium-intensity as they were present in six of the seven analysed events, were not given much space in the newspapers. They were most prominent in *Chibok* (8%, n= 38) and *Yusuf* (8%, n=19); 4% in *UN House* (n=8) and *Baga* (n=9); 3% *Designation* (n =3) and completely absent in *Police*. In news stories, they played very similar roles to residents and eyewitnesses. Though unlike eyewitnesses who spoke of security ineffectiveness, families speak more of government inaction.

The female parents blamed the abduction of the schoolgirls on the failure of government to tackle the security situation in the area (FG under pressure to find missing girls, *Daily Trust*, 17 April 2014).

They painted security agents as not willing to help rescue victims as they had more interactions with them. The presence of family sources in news reports around Chibok was one major factor that intensified dissatisfaction with security actions in news reports at that time. Family sources in conflicts create a sense of extended community and personalise conflicts for those that are far removed from affected areas (Frosh and Wolfsfeld 2004).

The women, who were all dressed in black gowns and head-ties, said had the parents who went into the bush earlier to look for the abducted schoolgirls been given security cover, the girls by now might have been reunited with their families (Women offer to search for Chibok students in Boko Haram enclave, *Thisday*, 24 April 2014).

There is an almost total exclusion of family members of Boko Haram fighters except for a few stories after the death of Yusuf. Thus, this probable important source of perspective into the actions of Boko Haram is completely missing from the narrative. Perspectives that family members of Boko Haram fighters can give include personality of individuals persuaded by Boko Haram worldview, incentives for radicalisation, type of education and environment, and general worldview and behaviour of such individuals. Journalists recognised the importance of this source group but were unable to utilise them due to several challenges to reporting Boko Haram including access to troubled zones, the risk to life, and security agencies getting in the way (this is further discussed in the challenges of reporting Boko Haram section).

Umar, who resides few metres to the sect's enclave, said her late son joined the group about two years ago in the course of seeking Islamic knowledge.

Mrs Umma Salihu, a 25-year-old housewife who lost her husband, insisted that the sect did not deserve to be killed. "The wicked people killed my husband. I saw his body when we were first brought to the Police headquarters. My husband was innocent. He couldn't even hurt a

fly, but the security agents shot him while raiding the enclave," Salihu, who was among the additional 140 women and children rescued by the police on Sunday, said.

Salihu, who was brought to the state from Jigawa by her late husband, said the sect was only out to spread the teaching of Islam through peace means for years. (Boko Haram - Wives, Mothers Lament Loss of Bread Winners, *Daily Trust*, 04 August 2009).

The few quotes from family members offer some insight into why [some] people were attracted to the group—quest for Islamic knowledge. They also offer a perspective into extrajudicial killings of men, who are husbands and fathers on the suspicion that they are members of Boko Haram, as wrong since to their families they cannot “hurt a fly”. They create a human side to killed members of the group and raise questions to the existing scenario where killings of members of Boko Haram by the military are not questioned and taken as a victory.

There was also an almost total exclusion of expert voices in the news coverage of Boko Haram. There were no expert voices in Yusuf and Baga and 2% representation in UN, Madalla, Designation, and Chibok. The absence of expert voices stifles alternative narratives such as radicalisation and reduces the debate on more efficient ways of confronting the group besides military actions. Thus, actions of government and other stakeholders are not critically appraised by a neutral party. The main actors in the conflict created more of a political discourse that encouraged the polarisation of the country sought by Boko Haram as each of these actors were interested parties in the conflict: government, Boko Haram, northern leaders and so forth. Consequently, there is in the news text several contests amongst these groups: southern-led government vs northern leaders, Boko Haram vs government, Boko Haram vs northern leaders among others.

#### Moderately-cited sources: Religious

An important news source in the Boko Haram discourse is religious sources. As Christianity and Islam are the two dominant religions in Nigeria, religious sources in the news texts are equally limited to these two. The religious frames present in the reporting of Boko Haram also make these sources vital to the Boko Haram discourse. Christian sources were cited 106 times appearing most in Madalla (n=66). Islamic sources were cited 84 times and appeared most in Madalla as well (n=41). Islamic sources (n=25, 11%) were used more than Christian sources (n=7, 3%) only in Yusuf. A chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 19.14206$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) show that there is no significant statistical difference between the use of Christian and Muslim religious sources across the seven analysed events when the data from the newspapers are used cumulatively. The almost lack of disparity between Islamic and Christian sources is mostly due to the influence of *Daily Trust* which is pro-northern and pro-Islam. When the use of religious sources is examined in the three newspapers, only *Daily Trust* showed statistical significance, preferring Muslim sources to Christian sources.

Table 18 Religious sources as used in analysed newspapers across news events

	Daily Trust		Vanguard		Thisday		Total
	Christian	Muslim	Christian	Muslim	Christian	Muslim	
<b>Yusuf</b>	0	19	4	1	3	5	32
<b>Police</b>	0	0	1	1	2	1	5
<b>UN</b>	0	2	9	4	0	0	15
<b>Mad</b>	10	16	34	11	22	14	107
<b>Des</b>	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
<b>Chi</b>	2	4	6	2	5	1	20
<b>Baga</b>	1	0	3	0	1	1	6
<b>Total</b>	15	43	58	19	33	22	190

As Table 18 shows, however, there is a substantial bias for Christian sources in *Vanguard*; there are 58 Christian sources as opposed to 19 Muslim sources in *Vanguard*. Its statistical non-significance is due to its seemingly even spread across events with the largest disparity occurring in just *Madalla*—the events at *Madalla* were targeted at churches on Christmas Day, analysed newspapers except *Daily Trust* used more Christian sources than Islamic sources as shown in Table 18. In *Daily Trust*, however, the spread between the sources are not as even; for instance, the newspaper had 19 Muslims clerics and no Christian cleric in *Yusuf*. Table 18 also shows that *Madalla* had the highest concentration of religious sources; this was the only action of Boko Haram in this data set that had clear religious targets. The lowest concentrations of religious sources were in *Police*, *Designation*, and *Baga*.

Christian sources typically saw and presented the attacks of Boko Haram as targeted at Christians and blamed northern and Islamic leaders for their lack of action, such as publicly condemning the group.

President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, yesterday described the Christmas Day attacks on churches as a declaration of Islamic Jihad on Christians.

Oritseajafor said last night in Abuja when he led a CAN delegation to President Jonathan that Islamic religious and traditional rulers were to blame for the attacks because of their failure to publicly condemn the activities of the sect. He said Christians have no option but to fight back (Boko Haram is jihad on Christians, *Daily Trust*, 29 December 2011).

The statistical evidence, in this study, does not support the claims of Christian leaders as to the non-response of Muslim leaders to Boko Haram as statistical data show no significant difference in the use of religious sources. The utterances of Christian leaders especially CAN were polarising especially the interpretation given to jihad as Muslim warfare against Christians. CAN's understanding of Boko Haram does not differentiate Boko Haram from Islam nor does it exculpate any northerner who might not have the same worldview as the group. Christian leaders also spoke of the conflict as likely to cause a religious war and an invitation to civil war. They, thus, mimic the prevailing narrative of a Christian south and a Muslim north and support the ethnodoxic understanding of Nigeria that does not separate the religion of a person from his ethnic identity.

But the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in the 19 Northern states and FCT warned yesterday that the attacks may spark a religious war (Muslim leaders condemn Christmas day bombings, *Thisday*, 27 December 2011).

"It is considered as a declaration of war on Christians and Nigeria as an entity" [CAN] (President promises security shake up, *Thisday*, 29 December 2011).

He [CAN president] said although the Muslim community had taken a good step by visiting and sympathising with Christians and Victims of the bomb blast, it was not enough.

He said they should take a step further and help reach Boko Haram members, noting that the perpetrators were not spirits (Boko Haram: Protect yourselves in any way you can, Oritseajafor tells Christians, *Vanguard*, 29 December 2011).

The utterances of CAN were almost as divisive as those of Boko Haram as they viewed Christians as victims and northern elites as part of a conspiracy against Christians. They encouraged violence, although as a measure of last resort, and

polarised the country around the Christian-south – Muslim-north narrative. Contrary to the insinuations of CAN, however, the evidence show that Muslims clerics condemned the activities of Boko Haram as contravening Islam and even referred to members of the group as criminals.

Sheikh Siraj who spoke through Engineer Abdurrahman Hassan of the Council after condemning the activities of the sect, said their acts contravened the teaching of the Holy Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Mohammed (SAW) (Ulama Wants Governor, JN1 to Meet On Boko Haram, *Daily Trust*, 31 July 2009).

Muslim clerics in Nigeria also slammed the fundamentalist sect as criminal and as an embarrassment to the religion (Nigeria: OIC Slams the Country's Radicals, *Daily Trust*, 31 July 2009).

Muslim clerics also condemned important figures in the group and faulted their interpretation of Islam. The quote below shows a criticism of Muhammed Yusuf's interpretation of Islam even before the increased violence of Boko Haram under Shekau's leadership.

Sheikh Albaniy who described the late sect leader as a mere "gardi" who just read the Quran without knowing its translation, said Muhammed Yusuf had no deep understanding of Islam (Nigeria: Boko Haram - security agencies not to blame, says cleric, *Daily Trust*, 05 August 2009).

Clerics blamed the media for its role in creating the perception of Boko Haram as Islamic or of northern Islamic elites as tacitly supporting the group.

Speaking on extremism and violence in the country, he [sultan] said Islam was never in support of those who use violence to achieve their aims. **He said the media were not helping matters as they were always quick to label any act of violence as handiwork of Muslims "without waiting for investigations to be concluded"** (Sultan decries lack of unity among Muslims, *Vanguard*, 26 December 2011).

Not every Muslim scholar or cleric condemned Boko Haram in this manner, however. There were Islamic sources who mimicked the dominant polarising narrative of conspiracy, this time against Muslims. Here, the Federal Government is accused of trying to eliminate Muslims using the guise of fighting Boko Haram. This is almost the

same claim made by Christian leaders except it was the northern leadership accused of conspiracy in that case.

Sheik Lau [National Chairman of Jama'atul Izalatil Bid'ah Wa'iqamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS)] who spoke at a press conference organised by JIBWIS in Kastina said the Boko Haram insurgency was a thing of the past and that the present situation was part of a malicious conspiracy to eradicate Muslims across the country (JIBWIS alleges attacks targeted to eliminate Muslims, *Daily Trust*, 21 April 2014).

A noteworthy point about the use of religious sources is the disparity between *Daily Trust*, with its northern focus, and the southern newspapers. The southern papers rarely focused on the viewpoints of Islamic clerics and focused more on the opinions of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) while *Daily Trust* focused more on Islamic cleric. Thus, arguably, southern audiences including the CAN president can erroneously assume that northern Islamic leaders were not critical of Boko Haram as their primary sources of information do not give salience to Islamic voices. While a causal relationship is not suggested, I argue that the observed limited use of Islamic voices in southern newspapers potentially limited understanding of the context and Islamic actors to southern audiences.

Other source groups—ethnic, opposition, PDP

Other source groups such as ethnic or nationalist groups, opposition politicians, and the ruling party at the time (Peoples' Democratic Party, PDP) were used marginally. Ethnic sources were most used in Madalla (5%) and UN House (5%) (figure 16). That the ethnic source group was not a popular news source in news reports did not preclude the narrative of ethnic violence from the profiling of Boko Haram. Individual sources coded into other categories belonged to ethnic groups and reflected their ethnicity even if they were not presented in news texts as representatives of any ethnic group movement. Boko Haram also made claims to suggest its violence was targeted at a specific group of people. As would be



expected in a conflict of this kind in Africa, when ethnic group movements were news sources, they aligned with and sought to protect the interest of their ethnic group (e.g. Don't post our youths to the North again, IYC [Igbo Youth Congress] tells NYSC, law school, military, *Thisday*, 25 April 2014). This reinforces the identity problem of the Nigerian state where citizens perceived themselves as first belonging to their ethnicities before their country. There is also a marked difference in how southern ethnic groups spoke on Boko Haram and how northern groups did. Southern ethnic groups generally dared Boko Haram, asked Boko Haram to limit their activities to the north and asked southerners in the north to relocate to the south. Northern groups, on the other hand, were more conciliatory and interested in the resolution of the conflict while condemning the activities of Boko Haram.

Gujungu (AYF president) also appealed to the leadership of the Boko Haram to rescind their decision of launching more attacks after the Ramadan (AYF to Boko Haram - Stop killing Innocent people, *Daily Trust*, 01 September 2011).

Opposition politicians were also a fringe source group; they were used below 5% in every event studied. Opposition politicians typically blamed the ruling government for the escalating conflict, sometimes referring to the president as insensitive, or weak, or clueless (APC to Jonathan - shelve all political rallies till abducted girls are found, *Daily Trust*, 24 April 2014).

Jonathan is insensitive, hard-hearted for campaigning the day after Abuja blast – APC (*Vanguard*, 16 April 2014).

The party in government (PDP) was not prominent in news stories probably as its official position would be exactly same as the government's. The party blamed the main opposition of the time as trying to gain political advantage with the misfortune

wrought by the actions of Boko Haram and sometimes directly accuse the opposition of encouraging terrorism (APC aids, abets terrorism – PDP, *Vanguard* 16 April 2014)

National leadership of the People's Democratic Party, PDP has alleged that the leadership of the opposition, All Progressives Congress, APC and their governors were responsible for Monday's bomb explosion by the members of the Boko Haram which took place in Nyanya, a suburb of the nation's capital, Abuja, where over hundred persons were feared dead, with several others, injured (Abuja explosions: APC leadership, governors are responsible, PDP alleges, *Vanguard*, 14 April 2014).

## 5.2 Newspapers sourcing patterns

The sourcing patterns of the three newspapers are very similar in the way they prioritise security and government voices, residents and religious leaders, and overlook family, expert, and political groups. In the three newspapers, security was the most used source group. There are, however, noticeable differences in their sourcing patterns. This section examines the newspapers sourcing patterns individually.

### 5.2.1 Daily Trust sources

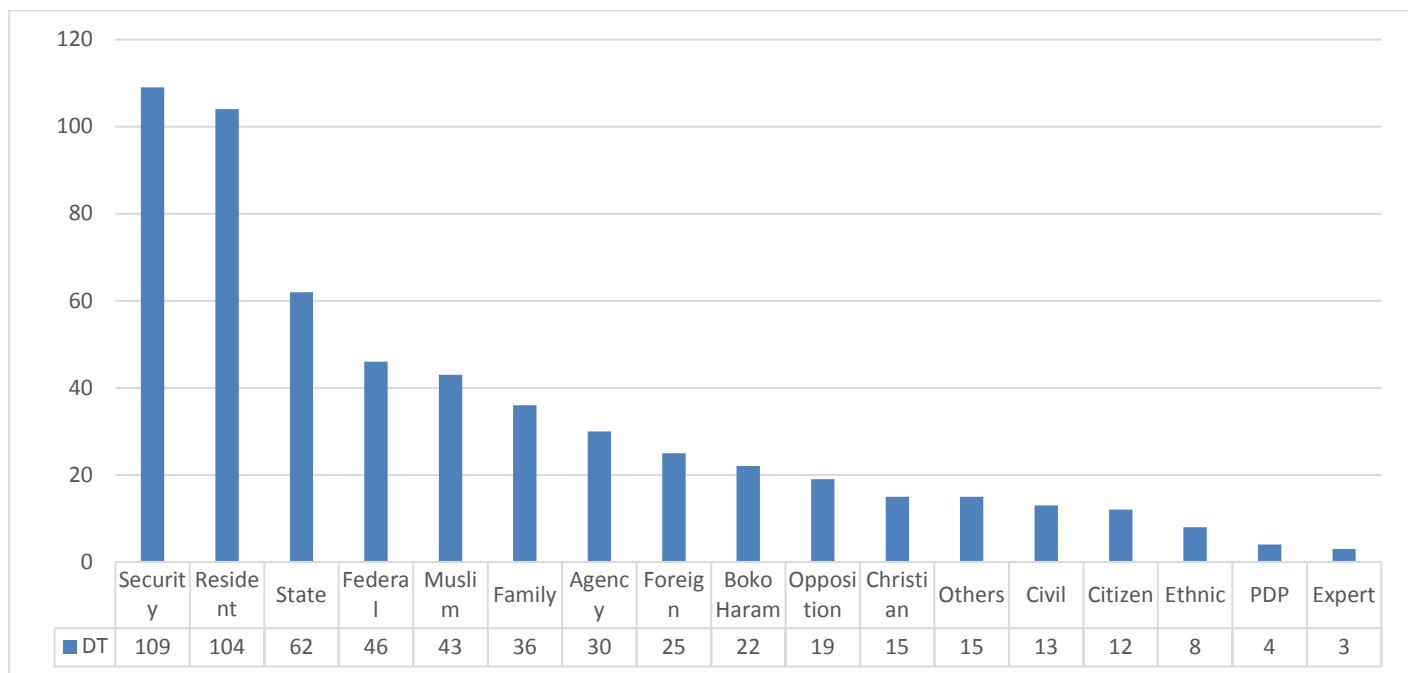


Figure 16 Daily Trust sources

In *Daily Trust*, as in all the newspapers analysed, security sources were the most used (Figure 16). They were used in each of the seven events—the most usage was in the Police House bombing (43%, n=24) and least in Chibok (11%, n=17). Residents were the second most used source group; the source group was well used in all news event analysed except in the coverage of Yusuf’s death where residents were used as sources 4% (n=3) of the time. The proximity of the newspaper to areas of Boko Haram’s influence probably accounts for the usage of this source group. Family sources were moderately used coming behind security and government sources, residents, and Islamic leaders; they were most used in Chibok (15%, n=22) where it was second only to residents (22%, n=33).

The state government was given more space in *Daily Trust* than the federal government. This was peculiar to *Daily Trust* as the other newspapers prioritised the

position of the federal government. There was, however, no statistical difference in *Daily Trust* as regards the overall usage of both source group ( $\chi^2=10.60$ ,  $p=0.05$ ). In *Daily Trust*, more state government sources were used in *Yusuf*, *UN*, *Designation*, *Chibok*, and *Baga*. Both were represented in all the events covered.

Islamic sources were used more than Christian sources in *Daily Trust*, absent only in Police compared to Christian sources which were absent in *Yusuf*, *Police*, and *UN* with minimal reference in *Chibok* and *Baga* (1% each) and *Designation* (5%). Christian sources were most used in *Madalla* (9%). Islamic sources, on the other hand, were well used in *Yusuf* (26%), *Madalla* (14%), and *Designation* (5%). A chi-square test shows significant statistical difference in *Daily Trust's* usage of Christian and Islamic sources ( $\chi^2= 13.74$ ,  $p=0.05$ ). Thus, *Daily Trust* favoured Muslim sources as opposed to Christian sources in its reports on Boko Haram (Data in Appendix D).

There was no statistical significance in the use of official and non-official sources in *Daily Trust* ( $\chi^2=8.89$ ,  $p=0.05$ ).

### 5.2.1.1 Source prominence – Daily Trust

An analysis of the sources used in the first nine paragraphs of the *Daily Trust* can be found in Table 19. The primary sources used in *Daily Trust* in its first three paragraphs are security sources (n=46), federal government sources (n=25), and state government sources (n=26). Thus, in most stories, the primary definers (Hall 1978) of news are mainly official sources. Residents are also well used (n=16) as well as Islamic leaders (n=18).

*Table 19 Daily Trust source prominence*

	BH	Res	Fam	Sec	Fed	State	Opp	Chr	Mus	Civil	PDP	Eth	Exp	Citize	For	Oth	Agency	
1st-3rd	14	16	7	46	25	26	12	9	18	5	2	7	0	8	12	5	15	227
4th-6th	2	21	6	21	5	13	0	2	6	3	0	0	0	1	5	4	4	93
7th-9th	2	14	8	13	1	6	2	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	5	12	1	63
	18	51	21	80	31	45	14	14	27	10	3	7	0	9	22	11	20	383
	5%	13%	5%	21%	8%	12%	4%	4%	7%	3%	1%	2%	0%	2%	6%	3%	5%	100%

An overall overview of table 24 shows that the most prominent source group overall is security sources (n=80, 21%). It was also the most used source group in the first three paragraphs of all analysed stories in *Daily Trust* in this study. The second most used source group in the first nine paragraphs of stories is residents (n=51, 13%) while the third is state government officials (n= 45, 12%). Thus, while official sources are more likely to be used in setting the initial frames in news stories, residents are more likely to appear after the first three paragraphs to either support views or give alternative narratives. Experts did not appear in the first nine paragraphs of *Daily Trust*.

Of the 22 times, Boko Haram was used as a source, 14 (64%) of them was in the first three paragraphs (first quarter), 2 (9%) was in the second three paragraphs, and 2 (9%) was in the third three paragraphs. Cumulatively, 18 of 22 Boko Haram sources (82%) was in the first nine paragraphs. Thus, Boko Haram as a source group was highly placed in the news when it was used. Although compared to other sources, it was used 5% in the first nine paragraphs as shown in table 2.

Residents were used 104 times in *DT*, of which 16 (15%) of those appeared in the first three paragraphs of analysed news stories; 21 (20%) were used in the second three paragraphs; 14 (14%) were used in the third three paragraphs. Cumulatively, 51 resident sources were used in the first nine paragraphs out of a 104 (49%). Compared to other news sources, it was used 13% of the time in the first nine paragraphs of analysed news stories, second only to security that was used 21% of the time. Family sources were used 36 times in *DT*. Seven was in the first three paragraphs of analysed stories (19%), 6 in the second three paragraphs (17%) and 8 in the third three paragraphs (22%). Cumulatively, 21 of 36 (58%) sources were used in the first nine paragraphs. Compared to other news sources, it was used 5% of the time.

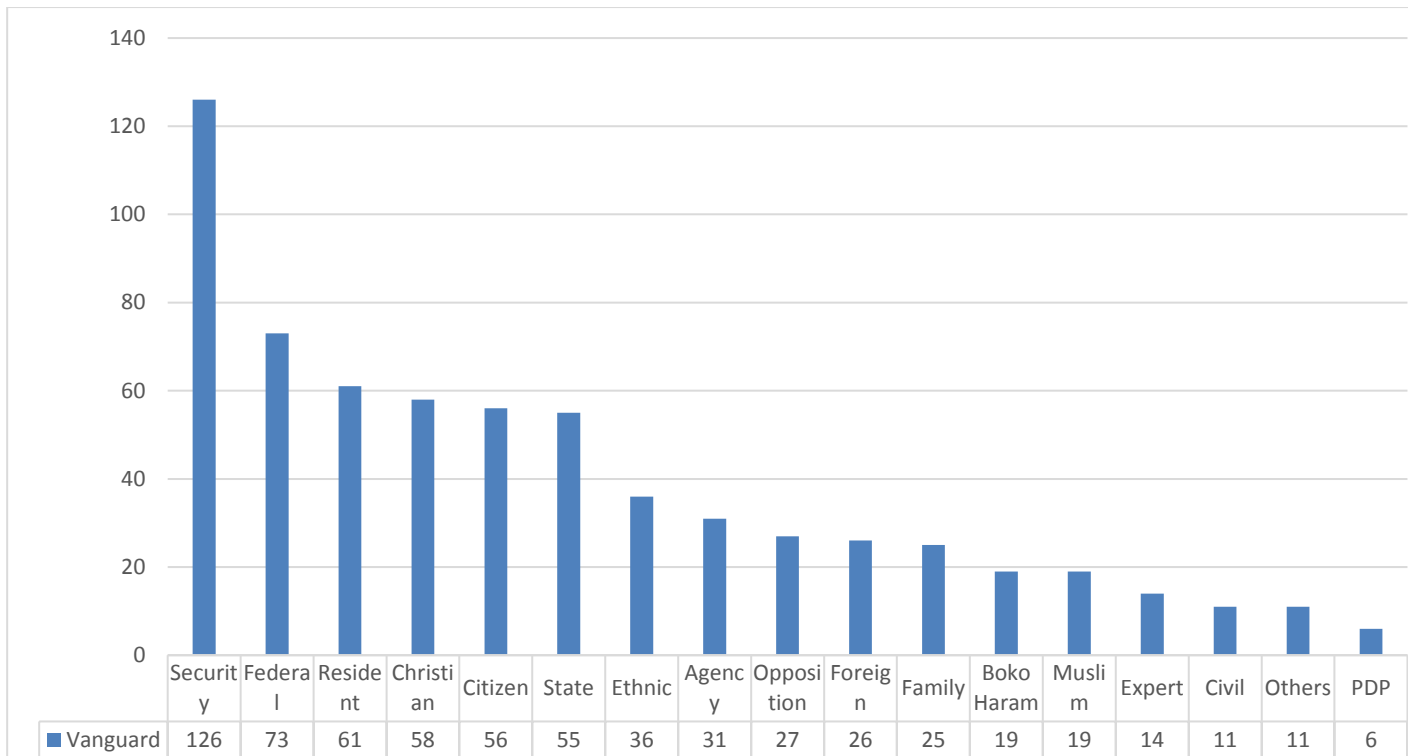
Official sources were given salient positions in news reports on Boko Haram. Security was the most used group in the *DT*; it was used 109 times, 46 (42%) of these were in the first three paragraphs, 21 (19%) in the second and 13 (12%) in the third. Cumulatively, 80 (73%) was used in the first nine paragraphs. Compared to other source groups it was used 21% of the time as a source in the first nine paragraphs.

Of the 46 times that the FG was used, 25 was in the first three paragraphs (54.35%), 5 (11%) in the second and 1 (2%) in the third. Cumulatively, officials of the federal government were used 31 times in the first nine paragraphs out of 46 times it was used in *Daily Trust* (67%). Thus, salience is usually given to federal officials in *Daily Trust* when they appear as sources. Compared to other source groups it was used 8% of the time as a source in the first nine paragraphs. Sources linked to the state government were used 62 times. Of these, 26 (42%) were used in the first three paragraphs; 13 (21%) in the second; 6 (10%) in the third. Thus, cumulatively state sources were used 45 times (73%) in the first nine paragraphs of stories in *DT*. Like federal sources, state sources were also given salience in news reports whenever they were used. State sources were also preferred to federal sources in *Daily Trust*. Compared to other source groups it was used 12% as a source in the first nine paragraphs. Opposition sources were also given salient places in news reports on Boko Haram in *DT*. Of the 19 times, opposition sources were used, 12 were in the first three paragraphs (63%); none in the second, and two in the third (11%). Cumulatively, it was used 14 times (74%) in the first nine paragraphs and among other source groups, it was used as a source 4% of the time in the first nine paragraphs. Foreign government sources were used 25 times in *DT*, of which 12 was used in the first quarter (48%), 5 in the second (20%), 5 in the third (20%). Thus, cumulatively, foreign sources were used 88% of the time in the first 9 paragraph (n=22).

Although religious sources were used less than official sources, they were also placed in salient sections of news reports. For instance, of the 15 times Christian sources were used in the first nine paragraphs, nine of these in the first three paragraphs (60%), two (13%) in the second three paragraphs, three (20%) in

the third three paragraphs. Thus, Cumulatively, 14 of the 15 times Christian sources were used, they were in the first nine paragraphs. Similarly, of the 43 times, Muslim sources were used in the first nine paragraphs, 18 (42%) were used in the first three paragraphs, 6 (14%) were used in the second, 3 (7%) were used in the third.

### 5.2.2 Source analysis – Vanguard



*Figure 17 Source usage in Vanguard*

Like in *Daily Trust*, Security sources were also the most used source group in *Vanguard* (Figure 17). It was used in every event and most used in the bombing of the Police headquarters. Similarly, officials of the federal government were present in all analysed events with its highest occurrence in the *designation*. Federal officials were preferred to state government officials in all events except in Yusuf, and no state official was used as a source in the designation with its highest occurrence in



Chibok. In fact, a chi-square test shows the use of federal officials as sources as against state official as statistically significant ( $X^2=13.81$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) (Data in Appendix D).

The usage of residents as a source group was low until Chibok and Baga (Appendix D) and even during this time, there was some reliance on wire services to get this source group into the news. This contrasts with *DT* that had residents as sources in good numbers from the first analysed event. Family was also another almost overlooked group. There were no family sources in *Police* and *Madalla*. Christian sources were a well-used source group. Appearing in especially good numbers in *UN*, *Madalla*, and *Baga*, it was least used in *Police*. Muslim sources were sparingly used and excluded in *Designation* and *Baga*. There was, however, no statistical significance ( $X^2=2.32$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) on the usage of Christian and Muslim sources in the *Vanguard*.

Also, in *Vanguard*, there was statistical significance in the usage of official and non-official sources ( $x^2=12.93$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) with more preference given to non-official sources cumulatively. This is significant as literature shows that official sources are usually the dominant source groups in news reports including conflicts.

#### 5.2.2.1 Source prominence - Vanguard

In the analysis of the sources used in the first nine paragraphs in *Vanguard*, official sources are the most used source group. Security sources were used 19% ( $n=71$ ) while the federal government sources were used 12% ( $n=44$ ). State government sources were less used (6%,  $n=21$ ). Christian religious leaders were also a significant source group in the *Vanguard* (10%,  $n=37$ ); Muslim leaders, less so (4%,  $n=14$ ). Residents were also well used (10%,  $n=35$ ) while family member (3%,  $n=12$ ) and experts (2%,  $n=8$ ) were among the least used source group.

Table 20 Source prominence - Vanguard

	BH	Res	Fam	Sec	Fed	State	Opp	Chr	Mus	Civil	PDP	eth	Exp	Citize	For	Othe rs	Agen cy	
1-3	5	12	4	43	28	13	10	28	9	4	3	19	4	17	9	3	13	224
4-6	6	12	5	16	7	3	1	4	4	0	0	7	2	4	4	2	4	81
7-9	2	11	3	12	9	5	1	5	1	1	0	0	2	5	1	2	3	63
	13	35	12	71	44	21	12	37	14	5	3	26	8	26	14	7	20	368
	3.53 %	9.51 %	3.26 %	19.29 %	11.96 %	5.71 %	3.26 %	10.05 %	3.80 %	1.36 %	0.82 %	7.07 %	2.17 %	7.07 %	3.80 %	1.90 %	5.43 %	100.00 %

From table 25, the most used sources in the first three paragraphs in *Vanguard* are security (n=43), federal government (n=28), Christian leaders (n=28), ethnic group movements (n=19), and citizens (usually members of the elite, n=17). Thus, the settings for most stories are set by either government sources or ethnoreligious sources (in this case, Christian sources) or elite citizens.

Of the 19 times, Boko Haram was used as a source in *Vanguard*, 13 (68%) were in the first nine paragraphs and 11 (58%) in the first six. Though Boko Haram was not a major source group, its opinions were placed in prominent parts of the news and, thus, amplifies their role in perception creation around the conflict. Security agents also had most of its usage as a source in the first nine paragraphs. Of the 126 times, it was used as a source, 71 (56%) were in the first nine paragraphs. Of these 43 (34%) were in the first three paragraphs. No other source group had as many sources in the first three paragraphs.

Christian sources were used as much time as the federal government in the first three paragraphs (n=28). The prominence given to Christian source in the *Vanguard* can be seen in the following: of the 58 times Christian sources were used in the *Vanguard*, 38 (64%) of those were in the first nine paragraphs and of the 37 times it was used in the first nine paragraphs, 28 (76%) were in the first three paragraphs. The closest source group with similar usage in the first three

paragraphs, first nine paragraph ratio is ethnic sources. Of the 26 times, ethnic group were used in the first nine paragraphs of news reports in the *Vanguard*, 19 (73%) were used in the first three paragraphs. Thus, the editorial decisions of *Vanguard* seem to favour ethnoreligious narratives.

### 5.2.3 Thisday sources

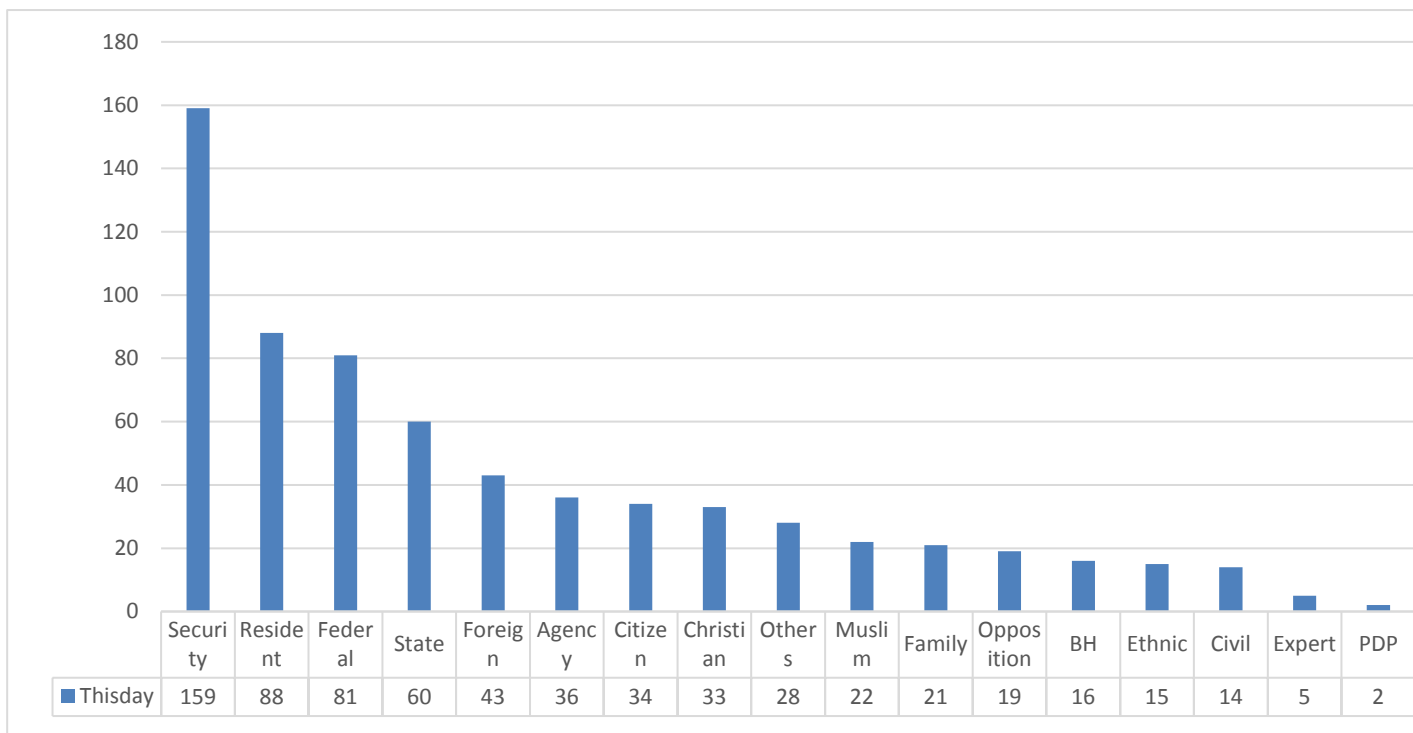


Figure 18 Source analysis - Thisday

The source use in *Thisday* has certain similarities with *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard*. Like in the other two newspapers, security sources were the major source group. In *Thisday*, it was used the most in *designation* (45%, n=20) (Appendix D). *Thisday* reported using more official sources than non-official sources. A chi-square test ( $\chi^2=32.52$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) showed significant statistical difference in the use of official and

nonofficial sources. The Federal Government was present in all events. Its highest representation as a source group was in Police (22%, n=11) and Chibok (18%, n=30). The Federal Government as a source group was used more than the State Government except in Yusuf where the state was used 19% (n=16) and the Federal Government was used 5% (n=4). There was also a significant statistical difference between the use of federal and state government sources ( $\chi^2=18.19$ ,  $p=0.05$ ); thus, federal sources were preferred to state sources in *Thisday*.

There is also a progressive increase in the use of residents as sources in *Thisday* as events evolved except in Chibok where resident source use was 8% (n=13). The use of residents as sources was most pronounced in Baga (31%, n=31) and absent in Police (Data in Appendix D). This shows in a way the increased understanding among journalists of the importance of eyewitnesses and residents to a narrative such as Boko Haram. This increase in residents as a nonofficial news source was not extended to family members. Family members as a source group were most used in Yusuf (9%, n=8) and completely absent from Police. Its next highest occurrence was in Designation (5% n=2), Chibok (3%, n=5) and Madalla (2%, n=4).

Religious sources were not especially favoured in *Thisday*; Christian sources were under 5% in every event except in Madalla (12%). There were no Christian sources in *UN House* and in *Designation*. Similarly, there were no Muslim sources in *UN House* and in *Chibok*. Like in its use of Christian sources, its highest use was in *Madalla* (8%). There was no significant statistical significance ( $\chi^2=3.21$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) in the use of Christian and Muslim sources in *Thisday*.

### 5.2.3.1 Source prominence – Thisday

In *Thisday*, security sources (n=47) and the federal government (n=32) are the primary definers of news, using figures from the first three paragraphs. These two source groups alone make up 42% of sources used by *Thisday* in the first three paragraphs of stories on Boko Haram. Thus, *Thisday* prioritises the views of federal sources—security and government—in its reports. Unlike the other newspapers analysed, *Thisday* does not prioritise any religious sources.

Table 21 Source prominence – Thisday

	BH	Res	Fam	Sec	Fed	State	Opp	Chr	Mus	Civil	PDP	eth	Exp	Citize	For	others	Agency	
1-3	4	18	3	47	32	12	6	14	6	5	0	6	1	6	16	6	8	190
4-6	6	17	5	22	10	11	2	0	4	1	0	1	0	5	10	4	3	101
7-9	2	13	1	23	8	4	0	3	3	0	0	3	1	6	2	2	5	76
	12	48	9	92	50	27	8	17	13	6	0	10	2	17	28	12	16	367
	3%	13%	2%	25%	14%	7%	2%	5%	4%	2%	0%	3%	1%	5%	8%	3%	4%	100%

The most used source group in the first nine paragraphs are also security sources (n=92; 25%). Other official sources were also well used—federal government sources (14%, n=50), state government (7%, n=27), foreign government (8%, n=28). Of the nonofficial sources, residents stood out as an important source group (13%, n=48). The religious sources were the closest to residents amongst the nonofficial sources—Christians (n=17, 5%), Muslim (n=13, 4%). Family and sources are almost totally excluded in the first nine paragraphs—family 2% (n=9), experts 1% (n=2)

Boko Haram was used 16 times as a source in *Thisday*, 12 (75%) of which are in the first nine paragraphs. Of the 12 times, four (33%) were in the first three paragraphs; six (50%) were in the second three paragraphs, and two (17%) were in the third three paragraphs. Thus, although Boko Haram was not a popular source group, its views were amplified and placed in prominent parts of news stories. Security sources had the most salience in the first nine paragraphs. Of the 159 times it was used as a source in *Thisday*, 92 (58%) were in the first nine pages. Similarly, other official sources were given priority in the first nine paragraphs compared to non-official sources—federal sources (14%), foreign governments (8%), and state government (7%).

Residents were the most used non-official source in the first nine paragraphs (13%). Others include Christian sources (5%), Islamic sources (5%), and citizens (4%). Family sources were almost excluded in the first nine paragraphs (2%) as well as expert opinions (1%).

### 5.3 Summary

This section analysed sources present in the news texts used in the framing analysis. It analysed the general sourcing patterns present in news reports and then examined those present in individual newspapers. The analysis of sourcing patterns shows four levels of source usage, of which security, residents and eyewitnesses, and government sources (federal and state) were among the most used source groups. The use of residents as a major source group is a significant finding given that studies have claimed that ordinary citizens are an overlooked source group in news reports (e.g. Reich 2015). The use of residents was probably due to the direct effects they faced and, perhaps journalists thought them an important part of news stories that chronicled their losses, as a way to add the human-interest element to

news stories and give face to suffering. They were also probably easier to reach than family sources who were almost totally excluded as a source group in news stories. The family of members of Boko Haram were also missing in news reports except in few stories in *Daily Trust* following the death of Yusuf. In these stories, the families of dead members brought the human side of members of the group into the story, as well their own difficulties. Members were painted as seeking Islamic knowledge, and stories offered an alternative perspective that did not glorify the extrajudicial killings of these men especially at that time when their violence was not as pronounced. The study is in line with other studies that claim that there is a strong bias for security sources in news reports (e.g. Carruthers 2011); security sources were the most used sources cumulatively and the most used source group in five of seven analysed events. There was an almost total exclusion of expert sources which was a major factor in why alternative narratives such as radicalisation and debates on more efficient ways of confronting the group besides military actions were absent in news reports.

Religious sources are important in the Boko Haram discourse because of the religious claims that the group makes. The religious sources in news reports are limited to Muslim and Christian sources as Islam and Christianity are the two dominant religions in Nigeria. A chi-square test shows that there is no significant statistical difference between the use of Christian and Muslim religious sources when the data from newspapers are used cumulatively. There is, however, a significant statistical difference in the *Daily Trust* in its preference of Muslim sources over Christian sources. Although *Vanguard* does not show any statistical differences, there is some level of bias for Christian sources. Religious sources, notably the

Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), were polarising. CAN viewed Christians as victims and did not exculpate Muslims from the activities of Boko Haram.

The second part of this section looks at the sourcing patterns present in the three newspapers. The three newspapers prioritised security and government sources in their reports. The *Daily Trust* use of residents was more pronounced than the other newspapers perhaps because of their proximity to areas of Boko Haram's influence although family sources were overlooked like in the other newspapers. Of the three newspapers, only *Daily Trust* had more state government voices as opposed to federal government sources in its news reports. The *Daily Trust* was also the only newspaper that prioritised Islamic sources over Christian source. An analysis of sources present in its first three paragraphs shows that security and government (state and federal) are the most prominent sources used in the *Daily Trust*. Although when the first nine paragraphs are considered, residents are the second most used source group after security sources. Thus, official sources are more likely to set the tone for in news reports while residents are used in more support roles. In *Vanguard*, there is a similar preference for security sources although, unlike *Daily Trust*, there is a preference for federal sources over state sources; in fact, a chi-square test shows the use of federal sources as statistically significant. *Vanguard's* usage of residents also contrasted with *DT* in that residents were not an important source group until Chibok and Baga whereas in *Daily Trust* residents were used as sources from the first news event analysed. An analysis of the first three paragraphs in *Vanguard* show that security sources, federal government sources, and Christian leaders are the most prominent sources, as well as ethnic groups and [elite] citizens. Thus, *Vanguard* was more interested in official and ethnoreligious narratives in its news reports over other possible narratives.



*Vanguard* was the only newspapers that had more religious sources (Christians) over residents in its first nine paragraphs. Although *Thisday* prioritised security sources, it differed from the other source groups in its strong preference for official sources especially federal government sources. There were statistical differences in its use of official sources over non-official sources and its use of federal government sources over state government sources. Like *Vanguard*, as the conflict progressed, *Thisday* used more resident sources but not family sources. Interestingly in *Thisday*, religious sources do not play a significant part in its reportage, and it did not particularly favour any one religious group over the other. An analysis of its first three paragraphs shows that security and federal government sources were far the prominent sources in *Thisday* reports. Although when the first nine paragraphs are considered, residents are also well used coming only after security and federal government sources.

In the next chapter, the results of the thematic analysis of journalists' interviews discussing challenges faced in reporting Boko Haram is presented.

## Chapter Six

### Findings: Challenges to reporting Boko Haram

The third research question in this study analyses the challenges journalists encounter in the reportage of Boko Haram. Thematic analysis of interviews with nine journalists led to the identification of four broad challenges:

1. Poor funding
2. Fear of safety
3. Southern domination of news and access to conflict zones
4. Editorial policies

#### 6.1 Poor funding

One of the most prominent challenges for Nigerian journalists when reporting Boko Haram is funding. Poor funding affects three areas in the reporting of Boko Haram: logistics, remuneration, and insurance cover.

Regarding remuneration, journalists talked of not being well paid which in turn leads to a lack of motivation in pursuing leads. Also, newspaper houses do not have budgets to cover expenses that journalists might incur while reporting, such as travel costs or hotel reservations. Thus, journalists are sometimes forced to rely on press releases or news wires resulting in, as one journalist calls it, armchair journalism.

In my opinion, I would say most of the media houses in Nigeria are not well funded and most of the journalists in Nigeria are not well paid. Even those that are well paid don't get their salaries as at when due. So, most times instead of having journalists who go to the field to pursue stories; of course, you know what it means to go to the field, those involve resources, finances, whether you like it or not money is involved. You have to go meet your sources, the matter of distance and everything. You have to go and meet people that are affected by one thing or the other. But because most of the media houses are not well funded and most of their journalists are not well paid, you find what we call the armchair journalism. People just sit back, and security agencies send these press statements to their office. (J8)

For you to do such stories, you need a lot of money. It requires you to stay outside for several days, several weeks. You stay in a hotel, you talk to people. You get a tour vehicle that will be moving you about and sometimes in Nigeria, you buy information from people (J7)

In line with the first statement from J8, the source analysis in the previous section has shown the reliance on security sources in news reports on Boko Haram. Lack of access to funds might be one reason journalists refer to official sources especially in conflicts as studies have shown. Access to alternative sources require funds which if lacking encumbers journalists, thus the dependence on press releases. As funding is not readily available to pursue original stories, journalists are limited in the sort of stories they can do. For instance, a journalist would not be able to travel from Lagos to the northeast to get the opinions of victims or those closest to the conflict because the lack of funding to go on such journeys. Journalists blame this inadequate funding, especially inadequate paychecks, for practices such as the receiving of tips or “brown envelopes” from interested parties in a news report; for instance, security sources.

There is also no adequate remuneration. That is why you see journalists sometimes, they give them tips to bend the story which is not ethical, but that does not mean we don't have good journalists. We have good journalists. (J6)

Often when press briefings are concluded, you find journalist sitting back. They are not sitting back because they want to hurry up and finish their stories; no, they are sitting back because there is always the “PR” that comes with it; the journalists here in Nigeria refer to that as “kwa” or brown envelope.

When you have collected this kwa, how do you go back and report against the agency that has given you kwa? And then some of these journalists will tell you, “do you know the last time I was paid?” And this kwa is sometimes huge, so why would you write against an agency that favours you when it comes to financial needs? (J8)

Kwa or brown envelope practice is common in journalism in Africa where journalists are given informal incentives after press conferences for a number of reasons.

Skjerdal's (2010) review of this phenomenon identifies three characteristics that are usually involved in this practice: it occurs on a personal level, it has some degree of confidentiality and denotes an informal contract between source and reporter. Thus, journalists are expected to not only report an event but also to report positively. Yusha'u (2009) explains that the term *kwa* was derived from "communique" into "communi-kwa" and shortened to *kwa*. In the quote above, the journalist refers to press briefings with security agencies and points out how journalists are possibly compromised because of tips they get from these agencies. The possibility, therefore, is that journalists might not challenge narratives, practices, or claims of security agencies that do not add up and give too much media space to security agents to influence the news framing of Boko Haram.

Studies argue that poverty is the most significant problem facing Nigerian journalists as it makes them susceptible to financial inducements which may invariably hamper their professionalism when reporting news (Omenugha and Oji 2008, Schiffrin 2010). As already seen in the source analysis of this study, in every analysed newspaper, security sources were the most used source group cumulatively and in the first three paragraphs of news stories.

Another challenge arising from the poor financial status of newspapers is the inadequate facilities available to journalists to report issues like Boko Haram properly. Journalists talked about not having adequate equipment to report Boko Haram effectively especially cameras and IT infrastructure.

If Boko Haram comes here now and makes havoc, there is no camera that will cover them to get the face of the person. The person will run away. So, some of the things that are helping to aid this are lack of IT, lack of sophistication in this technology. It is really one of the problems we have why Boko Haram is festering so fast in Nigeria. They have been doing all these things and getting away with it (J4)

Although the journalist speaks to reporting Boko Haram using cameras, the use of new technology in reporting goes beyond Boko Haram. The current media landscape is such that print newspapers are becoming more digital and moving to online spaces, and thus can reports stories with visuals and audios due to the functionalities afforded it by the online space. Thus, interviews with residents, experts, or official sources can be conducted on camera even by traditional print journalists. The non-availability of these equipment, therefore, hampers media work in the country. Even more important is the non-availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as bulletproof vests that are especially useful in conflict situations.

Not all journalist can go to battlefronts like Sambissa and cover because of ongoing battle between military and Boko Haram. But foreign journalists you see them at the centre of it, they will be reporting. You see them with their bullet proof jacket and if anything happens to them, there is insurance but here, we don't have such things. If you are dead, you are dead. So, we have to be careful (J6)

The lack of insurance coverage was an important factor for journalists. Every interviewed journalist touched on the lack of insurance coverage as a major reason journalists do not travel to troubled spots to report on the activities of the group.

A Channels Television reporter about three years ago, was killed on the spot when he was reporting Boko Haram. He was not covered, he was not protected. Do you think another Channels person will like to go to the thick of the warfront? ... Because no Nigerian journalist is insured to go on such risky ventures. (J4)

When you are going there, you have a hotel to stay. That is all about your care. You go there; you may be shot. You look at it; you have dependents at home. If you are killed, who will take care of them? You don't even have insurance that will cover you. You have a lot of experts in terrorism reporting in Nigeria but some of them may not take such risks. (J4)

In summary, the paucity of funds available to journalists to pursue original stories creates an environment that does not support independent journalism. As journalists

are not well paid, they are exposed to situations that could lead to their compromise, such as accepting bribes that could colour their news reports. Lack of funds in media houses also means that essential equipment needed to report conflicts in an increasingly digitalised media landscape effectively is not available to many of these journalists. In addition to lack of funds to take care of travel expenses, media houses do not have insurance policies for their journalists thus journalists are not motivated to take risks associated with reporting from places close to the conflict. Therefore, important perspectives from troubled spots are missing from news texts as journalists are not sufficiently motivated to take risks.

## 6.2 Safety

Another important challenge identified by journalists in the reporting of Boko Haram is safety, including the personal safety of journalists and safety of media houses. Journalists identified the lack of security when going into Boko Haram strongholds, threats from security agents themselves, and fear of realities in the northeast as inhibiting factors to reporting Boko Haram. Thus, this challenge deals with fears arising from the risk of reporting Boko Haram and the lack of mechanisms to protect against them.

There are some journalists who when they report Boko Haram, do not even use their names. They use pseudonyms because of the risks involved (J3).

Boko Haram has attacked journalists and news houses who have not, in its opinion, reported it correctly. Journalists use the example of a Channels TV reporter who was killed while reporting on Boko Haram as an example to show the potent danger in reporting Boko Haram. Journalists refer to places occupied by Boko Haram as war zones or war fronts and, thus, suggest the increased need for security if going to

such places. The lack therefore of security services for journalists in these situations creates a challenge for journalists.

If you take me to a war zone to report Boko Haram, I am supposed to be backed by police. But in Nigeria, it is not so. You are on your own. So, you just have to be careful when reporting in conflict zones so that you will be safe (J3)

Journalists referenced politicians who despite the availability of security personnel, refrained from going to places occupied by Boko Haram as standards to show how unsafe the northeast (at that time) was.

Another thing is the fear factor. Some of the victims of Boko Haram are in the north, and some of the journalists are not willing to go. If you send me to Chibok local government, I may be sceptical about going. The current Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, had an appointment in Borno State. He eventually didn't go. He didn't say it is because of insurgency but that is it. You don't need a prophet to tell you that. He didn't go. Not to talk of a journalist that does not have any security .... When a journalist goes there, the person will be arrested and disgraced and eventually killed (J4)

The non-provision of security for Nigeria journalists, in the opinion of Nigerian journalists, seems deliberate as foreign journalists were adequately protected when they came into the country. This could be due to several reasons: governments could be interested in its international image and embedding foreign journalists in its operations against Boko Haram is an efficient way to do this, government could also not want Nigerian journalists who have a lot of context and information and sources to have access to actual state of things except what is made available to them in press releases, or government could simply not have had too much regard for the national press. Journalists tend to side with the last point, as an interviewed journalist puts it:

security operatives don't have respect for journalists (J7).

Here in Nigeria, CNN people will come, soldiers will go with them to those spots, all those Boko Haram enclaves. But if we in Nigeria apply to do that, nobody listens to you, that is a limitation. (J7)

Furthermore, journalist's fear for personal safety was not only from Boko Haram but also from security agencies. Security agents, like Boko Haram, have interest in how the media represents them. Journalists talked of being threatened or expelled from press conferences on account of negative reports on the military.

The only threat I have had so far have actually come from security agencies. I have never had any threats from Boko Haram, I have written a lot on them. I have written a lot on the emancipation of Biafra and not had threats too. But most of the threats I have had is from security agencies because of reports I have done. For instance, my expose on the mismanagement of the allowances of soldiers in the UN mission in Mali. (J8)

We also use to have that kind of situation especially in the Nigerian military; I remember when I started with the dailies with the Nigerian military I was an enemy nobody wanted to see me especially the defence headquarter because the first story I did on the military was their guys that went to Mali on a mission. They were not giving them good food; we got the information, and we did the story, and I became the enemy. After the mission, they never paid them even while they were there all the allowances they were supposed to get they were not getting it to them. Then when I did the report of not being paid, they paid them ... during that period the military never wanted to see me (J8)

Security agents also, sometimes, hampered the endeavours of journalists in accessing ravaged areas. Some media houses were discouraged from pursuing stories as security would not be provided for them. Those who went out of their way to get unique perspectives from the northeast itself had to do these stories without informing security operatives who would have stopped the report from happening.

For that story, there was no announcement; they did not ask for any security cover. They just slipped into the area and quietly came out and the story was done after they were safely back to Abuja. Most times when you tell security operatives you want to venture into these areas they discourage you big time (J8)



The infrastructural decay in places like Borno was also a catalyst for fear. Bad roads, for example, prevents journalists from accessing sources or places quickly. There is also the risk of road accidents.

If you go to Borno state, they say there are up to 25 routes from Borno to Niger. So, you are here, you don't know there are other ways you can be attacked. Roads are not good, vehicles are not good. (J4)

In addition to these infrastructural deficiencies, some journalists were also afraid of the humanitarian realities of the northeast.

I have a former colleague who said he is so afraid of going to the north, Borno state, because if you go there, you see dilapidated people, you see people that beg for pity as a result of the insurgency and some of these people don't know what will happen the next day in terms of attack (J4)

In summary, fear for safety and inadequacies in security arrangements were major impediments to journalists' willingness to go through certain risk levels to get stories. These fears were not only from Boko Haram but also from security agencies who were interested in their portrayal in the media, infrastructural deficiencies that prevents easy access to troubled regions, and humanitarian realities of people living in the northeast areas where Boko Haram operate.

### 6.3 Southern domination of news and Access

The presence of most national newspapers in the south or southern ownership of most mainstream media in Nigeria is also a challenge to efficiently reporting Boko Haram. In fact, Ojo (2003) claims that the media do not pursue stories indicting southwestern leaders of political misdemeanours because of media ownership which is primarily southwestern. Challenges arising from the southern domination of the press include language barrier (as most southerners cannot speak Hausa, the dominant language in the north) and ethnic bias in the news. The ethnoreligious stance of Boko Haram creates the possibility of ethnic bias in news reporting.

Southern domination of news also creates the problem of access to areas affected by the Boko Haram conflict and to residents in those areas.

The issue of access is very difficult. When you see all these things happening, even as a journalist you think twice if you are sent there to report. Unless such people [residents, victims, survivors] come to the south, you will have to find them and interview them.

If I had more access to them, I would want to speak to them. They are very important to the narrative because they have first-hand knowledge of what is happening (J3)

The challenge of access presents difficulties in getting alternative narratives as sources very close to the conflict are not accessible to journalists. The problem of access is also compounded by the reluctance of the security services to assist journalists. Thus, in situations where journalists can go into an area, there is still the problem of security.

There is access to the state, but it is fearful because you are on your own. You are not backed by the police or whatever (J3)

Also, in cases where the state arrest members of Boko Haram, they shield them from journalists. The government also attempts to prevent journalists from attending and reporting court cases. Again, this does not help the nuanced narrative that is possible if various voices enrich the narrative and give a more holistic picture of what the conflict is about. Thus, journalists are left with press conferences of security agents.

At times in Nigeria getting information may not just be easy. Like if there is a Boko Haram member arrested, they hardly allow him access to journalist. They classify him as security information. Like some cases in court—the Nyanya bomb blast suspect—except what he says in court. They even try to keep journalists away from the trial. Unless you have insider information, which at times is very difficult. (J5)

Foreign media have the access when they might not understand the context. Journalists in the country then have to rely on their reports and statements from the government. The plurality of viewpoints that various newspapers will bring to the

narrative is lost, and instead, the news is from the viewpoint of the foreign journalist who might not have adequate context of the situation ab initio.

The issue here is that we don't go to the warfront. You don't expect me to go to Sambisa forest to go and cover a report. It is what the officials tell me that I will report. You see, the foreign media have more reach than we do. They have access to some of this information than we do, so when they report, we also get information from them. (J7)

There is also the problem of language barrier. Boko Haram communicates primarily in Hausa. Journalists reporting on the group who cannot understand the language (who are in the majority considering the southern domination of news) have to rely on translations from the few who can. Many times, newspapers embed unedited videos from Boko Haram on their website without subtitles because they cannot translate or understand what the video is about. If a newspaper like *Daily Trust* or a newswire with the needed manpower translates and reports a portion that it deems important, most newspapers rely on these translations and report similar things. The language barrier also extends to interviewing people who live in the northeast and might not be able to speak English.

Most times these people don't also speak English, so he becomes my interpreter, or if I get prior knowledge that those people don't speak English I get someone who speaks Hausa in my office, then I put down my questions and then this person asks the questions. Then I also trust the person to ask follow up questions if need be (J8)

In addition to language problems, there is the cultural and religious problems as well. Different cultures have the certain sensibilities which might affect reporting of a group like Boko Haram. Thus, a female journalist said:

I am a female and Islamic religion has a lot of ideologies relating to females. I can remember one time we wanted to interview a cleric on a Friday during their Jumu'ah prayer. You know the way you have in the churches, you have your pastor and after your pastor have spoken on the pulpit, you go behind to have a short interview with him. ... My head of desk said: "no you cannot go. I know you want to do it but no you cannot go." So, they looked for a male and attached him to the videographer to

go have that interview, do you understand? So, Islamic Ideology can stop female journalists like me from interviewing these people (J8).

Thus, this cultural and religious sensitivities might tilt certain newspapers to certain religious or ethnic sources or dissuade certain journalists from pursuing some leads or sources. There is also the reluctance of family members to speak to the media. A useful example that illustrates this reluctance is the refusal of parents of the abducted Chibok schoolgirls to meet with the conveyors of the Bring Back Our Girls movement in 2016 when it became clear that the president found the group antagonistic which could, in turn, hamper the rescue of the schoolgirls (Chibok parents bypass campaigners, seek audience with Buhari, Punch, 27 August 2016). Similar motives aimed at survival, sometimes, influenced parents and family members to avoid speaking to the press. This is probably one of the reasons family sources were rarely used in news stories.

Some of the families involved are at times sceptical about coming out to speak. Because when you speak, they [journalists] report. Those people [Boko Haram] might come back again. Some of them [family members] are not willing to come up. It's hampering media work (J4).

Thus, the southern domination of the news media affects the effective reporting of Boko Haram because of language barrier, cultural, and religious problems. There is also the problem of access to conflict zones which is affected by the reluctance of security agents to produce protection but also by journalists from the south who might not know the terrain in the north. User-generated contents are not easy to verify and the areas most affected by Boko Haram's violence, in any case, might not have access to the requisite tools needed to upload videos on social networking sites.

#### 6.4 Editorial policies and the influence of politics on reporting

Another challenge in the reporting of Boko Haram is the lack of editorial policies on reporting the group. Most newspapers do not have guidelines as regards reporting Boko Haram, ethnoreligious conflicts, or terrorism in the country. Journalists mainly referenced objectivity as the only guideline they used in reporting Boko Haram.

The only guideline we have is objectivity (J4)

As a journalist, your primary duty is to report to the society and about the society. A reporter reports what he or she sees, hears. What he or she thinks doesn't come into it. Even if he thinks that Boko Haram is evil, it doesn't come into the picture because as a professional journalist you have to be as objective as possible and being objective means that you try to rely less on your emotion. So even if I think that Boko Haram is evil, that is my opinion. It shouldn't reflect in my report. The next person might not think that BH is evil (J1).

However, as the literature, especially around reporting conflicts, show, objectivity is not entirely possible for journalists as everyone has an opinion on issues and these personal views can influence the kind of—and the manner in which—a story is covered. In fact, interviewed journalists, reflecting on the influence of their reporting on the group, appreciated how objectivity has not indeed been upheld in reporting.

If journalists were more objective and realised that these guys are just terrorists, it won't have been like this. Journalists did not succeed in making Boko Haram fiercer; they succeeded in polarising the country along religious and ethnic lines. Because Boko Haram has been there killing, but the only thing they succeeded in is tearing the country more (J4).

In other words, by reporting Boko Haram in the manner they did, they changed nothing in its operation except emboldening the group and further polarising the country. This was achieved, in the opinion of this journalist, by not upholding objectivity. In any case, objectivity is almost impossible in such situations where journalists do not have access to certain key players—in this case, Boko Haram members or residents.

I agree completely, if you want to be objective in your reporting, you must explore all avenues. Information coming from one side might actually be biased, but I will always tell you that journalists are not ghosts neither are they gods to know the unknown. You can only report based on the information available to you (J4).

One journalist claimed that newspapers adopted a cautious strategy in reporting Boko Haram for fear of some form of attack by the group. Thus, they stick generally to information from the military.

Every newspaper has its own editorial policies, Boko Haram once bombed *Thisday* Newspapers in Abuja. I think they said *Thisday* used to write bad reports on them and they didn't like it. They know how to intimidate, once they bomb they are communicating; they want other media houses to be careful on how they report their activities.

This is where it comes to editorial policies. Some newspaper houses may try to be on the safe side when they are reporting, not to take a position. They can quote what the army said. So, it's all about doing the job so that you also do it the next day. (J6)

The lack of editorial policy on Boko Haram extends to the epithet used to refer to the group. In news reports, words or phrases such as Islamist, Islamic fundamentalists, Islamic group, terrorists, Islamic sect, sect were used interchangeably for the group.

We have always seen them as a terrorist group, as an insurgent group. We use the terms interchangeably. We don't need the US to tell us that they are a terrorist group, we are feeling the impact first hand. We don't need anybody to tell us how to label them (J1)

Sect, Islamic group, terrorist, insurgent—I use all interchangeably (J2)

From the quote, the epithets on the list above are used as synonyms to represent the group, and although the use of these epithets is at the discretion of the individual journalist, changes can also occur at the editorial level.

The news process starts from the reporter to the copy editor who do basic grammar check and then to the editor. Sometimes as reporter when I write Boko Haram terrorist, by the time it gets to the editor, it is something else. So, it now becomes interchangeable. You can't even tell the difference anymore because you have been interchanging them in your report (J1)

Thus, in the understanding of Nigerian journalists, and as manifest in the news texts, there is no difference between Islamist and Islamic. While Islamism has been used to refer to a certain corruption of Islam for reasons other religious reasons, Islamic is directly associated with Islam.

Whenever we report, people have always quarrelled with the idea of describing them as Islamic terrorist group. They will tell us they are just terrorist group. We tell them no, we have to qualify it. People have always quarrelled with the word, but we cannot help it because it is the guise that they are operating, we cannot help it. (J7)

They are only connected [Boko Haram and Islam] to the extent that the Boko Haram insurgent said they are fighting an Islamic war, that is they want an Islamic state. I don't know if the Quran says they should build an Islamic state in Nigeria and of course Muslim leaders have spoken out. They've said Islam does not approve of this their killing, their terrorism act. Islam does not approve it. Taking of life should not be part of Islam, I am not seeing the relationship. But then you know that Islam is founded on jihad, conquest (J6)

Qualifying Boko Haram as Islamic, especially in a polarised country such as Nigeria, creates the impression in the minds of audiences that Islam is to blame for the actions of Boko Haram. The distinction between Islamists and Islamic might not even sway the opinion of audiences who might not appreciate the difference. Apart from its connotation with Islam, there is a consensus among interviewed journalists about the reference to Boko Haram as terrorists. Although there are several groups with interests that are arguably not in tandem with the interest of the government of Nigeria, Boko Haram stands out as terrorist in the opinion of journalists because of two major reasons: no clear agenda and human fatalities.

They are terrorist in the sense that terrorists have no particular mission; they are out to destroy. They are out to cause crises everywhere. That is why we call Boko Haram terrorist. If you look at Niger Delta guys, they also use guns, but they are not referred to as terrorists because they are agitating for something (J7)

Thus, there is the continuous comparison of Boko Haram to the Niger Delta militants. The argument that Boko Haram has no agenda or mission is interesting given that Boko Haram has several publicly known agenda including the establishment of an Islamic caliphate and opposition to western ideals especially democracy and education. This study argues that rather than having no agenda, Boko Haram simply did not meet the familiar frames of previous dissident groups in Nigeria. Thus, journalists relied on framing of similar groups in the western media especially given the commonalities in tactics with groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda.

People think it is an Islamic terrorist group because each time they launch their attack, they chant Allah is great in Arabic, and their latest alliance with ISIS also pointed to this – a religious war to convert everyone to Islam but then we don't know how true this is. Most people tag them Islamic extremist that could be because of their mode of operation (J2)

In any case, a clear editorial guideline is useful when reporting contested topics such as terrorism. The BBC, for example, does not use the term “terrorist” except in quotes as the “use of the word will frequently involve a value judgement... and affect our reputation for objective journalism” (BBC Editorial Guidelines 2010). Thus, Nigerian journalists cannot on the one hand claim objective while on the other hand refer to the group as terrorist given the political nature of terrorism and need clear guidelines on how to report not only Boko Haram but also other ethnically charged conflicts where there are possibilities of polarising narratives.

Politics and ownership of the media also influences editorial decisions. The position of Boko Haram in the ethnic and political configuration of the country allowed for political narratives and influences in the reporting of the group especially close to a major election. Thus, some journalists theorised that the focus on government's inaction around Chibok and Baga was based on this political influence



from opposition politicians at the time. The framing analysis gives credence to this position as it shows a high frequency of the government inaction frame during Chibok.

During the last elections, it was like a consensus among Nigerians that Jonathan has failed but some say the consensus was simulated by the media; that it was the Tinubu [major opposition politician] media machine that stimulated and sold to the people that Jonathan was a failure. But in the real sense of it, Jonathan wasn't completely a failure compared to what is happening now.

The media is controlled by powerful individuals, they are owned. In Nigeria, if you are not a former governor, you can't sustain a successful media. So, ownership of the media is key, who owns the media determines the focus of the media or the kind of news the media puts out. So Tinubu has a lot of them. The ones that doesn't belong to him directly, he has some influence over the editors, over the reporters. They were able to give out information about the former government portraying it as weakling, portraying it as ineffectual, portraying it as ineffective, as lame.

To a large extent, the media played a role in the removal of Jonathan especially in the reporting of the Chibok girls. Otherwise, Buhari is a year plus now, and he has not rescued the Chibok girls, but it is not a song being sung in the media. One of the Bring Back Our Girls campaigner is now Nigeria Ports Authority MD, a lady who has no knowledge of maritime. El-Rufai took her and made her Chief of Staff. From there, they appointed her NPA MD. You can see everything about our politics, you can see there are a lot of politics around Boko Haram (J6)

The journalist in the quote above creates a link between politics, ownership of media and news framing of Boko Haram. As individuals who own media outlets are members of society and identify with specific ethnic groups and political ideologies, they sometimes influence the political and ethnic leanings of news reports usually for political gains.

Media ownership determines the focus of the paper or the reportage. If an Igbo person owns a paper that speaks for the Igbos, you don't expect to write something that would not be in the interest of the Igbos. That's the basic fact you have to know. So as much as you want to maintain national unity, you also want to do something that would favour your own group (J7).

Politicians who bankroll newspapers can also compromise the position of media houses.

I was told, I didn't witness, that some of the editors and owners of news media were in the payroll of the opposition during the last election. I have a colleague who said the mother hated Jonathan because of Chibok girls because the media sold it to them that Jonathan was doing nothing about the Chibok girls (J4).

Also, some of the narratives especially around ethnicity—for example, Nigeria as a north-south composition—are mainly from political narratives around power-sharing formulas. Given the publicity given to politicians in the country, these narratives make it to the media and used to report groups like Boko Haram.

If you follow the way PDP, the party in government, was structured, it was based on zoning and rotation between the north and the south. When Jonathan became president as against the zoning policy, some people were saying they were going to make the country ungovernable for him. It was not the issue of north-south; it was more like the issue of "this one reneged agreement on this, so we are going to make the country ungovernable. The only time some northern leaders started talking about Boko Haram condemning it was when Boko Haram started attacking some of their own (J5).

There is a need for newspapers to develop ethically sound editorial policies to guide news reports of conflicts in the country especially given the existing polarisations in the country. Issues like how to address the religious claims of Boko Haram or how to refer to them should not be left to the whims of individual journalists. Objectivity, as shown in the literature review, while being a theoretically sound model is an almost impossible ideal to reach especially in conflict situations. This would also help reduce political influence on reporting of sensitive matters, at least to an extent.

## 6.5 Conclusion

This research set out to answer three questions on news frames in the discourse of Boko Haram in Nigeria, on the kind of sources used in news reports and

how they might affect news frames, and finally on the challenges journalists might face in reporting Boko Haram. This chapter answers these questions.

Five frames were identified from the framing analysis: Boko Haram as Other, the response of Government to Boko Haram, ethnic and political conspiracy, Boko Haram as legitimate, and fear and people fleeing. The framing analysis has several significant findings. First, the media representation of Boko Haram was mainly along the lines of Boko Haram's violence and government's reaction to the group, as these two frames were used in 80% of analysed news stories with a primary frame. The othering of Boko Haram and profiling as an enemy of the Nigerian people was generally reliant on its violence which was labelled as senseless, terrorist, and warfare. It was also reliant on the international membership of the group and its affiliation with jihadist groups such as ISIS, AQIM, and al Qaeda and on its posture, which seemed to target the fragments of the country towards precipitating a conflict along ethnic and religious lines. This frame thus legitimised the use of violence against the group especially when considered as a whole: Boko Haram as consisting of foreign actors targeting the unity of the country through war, terrorism, and stoking ethnic flames. Some of the usage of this frame seems to be journalists' attempts to fit Boko Haram into a familiar framework of reference such as the Maitatsine riots of the 1980s. For instance, the referral to Boko Haram's attack as targeting Christians is not supported from the timeline of activities even present in the news texts; on 29 December 2011, just four days after the 25 December 2011 coordinated bombing of churches, Boko Haram carried out a bomb attack in the north. This did not, however, affect the framing of the group as targeting Christians. Journalists did accept that initial framings of Boko Haram as attacking Christians were erroneous with more blatant attacks by the group on mosques.

Ethnicity was a key factor in virtually every isolated news frame of Boko Haram. In the government response frame, for instance, it was used to critique the action of the southern president on what was essentially a northern problem. It was also the central factor in the political and ethnic conspiracy frame, including the nationalism subframe which was a counter frame to the polarising discourses in the political and ethnic conspiracy frame. Thus, one major understanding of Boko Haram's acts is as an ethnic conflict. Boko Haram also used the ethnic polarisations in the country to drive its message; sometimes this was tied up with religion in such a way that a difference between ethnicity and religion, and which is the root of the conflict cannot be made. This has been referred to as ethnodoxo (Karpov et al. 2012). In the Boko Haram as prevailing frame, the victories of Boko Haram were always represented negatively with narratives of people fleeing or decomposing bodies.

The preponderance of frames associated with violence seem to be as a result of journalists' sourcing patterns as there are indications in the news texts that ordinary citizens preferred more peaceful attempts at resolving the conflict. The source analysis shows a heavy bias for official sources especially security sources in news texts although this might be down to the difficulties experienced by journalists in seeking alternative sources. A significant finding in the source analysis is in the attention given to residents and eyewitnesses. Rather than being overlooked, they were a major source group in news reports as the sourcing analysis show. Although as analysis of the first three paragraphs of each analysed newspapers show, the most likely sources to set the tone of news reports in all three newspapers were official sources especially security sources; thus, residents and eyewitnesses played a more supporting role in most news stories they appeared in. The use of religious

sources varied from newspaper to newspaper—*Daily Trust* preferred Islamic religious sources, *Vanguard* preferred Christian sources, while *Thisday* generally did not prioritise religious sources. Family including family members of Boko Haram members and expert sources were generally overlooked in news reports. Thus, alternative narratives such as radicalisation were utterly missing in the discourse on Boko Haram as the frames were centred more on ethnicity. The absence of family sources meant that news stories lacked that sense of extended community that family sources can bring to new stories (Frosh and Wolfsfeld 2007).

Finally, from the thematic analysis of interviews with journalists, four challenges to reporting Boko Haram were isolated including funding, safety, southern domination of news, and editorial policies and conflict training. The findings show that some of these challenges affected the news framing of Boko Haram. For instance, poor funding meant that journalists relied on press releases from the military to report occurrences in the northeast. In the next chapter, significant findings from the framing, source, and thematic analysis will be presented and the possibility of a more conflict-sensitive journalism in Nigerian will be reflected on.

## Chapter Seven

### Conclusion

#### 7.1 Overview

This research examined the media representation of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press. As Boko Haram is widely regarded as a terrorist organisation and given the debates around media coverage of terrorism especially in western discourses, this study attempted to understand the media coverage of an African group perceived as terrorist by an African press. Nigeria offers a unique perspective to the study of media and terrorism because of its history with colonialism which has created ethnic identities on whose basis most affairs of the country are decided. The country is sometimes presented as having a southern Christian population and a northern Muslim population. While Boko Haram is based mainly in northern Nigeria and claims to pursue the creation of a puritanical Islamic state, the press is based mainly in the south and has been accused of bias to affairs in the north. Boko Haram is also perceived as having pro-northern agenda, and its intended victims are perceived to be southerners.

The nature of news coverage of the group by the Nigerian press was analysed using framing analysis, which allowed for the examination of aspects of Boko Haram that were made salient in news reports and how news frames were organised to align with the cognitive schema in the Nigerian society. As sources are essential in what finally becomes news, the sourcing patterns present in news reports of Boko Haram were coded and analysed. Journalists were also interviewed to understand the challenges that reporting a polarising group as Boko Haram presents. The three research questions proposed in this thesis to understand the press coverage of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press are itemised below:

1. What are the dominant news frames used in the press coverage of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers?
2. What are patterns of source usage in the coverage of Boko Haram in Nigerian newspapers?
3. What are the challenges Nigerian journalists face when reporting Boko Haram?

The research finding of the framing analysis shows that the central factor in the coverage of Boko Haram and its so-called terrorism is the question of identity, of which ethnicity played a significant part. Thus, the political violence of Boko Haram was presented to audience members mainly through the familiar schema of ethnicity and ethnic violence as every isolated frame had an element of identity in it. The prevailing narrative around Boko Haram, therefore, was driven through the lens of politics—as identity is very much a political problem—and sometimes, religion—as ethnicity and religion are closely tied together in Nigeria, and Boko Haram claims a religious motive for its actions. Alternative narratives such as radicalisation are missing from narratives because of the prevailing political nature of reportage. The framing analysis also showed that the reportage of Boko Haram was mainly around the violence of the group and the reaction of government to the activities of the group. Reports legitimised violence against the group through the depiction of Boko Haram's activities as war and portrayal of Boko Haram as the aggressor.

The source analysis showed a preference for official sources—security operatives and Nigerian government officials—who, as studies have shown, are prone to propaganda and talk about their efforts in the best possible light. The preponderance of official sources in the news reports of Boko Haram arguably accounts for the dominant discourses on Boko Haram which prioritised political

narratives as shown in the framing analysis. The study identified three varying levels of source usage with each level representing the frequency of usage: high-intensity, medium-intensity, and low-intensity. High-intensity sources include security, residents and eyewitnesses, federal government, state government. The presence of residents and eyewitnesses as a highly sourced group was unexpected as while several studies show that journalists rely heavily on official sources in conflict reporting, none to my knowledge has shown similar usage for residents and eyewitnesses. The use of these alternative sources did not, however, affect the framing of Boko Haram's activities in any significant manner. News frames still reflected political positions, favoured violence, and were not focused on victims of attacks. In fact, the *fear* frame which was a victim-centric frame was one of the least used frames in the analysed data in this study. Residents and eyewitnesses mainly talked about the violence of Boko Haram and security ineffectiveness. Lee's (2010) argument that the use of ordinary citizens in the news might not affect coverage in any significant way if these citizens are only used to rehash the facts, holds true in this study.

The thematic analysis of interviews with journalists revealed four main challenges encountered by Nigerian journalists in the reportage of Boko Haram including inadequate funding, fear for safety, southern domination of news, and lack of editorial policies. These challenges give insights into journalistic decisions that resulted in news frames or sourcing patterns. For instance, a lack of access into conflict zones decreases the likelihood of interviewing non-official sources in conflict areas such as family members of victims or even members of the group. Thus, journalists relied on official sources to provide updates on events in the northeast.



## 7.2 Frames used in profiling Boko Haram

The first research question in this study was aimed at identifying frames present in news texts of Boko Haram reports in the three Nigerian newspapers used in this study. The framing analysis identified five dominant frames used in the media representation of Boko Haram in news texts: *Boko Haram as Other (enemy)*, *Government Reaction*, *Boko Haram as political conspiracy*, *Boko Haram as legitimate and winning*, and *Fear*. Of these, the most preferred in news texts are the *Boko Haram as Other* and the *government reaction* frames. As a primary frame, the *Boko Haram as Other* frame was used in 38% (n=327) of stories while the government reaction frame was used in 41% (n=350) of stories. Thus, both frames alone accounted for almost 80% of all analysed news stories. Although this does not diminish the effect of other frames, as some frames are very powerful that they can immediately evoke the cognitive schema of citizens, it shows that the primary representations of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press were around the *othering* of Boko Haram and the reaction of the Nigerian government to the group. Thus, what the press present about the conflict are mainly government narratives, critiques of government positions, or acts that emphasise negative aspects of Boko Haram. In fact, the framing analysis show that the framing of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press was mainly around three broad aspects:

1. The violence of Boko Haram
2. The political aspect of Boko Haram
3. Identity.

In other words, these were the aspects of Boko Haram that were made salient in news reports. The five frames contain different *organisation* (Reese 2007) of one or several of these aspects. The *othering* of Boko Haram was based on violence and

identity; the response of government was based on the political aspect of Boko Haram; the political and ethnic conspiracy frame was based on the political aspects of Boko Haram and identity; Boko Haram as prevailing was based on Boko Haram's violence; while the *fear* frame was an effect of Boko Haram's violence.

When Boko Haram was *other-ed* through its violent posture, it was often framed as the aggressor, as the distant other waging war on the country. This closely aligns with Kaldor's theorisation of the changing understanding of certain contemporary political violence as new war (2013). This study argues that labelling the violence of Boko Haram as war achieved two things: first, it *othered* Boko Haram as "both the idea of the 'nation' and the idea of the 'other' are given substance in war" (Kaldor 2004, p. 165); second, it legitimises the use of violence against Boko Haram, especially as the violence of Boko Haram was framed as attempts to destroy the unity of the country. Thus, in news reports, there were no questions asked when actions of the military resulted in deaths of members of Boko Haram as their deaths were a natural consequence of war. Journalists in Nigeria generally rallied around the flag and took the side of the government similar to the ethnic solidarity frames found in Wolfsfeld et al. (2008) study of Israeli and Palestinian television coverage of conflicts. As one journalist said:

In this fight taking the side of the government is supposed to be the way it should be. That is the right thing to do. Will you take the side of your enemy? Do you know if it will consume you tomorrow? Government is still government (Journalist 5).

Therefore, the othering of Boko Haram and the legitimisation of violence against the group by journalists were mostly deliberate as the group was perceived as an enemy of the state. The use of certain violent tactics especially bombings of religious places and suicide bombings further rationalised the negative framing of

Boko Haram, for instance, as a terrorist organisation. Suicide bombing was specifically used to *other* Boko Haram because of its depiction as un-Nigerian. In fact, interviewed journalists claimed that their portrayal of Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation was mainly because of the civilian casualties of their operations and what they perceived as the lack of an agenda. The claim by journalists that Boko Haram has no agenda, this study argues, is a way of delegitimising the group as Boko Haram has always been vocal about its agenda which includes the creation of what it deems to be a puritanical Islamic state (Kassim 2015). Boko Haram did not also fit the familiar frame of references used for violent groups in the past, for example, the Niger Delta militants, who attacked oil installations in the south of the country. While journalists recognised the aim of the Niger Delta militants, natural resources control, as legitimate, they dismissed Boko Haram's agenda of a puritanical Islamic state as a non-agenda, further delegitimising the group.

Not all news frames presented a united front against Boko Haram, however. The findings show that in othering Boko Haram along ethnoreligious lines, Christians were presented as victims. This narrative was polarising as it did not distinguish the Christian from the southerner and alluded to the Boko Haram conflict as a northern conspiracy. Thus, Islamic and northern leaders were sometimes portrayed as complicit in the violent actions of Boko Haram. Islam was also implicated in the acts of Boko Haram and news texts did not make distinctions between Islam and Islamism in the news reports of Boko Haram. In fact, some Islamic leaders faulted media representations of the group and advocated for perspectives in media reports that differentiates the Muslim from members of the group whom they referred to as criminals and heretics. Reprisal attacks in the south of the country that targeted northern Muslims who were not members of Boko Haram show how audience

members accepted narratives of northern Muslims as complicit in acts of Boko Haram. What is significant here is that certain news reports on Boko Haram cannot be classified as responsible journalism given the existing polarisations in the Nigerian state, as implicating Islam in the acts of Boko Haram or inferring conspiracy by northern leaders are fadders for violent reprisals. The ethnic and political conspiracy frame also shows a divided front in the narrative against Boko Haram as northern politicians accused the southern-led federal government of a conspiracy against the northern people through its management of Boko Haram while southern politicians accused the north of deliberately undermining the presidency of a southern leader. Thus, while Boko Haram was consistent in its divisive narrative, political and religious actors advanced multiple and, sometimes, conflicting narratives which were sometimes equally polarising.

In the frame that present Boko Haram as prevailing and legitimate, the findings reveal three things. First, the victories of Boko Haram were mostly represented negatively in the press. For instance, Baga was depicted as smelling of decomposing bodies following Boko Haram's capture of the town, and in towns annexed by Boko Haram, the reports were usually of "thousands of residents fleeing" as if to suggest a rejection of the authority and rule of Boko Haram. Second, parts of this frame were used to legitimise the group. The Boko Haram as powerful subframe, for instance, presented Boko Haram as an important northern group, speaking and acting in the interest of northern Muslims. Majority of these stories were driven by Boko Haram sources and are standalone stories with one source. The findings show that the few news stories that reported the perspectives of ordinary citizens revealed that they supported dialogue with Boko Haram as the best strategy in combating the group, contrary to government's positions, prioritised by media reports, that

supported violent actions. Northern political leaders were also more supportive of peaceful resolutions. The third important point is the lack of confidence in military and government's ability to protect citizens. Here the violence of Boko Haram was not just the symbolic violence (Shaw 2009) associated with terrorism but a real threat that was disruptive to the daily lives of citizens. Thus, citizens in areas of Boko Haram dominance appealed to the group directly for de-escalation of violence (Borno women appeal to insurgents to free abducted girls, *Vanguard*, 23 April 2014).

The *fear* frame was one of the least used frames in this study. It was used in 4% (n=39) of the total news frames on Boko Haram determined in this study. The low usage of this frame suggests that dominant discourses on Boko Haram did not consider the perspective of the victims of attacks. Indirect evidence that show this lack of victim-perspective framing can be found in the absence of names or personal details of victims after attacks. News stories typically reported numbers of victims or the general circumstances surrounding their deaths. It was difficult making comparisons to victim-related frames from other studies as studies mainly talked of fear as a mediated concept; that is, fear as a psychological reaction to watching the news on terrorism (e.g. Altheide 1997, Nellis and Savage 2012). The evidence in the literature, however, seem to suggest that in situations where victim frames are considered in news reports, more attention is given to victims, for instance, through the 'roll-call of the dead' (Frosh and Wolfsfeld 2007, p. 113). This practice which humanises casualties of violent attacks for audiences that might be far removed from areas of conflicts was absent in news texts analysed in this study.

### 7.3 Sourcing the news on Boko Haram

The second research question investigated the sourcing patterns present in news stories. The findings show that the most quoted sources in news reports of

Boko Haram are official sources and residents. While the high presence of official sources is in line with research (e.g. Carruthers 2011, Lewis 2012) that suggest a bias for official sources especially security sources in conflict reportage, the high presence of residents and eyewitnesses was not expected as most research argue that the ordinary citizens is overlooked in news reporting (e.g. Reich 2015). The findings of the source analysis show that the narratives of official sources were similar to the narratives of the dominant frames established in the framing analysis. For instance, narratives of security sources were usually one of the following three: the depiction of Boko Haram as foreign, Boko Haram as a terrorist organisation, and security as efficient. Similarly, the narratives of the federal government sources presented Boko Haram as a threat to national unity, and thus makes a case for collaboration and nationalism. Federal sources also presented the activities of Boko Haram as part of a new and global terrorism, denounced Boko Haram from mainstream Islam and sometimes opined that Boko Haram was a product of a political conspiracy. Thus, as shown in the framing analysis, there is also a unifying frame in the federal government's narrative—nationalism—as well as a divisive one—political conspiracy. Narratives of state government officials, who were mainly northern, profiled Boko Haram as un-Islamic, not representative of northern interests, and solicited avenues of dialogue with the group (Northern Govs meet, condemn BH crisis, *Vanguard*, 04 August 2009; Borno Governor promises to explore avenues for peace, *Daily Trust*, 27 June 2011). What this shows is that those closest to the conflict and, arguably, with better understanding of the group were more open to peaceful resolutions. It also shows the active roles played by sources in how news is framed in the Boko Haram reportage. If we look closely at the sourcing patterns present in the three newspapers, we notice that only Daily Trust, which is northern,

had more state government sources than federal government sources. Given the political and ethnic undertones of the Boko Haram narrative, this is significant considering the federal government was southern-led and the states where Boko Haram operated were northern states. Thus, *Daily Trust*, a northern-based newspaper, prioritised northern political views while the southern-based newspapers prioritised the views of the southern-led federal government. This shows that there were elements of regional sentiments when newspapers chose sources to use in news reports. While this might be conscious editorial decisions based on target audience preferences, this study argues that a polarising subject as Boko Haram is better presented to audience members with a more balanced sourcing system that ensures that every side is heard.

Boko Haram, despite being a principal actor in this conflict, was not very visible in news texts; in later stages of the conflict, they were sparingly cited—Designation 1% (n=1), Chibok 1% (n=6), Baga 1% (n=3). Thus, Boko Haram's perspective was seldom listened to and could explain why journalists could not link them with an agenda. Barkindo (2013) argues that listening to Boko Haram provides some level of clarity as to who they are, what they want, and how they operate. When they were used in news stories, Boko Haram sources presented their efforts as pro-northern Nigeria and pro-Islam. In claiming a pro-northern Muslim stance, Boko Haram uses the same form of othering used against it by Islamic leaders and official sources by creating enemies of the Nigerian government and other foreign states, especially in the West. Claiming a common enemy against "Islam" in westernisation and democracy, the group places itself as a frontline Islamic group, shows solidarity with similar-minded groups such as Al Qaeda, ISIS and AQIM, and improves its radicalisation narrative. The group's discourse on Islam and Nigeria

northern Muslims does not merely position it as one more Islamic sect in the country but rather as the new and authentic Islamic voice in the country. Consequently, they denounce Islamic leaders in the country presenting them as incapable of protecting Islamic interests in the country. They threaten and carry out violent attacks, disparaged democracy, and presented themselves as driven by ethnicity and religion (Boko Haram asks Christians, southerners to leave the north, *Thisday*, 03 January 2012). The exclusivity of its narrative resembles very closely Kaldor's (2004) concept of the new nationalism that is driven by religious fundamentalism.

Religious sources were an important source category in the reporting of Boko Haram. This is particularly so because, in the news text, Christian leaders mainly of the Christian Association of Nigeria accused Islamic leaders of not condemning the activities of Boko Haram. The findings, however, show that although Christian sources (n=106) were more used than Islamic ones (n=84), there was no significant statistical significant difference in how they were used across events when the newspapers are considered cumulatively. In fact, *Daily Trust* had more Islamic sources (n=43) than Christian sources (n=15) and showed statistical significant difference in its preference of Islamic sources to Christian sources; *Thisday* and *Vanguard* had more Christian sources although there was no statistical significant difference in both. The use of Christian sources in *Vanguard* is very pronounced however as it used two times more Christian sources than Islamic sources, and is, in fact, the only analysed newspaper with more Christian sources than residents in its first three paragraphs. Like in its use of federal and state sources, we see similar ethnoreligious sentiments in the way newspapers used religious sources—*DT* prioritising Islamic sources, *Vanguard* and *Thisday* prioritising Christian sources. Thus, a southerner with preference for *Vanguard*, for instance, is likely to share the



view of CAN regarding the non-condemnation of Muslims by Islamic leaders when this is not the case and more a consequence of editorial policies.

Residents and eyewitnesses were an important source group in the source analysis (n=253, 13%); it was the second most used source group after security sources. The findings show that its use as a source group progressive increased as the conflict progressed. This partly showed the increasing popularity and relevance of the ordinary citizen in the framing of Boko Haram, and also conflicts with other studies that show that the ordinary citizen is mainly overlooked in news stories. What this study shows is that in conflict situations where attacks on ordinary citizens are no more a matter of accidents, citizen perspectives become increasingly relevant to news stories and are not ignored by the press. Unlike residents, however, family sources were almost overlooked in the reporting of the group. Their most use was in Chibok (n=38, 8%) which played a role in galvanising the “extended community” (Frosh and Wolfsfeld 2007, p. 113) in the #BringBackOurGirls movement. As Frosh and Wolfsfeld argue, family sources in conflicts personalise conflicts and create a sense of extended community for people removed from the conflict. Thus, one way journalists might galvanise the “us” in the reporting of Boko Haram is using more family members of victims as news sources and humanising news stories through naming victims and giving audience members insights into their lives.

Another overlooked source group in the news texts is the family members of Boko Haram fighters, few of whom were used following the death of Yusuf. When they were used, they offered unique perspectives into why their spouses were attracted to the group—quest for Islamic knowledge. This further negates the relative deprivation theory that argues that poverty and economic deprivations are the primary reasons young people join Boko Haram. More perspectives from family

members can help understand incentives for radicalisation and worldviews of radicalised members. The findings also show that experts were similarly marginalised as a source group, and thus alternative narratives such as radicalisation or more efficient ways, besides violence, that might be used to engage the group especially in its nascent periods were absent in news texts. This study also argues that the exclusion of expert voices in news reports meant that actions of government were not appraised by a non-interested party leaving the narrative and framing of the group to interested official and nonofficial parties such as government, security, and religious leaders. Thus, the framing of the group in news reports was around politics and identity which fostered various binary division of conflicting parties: southern-led government vs northern leaders, Boko Haram vs government, Boko Haram vs northern leaders, Islamic leaders vs Christian leaders.

#### 7.4 Challenges to reporting Boko Haram

The findings of this study reveal four broad challenges affecting the work of journalists who cover Boko Haram: inadequate funding, safety, southern domination of news and access to conflict zones, and lack of editorial policies on conflict reporting. These challenges, sometimes, affected the sources journalists employed in news stories as well as news frames. For instance, journalists were not sufficiently motivated to take extra steps while reporting the group due to inadequate funding. The lack of insurance coverage, specifically, was a key concern for journalists considering the violence of Boko Haram. This is compounded by lack of security cover when going into Boko Haram strongholds which amplified journalists' fear for their personal safety. In fact, sometimes, journalists experienced threats from security agents themselves. As a result, journalists are not able to provide first-hand news stories or approach original sources that might either humanise news stories or

offer fresh perspectives. Thus, the excessive reliance on official sources and political frames.

Another important challenge concerns the southern domination of news which the study shows creates constraints mainly because of existing language barriers and ethnic bias in the news especially as the subject of Boko Haram is a very ethnically charged topic. This affects the sourcing patterns and framing of news stories. For instance, an experienced conflict reporter who does not understand Hausa or Arabic will not be able to analyse video and audio materials from Boko Haram or even interview primary sources (victims, family, eyewitnesses etc). Therefore, important perspectives of the conflicts might be lost. The gap can of course be bridged by interpreters, but a problem of funding already exists. Similarly, the prominent role of ethnicity in news frame show that the ethnic bias of journalists might be an important challenge in reporting Boko Haram. This problem is compounded by the admission of interviewed journalists that newspapers in Nigeria generally do not have specific editorial guidelines on reporting Boko Haram, ethnoreligious crises, or terrorism. Interviewed journalists referenced objectivity as the standard in every news report; but then an ethnic bias already exists and makes the case for objectivity even more untenable. In fact, the framing analysis showed that journalists were more likely to rally around the flag than “objectively” report news. The effects of a lack of editorial guidelines can be seen in how the group was referred to in news stories: Islamists, Islamic fundamentalists, Islamic group, terrorists, Islamic sect, and sect. These were used interchangeably in news texts as epithets for Boko Haram. It shows that Boko Haram was not divorced from Islam and this could be polarising in a country like Nigeria as it could create in the minds of audiences that Islam is to blame for the actions of Boko Haram. Politically charged

topics such as terrorism need editorial guidelines to reduce the potentiality of polarisation and bias. The BBC, for example, does not use the term “terrorist” except in quotes as the use of the word will frequently involve a value judgement ... and affect our reputation for objective journalism” (BBC Editorial Guidelines 2010).

## 7.5 Recommendations

What this study shows, so far, is that the reporting of Boko Haram in the Nigerian press was not conflict sensitive as reports were sometimes polarising, ethnically oriented, encouraged violence, and silenced useful alternative sources. There were positives found in news reports which could serve as building blocks to a more conflict-sensitive reporting in the Nigerian context; for instance, the high usage of resident and eyewitness sources. In analysing news frames, sources, and challenges of journalists, this study has revealed several shortcomings in the media reporting of Boko Haram. It now proposes viable alternatives that journalists and news media in Nigeria can employ to make news reports more conflict sensitive.

One of the important recommendations would be regarding the framing of Boko Haram or even similar conflicts in Nigeria. Focusing on the demonisation of Boko Haram, on violence, or political narratives do not promote peaceful alternatives to resolution and, indeed, encourage the conflict. For instance, as the framing analysis show, demonising Boko Haram through its violence and referring to its actions as war legitimised the use of violence against the group. The focus of the *us vs. them* narrative resulting from this was on the specific battle and on which side killed more people. Political narratives are mainly divisive as seen in the political and ethnic conspiracy frame and the ethnoreligious subframe (used in the othering of Boko Haram) that advanced polarising North-Muslim – South-Christian narratives. While focusing on political narratives are sometimes necessary, journalists should at

the very least refrain from promoting polarising viewpoints as these can be catalysts for reprisals and do not advance peace. Frames that focus on the victims, their families, and their losses can help humanise the conflict and attract the attention of citizens far removed from the conflict zones. Naming victims as described in Frosh and Wolfsfeld's (2007, p. 113) 'roll-call of the dead' can invoke a sense of extended community that was arguably seen in the Bring Back Our Girls movement that saw a united front seeking the release of the abducted Chibok schoolgirls. What Chibok shows is that if citizens can identify with the conflict, they can be a force for social change. This requires giving voices to the voiceless—survivors and their family. Giving identity to soldiers who die in defence of the country is also a step towards encouraging nationalism and reducing the suspicions people have on the willingness of security agents to protect them.

A second recommendation would be about source usage. First, every key actor in a conflict should be given a voice. Prioritising government sources undoubtedly gives a one-sided view of the conflict. It can be argued that members of Boko Haram may be difficult to find or even dangerous to interview; however, there are available materials produced by the group regularly, sometimes after major attacks, most of which are accessible on YouTube. These contain useful perspectives that explains the rationale for attacks, which is currently missing from news reports. Most overlooked source groups are also important to the conflict and easy to find. For instance, expert voices can give useful dimensions to conflicts and are not difficult to find. There is also bias in how newspapers use their preferred source groups. Vanguard's clear bias for Christian sources encourages readers of that newspaper to accept the perception that Islamic leaders were not reactive to Boko Haram's assaults. It is recommended that newspapers give fair coverage to

source groups that might have divergent views; for instance, Islamic and Christian sources; northern and southern leaders.

Finally, newspapers should prioritise the welfare of journalists. Interviewed journalists indicated that if well-paid and insured, they would pursue more useful leads. Prioritising welfare also includes giving journalist adequate and regular training on responsible journalism and how best to report in conflict-sensitive ways. Newspapers should also have guidelines on reporting ethnoreligious conflicts or terrorism. For instance, the appellations for Boko Haram cannot be left to the discretion of individual journalists.

#### 7.6 Implications for future research

This study has raised a number of possible directions for future studies on the news reporting of Boko Haram—and indeed, similar conflicts—in Nigeria. For instance, claims have also been made in this research as to how ethnicity and identity are very central to the reporting of Boko Haram in the national press. It will be instructive to determine the role of ethnicity in more local publication not in the mainstream, for instance newspapers written in Hausa for an exclusively Hausa audience or those written for an exclusively Igbo audience. Similarly, the coverage of Boko Haram in the international press across similar timeline will be useful. If the national press prioritises ethnicity, what do the international media prioritise? It would be useful to see if conventional western terrorism narratives are applied to Boko Haram or if the local conditions in Nigeria affect news frames in western media.

Finally, the representation of ethnicity in the news framing of other terrorist groups in Africa can be explored. This is also important as there is a paucity of

research around the African media representation of terrorism within its borders even with the presence of several groups like Boko Haram in African countries. For instance, Al-Shabaab across Somalia and Kenya, and Boko Haram across Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad, and Niger. Thus, media representations of these groups across countries are essential. Studying the media framing of ethnoreligious conflicts and terrorist activities within countries with similar configurations as Nigeria—colonisation, ethnic polarisation, and language diversity— and media representation of groups across countries in the continent will add to the knowledge created in this study as similarity between news frames can be determined and a more diverse corpus of work on the representation of conflicts in Africa might be developed.

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## Appendix A: Top news websites in Nigeria

7/18/2018

Alexa - Top Sites by Category: Regional/Africa/Nigeria/News and Media/Newspapers

Site	Daily Time on Site	Daily Page...	% of Traffic...	Total Sites ...	
1	<a href="http://Vanguardngr.com">Vanguardngr.com</a> Online version of the Vanguard, a Nigerian daily newspaper covering general national news, poli... <a href="#">More</a>	5:07	2.43	26.40%	13,204
2	<a href="http://Punchng.com">Punchng.com</a> News, news, Most Read, Nigerian Newspaper, Daily Newspaper, Letters, letters, Opinions, opinion... <a href="#">More</a>	6:32	3.06	17.50%	8,926
3	<a href="http://Guardian.ng">Guardian.ng</a> Independent daily newspaper published in Nigeria. Site contains articles from the printed version.	4:20	2.00	34.50%	1,013
4	<a href="http://Thisdaylive.com">Thisdaylive.com</a> An online version of a Nigerian daily newspaper. Contains news, with an emphasis on politics.	4:22	1.82	27.90%	1,803
5	<a href="http://Sunnewsonline.com">Sunnewsonline.com</a> A Nigerian newspaper with a penchant for 'British Tabloid' styled journalism, The paper and its... <a href="#">More</a>	3:33	1.89	21.30%	2,034
6	<a href="http://Tribuneonlineng.com">Tribuneonlineng.com</a> Tribune Online is well known for tradition of breaking news and has over the years, built a rep... <a href="#">More</a>	3:47	1.86	18.30%	791
7	<a href="http://Independent.ng">Independent.ng</a> Independent Newspapers Nigeria - Nigeria News - Africa News - Leading Nigerian newspapers - Bre... <a href="#">More</a>	6:20	2.34	17.80%	841
8	<a href="http://Businessdayonline.com">Businessdayonline.com</a> A daily business newspaper dealing with many sectors of Nigerian business including politics, b... <a href="#">More</a>	4:20	2.34	29.80%	1,594
9	<a href="http://Politicsngr.com">Politicsngr.com</a> Politics Nigeria is an independent online newspaper that publishes Nigerian news and politics.	2:56	1.60	3.20%	427
10	<a href="http://Independentnig.com">Independentnig.com</a> news, breaking news, business news, trendy news, Nigeria, current news, nigerian news, Newspape... <a href="#">More</a>		1.00	0.00%	65

## Appendix B: Top Websites in Nigeria

7/18/2018

Top Sites in Nigeria - Alexa

Rank	Website	7-18	7-22	3,30%	3,462,044
1	<a href="http://Google.com">Google.com</a> Enables users to search the world's information, including webpages, images, and videos, Offers... <a href="#">More</a>	7:18	7.22	3,30%	3,462,044
2	<a href="http://Google.com.ng">Google.com.ng</a> As part of our mission to make the world's information universally accessible and useful, ... <a href="#">More</a>	7:47	7.40	1.00%	
3	<a href="http://Bet9ja.com">Bet9ja.com</a>	17:04	5.30	3.30%	
4	<a href="http://Youtube.com">Youtube.com</a> YouTube is a way to get your videos to the people who matter to you. Upload, tag and share your... <a href="#">More</a>	8:51	4.83	16.00%	
5	<a href="http://Facebook.com">Facebook.com</a> A social utility that connects people, to keep up with friends, upload photos, share links and ... <a href="#">More</a>	10:11	3.81	8.20%	
6	<a href="http://Yahoo.com">Yahoo.com</a> A major internet portal and service provider offering search results, customizable content, cha... <a href="#">More</a>	3:54	3.40	7.20%	
7	<a href="http://Naija.ng">Naija.ng</a>	6:02	2.76	18.50%	
8	<a href="http://Jumia.com.ng">Jumia.com.ng</a> Jumia is Nigeria's No.1 and most trusted online shopping destination. Jumia is home to the wide... <a href="#">More</a>	8:16	4.66	12.20%	
9	<a href="http://Nairaland.com">Nairaland.com</a> A big, broad discussion forum for Nigerians. Covers dozens of topics including romance, technol... <a href="#">More</a>	13:39	9.22	17.10%	
10	<a href="http://Vanguardngr.com">Vanguardngr.com</a> Online version of the Vanguard, a Nigerian daily newspaper covering general national news, poli... <a href="#">More</a>	5:07	2.43	26.40%	
11	<a href="http://Punchng.com">Punchng.com</a> News, news, Most Read, Nigerian Newspaper, Daily Newspaper, Letters, letters, Opinions, opinion... <a href="#">More</a>	6:32	3.06	17.50%	
12	<a href="http://Wikipedia.org">Wikipedia.org</a> A free encyclopedia built collaboratively using wiki software, (Creative Commons Attribution-Sh... <a href="#">More</a>	4:13	3.20	67.10%	
13	<a href="http://Instagram.com">Instagram.com</a>	5:55	3.26	13.10%	
14	<a href="http://Dailypost.ng">Dailypost.ng</a> DailyPost Nigeria brings you the latest news in Politics, Entertainment, Sports & Opinions,	4:27	2.57	38.50%	
15	<a href="http://Twitter.com">Twitter.com</a> Social networking and microblogging service utilising instant messaging, SMS or a web interface,	6:19	2.96	11.60%	
16	<a href="http://Naijaloaded.com.ng">Naijaloaded.com.ng</a> Naijaloaded is Nigeria's No. 1 Music & Entertainment Website, Dishes out Interesting Conten... <a href="#">More</a>	6:10	4.57	35.10%	
17	<a href="http://Newsprofin.com">Newsprofin.com</a>	1:08	1.51	0.80%	
18	<a href="http://O2tvseries.com">O2tvseries.com</a>	13:01	12.80	13.70%	
19	<a href="http://Livescore.com">Livescore.com</a> Real time football (soccer) match scores across International and over 100 leagues in 34 countr... <a href="#">More</a>	5:16	3.39	10.70%	
20	<a href="http://Premiutimesng.com">Premiutimesng.com</a> An innovative multimedia Nigerian publication delivering the fastest breaking news and deepest ... <a href="#">More</a>	4:08	1.99	26.20%	
21	<a href="http://Blogspot.com">Blogspot.com</a>	3:00	2.30	42.40%	
22	<a href="http://Lindaikajsblog.com">Lindaikajsblog.com</a>	12:35	5.78	9.10%	
23	<a href="http://Gtbank.com">Gtbank.com</a> Guaranty Trust Bank plc is a leading African Bank that offers Online/Internet Banking, Retail B... <a href="#">More</a>	9:00	5.52	8.30%	
24	<a href="http://Xvideos.com">Xvideos.com</a> Streaming high and standard definition movies, Categories include hardcore, 'punish' porn, publ... <a href="#">More</a>	14:56	10.82	27.30%	
25	<a href="http://Live.com">Live.com</a>	4:04	3.64	12.60%	

<https://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/NG>

1/3

## Top Sites in Nigeria - Alexa

Rank	Site Name	Visit Time	Visits	Percentage
	Search engine from Microsoft.			
26	<a href="#">Goal.com</a> New media company that provides soccer news and entertainment through its internet and mobile p... <a href="#">More</a>	4:11	2,46	28,80%
27	<a href="#">Afrtrk.com</a>	0:36	1,01	0,50%
28	<a href="#">Amazon.com</a> Amazon.com seeks to be Earth's most customer-centric company, where customers can find and disc... <a href="#">More</a>	7:57	8,13	22,50%
29	<a href="#">Jamb.org.ng</a> JAMB Exam Online Registration Site	13:27	7,21	6,50%
30	<a href="#">LinkedIn.com</a> A networking tool to find connections to recommended job candidates, industry experts and busin... <a href="#">More</a>	5:20	3,76	18,50%
31	<a href="#">Msn.com</a> Portal for shopping, news and money, e-mail, search, and chat.	3:54	2,51	4,50%
32	<a href="#">Whatsapp.com</a> Một ứng dụng nhắn tin đa nền tảng, cho phép bạn nhắn tin mà không cần phải trả phí tin nhắn SMS.	3:28	1,21	13,70%
33	<a href="#">Stackoverflow.com</a> A language-independent collaboratively edited question and answer site for programmers. Questio... <a href="#">More</a>	5:24	3,52	74,10%
34	<a href="#">Betradar.com</a>	17:48	6,23	1,10%
35	<a href="#">Frsc.gov.ng</a> News and information about safety campaigns intended to help reduce the number and impact of ro... <a href="#">More</a>	15:08	3,68	11,30%
36	<a href="#">Tooxclusive.com</a> Africa's Most Visited Music Website ,#1 Music Website in Nigeria . All Round Access to the best... <a href="#">More</a>	4:29	3,40	44,70%
37	<a href="#">Microsoft.com</a> Main site for product information, support, and news.	2:53	2,42	36,70%
38	<a href="#">Konga.com</a> Konga.com is Nigeria's Largest Online Mall. With over 100,000 products at great prices, excepti... <a href="#">More</a>	6:54	4,03	21,10%
39	<a href="#">Livescores.com</a>	17:43	3,79	4,70%
40	<a href="#">Remita.net</a> Remita is an e-Payments and e-Collections solution on a single multi-bank platform. Adopted by ... <a href="#">More</a>	9:39	2,95	4,70%
41	<a href="#">Jiji.ng</a>	9:26	6,25	28,10%
42	<a href="#">Thenationonlineng.net</a> Nigeria's national most read daily newspaper covering varied issues including news, politics, b... <a href="#">More</a>	4:42	2,42	21,50%
43	<a href="#">Eskimi.com</a> Eskimi is a mobile social network to meet new people where people chat, share photos, discuss i... <a href="#">More</a>	12:10	9,26	12,50%
44	<a href="#">Nairabet.com</a>	4:49	2,61	3,50%
45	<a href="#">Informationng.com</a> Information Nigeria is Nigeria's No. 1 Information Portal. We have the largest social media rea... <a href="#">More</a>	3:29	1,56	43,40%
46	<a href="#">Myway.com</a> Internet portal without banners or pop-ups.	2:48	2,22	1,60%
47	<a href="#">Waecdirect.org</a>	7:54	2,60	18,90%
48	<a href="#">Interswitchng.com</a>	4:04	1,89	1,10%
49	<a href="#">Office.com</a> Online business resource with industry-specific news and analysis, tools and access to relevant... <a href="#">More</a>	3:23	2,16	14,40%
50	<a href="#">Wordpress.com</a> Free blogs managed by the developers of the WordPress software. Includes custom design template... <a href="#">More</a>	2:43	1,94	51,00%



## Appendix C

### Interview questions

1. What, in your understanding, does terrorism entail?
  - b. What in your views are some of the issues or events that may fall under this label?
2. Now that it is commonplace to refer to Boko Haram's activities as terrorism, do you think that this term describes their issues adequately?
3. Do you have any qualms about how journalists in Nigeria have reported Boko Haram – or thoughts on how they ought to report them?
4. Did the official designation of BH as a terrorist organisation affect your reporting of the group?
5. Is there any in-house style guide on referring to Boko Haram? Are sect, insurgents, terrorists, islamists used at the discretion of the reporter or do they point to specify actions of the group?
6. What sources would you ordinarily rely on to give insight to events involving Boko Haram? What role do you think sources can play and how does this affect your selection criteria?
7. How does National identity and threat to national unity influence your reporting of Boko Haram?
8. What in your view is the relationship between BH and Islam?
9. How is your reporting influenced by threat to personal safety or danger of access to areas where insurgency is high?
10. Does your religion influence your framing of the group or sources you approach?
11. Newspaper policy around Boko Haram discourse during election, Chibok, caliphate—government insensitive?

## Appendix D

### Daily Trust Sources

	BH	Res	Fam	Sec	Fed	State	Opp	Chr	Mus	Civil	PDP	eth	Exp	Citize	For	others	Agency	
Yusuf	3	3	5	16	4	13	2	0	19	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	73
Police	3	11	0	24	6	2	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	56
UN	4	12	2	11	3	4	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	7	50
Mad	7	15	0	15	9	7	6	10	16	2	1	2	1	1	8	2	9	111
Des	0	10	1	9	1	5	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	2	7	2	44
Chi	3	33	22	17	18	19	7	2	4	1	2	4	1	3	5	4	5	150
Baga	2	20	6	17	5	12	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	7	0	4	82
	22	104	36	109	46	62	19	15	43	13	4	8	3	12	25	15	30	566

### Vanguard Sources

	BH	Res	Fam	Sec	Fed	State	Opp	Chr	Mus	Civil	PDP	eth	Exp	Citize	For	others	Agency	
Yusuf	6	1	6	20	5	6	2	4	1	2	2	3	1	10	0	0	8	77
Police	2	4	0	26	8	2	1	1	1	3	0	3	2	6	2	3	5	69
UN	5	3	5	18	12	7	3	9	4	0	0	8	1	2	9	2	4	92
Mad	4	8	1	20	15	11	12	34	11	3	0	15	5	12	7	1	10	169
Des	1	1	0	3	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	2	18
Chi	1	29	11	27	21	28	7	6	2	3	4	6	1	26	5	5	2	184
Baga	0	15	2	12	8	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	45
	19	61	25	126	73	55	27	58	19	11	6	36	14	56	26	11	31	654

### Thisday Sources

	BH	Res	Fam	Sec	Fed	State	Opp	Chr	Mus	Civil	PDP	eth	Exp	Citize	For	others	Agency	
Yusuf	3	4	8	21	4	16	4	3	5	5	0	1	0	3	0	0	9	86
Police	2	0	0	20	11	2	3	2	1	1	0	2	1	3	0	3	0	51
UN	1	2	1	13	6	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	7	5	1	42
Mad	7	29	4	27	19	8	3	22	14	3	0	6	3	5	15	7	13	185
Des	0	9	2	20	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	44
Chi	2	13	5	28	30	24	8	5	1	1	2	5	0	22	9	4	8	167
Baga	1	31	1	30	8	4	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	10	5	5	101
	16	88	21	159	81	60	19	33	22	14	2	15	5	34	43	28	36	676