

The Other Side of the Coin: How Europe is Represented in Nigerian Newspapers

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Abstract

The heated debate on information flow issues between the developed and developing nations is yet to abate and there is ample evidence to support the claims by developing countries that they are marginalized in the media of the first world nations and that news on them are often negative and distorted. However, what is not receiving much attention, especially in the developing nations research circles, is the fact that news distortion, negativism, quantitative news imbalance among the First and Third world countries' media is mutual such that the media of the third world may also be under-reporting the developed world and highlighting crisis and negative occurrences. This content analyses of two Nigerian newspapers, the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*, underpinned by the frames analysis theory showed that Europe is getting exactly the same treatment the West gives Nigerian or indeed African news in its media. The study uncovered very low coverage, a preponderance of negative news and emphasis on crisis in reporting Europe. The implications for policy are discussed.

Key Words: *.Europe .News Flow .News Distortion .Imbalance .Framing.*

INTRODUCTION

The imperfections of international news flow has occupied discourse and debate for most of the second half of the century and is in no way abating as regions of the world and countries squabble over the main issues as stake which Udeze (2005) listed as news flow imbalance, information distortion and media/cultural imperialism.

Baran and Davis (2005, p.373) write about small nations arguing that their power is challenged and undermined by multinationals and foreign media contents that promote alien culture, norms and values and that local culture is under siege by 'mass culture produced in Hollywood.'

Schramm (1964) was among the early commentators on what later snowballed into high international debate when he observed that the flow of news among nations is thin and that much attention is given to developed countries and little to less-developed ones while important events are ignored and reality is distorted.

Sparkes and Robinson (1976) in a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Commonwealth Association for Education in Journalism and Communication pointed out that international news flow first generated attention in the early fifties when two European studies formulated the themes which were to pre-occupy analysts for the following decades. The two studies are UNESCO's 'How Nations See Each Other' in 1954 and The International Press Institute's 'Flow of News' in 1953. These two studies reportedly began a long tradition of descriptive "image" studies and probing of national stereotypes as well as raising issues about the way in which international information was reported and distributed.

Sparkes *et al* (1976) notes that the two studies for the first time highlighted the uneven flow of international news and the tendency of the global agencies to focus on hard news and on elite nations. The studies uncovered the trend of most accounts being devoted to war, politics and foreign relations, ignoring cultural and other human activities as well as the doings of smaller nations.

Ten years later, according to Sparkes *et al* (1976) in the mid-sixties, Scandinavian scholars *Einar Östgaard*, Johan Galtung and Holmboe Ruge, utilized this foundation of descriptive studies to develop the first theoretical perspectives for the explanation of international news flow. Östgaard (1965) points out that news is produced in a politico-economic context and is additionally affected by "channel" discrepancies, while Galtung and Ruge (1965) specify what these channel characteristics were. According to Galtung's psychological theory, an event is more likely to be chosen to become news if it has certain frequency, clarity, consonance and continuity characteristics and if it concerns elite nations and people and contains personification and negativism.

Shoemaker, Daniellan and Brendlinger (1991) believe that deviance in a nation is a key predictor of international news coverage. They point out that literature abounds on accusations of distortion of third world news by the United States and other first world countries media.

Mowlana (1985,p.24-25) more or less agreed with the deductions of the earlier researchers in his seminal work, 'International Flow of Information: A Global Report and Analysis.' He mentioned five shortcomings of world news flow to include among others a Western-centric tangent and a scanty third world coverage where focus is on negative or bad news, 'catastrophes, violence and corruption, rather than on "developmental" news or education information'. He, however, pointed out that further research showed that negative news purveyance is not the exclusive preserve of the western media and is also a feature of the Third World media.

The perceived negative portrayal and misrepresentation of reality concerning several regions of the world also featured prominently in the debates over communication imbalance and allied issues that later led to the setting up of the Sean MacBride Commission for the study of communication problems. Its report, published in 1980 and titled '*Many voices one world, communication and society today and tomorrow*,' harped on the need for accuracy, sensitivity and close attention to cultural issues and nuances in news handling and portrayal of each other in the media.

The Commission came up with the recommendations for a new order of information that will address perceived imbalances. The Resolution 4/19 Adopted by the Twenty-first Session of the UNESCO General Conference, Belgrade, 1980, on the matter of a new information order obliquely referred to the matter of distortion and negative/unacceptable framing using such phrases as ensuring 'better balanced dissemination of information and ideas,' 'freedom inseparable from responsibility,' and 'respect for each people's cultural identity.'

The still raging debate has been mainly tilted towards the imbalance in flow and distortion as it has to do with the developed countries giving scanty and very negative coverage to the developing nations without much consideration for the angle that the flow accusations might actually apply to both sides of the development divide.

In recent times though and with the latest new media age on us, the debate has assumed new dimensions but increasingly attention is being shifted once again to studies exploring the possibility that the problem could be more to do with the definition of news and determination of newsworthiness rather than a straight conclusion and acceptance of conspiracy theorists' assertion that it is about the perpetuation of the economic, social and information dominance of the North over the South through the media.

Statement of the Problem

Much research efforts have both in the past and recent times been directed at the issue of quantitative news flow imbalance as it has to do with the scanty reportage of the developing world in the media of the developed nations. Research has also amply captured what is termed as distortion of information and concentration of reportage on negative occurrences in the developing nations (Harth, 2002; Asante, 2013, Michira, 2002; Beaudoin & Thorson 2001; Hanusch 2003; Stevenson & Cole, 1980).

What is gradually becoming obvious though is that the same treatment of news on the third world that the west is being accused of may be exactly what these developed nations are equally getting from the media of the peripheral nations. While not too new, this is a focus of research that is often avoided for fear that it may divert attention from what is considered more urgent, to wit, the imbalance and distortion coming from the West. This study resurrects earlier arguments that the guilt is mutual.

It focused on the coverage of a core developed area of the world, Europe, in Nigerian newspapers with a view to uncovering whether the scanty quantitative flow, news distortion and negativism accusation could be mutually shared by both sides of the news divide.

Research Questions

The research questions arising therefore are:

- 1) What is the frequency of news on Europe published by the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers?
- 2) What is the prominence accorded to news on Europe in the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers?
- 3) What are the categories of stories on Europe published by the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers?
- 4) What are the prevalent frames in stories on Europe in the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers

Literature Review

Third World Complaints

The communications problems and complaints are numerous but can be broadly classified into three. These three major angles of the complaints include the scanty mention of the third world in the media of the first world nations; the distortion of whatever little is reported on these poor nations and a real issue of media and cultural imperialism arising from a deluge of information materials being dumped, largely unedited to fit local sensitivities. Udeze (2005) discusses the issue of access to the media of communications and noted that the disparity in access existing among individuals like Ted Turner, major owner of CNN and the average American also extends to the rich nations versus the poor ones. He points out that there is abundance of evidence to support the claim that much of the news of the world and about the world come from the western media. He also gave another major complaint as the reporting of partially or outrightly false, negative information and then the third complaint is the remote-controlling of tastes, preferences, direction of educational needs and other matters by way of controlling beliefs and attitudes due to a corresponding control of information consumption by the third world (Udeze, 2005).

Rao (1976), Mitra (1976) and Mukerjee (1976) in various commentaries on the disparity in flow cited the case of the United Press International and India's biggest news agency, Samachar. Tharoor (1976) summed up their individual arguments by writing that:

The case is made even more convincing in figures. UPI, only the third largest of the multinational agencies, has 238 bureaus, is represented in 62 countries, employs a staff of over 10,000 and has over 6,500 subscribers. Samachar, the new Indian national news agency (formed after a merger of the country's four major agencies in 1975) has 80 bureaus, is represented in little over 20 countries, employs a staff of 1,700, and has 800 subscribers. Where UPI circulates 4.5 billion words a day, Samachar sends out 125,000. The comparison would be largely otiose, were it not for its implications. As a leading Asian scholar has pointed out, "the economics of the situation is such that most of this free flow of information has been moving in only one direction - from the developed countries to the developing

<http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/forwa1&div=20&id=&page=>

On the accusation of distortion, Somavia (1976), Mukerjee (1976), Nathan (1976) and the *Freedom At Issue* (1976) all of which actively participated in the then 1970s heated debate on information distortion said there are real and existing news distortion problems due mainly to the commodification of news. Tharoor (1976) pieced together the arguments thus:

There is.... in the commercial concept of news, a built-in systematic discrimination against these events that cannot be "sold," which therefore, in accordance with this rationale, are not "new," because the controlling market has no interest in them. At the same time, there is a tendency to distortion by the projection of those aspects of events that make them more marketable.
(<http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/forwa1&div=20&id=&page=>).

Biney, (1997) believes that Africa has been misrepresented ever since the first Westerners stepped into the continent. To him, it started from the era of slavery and colonial rule; went on after the nationalist struggles for independence in the 1950s and 60s to the present day. Biney (1997) writes that Africa has been variously painted as 'dependent' and 'pitiable' summing up by insisting that while colonial administrators, missionaries and merchants were largely responsible for disseminating ideas about Africa from the 16th to the 19th century, the distortion of the present era is done by various forms of print and electronic media: newspapers, television, radio and the Internet.

On how the distortion and negative portrayal comes about, Asante (2013) explains that it occurs through the distortion of news events and when untrue statements about Africa are repeated as fact as well as when biased interpretations are interwoven into news reports, and through the use of pejoratives. He argues that the negative image can arise from according high prominence to events of little importance in order to demonstrate Africa's ineptness, ignorance, or easy-going nature. He is of the view that Western media steadfastly and deliberately maintain the status quo about reporting negative ideas and actions coming from Africa.

Chavis (1998), sounding exasperated, points out the consequences of the perpetuation of the distorted, negative images of Africa:

To Simonsen (2010), the distortion is deliberate and perpetuated to serve certain interests. He argues that, the perspectives taken by reporters, the headlines, pictures, statistics, and the language that they use, strongly suggest a picture created to serve certain interests/agendas. He insists that a lot of information is usually omitted or added to give the western audiences and governments what they want.

Empirical Review

A lot of empirical and other studies have been done on the communication flow debate with results largely confirming the existence of a problem but often citing different reasons for the imbalance and distortion issues. Kondowe (2008) in a content analysis of international news in four Malawian newspapers- *The Nation*, *The Daily Times*, the *Weekend Nation* and the *Malawi News*-compares the international news content about Africa and the rest of the world and explored the extent to which economic factors, as represented by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), influence news flows about Africa into Malawi.

The results show the dominance of the categories of war/international conflict and politics on news about Africa and the rest of the world in Malawian newspapers even as the study established that international, foreign news agencies were the principal sources of news items for all the four newspapers studied. Though there were differences among the newspapers in the amount of space allocated to various categories such differences

were minor. The study established that GDP is not a determinant of the amount of coverage a country receives in the media in Malawi. Kondowe also argued that the universality of negative portrayals may be strongly linked to uniform news definition concepts adopted by news rooms all over the world.

Golan (2008) in 'Where in the World Is Africa? Predicting Coverage of Africa by US Television Networks,' investigated the coverage of African nations by four United States television news-casts- ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN evening news programmes.

The study focused on the news period between 2002 and 2004 and the findings can be summarised thus:

The results indicate that despite the fact that African nations faced many newsworthy events such as controversial elections in Zambia and Zimbabwe, an ethnic cleansing campaign in the Sudan, wide-scale famine in the West African nations of Mali, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Gambia and Senegal, a widespread AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa and numerous civil wars, American television newscasts do not view the African continent to be newsworthy. The results indicate that a dozen or so African nations account for the majority of US coverage, while the majority of African nations received limited to no coverage. (<http://gaz.sagepub.com/content/70/1/41>).

Results identified trade with the US and gross domestic product as the two key predictors of coverage of African nations. Golan's conclusions on the place of GDP in foreign newsworthiness of a story in the US media contrasted with Kondowe (2008) whose findings indicated that GDP was not a major factor.

Wu (2007), in 'A Brave New World for International News? Exploring the Determinants of the Coverage of Foreign News on US Websites' carried out a content analysis of international news on CNN and *New York Times* and the web sites of these two, www.cnn.com and www.nytimes.com on two composite weeks randomly selected between September 2003 and December 2003 focusing attention on the influences of trade, existence of news agencies, national traits and cultural and geographic proximity on the websites' coverage of foreign news. The study found that trade volume and existence of news agencies are two leading predictors of international news coverage. He also reported that press freedom was found irrelevant to international coverage in the US media. The correlation test indicated a high resemblance between traditional and online media in that the overall picture of the world presented by the websites reflects their traditional media counterparts well. Wu (2007:549) observed that this discovery could be "a great disappointment for those who ideally envisioned the web as a truly global medium that can break away from the structural, systematic barriers to deliver more - and more diverse - information to people around the world."

Kim and Barnett (1996) examined the structure of international news flow and its determinants, using network analysis. The findings showed inequality of international news flow between the core and the periphery. They concluded in the study that the Western industrialized countries are at the centre, dominating international news flow with the periphery not only dominated by the unequal vertical news exchange between it and the core, but also marginalised by the news exchange among the countries in the core. Their finding reflected the archetypal map of the world economic system as they established that the structure of international news flow is influenced by a country's economic development, the language(s) its people speak, its physical location, political freedom, and population with economic development as the most important factor.

Theoretical Framework

The Frames Analysis theory is best captured by Goffman (1974) in his book *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Framing means the injection of meanings and putting of the news in context that can happen when one deliberately selects certain

aspects of reality and highlights them in communication (Entman, 1993). This is also in line with the assertion of Norris, Kern and Just (2003) that the main essence of framing is selection which leads to the prioritisation of some facts, developments or images over others such that there is an unconscious promoting of a particular interpretation of events.

The frames analysis theory is appropriate for this study by virtue of the fact that it is aimed at uncovering the subtle and often conscious decisions made by the media in Nigeria to paint a certain picture of Europe which is in synch with the dominant beliefs and ways of life as well as implicit biases in the media and culture of the Nigerian people.

Methodology

The research design for this study is the content analysis method, which involves the analyses of the manifest content of communication to discover the defining patterns. Krippendorff (1980) cited in Ogbuoshi (2006) defined content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. The data here refer to certain kinds of data that come from documents of various kinds. The content includes the purpose of the document as well as institutional, social and cultural aspects. The coding sheet was used for data collection.

Description of Study Population and Sample Size

A population refers to all the elements that fit into a set or into a certain specification while the target population is the one under study. In this case, the population is all Nigerian newspapers while the target population is *The Guardian* and the *Daily Sun* Newspapers.

The sample size for this study is 60 issues made up of 30 issues each of the two newspapers under study. Ten (10) issues were selected per month for each newspaper for the months of August, September and October, 2015. The ten issues per month for the study were selected using random sampling. The 10 issues were multiplied by three (3) months under study to arrive at a total of 30 issues per newspaper. Thirty issues multiplied by the two newspapers gave a total of 60 for the sample size.

The two newspapers used for this study were selected because they are national newspapers owned and managed by Nigerians; appeal to both the masses and policy makers, and so have wide circulation and readership and are readily available in the market nation-wide and are also available to the researcher for the purpose of this study.

Units of Analysis

Unit of analysis here referred to the actual thing counted when coding which in this instance is a foreign news story, feature, editorial, opinion articles, cartoons and photograph on a European country or the European Union.

Each unit was tested based on prominence, frequency, frame and source of reports. Frequency is determined by the degree of the coverage of Europe as against other issues and areas of the world.

Prominence is determined by the placement of each item on Europe on the pages of the newspapers. Front page appearance signifies that the news stories are the most important for that day while those that appear on the back page are regarded as next in rank to the front page stories in order of importance. The inside page stories are counted as the least important stories and they usually appear from page 2 to the last page before the back page.

Frames adopted:

Frames used for the study were those highlighted by the Pew Research Center (1998) and accessible on <http://www.journalism.org/1998/07/13/frame/>. They include:

- **Straight news account:** No dominant narrative frame other than outlining the basic who, what, when where, why and how

- **Conflict Story:** A focus on conflict inherent to the situation or brewing among the players
- **Consensus Story:** An emphasis on the points of agreement around an issue or event
- **Conjecture Story:** A focus around conjecture or speculation of what is to come
- **Outlook:** How the current news fits into history
- **Trend Story:** The news as an ongoing trend
- **Reality Check:** A close look into the veracity of a statement made or information given
- **Wrongdoing Exposed:** The uncovering of wrongdoing or injustice
- **Personality Profile:** A profile of the newsmaker

Data Presentation

The study's main objective was to find out the portrayal of Europe by the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*. Sixty issues, comprising of thirty issues each of the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*, were analysed and the findings were that the *Daily Sun* carried a total of 52 stories on Europe out of 4033 items in the newspaper copies while *The Guardian* published a total of 23 stories while having a total of 4683 items in the thirty issues

Table 1. Frequency of news on Europe in the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*.

Research Q1: What is the frequency of news on Europe published by the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers?

Frequency	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	Total	Percentages
Stories on Europe	52	23	75	0.9
Other stories	3981	4660	8641	99.1
Total	4033	4683	8716	100

Source: Authors

Table 1 above amply illustrates the frequency of coverage received by Europe vis-à-vis other issues. The *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* jointly allotted 0.9 per cent of their news attention to Europe.

The study equally peripherally probed the issue of the general foreign news content of the two newspapers with a view to finding out how other areas of the world fared in the two newspapers and the results are shown in Table 2 below. The rest of the countries in Africa, other than Nigeria got 92 mentions in the *Daily Sun* and 54 in *The Guardian* which left Africa with 41.2% of all the foreign news in the two newspapers under study. Also, all the other countries of the world outside Africa were reported 80 times in the *Daily Sun* and 53 times in *The Guardian*.

Table 2. Foreign news coverage in the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*

Region	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	Total	Percentages
Europe	52	23	75	21.2
Africa	92	54	146	41.2
Others	80	53	133	37.6
Total	224	130	354	100

Source: Authors

Table 3. Prominence accorded to stories on Europe

Research Q2: What is the prominence accorded to news on Europe in the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers?

Prominence	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	Total	Percentage
Front page	1	1	2	2.7
Back page	0	0	0	0
Inside page	51	22	73	97.3
Total	52	23	75	100

Source: Authors

Out of 52 stories on Europe published by the *Daily Sun*, one appeared on the front page, none on the back page while 51 were on the inside pages. In the case of *The Guardian*, one story on Europe was on the front page, there was none on the back page while 22 out of the 23 stories were on the inside pages. As can be seen from Table 3 above, 97.3% of the stories were published on the inside pages while only 2.7 % were on the front pages of the two newspapers

Table 4. Categories of stories on Europe published by Nigerian newspapers.

Research Q3: What are the categories of stories on Europe published by the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers?

Categories	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	Total	Percentages
News	48	20	68	90.6
Feature	0	0	0	0
Cartoon	0	0	0	0
Opinion	0	2	2	2.7
Editorial	0	0	0	0
Photo	4	1	5	6.7
Total	52	23	75	100

Source: Authors

News stories on Europe took the lead in both papers with the two devoting 90.6% of coverage to news, 2.7% to opinion and 6.7% to photographs. There were no editorials, cartoons or features on Europe. Table 4 above provides the details.

Table 5. Frame of stories on Europe

Research Q4: What are the prevalent frames of stories on Europe in the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers?

Frames	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	Total	Percentages
Straight news account	2	1	3	4
Conflict Story	23	13	36	48
Consensus Story	2	1	3	4
Conjecture Story	3	1	4	5.3
Outlook Story	2	0	2	2.7
Trend Story	5	0	5	6.6
Reality Check	5	1	6	8
Wrong doing	9	5	14	18.7
Personality Profile	1	1	2	2.7
Total	52	23	75	100

Source: Authors

As can be seen from table 5 above, a total of 50 stories out of 75 recorded on Europe (66.7%) were centered around conflict and wrong doing frames, while straight news frames had only 4% of the stories. This shows a high inclination towards the use of negative stories bothering on conflicts, deviance and the bizarre.

Discussions

From the foregoing, it can easily be deduced that the Nigerian media coverage of Europe will provoke further debates. It will also further buttress arguments that news distortion and the use of negative frames is a universal phenomenon arising from the use of uniform definitions of news and newsworthiness and that both developed and developing nations newsrooms are guilty (Stevenson & Cole 1980). It is also a further validation of the developed countries' insistence at the heat of the information imbalance debates of the 1970s that they were equally being marginalised in the media of the Third World countries.

The study uncovered evidence of the low rating of foreign news in the two newspapers in that the foreign news pages were missing on a lot of days while advertisements often ate deep into the pages allotted to foreign news on many of the days. *The Guardian* published its foreign stories on the 'World Report' page while the *Daily Sun* had foreign stories on mainly the 'International News' page in addition to a four-page pull out, the 'West Africa Post' on Mondays and 'Memories' which appeared daily and marked anniversaries of memorable events both locally and internationally.

The two newspapers essentially published mainly negative stories that carried what may be regarded as elements of deviance and sensationalism in a Nigerian context. Examples from *The Guardian* newspapers include: Putin offers to meet Elton John after gay rights call (*The Guardian*, September 25, 2015, P.15); Germany's five-year yields fall below zero as equities tumble (*The Guardian*, September 24, 2015, P.20); Refugees flood Macedonia from Greece (*The Guardian*, August 24, 2015, P.70), Hungary declares emergency at Serbia border (*The Guardian*, September 16, 2015, p.13); Thousands more pour into Austria as EU migrant crisis deepens (*The Guardian*, September 21, 2015, p.16). The *Daily Sun* also published a good deal of stories on Europe with war/conflict/deviance frames. Most of the stories dredged up and published on its 'Memories' pages were those bothering on negative themes in Europe's history. A few examples include: Hitler appeased in Munich (*Daily Sun*, September 30, 2015. P.20); Napoleon enters Moscow (*Daily Sun*, September 14, 2015. P.20); Hardline communists riot in Moscow (*Daily Sun*, October 02, 2015. p.20); Bomb blast in London club (*Daily Sun*, October 22, 2015. p.20); Double-agent breaks out of jail (*Daily Sun*, October 22, 2015. p.20) and Jets collide over Zagreb (*Daily Sun*, September 10, 2015. p.20).

In the heat of the migrant crisis in Europe leading to a scheduled meeting of ministers of the interior of European nations on September 22, 2015, such news as "Danish man charged for storing women's genitalia in freezer" (*Daily Sun*, September 22, 2015, p.14), was featured as the only news from Europe for the day. This portrays the use of news judgment parameter of sensationalism.

Also, the few photographs used were those with sensational images. Examples included the two photographs on page 14 of the *Daily Sun* of October 6, 2015 showing Air France Human Resource Director, Xavier Broseta and Director of long-haul flights, Pierre Plissonnier, scaling a high fence with irate workers hot on their heels during job cut talks. Another photograph was that accompanying a story titled, 'Guinean immigrant arrives Spain in car engine' (*Daily Sun*, September 02, 2015, p.14)

The pattern of coverage as can be seen from this study also shows that the Nigerian media bother more about proximity and affinity judging by the skewed figures as regards coverage of Africa. Also it is worth pointing out that the few mentions of Europe on the front pages were at the periods the Nigerian president visited France leading to conclusions that news on Europe will only be considered important by the Nigerian media if it touches directly on matters concerning the nation. This is in consonance with the assertion by Yadava (1984:29) that 'the media in all countries have a natural tendency to focus on foreign affairs which occur in or relate to their own respective region.'

Also, the finding that stories on Europe do not enjoy prominence on the pages of newspapers has implications as this depicts low visibility for the stories and an attendant low reckoning of issues arising from these stories. This is line with the assumptions of the agenda setting theory that the media's handling of an issue is capable of putting it on the front burner of discourse or burying it out of sight.

Again, not subjecting issues relating to Europe to editorials and opinions also detracts from their importance as the media do not come up with stands or clearly spelt out policies, negative or positive, about issues without editorialising on them.

The figures from this study closely mirror the findings of Ugboajah (1984) cited in Yadava (1984) where Africa took half of the news holes; news stories made up 92.7% of foreign news contents and Western Europe took a distant fourth place out of a five-

geopolitical bloc classification in terms of mention in the Nigerian media. The study was carried out in 1979 as part of the international co-operation research on Foreign Images co-ordinated by the International Association for Media and Communication Research.

It can be safely inferred from this study that media coverage of Europe still leaves much to be desired in terms of frequency, prominence and frames and that this has implications for the salience of issues relating to the continent. This is because the study found out that Europe received low coverage while negative stories both in its past and present seemed to dominate news about the continent in the two newspapers studied. In a way, Europe is receiving exactly the type of coverage African countries lament about in the West's coverage of the continent.

However, one is at a loss what final conclusions to draw in this matter for as Yadava (1984) pointed out, "the imbalance debate and arguments are not strictly empirical, quantitative stuff that could be explained away with data." Perhaps, we can adopt the conclusion by the The Pew Media Center (1998) that the placement of frames might suggest that:

Journalists tend to view conflict, wrongdoing and the winning and losing more important or urgent and therefore more deserving of lead placement.
(<http://www.journalism.org/1998/07/13/placement/>).

Also we may also refer to the theory of news values which stipulates that there are certain factors that influence the publication or reporting of both foreign and domestic news. These factors include negativity, cultural proximity, wealth, and how elite a nation is (Zuckerman 2004). In other words, news values are aspects of an event which make that event news worthy from the point of view of a journalist and his news organisation (McQuail 2010:310-316).

Findings

From the presentation and analysis of data, the findings are:

- 1) That in clear terms the level of coverage the *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian* newspapers gave to Europe was low. Europe was portrayed as not important. It is obvious that the two newspapers did not give Europe what could be considered adequate coverage at a period the continent witnessed such upheavals as the migrant crisis, critical elections, economic problems and increasing threats of terrorism.
- 2) That the low coverage was equally attended by negativity as a lot of the few stories on the continent had negative frames.
- 3) That the preponderance of news stories and total absence of editorials and features and few opinions left much to be desired as opinions, features and editorials bring out important facts behind the news and as such their absence might be an indication of lack of depth and low rating for events in Europe by the newspapers.
- 4) That stories on Europe did not enjoy prominence on the pages of the newspapers under study as most of the stories appeared on the inside pages.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the researchers recommend that:

- 1) Media policy makers in Nigeria should improve on the amount of coverage given to Europe and re-think the use of stories with mainly negative frames. This seems the right course of action if Nigeria would in good conscience criticize low and negative coverage she complains about in the media of developed nations.
- 2) There should be a revisiting of the issue of news definition as a way of re-defining newsworthiness to shift emphasis from deviance and the bizarre.

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