
Nationalising People and Spaces:
The Critical Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Newspapers between
1906 and 2007

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While contemporary western Journalism works towards the ideals of objectivity in reporting and democratisation in the reporting and development of news stories, for postcolonial societies like Nigeria, print journalism remains an elitist part of the public sphere, predominantly constructing and representing the worldviews of a small politico-economic group. While this might be regarded positively as the media working as a social watchdog, such intense focus on a small section of the society to the exclusion of others is deserving of accusations of bias. Aside from issues to do with the unhealthily close relationship between the state and the newspaper industry due to political elites constituting those who own or control the country's newspapers, there are also questions to do with the exclusiveness of participation through the predominant use of English as the language for publication to the exclusion of other indigenous languages.

This narrow approach to journalistic practice is inconspicuously embedded in discourses on national practice, with elite actors and actions dominating any discussion on the nation-state. The masses on the other hand, are denied any form of social agency from these discourses which might make them relevant actors. Instead, they are spoken for by elite actors. This state of affairs is not restricted to any particular socio-historical context and is to be found to have been an integral part of journalistic practice across the country's Colonial, Latter colonial, First Republic and Military moments on the one hand, and even now in contemporary times is still observable.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Since the independence of many African countries in the 1960s, discussions and debates have been rife about the challenges surrounding national development on the continent. Regardless of which aspect of life one considers in African nation-states, the label of underdevelopment seems apt to apply. As Heeger (1974) observed, it is tempting to conclude that development has completely eluded Africa's postcolonial societies, with him stating that "Underdevelopment threatens to become a permanent condition rather than a transitory stage" (Heeger, 1974: p.1).

This situation calls for continuous analysis and examination of the course of events in these countries, rather than despair and resignation. It is the opinion of this researcher that only through such steps could necessary adjustments be made and realistic steps are taken in the crafting of effective paths to development.

It is easy in being preoccupied with the present, to obfuscate both the true nature of the problems of national development and the evolutions they may have undergone with time. As such, it is important to investigate these roots and delineate the mutations. Defining a concept like national development and *operationalising* it is very difficult. For instance, Huntington (1968) and Apter (1965) consider it in political terms, arguing that a developed society is one which exhibits a high degree of order and stability, role and structural differentiations and perhaps more markedly, institutionalisation. Others like Deutsch (1971) consider it in purely

economic terms, defining it in terms of Gross National Product (GNP). Still others like Markovitz (1977) conceive a developed society as one which has succeeded in making the standard of living reasonable for majority of its inhabitants. This perspective attaches a high premium to the elimination of poverty, and the provision of food, clothing and shelter to all its members. As difficult as the delineation of a clear-cut definition of development is, it is regardless a condition which developing societies like Nigeria aspire to create and sustain. For the purposes of this thesis, national development for Nigeria will be delimited along the lines of Dr H. N. Nwosu who defines a developed Nigerian society as one in which its people are self-reliant and confident, and can constantly generate and mobilise the necessarily political energy which could produce and sustain an independent and democratic government on the one hand, as well as inducing a productive and distributive economy which would be both self-generating and self-perpetuating on the other (Nwosu, 1980). As Amucheazi (1980) points out, approaches to development are realistic only when it is regarded as a multidimensional process. As he further argues, for Nigeria and undoubtedly for many other African countries, national development is hampered by various constraints, perhaps the most basic being the legacies of colonialism, resulting in national development being conceived largely in terms of western ideologies and practices, which might not necessarily work as well in the African context.

In looking at these questions, the nature of the nation and the way(s) it is constructed, interpreted and operated play a central role. For Nigeria, like many other African states, colonial “origins” also infer a situation within discussions on postcolonial identities and structures. Such an approach is justifiable when we consider Amucheazi’s argument above that Africa’s experiences of colonialism continue to hamper the ways in which it operates

postcolonially (Amucheazi, 1980). Contemporary Nigeria consists of 250-plus ethnic groups, each with its own standardised language, dialects, culture and history. Nigeria, not unlike many other African states is a colonial by-product and broadly speaking, an example of the various social impacts of colonialism. Indeed, the term “Nigeria” was not used to describe the territory until 1906 when Britain’s conquest of West Africa was effectively complete. Even then, these socio-cultural groups were not unified administratively until 1914, when the defunct Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria and the Colony of Lagos were amalgamated to form a singular Nigerian state. The country’s post-independent history has been highly volatile as it has struggled to forge and define its postcolonial national identity, a fact which a myriad of coups, counter-coups and a civil war stand in testimony of. The country at present is currently divided into thirty-six (36) states aside from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja. However the country is also divided less formally along religious, socio-economic and ethno-regional lines which pre-date the birth of the Nigerian nation.

Interestingly, Nigeria has fared very well in terms of reconstructing its cultural nature in the face of exposure to foreign cultural influences. As Falola and Heaton (2008) point out, Nigeria’s various local cultures have fused well with western cultures in terms of fashion, music and other socio-cultural aspects, incorporating what features they like and adapting them to fit in with indigenous cultural forms. It seems that it the task of arranging the political dynamics within this highly diverse milieu which proves highly problematic. In particular, there seems to be an irreconcilable rivalry between the ideals of the Nigerian nation-state on the one hand and those of other forms of identification, such as ethnonationality. As Igwara (2001) states, while the nation-state as a source of identification appeals to most Nigerians, it

has yet to deliver on its promises, operating instead, as Berman (1998) similarly points out, to be a “Big man’s” club, a site for domination by an elite class. This is particularly worrying when one considers arguments made by social scientists such as Nwosu (1980) and Amucheazi (1980) calling for a populist, citizen-centric approach to development, rather than the elitist characteristic which informed the social dynamics of contemporary Euro-western societies. As Amucheazi (1980) states:

“One of the driving forces which sustained the quest for independence was the belief that development would necessarily follow independence. Many nationalists believed that as soon as *citizens* were allowed to manage their own affairs they would so conduct the affairs of the nation that the country would quickly attain the level of development already reached by the western world. It certainly sounded reasonable and logical that this had to be so since the colonial powers were not out on a humanitarian mission of “civilizing” mankind without some interest. There was abundant evidence of the exploitation of resources within the developing countries by their colonial masters for the latter’s selfish interests. It was therefore reasoned that if these resources were properly harnessed for the development of the nation *by the people themselves*, development would quickly come the way of struggling nations.”

Amucheazi (1980) [Emphasis mine]

As has been pointed out above, attempts at development which do not effectively mobilise and carry along the citizenry of a nation, focusing instead on institutions or elites as the major agents for social change, are unlikely to facilitate the achievement of any such desired outcome.

1.2. What is this study about?

Discussions revolving around national development on the African continent have been historiographically articulated in local and regional dimensions and not merely in terms of its nation-states. It is in recognition of the contemporary salience and the socio-historical depth to the issue that this study on the Nigerian identity is deemed necessary, particularly when one considers that the entity is fast approaching the first centennial since its formal creation in 1914 and has marked its golden jubilee. More specifically, the examination is centred on the amount of social agency that is given to the citizenry of Nigeria in shaping and defining their own nation's practices and culture in the move towards development. Additionally, there will be an examination of the model of interaction prescribed by its print media for the Nigerian state and its masses, exploring and analysing the politics around the way the masses in particular are articulated in diverse temporal settings, spanning the country's colonial roots to its more contemporary manifestations.

The main focus of this study is on the discursive aspect of the Nigerian nation-building project. Specifically, it addresses the following question:

- In what ways are Nigeria's non-elites constrained in Nigeria's newspaper discourses on national issues?

The findings of this study indicate that Nigeria's masses are at best used as an ideological device in the legitimising practices or policies that are considered by the elite as national or conversely, *delegitimising* what is to be considered as working against the national good. When they are not used in this way, the non-elite are constructed as passive social actors, infantilised so that they are either complaining about the state of affairs, or being vaguely advised by members of the elite on issues which they should be granted full appraisal. Alternatively, the peoples of Nigeria are constructed as a homogenous group. While this might be regarded as aiding in the construction of a singular national identity for all, it wrongly acts to present Nigeria's highly diverse multicultural groups as though they are all identical in their experiences of, and hopes and dreams for their country. As a result, any expressions of dissent from any particular ethno-national group are represented as divisive and counter-national, rather than voices highlighting shortcomings in successfully addressing the concerns and meeting the needs of the diverse sections of the Nigerian society. When one also considers Nwosu's point that the attainment requires a shift of perspective that considers Nigerians as individuals rather than as a homogenous group, particularly when considering issues to do with development and public administration (Nwosu, 1980), this observation is worrying for the country's achievement of development. Consequently, Nigeria's masses are constrained within these discourses so that this group of actors are never presented as agents of social change. Instead, they are constructed as a redundant group, one comprised of individuals that do not really know what is good for them and who need protecting from the intricate complexities of state operations. What is interesting to note is that such discourse is observable in newspaper articles produced prior to the amalgamation of the Nigerian state, only then it was a coloniser-colonised relationship dynamic between the European colonisers and the peoples who they colonised and subsequently, the actors are all Nigerian.

These findings raise the serious question of how relevant Nigeria's journalism, particularly that of its print media, is in constructing a discursive setting which includes all individuals, classes and sections of its society and is consequently, a positive factor for development.

1.3. What is our Approach here?

This research takes a decidedly neo-Marxist approach, focusing on Nigeria as a political economy. As such, this study takes the view that while there might be an objective social reality, the way human beings interpret and represent their interactions with the world is subjective, drawing on their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977). These subjective experiences inform our discourse of the world outside ourselves and perhaps more importantly, the meaning of any dealings we have with it and/or other actors, making the world make sense. Some perspectives, such as that of the nation, come to dominate social consciousness, especially when as Bourdieu points out; you have a larger number of individuals sharing the same habitus in the same context of social practice (Bourdieu, 1977). By extension, the nation as a "theory" (and I use the term loosely here), of how social practices and indeed the fields of these practices are conceptualised is really one amongst many, even if it holds a position of dominance.

Following this line of reasoning, this treatise also considers that if the nation is a dominant *weltenshaung* out of many other possible ways of viewing social organisation, it is also possible that the way in which the nation as a concept is imagined collectively is not only one out of several but also one which could be, and is, contested and subject to the possibility of redefinition, just like the world that it is meant to characterise. As Gramsci (1971) posits, any given society is subject to hegemony, such that at any socio-historical moment, the dominant

ideology in society is that of the elite class. Furthermore, social structures, practices and organisations operate as sites for ideological dominance and resistance of societal status quo (Gramsci, 1971). The news media are not excluded from this arsenal of ideological apparatus (Hall, 1980). However, it is worth mentioning at this juncture that the view taken of the press is one which views it as being capable of being part of a diverse discursive environment as suggested by Cunningham and Sinclair (2001) as well as conforming to the Habermasian notion of a “public sphere” with a singular normative speech community (Habermas, 1989). While the view shared by Gramsci (1971) and Bourdieu (1977) that a particular perspective of the world can and does dominate at any moment in history will form a key part of the theoretical foundations for this research, it is possible for the spaces or “sphericules” for public discourse to be varied (Cunningham and Sinclair, 2001), allowing for the possibility of marginal groups to also shape public debate and resist ideological dominance. However, as Weber’s analysis on media systems demonstrates (Weber, 1964) it is the socio-political climate under which a media system functions which determines whether the mass media forms part of a uniform public sphere or is a fragmented space, so that it is at once part of many public sphericules.

It is worth mentioning that whether hegemony is achieved through deliberate social engineering or not is not central to this particular study. In this case, it is appropriate to accept this view without necessarily getting into any discussion on this issue, especially as the subject of intent will not be vital here.

1.4. The Nation

Broadly, in looking at how nations are constructed certain assumptions serve to underpin the analytical framework in this research. Chiefly, we must assume that nations are “imagined communities” as Benedict Anderson (2006) posits, and that nationalised individuals perceive them as natural, distinct political entities. Having conceded this point, we must also presume that a sense of belonging to these communities i.e. national identities, are dialectically produced and reproduced and can be deconstructed similarly. National identities then are not essentialist, but instead are contrivances. In deconstructing nations and national identities, we should then expect to find different conceptions and perceptions of convention within this structure, learned through socialisation and internalised so that national identity becomes part of an individual’s habitus. These constructing devices must also reinforce a sense of national uniqueness, excluding anyone who does not fit into the criteria socially set. In other words, a Nigerian’s national counterpart is anyone else who was non-Nigerian.

Billig (1995) suggests that the uses of everyday routines aside from more ‘exotic’ experiences which are less visible are used to normalise and naturalise nationalist ideology. He further states that the media play a major role in this. For instance, reports on the news, the weather forecast or even the airing of global sporting events like the Olympics, World Cup, etc. require an acceptance of the notion of the nation as a legitimate, natural and normal express of identity. In the news, Polish people are people from Poland, a place which is different from Britain, with its own customs, history, etc. A World Cup match between England and Nigeria could only be “real” if we already “know” that such places do exist. The weather forecast which shows a map of Nigeria and the weather conditions in parts of the country could only truly be believed by the audience if they already believe that the

representation does depict a real place.

Following up on the above point, the discourses in the media as illustrated above are not just representations of social reality. They constitute social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997b) and like much of the non-discursive practices that take place in everyday life, contribute to the construction of nation and national identity (Wodak et al, 1999; Billig, 1995). The structures, practices and products of the media help to construct and reflect nationalist ideology in society.

1.5. Discourse and Ideology

Discourse has been defined in various ways. Foucault (1972) defines it as a set of related statements that produce and structure a particular order of reality. More specifically, Foucault defines discourses as knowledge systems that inform social and governmental technologies. These technologies constitute power in society. Power does not come from outside, but is in us, the subjects, who are ruled by our own creations and constructions: the technologies and techniques of power in social institutions. Michel Foucault opposes the concept of ideology because it is implicated in debatable universal truth claims and rests on a humanist understanding of the individual subject (Foucault, 1977/1978: p.34, cited in Langer, 1998). Halliday, agreeing with this perspective of discourse, defining it as a socio-historical contingent, which is “meaning potential” that enables and constrains possible ways of knowing the world and the role (s) we and other social agents (human or otherwise) can and do play. Fairclough (1989: p.23) agrees with this notion of discourse as constraining and enabling social practice but he also describes it as both a product of, and a factor in, the construction of social practice (Fairclough, 1989: p.20). He states that in order to understand

the texts which form part of a discourse, it is necessary to also analyse not only the processes of production and interpretation of the texts themselves, but also to understand the relationship between the texts, processes, their social conditions (both the immediate situational and more remote institutional social structures). A socio-cognitive approach however, sees discourse as schemata, assuming that discourse is created based on individual and/or collective ideology (Van Dijk, 1985; 1991; 1993; Langer, 1998). Van Dijk, who is perhaps most notable for his contribution to the interdisciplinary theory on discourse analysis within journalistic texts (1991, 1993), appears to disagree with the Foucauldian definition of discourse. Rather than see it as separate from ideology, that is, pre-existing frameworks, philosophical positioning, Van Dijk and others like him see discourse as ideology, so that in any expression of discourse lies ideological framing. Thus, a news story on tribalism would be constructed to fit with certain ideological frameworks i.e. reproduced and not created through these. Fairclough (1995a:18) suggests two main perspectives on “discourse”:

“One is predominant in language studies: discourse as social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations. The other is predominant in post-structuralist social theory (e.g. in the work of Foucault): a discourse as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge. The first sense is most closely associated with the interpersonal function of language, and with the concept of genre (...). The second sense is most closely associated with the ideational function of language, and with discourses - notice that in addition to being used as an abstract noun for this general view of language in social use, discourse is used as a count noun (a discourse,

several discourses) as a category (alongside 'genre') within the intertextual analysis of texts.”

(Fairclough, 1995a: p. 18)

Such a distinction as that made by Fairclough does not translate into a polarisation in the ways that discourse could be considered. For one thing, all definitions of discourse agree that it is both producer and product, so that discourses are both constantly being constructed and constructing social practice through social action and interaction. Here, discourse is not restricted to language only, although it does express itself through language as well as any other sign system that avails itself to be used in this way. Langer (1998) points out that van Dijk and Fairclough tend to use discourse in the second sense, identified- as a linguistic device, functioning as a linguistic category. If nothing else, the above demonstrates the ambiguity of the term discourse and the various ways in which it is used. Perhaps Fiske (1996) captures it best when he says:

“Discourse is an elusive term, for it both refers to a general theoretical notion and to specific practices within it. At the theoretical level, ‘discourse’ challenges the structuralist concept of ‘language’ as an abstract system (Saussure’s langue) and relocates the whole process of making and using meanings from an abstracted structural system into particular historical, social, and political conditions. Discourse, then, is language in social use Discourse analysis differs from linguistic analysis in focusing on what statements are made rather than how they are... At this level, then, discourse is the means by which those conditions (of social use) are made to make sense within the social relations that structure them. It is structured and

structuring, for it is both determined by its social conditions and Affects them...Discourse also operates on a lower level on which a number of discourses put discourse-in-general into practice, and this is the level where it can be most particularly analysed.”

(Fiske, 1996: p. 3)

Of course, one thing that is agreed upon in all the definitions outlined above is that discourse constructs and reflects ways of seeing the world which are constructed and reconstructed, rather than definite and absolute. If so, then it follows that when taken apart, what would be revealed in any discourse analysis would be subjective positions that reflect the models for social realities that would inherently favour certain groups and subordinate others. This suggests then that discourse is an arena and a tool of power struggle. As Fairclough (1989) states:

“Language [as a form of discourse] is both a site of and a stake in the class struggle, and those who exercise power through language must constantly be involved in struggle with others to defend (or lose) their position.”

Fairclough (1989: p. 29)

Fairclough (1989) seems to be proposing that the construction of discourse is intentionalist and that texts as such are used to reproduce power positions or change them. While Fiske agrees with the idea of discourse as an arena for contesting social power and control, he does not necessarily agree with the intentionalist view of the use of discourse in social interaction:

“Discourse is the continuous process of making sense and of circulating it socially. Unlike a simulacrum, discourse is both a noun and a verb, it is ever on the move. At times it becomes visible or audible, in texts, or a speech, or a conversation. These public moments are all that the discourse analyst has to work on, but their availability does not necessarily equate with their importance: discourse continues its work silently inside our heads as we make our own sense of everyday lives.

Though discourse is used privately and individually, it remains inescapably social, so those who share discourse are likely to form social and political alliances, for they will share broadly an understanding of the world and the way that their interests can best be secured within it. We use discourse, then, both to form our sense of the social world and to form the relations by which we engage in it. In the realm of social relations, discourse works through a constant series of invitations and rejections by which it attempts to include certain social formations in its process and exclude others. Discourse offers continuous but unequal opportunities for intervention, and discursive guerrillas are key troops in any political and cultural campaign.”

Fiske (1996: p. 6)

Foucault (1972) propounds that discourse is not merely constructed from linguistic units, but that it also functions through any system of signs, a point which Fiske (1996) has also made above. As Lazar (2000) points out however, most studies tend to synonymise discourse with language, when in reality, the two are separate concepts. Certainly language i.e. a code used to communicate is a function and a means of creating and expressing discourse, but it is not the only one. There are other systems of communication like body language, drawings and

mathematical signs among others that could be used in creating discourse. Discourse is much more than just an arrangement of communication. It is meaning or ideology that expresses itself through a sign system (like language). Language simply is a way discourse is expressed (Fiske, 1996: p. 3).

Language is seen as playing a vital role in constructing and shaping our realities. Language, just like every other social practice, reflects and shapes personal understandings of the world. Language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power. One seeks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 648). In simpler terms, the fact that when a person uses words (whether spoken or written) to communicate and someone else listens and engages with their communication is evidence of the power that language has in and of itself, and which it gives to communicators. Anyone could make use of any language and its features to express their views of the world, and in so doing, shape the views of those exposed to their communication. It follows that the larger the audience, the more widely a communicator could influence social understanding of the world with their particular worldview. Journalism, a field which deals with the reporting of important facts on the observable world, through mass media technologies constructs pictures of the world which news media audiences engage with.

1.6. The Discursive Power of Elites

For the purpose of this research, the term "elite" is used to refer to a social group that dominate intellectually, morally or through legitimised authority (Gramsci, 1971). Although Gramsci's places class and economics at the core of his theories, nonetheless, he also claimed

that this dominance by elite groups, i.e. hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) is also socio-psychological. Arguably, the relationship between the discourse of the elite and the non-elite may be viewed as reciprocal, each group's discourse shaping the other. The dialogue between these groups determines who wins elections, which television programs succeed, what products are purchased, and even which research findings are credible. However, all groups maintain differential levels of influence over what is discussed publicly and how it is discussed.

Because communication is essential to developing perspectives that are shared by the larger society, those who have better access to, control or influence of media outlets hold more sway over the creation of both social and personal opinions than those who do not. In an examination of how majority group members in the Netherlands and the United States discuss minority group members, van Dijk (1993) found that participants' ideologies expressed in mundane conversations reflected the influence of "elites," whom he contends dominate the upper echelons of power hierarchies in businesses, politics, the media, and universities. Even their conversation topics reflected those deemed by elites as important: crime and deviance, cultural differences, socio-economic problems, and immigration crises. Moreover, the tone in most discussions was negative, suggesting that ethnic minorities are viewed as problematic for the country. In describing the power of elites to shape public discourse, van Dijk (1995) says, "Their discursive resources are such that they are better able than other social groups to influence interpretations and social beliefs..." (p. 5). Thus, while Nigeria may be a colonial legacy, it could be suggested that national ideology may well permeate the discourse of elites, who have more power to shape social opinions and influence policy decisions.

News media elites, in particular, wield considerable power over the ways in which groups and events are depicted. As producers and purveyors of public messages, they represent for most Nigerians their main source of credible social knowledge about their everyday social realities. Such monopolised control over public discourse vests this group with more power than most other elite groups to frame discussions about and ultimately give meaning to various social categories (van Dijk, 1993).

Elite news media function not only as venues for expressing opinions, but also as unifying agents for disparate groups. As a societal institution, the mass media could play no small part in the production and reproduction of discourses which serve to entrench state legitimacy (Althusser, 1971). Anderson (2006) attributes the rise in nationalism in European countries in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries to the success of print capitalism. In the United States, Starr (2004) found that, beginning in the late 1800's, technical innovations in printing which reduced costs and increased production capacity, as well as improvements in transportation, led to vast increases in daily newspaper circulation. Anderson (2006) suggests that print media, through widespread, daily distribution, provide the technical means by which a national consciousness can be represented and conveyed; and newspapers, in particular, confer on their readership a sense of belonging in an "imagined community" of people like them. Moreover, news media have the power to include or exclude critical voices which would undoubtedly alter public discourse. Moreover, by mediating messages between powerful groups and the public, the media represent important forums for the creation and exchange of public discourse (van Dijk, 1993). Indeed, access to news media and control over knowledge production is pivotal to a group's powers of persuasion (van Dijk, 1992). Foucault (1977) asserts that only those agents with special claims to authority and legitimacy

are granted entry into public discourse, while others are ignored as unreliable.

Among those groups with such privileged media access are politicians who do not have to wait to be invited into public discourse - they can generally call press conferences when they choose. Such power allows them to exert considerable influence over how discourses take shape. Every major newspaper reports on the actions and statements of the elite and national political debates receive extensive media coverage, thereby providing the actors with unrestricted access to a national audience. Often, political groups use these opportunities to shape opinions and public discourse about groups they consider to be different from themselves and from their electorate. For instance, when van der Valk (2003) analysed the discourse from parliamentary debates, political speeches, interviews, and articles in the Netherlands and France from 1990 to 1997, he found that the majority of politicians depicted immigrant groups as different, sometimes deviant, and even threatening. As Steiner (2000) asserts, “to understand politics we need to pay attention not only to the actions of political actors but also to their rhetoric” (p. 9). Thus, since political figures can transcend boundaries to media access, their expressed views have particular power to shape the ways in which groups are perceived.

Like politicians, scholars also have the authority to both make and interpret meanings and thus influence public discourse about groups. Weber (1946) was concerned that politics, which has the potential to impose personal opinions and ignore “inconvenient facts” that undermine those opinions, lacked morality that could be restored by its relationship to science. The legitimacy of science, he argued, could only be achieved and maintained by its reputation as reliable, authoritative, and politically impartial. Using rigorous empirical

research methods, academic and scientific communities assume important powers over the creation and validation of knowledge in publication. Although academic journals (where most research first enters the public sphere) may be rightly regarded as less accessible to the average member of the public than popular media, when newspaper editors highlight research findings or politicians reference studies which support their agendas, scholars can wield considerable power over the shape subsequent discourse takes. As an example, van Dijk (1992) contends that social research confirming ethnic minority stereotypes generally receives extensive press coverage and is, in turn, often used in political discourse, “thus closing the circle of elite discourse” (p. 50).

While these and other elites, such as special interest groups, business executives, and religious leaders, wield considerable powers over public discourse through privileged media access, news media have ultimate control over the messages they disseminate (Starr, 2004; van Dijk, 1993) and are considered in this study to be among the most influential groups contributing to the discursive construction of Nigeria and Nigerians.

For Nigeria, print journalism has always been a major part of the political economy. The newspapers and magazines have always been owned and controlled by the elite class in the territory; the same social group who led the anti-colonial nationalist movement and who continued to be the ruling class up till the present-day. If this is so, then it could be expected that the language in the news would predominantly reflect the perspectives of the elite class (Fage, 1969; Omu, 1982). Of course, it is to be expected that the models of the world they would disseminate linguistically might be in keeping with their interests, such that the world works in a way that remains favourable, comfortable or familiar.

For contemporary postcolonial societies like Nigeria, the nation-state as we know it is a by-product of their colonial relationships with European societies. However, after gaining independence from colonialism, these societies continued to function as nation-states, suggesting that there was an ideological shift from ethnically-constructed organisations. Be that as it may, there is strong evidence to the fact that ethnicity; political bias and partisanship have always been major features of the state in general and the press in particular, especially with regards to their coverage of political issues.

The locational concentration of media institutions in South-west Nigeria as well as the occasionally tendentious perspectives of media, however, has made it easy for establishment politicians and corrupt officeholders struggling for survival to categorise the media as sectional and ethnic. Indeed, some have suggested that there is no national media in Nigeria. Rather the country has, they argue, an "Arewa media," an "Nkenga media," and an "Ngbati media"-corresponding to Nigeria's three major geopolitical zones. (Arewa is a popular term in Nigeria for the Hausa of Northern Nigeria; Nkenga is used similarly to denote the I[gb]bo of Eastern Nigeria, while Ngbati is a derisive soubriquet for the Yorubas of Western Nigeria). Here we are reminded of Aaron Gana's argument in a related context, that:

“One basic weakness of civil society organisations appears to be unevenness in their spread and strength across the country and the concentration of their activities in the Lagos-Ibadan axis [South- Western Nigeria]. In one fundamental respect this unevenness often appears to give ethnic/regional character to broad democratic struggles waged by civil society and [which are] exploited by government in ethnici[s]ing the struggle.”

(African Centre for Democratic Governance Newsletter, December 1998)

While studies taking politico-cultural perspectives on the Nigerian press are in abundance, it would appear that the social analysis of the Nigerian situation so far has had a blind-spot when it comes to the workings of socio-economic class. This is not to say that there is no recognition of the distinction between the various classes in the African or indeed the Nigerian context. The reverse is the case. Nevertheless, there appears to be a dearth of social analysis which looks specifically at the working of class. As a result, there is a gap in our knowledge of the political economics of the society, more specifically with regards to the press.

1.7. Conclusion: Why is this Study Relevant?

While this research cannot claim, by any stretch of the imagination, to be the definitive work on the questions it raises, it could humbly profess to be of some value generally on an epistemological level to the social sciences.

This thesis looks at the discourses on national development as expressed by the political and economic ruling classes, particularly concentrating on the way that the masses are constructed and represented in national contexts. As our focus is on how social roles and identities are constructed through journalistic practice, it should further help us understand the role that class can play in shaping cultural and political practice. As Igwara (2001) points out, there is a significant gap in knowledge on the dynamic between socio-economics and the larger social contexts within African societies, with a strong bias for politico-cultural approaches to majority of the studies conducted on postcolonial societies. This study hopes to

contribute towards bridging that gap. In particular, it should also aid in understanding the issues surrounding national development in African countries and the roles that the media on one hand, and the masses on the other, play with regards to such matters.

Following from the above point, this study has bearing on contemporary colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial debates, particularly as it would help in examining the impact of the colonial experience on national development in formerly colonised societies, hopefully from a fresh perspective. As it will also be examining postcolonial moments, it should help us in looking at postcolonial factors that shape the construction of the African nation-state. That said, while this research is looking at the mediated construction process of social categories in the Nigerian context, its findings will be useful in theorising the role of the mass media in the social categorisation process in other contexts, whether or not they are colonial.

Another key contribution this research should make is a more comprehensive knowledge of how language works not merely as a vehicle for social communication, but as an aspect of social practice, and a part of social communication in itself. In particular, it would further elucidate on how concepts like nationality could be appropriated and expressed through language. In this case, we will be looking at discourses in the English language, which is currently a national lingua franca in Nigeria, a long way from its initial status as a foreign language used for communicating with British traders, explorers, missionaries and colonial administrators. Like journalism, which is also a cultural practice with Anglo-American origins, English has now become a commonsense vehicle for social communication despite its foreign origins. It will be interesting to observe how such socio-cultural forms operate in conditions removed from those in which they were initially produced. As such, this study has

implications for the fields of Sociolinguistics, Journalism and Cultural studies.

In addition, it should be relevant to mass media professionals, helping them understand how media discourse contributes to the construction of social categories specifically and more broadly in terms of social reality. In the same vein, this study should also be relevant to governments (local, regional, national), non-governmental organisations and international organisations, particularly as its findings should help in providing better understanding how the language used in mediated social discourse impacts on everyday social practices. Hopefully this would enable them harness the power of news media in effecting positive social change and in building a nation-state which could be truly perceived as belonging to Nigerians, rather than an apparatus for the expansion and maintenance of the dominance of an elite class. Resultantly, this research should be of interest to anyone who is practicing in the field of Political Science.

Considering also that this study will take on a socio-historical dimension, particularly in the analysis and discussion of data, it is my hope that this study will be relevant to any researcher who is interested not just in examining societies as we do here, but also for those who are interested in good research practice in terms of research methodologies that enable effective historical analysis.

Chapter Two

Elitism and the Nigerian Press

2.1. Introduction

The Nigerian press is very vibrant, with a dynamic history. In talking about the Nigerian press, it is important to understand that it is not one homogenous, unproblematic media structure. It is a complex press whose neutrality on rational national discourse cannot be readily established because of differing schema, impetus and interests within the state and its structures of ownership and control. Regardless, it could not be refuted that the press in Nigeria have defined the parameters of debates on the issues of nation, constructing and deconstructing words, issues and personalities and geo-ethnic blocs in ways that are fundamental to the crises of a federal Nigerian state. One dominant pattern inherent though is that the press in Nigeria has always been critical of ‘establishment’, raising questions and setting the agenda on pertinent national issues. However, the extent to which the media actually represents all sections of the Nigerian society could be called into question, given the lack of inclusiveness in the process of discourse on matters pertaining to nation and nation-building. It cannot be disputed that there is a significant section of the society that has been excluded from participation in the press either as a result of educational and linguistic limitations, or lack of input to the public discussions that it presents. Furthermore, the concentrated ownership of the print media by particularly by members of the political elite paint the picture of an press which operates narrowly as a site for Nigeria’s elitist power struggles and not a site which reflects the ideologies of other classes.

2.2. News Media and the Construction of Nation

Broadly, in looking at how nations are constructed certain assumptions serve to underpin the analytical framework in this research. Chiefly, we must assume that nations are “imagined communities” as Benedict (2006) posits, and that nationalised individuals perceive them as natural, distinct political entities. Having conceded this point, we must also presume that a sense of belonging to these communities i.e. national identities are dialectically produced and reproduced and can be deconstructed similarly. National identities then are not essentialist, but instead are contrivances. In deconstructing nations and national identities, we should then expect to find different conceptions and perceptions of convention within this structure, learned through socialisation and internalised so that national identity becomes part of an individual’s habitus. These constructing devices must also reinforce a sense of national uniqueness, excluding anyone who does not fit into the criteria socially set. In other words, a Nigerian’s national counterpart is anyone else who was non-Nigerian.

Billig (1995) suggests that the uses of everyday routines aside from more ‘exotic’ experiences which are less visible are used to normalise and naturalise nationalist ideology. He further states that the media play a major role in this. For instance, reports on the news, the weather forecast or even the airing of global sporting events like the Olympics, World Cup, etc. require an acceptance of the notion of the nation as a legitimate, natural and normal express of identity. The weather forecast which shows a map of Nigeria and the weather conditions in parts of the country could only truly be believed by the audience if they are ready to accept that the representation depicts a real place.

Following up on the above point, the discourses in the media as illustrated above are not just representations of social reality. They constitute social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997b) and like much of the non-discursive practices that take place in everyday life, contribute to the construction of nation and national identity (Wodak et al, 1999; Billig, 1995). The structures, practices and products of the media help to construct and reflect nationalist ideologies in society or render them ineffectual, as the case might be.

2.3. The Politics of Language Choice

Formal Western type education was introduced into the country by Christian Missionaries just before the middle of the nineteenth century. For about four decades after that initial date, both the nature and main thrust of Language Education in the country were completely left to those missionaries to decide (Taiwo, 1980: p.10 - 11; Fafunwa, 1974: p.92). And given the well-known belief of most such missionaries, first, that the African child was best taught in his native language (Hair, 1967: p.6), and, second, that the interests of Christianity would best be served by actually propagating that religion in indigenous languages, it is not at all surprising that the teaching and learning of indigenous languages received much genuine attention in those early days of Western type education in the country.

Nonetheless, there were criticisms to the 'products' of such a system of education. Predominant view amongst members of Europe's colonial elite was that those turned out under that system of education were unsuited for the job market of those days, which needed persons with training in English rather than in the indigenous languages (Taiwo, 1980: p.11). Influenced perhaps only in part by such views, the governments in the country began gradually from the early 1980's to intervene in the educational sector of the country with a

view that accords English a prominent place. Over time, such policy succeeded so well that interest in language education in the country shifted substantially away from the indigenous languages towards English, the language of the colonial masters. Proof of this is that, firstly, pupils and their parents gradually formed the opinion, which is regrettably still widely held even today, that it is financially more rewarding to study English than any of the indigenous languages; secondly, certification became conditional upon passing English; and, finally, the various governments in the country from the colonial times till well past the attainment of political independence in 1960 rarely felt that they had any duty to promote the study of the indigenous languages whereas they considered themselves obliged to encourage and even enforce the study of English.

After Nigeria's independence, there was a clamour for the substitution of English as official language of the nation, particularly prevalent in the 1970s (Fishman, 1968a; 1968b; 1988). According to Akinaso (1991), there are important theoretical issues are raised concerning the relationship between the ideologies which underlie the language planning decisions, the orientations of the ensuing policies and the models of education employed to implement them. However, there are more practical issues of implementation which are more focused to the nation's history and complex economic, political and sociolinguistic landscape (Fishman, 1968b). Although language planning activities in Nigeria have typically resulted from top-down directives from the government (Akinaso, 1991), there are often bottom-up motivations from the grassroots, especially linguistic minorities and local associations (Emenanjo, 1985; Brann, 1985; Bamgbose, 1989). Beyond local demands for language maintenance and development rights however, there are other factors which have influenced language planning in Nigeria. Such factors have either a nationalist orientation, such as

adoption of indigenous 'national' languages as a means of achieving national integration (Akinasso, 1991) or an international focus, such as continental pressures, especially from the Organization of African Unity, for the rejection of European or colonial languages (Brann, 1985) and global pressures to implement the famous declaration by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on mother tongue education. In responding to these pressures, the Nigerian government has formulated several distinct policies governing language choice and language use in certain specific contexts, notably legislation, administration, education, and the mass media. While many of these policies are codified, others have simply grown out of history and convention.

The use of English this way is of particular relevance to our study. Considering that one of the features of newspaper texts is that they are accessible only to those who are literate and more specifically, literate in the language it uses as a vehicle. In other words, the act of producing a newspaper and the choice of language for its production are discursive in themselves, creating a group who are privileged in their possession of certain "social capital" (Bourdieu, 1977) in this case of English language literacy. The selection of English as the language for the production of news works to construct and reinforce the hegemony of those who can effectively communicate in this language. In the case of Nigeria, all national publications are produced in English, although Yoruba, Hausa, Ibo and French are also assigned the status of national languages, suited for public discussions. As a result, the social practice of national newspaper publication is ideologically framed to protect the interest of English literate sections of the Nigeria population, which make up an overwhelming

minority. UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) reported illiteracy¹ in the English language in Nigeria at a staggering 84.4% for 1950. The 1994 literacy² levels were reported at 68.0% while the literacy figures in 2004 were estimated at 66.8%. While there is a noticeable increase in literacy levels, significant parts of the population is still illiterate in English and thus are unable to participate in any discourses that operates in this language.

This is especially useful when we take into this account this alongside the arguments made by Anderson (2006) and Billig (1999) on the role that the media plays in the construction of national communities. Anderson (2006) for instance, sees the emergence of newspaper reading as an example of the role that print culture and language choice play in the historical construction of nations as imagined communities. Speaking specifically about newspaper reading he asserts that:

“The significance of this mass ceremony... is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performed is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion.”

(Anderson, 2006: p. 35)

¹ Illiteracy of section of population aged 15 and above. Information available in the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS)'s Literacy Statistical Archives via http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=5794_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

² *ibid*

A study into Yoruba newspaper consumption in Nigeria by Abiodun Salawu (2004) works to support the above point about the hegemonic place of English, an Anglophonic hegemony as we might refer to it here. His study demonstrates that knowledge and readership of indigenous languages in Nigeria is considered inferior by the elite classes who prefer to communicate in the language of their formal colonial masters. It is only with the non-elite (urban-poor and rural dwellers) in African societies that indigenous languages are able to escape being “swallowed up by oppressor languages” (Ngugi, 1993).

Salawu (2004) argues that the attitude of the African urban educated elites to their native languages has its roots in the colonial history of the peoples of the continent. The Europeans colonised the minds of the Africans, relegating African languages and cultures to the background while exalting their own languages. As Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, explains:

“English became more than a language: it was the language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference. Thus, one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment – three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks – or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. Sometimes, the culprits were fined money they could hardly afford.”

(Ngugi 1986: 11).

As a result of such colonial experiences, Africans have learned to be ashamed of things native to them, regarding any aspect of their societies as inferior, particularly when compared with western cultures. Ngugi, in an interview published in *African Theater Review*, laments this

situation:

“Whereas you see today people identify themselves with that which is removed from themselves. That which is near them, they don’t want to identify with.”

(Ngugi, cited in Eyoh 1986: 112)

Esen (1982), writing about literacy in the Ibibio, one of the many Nigerian languages, makes a more worrisome comment:

“Western education seems to have acted together to uproot the newer generation of Ibibio from the linguistic soil of their fathers and foisted a bastard language on them. Thus, education has helped to kill the Ibibio language through disuse.”

(Esen, quoted in Udosen 2002: 287).

As Hall (1993) and Bourdieu (1977) argue, language use is a significant part of cultural identity and the standardisation of national newspaper language works ideologically to produce the effect of a singular cultural identity (Anderson, 1991). In fact, Billig advises that in examining national identity, that it is important to watch out for commonsense assumptions or presuppositions of nationhood (Billig, 1995: p.61). While in the case of a multicultural context like Nigeria it might be seen as necessary to construct a particular identity as dominant or hegemonic in constructing a national identity, this choice is never as commonsensical as might be assumed. To the contrary, the dominant use of English in the production of Nigeria’s “national” newspaper texts is an ideological preference, reflecting and reinforcing a perspective that sees it as the most superior language in the Nigerian context. In conferring such a status to the English language, a similar appraisal is inferred on

individuals who are effectively able to utilise it and works to reinforce a hegemonic position for members of the small class, which are privileged to possess the skills and knowledge to use it, while relegating those who are limited in their use of English to a “subordinate” social rank.

2.4. Ethnicity and the Nigerian Press

There is evidence that suggests that ethnicity has a huge impact on all aspects of communication (production, representation, consumption and feedback) and is intrinsic to the Nigerian press, with suggestions that no true national media exists, but rather three different media corresponding with the three major ethnic groups (Olukotun, 2000a; Adebani, 2002a). According to Adebani (2002a), the Nigerian press is rudimentarily constituted of the Arewa press, which included all the newspapers and magazines published in the Northern region of the country, now broken into the North East, North West and Middle Belt geopolitical zones; the Nkenga or Okoro press, which is comprised of the newspapers published in the Eastern (now the South-East and South-South) region and the dominant Ngbati press, situated and representing the interests of those living on the Lagos-Ibadan axis of the Western region (now the South West). There was a fourth media cache, called the Tiwan-tiwa presses which are more correctly described as the Yoruba ethnic press. These are also known as “Awo” newspapers, signifying their allegiance to the Yoruba-centric ideology of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. However, the Tiwan-tiwa press as Adebani (2002a) states has recently lost their political potency, although they still have a presence in the Nigerian media situation. Adebani (1995; 2002a) further analysis separates the Western press into Ngbati and Tiwan-tiwa. As he clearly states:

“Although this press is located on Yoruba soil, nurtured by their relative educational, cosmopolitan advantage and their competitive, ambitious ethos... their dynamic impulse to self-aggrandisement (this) press is not a Yoruba press. It is press sustained by the intra- and inter- class competitions that is sometimes reflected in the impatience and dissatisfaction of the middle-class journalists who dominate the press.”

(Adebanwi, 1995: p.141)

The Ngbati press is perceived as the section of the Nigerian press that is most concerned with national issues (Ofeimun, 1994: p. 15; Adebanwi, 2002a). Perhaps this could be explained by the fact that their ownership is more vested in individuals who are members of ethnic minorities and who stand to gain more from the success of the national project than a society that is ethnically divided. The Tiwan-Tiwa press on the other hand, is more concerned in securing the interests of the Yoruba ethnic group. Such classification of the press could be broadly defined as reflecting ethno-regional and nationalist ideologies, with the press acting as a site for hegemonic struggle.

These ethno-regional divisions are not necessarily an issue. As Igwara (2001) points out, ethnic identification is an important aspect of social practice in Nigeria. As a tool for calculation and negotiation, it is a form of social capital which individuals use in furthering their interests on a daily basis and while such practice might be viewed as nepotistic, is one nevertheless that every Nigerian understands and operates at some point. As Igwara (2001) puts it:

“People use their ethnic ties to attain their aims, whatever these are: housing, employment, scholarship, school admission, or political office. An Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa or Tiv person who needs something from the state may be quite aware of official procedure to secure it, nevertheless, he/she is also aware that things are done unofficially through the strategic use of ethnic, friendship or pecuniary ties. The various levels of the society- political, social and economic- are held together by these ties.”

(Igwarra, 2001)

Thus, it is that as the Nigerian state exists with its own system, there also operate rival versions of social practice, a system of “social and ethno-ethical conduct of association of peoples” (Gerth and Mills, 1977: p. 329). It provides social security for Nigerians in what is perceived as the absence of a formal state welfare system. More importantly, it is a system which Nigerians trust and regard as a certain means of protecting their interests in a way which the state seems unable to do. Perhaps the most significant role that ethnicity plays is that it provides a way for non-elites to access opportunities which otherwise would be the exclusive of the country’s elite (Frank, 1979: p. 451). While ethnicity is one of the means of social manipulation by members of the elite (Nnoli, 1978; Otite 1990; Sklar, 1976), it is nevertheless a process which ordinary folk also participate in, rather than merely being victims. Ethnic identification is perhaps one of the few forms of social capital that is available both to elites and non-elites, unlike others like education, status or as Frank (1979) proffers in reference to the military, machine guns. Furthermore, as it is the basis for local differentiation that proves to be least disadvantageous to those of lower status, it is one which they respond more readily to and use in furthering their own ambitions (Frank, 1979: p.452). As a result,

the “informal network of patronage” (Coleman and Rosberg, 1964: p 8ff) which ethnicity provides acts to lessen the massive gap that might otherwise exist between the elite and the masses. Thus, while ethnicity might be one of the tools which is manipulated by elites in securing their continued dominance in the Nigerian context, it is similarly used by non-elites in furthering their own interests. However, as Igwara (2001) suggests, the strong presence of ethnicity in national affairs might be mitigated if the state could ensure reasonably equitable provision and distribution of welfare to all its nationals. As it stands, in a situation where there is a massive gap between those who have and those who have not, ethnicity is a readily available means for making sense of such disparity.

2.5. The Pre-colonial Press in Nigeria

Although Nigerian societies have always had their own traditional modes of social communication, the initial development of the press in Nigeria is largely to the credit of Christian missionaries, who following the abolition of slave trade by Great Britain in 1833 and the emigration of slaves back to their homes went to Africa to Christianise and educate the freed slaves so that they could spread the gospel to their kinsmen and also be useful to the Europeans in their business (Fage, 1969: p.116). Thus it was that printing presses were set up to enable the production of Christian literature.

The first print publication in Nigeria, *Iwe Iroyin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba* (Newspaper for the Egba and the Yoruba), which was first published in the Yoruba and eventually in both the Yoruba and English languages, was established by Reverend Henry Townsend of the Christian Mission Society (CMS) in 1859 in the town of Abeokuta (Ademoyega, 1962). The paper became bilingual in March 1860. The publication was more of a newsletter, divided

into two equal parts, one giving Yoruba text and the other with the textual content in English. The paper was geared towards getting the indigenous peoples of that area to read and to form the habit of seeking information by reading (Omu, 1982). Although there were other religious printing presses, Townsend's was the only one that published news. The printing press in Calabar, which functioned as the main base for the Christian Mission of Scotland published many religious literature and books, but no news publication. The impact of the short-lived religious press in Nigeria which although more prosaic than its descendants nonetheless had far-reaching effects on the society and in particular the 'configuration' and organisation of the press in the country.

For one thing, it was primarily the efforts of missionaries which, to a rather large extent, brought about the construction of certain indigenous languages and ethnicities as dominant in a region primarily through the creation and use of script for certain languages such as they did in Yorubaland (Peel, 1989). Peel in analysing the missionary impact on Yoruba language and culture, and even on the spread of the name "Yoruba" itself, noting that the ethnic message 'came wrapped in this language of literacy' (Peel, 1989). Through the exclusions of other 'dialects' or languages within the same territory from this exercise they unwittingly or not, established hegemonies. Berman (1998) best sums it up thus:

“By compiling grammars and dictionaries from one among a diversity of variant local dialects, usually that spoken around the mission station, missionaries transformed it into the authoritative version of the language of a whole 'tribe' and propagated it through their schools. By creating and disseminating a standardised print vernacular, the missionaries promoted the development of indigenous literate elite, encouraged

the recording of standardised versions of local history and custom, and thereby had an important impact on the conceptual reification of particular ethnic groups and their cultures.”

Berman (1998)

In considering the foreign origins of journalism in Nigeria, it poses the question of how one should conceptualise journalism. In regarding the Anglo-American influences in its development (Chalaby, 2000) and especially considering its introduction and entrenchment in Nigerian society through the efforts of European missionaries and westernised Africans, it is difficult to ignore the imperialist origins of journalistic practice in Nigeria. When one considers as well, the fact that the written nature of the texts produced through the print press stands in stark contrast to the oral nature of African social communication (Bourgault, 1995), this adds to strengthen the case of cultural imperialism. In introducing a system for social communication as part of the Euro-western civilisation project in Africa, the result was the creation of parallel communication systems, both co-existing in the same space, both operating under different rules. As Amucheazi (1980) points out, anything that takes place within a cultural space is inescapably a part of it, much in the same way a child is the biological product of its two parents. Therefore, despite its foreign origins, Nigerian journalism is to be regarded as a localised articulation of a foreign practice, containing traces of its ancestry, while redefining itself to fit with its local context.

For the northern part of the country, press development was over six decades slower. This again, could be attributed to the fact of missionary absence in the Islamic region. Yusuf Adamu (2006) in giving a background of the media in northern Nigeria explains it thus:

“Northern Nigeria has been literate for the last seven hundred years after the invention of Ajami (the use of Arabic script to write Hausa language). It is however behind southern Nigeria in western education which came to it late and was not popular for a number of reasons.... This may partly explain why the north is lagging behind in terms of the print media in particular.”

(Adamu, 2006)

With the British annexation of Lagos in 1861 and the opening up of the hinterland, Lagos attracted more people from Sierra Leone, Liberia, the West Indies and the Americas (Omu, 1982). With the subsequent economic development came further development and diffusion of the newspaper in Nigerian society, with its evolution into a channel for information and advertising. This was particularly focused in the western belt of Nigeria i.e. Lagos and its environs.

As Sobowale (1985) points out, the press also began at this stage to function as a medium for political communication, often at times being a harsh critic of the colonial administration. For instance, the *Iwe Iroyin*, although initially meant to be religious press, became Reverend Townsend’s principal weapon for political manoeuvring in England (Omu, 1982). By December 1862, Governor Freeman had to lodge a complaint against this publication at the colonial office in London, ultimately resulting in its closure.

Between this time and the end of the 19th century, there were over ten more newspapers launched by merchants and educated members of the indigenous African population, most of which were short-lived (Omu, 1978: 26-38). Many of these were freed slaves who had

worked with the missions as printers also set up their own printing presses. In 1863, Robert Campbell, a Jamaican *mulatto* printer and journalist who had settled in Lagos, launched a newspaper, the *Anglo-African*, to serve the young settlement of Lagos (Omu, 1978: p.19). Such newspapers as Campbell's were involved in power relations even at that early stage, clamouring for independence from the colonial powers as early as the 1880s (Omu, 1982; Coleman, 1986: p. 184).

Thus it was that by the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, the newspapers in the territory had established themselves as a potent opposition to the British administrators of British West Africa, particularly those of Nigeria (Sobowale, 1985; Kopytoff, 1965: p. 216-18). This is not to say that all the press were anti-establishment. For example, the *Nigerian Pioneer* whose year of inception coincided with that of the amalgamation was dismissed as a "quisling medium of the colonial government" (Adebanwi, 2002a). Still, most of the press in existence at this point were largely anti-establishment.

2.6. The Pre-Independent Press

The return of many young educated Nigerians in the 1930s who had gone abroad for their studies added to the impetus of anti-colonial sentiment that had begun to be expressed by the press in the cross-over to colonisation in the 1890s. Political parties were inaugurated in the years leading up to the start of the Second World War in 1939 and began pressing for improved social conditions and greater political involvement (Omu, 1982; Sobowale, 1985).

In 1937, Doctor Nnamdi Azikiwe, who later became the first leader of post-independent Nigeria, set up the *West African Pilot*, a newspaper which has been credited with introducing

professionalism into the practice of journalism in Nigeria. According to Ademoyega (1962), he spread banner headlines across his pages, introduced the use of paragraphs and simplified journalistic text. He adopted the one-paragraph style which was much easier to read and digest. Azikiwe, popularly known as Zik, established Zik Press Limited, which in addition to the West African Pilot also owned the Defender in Warri and the Daily Comet, which was published in Kano. Doctor Azikiwe was part of the generation of Africans who had gone abroad to complete his education in the United States and had experienced and witnessed the politics around race in that society (like the anti-segregation movement in the early twentieth century) and racial discrimination first-hand. As a result, all these newspapers founded by him or affiliated with him were largely characterised for their anticolonial and pan-Africanist sentiment (Ademoyega, 1962).

Development of the press in the Northern region of the country was a lot slower compared with that of its Southern Counterpart. In fact, the North did not have a press until the 1930s. As Adebani (2002a) points out, the trend of the press development was diametrically opposed to that of the south in that the first government owned press in the north was set up by the colonial government. The first government owned print medium in Nigeria as well as the north's first press was the Jaridar Nigeria Ta Arewa (Northern Nigeria News), published in 1932 was joined in 1939 by yet another government owned publication, Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo (Truth is worth more than a penny). The Southern (and private) press intervened in this process later with the Comet and Northern Advocate being established in 1949 at Kano and Jos, respectively, by the Zik Group of Newspapers. The Tribune Group owned by Chief Obafemi Awolowo also established the Middle Belt Herald in Jos and the Northern Star in Kano.

Thus was established a divide in the Nigerian press, one which was further accentuated by ethno-religious and political partition occasioned in the latter part of the colonial and more particularly emphasised in the post-colonial period. As Agbaje (1992), notes, the press became so enmeshed in the struggle for political power that it found it virtually an uphill task to rise above... “personal, political and ethnic acrimonies”.

Despite the ethno-regional division of the Nigerian press, one major reason cited for the success of the journalists in Nigeria during the colonial era was majorly that they had the support of the people. In many instances, the people demonstrated their support for the journalists and as such, the colonial administrators were unusually unwilling to enforce the media laws they had enacted, primarily as they only resulted in making heroes out of the victims. Thus, it was that the Nigerian press arguably was more libertarian during this oppressive period than it has been post-independence, even during civilian rule (Sobowale, 1985). So critical had the newspapers become of the colonial establishment that by the early twentieth century, the various colonial administrations in Nigeria enacted a series of laws aimed at limiting the freedom and popularity of the press. Some of the laws included the Seditious Offences Ordinance of 1909; the Criminal Code Ordinance of 1916 and the Newspaper Ordinance of 1917. A more comprehensive review of Nigerian media law are available in works by Elias (1969). Oddly enough, many of the laws passed in the colonies and which are still in force in contemporary Nigeria, had been abolished in Britain long before they were enacted in the African colonies (Sobowale, 1985). However, as already been pointed out above, these laws were not a major stumbling block to the nationalist press given the colonial administration’s reluctance to enforce them.

One important feature of the Nigerian press prior to independence was that with the exception of the Daily Times, which belonged to the Mirror Group in London, all were largely owned by or identified with political parties. The West African Pilot and its sister papers became the official organs of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The Nigerian Tribune was founded by Chief Obafemi Awolowo at the height of the anti-colonialist movement in 1949 to advance the cause of his party, the Action Group (AG). In as much the same way, the Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo although government-owned, was established to protect the interests of the northern part of the country in the struggle for political freedom. Thus it was that from this period, issues surrounding the country polarised the press oftentimes along territorial, geopolitical lines. For instance, while most of the southern newspapers owned by many of the southern politicians clamoured for early independence; northern newspapers, supporting the positions of leading northern politicians opposed it, based on the suspicion that the South would overrun the north in the event of an early independence (Adebanwi, 2002a). As there were fewer newspapers in the north, the southern voices drowned out those of the north in this debate. Essentially, the outcome was differing perspectives on the discourse of Nigeria's "national question" even before its independence in 1960. Such suspicions were not entirely unfounded. According to Unongo (1968), while Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the AG party and later became first Premier of the Western Region stated that his task was "to unite the various clans and tribes of Yorubaland and generally create and actively foster the idea of a single nationalism throughout Yorubaland, to accelerate the emergence of a virile, modernised and efficient Yoruba state"; Doctor Nnamdi Azikiwe, leader of the NCNC, first Premier of the Eastern Region and eventually first President of independent Nigeria averred that "the God of Africa has specifically created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of ages. The marital prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human

history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the impact of pressure. The Ibo nation cannot shirk its responsibility.” Their northern counterpart, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, who was to become Prime Minister in 1963, stated “many Nigerians deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one. This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this present unity is artificial...”

As highlighted previously, these three individuals were key nationalist leaders. However, they also functioned as torchbearers for the interests and grievances of their respective sections of the country. Certainly, their ownership and control of various presses in that period could not help but reflect their personal biases and the ideology of their various political parties. It is worthy of note that the radio, which at this time was completely under government ownership and control, was launched in the late 1930s. Without doubt, it would have impacted on the media structure at that point in time. At the very least, it would have served to fragment the public sphere and provide alternative discourses to those in the newspapers. Unfortunately, the role and history of the radio is outside the scope of this study.

2.7. The Nigerian Press after Independence

The fact that the political parties which owned the many newspapers in the country at independence were local in outlook and based on affinity with specific ethnic groups had serious implications for a press which was so vigorous during the struggle for freedom from colonialism. Independent Nigeria consisted of three regions- Western, Northern and Eastern- in 1960. Each of these had a dominant political party and an arsenal of loyal press. The northern region was dominated by the Hausa and came under the political remit of the

Northern People's Congress (NPC). The Nigerian Citizen, set up in 1961, was its official party organ newspaper. The Yoruba and their political party AG held sway in the Western Region. They were served by the Nigerian Tribune and the Daily Service. In the Eastern Region were the Igbo and their party, the NCNC. Because Azikiwe was the founding father and leader of the party, his chain of newspapers automatically projected the image of the NCNC and served its interests.

Upon independence, it became clearer that all the different political parties and regions had in common- colonialism- was gone. In its absence, suspicions and petty jealousies began to arise amongst the papers and parties. The owners and editorial teams were unable to perceive issues beyond the confines of party ideologies or ethnic boundaries. Additionally, because none of the three major political parties had any firm footing in any region aside from its home base, the newspapers were unable to promote national goals, despite the considerable following that the parties and their papers had on a national level (Sobowale, 1985). Due to the partisan nature of the coverage of the newspapers on events and opinions, it became difficult, if not impossible for federal issues to be given adequate and objective exposure. As a result, the federal government set up the Morning Post and its sister paper, the Sunday Post. The regions soon followed suit with the Daily Sketch owned by the Western regional government; Nigerian Outlook, later renamed the Biafran Sun during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70), Renaissance after the war and then the Daily Star; and the Nigerian Citizen taken over by the Northern regional government and renamed New Nigerian. The majority of the editorial staff in these papers was therefore also staff in the regional or federal ministries of information, which were legacies from the colonial administration. According to Sobowale (1985), the constitution of the newspapers' staff with individuals who had no expertise in

either production or news judgment or who were also loyal to their respective government and its policies brought about a compromise in the professional principles of journalism and eventually a lack of trust of the public in publications or any medium for that matter, which is owned by government. Interethnic rivalry and the lack of a common political objective made it expedient for each region not only to adopt the restrictive media laws enacted by the colonial masters but also to endorse new ones, mainly to keep opposition newspapers in check. In particular, the controversial Newspapers (Amendment) Act of 1964 received heavy criticism from the newspaper industry for seemingly operating by double standards (Uche, 1989). The major source of condemnation for the Act came from the provisions which stipulated the levying of a fine of £200 or one year imprisonment for the publishing of any “statement, report or rumour” which turned out to be false, regardless of whether or not the newspaper that published it was aware of the veracity of such pieces of information. According to Uche (1989), this stipulation was problematic for two reasons. Firstly, there was no clear definition of what was considered as “rumour”. This unclarity meant that if any newspaper proprietor or editor fell out of favour with any politician or public official, that they could be easily charged with peddling rumours through their publications. And this would be a very effective way of restricting press freedom. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, was the fact that during the colonial era, many of the political class in the 1960s like Azikiwe, had successfully militated against an ordinance in 1948 introduced by the colonial establishment, which sought a cash deposit as security prior to the publication of any newspaper. This restriction of press freedom following independence only served to demonstrate that the political leaders of this period did not want to be held to account or challenged by the press the same way they had challenged the colonial governments. If press freedom had helped to hasten independence from colonial rule, then it would have stood to

reason that those same freedoms would contribute positively to the development of the independent state.

Towards the end of the First Republic in 1965, political rivalry had intensified to the point of a complete breakdown of law and order. The chain of events that culminated in the Civil War in 1967 was touched off by an internal contention within the AG and the subsequent arrest and imprisonment of the leaders of that party on charges of treasonable felony. The stalemate arising from the disputed results of the general elections of 1964, the bedlam that was let loose in the West in 1965 and the near state of lawlessness that prevailed eventually led to the first military *coup d'état* on January 15, 1966.

The impact of the press in each of these areas was considerable. In each of the districts in troubled areas, particularly in the West and in the East, legislation was passed to prohibit the circulation of opposition newspapers. Apart from this, regulations were put in place banning newspapers that were reporting events in a way that was not approved by the ruling parties in the respective areas. The area offices of these papers were attacked and damaged. Such was the state of affairs until the military took over civilian government in January 1966.

2.8. The Press under the Military

One of the first actions of the military government of General Aguiyi-Ironsi in January 1966 was to declare null and void various regional laws banning the circulation of certain newspapers (Arikpo, 1967: p.153) and vesting the regulation of the activities of the newspapers in the federal military government. With the collapse of the Ironsi regime in a

counter-coup later that year, a bitter interethnic conflict flared up in the North, leaving thousands of resident Igbo dead and many more fleeing for the East. The later Civil War that sapped the resources of the country for three years provided the excuse for the declaration of a state of emergency in May 1967.

Although at no time, not even during the three years of internecine war was press censorship imposed in principle; expression of dissident opinions was forbidden in practice. One way the government went about ensuring this was through Decree 24 of 1967, which empowered the Inspector-General of police and the Chief of Army Staff to indefinitely detain without trial anyone considered to be a security risk. Similarly, another decree promulgated in 1967 not only banned strikes and lockouts, but also stipulated strict punishments for reporting them in a way that served to encourage workers to partake in industrial unrest.

Another action that affected the Nigerian press was the creation of states. In 1967, just before the breakout of Civil War, the government of General Yakubu Gowon split the country into 12 states. In 1976, it was further divided into 19 states by the military government of General Olusegun Obasanjo. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja was also established. Subsequently in 1987 and 1991 the government of General Ibrahim Babangida divided the country into 21 and 30 states respectfully, aside from the previously created FCT. Finally in 1996, late General Sani Abacha reorganised the country into its current 36 state-structure, with Abuja remaining as the FCT. When broadcast media were deregulated in early 1990s, this facilitated the establishment of state-owned radio and television stations as well as founding their own newspapers to publicise activities in their own respective communities. It was during this period that the Mid-West's Observer, the Chronicle in the South-Eastern

State, Tide in Rivers State, the Standard in Benue-Plateau State and the Herald in Kwara State were founded.

In the mid-1970s, there were only four independent newspapers left in Nigeria. In addition, the Daily Times was 40 per cent privately owned, the federal government holding a 60 per cent share. Of the four independents, the West African Pilot was already a pale shadow of its former self and ceased publication in 1978. The Daily Express ceased publication in 1979, leaving only the Nigerian Tribune and Punch as strong non-governmental-owned newspapers.

The year 1979 saw the handover of rule from military to civilian rule and the country's third attempt at democracy. By the end of 1983, the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari (a northerner) was taken over in a military coup and General Muhammadu Buhari (also a northerner) took over leadership.

The 1980s saw the proliferation of privately-owned newspapers and magazines, with papers including Concord, owned by the late Chief Moshood Abiola and The Guardian, published by Dr Alex Ibru, were launched. Most of the newspapers publishing in the 1980s were partisan and thus affiliated to some political group or the other. The Guardian however, gained the title of "Flagship of the Nigerian Press" for its independent and professional stance on political issues, particularly since its publisher has political affiliations both on ethno-regional and national levels. This newspaper is one of the strongest and earliest examples of Ngbati press in the country. The magazines in particular, took on the critical anti-establishment stance that the newspapers had possessed in the colonial era, with many

journalists being imprisoned and some even losing their lives. One prime example of such an occurrence was the assassination of the late Dele Giwa, who was Editor-in-chief and co-publisher of Newswatch, one of the country's most prolific and respected independent news magazines.

In the 1990s, particularly the later part of the decade, saw the birth of several more newspapers like *This Day* and *The Independent* formed by seasoned journalists who had no personal political affiliations. This decade saw newspapers being particularly critical of the military governments of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha. The annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential elections, which saw Chief Moshood Abiola as victor and which was declared by Nigerians to have been the freest and fairest elections the nation had seen since independence became a turning point. The newspapers' reactions varied largely based on their regional/ethnic grouping. According to Adebani (2002a), for the Ngbati (and Tiwan-Tiwa) press, they saw the annulment of the June 1993 elections as the north's refusal to relinquish power to the southern region; the Arewa press in response to this cited that the South was incapable of leading the country while the Nkenga press on the debate was more ambivalent, focusing on the place of the Igbo in the ensuing crisis and how best to serve their ethnic interests.

In the wake of the annulled June 12 1993 presidential elections, another privately-owned member of the Ngbati press, *Tell Magazine* noted:

“...It seems to suggest that, put bluntly, Nigeria's days as a single nation are numbered, especially if the hard issues of contention are not quickly addressed by

way of a national conference.”

(Quoted in Adebani, 1995: p. 214).

While the call for military rule appeared to be on the basis of what was good for democracy and governance in the country, another key hub of this anti-military debate was one of political power shift. As the military was seen to be dominated by the North, the call for an end to military rule was still guided largely by the matter of power shift from the North to the South although military dictatorship was generally seen as inimical to good governance and democracy.

With the death of General Sani Abacha in June 1998 and the eventual handover of political leadership to the civilian government of retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, who ironically, had led the country as military leader from 1976 before handing over power to the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari in 1979, the role of the press had shifted from that of fighting for democracy to working towards safeguarding the country's democracy and ensuring development on all fronts.

Much of the discourses in the last two decades of the 33-year period (spanning 1966-1999) characterised largely by military and northern dominance of political rulership, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, were centred on rethinking the basis of the continued relationship of the country's painfully disparate ethnic nationalities. Newswatch (cited in Olukotun, 2004a) captured it thus:

“For sometime now, the national question has remained a barely audible whisper. Any effort to discuss it in the open has always been seen as an attempt to stir hornets’ nest because it was considered a volatile issue. And like a seething volcano, it has, since independence sat precariously on the national psyche. But the underground whisper of yesterday has become the whirlwind of today, as Nigerians seem more eager than ever before to discuss the issue.”

(Newswatch, July 9, 1990)

2.9. The Nigerian Press in Contemporary Times

As has been illustrated above, the Nigerian press has functioned in a largely political capacity during the era of colonialism and from the turbulent post independence period until the birth of the Fourth Republic in May 1999.

The period since 1999 has witnessed rejuvenation in the newspaper industry, and the relaunch of older newspaper publications. As political competition heats up, more titles are expected to be born, most of them as Adebawwi predicts, with short lifespan (Adebawwi, 2002a). He further states that the combined circulation of all newspapers in the country barely reaches half a million in a country of close to 120 million people. If the circulation figures of magazines and other publications were added to those of newspapers, the numbers barely hit the one million mark.

The Punch, a privately owned newspaper, is perhaps the most widely read newspaper, with a print run between sixty thousand and eighty thousand copies per day. The Guardian, a favorite of the intellectuals and respected for its independent, sober views, had a print run in

2001 of between fifty and sixty thousand copies per day (Olukotun, 2004a). Other newspapers such as the privately owned Nigerian Tribune, This Day, Post Express, the Vanguard, and the Comet, the Daily Times, and the New Nigerian do not do as well in terms of circulation when compared with Punch and The Guardian. The magazine market is dominated by three giants, namely, Tell Magazine, The News, and Newswatch, which have circulation figures of about one hundred thousand, eighty thousand, and fifty thousand, respectively (Olukotun, 2004a). Between 1999 and 2003 several prominent titles, such as the Concord, National Interest, Tempo (which survived underground during the Abacha dictatorship), the Anchor, Post Express, and Eko Today disappeared from the streets.

One genre of the newspapers that is little-reported is that of the vernacular newspapers. These have sprung up in recent years in an attempt to build on the success of Alaroye, whose circulation competes favorably with the most successful national dailies (Adebanwi, 2002a). Nigerian media largely uses English as its language of choice, although three other languages dubbed as representative of majority of country's linguistic diversity are used by a small number of mass media.

Thus far very little study has been done on the role the media has played thus far in the arena of development. While there have been calls from all quarters for the media to step up to its role as Fourth Estate of the Realm, there is little evidence to show how the Nigerian mass media, the press included, have fared thus far. The most relevant and up-to-date work that does look at this is Ayo Olukotun's assessment of the media's function of government watchdog in the Fourth Republic (Olukotun, 2004a). He provides a strong basis for looking at the print press:

“The print media are emphasised because, although circulation of newspapers and magazines has dwindled considerably in the last decade, they continue to exercise considerable influence on policymaking. Also, the political nature of the [N]igerian press, dating back to the nationalist struggle, contrasts with the growth of independent broadcasting, which began in the mid-1990s.”

(Olukotun, 2004a)

According to Olukotun (2004a), the Nigerian media has been a powerful influence in keeping the government and politicians accountable to the public. However, the results of his comparison of the media’s coverage of three national political scandals between 1999 and 2003, each involving key public officers from each of the nation’s three major ethnic groups also revealed that the degree of attention the media pay to these scandals was largely determined by the ethno-regional, political leanings and partisan affiliations of the mass media and those of the individuals involved. In most cases, a partisan newspaper or magazine is more reluctant to report on such scandals and when it does publish, it usually takes a sympathetic stance. For publications that had no such affiliations with the individuals involved, are only too ready to criticise and highlight the issues.

The media, it is well known, set agenda both by what they say and display and what they fail to say and display. Nigeria's media, which could be described as ethnically polarised and rather corrupt, has been the site for national debate as to what exactly, are the driving forces of the struggle of the Nigerian media for accountability and national cohesion in the Fourth Republic. The debate gained national prominence as a result of what was alleged by some to be a conspiracy of silence of the media located in Yorubaland regarding a scandal that broke

out in August 1999 over some of the claims made in the bio data of the Lagos State Governor, Chief Bola Tinubu submitted to the electoral authorities. In this instance, the claim made by the Governor to have attended the University of Chicago was found to be untrue, even though it was confirmed that he had actually attended a university in Chicago (Olukotun 2000b). According to the findings in Olukotun's research, certain key newspapers and magazines along the Lagos-Ibadan axis were slow in joining the debate on the issue. When they did join in, their stance was perceived as largely biased in favour of the Governor. The argument made by critics of the media was that the same media that were so stubborn on the documentation controversy of Alhaji Salisu Buhari, speaker of the House of Representatives, and Chief Evans Enwerem, former Senate president, were ostentatiously silent over the inconsistencies in Tinubu's biodata³. Tinubu, being a Lagosian Yoruba, opened up the Ngbati media, which is situated in Western Nigeria, to charges of ethnic bias. At the heart of this controversy was the News magazine, which had championed the cleanup exercise that led to Salisu's downfall.

A content analysis of the News coverage of the Tinubu affair by Olukotun (2004a) corroborates this argument. All the five stories carried by the magazine on the subject were sympathetic to the Lagos State Governor, three of them overtly so. The position of the News on the subject was not helped by the fact that Tinubu is one of the proprietors of the magazine, having helped out with funds when the publication was forced underground during the Abacha years, a notion supported by interviews Olukotun conducted in February 2003

³ Alhaji Buhari had falsely claimed to have earned a degree at the University of Toronto. Chief Enwerem had forged a Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) result. Both were exposed by journalistic investigations by Tell Magazine, the same publication which sought to ignore the inconsistencies in Governor Tinubu's bio data.

with one member of the magazine's management (Olukotun, 2004a). Another member of the newspaper's management refuted any partisan or ethnic bias in the coverage of any of the issues, in a similar interview in Olukotun's research (Olukotun, 2004a), claiming that the difference in coverage was based on the weight and consequences of the inconsistencies.

One other key area of failing in the Nigerian media, noted by observers of the April 2003 elections from the European Union (EU), concerns the lack of balanced coverage of political candidates. The report faulted the state-owned media in particular for failing to live up to the responsibility of providing unbiased and impartial coverage of the electoral process, while also coming down on the private media for allowing commercial considerations to override their commitment to journalistic professionalism. The fact that these allegations were corroborated by domestic observers such as the Transition Monitoring Group and by some journalists serves to add weight to these accusations (Institute for Media and Society, 2003:1; Olukotun, 2004b).

2.10. Conclusion

Mass media in general, and the press in particular, play a crucial role in the social imagination of communities and the way that societies function as a result, whether it is through their commonsense representations of the more banal, mundane aspects of social practice or through their depictions of more exotic occurrences. Especially central to this role is the fact that they describe a view of the world and then prescribe the best way to navigate it. When one considers that no individual has much of a chance of truly making sense of, or experiencing all aspects of objective reality, the news media with their ability to access, provide and help simplify complicated information, occupy a privileged position in society.

Certainly, our appraisal of Nigeria's press history reveals the importance of these in reshaping the society in historical moments such as the anti-colonialist movement in the early to mid-twentieth century and more recently with the effort to establish democracy. However, it is also apparent that ownership and control of the press in Nigeria is usually in the hands of the politico-economic elite, the "Big men" as Berman (1998) described this class. If this is the case, then it is reasonable to expect that the press function as an extension of this group's hegemony. More importantly and worryingly, is the fact that the press might also not function as an adequate representative of non-elite interests.

Chapter Three

Journalism as Discursive Practice

3.1. Introduction

Machin and Van Leeuwen (2004, and 2006) illustrate how even supposedly generic media formats are adapted so that they work effectively in more localised contexts. Understandably, there are different perspectives on what broadly influences journalistic practice. Siebert et al (1963)'s classic model of four different types of news media or press systems for instance, is approached from a political-economic systems perspective, with them presenting an argument that local expressions of journalism are essentially politically controlled. Ostini and Ostini (2002) and Nerone (1995) on the other hand, argue that journalistic product is cultural as well and as such in reality, journalists negotiate the line between policy control and professional constraints.

With this in mind, this section aims to look closely at journalistic practice. Initially, we will anatomically analyse journalism to look at its features, as well as the principles which would categorise any text as a piece of journalism. We will also examine the concept of objectivity, one which is rather central to journalism studies and practice.

3.2. Defining Journalism

In looking at journalism, we must first start with attempting to define what it is. Chalaby (1998) speaks of journalism as a discursive field, a system for constructing and conscripting knowledge, developed in response to socio-economic situations. Using discourse in the sense that Fairclough (1989) does, one might say that journalism then, is a field that deals with the

production and reflection of representations of the world, based on experience and fact. Fairclough's idea on discourse would also suggest that journalism's products forms part of the world that it seeks to represent. Using the analogy of the blind men and the elephant, journalism would be likened to any of the parts that the blind men touched in trying to figure out what it was they were trying to describe. Perhaps the simplest way of defining journalism which captures the above points, is that it "is an invention or a form of expression used to report and comment in the public media on the events and ideas of the here and now" (Adam, 1993: p. 11). This definition given by Adam definition connotes at least five elements or characteristics of the concept:

- Journalism is a form of expression that is created
- Journalism entails the reporting of ideas and events;
- Journalism does not merely report on ideas and events, but also comments on them;
- The reports and their interpretation must be publicly circulated; and
- Journalism deals with the here and now.

We will look at each of these elements, saving the idea of invention, for last so that more time could be spent discussing it at greater length. The idea of journalism and its products being a product of not just human imagination, but also of other socio-cultural factors that influence and are influenced by it, is perhaps the most central theme to this discussion.

Journalism basically entails reporting on ideas and events as they occur. These would range from the collecting and representation of information on topics that may vary from what may be perceived as more related to the day to day, or as Anderson (2006) terms them “banal” occurrences, to what may be considered as the more exotic, or isolated incidences in history.

Whatever else journalism may be, with evolution into its present form largely originating in the United States and Britain (Chalaby, 1998) before spreading across the globe, it is firstly the product of reporting, the gathering and portrayal of human experience and thought selected from what Llewellyn called the “perceptive mass of behaviour” (As cited in Adam, 1993). Even when looking at how it has evolved in other parts of the world, it is evident that journalism has always been about reporting and recording events and ideas (Bourgault, 1995).

Journalism is not only defined by reporting however, as it also requires those involved in the production process to edit and package news. Much of the raw data gathered during the recording stage is not what is disseminated as finished product. During the gathering and editorialising stages, the journalists, and I use this term here loosely to include editors, proofreaders and everyone else involved in the production of news, requires a conferral of judgments on the topics and actors (McDevitt et al, 2002; Deuze, 2005). Each item that goes to form the content that is disseminated through any journalistic medium involves at some, if not all stages, assigning some degree of significance to the actors and their actions, whether such judgment is conscious or not. So journalism involves the application of the values we use to judge things, and those values are reflected in the selection of subjects and in the judgments conferred by journalists on how well the world they reveal is working. As is

evidenced in research by Machin and Mayr (2007), journalists through the choice of words and imagery to capture during the reporting stage and even during editing, assess not just events and ideas, but also the social actors who play a role in an event or hold any given idea. Simply put the concept and practice of journalism embraces and even makes room for “notions of commentary, judgment, and criticism” (Adam, 1993: p. 11). This immediately raises the question of objectivity and subjectivity in news production, which will be treated later on in this section.

Journalism is public in its nature. Undeniably, there is a distinction between what is specialised or private, and what is conceived for public consumption. There is certainly a distinction theoretically between public and private spaces (Habermas, 1989; Habermas, 1992; Keane, 1998; Cunningham and Sinclair, 2001). Journalism, along with novels, short stories, films, and speeches is created for public consumption, as compared to letters, emails, diaries or journals that are more private in nature. As a result, features like format, vocabulary, style and imagery are used to distinguish journalistic content and make it different from content meant for private or specific sphere or sphericules. Even its tone and language exude *publicness*. However it also serves to define and reinforce what is appropriate for public discussion (Schudson, 2000) for instance through being unequivocal, by an absence of references that are meant only for the private sphere, and by the limited usage, if at all present, of jargon that has meaning only within less public fields (Adam, 1993).

If journalism is marked by its public character, it is marked equally by its correlation with the here and now. Michael Oakeshott, a British philosopher, once defined “the world of history [as] the real world as a whole comprehended under the category of the past” (As cited in Adam, 1993). On the other hand, the world of journalism is fixated with contemporary “the

real world,” to borrow Oakeshott’s term or more accurately, as close to the current as possible. Deuze (2005) states that journalists work in an accelerated sense of time, striving to ensure that the reports that become public are delivered with the smallest gap between the time of occurrence and the time it gets disseminated.

So, an introductory definition of journalism contains the essential aspects of reporting, critiquing, situation within public domain, and a strong correlation with the contemporaneous. These elements could be regarded as straightforward, being based on what is observed from a rather common perspective of journalism in practice. We will now turn to the first element of the original definition, which is the quality of journalism being an invented form of expression.

3.3. Journalism as a Product of Individual and Social Imagination (s)

Journalism is an invented concept and practice. From this understanding, this would mean that journalism is a creation in both an individual as well as in a larger, cultural sense. It is a form of expression in which the imaginative capacities both of individuals and of a cultures or societies are revealed. The idea here is that although individual journalists express their individuality as it were, in journalism, they speak through a cultural form. As Adam (1993) suggests, although journalism is a social and human invention, this does not mean that it is works with the immaterial. Journalism, after all, is about the here and now and as such, deals with recording and representing occurrences and ideas that are seen and experienced in the world that can be perceived with the senses (Mills, 1957; Collingwood, 1959; Frye, 1980 and Oakeshott, 1959).

This idea of imagination being a parent of journalism, although appearing to be at odds with all that journalism stands for, does make sense, especially when we accept that it (journalism) is a product of human interaction with themselves and with everything external to them. Oakeshott says that the self is activity and this activity is “imagining: the self making and recognizing images.... So the not-self is composed of images, many of them: trees, chewing gum, cigarette butts, department stores, gas stations, dogs, cats, students, and colleagues” (1978:p. 32). In order to see ourselves, he argues, like Giddens (1990) that human beings and by extension social groups form images, and then through language or other forms of representation we create what he calls arrest (s) in experience. This activity, he says, is basic, and by this he means there is nothing that functions as a premise for it. As such, most sophisticated forms of representation like art and science are also expressions of this type of primordial activity. As he notes and is obvious on close examination, each of these is a complex system that has established methods on what is originally a primitive activity. However, through identification and labelling of what is external to the self, each individual is able to identify what they are and are not. Such activity as research has revealed, is part of social and intrapersonal interaction (Douglas, 1966).

Summarily, all forms of expression, not excluding the journalistic which serves the basis for this thesis, are simply methods human beings use to perceive and understand the world. For those of us that study the media generally and journalism practice in particular, the focus of interest is principally on how journalism and its elements frame experience and form models for which people could then use to navigate the complexities of social interaction. This is not very different from how academics produce evidence and theories which serve as framework for other research. Journalism’s products, processes and systems are all the results of the

imaginings and experiences of an individual or group of individuals. This means that the transfer of any perspective of the world from one human being to another through any story, from a journalist to an audience, in this case produces the forms of “public consciousness” (Adam, 1993) that make socialised existence possible. It establishes and defines models of the world that we all use in just getting on with things (Giddens, 1990; Fairclough, 1989).

If we looked at the styles and techniques used in producing what we understand as journalism and this suggests, as noted above, that there is more to journalism than simply a display of the creative abilities of single journalists. There are also styles to choose from or narrative procedures to adopt, and all of these belong to this broadly conceived form of expression we call journalism. The elements and norms of the practice are results of past journalistic experience, and although they must be reproduced and reconceived every time a journalist writes, the working journalist is never working in isolation from society. He or she is constantly shaping and contributing new experiences to established forms (Deuze, 2005).

While the properties of this expressive form will be discussed in detail, it is worth mentioning here that as detailed in the review of Nigerian print media history, it is worthy of note that the history of journalism as we now understand and know it while perhaps beginning in the early seventeenth century in Europe’s cities- particularly in London, where so-called *corantos* were first published in 1621 (Frank, 1961)- followed a different socio-historically defined path in other parts of the world. Chalaby (1996) advocates that it is an Anglo-American concept developed in the later part of the 19th Century. Whatever its non-African origins, for Africa, the modernisation of journalism began in the mid-eighteenth century (Omu, 1976) and even then, its diffusion and development in different parts of the continent was not uniform.

Certainly, there were systems for communicating and constructing the world that fall broadly into our definition of journalism (Bourgault, 1995). Perhaps more importantly, it is necessary to highlight the fact that these took place locally. However, as many African media histories show, the presence of Europeans missionaries, adventurers and entrepreneurs on the continent from the 16th century, as well as the intensification of the European colonial project from the later part of the 19th century were in no small way responsible for the progression of journalism on the continent. As such, both local and global events and trends were and still are big determinants in the defining and shaping of journalistic practice, aside from its development. Certainly it is possible, although it is a complex task, to map the evolution of the journalistic form from that time by following initially the contents of mass media (in this case newspapers) and tracing reportorial, narrative, and analytical methods through to the present day.

This raises the matter of the interpretation of journalism in social context. If journalistic practice is a product of the synthesis of experience, with its evolution and methodology being fashioned by social norms and rules, then this suggests that the way its practice might vary indeed to varying extents as social contexts change. While the idea and definitions of journalism might be globally normalised and naturalised, systems (Held, 1995) and formats (Machin and Van Leeuwen, 2006) and might I add, the way it is put into practice varies from locale to locale. The models of media systems proposed by Siebert et al (1963), Nerone (1995) and Ostini and Ostini (2002), which were referred to in the introduction, serve to illustrate this. While the definition for journalism might be the same, economic, political and technological factors do prescribe and constrain its expression in local settings. Olukotun (2000b) for instance, illustrates about how economic and political and socio-cultural

circumstances influence the reporting and analysis of national scandal in the Nigerian context. Tomaselli (2003) argues that cultural constraints tied to the notion of respect in African socio-cultural contexts often pose a problem for journalists when it comes to critiquing the actions of certain personalities, particularly those in public office. McQuail (2005) discusses how the introduction of newer forms of technology changes not only existing forms of journalism, but also the audiences and how they act. As these are not the focus of this research, we will not delve into much more discussion on these matters.

Journalists work under varying conditions as illustrated above. For one thing, some have much more time than others, although time pressure is always a factor that is universal to journalism. Access to technologies differs across organisations and societies. Additionally, the imaginative gifts of journalists are unequal just as the imaginative gifts of poets and novelists, film-makers and scientists are. As one might expect, some journalists are much more creative than others. Some are like artists, who reinvent practices that are already in place in the field; and some are more inclined to reproduce the status quo, not really making any changes (Adam, 1993). However, all are imaginative in the sense with which Oakeshott (1959) uses the word and they express their experiences of the world within the framework of journalism's social constraints.

To sum it up, journalistic practice, no matter how complicated, requires individuals to synthesise experience and deliver their interpretation of it to other individuals. Thus, journalism and its offspring may be thought of whether in detail or in their various manifestations as single products of the imaginations of single individuals. That said, it is also a collective creation in a broader sense, of the social. Simply put, it is a form of expression, with models which are situated within cultures and with principles that have been

socially invented and developed and resultantly, formed the basis for the way it operates. In other words, it is a form of expression that, along with other public forms of expression forms part of the society's cache of methods for creating societal scripts. It is this aspect of journalism being socio-cultural in particular that informs the work of every journalist, becoming more or less entrenched in their personal value systems and, correspondingly, in the organisational policies of any and every media organisation.

3.4. Producing Journalism

As mentioned previously, journalism is a form of expression. "Form" in this context is used in the more generic sense referring simply to a type or class of thing that has its own internal constitution and sets of functions that are distinct from the internal structures and functions of other types (Adam, 1993). While in poetry, there are sonnets, epics, limericks, and free verse; in journalism, there are news stories, sidebars, editorials, news features, backgrounders, think pieces, columns, narrative documentaries, and reviews. Although this thesis looks at print media, specifically newspapers, in this section, we will not classify journalism by the channels used, especially since our primary focus is to define journalism in terms of what it is rather than by the medium or media through which it is circulated. Certainly, the medium impacts on the message as McLuhan (1964) demonstrate, but that argument will not play much of a role at this stage. It is worth mentioning too that the audience and how they respond is not really central at this point either.

As Adam (1993) opines, there are minimally five elements or principles of design in any piece of journalism that together mark and define it, although journalism may share some of these with other forms of expression and although the elements may be unequally represented in individual pieces. As discourse media texts are discursive, the elements in any media text reveal the ideologies that have guided its production. It would be possible to write a full essay and then some on each of these elements or indeed on their underlying principles and certainly, this would be not be without merit. Here though, these will be discussed briefly in order to provide a relatively simplified overview. As Adam (1993) states, journalism is comprised of distinctive principles embodied in the following rudiments:

- Of news,
- Of reporting or evidence-gathering,
- Of language,
- Of narration, and
- Of meaning.

3.4.1. News: A Shift in the State of Things

At the core of what we call news are journalistic conceptions of events, time, and subject matter. That is, journalism is concerned with things that take place in relatively contemporary timeframes. Often these events are defined narrowly and in terms of conflict or, of the prominence of the major actors or the consequences for individuals in society (Mencher, 1977). For instance, a dog biting a man might not be considered newsworthy, since it is commonplace for dogs to bite people. However, something absurd or extreme such as a man biting a dog or a dog mauling an infant, would be adjudged as newsworthy. To sum it up, the

greater the consequences or the odder an occurrence, the higher the news value. However, the starting point for journalism is always an event, regardless of the system of values that are used to decide its significance and regardless of the extent of meaning that we may give to the notion of a given event.

The terms “event” and “occurrence” are not used here in the usual sense, where they simply refer to a happenstance or its possibility. There are boundaries to the subjects and thereby to the events that fall within the scope of journalism. A journalist normally stops at the boundary that separates fact from fiction. The journalist’s remit is with what is apparent and provable rather than what is hidden, or as Adams (1993) put it, the objective rather than the subjective. As he explains, news represents a shift or change in the state of the objective world, and a news story is simply an investigation into, as well as an attempt to understand, the implication of this new objective world for individuals and society.

3.4.2. Reporting: Facts and Information

Just as journalism cannot exist without news, it is equally impossible to imagine it without reporting. However again, as pointed out above in our discussion on news, journalism is delimited in what can be reported. As a result, journalists are concerned with facts and information, and they tend to follow, however crudely and randomly, some kind of procedure for getting at the facts. They construct a picture of actuality and information. As Stone has observed, a writer, in this case, a journalist assumes, “above all, the responsibility to understand.” (1988: p. 71). There are many ways to achieve understanding of reality and certainly different approaches are adopted across different disciplines and fields of knowledge. Hersey puts it this way:

“I will assert that there is one sacred rule of journalism. The writer must not invent...The ethics of journalism... must be based on the simple truth that every journalist knows the difference between the distortion that comes from subtracting observed data and the distortion that comes from adding invented data.”

(Hersey, 1986: p. 290)

Hersey’s use of the verb “observe” best underpins the point that observation is a central device of the reporter, one that the British critic John Carey makes the principle of inclusion in his book *The Faber Book of Reportage*. He notes in that eyewitness observation of events principally, serves to authenticate any news that is presented as journalistic (Carey, 1987: p. XXIX). There is arguably, something to be said for such a statement. While much of what is rich and authoritative in journalistic output is undeniably the product of such observation, as Adam (1993) points out, much of what is disseminated by news media owes much to the analysis and summary of documents, whether published previously in newspapers and available on request from databases, or published in books and magazines, or broadcast on television and radio, or found in public records offices.

To sum it up, for the journalist, what can be picked up with the five senses is the basis for the authority with which they produce and give a news report. A case in point might be the survey research published in newspapers on social issues deemed relevant. The random selection of interviewees and the preparation of questionnaires represent, in a sense, add-ons in reporting methods to the interview. Acts of observation, the analysis of documents, and interviewing in journalism are intended to provide authoritative facts. They represent the operations of the principle of reporting, which is that any statement made must be a statement

of fact, one which could be made with confidence. In journalism, regardless of what some journalists might say or do, the principle requires that facts are authoritative. As John Hersey has said, “In fiction, the writer’s voice matters; in reporting, the writer’s authority matters” (1986: p. 308). In other words, a journalist can hold whatever personal opinions the individual chooses, but he or she can only report on what they know and can prove to be facts.

3.4.3. Language: The Plain Style

Journalism has its own style or voice, which is recognisable and serves to identify it for what it is. This journalistic styling otherwise referred to as “journalese”, has been defined by Webster’s New World Dictionary as “a style of writing and diction characteristic of many newspapers, magazines, etc”. John Carey has said, that the “power of language to confront us with the vivid, the frightening or the unaccustomed is equalled only by its opposite — the power of language to muffle any such alarms.” (Carey, 1986: p. XXXI). Fairclough (1989) talks about language generally as having the power to determine what is normal and natural, giving models for engaging and changing the world. Both views point to the fact that there is a tension among the limitless possibilities that language can perform. However, it is also constrained by the circumstances within which it is used.

For instance, there is a tension between the need for journalism to be economically viable as a business organisation and for it to present the facts as they simply are. That is, any news produced must be able to return a profit on whatever finance has been put into its production process but it also has a more basic responsibility to provide a judicious reading of the day’s events. Adams (1993) posits that the need to sell inclines the use of language to embellish the

facts, while still ensuring that any such exaggerations do not cross the line between fact and fiction; the need for substance might incline the application of language that results is drab and plain with brevity and word-picking being used to a fault. Good journalism would be able to reconcile the differences between both obligations where possible within the scope set by circumstance.

Adam (1993) states that the limits are chiefly imposed by the public i.e. the audience, not just in terms of the choice of what content to disseminate, but also in the way content is put together. Whatever else might be said about the language of journalism, it is fair to say that it is disciplined by its public and empirical character. Its vocabulary has to be one which is fit for public discussion. While it may represent information, concepts and ideas which are more private or specialised, this must always been done using language that is public and not the vocabulary of private or specialised spheres. It must always use vocabulary that can be understood by its audience. In other words, journalistic production strives to work within the framework of what is conventional in public interaction.

Hugh Kenner sums up these attributes by calling them together “the plain style.” (Kenner, 1990: p. 189). However, plainness should not be construed to mean that a journalistic text is produced with minimal deliberation. Like the other forms of expression, journalism is a contrivance and as such requires effort and great skill. The key merit to the inherent simplicity is that it is trustworthy. “The plain style,” Kenner notes, “seems to be announcing at every phrase its acquiescence to the check of experience and nameable things” (1990: p.187) and like the use of documented and provable facts, adds to establish journalism as a reliable social knowledge resource.

3.4.4. Journalism as Narrative

What applies to language applies equally to the application of the narrative principle in journalism. But as with linguistic principles, there is more to the matter than meets the eye. To speak of narrative is to speak, as Scholes and Kellogg (1966) and Bourgault (1995) opine, of a story and a storyteller. This conceptualisation of narrative is not unique to western journalism although it does not necessarily operate in the same way in every journalistic system. Bourgault (1995) for instance illustrates that in a lot of African societies, not excluding those of Nigeria which will be principle in the final thesis, the journalist still functions in the way a storyteller or town-crier in villages does. Unlike the rural counterpart (the town-crier) who can blur the lines of what is real and what is not, the urban journalist is required to observe the tenets of reporting and commenting only on what has observed.

In every case the journalist-narrator is a presence guiding the audience through a story. He or she shows, tells, and explains using the same set of devices that storytellers use): plot, characterisation, action, dialogue, sequencing, dramatisation, causation, myth, metaphor, and explanation (Adam, 1993; Bourgault, 1995). This may be understood simply by considering what all newspaper editors conventionally require in stories submitted by their reporters. They require, five W's and one H — a who, a what, a where, a when, a why and a how. The who guides the writer to construct characters, the what to action, the where to sites, the when to a time line, and the why to motive or meaning. The how, it could be suggested, based on work by Machin and Mayr (2007) serves to help the journalist evaluate and assess the narrative's characters, their actions, and their role in the story. The characters may exist simply as names attached to institutions what James Ettema and Theodore Glasser call "authorised knowers" (1985: p. 188) or as in the case of Machin and Mayr's research on the

construction of multicultural discourses (2007) carefully described individuals with clear voices, personalities, and physical shapes. These authorised knowers are used in authenticating not only information, but also in constructing social meanings and assigning values to ideological positions (Machin and Van Leeuwen, 2004, 2006). As research has shown, the actions described may be rendered in an abbreviated or sustained form, the sites only alluded to, and the motives barely canvassed. Regardless of how a story's details may be handled, the narrative generally works with the five Ws and single H.

True to its origins in nineteenth-century British West Africa, much of twentieth-century news journalism in the Anglophone Africa, much like its former colonial sponsor, retains elements of officialdom (Adam, 1993). The announcements from the government or the results of a criminal trial each turn the narrator in journalism into an official of some sort who functions as a town crier or herald once did, but now with a stylised, published, and routinised voice.

Events thus, are marked by stories, follow-ups, and commentaries in a bid to answer the general question of "what happened next?" (Adam, 1993: p. 35). Editorials serve to provide a summarised evaluation on what an organisation perceives as the key issues of the day. All the stories and sub-genres in news media fit together in meta-narratives about society's progress, however many hands are engaged in rendering the descriptions and interpretations, incomplete as they may seem at the time. James Carey (1987) for instance, has noted that it is useful to think of the newspaper as a syllabus to be judged, by how it follows a story day by day or month by month rather than by the character and substance of each story. This 'curriculum' that Carey speaks of expounds in detail and substance of a story to give a narrative.

It is fair, although debatable, to say that the operations of the principle of narrative are normally less complicated in newspaper journalism than they are in a non-journalistic, literary piece. The fact of journalism being a public discursive form predisposes it, in narrative terms, to simplicity and specificity. For example, efficiency, clarity and above all, a direct link with the immediate, are the principles that shape the construction of the hard news story. In narrative terms, the hard news story is comprised of actors, actions, and time sequences which depending on the medium, aside from many other factors, are not always given the added benefit of being complemented or supplemented by carefully drawn setting shots, scenes, character development, and suspenseful plot lines that one might find in a literary prose. However, one would be in error to assume journalism's narrative approaches as limited by the inverted pyramid. Between the inverted pyramid and the narrative documentary, a journalist may choose from many approaches (Adam, 1993) in the bid to negotiate social constraints, organisational policy and personal perspective (Ostini and Ostini, 2002; Nerone, 1995). While much of the journalistic output will be considered to be less developed from the perspective of anyone comparing the journalistic narrative with its literary counterpart, it is useful to consider that the short stories in newspapers and other news media are stories within unfolding stories, being especially navigated and constructed by reference to a meta-narrative that serves at a more general level to reveal a society's social history.

3.4.5. Journalism and the Construction of Meaning

A journalistic piece is not complete if it does not construct meaning. The study of all the major journalists and critics reveals a basic similarity (Adam, 1993). Each works out of intellectual systems that shape both what journalists see and how they see it. While perhaps

this is more obvious and even expected from those who are seen to critique and study the phenomenon/concept of journalism, it is possibly not as much when one takes practitioners into consideration. While we know that for instance, a journalist might be biased in coverage of news due to their experiences and backgrounds, there is not much of an allowance for the fact that journalists choose theoretical viewpoints which they use to construct meaning. This certainly raises the matter of objectivity and subjectivity in the reporting of news, which will be dealt with subsequently.

Adam (1993) suggests that journalists use many of the same sets of theories in meaning production as an academic in the social sciences or humanities might employ in conducting research. As he says:

“Typically, the systems contain conceptual templates that have been inscribed by such intellectual figures as John Stuart Mill, Max Weber, or Sigmund Freud. Sometimes they are grounded in the mythic and the metaphoric and can therefore be read more as literature than as social science. Thus, the operations of the principle of meaning in journalism vary according to who is writing and according to the explanatory or mythic systems that guide description and analysis.”

Adam (1993: p. 42)

Like all storytellers, journalists inscribe meaning on the facts and events they describe. The devices they use would inevitably vary from journalist to journalist. For the most part, journalists are most likely, not highly conscious of the explanatory techniques they use or in other words, the ideological standpoints that they unconsciously champion. In this vein,

James Carey has argued that while the answers to the how and the why of daily journalism are almost never apparent, daily journalists have nevertheless a fairly fixed view of the causes of human behaviour. “Because news is mainly about the doings and sayings of individuals,” he states, “why is usually answered by identifying the motives of those individuals.” (1987: p. 180). Rational motives are assumed to be the primary causes of behaviour. Missing from the picture is a consideration of causes that transcend individuals and their motives and reflect deeper in socio- cultural impulses.

Such wider theories are not always missing though. A comprehension of contemporary journalism that goes beyond merely looking at the texts, layouts and formats of the news pages like we are attempting to do in this thesis reveals that there is as much variation in the ideological ambit of journalists as there is in the minds of academics in social science, language or literature studies . Adam (1993) identifies four theories of human behaviour in order to illustrate how the principle of meaning functions in contemporary journalism, which will be briefly mentioned shortly.

A first type, the interpretative method James Carey has identified, is an example of rational individualism. It is a theory that reads the world in terms of individuals and their mainly rational calculations. There is a kinship between this theory and traditional utilitarianism, which sees that the rightness or wrongness of an individual’s actions could be determined by how much benefit it is to one’s interests. As such, Adam maintains that it should not be surprising that such a theory is present and maybe even dominant in what he calls “liberal-utilitarian culture” (1993: p. 38). In the world of journalism that Carey explores, human actors are possessed of conscious motives and purposes and human acts (social or not) can be

understood in light of them. Individual accounts of behaviour are taken at face value. Human beings do what they intend for the reasons that they give.

A second type could be described broadly and simply as sociological. In the sociological method, events and behaviour are explained primarily by looking at it in context of factors that are external to the individual. It sees the composition of the social world as distinct from the unique psychological composition of individuals. The method then, requires that the researcher measure individuals' actions by how much of an effect forces found primarily in the domain of social organization and power structures compelled them to act. In such a scenario individual actors are likely to be unaware, or to be falsely conscious, of the 'real' causes of their actions. Such a perspective would be described as Marxist in the social sciences.

The third, psychological approach shares some similarities with the first. It focuses on the individual however, it emphasizes the non-rational. The unconscious, which is the product of experience and discovered in the detail of biography, is regarded as the source of the impulses that govern much of behaviour. Individuals act out of unremembered psychic wounds that their current lives trigger and as such, may not be responsible for their behaviour. It has overtones of the Freudian approach, which might be seen as having currency in the field of psychology.

The fourth is cultural —and it is idealistic in the technical sense. In this cosmology, individuals are the embodiment of ideas and impulses that dwell in the culture. As in the sociological and the psychological, individuals are more reactors to social stimuli than they

are creators of their behaviour. However, their actions are not dictated so much by the society's organization or in an individual's psychic wounds, but in general social communication, norms, in discourse. In other words, people do what has been scripted in the everyday social norms and practices and they reproduce or resist these.

If there are dominant method in daily journalism for conferring meaning, the devices James Carey points to, in which causes and effects are read in terms of individuals possessed of motives acting more or less rationally arguably make for a good starting place. It is certainly possible, even highly probable that many journalists work in deeper and more 'complicated' intellectual frames and thus confer meaning on their subjects in richer and more persuasive ways than might initially be assumed.

3.5. Objectivity in Journalism

This paper has examined the anatomy of journalism in quite some detail. At various points in earlier parts, there seems to be an underlying idea that the journalist is always involved in the piece, whether by conscious or unconscious decision. This certainly raises the need to discuss the idea of the extent of journalist's involvement in the production of news.

Objectivity as a concept, is derived to a large extent, from the idea of news media as the "fourth estate" in democratic political contexts (Carey, 1993), and while initially forming a cornerstone for the ideology of journalists in liberal democracies (Lichtenberg, 2000) has become part of the universal ideals for measuring the effective of journalism in any society. This concept has been overwhelmingly adopted by journalists universally as one of the key defining features of their profession (Hackett, 1994; Rosen, 1993; Soloski, 1997). It is

however, widely debated in academics. The ideal of objectivity suggests that facts can be separated from opinion or value judgments, and that journalists can stand apart from the real-world events whose truth or meaning they transfer to the news audience by means of neutral language and competent reporting techniques (Hackett, 1994). The concept, of objectivity as an essential tool of the practice of journalism, also implies that journalists are turned into copying machines, merely recording what they perceive rather than analysing it as suggested by Phillips (cited in Soloski, 1997: p. 143). This suggests then that journalists ought to seek out the facts from all 'legitimate' sides of an issue and report the fact in an impartial and balanced way. How they are meant to do this though is not certain. This in itself raises the question of what makes a view legitimate, the answers of course leading back to the discussions made earlier about ownership and control, institutional policies and the backgrounds individual journalists aside from the fact of the social climates in question.

Objectivity as a defining tool of journalism's social practice has increasingly been called into question, perhaps because it is not clear how it would look in practice. Several arguments have been advanced against this position. For Hackett (1984), the challenges to the subjectivity/objectivity catch-22 are extensive and pivot on questions of evidence, methodology and epistemology. The challenges revolve around the problems of objectivity in practice - that the notion of neutrality is difficult given that news media unavoidably structure their representation of social and political events in ways that are not pre-conditioned in the events themselves, for various reasons (Hackett, 1994). The very process of 'decontextualising' events and 'reconceptualising' them in accordance with the 'news perspective' in the process of production entail the reshaping of news. It could further be contended that the symbols (linguistic or otherwise) that communicate and mediate social

events are inherently incapable of directly transmitting the supposedly basic meaning or truth of events without some modification. Neutral-value free language in which pure facts of the world could be recorded without prejudice is impossible (Morely in Hackett, 1984: 234). Merritt et al (1995) argue that asking journalists to be detached is the same thing as asking them to not provide commentary or criticism, without which news becomes simple raw data. Reality cannot be regarded simply as a given set of facts, but rather as the result of a particular way of constructing reality (Hall, 1982). The media thus define and not merely reproduce 'reality'. Schudson (2000) also raises critical views against the notion of objectivity in news production, arguing that news is a social construction and as such, makes little room for a journalist's detachment (during the production process) or value-neutrality as Deuze (2005) calls it.

It is, however, of importance to highlight that the concept of objectivity as a defining tool of the practice of journalism cannot necessarily be discarded as absolutely irrelevant, whatever its failings. Although it may not be possible for the practical version of objectivity to live up to its normative ideal, it was still a useful ideal for journalism to have. Rosen suggests that:

“With all its flaws [the concept of objectivity] still expresses certain deeply held and legitimate values [for journalists]: the notion of a disinterested truth, the wish to separate doing journalism from doing politics, the principled attempt to restrain...biases, looking at things from the other person's perspective.”

Rosen (1993: p. 53).

In the same line of thought, Lichtenberg (2000) argues that in so far as we aim to understand the world, the assumption of the existence and value of the ideal of objectivity is necessary. Perhaps the deepest dilemma about objectivity as a defining concept of journalism's social practice is what would otherwise replace it. The answer, according to Rosen (1993) lies in reconsidering journalistic perceptions of the concept of the social realities they represent. Journalists should cease to assume that everything is the natural, normal state of affairs which is fixed and rather see the world as something constantly open to reinvention. This would in turn lead to a new approach - public journalism," a theory and a practice that recognises the overriding importance of improving public life" (Rosen 1993: p. 49). This approach entails the redefinition of journalism's social practice through shunning the whole idea of neutrality on key aspects of public interest, for example, whether the political-economic system works or whether public life draws the attention of the audience. Objectivity, at least as a normative ideal, might still be a useful concept when divorced from the idea of neutrality. As journalists realise they cannot be neutral on matters of public concern, Rosen (1993) envisages the possibility of the emergence of a philosophy that would replace objectivity with something stronger. Others like Van Zoonen (1998) would argue that both subjectivity and objectivity are required in the making of news, especially as it is the personal analysis by journalists that help in the meaning making element of news. One can thus argue that despite its weaknesses, the concept of objectivity is essential as the bedrock for the birth of more effective concepts that would keep the role of journalists in check. In other words, every element that forms part of journalism, every piece that aspires to be considered a journalistic product and certainly the actors in the journalistic process must be willing to be subject to a regime where objectivity rules.

3.6. Conclusion

Journalism at its core is a social construction, one which is used by individuals and societies alike to express and build up a library providing guidelines on how to function. Journalism or more precisely, the “Journalistic Imagination,” (Adam, 1993: p. 45) is a crucial method of framing experience and forming the pictures of the world and models for individuals and society to use. Its principles are incorporated, more or less, in every journalist and in every journalistic institution. To a certain extent, it is also determines individual and social expectations and responses to it.

The principles that work to define and mark every piece of journalism as well as the place of objectivity in journalistic practice have been looked at. These principles are universal in a sense, so that all journalists and societies at large, regardless of socio-cultural background, use them principles as a standard for measuring their performance. In turn, they are used in assessing and categorising societies on a larger scale. However, it is also clear that each of these conventions is understood and operationalised differently by different individuals and different institutions and in different societal contexts.

Those who practice journalism hold unique positions as narrators and meaning producers, building societal knowledge and functioning as record keepers as it were. Of course, their personal input is always somewhat constrained by wider societal limits. This fact is particularly pertinent to any analysis on national logic that is done in this treatise, because it at the very least means that a knowledge of wider social contexts is important for understanding why the Nigerian nation would be constructed and represented the way it is in specific texts. It would also help in highlighting any instances were ideology or social

scripting do not fall in line with major trends within certain milieu. For an analysis of Nigerian national logic, understanding the principles and social constraints under which journalism was practiced at various points in history should translate to a greater understanding of the wider conventions that governed the constructions of certain meanings of the nation and also the reasons for any identifiable patterns or trends present in the discourses.

Chapter Four

Nation and National Identity

4.1. Introduction: Approaching Nation and Nationality

In communication theory, not unlike much of social theory, nation has been conceptualised as a space within which social interaction occurs or as a level of social organisation, which acts as a go-between for the local and the global (Wiley, 2004). Consequently, it plays a major role in the way we think about the way societies, social aspects and people operate. Thinking in terms of both research and social practice, it serves as a fundamental point of reference whereby structures, processes and identities could be defined, so that we speak not only of the local and global as mentioned already, but also of international, transnational, etc.

What is a nation though? Kellas (1991) defines the concept of nation as “a group of people who consider themselves as a community bound together by ties of history, culture and common ancestry. Nations have “objective” characteristics which may include a territory, a language, a religion or common descent (though not all of these are always present) and “subjective” characteristics, essentially a people’s awareness of its nationality and affection for it.”

Nations are political (Anderson, 1991, 2006; Billig, 1995), cultural (Hall, 1997) and mental constructs (Wodak et al, 1999) which are distinguished more by imagined commonalities to a community than by any tangible “authenticity” (Anderson, 2006). This does not mean that nations are figments of the imagination, pure objects of fantasy. After all, in everyday society people authenticate nations as geo-political or cultural space to which they are indigenous.

When we say that nation is invented, this is meant in the sense that the meanings ascribed to the commonalities shared by individuals which serve to create and reinforce distinct nations is largely the result of human imaginings of difference and sameness. This perhaps is why the term nation has different contexts of usage. As such, the term nation could be used to refer to nation-states which are created and bound together through the use of political tools such as citizenship, electoral rights and duties, the paying of taxes, etc. Nation could also refer to groups defined more by a combination of ethno-cultural ties of ancestry, history and language such as the Yoruba groups of West Africa or the Jewish nation.

In the context of this study, the concept of the nation is taken from a multi-dimensional perspective which centres on the identification of social subjects. This work speaks then of the meanings attributed to a territory, their people, their history, etc. vis-à-vis any others. This is what Anderson (2006) refers to as an “imagined community”, which is built on biographies with history and with a shared socio-cultural tradition. However, it must be recognised that every lived identity must have attributive aspects, if it is viewed in relation to the Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of “habitus”. Social identities, more specifically those of national identity, are symbolic manifestations of networks of social belonging; social categories through which individuals assimilate the social representations and practices of the groups they perceive themselves as belonging to (Valenzuela-Arce, 2000: p.32, cited in Sanchez-Ruiz, 2000).

Individuals build identities with references to various levels of proximity: from the closest, individual identity (Mead, 1967), running through other levels of social identifications, such as family, neighbourhood and other intermediate and larger groups and territories (Safa, 2000; Jimenez, 2000, both cited in Sanchez-Ruiz 2000; Evan-Pritchard, 1937). Central to this analysis are the social representations of higher socio-territorial levels which constitute imagined communities: as long as we cannot know directly the landscapes of the territory, nor its residents, but they can be symbolically identified in the collective imaginary. In this case, the imaginary is the multi-ethnic Nigerian nation-state.

Various identity levels co-exist and interact. They are not mutually exclusive, although at certain points each might seem to compete for some kind of dominance. Stuart Hall (1997) has noted that identities are fragmented and fractured, never singular but multiply constructed across different, often overlapping and opposed discourse, practices and positions. Such co-existence of levels of identity allows the possibility of multiple cultural identities in one national, regional or local territory, that is, a “multi-cultural riddle” (Bauman, 2001). Identity then cannot be thought of as the expression of a unique, homogenous, perfectly discernible and coherent culture. Every social culture is in a state of permanent flux, so that for example, the identifications, experiences and perceptions of being “Nigerian” during the period of colonialism would not be the same as those today. The same could be said with regards to any Nigerian generation and its identities at the multiple levels and dimensions mentioned previously. However, identities are still rather fixed and whether or not their meanings changes with time.

4.2. Nation-States and the Question of Legitimacy

Nation and national identity are constructed in a wide variety of ways. As Smith (1981) posits, a nation requires a strong mythology which is concocted and reinforced by ingredients including but not restricted to the following:

- A fixed homeland (current or historical)
- High autonomy
- Hostile surroundings = “they”
- Memories of battles
- Sacred centres
- Languages and scripts
- Special customs
- Historical records and thinking

While Ernest Renan (1990) does not disagree with this assessment, he does point out that there is no singular defining characteristic which grants any group of people or particular place national status. Instead, he posits that nations are formed when a group of people give legitimacy to a particular version of history and having done so, “decide” to continue with common life. As he argues, no nation ever has any real interest in annexing or holding a people against their will. The wish for the existence and membership of a particular national community is, “all in all, the sole legitimate criterion, the one to which one must always return” (Renan, 1990). Antonio Gramsci (1971) and Louis Althusser (1971) disagree with this view however, particularly when discussing the nation-state. They hold that the state make use of coercive measures to secure and maintain its dominance. In a highly influential essay, Althusser reasons that in addition to the use of Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), to

coerce compliance to prescribed norms and practices, Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) is also used to normalise and naturalise the dominance of the state and its human actors. Gramsci (1971) refers to the ideological dominance this way as hegemony.

Billig (1995) suggests that it is the representation of habitual experiences, compared to more 'exotic' experiences, which are key to normalising and naturalising nationalist ideology, and more importantly, to produce national awareness. He further states that the media play a major role in this. For instance, reports on the news, the weather forecast or even the airing of global sporting events like the Olympics, World Cup, etc. require an acceptance of the nation as a legitimate, natural and normal expression of identity. The discourses in the media as illustrated above are not just representations of social reality. They constitute social practice (Wodak and Fairclough, 1997) and like much of the non-discursive practices that take place in everyday life, contribute to the construction of the nation and its attending community (Wodak et al, 1999; Billig, 1995). The structures, practices and products of the media help to construct and reflect nationalist ideology in society.

The nation could be perceived as a natural order of things, an ontologically grounded arrangement of the world. For those adopting a critical approach, as is the case in this study, the nation is a historical construct, one which also relies very heavily on hegemonic processes to forge and reinforce it. Anderson (2006) for instance, posits that the nation is an "imagined community". His argument is not so much that nations do not exist, but rather that they are realised through people's imagining of a set of people who share commonalities based on certain criteria, rather than a natural ordering of things. In line with this argument, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) demonstrate that nation is an "invented tradition", one that is

constructed through the use of norms and customs (social practices), which are then used to naturalise and essentialise the idea of a group of people who are a nation through their participation in a particular set of practices. The nation-state has also been demonstrated to be a modern means of centralising political authority, education and capitalism (Gellner, 1983), facilitated by the expanse in communication and transportation technologies (Carey, 1988). The concept we understand as the nation, Smith (1995) has argued, is also a reworking of pre-modern ethnic identities. Hence, we should find in many contemporary nation-states that there are links to pre-existing social formations. Postcolonial nation-states however, are an exception to this way of understanding the development of the concept. These are largely the products of the imperialist projects of European states, so that modern African states are not necessarily revamps of pre-colonial forms of identification on the continent. Instead, they should be conceptualised and understood differently.

Based on the above, there follows disagreement among critics of the nation on whether or not it is a modernist phenomenon, the inevitable by-product of the development of the modern state and the industrialisation of mass media on one hand (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983), or a much older phenomenon that has been transformed rather than created by modern political and economic forces and so are more deeply rooted (Smith, 1995). Despite these differences in understanding and defining the concept, it serves as an *a priori*, an assumed reality and forms the unit of analysis in much of the critical approaches to it in research, so that in a sense the deconstruction of nation and nationality does not render it redundant. Rather, the assumed definitions of the object of study as nation, answers the question of whether it exists or not, even before it is asked (Wiley, 2004).

The view of the nation as a historical construct is one which has filtered into Cultural Studies so that now even in the area of Communication theory, we see the naturalised accounts of national societies and cultures being questioned and critically analysed in light of cultural and political practices, as well as in terms of economic and technological transformations through which national spaces and entities are formed, rather than taking them for granted. For instance, James Carey focuses on how the construction of national space in the United States of America is by no small way dependent upon the historical development of communication and transportation technologies (Carey, 1988, 1997), so that what was resulted through the consolidation of a national system of regular communication and transport (in this case, railroads and telegraphs) was the infrastructure through which a national community of politics and commerce could and was constructed (Carey, 1997: p. 322). This as Wiley posits, gives birth to a national space that emerges dialectically as culture shapes policy, policy shapes infrastructural development and infrastructure shapes culture, a cycle for the construction and reconstruction of national practice. Wiley (2004), points out that within contemporary times we see multinational and international bodies, and national governments facilitating the role of forces outside the nation-state in shaping and building the national. What happens now is a situation where “national” products and culture are increasingly transnationalised and meshed (Miller, 1996).

This however, is not a recent phenomenon. Nations have always been constructed in relation to another on which their cultural, economic and political social spaces have relied on for meaning and coherence. Thinking of this in terms of the imperial project, as Hall (1997: p. 48) illustrates, the forms of citizenship that have been historically possible both in the colonies and in Europe, would have been unattainable without the migration of labour and the

production of knowledge, which were used to manage these. Carey (1988) in describing the construction of the US speaks of the use of Asian and African manpower in constructing the rail networks that connected the territory. Chalaby (2000) illustrates how the evolution of print journalism as a discursive field, a profession and a business, was parallel to the development of nations on the Anglo-American axis. Similarly, Martin Conboy's work on the construction of British nationalism in the tabloid press also helps to illustrate that multiple versions of the national history of any nation could be constructed and available at any particular point (see Conboy, 2002, 2006). Thus, it is impossible to fully understand the historical construction of any particular "national space" (Wiley, 2004) without fully examining how it is connected to and dependent on other contexts and broader external factors.

4.3. Analysing the Logic of Nationality

As we have seen in the above discussion, the nation continues to serve as key unit for analysis so that transnational flows still require the concept of nation, despite the increased complexity and velocity of social flows seemingly without it. As Wiley (2004) states, nation is just a label for a scale for social interaction and flows out of many i.e. local, global, and regional. Thus, it is really a way for mapping social networks, "forces, relations and consequences that give a cultural event or practice its value or effectivity" (Wiley, 2004).

How does one look at it though? Grossberg (1996b) suggests that one way to do this is to not only acknowledge the background of a particular cultural event or practice, but to also critically examine the structures and processes that define that context (p 54, 56-57). This contextualist approach would be undoubtedly complicated, due to the fact that the relevant

context of an event would be definable so that predetermined categories could not be used. Instead, the form and extent of an event's impact must be apprehended during the course of the analysis, as one tries to ascertain which forces and relations are relevant to structuring it. However, relevance could only be determined in relation to a specific political or theoretical position (Kadmon, 2001; Bekalu, 2006). Furthermore, the analyst is always part of the context so that mapping is not only a representational practice, but also one of intervention (Wiley, 2004). However, it is this sort of in-depth approach that allows the revelation of and redefinition of articulations that are otherwise not always apparent (Grossberg, 1996b).

Contextualism allows for looking at the nation not as a clearly defined, distinct contiguous and continuous space, but rather as a fundamentally fractal, polythetic, complex unit, one which is to all intents and purposes, comprised of overlapping cultural forms (Appadurai, 1990: p.20). Morley and Robins (1995) for instance, examined the nation within the framework of regional networks, critically examining the articulations of citizenship and belonging on the multiple overlapping levels. Morris (1992) also characterises the nation-state as a (re) workable context, an articulation of various flows i.e. global, local, regional. As such, nation should not be approached as a primordial way of social categorisation; neither should it be 'imagined' in isolation from a broader context of power and culture. Bringing it closer to home, in terms of media theory, Hay (1992) demonstrates that national territory could be mapped using the spread of modern mass media forms, as well as the broader 'assemblage' of institutional, political and economic flows and practices embedded in broader social context. As a result, while a space might be constructed as national, the sites and practices which engender that space might not necessarily be so, or even controlled by the notion of the national, or "national logics" (Wiley, 2004). This view certainly makes

room for looking at hybridity and intra-nationality, specifically helping to understand how and why the sense of national belonging could be stronger or weaker within the same geospatial area. It also allows us understand that we might and should find different interpretations and operations of nation within the same “national” space.

If one accepts this contextualist position on nation, then one also recognises the potential for different ideological frameworks, what Wiley (2004) calls “logics” and what is also referred to as discourse by critical linguists and discourse analysts (e.g. Foucault, 1972; Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 1991c; Van Leeuwen, 1995; Van Dijk, 1991), to operate within the same geospatial context. What this means now is that any given nation-state is a social construct with specific historical relevance and political value, neither of which can be assumed (Wiley, 2004). As such, any nation-state could be deconstructed politically and discursively in terms of socio-historical contexts.

It is worthy of mention at this juncture that this does not displace nationality. If we admit that it is the nation-state that is under analysis, we are in a sense, giving credence to the notion, exploring a social space already labelled and understood by that title. This position does not dismiss the nation-state, rather it highlights the fact that national spaces are uneven and contingent, tied into processes and structures that are not necessarily so, as we pointed out earlier.

On the basis of the above, what is proposed is a look at the nationality as a type of logic, one among others, that could be used in organising social space? This sort of approach would examine how a space might be nationalised, that is, discursively constructed. This perspective

allows for the fact that other alternatives for organising social spaces may be at work, alongside that of nationality. This might explain why in postcolonial states for instance, we have more localised identities e.g. tribes featuring prominently in everyday social practice, as is in the case with Nigeria (Igwarra, 2001). At the same time, we may see individuals operating transnationally e.g. migrating and functioning diasporically.

Thinking of this in terms of our analysis of the Nigerian nation-state, we could ask the question of how it came to be defined as national and how any particular aspect of social practice (in this case, the language choices in news reporting) might contribute to its continued operation as such. It seems sensible to look at national logic in terms of socio-historical contexts, so that what might be uncovered is that the definition of nationality and the dominance of such logic varies (or not) within the same space, as Wodak et al (1999) demonstrate. This certainly makes sense when we consider that the geo-political boundaries of nation-states change, such as when independence for Nigeria meant the redefinition of its boundaries to exclude what now forms Anglophone Cameroon; the Indian subcontinent being fragmented so that we currently have several nations out of colonial “Hindustan”; or the cessation of the Soviet Union, resulting in 13 states in the latter part of the last century. With regards to research, Wiley (2004) suggests two starting points: with the concrete sites or practices the researcher wishes to engage (whether national or not), or with the sites and practices through which the logics of nationality are produced.

The first approach would begin with an analytical context defined by the aims of the research, but where the researcher would not necessarily define that context as national or assume that national discourses are relevant. Here, Hay’s work on the televisual mapping of the American

nation could fit in such a framework, charting how structures and processes work to build up the nation, through the production of national discourse (Hay, 1992). The emphasis in such a framework considers national logic as a shaper of spaces or practices and works to appreciate any impact which such logic has on them. The national logic is treated as a material for the building of social practice, so that social practice is seen to be constituted by it and not the other way round.

The second approach would focus on the nature of the discourses produced rather than on their construction. The agenda here would be to decipher what models of national practices are present in a particular space and regards national logic as a product of and interpretation of social practices. Here, there would be room to look at how it works with other discourses and how national discourse (or logic) is used to legitimise new cultural spaces and practices. It would be especially helpful in looking at how nationally defined identities are constructed, deconstructed, reinforced, or transformed (e.g. Wodak, 1991c). In contrast to the first approach, which looks at the dynamics and expressions of national discourse as a research tool to understanding another phenomenon or event, this second approach focuses on these as the object of study, with the aim of charting how one particular discourse works in different socio-historical contexts. Here, the focus is on the national logic and how it behaves and is used in terms of broader social practices.

Looking particularly in the context of colonial and postcolonial nation-building, it is clear that the universalisation of national organisation of social spaces as does not necessarily incorporate all peoples and places to result in equal, but distinct national cultures or structures, even though politically, this might have been the case. Even in places defined as national, there are many aspects of social life where national logic does not operate. As such, when analysing Nigeria as we aim to do, we would be wrong in assuming that one would necessarily be dealing with a social space that is primarily characterised by national discourse. As we aim to look at national logic at work in that context, the second approach lends itself to application here, with us regarding discourses on the nation-state as attempts to define and make sense of contextual social practices and conditions, rather than a means of creating those conditions.

4.4. Theorising the Nigerian Nation-State

When looking at the Nigerian nation, the fields of theory that serve best in this analysis is the post-colonialist and postmodernist theoretical perspectives. The grouping together of these appears to be the most straightforward way of reading the overlapping, intertwined, and highly dialectical aspect in this study. The interconnectedness of the fields is derived from a common questioning of representations within relations of power between centre and margin, both locally and globally (Bull-Christiansen, 2004). Postcolonial theory (and postcolonial studies) was set off by the critical reading of texts, and is grounded to a large extent in the study of the relationships between language, the world and social consciousness mainly represented by postmodern thinkers like Lacan, Derrida, Barthes and Foucault (Spivak, 1987:p. 77–78).

As a result of postcolonialism's link with postmodernism the question has been raised of whether postcolonial theory is nothing more than one of the 'post-isms' that de-construct and critically examine the notion of linear historical progress and have been merely nominalised to reflect the area of critical. The 'post' in postcolonial theory could be (and has been) taken as alluding to a 'post-ness' of the colonial period and therefore signifying a theory of the entire range of so called postcolonial societies (McClintock 1994: p.254– 258).

Postcolonial theory focuses on the production of the nation-state in terms of imperialism and colonialism and their consequences on the resulting formations. Looking at nation from this perspective requires that one recognises that in terms of discourse, national spaces are formed dialectically, situating the colonially-constructed nation within larger and unambiguously unequal histories and geographies of global power and culture (Shome and Hedge, 2002: p. 252-253). The nation-state, it is argued, achieved its currency as a political and cultural formation in the context of European colonial expansion, emerging in the wake of a "process of expansion, exploration, conquest, colonisation and imperial hegemonisation which constituted the 'outer face'... of European and then western capitalist modernity after 1492" (Hall, 1997a: p. 249). From this view, Nigeria as a African nation-state is an outgrowth, part of the tools used in exporting and imposing western modernity to other regions (Ang and Stratton, 1996).

European expansion and domination are viewed as simultaneously cultural and political-economic processes, with discourses framing the coloniser as culturally superior to the colonised (Amin, 1989; Chakrabarty, 1992; Said, 1979). As a result, the nations that were forged in this process were constructed in relations of interdependency (Wiley, 2004) and

modernisation (Spivak, 1987; Chatterjee, 1986) regardless of whether the nations are colonies or colonisers in such discourse.

The nation-state functions conceptually and practically in this context. As Grossberg (1993) states, the use of the nation-state as a fundamental unit in the analysis temporalised space and recontextualised the other as different, so that the result is a world organised into distinct nations, each one autonomous, following a distinct path. Thus, western societies are framed as the epitomes of modernity, with others lagging behind in comparison. This framework still operates, with the world being conceived as a network of distinctive modernities, evidence of the failure and success of the universalising European modern/colonial project so that now we are in a postcolonial moment (Ang and Stratton, 1996a: 16; Chatterjee, 1986). Wiley (2004) supports this view, but further points out that since these positions and formations are hegemonically constructed, they are complex and open to struggle.

It has been argued that we are in a neo-colonialist moment rather than a postcolonial one (Ahmad, 1992; Chen, 1996), especially when reviewing it in terms of the rapid rate of global/transnational interaction. The current state of flux which is characterised with the current global climate is seen as a threat to the nation-state (Morley and Robins, 1995; Appadurai, 1990). Wiley (2004) states that the apparatus used in building nation are no longer national, resulting in a disjuncture of older territorially based cultures. It has however been argued that the announcements on the eclipse of the nation as a form of space are premature at best (Morris and Waisbord, 2001), although nationality requires reconsideration so that it is relevant in the new context (Wiley, 2004). The argument here then is not that globalisation is a new phenomenon, a never- before-seen moment in world history, but rather

a phase in global history that largely due to rapid advances in technology, presents opportunities for interaction at speeds and scales not previously possible (Morley and Robins, 1995: p.1). However, it could be assumed that this carries with it the potential for a grander speed and scale for dominating the ideological construction of the world as well, which is an argument for the continued examination of nations in terms of colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial dynamics.

From this perspective as well, globalisation is not a new threat, but rather an old face with a new name, a new context for looking at old issues. As Appadurai (1990) states:

“The world has been a congeries of large-scale interactions for many centuries. Yet today’s world involves interactions of a new order and intensity.”

(Appadurai, 1990:p.1)

Duncan (2002) proposes three dimensions to postcolonialism, each one multilateral so that there is no fixed way of defining it or approaching it. In proposing her “flexible foundation” for postcolonial theory she states:

“The first point, the ontological, focuses on questions of identity: Who am I? How did I come to be who I am? To who [sic] am I connected? While all people grapple with these questions, the postcolonial condition intensifies the struggle to come to some understanding of identity. The second point of intersection, the contextual, provides the phrasing that alone could replace the old definition because it focuses on the socio-political situation. I describe the contextual situation as the socio-political domination of a native people by an encroaching alien power. This description

hono[u]rs all those caught in the net of the postcolonial condition, regardless of place or race. The third point of intersection, the textual, focuses on a three-sided storytelling that deals more with image and experience than questionable facts. Because people caught up in the postcolonial situation may see things radically different given whether they are natives, the coloni[s]ing government, or settlers that become buffers between the native resistance and the governing coloniser so facts are difficult to corroborate and may become meaningless next to the power of image and experience. Because of this reality, there are always at least three sides to the postcolonial story: the native history, the state construct, and individual investigation that interrogate [sic] both the others. Only by hearing all three parts of the story can we achieve greater understanding and can the author speak a more complete identity.”

(Duncan, 2002)

In the context of this study it is important to stress that the term ‘postcolonial’ is used in its theoretical sense. That is, it does not refer to postcolonial societies just in terms of their having once been ‘colonised’ but now liberated. When referring to the Nigerian ‘postcolonial state’ neo-colonial power relations, which are discussed below, also inform the use of the term ‘postcolonial’. In other words, it is used here to incorporate a notion of postcoloniality, which could be taken as meaning: ‘a theory about postcolonial culture and society’ (Duncan, 2002), and which could be applied at any time and to anything that relates to any societies that is labelled as such. Consequently, here the term postcolonial is used in the sense of a critical perspective, which takes into consideration different aspects of the colonial and the neo-colonial projects, particularly in terms of their impacts on more local (intra-national) levels. As such, postcolonial theory and postmodern theories of power relations critically

engage the modern power relations from different points of view. Postmodern theories of power relations cannot serve as a direct model for the analysis at hand because they analyse specific European relations of power. However, these theories have served as inspiration for some of the ‘pioneers’ of the postcolonial theoretical field such as Bhabha, Said and Spivak because of the shared critical perspective on colonialism and western civilisation (Gandhi, 1998). Colonial and neo-colonial power relations are thus seen in light of such critical analysis.

Here contemporary Nigerian nationalism is to be analysed as part of the colonial and neo-colonial power relations in a world, which is interconnected and has been formed through processes of integration and relations of power on a global scale throughout the colonial period and thereafter. These processes have been critically evaluated by Partha Chatterjee who argues that the modern modes of exercise of power in the colonies have formed unique state formations, in which older forms of power have also persisted, creating a new form of power relation within the former colonies:

“When one looks at regimes of power in the so called backward countries of the world today, not only does the dominance of the characteristically ‘modern’ modes of exercise of power seem limited and qualified by the persistence of older modes, by the fact of their combination in a particular state and formation, but it seems to open up at the same time an entirely new range of possibilities for the ruling classes to exercise their domination.”

(Chatterjee quoted in Spivak 1987: p. 209)

The power relations in contemporary Nigerian society are not and neither should they be, analysed as working through the same mechanisms as the power relations in European societies. Nevertheless they could be analysed as interconnected with the same global power relations or forces that govern them. In the same vein, contemporary Nigerian power relations are not viewed as similar to European power relations. They are, however, viewed as influenced by the same political project, namely imperialism. Here imperialism refers to “the practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (Said in: Ashcroft et al. 1998:p. 122) as opposed to colonialism, which refers to the implantation of settlements in a distant territory. In reference to Nigerian nationalism and the creation of the Nigerian nation-state both could validly be used because the Nigerian state was the product of a direct and indirect rule and the two cannot entirely be separated analytically from each other in the Nigerian context.

Postmodernist theories are therefore here read through a postcolonial perspective. This is inspired by Bhabha’s appropriation of Foucault’s notion of power-knowledge. Bhabha (1994) uses Foucault’s theories as a supply for methodological tools and principles that inform an analysis into any society, which has been shaped to any degree, by the modern enterprise of Enlightenment, of which imperialism was an integral part. This was, however, not taken into account by Foucault in his analysis of modern power relations. As such, while Bhabha’s theories are inspired by the foucauldian analysis of power relations, he focuses on the specific colonial and neo-colonial relations of power, which were not part of Foucault’s perspective. Bhabha uses the foucauldian analysis to point out the strategic nature of discourses and to undermine the notions in postcolonial theory of binary antagonisms of colonised and coloniser, which could be subverted by being inverted (Bhabha 1994:p. 72). Bhabha instead

uses Foucault's theories of power to underline his own focus on difference. Foucault insists that the relation of knowledge and power within the apparatus is always a strategic response to specific situations at a given historical moment. As a result, the force of colonial and postcolonial discourse as a theoretical and cultural dynamic in our current historical moment represents the urgent need to contest singularities of difference and to articulate diverse 'subjects' of differentiation (Bhabha 1994: p.73–74).

The postcolonial connection between postmodern theories such as Bhabha's appropriation of Foucault's theories is useful here not only as a tool for understanding colonial discourses, but also as a means to understand the contemporary political discourses and journalistic narrative strategies within the discursive field of Nigerian national identity. These are seen as strategic articulations that are formed by an apparatus of power which in turn, has been shaped by the Nigerian colonial project. As a result, they bear a fairly striking resemblance to the modern relations of power as analysed by Foucault, but are specific here in their response to the conditions under which the national space we call Nigeria has been formed.

4.5. Articulating The African Nation-State in Postcoloniality

In examining how Africa nation-states function, we are ultimately asking how those who constitute the ruling class have produced a form of social hegemony, in which a certain power relation forges a nationalism that articulates collective national identity in a way that is distinct and situated in the context of post-colonialism. Postmodern theories of collective identity are in this connection also explored in order to facilitate a description of Bhabha's theories of national identity, which outlines how the nation as a narrative strategy works by calling on the nation's people to 'remember and forget' the nation's history in order to

maintain the nation's unity.

An analysis of nationalism within such a theoretical framework gives rise to at least two challenges when situated in the Nigerian nation-state. Firstly, the theoretical approaches to an analysis of national formation, which relies on national formation in Europe, needs to be re-evaluated in order to have significance in the Nigerian context. A critical approach to theories of modern African and modern European forms of operating nation can benefit from an approach to the nation-state that views it as an idea of political order that is imagined and which has gained a hegemonic status in global power relations and thus structured international relations after 1945. Secondly, the theoretical approach to such an analysis must rely on the specificity of the context of the analysis, that is, one must abandon any essentialist notions of a typical African nation-state formation and instead approach the specific context of the analysis in light of how this particular state comes to be imagined as a mythology which has gained historical weight (Hansen & Stepputat, 2001: p. 10–14). The nation-states in Africa, which all were formed under colonial rule, have the inherent commonality in the sense that they all share an alienation with the arbitrary geographical entities they represent and the people who supposedly should imagine themselves as belonging there (Davidson 1992:p. 10–11, p. 294–295). Mamdani has argued that this alienation, apart from being the product of the arbitrary distribution of land between the different colonial powers, derives from the colonial forms of national practice rather than an appropriation of the European nation-state model to the African colonies (Mamdani, 1996). Drawing on Fanon, Mamdani finds that the tendency towards single-party regimes in postcolonial African states were critical of democracy and its base in civil society because democracy and civil society organisations were urban multiparty projects, which threatened their rural-based hegemony

(Fanon, 1963; Mamdani, 1996). This was a national ideology that continued to gear the nation's economy towards the enrichment of a small bourgeoisie who were acting as middlemen in the postcolonial economic world order (Fanon 1963: p.142; Cabral, 1972; Cabral, 1974). The single party or military regime, acting on the part of the bourgeoisie elite took hold of the state apparatus in order to ensure this hegemonic status, relying more on coercion than on persuasion. Mamdani (1996), while agreeing with Fanon (1963), further adds that this represented a continuation of the colonial governmental rationale and techniques of power (Fanon 1963: p. 132, Mamdani 1996: p.290–1). In Nigeria's case, attempts at democracy have been characterised by the presence of multiparty systems, although these are perceived as representative of ethno-regional interests rather than different ideological (philosophical) premises for managing of the state's resources.

In the hands of the bourgeoisie elites of the nationalist parties in the postcolonial states, Fanon claims that nationalism and nationalist history functioned as tranquilisers that helped hide the reality of the kleptocratic tendencies of those in government (Fanon, 1963). Fanon stated that lacking the means for genuine social change, the nationalist elite forged nationalism and the heroics of the political leader as a braking power against the dissatisfaction of the oppressed people of the nation:

“This elite class, because they are unready to break up the national bourgeoisie, asks the people to fall back into the past and to become drunk on the remembrance of the epoch which led up to independence. The leader, seen objectively, brings the people to a halt and persists in either expelling them from history or preventing them from taking root in it. “

(Fanon, 1963:135–136)

The battle cry of ‘African Unity’ as a means for galvanising national unity (or making up for its absence) which had effectively mobilised the masses against the colonial masters, was in the discourses of the nationalist elites turned into an africanist chauvinism, which takes the place of the racism of the former European colonial bourgeoisie (Fanon, 1963: p.125–126). In the postcolonial nation-state, Fanon (1963) claims that nationalist history, which ‘naturalises’ the community of the nation-people is not only arbitrary, but that the process of naturalisation is caught in an imaginative dialectic, which moves back and forth between articulations of modern, colonial, postcolonial and ‘native’ national culture.

For Bhabha this constitutes a question of how the sign of history in political or media discourses comes to designate the people ‘as one’, as a national culture which can become the object of psychic identification (Bhabha, 1994: p.152–153). This question of collective identity formation has been articulated in different ways in the so called ‘family of theories’, which understand collective identities as constructed in relational networks of negation (Frello, 1999: p.1, 5–6). Consequently, the notion of collective identity is discussed below, before Bhabha’s theories of the nation are described.

Homi Bhabha has drawn on Anderson’s ideas on constructed nation (Anderson, 1983) as well as the postmodern theoretical tradition in his analysis of nations and nationalism, and he defines the nation as:

“...an obscure and ubiquitous form of living the *locality* of culture. This locality is more *around* temporality than *about* historicity: a form of living that is more complex than ‘community’; more symbolic than ‘society’; more connotative than ‘country’; less patriotic than *patrie*; more rhetorical than the reason of State; more mythological than ideology; less homogeneous than hegemony; less centred than the citizen; more collective than the cultural differences and identifications than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism.”

(Bhabha, 1994: p. 140) [Original italics]

Bhabha defines the [postcolonial] nation as a narrative strategy. This strategy deploys the elements ‘the people’ and ‘the nation’ in a linear historical narrative of events, ideas, and cultural traits. The nation writes itself through historical narratives, political narratives, and journalistic narratives as a homogenous entity that can function as a point of identification (Bhabha 1994: p.140). For Bhabha ‘the people’ as a narrative strategy can be defined as both totalising and liberating:

“The people are neither the beginning nor the end of the national narrative; they represent the cutting edge between the totali[s]ing powers of the ‘social’ as homogeneous, consensual community, and the forces that signify the more specific address to contentious, unequal interests and identities within the population.”

(Bhabha 1994: p. 146)

The narration of an essentialist nation is inherently bound up with the idea of the people. The tension in the above quotation between the homogeneous and the unequal interests of the people is at the heart of Bhabha's theory of the nation. The people are for Bhabha both the historical *objects* of the nationalist pedagogy and the *subjects* of a process of signification. Bhabha calls this 'a double narrative moment' within the discourse of nationalism. There is ambivalence within the discourse, which is a splitting process in which the narration of the nation splits between the prescriptive and the performative (Bhabha, 1994; Bojsen and Larsen, 2003). The prescriptive is an accumulative temporality which is signified by a defining moment, from which time is ascribed meaning. The 'performative' is a recurrent strategy of signification, which defines the nation's temporality in a series of events that shape the nation. As Bhabha (1994) states:

"The people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on a constituted historical origin *in the past*; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any sense of prior existence of the nation-people"

(Bhabha 1994: p.145) [Original italics]

To be obliged to forget – in the construction of the national present – is not a question of historical memory; it is the construction of a discourse in society that performs the problem of totalising the people and unifying the national will (Bhabha 1994: p.160–161). This process is similar to Benedict Anderson's idea of 'remembering and forgetting' (Anderson, 2006). However, for Bhabha this means that the people are at once the closing and the opening points of the discourse, and that this constitutes an ambivalence of the narrative of

the nation, both as a temporal agent and a horizontal community. As such, the narration of the nation must be viewed as having an “ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation” (Bhabha 1990:p. 1). The ambivalence occurs when the pedagogical is contested by articulations which disturb essentialist identity that is associated with the idea of one out of many. In Bhabha’s view postcolonial writers form an example of such a contestation, as they attempt to question the way in which discourses of national consciousness are constructed and because they try to form a temporality in which different identities can be articulated:

“[They] seek to redefine the symbolic processes through which the social imaginary – nation, culture or community – becomes the subject of discourse, and the object of psychic identification. These postcolonial temporalities force us to rethink the sign of history *within* those languages, political or literary, which designate the people ‘as one’.”

(Bhabha 1994: p. 153)

In Bhabha’s analysis the cultural practice of postcolonial nationality and the meaning ascribed to the past in the narrative of the nation are seen as having to align themselves in the nation’s temporal space. If the practice of nationality and the significance ascribed to the temporality of the nation by hegemonic discourses do not correlate, Bhabha calls this ‘disjunctive temporality’ (Bojsen & Larsen 2003: p. 4). This disturbs the ideological manoeuvring of the imagined community in the national space by insisting on positions of marginality in the people. For Bhabha the ambivalence creates space for marginal ‘counter narratives’ or counter discourses which enable them to challenge the homogenising nature of dominant ideologies (Bhabha 1994: p. 149). Bhabha argues that such ambivalence questions the “mythic metaphor of homogenous progress” hence; he questions the notion of holistic

community and culture, and the notion of unitary collective experiences (Bhabha 1994: p.142).

Berman (1998) however, suggests that colonial logic still operates in the governance of post-colonial states, with a system of patronage and bigmanism at work. Here, he suggests that national practice and governance in the postcolonial states operate more through social networks than through any real cultural or economic practice. The result of this was the birth of the regional-ethnicities, which function today and are used as part of the apparatus for elitist national practice in Nigeria. According to Berman (1998) modern African ethnicity, constructed by the elite groups in their quest for a premise for “conservative modernisation”, is a social construction of the colonial period through the reactions of pre-colonial societies to the social, economic, cultural and political forces of colonialism. It also serves as the rationale for national practice for many postcolonial states even in contemporary times. Colonial states, Berman (1998) argues, were grounded in the alliances with local 'Big Men', incorporating ethnically-defined administrative units linked to the local population by incorporation of pre-colonial patron-client relations. Postcolonially, this continues to be the case with the Nigerian nation-state would be perceived and used as a politico-economic construct and the practices of nation then revolve around issues of resource control and distribution, and that both ideological and repressive apparatus both reflect such an approach and are used as a means for organising the social space, much as it was in the case of the colonial state.

4.6. Conclusion

The concepts of nation and national identity are not as natural as one might initially be tempted to presume. Nations are expressions of, and thereby, fashioned by the imaginings of how the world and people should be organised. As the various understandings of nation in this section highlight, its construction as commonsensical is based on subjective criteria which in turn are the operation of dominant views. National identities which are by-products of these constructions are similarly comradeships based on whatever notions of community that its members subscribe to.

In considering the construction of the Nigerian nation-state, it is hard to ignore the nature of its birth, which is largely an incidental result of the imperialist projects undertaken by empires in Europe. The creation of Nigeria as has been argued by many Africanists, took into little account neither the presence of pre-existing ethno-nationalities nor the complexities of the dynamics of all these social groups. As a result, Nigeria at its inception was no more than a colonial project, conceptualised as it was a politico-economic construct, largely for the purposes of colonial administration one. As has discussed previously, this nationalising of space has not necessarily meant the recession of other means for social organisation and imagination. Rather, what is observable is a situation where another kind of logic for arranging the world has been introduced into the struggle for dominance with others. Thus, the discourse of nation here does not operate in isolation from other discourses or social elements, but as an additional element.

The colonial circumstances surrounding the initial conceptualisation of Nigeria function similarly, producing not only the logics that govern the way the nation is understood, but also the way it is understood in relation to other logics such as ethnicity. Ethnicities continue to factor as a major part of everyday living in this context, contending very vigorously with the supremacy of the nation-state. Postcolonial theorists contend that the interactions between ethnicity and nationality in a postcolonial context do not necessarily differ greatly from colonial dynamics each other, so that these two act to juxtapose each other. As a result, the systems of patronage which operated using these colonially are to be expected postcolonially. In a sense, this suggests that independence from colonisation by “external” elites means the substitution of colonisation by “internal” elites via the nation-state.

In considering the dynamics of the nation-state’s construction and operation, the matter of the place of the people arises. If as Bhabha argues, they are infantilised, being no more role than afterthoughts in the crafting of their identities and the community to which they have aligned themselves, how has this been achieved? Taking into account that Nigeria is not monoethnic, how would such unity have been achieved? As we have established previously, historically, the elite have failed to provide a nation-state that places the people at the centre and that would effectively delimit the weight of cultural difference within the territory on the one hand, and have patterned the nation’s culture after that of its colonial predecessor on the other. In national discourse, how are the dynamics between the elite and the masses framed linguistically?

Fanon's analytical framework affords an understanding of the power relations that national narratives work through. Considering the nation as a community that is ascribed meaning and relevance through narration allows it to be considered as a historical construct and as an idea or a set of ideas that could be textualised. In approaching national logic this way, it is then becomes an ideological framework that operates in socio-historical contexts but which is also 'tangible'.

Chapter Five

Research Methodological Framework

5.1. Introduction

In every research study, it is crucial to have a grasp of the methodology that is to be employed, particularly how it has been used, as well as its strengths and shortcomings. This section aims to provide an understanding of what is to be analysed. Hence, it will offer a review of this study's proposed methodological framework, including a review of various ways in which it has been practised. Most importantly, we will look at the toolkit to be employed in the analysis to follow.

5.2. Research Questions and Hypotheses

As mentioned in the introductory section of this treatise, our aim is to demonstrate how discourse in national newspapers has worked to construct a picture which presents an elitist perspective of political practice in Nigeria. To allow us achieve this in this analysis, we ask the following questions:

- In what ways are Nigeria's non-elites constrained in Nigeria's newspaper discourses on national issues?

Hypotheses in this study are informed largely by Foucault's (1972, 1977) perspective of power relations in being embedded in discourse as well as, Derrida's (1972) theory of the unequal positioning of socially constructed binaries and Gramsci's' (1971) notion of

ideological dominance by elite groups. Theoretically, concepts here are operationalised by Sinclair and Cunningham's (2001) idea of public speech being conducted in sphericules, rather than in a single sphere as put forward by Habermas.

Hypothesis one: If discourse constructs group boundaries and constitutes power relationships (Foucault, 1977) by defining subordinate groups as “intrinsically different, I expect to find that news elites communicate a homogeneous, “abstract image” of the masses (e.g. Nigerians, the people, the masses) than a more multi-faceted one. In the reverse, elite actors would be frequently individualised.

Hypothesis two: if news elites indeed act as spokesmen for dominant groups whose social positions are accompanied by feelings of superiority, I expect them to assert this orientation discursively by using activating strategies when referring to elite actors. Specifically, I expect to find that newspapers construct elites as subjects in sentences, while passivising or suppressing non-elites. Furthermore, it is expected that the referential strategies for non-elites should work to diminish their roles in state practice.

Hypothesis three: If social discourse that creates a collective sense of group position is disproportionately influenced by the expressed views of elites, I expect to find that non-elite actors are given little or no opportunities to participate in national discourses.

Hypothesis four: I would expect to find that ethnonationality is framed negatively in news discourses. In particular, I expect to find that this is done through the use of delegitimising strategies.

Bearing these in mind, in order to rigorously and thoroughly answer the above questions, a more extensive list of questions needs to be used in ‘interrogating’ the research data. In this vein, in the critical analysing the texts, foci will be on the following lines of enquiry:

- What social actions are Nigeria’s non-elites performing within the discourses?
- What role do Nigerian masses play in the legitimising or delegitimising of national practices or events?
- What meta-narratives are constructed in the texts in relation to Nigeria and the social agency of various groups of actors?
- How have these discursive practices varied (or not) socio-historically?

5.3. Population Definition and Sampling Frame

The data gathered for the purposes of this study comprises of corpora of news reports and feature articles from Nigerian newspapers published during the period spanning January 1906 to June 2007. This period spans the end of Britain’s colonisation project which resulted in the formation of the Colony of Lagos, the Southern Protectorate of Nigeria and the Northern Protectorate of Nigeria and includes the history of the country until April 2007, which marked the latest attempt by the country at democratically electing gubernatorial and presidential leadership. As this study is concerned with the “mundane” aspects of national life rather than with more unique ones, there is no focus on particular historical events. As a result, the texts that will form our sample will be selected on the basis of their focus on national issues rather than their coverage of specific events.

Additionally, the sampling of texts for this study will work to incorporate newspapers from different parts of Nigeria. This is more to ensure a better representation of texts from within the nation, rather than to allow a consideration of ethno-regional and partisan dynamics in our analysis. While this would no doubt enrich the discussion that is to follow, it is not entirely clear what kind of contribution such a dimension would add to the body of knowledge. There is evidence, as we have seen previously, that ethnic and partisan interests influence journalistic practice in Nigeria. This research aims to look at the role that class plays in journalistic practice, particularly in the way the relationship between the state and its citizenry has been represented and constructed within texts. Thus, while our selection of texts for analysis while contrived to ensure a geographical representation, this does not translate to an interest in widening the focus in our analysis.

Given that this study is working within the scope of the discursive and the socio-historical, the use of such data is justifiable. When we consider that newspapers have and continue to feature very strongly in public discussion, acting as sites for the construction and reconstruction of social knowledge, the relevance of such investigation is without doubt. The contents of newspapers are discursive, tied to and producing professional, institutional and societal conventions which act to constrain and them while at the same time acting to provide a site for resistance. In viewing newspaper texts as discursive, they become more than expressions of facts, but also the representatives of reading or subject positions, interpellating the readers and situating them in power and agency struggles in relation to the texts (Kress, 1989). As such, an analysis of national discourses within newspaper texts should help to understand the models of national practice that are thus represented and disseminated. Newspapers are arguably, one of the oldest forms of nationalised mass media in the

‘Nigerian’ contexts and as such, have a longstanding involvement in the discursive politics.

From theoretical and methodological perspectives any form of media texts could have been analysed. Certainly discourses on the nation are not to be found in newspapers alone. Film, television and radio are also relevant mass media and are certainly discursive. However from a more practical standpoint, texts from newspapers are a more convenient means for extracting and analysing the necessary data in this study.

The most important factor in the source of the data was whether it would be available across the time-period that forms the basis for this study. As this study focuses on the construction of Nigeria’s national identity from its conception as a colonial entity to its more contemporary version, the data gathered would need to be consistent and available through the various socio-historical contexts. On this basis, newspapers whose presence in this context predates the conceptualisation of Nigeria in 1906 stand out as the best data source more so as radio, the second oldest mass media, first features in Nigerian history in the 1930s. Televised texts produced within the same space would only be available from the earlier part of the 1970s, when what we now know as the National Television Authority (initially called National Television Service) was established. As such, in order to get a single media form that would provide all the data, newspaper texts were the obvious choice.

The matter of access to the research data was also determining factors in the choice of data for the research. If by happenstance, no media form existed during the entirety of the period under examination, the framework of the study and the data required could have been adjusted to fall in line with this actuality. Be that as it may, such data would also need to be

accessible to the researcher. Access to recordings of audio or audio-visual texts in Nigeria in the media houses libraries back in Nigeria is largely restricted, where such is possible.

Perhaps the singular most important justification for the use of newspaper texts as our data source in this research is the fact that whether historically and contemporaneously, particularly in the Nigerian contexts, print news texts are tied into ideological struggles for hegemony. These texts, in concert with other discursive systems in this context, work to define, constitute and prescribe social knowledge, specifically those to do with Nigeria as a nation, identities, roles and practices in this framework. If for no other reason, this justifies the use of newspaper texts as data in a study interested in the sort of questions like those asked here.

5.4. Critical Discourse Analysis: An Overview

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary branch of linguistics or more specifically sociolinguistics (Fairclough, 1989) that attempts to explore the ideological ‘technology’ of language in representing the world. CDA has its premise in the Foucauldian notion that language is not a neutral or transparent communication tool that objectively reflects reality. Rather, it is a form of ideological practice that channels, constructs and influences the way we see and experience the world (Foucault, 1972). Its earlier forms like Critical Linguistics (Kress and Hodges, 1979; Fowler et al, 1979) tended to adopt the intentionalist assumption that all text was a product of strategic word-crafting on the part of the authors and producers i.e. all discourses are abstract sets of options constructed by the author with the aim of limiting the options of choices available to its interpreter(s). Linguists like Van Dijk have shown how language, particularly news language, is used to subtly

construct ideological squaring so that no text could ever be ideologically neutral (eg Van Dijk, 1993). Essentially, CDA treats discourse as a form of social representation that systematically organises the world into patterns, which in turn, facilitate the agendas and values of particular groups. More recently, CDA has been committed to identifying existing discourses associated with particular social practices or institutions which may operate interdiscursively across a range of contexts (see Wodak and Meyer, 2001; Van Leeuwen, 2007; Wodak and Mitten, 1996).

In whatever case, a major assumption in this framework is that discourses operate as prescriptions for and descriptions of social practice, which social actors inculcate. CDA therefore has a very explicit political agenda of raising awareness about the various ideological frameworks that not only inform language choice, but the way that such language through discourse, constructs, represents and positions the social actors within the text. CDA involves the scrutiny of the various components that collectively express particular discursive meanings in text. The method of analysis would certainly be dependent on the form the discourse takes. This means that newspaper articles for example would need to be analysed linguistically because they use linguistic units (like words, sentences, clauses, phrases, paragraphs) and tools (like irony, humour, plot, metaphor, similes) in articulating discourse. Similarly, a photographic image would need to be analysed through the analysis of tools and units employed in the creation of the image. Discourse is multimodal (Van Leeuwen, 2007) a trait which allows CDA to also be employed on non-linguistic text, like pictures, music, body language.

While textual analysis is an important part of Critical Discourse Analysis, it is however, not enough to simply look at the text alone. As language is impacted by and impacts on social structures, practices and institutions, it is crucial that an understanding of the social context in which the text functions as discourse, is also part of the textual analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Blommaert, 2005). CDA as Benwell and Stokes (2006) argue, therefore works with two key assumptions. Firstly, that the researcher must closely engage with the text and secondly, that language is socially bound and that any phenomenon or discourse being studied could only be properly understood by also looking at the socio-cultural context in which the text occurs.

Nevertheless, the CDA methodology (-ies) remains rooted in historical, political and ideological views of the social world and is concerned with issues like power and social structure (Van Dijk, 1991; Lazar, 2005; Lazar, 2000; Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1993; Wodak, et al, 1999). The critical perspective becomes obvious in the choice of topics. All approaches to critical discourse analysis generally tend to put social issues on the agenda of their research, concerning themselves with the dynamics of power in social relationships. In particular, the study of feminist, racist and multicultural discourses has been central subjects of these studies. As Wodak et al. (1999) underline, the same concepts and terms can be used in the study of the discursive construction of other social issues, such as those of nation and nationality, which forms the basis of their study.

However, as has been highlighted previously, CDA is not a single method, but a theoretical approach to analysis. As in each family, there are fundamental common features - but at least as much important differences among each of its single members. Such differences as with the matter of defining discourse(s), find their expressions in the methodical design to doing

Discourse Analysis. Langer (1998) identifies four different approaches to discourse and CDA, all evolving from a Foucauldian understanding of discourse as ideological, with the exception of the van Dijkian approach, which, by Van Dijk's own admission (Van Dijk, 2000) treats discourse as devoid of ideological influence:

- The socio-cognitive approach of Teun van Dijk.
- Critical Discourse Analysis with Norman Fairclough
- Critical Discourse Analysis with the Duisburg School (Jägerian).
- The discourse-historical method of the Vienna School (Wodakian)

According to Langer (1998), Fairclough, Wodak and Jäger refer to Foucault's discourse approach by integrating the notion of intertextuality as a key concept into their approaches, while this is only present to a lesser extent in van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach. Not all approaches to CDA include a historical perspective. Only the Vienna School systematically incorporates historical data into the empirical ground of their discourse studies. The approaches also differ in how they view the mediation between the text and the society. Thus socio-cognitive processes, genres and argumentation strategies and techniques are assumed to mediate between social and discursive practises, while all the other approaches see the same techniques as both mediating and being social and discursive practices.

Van Dijk's approach is put forward as an exception to other approaches to CDA (Langer, 1998). According to Langer (1998), the van Dijkian approach is in contrast to the more foucauldian perspectives found in most of Discourse Studies and the employment of CDA by replacing the concept of ideology as the focus of discourse analysis (in contrast to Foucault).

Langer goes on to state that as it stands, the methodical stances and concepts used by van Dijk are less orientated towards critical hermeneutics or a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, which is concerned with ideology. Instead, the tools van Dijk uses are rather a way of bringing a quantitative quality to CDA, handling the data in the functional perspective to bridge the gap between micro- and macro analysis. As a result, van Dijk's model of CDA is put forward as allowing a researcher to gain both representative results and in depth insights about the "discursive rules and conventions; the rhetoric, linguistic and/or cognitive patterns of discourse" (Langer, 1998). Therefore, van Dijk's concepts of superstructures seem to allow for a better treatment of large amounts of empirical data (texts). Other approaches to CDA seem better equipped to deal with qualitative in-depth analysis of discourse fragments by pinpointing the concept of intertextuality. Instead of opposing these different approaches and perspectives, the variety of perspectives and angles can also be seen as a variety of different constituents to a critical analysis of complex communication events, which integrates and correlates aspects of form and content of media texts, discursive and other social practises.

Advocating such a view on the different approaches to critical discourse analysis corresponds to the following concluding remark by van Dijk underlining the practical dimension of Critical Discourse research, in which the development and application of the CDA is closely related to and sensitive for the work on the empirical material:

"But then again, many others may at least in principle reject such a division of the field into directions, approaches or schools. They may precisely advocate that constant renewal in the field comes from new combinations of approaches, across

subdisciplines, methods, theories or types of phenomena studied. They may refuse the artificial distinction between theory, description and application, and may study the same phenomena both in text and talk, and do so in abstract terms as well as in the more empirical terms of actual language use and interaction. Given their broad orientation, critical scholars for instance may want to consider all levels and dimensions, and all methods and approaches, as long as they contribute to our insight into the role of discourse in society and the reproduction of inequality. It is this variety that is one of the appealing characteristics of contemporary discourse analysis.”

(Van Dijk, 1997a: p. 24)

Notwithstanding the differences between different approaches to CDA, substantial points emerging from Foucault’s work had a decisive impact on CDA. These terms and concepts are the constitutive nature of discourse, the primacy of interdiscursivity and intertextuality, the discursive nature of power, the political nature of discourse and the discursive nature of social changes (Fairclough, 1992:p. 55-56). Also the whole foucauldian concept of discourse has been integrated into the approaches to critical discourse analysis. These foucauldian terms and concepts play an important role in all approaches and can be seen as basic methodical and instrumental tools to discourse analysis from a critical perspective. Therefore the terms and concepts in each model should be considered as basic methodical tools to the analysis of the questions about the construction of Nigeria and Nigerians within media discourses. Even as they disagree, the four approaches to CDA agree on a number of basic assumptions (Van Dijk, 1988b: p. 2-10; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997:p. 268):

- Media discourses are specific kinds of language use and of social practice ‘framed’ by institutions, with rules, conventions and positions of agents. Thus media discourse analysis addresses social problems and power relations and is even a form of social action itself. They (discourses represented through mass media) are more or less coherent and repeatable linguistic and material practices, creating specific power frameworks.
- The relationship between discourse and society is dialectic: Discourses are not just seen as representations of the world, but also as (re-)producing, (re-)constructing and (re-)transforming social practice and social relations.
- Media discourse analysis is by definition interdisciplinary, drawing on disciplines as linguistics, semiotics, cultural studies, ethnography, sociology, rhetoric, social and cognitive psychology.
- Media discourse analysis works with different levels of description (text, discursive practice and social practice), is focused on the level of discursive practice and is basically interpretative.
- Media discourse analysis sees itself as a qualitative alternative and supplement to traditional quantitative content analysis. In contrast to quantitative content analysis it is aware of formal aspects of language use in media texts.

5.5. Criticisms of CDA

There have been, and continue to be, a great number of critics of CDA so much so indeed that the activity according to Haig “threatens to develop into a whole new academic cottage industry of its own” (Haig, 2004), at the heart of their criticisms is the fundamental question

of whether or not CDA produces knowledge that can be truly considered valid. It would be reasonable to expect that majority of those who work within CDA's framework would answer this question more or less in the affirmative.

Unlike some critics who tend to quibble over lesser details of CDA methodology, the ethnographer Martyn Hammersley (1997) directs his criticism of CDA at the most fundamental level of the foundations upon which CDA is built. In many ways, this is potentially the most damaging criticism of those reviewed here since it targets the validity of the philosophical foundations that serve as the basis for much of fieldwork undertaken within this framework. In addition to criticising lack of clarity on what theoretical premise that CDA is built upon, he also queries the lack of what he perceives as a robust enough body of sociological theory on the one hand; and for what he regards as the overemphasis of an ambition to effect social change that interferes fatally with its scholarly task.

In beginning, Hammersley (1997) places CDA within the 'critical' perspective within the social sciences, stating categorically that the word 'critical' signals to him "an abandonment of any restraint on evaluation of the texts and contexts that are studied" (p. 243), which is seen to be markedly different from the dominant positivist rejection of normative judgments in favour of a concentration on 'factual' enquiry. Hammersley's definition of the term 'critical' could be deemed as aimed at provoking unnecessary debate. In choosing to ignore the issue of Hammerley's framing of the critical social sciences here, it seems apparent that 'critical' social enquiry cannot be founded on the same philosophical base as the physical sciences. So what serves as its philosophical roots? Hammersley identifies three possible alternatives, namely Marxist theory and its later Frankfurt School variant; decisionism; and

Habermas' notions of public sphere and speech community.

While he raises points worthy of note in listing his concerns with CDA's theoretical foundations, Hammersley nevertheless makes some rather unfair criticisms. For one thing, he suggests that CDA's premise in Marxist and neo-Marxist theory makes for a shaky one as it removes historical development from the scope of any such analysis. However, work done Ruth Wodak and others in the Centre for Austrian Studies has specifically worked to incorporate socio-historical context into the analysis of discourses on national identities (see Wodak et al, 1999).

Hammersley also criticises CDA researchers of decisionism, of deeming their work as valid on the basis of their own personal values. By this, he works from a position that denies that values are amenable to rational justification. Hammersley (1997) observes that, 'According to this [that is, a decisionist] position, one *chooses* one's values and this involves a leap of faith or an act of will: it cannot be based on rational deliberation' (p. 249). As he also reminds us, the problem with this is that 'leaps of faith can go in any direction' (p. 250). Indeed they can, and have done so many times. Here, Hammersley's criticism attacks any claim to validity which results produced through CDA might have. If CDA is based on a simple conviction that the emancipatory ends are right, then how likely is it that practitioners will worry unduly over the validity of the means whereby they are achieved? As Haig (2004) points out, at worst, what we get is the use of CDA by powerful groups, who will further develop their manipulation of discursive tools. After all, if CDA really is a powerful tool it will inevitably be used by powerful groups and individuals. Of course, as further states, the decisionist position can, and notoriously does, lead many people into a third option: not jumping at all,

that is, political quietism. While this criticism is a poignant one, it is itself be open to the same. Generally speaking could any academic engaged in social scientific research ever say that their areas of interest and indeed their choices of methodology is unaffected by their personal values?

As a top down approach, CDA has been criticised for bringing in a priori categories to analyses which are known to be relevant to interaction, such as the position or intention of the producer and tends to take certain concepts for granted. For instance, an analysis of discourse on multiculturalism takes for granted that certain social cultural categories are intended by the author or that definitions of these categories are intended, which might not necessarily be the case.

Be that as it may, CDA is a methodology that works to reveal subjectivities in social communication, which might otherwise go unquestioned. Furthermore, it never pretends that the readings of any particular text by any singular analyst are definitive. Polysemy, the ability of texts to have more than one meaning, is not an alien concept in the study of the interaction between language and meanings. Intertextuality is not entirely foreign in the analysis of media texts either (Hall, 1981; Wodak et al, 1999). As this is the case, then any piece of text could contain different ideology/model and any or all of these could these could be picked up by any of its reader/interpreters. Additionally, CDA allows for the presence of different sphericules for public discourse (Cunningham and Sinclair, 1999) which means that different communities can construct and deconstruct meanings heterogeneously, a shift away from Habermas' notion of a singular public sphere, with an ideal speech community and not much scope for cultural pluralism or linguistic diversity.

In further support of the above point, Van Leeuwen (2007) highlights Gunther Kress's analysis (1985) of a speech by Helen Caldicott at a large Anti-nuclear rally in Sydney which powerfully demonstrates the contemporary proliferation of legitimisation discourses. He shows that a single text can invoke many different, sometimes even contradictory, discourses: 'medical, Christian, populist, (Jungian) psychiatric, patriotic, sentimental/parental, romantic, patriarchal, technological, prophetic, feminist' (p. 17). Kress (1989) opines:

“The traces of these different discourses are evident enough; they have not been closely integrated by the writer/speaker into anything like a seamless text: the discursive differences are not resolved. Consequently the text is unlikely to provide that definitional impulse which would act to give unity to the diverse groups which had assembled that day to hear this speech. Although the text is that of a single writer the contention of the different discourses is clearly evident, so much so in fact that it has been beyond the writer's ability to control that difference.”

(Kress, 1989: p. 17)

This idea is very important in CDA because it gives validity to any of the many results that are revealed in the analysis. CDA does not claim to give a singular, unequivocal reading of any discourse, making this attribute a key strength. CDA has at its core an ideology of relativism and embraces the subjectivity of its researcher, giving validity to the multiplicity of the readings possible. The criticism that CDA is political and subjective in its approach, therefore compromising any claim towards having an objective analyst/researcher has been countered by the reply that it is impossible to exclude the analyst's values from any research and that indeed, there are often good political reasons for not doing so (Billig, 1999a).

Furthermore, as is the case in even methods which follow the more quantitative traditions, the analyst/researcher subjectively predetermines categories, personally choosing the manner in which data will be coded and analysed. Additionally, CDA is interdisciplinary and generally goes beyond linguistics in its theory and practice. For instance, the Wodakian discourse-historical model not only looks at language, but also prides itself in looking at it in a socio-historical context so that analysis while starting off at the entry point of the text, focuses more on the text as a product of a specific socio-historical context. This approach is not concerned so much with the linguistic structure of a text as it is with how such structures interact with other wider social practices. As such, CDA while not patterning itself after quantitative frameworks should not be accused of being incapable of producing valid knowledge.

Another key criticism which has been levelled against CDA is that it has set for itself an aim which is unrealistic. Hammersley (1997), states that the “extraordinary ambition” revealed by the task he purports that CDA had set itself of providing insights to not only discursive processes, but also to whole societies, their problems and the means of fixing these, was perhaps more damning than the philosophical considerations he addressed (p. 252). Similarly, Jim Martin who has expressed concern about the unachieved practical ambitions of ‘linguistics which is articulated as a form of social action’ (Martin 1992: p. 587), also alludes to this issue. In the closing section of this work, *English Text*, Martin writes:

“Where critical linguistics has fallen short of evolving into a form of social action lies in its observer as opposed to an intruder role. Even in educational contexts, critical linguists have tended to stand back and let teachers and consultants do the work of changing educational transmissions ..., being somewhat reluctant to shunt themselves between theory and practice. As far as linguistics as social action is concerned this is not adequate. The theory has to be developed to the point where it informs interventions in the political process – where critical linguists take charge for example of public relations for the ANC or intervene directly with education ministers in curriculum debates. This involves developing appropriate theories of semiotic subversion”

Martin (1992: p 587–8).

There is very little doubt that CDA entertains such ambitions, and that in its younger days was quite strident about them. However, as Haig (2004) points out, as the framework has come to mature and perhaps in response to the criticisms it has faced, there is increasingly detectable a measure of realism as to the possibilities, under present social conditions and state of development of CDA itself, of fully actualising such aspirations. Even in its younger days, there have been analysts like Van Dijk who been less focused on ideological norms and instead have viewed discourse cognitively. As such, it seems unfair to generalise all work in CDA as having the same fundamental aims. With regards to crusader tendencies, while such aims of CDA have become perhaps more realistic, more streamlined and down-to-earth, there is still a tendency for ambition to result in over-interpretation of data, which in turn leads to a tendency to judge results “according to their political implications as much if not more than their validity.” (Hammersley, 1997: p. 253).

Perhaps one of the most resonating critical voices against CDA is that of the critical linguist Henry Widdowson, who has in a series of papers (Widdowson 1995a; 1995b; 1996; 1997; 1998; 2000a; 2000b; 2001a; 2001b) built and sustained a four-prong argument against critical approaches to discourse analysis, particularly Faircloughian CDA. Much of his arguments lie with the idea that he, like Hammersley regards CDA as having a decisionist foundation. As such, he charges that:

- CDA is not analysis in support of theory. Rather, it works serves merely as interpretation in support of beliefs held by the analyst.
- The beliefs of analysts are ideologically biased. As such analysts read meaning *into*, rather than *out of* texts.
- This bias is further compounded by the fact that analysts only select texts which confirm their beliefs.
- The distinction between the interpretation of the analyst and that of a layreader is ignored.

Again, much of Widdowson's criticisms are targeted at Fairclough's work and others which follow in this tradition. As such, this criticism is not necessarily relevant to all research in CDA. In any case, the first three points which Widdowson raises against CDA seem to be unduly unfair for in varying degrees, every research study is subject to influences of its researcher's own personal values. Additionally, Widdowson also constructs his own

arguments to favour his criticisms mainly by defining the term “analysis” in very stringent terms. Regardless even if CDA permits analysts to select texts which serve to demonstrate that discursive tools are used in particular ways, this does not necessarily render the knowledge invalid or useless. Indeed, as Martin (2000) posits, CDA could be used to demonstrate how discursive practices serve to counter dominant thought models or ideologies. The role that CDA takes is mainly to highlight instances where subjectivities maybe present in the construction of social communication. Widdowson also, argues for an introduction of analysis which examining alternative possible readings and seeking evidence to support or refute them. In defence of CDA however, Edward Haig (2004) points out that the failure to test findings by falsification is also prevalent amongst the great majority of orthodox applied linguists and is not peculiar to CDA. What is more pertinent in Widdowson’s critique is his point about the possible lack of interest in the principle of falsification being due to ideological beliefs. Again, such criticism comes across as a bit hypocritical, especially as no researcher; including Widdowson himself could with full confidence declare freedom from ideological commitments. Ignoring any possible failings on the part of other textual analysts, it is crucial to stress again that CDA does not pretend to hold the answers to any social issue. What it does accomplish is to indicate instances of certain strategies in discourse from a qualitative perspective. Its findings are only useful when considered in conjunction with the wider body of knowledge on any issue, not excluding those provided by other approaches to discourse analysis and social analysis which are considered more conventionally mainstream or quantitative.

Edward Haig (2004) and Jim Martin (2000) make an interesting criticism of CDA, which is perhaps a bit more transparent than most of the philosophical ones put forward by most other critics. Haig (2004) points out that by claiming to be “critical”, CDA effectively “others” the more established, mainstream approaches to discourse or linguistic analysis. As Haig states:

“From personal experience I have found that it also seems to cause the hackles of other discourse analysts to rise because of the implication that they are ‘non-critical’ or even ‘sub-critical’ and therefore somehow *in favour* of things like oppression, exploitation and inequality: by commandeering the moral high ground of being critical, CDA thus ‘others’ mainstream discourse analysis and performs the very kind of domination through language that it seeks to oppose.”

Haig (2004)

In being perceived as taking “the moral high ground” in the way which Haig suggests, CDA in a sense is challenging the validity of other approaches. As such, even though these approaches are themselves flawed, because they conform to the hegemonic norm rather than the explicitly oppositional stance that CDA espouses, they tend to attract less attention, while at the same time exercising their dominance. Even so, this does not afford CDA practitioners the right to adopt the label of victim. Instead, it behoves researchers who employ this methodology to work towards curtailing the supposed excesses which have been associated with CDA and ensuring that any analysis conducted is as systematic and transparently conducted as possible. That said, it is noteworthy that CDA is not as rigid theoretically as most other approaches to discourse or textual analysis. Perhaps, this might be more due to the fact that CDA has never set itself up as a theoretical or conceptual approach to social

research. Instead, it might be more useful to regard it as a methodological framework which allows researchers to among other things, analyse texts in relation to their wider societal contexts.

5.6. Analysing Discourses on Nigeria's National Identities: Building a CDA Toolkit

As highlighted previously in this chapter, CDA is a methodological framework which borrows from diverse approaches to discourse analysis. More importantly, it encourages the analyst to systematically and conscientiously consider what they aim to achieve in the analysis of data. This is an important feature because it results in a buffet-style approach in the planning and design of the research methodology, resulting in a toolkit which may be specific not only to a particular analysis, but also to a particular analyst. As a result, there is no guarantee that another analyst in attempting to conduct the same analysis using CDA will necessarily select the same toolkit I will present and employ on this occasion.

For those unfamiliar with the approach, it would seem that CDA is limited in its ability to address the questions raised in this enquiry. However, one of the strengths of CDA is the permission it gives for researchers to customise a set of tools particular to any study. This is certainly one which will be duly taken advantage of on this occasion.

The analysis of the data will draw very heavily from various models in the CDA framework, most markedly, the Social Actors, Lexical, Legitimation and Discourse-Historical models for analysis. As we have discussed previously, CDA is still a relatively nascent methodological framework, lacking the unified conceptual and analytical coherence that is a feature in other research methods. This undeniably allows for a mixing-and-matching of research tools

making way for customising methodologies which are study-specific. This approach should prove very useful, especially when one considers the various questions on the one hand and also solid instances of how such a gambit works methodologically and analytically.

5.6.1. Relevance and Social Action in CDA

Relevance is a term that depends on various circumstances and, as such, the decision on whether a given piece of presupposed information is relevant or not involves the consideration of such factors as audience and context of communication (Wodak et al, 1999; Mitten and Wodak, 1996). For instance, a given piece of presupposed information in a news article about an event in Nigeria cannot be equally relevant for Nigerian readers and their expatriate colleagues concurrently. At the same time, it could not be expected to be relevant to all those considered Nigerian. To do so would be to wrongly assume homogeneity of perceptions, expectations and experience of Nigerian social practice. The present study addresses this particular type of presupposition – ‘discourse presuppositions’ – because they are assumed to be strategic in terms of the readers’ “processing effort and the journalist’s intentions of achieving ideological goals.” (Bekalu, 2006).

Presupposition is a term often used in the linguistic/pragmatic literature to describe an important and inherent property of language use (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 1996), an idea which has now been inherited by and used in CDA. As a result, it is now a popular notion in discursive and pragmatic circles. The term, initially featuring in the work of German Philosopher Gottlob Frege (1982, cited in Kadmon, 2001: 10) theorises on the nature of reference and referring expressions. Kadmon (2001) summarises Frege’s main claims as follows:

- Reference expressions (names, definite descriptions) carry the presupposition that they do in fact refer. For example, the statement “Nigeria is a multicultural society” presupposes that an object or idea, called Nigeria is presumed to exist; otherwise the above statement makes no sense.
- For any sentence to have a truth value, its presupposition must hold. For instance, in saying “Nigeria is a multicultural society,” the state of affairs must fit with the presuppositions in the statement. If this is not the case, then the presupposition and the statement that uses it as its premise are false.
- Any presupposition of a sentence is also a presupposition of its negation. For instance: “I want to do it again” on the one hand, and “I do not want to do it again,” on the other. Whether or not I want to do it again, it is to be presupposed that I have done it before, whatever it is. This means that the negation of a presupposition does not necessarily render the presupposition false.

It might be tempting to assume that presuppositions are connoted meanings or subtexts and that they are generally used this way. Renkema (1993), however, argues that the term has its origins in the “philosophy of logic”, where it is used to denote a special type of implicit information. However, Grundy (1995) states that the two are different. He states that while ‘implied meaning’ refers to the possible conclusions an addressee deduces after decoding a text in relation to the intended meaning of the author of that text, presupposition on the other hand, refers to pre-existing knowledge that the “decoder” of the text is assumed to have and

that the text's creator therefore does not therefore need to assert. Keenan (2000), sharing a similar view states that the presuppositions of a sentence are the conditions that the world must meet from the decoder's point of view in order for the sentence to make literal sense. In other words, the decoder and encoder must share the same habitus, the same worldview. Looking at this in terms of the nation and national identity, the only way any discussion where these could be meaningfully employed as presuppositions require presupposed if he or she grasps these concepts and knowledge which the author considers common to the target audience.

Bekalu (2006) states that it is useful to consider the difference between the conception of the term presupposition as referring to all the pieces of knowledge that language users must assume in order for what they say to make literal sense, on the one hand, and 'discourse presuppositions' – the pieces of information that are taken for granted in a given discourse, on the other hand, although he is unable to give any clear distinguishing features between the two. While it might be conceivable that discursive presuppositions are subsets of the generality of presuppositions, defining this subset remains a difficult task (Bekalu, 2006). What appears less difficult to decipher is that the use of the term "discourse" to distinguish between both forms on presuppositions serves appears to act metonymically to describe genres of social communication, rather than to give discursive expression to an abstract.

Having established the above, for the purposes of this study, '[discourse] presuppositions' will be treated as information that is taken for granted in the creation of a discourse. These are more relevant than others in order for the assertions made in the discourse to be fully understandable. While Bekalu (2006) suggests that the readers must find these

uncontroversial in order to find the assertions relevant or acceptable,” knowledge being uncontroversial does not necessarily equate to its being accepted or relevant. If as Frege (Frege, 1892, cited in Kadmon, 2001) suggests, a presupposition could be challenged or negated, then it must follow that comprehension of a statement within a text does not mean that the reader would not refute it, in the same way that members of a community might agree on being a nation, while not necessarily agreeing on what character that nation takes.

Presupposition can also be classified as pragmatic and conventional. Pragmatic presupposition is non-linguistic in nature and relates to the context in which the utterance or proposition has been used (Levinson, 1983; Grundy, 1995; Stalnaker, 2000; Norrick, 2001). Text creators unconsciously or consciously make pragmatic presuppositions based on the assumptions of the audience and any shared knowledge between them and their intended audience. In contrast, conventional presupposition is linguistic, context-free, and can be encoded and decoded via the use of words and special structures.

This study addresses both pragmatic and conventional presuppositions without necessarily making any distinctions between either, especially as this is irrelevant to the way meaning is gleaned out of texts in practice (Bekalu, 2006). Indeed it is virtually impossible to utter or write a single sentence of any consequence without making some kind of assumption and hence without the use of presupposition.

Text authors presuppose different types of knowledge. For instance, Van Dijk (2005) alludes to personal, social and cultural knowledge, as well as knowledge about specific or general properties of events, and knowledge about historical and political structures that may be presupposed by the journalist in news discourse. He further argues that such forms of presupposed knowledge are to be found in other types of discourse genres. In a discussion on the management of knowledge within context, Van Dijk (2005: p. 80) argues that, despite the huge amount and diversity of knowledge presupposed in interaction and discourse, what he calls “K (knowledge) device” operates with it in a fairly simple manner. His summary of knowledge strategies employed in the management of presupposed knowledge is as follows:

- If the recipients are believed to be members of the same epistemic community (culture, country, group, etc.) as the writer, then it could be presupposed that all socially shared knowledge of this epistemic community is known by these recipient(s).
- If the recipients are believed to be members of another epistemic community, then activate knowledge about that other community. If such knowledge fails, assume that knowledge may be the same or similar to that of your own community. When in doubt ask or show ignorance.
- If I have just acquired new knowledge about specific events, it is probably not socially shared throughout the community, and hence not to be assumed that it is known to the recipients unless these recipients are known to have used the same source of information (e.g. the media).

- Interpersonal knowledge by definition may be presupposed to be known by the recipients with whom it was shared. Whenever the author is unsure of what speech communities make up his audience, such knowledge should be referred to.

- Personal knowledge is not assumed to be shared by recipients, and should hence not be presupposed.

Here, it is worth remembering a speaker's or writer's use of presuppositions for ideological reasons. Presuppositions could be 'fair' or 'honest' or 'non-controversial' ones based on common knowledge and agreement of observable facts. Or, in contrast, they could be contrived ones which are used by the author solely for the purpose of constructing social practices as legitimate (or not), or transforming their meanings. In this case, it would be logical to speculate about the possible influence of other elements of the speaker's or writer's context model, such as his or her intentions. Authors may not be merely guided by the fast decisions of their K-device but may instead be deliberately working towards achieving personal or group ideological goals in treating some pieces of information that are vital for the hearers' or readers' ease of understanding as "presupposed" (Bekalu, 2006).

Be that as it may, it is worth asking, if presuppositions perform ideological functions and they are based on common knowledge and serve to build "new" social knowledge, where the line is that separates presupposition and discourse. It could be argued that presuppositions are nothing more than discourse- assumptions or ideological positions that then serve to build others, which informs the concept of interdiscursivity.

If we consider presuppositions as knowledge which is exclusively possessed by a particular speech community, then how do we go about identifying these linguistically? Van Leeuwen's toolkit for Social Actors Analysis proves very useful here. Van Leeuwen (1995) departs from the Hallidayan approach to linguistic analysis (see Halliday, 1978) to provide a fairly quantitative means of analysing social action and social actors. It helps broadly to answer the questions of "who are the actors within this discourse?" and "What functions to they perform?" It could even help ultimately to answer the question of where the balance of power lies within a discursive context (Machin and Mayr, 2006).

Van Leeuwen (1995) outlines fifteen of these categories. In this particular instance though, we will be making use of the following in our analysis.

Abstraction- A linguistic (or discursive) device where actions are described in non-concrete terms (metaphors, similes). For instance, "Politicians in the past have dribbled their way into power."

Generalisation- This is the association of certain actions with an overall event, such that particular sequences of events are shown to be associated with certain phenomena or social actions. For instance, "During election time, people tend to choose candidates based on ethnicity."

Objectivation- This is the metonymical nominalisation of a complex set of actions. It is a form of abstraction, reducing a set of processes to a singular social event, action, idea or phenomenon. For example, "A free and fair election, one devoid of violence, not only

engenders but is also a sign of National Development.”

Descriptivisation- Assigning fixed qualities to certain actors (adjectival).

“The frustrated Nigerian is tired of the status quo.” For instance, “The average Nigerian is tired of the status quo.”

Determination/ Over-determination- Stereotyping (allegories, symbolisation, distillation, Inversion), which is not very unlike descriptivisation, generalisation and objectivation, which reduce actions, actors and phenomena to simple stereotypes.

Van Leeuwen (2007) points out that actions and reaction can be semiotic (figurative) or material (in the sense that they are exactly as it is described).

The politicians campaigned for office

Semiotic actions on the other hand, tend to be fairly abstractions, or objectivations. Such as in the examples below:

These politicians dribbled their way into power.

The nation’s progress has been hijacked by a select few.

The dream is dying.

Corruption is crippling our nation.

The actions depicted above are all material, in terms of Halliday's transitivity classification, but Van Leeuwen's Material/Semiotic model would classify them as semiotic, because although these are linguistically possible, it is quite hard to describe them in terms of observable actions in the material social world. For instance, how does a dream die? What would this look like in real terms? We understand what these mean, but only as symbolisations of ideas.

Rhetorical Tropes such as Hyperbole, metaphor, metonym, pun etc. are used to shape an understanding of a situation rather than describe it in concrete terms. These are especially prevalent in political communication (Chilton, 1997).

Hyperbole

The student demonstration was a mob rampage

Metaphor

Banks have said that we must not let the economy stagnate

The housing market bubble has burst

The situation in Iraq has overheated.

Right now the government is under siege

Quoting verbs

The management announced that striking workers would be punished.

The workers grumbled about problems with conditions.

Minority community leaders claim that they have suffered increased levels of abuse.

When the delegates had a meeting with Mr Brown and told him they felt under siege,

he replied: “I’m under siege too.”

When the delegates had a meeting with Mr Brown and complained they felt under siege, he whispered: “I’m under siege too.”

Mr Smith challenged the politician that represented a tired old stereotype.

Mr Smith grumbled to the politician that represented a tired old stereotype.

While Van Leeuwen (1995) provided these tools for the analysis of social actions with the aim of identifying who is given the most social agency in the construction of sentences, the first three in particular would serve to help us identify presuppositions in texts. In particular, we will be looking for instances where commonsense statements are made, but where in actuality, readers would need specialised knowledge of processes to fully understand their meanings and implications. As such, these tools should help in testing the hypothesis that news elite present knowledge in language that may appear oversimplified, but which really works to conceal information of processes, information which is only available to a select group.

The remaining categories provided by Van Leeuwen will be more useful in helping us answer the question pertaining to the way Nigeria’s non-elite actors are discursively framed in relation to national practice and what sort of actions they do both in terms of both the semiotic/material and Hallidayian transivity models. Looking at this specifically in terms of the Nigerian nation in discourse, it should help look at what degree of power they have in nationalist discourse, by showing us how actions are scripted and what sort of role non-elites are typecast.

5.6.2. Critical Lexical Analysis

As pointed out previously, CDA is concerned with the way broader social ideas are constructed and communicated. In terms of language, CDA focuses on the way linguistic components work within a text to communicate ideological positions. One key means of analysing and deconstructing power relations is the examination of word choices and their meanings i.e. lexical analysis. The idea that serves as a basis for this approach is the Hallidayian notion that word choices have implications for the possible interpretations of a sentence for instance (Caldas-Coulthard, 1994; Halliday, 1977):

The citizens shall make their own mind up.

The people will make their own mind up.

The community shall make up its own mind.

Each individual shall make their own mind up

Not too far removed from this also is what Caldas-Coulthard (1994) terms referential strategies, where the way actors are named has significant impact on the way in which they are viewed. There is also a range of naming choices that we can make regarding any particular social actor in a text. It is important to remember that in doing a Critical Lexical Analysis, the important thing, what separates CDA from discourse analysis is the questions that are asked, which serve to draw out the ideological framings that are done within a discourse. We can also ask a number of questions to draw out the ideological work that is being done, particularly when looking at actors in a discourse.

In terms of this study, the lexical tools that will be employed will be the tools of suppression, functionalisation, collectivisation and individualisation.

Suppression- What group of actors is missing?

Functionalisation- How frequently are social actors lexicalised in relation to state roles?

Collectivisation- Which social actors are more frequently constructed as groups?

Individualisation- Which social actors are more frequently constructed as individuals?

These tools will be applied in our analysis to help us glean from the texts information that would indicate which groups are assigned more social agency discursively. By identifying any differences in the way certain actors are lexicalised or excluded within discussions on the nation-state, we should be able to determine, with reasonable success, the model of nationality that is dominant in Nigerian newspaper texts.

5.6.3. Social Practice as Ideological: Legitimation Analysis

Van Leeuwen's (2007) model for looking at legitimation using Critical Discourse Analysis helps to answer questions around how social practices and roles are defined, legitimised, normalised and naturalised in discourse. The basis for this idea of language used to legitimate the social models is a Marxist one. As Van Leeuwen points out, agreeing with Weber, 'Every system of authority attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy', Weber (1964: p. 325, cited in Van Leeuwen, 2007). He goes on further to say that Language is without doubt the most important vehicle for these attempts. Berger and Luckmann (1966) have even argued that, effectively, all of language is legitimation. As they reason, the fact of a linguistic objectification of any aspect of human experience implies a fundamental legitimation of it on a basic level (1996:p.112). In other words, if there is a word, or linguistic means of expressing or describing anything, anyone, anytime or anyplace, that implies a validation of its existence. Legitimation more or less, serves as justification for an action or

institution; it also constructs reasons for why it is natural or normal for certain actors to perform certain actions or roles (1996: p.111). However, it also works in the reverse, serving to delegitimise and critique these as well.

Not dissimilar to Wodak and Mitten's (1996) idea that discourses are never decontextualised, he (Van Leeuwen, 2007) examines discourses on formal education. However, what is especially interesting about his research is that its findings are based on a corpus that is multimodal. As he states:

“...a decontextuali[s]ed study of legitimation is not possible. Legitimation is always the legitimation of the practices of specific institutional orders. “When I worked out the descriptive framework I present in this article, I started out from this premise and used an institutionally specific corpus of texts, texts that regulate and legitimi[s]e a particular institution, namely compulsory education. It was a diverse collection of texts, including teacher training texts, brochures for parents, books for young children, press reports, radio broadcasts, advertisements for school uniforms and necessities, and also critical texts, texts that sought to de-legitimise compulsory schooling, such as Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society (1971).”

Van Leeuwen (2007)

The analysis he conducts considers clauses and parts of clauses that focus on the activities, persons, tools, times and places that constitute certain social institutions and actions, in this case that of formal education. On the basis of the study, Van Leeuwen (2007) proposes and

demonstrates four types of legitimation conducted discursively through language, these being:

Authorisation- Justification based on the doer of the action.

Moral Evaluation- Justification based on notions of the rightness or wrongness.

Rationalisation- Justification based on expected outcomes.

Mythopoeia- Justification based on narratives, which reward and punish actions.

Authorisation as mentioned already, gives explanation for actions and actors on the basis of who they are, what they do. It answers the question of why we do or should do things with an answer of “Because I say so” or “Because X said so”. Authorisation operates through various ways. Van Leeuwen (2007) illustrates that it could take place through the use of personal authority (an action being proposed by someone in a position of status); expert authority (an action being proposed not so much by someone who has status as they do specialist knowledge); role model authority (evaluating an action on the basis of it being done by the type of social actors who do them), the authority of conformity (justification given to an action by the fact that it is done by social consensus), traditional authority (an action has the approval of a social institution) and impersonal authority (sanctioning an action on the basis of structural rules and regulations).

FORM OF AUTHORISATION	JUSTIFICATION
Personal	“Because X says so.”
Expert	“Because X knows so.”
Role Model	“Because X does so.”
Conformity	“Because everyone else does.”
Traditional	“Because that is the way it’s always been done.”
Impersonal	“Because the rules and regulations stipulate so.”

Table 5.1 Forms of Authorisation

Of course, this raises a further question of how authority gets vested in social characters in the first place. This issue would present itself with other forms of legitimation as well. The answer to this question is that of intertextuality, where discourses are built and constantly building other discourses (Fiske, 1996). How intertextuality takes place is in itself worthy of a full discussion, one which does not appear to be part of what this form of CDA tries to unveil. Of course, decoding any particular discourse usually reveals another set of discourses that serve in its construction. It also appears that the same takes place with legitimation. For instance, there is usually a moral judgment or some kind of rationalisation given for a course of action.

Moral Evaluation in contrast, is a form of legitimation that works through the use of discourses on value. Usually, this would be done through the use of terms which either connote or denote negative and positive values. In this case, moral evaluation legitimises ideas, roles, events or practices by answering the question of “why?” with “because it is right”. The same is the case with the reverse i.e. delegitimising.

Moral Evaluations ascribe values to actions and people. Adverbs and adjectives are usually featured in whatever linguistic unit i.e. clause, phrase or sentence it occurs in.

It is normal to be afraid of change.

Tribalism is inimical to national development.

He grudgingly helped her up.

Sometimes, evaluations could be explicit, especially when nominalisation is applied.

The forces of evil should not be allowed to undermine democracy.

Immigration is an invading force.

Visually, evaluation might occur by the use of facial expressions like smiling or frowning.

Abstractions are moral evaluations which work by associating actions with processes or abstract nouns. These are similar to those proposed by Van Leeuwen in the formulation of a Social Actors Analysis toolkit (Van Leeuwen, 1995).

Tribalism can only foster disunity.

We are fighting for national development.

This form of moral evaluation relies heavily on comparing two different things. It works to either show similarities or to create sharp contrasts.

Letting go of the past is difficult. The same with letting go of tribal affiliations in

favour of national interests.

It is painful letting go, but you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs.

Rationalisation, a third type of legitimation tool, justifies or *dejustifies* an action or an idea on the basis of the reasons for doing it. It is right if the outcomes are right.

Promoting national development ensures a brighter future for all.

Instrumental Rationalisation constructs actions as a means to an end so that you have an actor performing an action to be able to achieve something else.

By voting, Nigerians are exercising their rights to express their true desires on what direction they want the country to take.

It assists in development.

Here we see that voting is not just an action in itself. Instead, it is constructed here as a means of empowerment, of flexing political will.

Theoretical Rationalisation defines, predicts or explains actions. It acts as a naturalisation tool. Rationalisation could be based on commonsense (experiential) or on scientific knowledge. The first is usually easier to refute and debate, whereas the latter is harder to argue, given the weight of structured evidence that supports it. On explaining scientific rationalisations, Van Leeuwen (2007) enlists the help of Berger and Luckmann (1966) who argue that:

“Such legitimations form fairly comprehensive frames of reference for the respective sectors of institutionalised conduct. Because of their complexity and differentiation they are frequently entrusted to specialised personnel who transmit them through formalised initiation procedures.”

(Berger and Luckmann, 1966: p.112)

With scientific rationalisation we see a form of authorisation (could be personal, expert or impersonal authority) taking place as well, for the main backbone with this kind of legitimation is that of specialised knowledge, authority figures, such as political figures, or the strength of institution and tradition.

It is necessary to leave home in order to mature fully into adulthood.

Do not allow a few people hijack our civil rights. Nothing good would come from it.

Tribalism is a sign of cultural backwardness.

Mythopoeia use stories to legitimise social actions. Stories may also use symbolic actions, specific actions that can nevertheless represent more than one domain of institutionalised social practice, and so provide a ‘mythical model of social action’ (Wright, 1975: p. 188). Stories could be moral or cautionary. Moral tales sketch out positive outcomes to particular actions. Cautionary tales on the other hand, serve to do the reverse- outlining negative outcomes to actions. Within the mythopoeia Van Leeuwen (2007) proffers, is all the other types of legitimation. Van Leeuwen’s example was the story of a lion whose actions made it a misfit in the context of the classroom. Here, the end result of the story showed the outcome,

which was that school was not for animals, but for people. It appears that the only unique feature of mythopoeia is that it uses stories, whether fictional or factual and more specifically the narrative genre to legitimate. Within the narrative however, are moral evaluations, rationalisations and authorisations of actions and actors working together to bring the story to its end and to underpin the meta-narrative, whatever it is.

Thus, mythopoeia seems to function more as a category for identifying all the legitimations and the way they work within any text like a journalistic article to come up with the dominant meanings within it. In a sense, mythopoeia is a type of discourse analysis, using linguistic tools for its examination. Perhaps the most important thing to realise is that the legitimisation forms, excluding mythopoeia, do not occur in isolation of each other. Many times, these work together in various combinations in practical terms. Although we review these and identify these here separately, in everyday social communication, one could find a singular discursive exchange i.e. text using these to give legitimacy to any ideological framework. See the example below:

“The teacher smiled to further encourage the helpful students who picked up their toys.”

(Cited in Van Leeuwen, 2007)

Authorisation has been done by ‘The teacher’ performing the action. In terms of Van Leeuwen’s analysis (2007) the teacher here serves both as role model and personal authority figures. Visually, the teacher might act as a role model authority as well. The Moral Evaluation comes through the use of the expression “helpful students” rather than simply

referring to these as “students”. The term helpful places a positive value on the students as a result of their actions. Rationalisation is evident here through the use of the clause “...to further encourage...,” which shows the reason for the teacher’s smiling. The expected outcome of the teacher’s action is to reinforce the actions of the students as helpful.

For the analysis in this study, all the tools in Legitimation Analysis framework will be very useful in enabling an identification of what meta-narratives emerge with regards to the nation-state and the roles played by both the elite and non-elite in it . In particular, we will be looking at the hierarchy of agency given to both sets of actors. Furthermore, a legitimation analysis will also look at the position given to ethnonationality and any difference in how actors and actions are evaluated with respect to ethnic and state identities.

5.6.4. Context and History: Discourse-Historical Method

This model of CDA is more socio-historically focused, than it is preoccupied with language. It uses the text as a means of understanding the social context and ideologies that inform its production and are therefore present in it, although not always explicitly so.

A case in point is the work done by Wodak and Mitten (1996) in examining the discursive development of racism in Austrian discourse look at private letters, group discussions and speeches and demonstrate how racist (anti-Semitic) discourse constructed in a speech in the earlier part of the century brings itself to bear in more contemporaneously situated social communications on racism. As we can see, the analysis is also multimodal. Wodak and Mitten (1996) suggest that prejudice and racism cannot be broadly narrowly, suggesting that these are practices in varying degrees rather than unilaterally. If this is the case in practice,

then it would occur discursively, particularly in language.

In this particular analysis by Wodak and Mitten on prejudice and racism borrows Quasthoff's models of prejudicial analysis, finding sentences as the linguistic unit most amenable to her type of analysis (Quasthoff, 1973 cited in Mitten and Wodak, 1996). Mitten and Wodak distinguish four types of prejudice expressed in sentences, which she defines using the rules of formal logic (Quasthoff, 1973 cited in Mitten and Wodak, 1996).

Firstly, there are Analytical Propositions claiming to express a truth. This is the basic form of a stereotype, and all stereotypes can be seen as conforming to this pattern. A quality or behaviour pattern is ascribed to a group. Van Leeuwen (2007) would say that a moral evaluation has been made. The group is the subject, the quality the predicate. It takes the form of a statement, from the point of view of logic it is, however, a judgment (e.g., "Germans are hard-working"). The second types are classed as Modified Statements are those which limit their force by using certain signals in their surface structure (e.g., "The inhabitants of Lower Saxony *are said to have* a reputation for being taciturn"). Here, the speaker may or may not hold this view, but they express it nonetheless. Thirdly, are the Directly Expressed Opinions, sentences in which the speaker explicitly takes ownership of the view expressed (e.g. "I don't think that . . ."). Again, these are individual opinions and not constructed as collective. Finally are the Text Linguistic types. In this case, the stereotype is expressed implicitly (e.g. "He is Jewish, but he's very nice"). Here, being Jewish is constructed as negative even though the individual being evaluated is in himself "nice."

As is evident from the work done by Mitten and Wodak outlined above, the discourse-historical mode of CDA uses language to look for clues on how discourse like those of

prejudice and racism are expressed and practised socially. The wodakian focus is not on linguistics and does not claim to do so, although it uses language and its components i.e. words, clauses, phrases, sentences and paragraphs as entry points in its analysis. While looking at language, this approach also works with many other disciplines, like Rhetoric, Logic and History, which could be useful in this case.

This tool is especially useful for seeing how discourses change, or not, within the same society, over different time periods, so that for instance it is possible for us to chart the flow of the Nigerian nation in discourse from the country's creation to present day. It is interdisciplinary and generally multimodal in its approach, not limiting its tools to those used in linguistics nor to particular modes of social communication. The earlier mentioned work by Mitten and Wodak (1996) looks at speeches *and* journalistic output, situated within the same field of practice and socio-histories and look at the development of meanings as present within discourse. However, it could also work multimodally. It allows for the fact that Nigeria could mean one thing in one socio-historical period and something else in another, all within the same space. This method also helps to show how one discourse could help to build another.

While this model of CDA would allow for an exposition into the framing of certain practices and groups, it offers two dimensions to apply in our analysis. Firstly, this approach appears to offer something relevant to our analysis in its comparison and contrasting of particular discourses across various socio-historical contexts. This categorisation of texts by socio-historical frames that would be useful in our analysis, especially as the historical scope spans a fairly wide timeframe. Borrowing from the categories that media historians like Fage

(1969) and Omu (1982) have applied to Nigeria's media history, in this study the texts gathered will be analysed in relation to the following timeframes: Early Colonial (1906-1921); Latter Colonial (1922-1959); Early Postcolonial (1960-1965); Military Postcolonial (1966-1998); and Fourth Republic Postcolonial (1999-2007)

A second useful tool that the Wodakian approach offers is the analysis of narrative within texts. Similar to the use of mythopoeia in the Legitimation Analysis, a focus on narratives will allow an identification of patterns in the sequence of events on national practice constructed within texts. It could even be used in combination with the Legitimation Analytical framework to not only look at the prevalent strategies for legitimising or delegitimising certain practices or ideas, but to also examine the process by which hopes or fears are employed linguistically to affect the way societies consider these practices or ideas.

5.7. The Question of Size: How Big is Big Enough?

A very important question in the conduct of a research study is the question of how large or small a corpus (or the number of texts used for analysis) should be. For CDA in particular, this question is one of ongoing debate. CDA theoretically functions within an analytical framework that is highly qualitative and intensive in its approach to analysis. For those who adopt the Corpus Linguistic (CL) approach, the answer is large corpora. However, it must be noted that CL has not been associated with the analysis of discourse, but rather with the study of lexical and grammatical patterns in general language, so that the use of very large corpora is not only relevant, but an integral part of the approaches it takes. Moreover, unlike the tradition(s) of CDA, in which the subjectivity of the analyst's reading position is candidly admitted, CL makes a claim to the objectivity of its findings and is concerned with questions

such as the "replicability" or reliability of its findings (Bayley, 2006). A third and perhaps fundamental feature which differentiates CL from CDA is that it is not theory-driven but data-driven, and this alone might be enough of an incompatibility to limit its influence on CDA (Garzone and Santulli, 2003).

Corpus Linguistics is an empirical approach to the study of language based on the computer assisted analysis of the actual patterns of language on the basis of a "finite-sized body of machine-readable texts, sampled in order to be maximally representative of the language variety under consideration" (McEnery and Wilson, 1996: p. 24). Its origins can be dated back to the 1960s with the construction of the Survey of English Language, the Brown corpus, the London-Lund corpus and the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen corpus, which were corpora amounting to between 500,000 and 1,000,000 running words (Bayley, 2006). That said, it was not until the final decades of the twentieth century, with the ever-growing memory sizes and operational speed of computers and the greater and greater availability of text via the worldwide web i.e. the internet, that CL definitively became a widely popular approach in Linguistics.

The kind of linguistic information that a corpus can provide includes data on the relative frequencies of referential terms, their distributions across the corpus and the patterning of collocation and colligation associated with other lexical expressions, and patterns of (co?) selection. Work on corpora has demonstrated that language use is characterised by spectacular regularities of patterns; it highlights the very routine constrained nature of much language behaviour, in contrast to its creativity and individuality. The data it provides us with are not merely quantitative but also qualitative. For example, corpus linguistics has shown us

that the meanings of words are not properties that can be found in dictionaries but are highly sensitive to their immediate linguistic context and may be said to have their own grammar. Thus while the English dictionary merely gives the following definition of the verb *cause*: "Be the cause of, effect, bring about; occasion, produce; induce, make [.]", findings from corpora demonstrate that the thing caused is nearly always something constructed as undesirable. Conversely, the complements of the verb *provide* is nearly always something desirable (Stubbs, 1996: p. 173-4) and many other findings of this kind of semantic prosody have been provided by the analysis of corpora.

In discussing the use of corpora, a distinction should be made between mainstream corpus linguistics and CDA which adopts some of the tools of corpus linguistics (Bayley, 2006). Perhaps the most important general claim made by the latter is that "corpus linguistics is finally reinstating observation, and on a scale previously not feasible" (De Beaugrande, 2001: p. 115). However, there are some basic theoretical assumptions that make bridge-building the two different approaches difficult in practice. For example, there is little agreement as to what the role of corpora should be vis-à-vis linguistic theory. Should linguistic study be driven by a study of the data we find, in other words should the procedures be bottom-up and inductive? Or should corpora be used for verifying and correcting descriptions, models and theories, following a top-down deductive approach? The mainstream position is that corpus findings cannot be modelled onto existing theories of language and that we should always start with the data and postpone "the use of [abstract categories] for as long as possible" (Sinclair, 1991: 29). Indeed it is argued that starting from theory is likely to predispose the analyst to subjective research. This search for concrete use of abstract categories is what CDA does, so that a proposal to quantify it goes against its nature. Tognini Bonelli (2001) has

proposed an acronym for an independent discipline within linguistics - CDL, or Corpus Driven Linguistics. Tucker (2005), on the other hand, presents a case for the incorporation of corpus findings within existing linguistic theory like that of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which has already impacted on CDA.

Next there is the problem of corpus dimension, the question of size. Within mainstream CL, the position seems rather clear - the larger the corpus the better. Given some of the aims of CL, for example lexicography based on a huge quantity of authentic data, or delicate grammatical description deriving from the observation of large corpora, this position is fully justified. A small corpus simply does not give us enough lexemes or enough instances of each to conduct sophisticated lexicographical or grammatical research. However, as I shall claim later, for the discourse analyst the role of small specialised corpora is fundamental.

The size question also implies a claim for representativeness - the more tokens a corpus contains; the more likely it is to represent a language. However, such a claim may be exaggerated. Can 300 million words be said to be representative of a population or universe whose size nobody has been able to quantify? The definition of the dynamic, extremely varied, potentially infinite and continuously expanding 'population' of a language is in itself rather problematic. Moreover, no general corpus dedicates a sufficiently large collection of spoken language. For instance, the British National Corpus, according to Bayley (2006) is made up of 100 million running words and contains some 4.5 million running words of unscripted conversation. Collecting this data, would have been no easy task, but it was drawn from recordings made by just 125 informants and makes up less than five percent (5%) of the whole corpus.

The third problem that critical discourse analysts may have with corpus linguistics concerns the nature of quantitative studies and the potential loss of the textual dimension of language that it necessarily involves. Within CDA, it is taken for granted that entire texts and not isolated examples should be studied; it is also taken for granted that meanings are made over long stretches of text and across texts and that to understand a text we need to know something about the context of situation, the social positioning of speakers, etc. In a very large corpus this aspect of textual analysis is difficult, if not impossible, to recover. Decontextualising language in this way removes the very thing that makes it discursive. Moreover, work with small corpora has shown that meanings that seem to be apparently clear in a concordance line often turn out to be very different when we see the line situated in its full context. When Sinclair (1991) argues that corpus data should be studied from the bottom up, he is making a claim for a qualitative study of language. However, as he concedes, there is a price to pay for dealing with large quantities: a qualitative study of language implies a considerable amount of insight into the texts themselves and the conditions of their creation, the intertextual network that they fall into. This is very difficult to achieve with large corpora.

In concluding this discussion on how large the dataset in this research should be, what I would argue is that the analysis of the language on nation could be enhanced by adopting some of the tools and procedures of CL in what might be called small corpus discourse analysis, corpus-assisted discourse studies (Partington et al., 2003), or computer-assisted analysis (Baker et al, 2008). According to Partington et al (2003), this may not satisfy those of the mainstream CL school of thought but it could provide a healthy corrective to the tendency in CDA to focus on relatively small amounts of text. There is an enormous quantity of discourse that can reasonably be considered as falling in the broad macro-category of

"nationalist language". Specialised corpora can be constructed in order to examine say, a particular kind of discourse, a particular timeframe, or a particular societal issue. Such corpora serve a three-fold function. Firstly, they may serve to provide an entry point into the textual dimension of the corpora. Secondly, they may also serve to verify the significance of any findings. Thirdly, it makes it easier for the CDA analyst to intensify their focus and be specific in their examination. The analyst may shift backwards and forward between the data provided by concordance findings and the texts themselves, and small corpora could be compared with large corpora in order to identify characterising traits. This, according to Bayley (2006) is the approach adopted on the national research project conducted by the University of Siena, the University of Bologna, the University of Bologna at Forlì, and the LUISS of Rome ("Corpora and Discourse: a quantitative and qualitative analysis of political and media discourse on the conflict in Iraq in 2003") which has as its starting point the construction of indexed and annotated corpora of discourse in the House of Commons and the House of representatives, of White House press briefings, of the Hutton inquiry, of British and US newspapers and of British, US and Italian television news broadcasts.

CDA looks at power in language and as such, it involves some search for patterns in language use, especially as CDA primarily looks to demonstrate how power relations operate in language use. While this may be, CDA is more concerned with the ideology or models of the world (discourse) constructed and communicated through language, rather than knowledge of language as an end in itself. It is the difference in objectives that makes the use of vastly large corpora impossible, especially when bearing in mind the many constraints that limit any research. It is only the use of relatively small corpora that would sufficiently permit a critical discourse analyst to be critical of the text and look at it as social practice, rather than

conducting a superficial textual analysis that focuses on the language in the text while not necessarily revealing much about how social frameworks are constructed. At the same time, this would allow the analysis take on a more “quantitative” quality.

Bearing this in mind, this research seeks to build a relatively small corpus. What might be considered as constituting a large enough dataset is always open to debate. However, the aim in this study will be to work towards gathering as many texts as is realistically possible within the timeframe that applies in this instance. Of course, these texts would all contain discourses on the Nigerian state. To help effect this synthesis of a quantitative and qualitative approach to our analysis, we will analyse our text in two stages. At the first stage, an examination of texts to identify the frequencies of the various discursive tools we will be borrowing from the diverse CDA perspectives we have reviewed previously in this chapter. This stage of analysis would involve a fairly large dataset and would generate quantitative results.

The second part of our analysis will deal with a smaller sample of texts, which will build up on the quantitative results while demonstrating how certain meta-narratives, that is, on the positions of elites and non-elites and on the place of ethnic identity in the nation-state, are embedded within texts and are used to give a commonsense approach to the statist model of the nation-state. In this instance, several texts will be selected to illustrate these discursive strategies

5.8. Conclusion

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as an interdisciplinary methodological framework offers various opportunities to analyse the discourses on nation in Nigerian newspapers. Being a qualitative approach, it prioritises the intensive focus on individual media texts over gathering larger data sets, especially as at its centre is the aspiration to critically deconstruct discourses to reveal hidden ideological building blocks. Essentially, CDA works to reveal social power relations or ideological framing that is constructed and operated through discourse. There are criticisms centred on the relatively small datasets as well as the subjective role researcher/analyst (when compared to more quantitative methods) that inform the approach to CDA. CDA however, prides itself on being able to thoroughly comb texts in a way that other quantitative approaches to textual analysis do. As a practical way of doing this with large amounts of texts has yet to be found, the tendency is to lean towards smaller “collections” of texts in favour of richer analysis. As CDA could be applied to the analysis of various modes of discourse, it could be used in looking at either linguistically or visually constructed discourse.

CDA also allows for analyses of discursive texts that are not limited to the texts alone. As discourses are situated in socio-historical contexts, such critical assessment allows for a more complete and thorough study. This allows the researcher to include what information is available on the socio-historical context of the production of the discourses in the critical analysis. As a relatively young research framework, CDA has various models with opportunities for the development of even more depending on which area(s) of social science it borrows from theoretically or methodologically. In looking at doing an analysis of discourse in the linguistic texts in Nigerian newspapers, three models stand out as especially

relevant- Social Actors Analysis, Legitimation (or Appraisal) Analysis and Discourse-historical Analysis.

The Social Actors' model developed by Van Leeuwen would enable the examination of how the actors we are concerned with are in the discourses and the roles they play in the context of nation. This would allow us to see to what extent the masses are provided a script for social practice which includes them and grants them social agency in matters to do with the defining and operating of their nation. The Social Actors model also provides some tools which would allow an identification of the ways in which presuppositions are used discursively to provide information which requires knowledge that might not necessarily be widely available to those who are not part of the economic or political elite. Legitimation Analysis would be helpful in looking at how social actors and their actions are either positively or negatively evaluated. Additionally, it will help us see the ways in which the masses are framed in the legitimising or delegitimising of national practice. The wodalakian Discourse-historical Analysis offers tools for looking at how discourses change over time. While it employs similar tools to the others, its focus is more directed towards examining how the ideologies present in a discourse might be altered or be maintained across various historical moments, or depending on who is exercising discursive power. It also allows us explore the use of narrative in constructing models of national practice.

One small point about the selection of the actual tools for analysis in this thesis. It is worth bearing in mind that CDA offers a relatively wide selection of analytical tools which the principle instrumentation tool i.e. the researcher can use. While this might be the case in this instance, only those tools which have been deemed appropriate, necessary and useful for

completing the task at hand have been chosen. Of course, this means that only the tools that will effectively assist in answering the research questions have been selected for application during the data analysis. Ultimately, how well-suited they are to this undertaking will be determined by how lucratively they function in the analysis which is to follow.

As mentioned previously the relatively small size of the datasets used in CDA factors as one of the major criticisms that come against it, especially when it is compared in contrast to more quantitatively-driven branches of linguistics, such as CL, which as a rule, looks for patterns in linguistic corpora and as such, comes into its own with vast amount of data. CL however, tends to be superficial in its analyses of texts and does not work to part for considering them beyond their linguistic properties. CDA on the other hand, is concerned with such questions. Of course, these questions about the size of datasets are more representative of wider questions in the quantitative/qualitative debate. No research approach is without criticisms and ideally, a research method should possess all the strengths and none of the perceived weaknesses of either. In this research the analysis will combine both CL and CDA, working with large datasets to identify frequencies of linguistic units present within our newspaper texts at the first stage; and working with a significantly smaller sample at the second stage which should allow for a more intensive focus on any notable observations made in the first phase of analysis. Baker et al (2008) demonstrate how the hybridisation of the two frameworks could be applied and that has usefully informed the sorts of analysis that will be employed in our case.

Chapter Six

Analysis and Discussion

6.1. Research Data

The data gathered for this study is a stratified purposive sample. Considering that one of the chief aims of this study is to examine the way that discourses on nation operate and are constructed, it is key that the sample set used here be denotatively identifiable as expressing nationalist logic or ideology. Here, if a piece of text (an article or report in this instance) has a headline that overtly purports to discuss any aspect of national practice, it is selected. As the study also investigates the degree to which the framing of non-elites in national discourse in Nigeria may have varied across different socio-historical stages, it is necessary to purposefully work to select texts that were also chronologically representative, with texts gathered from each decade from 1906 to 2006.

The sample was gathered from two sources. Copies of texts in the Nigerian newspapers published prior to 2000 were obtained from the British Library (Newspapers) in Colindale, North London in the United Kingdom. The data gathering for these was done over numerous visits between January and June 2007. For texts that were more recent, that is those that were published between the years 2000-2006; these were gathered from the Agbiti family library in Nigeria. The gathering of these pieces of texts was done between October 2006 and June 2007.

An ideal population, one comprised of every newspaper article published in Nigeria within the socio-historical framework of this study was unavailable, especially observable as the sampling goes back further. Regrettably, the British Library did not have a readily accessible supply of usable originals or alternate versions of every Newspaper publications prior to 1907. While there were accessible copies of some Nigerian newspapers published in the earlier part of the 1920s, there were none for the middle to latter part of that decade. The 1930s provides a fairly more source for data, but even then, the only years in that decade with accessible data were 1933 and 1939. Surprisingly and unfortunately, there were no obtainable versions of newspaper publications produced in the 1940s. It is when we get to the 1950s, in particular periods from 1951 and 1954 through to 1959 that there is relative abundance of and ease of access to newspaper texts. Newspaper articles after this period are more ample, albeit not in a complete assemblage. As a result, the sampling was also greatly affected by “non-response” from particular timeframes.

A total population comprised of 237 articles was eventually gathered from across the socio-historical scope of this study.

Time frame	Population
Early Colonial (1906- 1921)	26
Latter Colonial (1922-1959)	28
Early Postcolonial (1960-1965)	33
Military Postcolonial (1966-1998)	59
Contemporary Democratic Postcolonial (1999-2007)	91
Total	237

Table 6.1 Socio-Historical Distribution of Data

The newspapers where the data is drawn from are those which have been highlighted as being nationalist publications, which is to say that they are regarded as being neither partisan nor ethno-regional in their coverage of news. While none has run for the entire timeframe that forms the scope of our analysis and discussion, these will help us in gaining insight to the broader practice of the construction of the non-elite.

6.2. The Discursive Construction of Nigeria's non-elites

The suppression of non-elites is a common feature of discourses on the nation-state and on issues related to its development during the colonial era. Fifty percent of the texts analysed from this period make no mention of the non-elites of the colonies, focusing instead on indigenous elite actors and on the colonial establishment in the discourses about the territory and its development. This under-specification of “the masses” is particularly prevalent the further back the texts are, implying a historicity to the acknowledgement of the masses in discourses.

Interestingly, the increased presence of non-elites in the discourses coincides with the steady introduction of the idea of indigenes governing themselves, rather than the continued rule of their homeland by non-natives. The overriding theme of the national discourse, here is the acceptance of a new socio-political unit, with associated newer practices, to achieve a common political cause. The logic being communicated here works to rationalise the redefinition and recontextualisation of social organisation and practices attached to it.

Homogenisation is a consistently employed tool in the construction of non-elites. They are consistently handled and operated as a collective, regardless of the socio-historical framing of the articles analysed. In only two texts analysed from the period of Early Independence is the individualisation of non-elites observable and even in both cases, the actors are typified through descriptivisations such as “the average Nigerian”, “the ordinary man”, “the common man” and expressions such as “every Nigerian” to construct representatives of a collective. This of course, works very well in constructing a national collective. While this might be viewed as a means of unifying otherwise culturally divergent groups of people, in many cases, with irreconcilable communal worldviews and practices on the one hand, it also works to discursively suppress diversity in contexts where not doing so would be problematic. This practice is especially observable in political discourses. Another thing such descriptive practice does is imply an inferiority to the role of the non-elite. In being “ordinary” or “average”, the masses then are subordinate to those who are less ordinary- The Big Men. Of course, with this prescribed dynamic comes the implication that this group of actors ought to accept the dominance of the elites ideologically and otherwise. The seemingly innocent expressions work to create a picture that renders any social contributions by this group as fairly insignificant in comparison to those of the intellectual and political elite.

The heavy use of collectivisation lies in stark contrast to the extremely heavy use of individualisation and functionalisation in nominalising elite actors in discourses. The analysis reveals that while elite actors are homogenised and collectivised routinely in discourses e.g. “governors”, “politicians”. However, the individualisation of these actors far outweighs the practice of collectivisation.

Of course, collectivising “the diverse peoples of Nigeria” is also an effective strategy for creating in-groups and out-groups when working to ethnicise or regionalise national discourses. For example, see this text produced in the 1960s at the height of the political instability within the First Republic which eventually led to the military takeover of governance in Nigeria.

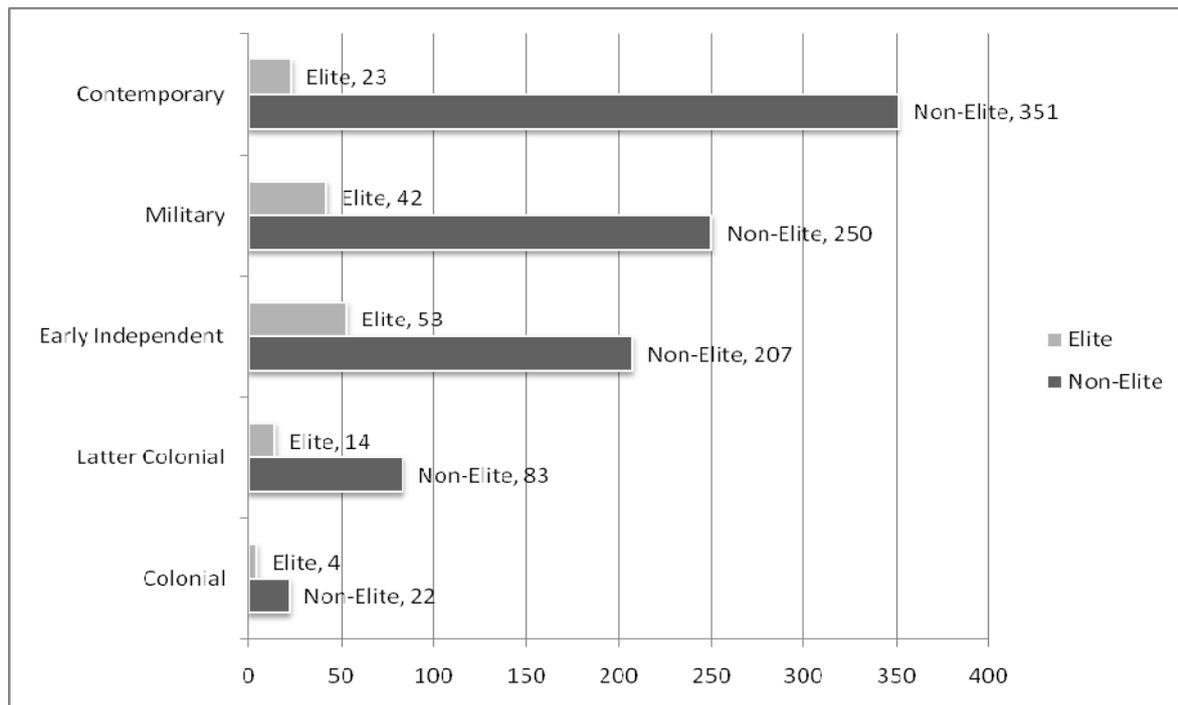


Figure 6.1 Frequency of Collectivisation of Elite and Non-Elite Actors

“The different peoples in the region were merging into one single entity which would eventually become a formidable force in Nigeria. It was not done cunningly. It was an open exercise born out of the genuine desire to make into one, a group of divergent people. Thanks to the good sense of the leaders, the exercise succeeded and the North became what it is today.”

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

In terms of the socio-historical timeframes, the strategies of collectivisation and homogenisation are observed in framing the ways that the non-elites are to view their collective identity in ways that vary with each different frame. The nominal choices for these actors in the earlier periods (colonial and latter colonial) reveal a pan-africanist view of the identities of the people within the colonised territories. Here, the people are predominantly referred to as Africans or West Africans. While initially there was a suppression of “the people” in earlier texts from the colonial era, gradually, the nominalisation of these actors is introduced into the discourses, particularly in anti-colonial rhetoric. The nominalisation of non-elites as Nigerians does not occur until we are dealing with discourses dealing with the movement for self-government and independence from colonial rule. The referential strategy of constraining non-elites as Nigerians marks a significant shift ideologically where their role changes from being [West] Africans, a collection of ethnonationalities with the commonality of European, specifically British colonialism, to becoming a singular national community.

In the years following the attainment of independence, there is a continued use of terms that situate “the people” in a nationalist perspective of the world; however, there is also a strong presence of ethno-regional references for the people. Reflecting the distrust that was prevalent among the political elite and the regionalising of national issues, there is also a considerably high use of terms that divide actors along these lines. On average, there are three ethnoregionalist references for non-elites actors for every nationalised reference to them during this period. While the West, East and North regions are synonymous with the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups, respectively, it is interesting to note that ethnic referential terms are hardly used in the national discourses from this period. Instead,

expressions like “Southerner”, “Easterner”, and “People of the North” are prevalent.

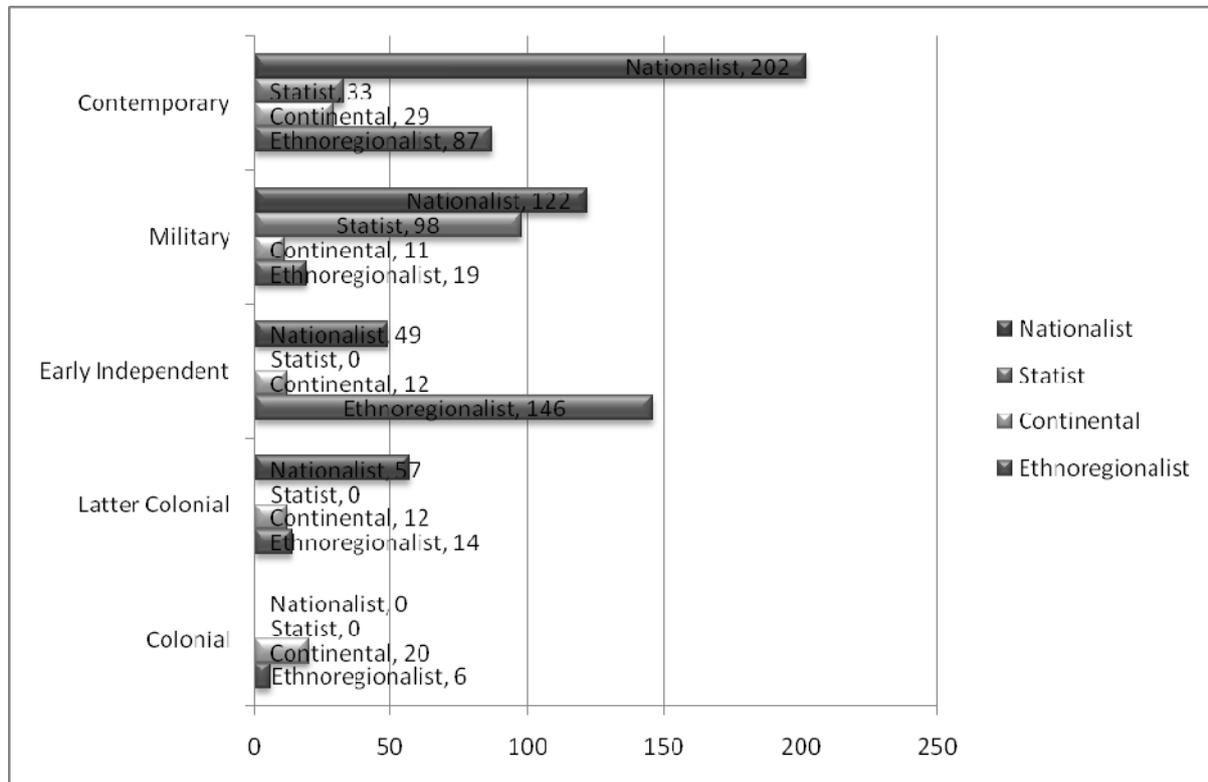


Figure 6.2 Socio-Historical Patterns of Non-Elite Nominalisation

An analysis of the discursive uses of activation and passivisation in our texts reveal a pattern of using non-elites grammatically as objects in sentences. As the chart below illustrates, there has been a larger use of passivisation of Nigeria’s non-elites when compared with activation. As such, Nigerians are usually passive voices, spoken for by elites within newspaper discourses. The pattern of the use of passivisation in national discourses cuts across all the socio-historical timeframes except for the colonial era. The analysis of data from the colonial era shows a predominant use of activation during this period with an average of 85

activations for every 100 articles, compared with an average occurrence of 42 passivisations for every 100 articles.

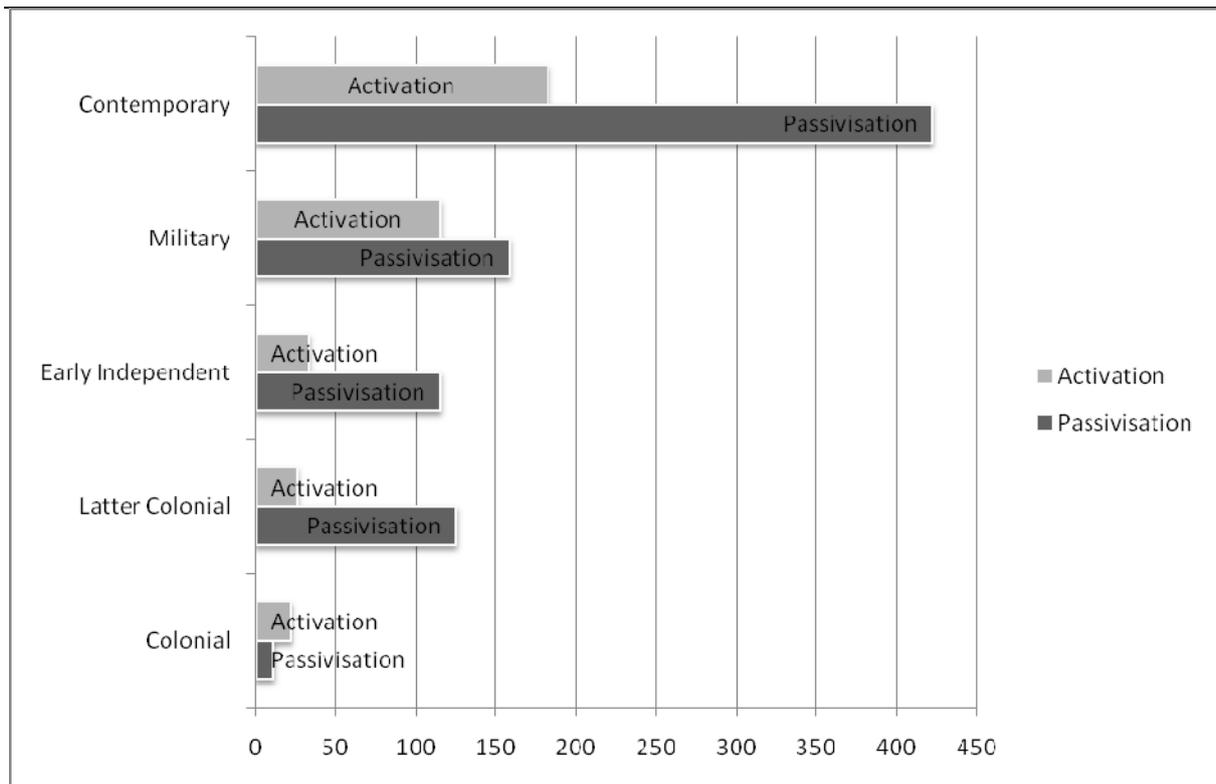


Figure 6.3 Distributions of Activation and Passivisation Socio-Historically

The use of activation does not necessarily operate to construct the non-elite actors as possessing the ability to be *materially* socially active. For instance, see an excerpt from an article published by Thomas Payne Jackson which might be deemed as one which was aimed at mobilising indigenous political action against colonialism:

“*West Africans* have discovered today what the *Indians*... discovered 35 years ago, that, placed as they are under the controlling influences of a foreign power, it is essential to their well-being that they should have a common cause and develop a

national unity... We hope the day will come soon when... *Hausas, Yorubas and the Ibos* will make a common standard and work hand in hand for their common fatherland.”

(Lagos Weekly Record, February 26, 1910)

While the non-elite actors here are constructed as subjects, the actions they perform are predominantly semiotic. The acts of discovery of the need to “have a common cause”, “developing a national unity”, “make a common standard” and “work hand in hand” as progressive and noble as they appear, are not material actions. How could these lofty ideas be translated into concrete actions which the individual could enact and express in a way that demonstrates social agency and activity? This phenomenon is not restricted to this article or indeed to texts produced during the colonial era. In fact, approximately 70 per cent of the observances of non-elite activation in the total texts analysed were of semiotic actions. Substantially, though it might be tempting to regard the presence of activations as an indication of the scripting of some agency to the roles played by non-elites, a further probing of these suggests otherwise.

In addition to the points regarding the passivisation of non-elites as well as the prescription of semiotic actions for the “masses”, there is also the fact of that these social actors are constructed as being oppressed. In a significant 35 per cent of this dataset, this theme is present.

“The people in every state should stand prepared to abort any party or government-sanctioned hijacking of their democratic rights of choosing a leader best for the nation. The entire nation should participate in choosing the next President.

(The Guardian, May 29, 2006)

While predominantly, such texts like the above article published in The Guardian and those published in the Lagos Weekly Record aim to galvanise “the people” to fight social injustices through political action and the rhetoric prescribes “the people” fight, during the Latter Colonial period, when the struggle for indigenous self governance was at its highest, there are texts where the authors appeal to the colonial government for relief. An excellent example of this is the article published in the West African Pilot in May 29, 1939, in relation to what the paper regarded as economic exploitation by Europeans. What exactly the government should do is not specified except that the newspaper urges ‘We therefore say, the palm produce pool must go’. But the newspaper says that the government should help since the African farmers are its “prodigy”. This could be seen as odd by our standards that such a reason would need to be given, that unjust exploitation was not enough. In fact the nature of the exploitation itself remains an abstraction as ‘suffer hardship’. In terms of verification for their information the newspaper says: ‘Reports have come to us continually.’ This is passive voice. How have they arrived and from who? If these reports have come from ordinary farmers, they have been effectively suppressed so that they are spoken for here, rather than being allowed to speak for themselves. In this text we have a discourse of colonial exploitation of Africans and Natives. There is little actual description of what it going on. Its purpose perhaps is to be anti-colonial and pro-African.

Certainly, this rhetoric is of oppression not isolated to those suffered by the colonial establishment. Even before the country's independence, the discourses produced towards the end of colonial rule begin to construct a change in the office of oppressor. For instance, in an article published by the Daily Times with regards to an amendment in the Nigerian constitution in preparation for its independence, the people are constructed as a critical, cynical voice on actions concerning the nation assumed by elites. For lack of a better term, one might even say they are conscripted into the role of opposition to the government's policies and practices.

“The resolution accused political party leaders to the 1953 London Constitutional Conference of adopting the present amended Constitution without *ascertaining* the wishes of the *diverse people of Nigeria....the people of the East* were dissatisfied and most critical about it.”

(Daily Times, January 3, 1956)

The legitimisation analysis in relation to the discursive construction of non-elites suggests a heavy use of “the people” as rationalisation tools in Nigeria's national discourses, a pattern which is prevalent irrespective of the socio-historical frame of production. The justification that a certain action is necessary on the part of the non-elites because it is “for the good of the collective” is often used to legitimise a prescribed actions or practices that will render this group as materially socially active. Again, the rationale that material inaction is “for the good of all Nigerians” is frequently operated in discourses where they are being encouraged to accept an idea or course of action proposed by the elite via the state.

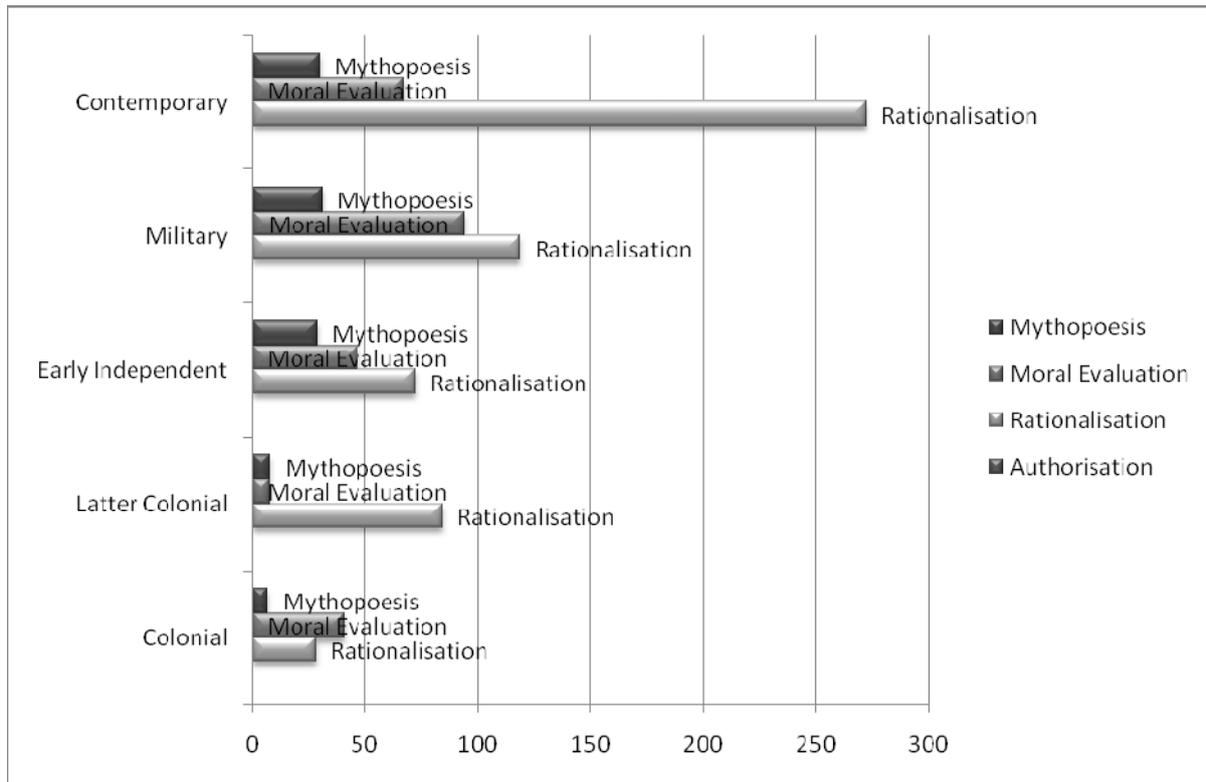


Figure 6.4 “The People” as a Legitimation Strategy.

Another interesting thing to note is that the discourse here utilises national unity as a means to achieving political influence, rather than a natural, normal way of organising and national development as the end which necessitates it. National construction is in a sense legitimised through rationalisation, so that the nation and any attending sense of national identity are naturalised within discourses, serving as legitimation tools for other practices.

6.3. Ethnonationalism and Nationalism

A significant point to note is the normalising of a status quo for the cultural groups who are constructed as having legitimacy for political activity in the territory. In contemporary Nigeria alone there are between 250 to 889 socio-linguistic groups. British West Africa was not only comprised of Nigeria, but also of the Anglophone part of contemporary Cameroon

and Ghana (formerly Gold Coast) who are similarly diverse in culture. Even in our earlier texts, there is a matter-of-fact aspect to the frequent mention of the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo ethnic groups in the discourses which reveals the roots of a status quo in Nigeria which considers these groups as the natural, commonsense dominators of national political practice. As a result, the practice of regionalising or ethnicising national discourses in terms of a tri-ethnic model which has been a troublesome part of Nigeria's national development and continues to do so contemporaneously is not arbitrary. Instead, this tradition should be regarded as another legacy of texts produced in the colonial contexts, having been implemented in nationalist discourses well before the creation of the Nigerian state in 1914.

By constructing a multi-ethnonational context such as this contrariwise, ethnonationalism and actors framed as ethnonational are then presented as oppositional to national development. While this sort of practice is observable in every socio-historical timeframe, with 39 per cent of the dataset dealing with ethnonationality in this way, during the years of early independence from Great Britain, questions surrounding ethnonationalism and its place in Nigeria's development dominated much of the newspaper discourses, when compared to the other timeframes.

The analysis of the role of local identities in national discourses, combined with the way(s) they are appraised (or legitimised) paints an interesting picture. In discourses predating independence, ethnic identities were mostly suppressed in favour of a common [West] African one. It was almost as if with common enemy present, cultural differences were less important than the commonality of colonial presence in the national (?) space. When present in discourse, these differences are constructed as the antithesis to nationality and as such, are

evaluated as inimical to national development. Similarly, the ideological framing of state/ethnic identities and communities within postcolonial national discourse is negative, except when being dealt with in discussions to do with culture, where the multi-ethnic, African character of the “nation” is lauded.

“We do not need a leader who will, against economic and national interest take industries from the source of maximum benefit to his state of origin. At all times the National interest must prevail. “

(The Guardian, May 29, 2006)

As we see above, the protection and furthering of local interests is appraised as wrong within these discourses. The inhibition of local identities in favour of the expansion of national interests is portrayed as good. The evaluation of social actors within the discourse was also done through either assessing their actions and attitudes as regional/ethnic/statist or national.

“Irrespective of where a good leader comes from, he or she will address the problems of the nation in a just manner....The way forward is to embrace one or those who are not sectional, ethnic, regional, and zonal but purely national.”

(The Guardian, May 29, 2006)

Another way that local identities are delegitimised is through the news frames they fit into. For instance, an appraisal of the social actors in the texts showed that ethnic groups are constructed as the actors in discourses related to conflict or illegalities. A focus on the framing of places reveals that regions are sites for “anti-national” activities. Headlines on

texts relating to tensions collectivise and nominalise the actors in terms of ethnicities or region. A particularly good example is the matter of the militia in the oil-rich states of the Niger-Delta, located in the South-South of the country. Texts related to this refer to the “youth” and “militia” of Ijaw, Itshekiri, Urhobo and Ogoni ethnic groups as responsible for the tensions and civil unrest in the area. The Niger-Delta region currently accounts for nine states, (25% of the states in the country) and represented the former Mid West region. It is certainly worth asking why these issues are discussed in terms of ethnicity rather than approaching them as concerns which are raised by a particular section of the national community. So ideologically, ethnicity is framed as problematic and is used to problematise issues as well. This has been observed in all instance of texts related to the political activities of the various ethno-regional groups.

This pattern to the assessing of ethno-regional actions and actors is especially present in the texts sampled from the 1960s. This of course echoes the societal situation of the time, with struggle for power amongst the regions and with groups within the regions clamouring for autonomy, for political legitimacy separate from the current structures. While this turmoil is might not be of particular note, the contextualisation of the actors and their actions reveals an ideological orchestration by the producer(s) of these texts. An especially good illustration of this is a feature article from the Nigerian Citizen in April 1965. This article was published in the Nigerian Citizen, one which had been set up in the 1950s by the northern regional government. As highlighted in our previous review of Nigeria’s newspaper history, it was, not unlike other newspapers of its time, used as a political tool to counter what was perceived by the Northern region as an attempt by the Southern regions, i.e. East and West to dominate the entire country socio-economically, politically and ideologically.

The tension between the various geopolitical regions is made apparent in the national discourses. In this instance, the main point of contention has to do with the perception of equality of access to and control of economics and politics nationally but also with respect to local territory. Looking at this piece in relation to previous ones already analysed, it seems that where resources are at stake as they are in the Niger-Delta, that Nigeria discursively is not regarded in terms of culture. The focus on discussions on Nigeria centre on politics and economics. Nothing is said so much on cultural cohesion or the importance of a national culture.

There is a collectivisation (or homogenisation) of all the actors in the texts. We have types here mostly, rather than individuals. It seems that in this text though we are dealing with Northerners on one hand and Southerners i.e. Westerners and Easterners on the other.

“The Easterner has charged the Westerner of perpetuating tribalism. The Westerner has similarly impeached the Easterner. Both of them have at various times jointly or individually arraigned the Northerner. The northerner too has, of course, made similar accusations against the Easterner and the Westerner....The system remained thus until the ministerial system of government was introduced. The northerner was governing himself and began participating in the administration of the whole country. Northern representatives then became a *permanent and necessary* part of the Lagos scene.”

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

In this text here, there is a marked use of moral evaluating strategies here in the construction of the northern and southern actors. They are described more by what they are not in this

discourse rather than by what they are. In a sense, there is also a stereotyping of the actors here:

“The northerner is *naturally not tribalistic*, if by *tribalistic* we mean the *cunning* method of advancing things of the tribe we belong to at the expense of the other tribes.”

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

There is also generalisation of ideal social practice, which in this case is a giving not just of opportunities, but of equal opportunities to everyone in the country.

“But in climbing this ladder to “greater tomorrow” are the southerners, particularly the easterners, giving *equal chance* to their neighbours, or more properly, their host northerners? Rather than be accepted as comrade in the struggle for economic and political emancipation of the country, the northerner was exploited, cheated on, degraded and in fact treated as a *second-rate* citizen in his own country. A Kith and Kin from the *thick bush of the south* would be invited to fill a vacant post in the North, rather than allow a northerner to take up the appointment.”

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

The south is tribalistic and the north is not. The north here is host and the south plays the role of the guest that takes advantage of its host’s hospitality. However, these actions are symbolic more than they are real and are in a sense fairly abstract, although the last sentence in the extract above shows that in real terms, this is about opportunities to access national structures and maintain dominance in what they perceived as their own territory. The term “tribalistic”

is used to describe the actions of anyone that is not Northern.

“...the northerners have more reasons to point accusing fingers at the southerners who, I hold, are guilty of *tribalistic* tendencies.”

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

What is interesting to note is that tribalism in this text is contextualised as “bad” because it is cunningly, covertly done. Therefore in this discourse, tribalism or regionalism is not bad as long as it is open and not done secretly:

“The different peoples in the region *were merging into one single entity* which would eventually become a *formidable* force in Nigeria. It was not done cunningly. It was an *open* exercise born out of the *genuine* desire to make into one, a group of *divergent* people. Thanks to the *good sense* of the leaders, the exercise succeeded and the North became what it is today.”

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

This is worthy of note because while the North is constructed here as a single cultural entity, it does not refer to its policy of advancing the cause of its peoples as tribalistic. However, it refers to similar actions of the southern regions whether formalised through policy or not, as tribalistic:

“In the 1940s when southern politicians *were busy struggling for power* in Lagos, the northerner *was discovering himself*.

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

The only difference between practices which are tribalistic and those which are not is in the type of moral evaluations or rationalisations used to constrain the different sets of actors and their attending actions in these discourses. Looking at how the actions are appraised discursively, there is a marked negative value in the way that “un-national” actions, whether they are personal, regional or ethnic, are presented in political discussions in national discourse. Most significant is the prevalent use of abstractions and literary tropes in articulating such actions and by extension the actors who do them. This is particularly interesting because while abstractions and literary tropes are able to produce mental pictures, or function as analogies, helping to make ideas easier to understand or conceptualise, they only construct semiotic, rather than material actions.

“To cure this disease, every Nigerian must have a change of heart to regard Nigeria first and his tribe second. Such a change, which must be practical, should come out of the conviction that it is for the good of our beloved country.”

(Nigerian Citizen, April 10, 1965)

In the extract above, tribalism is symbolised as a disease, a malady, a term which connotes a disorder, the presence of something alien in the system. There is also the use of the figure of speech relating to a change of heart, of conviction, not entirely unlike biblical ideology on repentance in prescribing the transformation of political ideology from ethno-regionalism to

Nigerianism. However, this is a figure of speech and it is not entirely clear what this looks like in real terms. They suggest that every Nigerian must regard Nigeria first and his tribe second. What would this look like in social practice? Who is to say this was not already the case? How does a change of heart take place? Additionally, the text above presents a catch-twenty-two situation. On the one hand, Nigerianism is constructed as dependent on tribalists regarding themselves as Nigerians. However, for tribalists to regard themselves as Nigerians, they must convert to Nigerianism. How does this transformation take place however? This is not clear from the text.

As such, ethnicity is either delegitimised by social actors within the discourse through the use of negative appraisals, or constructed as problematical through news framing. While this might be expected to translate to a complete shift from ethno-regionalism, it is worth noting that the same discourses that delegitimised these more localised forms of social ideology also inadvertently prescribe these local forms of social organisation as the best way to make use of the nation, particularly as regards getting the best of its resources.

It is worth pointing out that anti-ethnic discourses do not necessarily delegitimise the socio-cultural aspects of these groups. The negative ideological appraisals are mainly focussed on the political activities. Issues to do with language and cultural policy are suppressed within the discourse, although dance, art and history are positively constructed, albeit in pan-Africanist discourses.

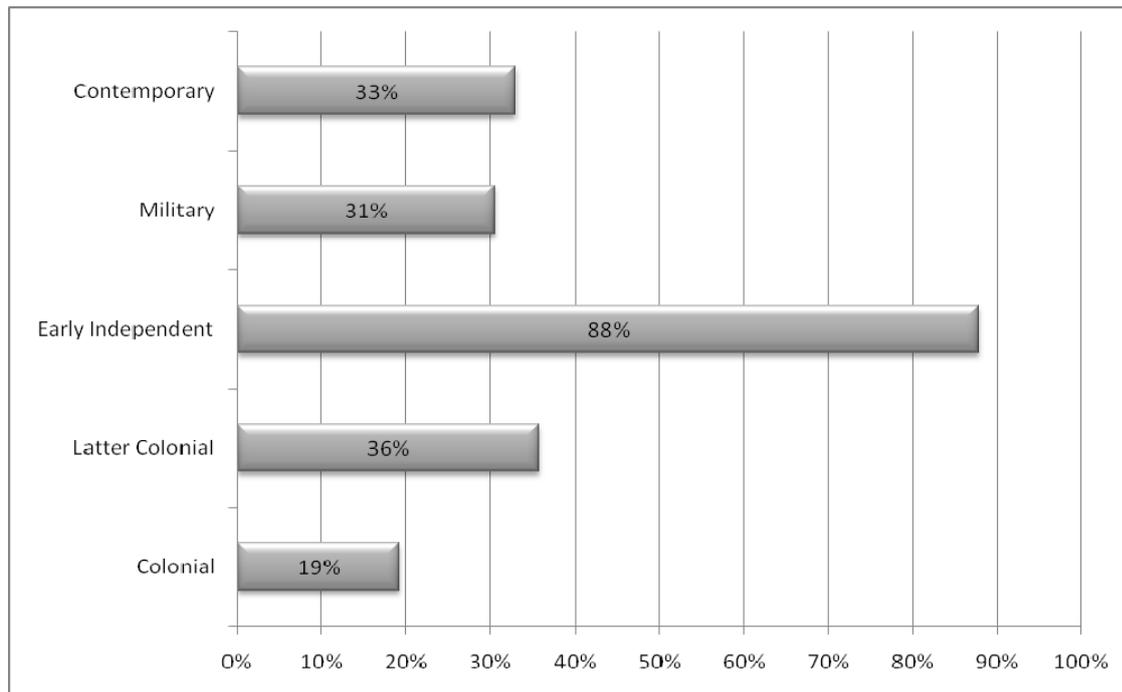


Figure 6.5 The Socio-Historical Problematicisation of Ethnonationality

How should the politics in Nigeria be structured and what political interests are legitimate? Within the discourse, the ideological framing of ethnonationalities in the news constructs it as no much more than a vehicle for advancing interests is explicit and treated as a natural, legitimate view:

.. *any Northerner* who followed rigidly the association of the MDF [Midwest Democratic Front] before the last Federal election will agree that the recent resignation of the MDF membership in the *Midwest legislature* to join the ruling NCNC [National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons] shows that the future political advancement in Nigeria will be on one party system in each region in order to seek the salvation of their regions.

(Nigerian Citizen, March 24, 1965)

An ideological model on national unity that expresses ideologies on Nigerianism and pan-Africanism are also observable within newspaper texts during this period, so that Nigeria is discussed in relation to questions of cultural diversity without necessarily ascribing it with a national cultural character:

“Foreign observers have demonstrated their pessimism in the political viability of Nigeria and many other African states....we give the name of people to men whose organs of speech are influenced by the same external conditions, who live together and who develop their language in continuous communication with each other....“How then can we use nationalism to build up a united Nigeria?”

(Nigerian Citizen, March 24, 1965)

What is particularly worthy of note is the fact that a significant percentage of national discourses during this era tend to revolve around matters of culture. However, there is not construction of a national identity. Such discussions on Nigerian unity also tend to construct the idea of national identity as more the product of psychosocial processes and less a by-product of cultural or political actions. This is particularly fascinating, because it seems to contradict to the naturalised construction of nation-state. For while the country is presupposed and normalised in the discourse, not only is national identity individualised, but the existence of Nigeria, which is supposed to be a natural construct, is presented as dependent on human input to exist and thrive. So then, Nigeria is a natural unit on the one hand, but Nigerianism is a matter of choice.

Another interesting thing to note is that the discourse here describes national unity as a means to achieving political influence, rather than a natural, normal way of organising. National construction is in a sense legitimised through rationalisation, so that the nation and any attending sense of national identity are naturalised within discourses, serving as legitimisation tools for other practices.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

This thesis opened with asking the question of how a socially complex and difficult entity like Nigeria is constructed as a nation and by extension how national identity works here. In particular, the role that the print media play in discursively contextualising national roles and practice were the key focuses here. These issues necessitated the expedition that forms the body of this work.

In bringing the thesis to a close, this section will recapitulate the discussions, going over the conceptual, theoretical and methodological aspects covered here in light of the findings of the analysis. It is worthy of note that the aim here is not so much to revisit these as it is to assess how well the aims and objectives of the investigation were met. This would enable us look at how effectively this research resolves the questions that serve as its justification. A secondary purpose for doing this review is to allow a reflection on the process itself, allowing for an identification of areas where improvements could be made in subsequent study.

7.2. Research Questions

As already explained in the introductory chapter, Nigeria as a national entity is a taken-for-granted reality, entirely in keeping with a prevalent view of the world which views it as a network of national structures, and where every individual comes with a national identity and is under the direct influence of a federalised system of governance. However, considering the

socio-cultural diversity of Nigeria with over 250 ethno-nationalities, each with a distinct language, dialects and culture marking them as unique, would lead one to suppose that the daily simultaneous operation of a single nationalised culture alongside these would take a fair bit of social engineering. Another point, not to be trivialised is the fact of the Nigerian national project being conceptualised and applied during the colonisation of parts of West Africa by the British in the earlier part of the 20th century, with its formal creation in 1914. As such, the Nigerian nation-state has for all intent in this research been regarded as a socio-historical construct, or a ‘geographical expression’; one created through social activities and redefined or reinforced through social practice.

This research set out to specifically address the following question:

- In what ways are Nigeria’s non-elites constrained in Nigeria’s newspaper discourses on national issues?

This is an important question to ask, especially when considering the challenges complicated socio-political landscape of the context under examination is considered. As the early development of newspapers is strongly tied to the evolution of British West African colonies to nation-states, and when we also consider the pivotal place that the press play politically in Nigeria, they in particular lend themselves as a relevant data source for answering these questions.

Given the position that news mass media assume as observers and recorders of social knowledge, their role in the construction of national discourses are not to be under-estimated. From a politico-economic perspective, the national press are a significant site for the struggle for ideological dominance in any society, particularly at the level considered to be national. The Nigerian press were not merely significant in terms of the political-economy, but also when you consider that they represented and constituted discursively, a new “culture” of representing, understanding and dispersing knowledge of the world. For societies that had previously relied on mainly oral traditional indigenous systems of mass communication, the entrance of print media meant for them that not only literacy, but also knowledge of exogenous language(s) were required for them to function effectively. This change in mode for public communication as well as the change in language facilitated the emergence of an elite indigenous class which cuts across the diverse socio-cultural groups, due in no small part to their bicultural situations in both the colonial and their indigenous systems, which placed them in privileged positions. In employing the press as their forum for public discourses, they have been able to effectively exercise their social hybridism in a way that demonstrates their difference from the pre-existing indigenous cultures, whilst also being able to position themselves as legitimate representatives of these as a national collective.

In looking at the construction of the role non-elites, the peoples of the Nigerian nation themselves in terms of their ideological framing or socio-cognitive modelling in relation to national development, much of the discussion in the literature that has been reviewed earlier in this thesis paints a picture of an elite class, comprised largely of the wealthy on and western-educated indigenes who in the postcolonial nation-states took over the place of their European colonial administrators, organise and operate the nation based on their own

weltanschauung and interests, just as the colonial systems of governance served to further those of the colonisers.

7.3. Key Research Findings

Overall, the analysis reveals a discursive construction of the non-elites through language choices that treats them as a homogenous collective with singular interests and aims, rather than as a multicultural heterogeneity that have diverse and legitimate interests. This strategy might have its merits, particularly with respect to the social engineering of a new nationality from an assortment of pre-existing ethnonationalities. However, to homogenise the society in this way works to minoritise actors who do not fit into the roles assigned for the people in the national contexts. Particularly, this practice is employed to delegitimise any actors or actions that have concerns about the points where national and other interests do not neatly intersect. Certainly, the analysis reveals that ethnoregionalism is always a source of tension in national practices and discussions, particularly when it comes to issues to do with politics and economic control.

Perhaps the most powerful ways in which non-elites are constrained and deactivated discursively is through the linguistic strategies of passivising them in sentences so that they are always the objects of sentences. Their role is reduced largely to that of observer. The elites make decisions that will affect them and yet, they are not constructed as having meaning input into the discursive process. Instead, they are constantly advised by elite actors on what they should do, with their well-being and that of the entire nation's being the rationale for their actions or inactions. Where these actors are activated, their actions are usually symbolic so that they seem to have little material agency beyond expressing

dissatisfaction with any hardship that is perceived as being wrought on them by the nation's big men. Regardless of their lack of authority or social agency, the interests of this group are still constructed as being at the heart of any decisions made by the elite. As the core ingredients for the rationalisation and moral evaluation of any social action, but at the same time insignificant in the discourses, this group of actors are at once at the heart of much ambivalence in the narrative of Nigeria's national development.

7.4. Methodological Considerations

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was chosen as the methodological framework for the gathering and analysis of data in this study. Its qualitative approach offered a means of not merely looking at the language and discourses superficially, but of revealing the ideological perspectives of the world that are expressed through language, an approach which fit in succinctly with the focus of this study. Moreover, since CDA is an interdisciplinary framework, it draws theoretically and methodologically from other fields and disciplines so that a researcher implementing CDA could eclectically select the data gathering and analytical tools required in analysing any media text. As we have seen previously in our review of CDA, Linguistics, Philosophy, Politics, Economics and History, aside for many other disciplines contribute very heavily to CDA. Another thing that gives strength to the framework is that it allows the researcher to utilise knowledge of the context of a text's production in its analysis. This multi-dimensional aspect to Critical Discourse Analysis permits for a flexible selection of analytical means that allow for the critical interrogation of commonsense linguistic and discursive strategies, rather than a one-dimensional indication of patterns.

In terms of the specific CDA “tool kit” used, this study drew from several methods for implementing CDA, chiefly the Discourse-Historical method, developed by Ruth Wodak; Maria Caldas-Coulthard’s Lexical Analysis method; as well as Van Leeuwen’s Legitimation Analysis and Social Actor Analysis. It must be highlighted that the customised selection of which analytical tools to use was not as easy to do as one might suppose. While there are many perspectives and methods within the CDA framework from which one might choose, more often than not, there is an overlap in the tools used. As an illustration, there are many instances of linguistic categories present in Caldas-Coulthard’s Lexical Analytical framework, which are also present in the Van Leeuwen’s Social Actor Analysis, passivisation and activation being cases in point. Considering that both of these are focused analysing on actors and their actions, it is hardly surprising. Similarly, the discursive patterns available for analysis in the Legitimation Analysis that is, Authorisation, Rationalisation, Mythopoeia and Moral Evaluation also draw from other CDA methods, chiefly, the Appraisal Theory, the Lexical Analysis and Social Actor Analysis.

Such overlap, whilst allowing for a selection of tools on the basis of what is the researcher identifies as necessary for effectively tackling the research problems, comes with its own set of problems. In this study, certainly the selection of a toolkit was not made easy as a result. While, the research process is not necessarily meant to be effortless, it certainly should be less complicated. CDA boasts of its eclectic, mix-and-match approach to analysis. While this ideally means that each piece of research employing CDA involves a very high level of rigour which discredits any criticisms of the method as being no more than a means to validate the readings analysts give to texts, it also means that in addition to selecting a methodological framework, there is an additional stage of handpicking the analytical tools.

This could be a long, arduous process, as it was found to be in this study is a credit to the framework, doing much to neutralise any criticisms of CDA as being unsystematic.

7.5. Considerations for Further Study

This study broadly highlights the elitist character of the Nigerian press, one which so far, has not been constrained by socio-historical fluctuations, or changes in political circumstance. More specifically, it also helps to draw attention to the fact that non-elites are severely limited and insufficiently included in national discourses. While they help to shed light on the ways that Nigeria's newspapers operate discursively, inevitably the findings of this thesis raise further concerns beyond those that were the direct consideration of this thesis.

Chiefly, the major uncertainty revolves around the effectiveness of print journalism in Nigeria's nationalisation project, especially in term of the country's development. If as this study shows, the news discourses work to delimit the participation of those outside the political and intellectual elite cadre of society, then to what extent could it be regarded as an effective component in the nation's advancement? While this elitist nature of the Nigerian press is in keeping with Berman's arguments of a postcolonial context that is largely classist, working on a system of patronage and elite networks and more generally with the Gramscian notion of hegemony in discourses, when we consider the impediments of illiteracy of the English language, the language of choice for the production of discourses in the Nigerian newspaper, one is inclined to regard the Nigerian press as no more than an egotistical undertaking, one meant to create a space in public discourse which excludes all but members of the very class who created it. Consequently, it is not surprising that discourses here work to reflect a perspective of national practice that coincides with that of its select community.

What is an eye-opener is the fact that the section of the country's press that is considered nationalist, *unembroiled* in partisanship or ethnocentrism and free of bias is also a site for the normalisation of elitist practice. Such practice works to represent a commonsense perspective that constructs national discourse and by extension, national development, as a natural sphere of activity for the political elite and equally delegitimises any concrete participation by those outside this class.

Subsequently, the elitist nature of Nigeria's nationalist press as has been evidenced by the findings of this study and the ethnocentric character of other sections of the country's newspaper industry raise very serious questions about the ability of this part of the news media to positively contribute towards the development of a fairly stabilised Nigerian society. Between the normalising of ethno-regional and class divisions in the press' journalistic practice, it is fair to say that this section of the country's news media is ineffective in this regard.

Related to the above point is also the matter of the extent to which populist perspectives of the society are accurately represented in public discourses on the nation. If Nigeria's print press operates as an apparatus for the dissemination of elitist worldviews, then where in public discursive spaces are non-elitist perspectives to be found? Are other forms of media filling this role effectively, or perhaps are populist views not aptly represented at all in the nation's mass media? If the latter is the case, then it is worth considering what means of social communication are being implemented to perform the functions of the mass media. Considering Chalaby's notion of journalism as an Anglo-American concept, one which has been exported to other contexts, there is a distinct possibility the socio-culturally diverse

groups of people in Nigeria, make use of the more customary methods such as those highlighted by Bourgault (1995) in this regard.

7.6. Conclusion

That the issues surrounding national identity construction in postcolonial African nation-states are very complex is hard to dispute, from the perspective that we have. In answering the questions raised in this thesis, it became apparent that a multi-dimensional approach would be needed to adequately address them. The histories of Nigeria, notably the colonial influence on its creation make questions about its national temperaments relevant. This becomes even more pertinent when we consider the questions about its competency as a state, in the more globalised settings of the present-day.

While we have addressed to some extent how elite ideology works through journalistic texts to actualise a version of national community and national identity, there are still many areas that need investigation. While this study may have revealed that the cultural character of national community across its socio-history has been underdeveloped in elite discourses, there is room to look at how other sections of society define and construct their own understanding of the Nigerian nation. Aside from this, a more detailed look at each historical period, than that undertaken in this study would help to bring things into sharper focus. The analysis here has drawn our attention to the focus on economic and political aspects in elite nationalist discourses. Further study, in particular a comparative analysis of the constructions of social roles and actions in the various discursive fields would be interesting, helping to further expand our knowledge in this area.

In terms of the methodological approach employed here, there are more opportunities than shortcomings identifiable. It calls for a laborious and meticulous mind-set to the selection of method and the actual process for analysis. While the lack of a narrowly defined structure and the additional length of time that this might make it less appealing, Critical Discourse Analysis presents possibilities for social researchers and analysts to custom-make methods for analysis, which should help towards ensuring that a research project does not simply adequately achieves its aims, but that it does so definitively.

In concluding, it is worthwhile mentioning that while this study has scratched the surface and may draw different comments as regards either different parts of its anatomy or even its overall personality, it has certainly helped to draw attention to other areas that could do with further exploration and that could only be a good thing.

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