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Buhari's First Year Anniversary in the Eyes of Nigerian Newspapers: An exploratory analysis of the most relevant frames

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Abstract

One of the most popular and robust areas of research in mass communication is the framing theory. Framing, which is used by the media to organise media content has attracted researchers' interests particularly in the domain of media and politics towards the investigation of strategic dimensions of news framing for social construction, negotiation and social renegotiation which ultimately, has implications on the socio-political disposition of a society. This is a qualitative study which sought to explore how Nigerian Newspapers framed the Buhari's administration's first year anniversary in office using five national dailies (*Daily Newswatch*, *Lead*, *The Guardian*, *The Nation* and *The Punch*). It adopts a qualitative comparative approach to answer the research question on the pattern of coverage as coded three main content categories: security, state of the economy and corruption in the corpus (N= 144). Findings show that although media reportage on Buhari's first year in office was generally favourable especially as it pertains to the fight against corruption, it was also critical of the administration particularly in its handling of the economy which had threatened to overshadow the achievements of the administration's first twelve months. While security was framed using majorly conflict inflammatory headlines stories particularly with regard to the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict, the media had also set agenda for the government through its constant reminder of the abducted Chibok girls who remain in captivity.

Keywords: *Framing Buhari's administration Corruption Economy*

Introduction

Since democracy was restored in 1999 in Nigeria after the transition from military to civilian rule, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had dominated the nation's political landscape. That the 2015 national election was a watershed in the history of the country is not in doubt. This is because while the opposition parties had over the years, failed to present any serious opposition in the past, the All Progressives Congress (APC, an alliance of five major political parties) was considered as a serious challenge to the PDP led Federal Government in the 2015 elections. The APC eventually won the Presidential election which held on March 28, 2015, with Muhammadu Buhari emerging the President-elect.

One of the critical functions of journalism is holding elected political office holders accountable and the Nigerian mass media is no exception to this duty. The history of the rich contributions of Nigeria's mass media, in particular, newspapers, towards shaping the socio-political disposition of the society has been well documented (Omo, 2008; Combe, 2006; Adesoji, 2010; Oso, Odunlami and Adaja, 2011; Daramola, 2011). Through reportage provided by journalists of what government officials, politicians, professors amongst others, are saying, the citizens seek political information and knowledge from both print and broadcast media, about the achievements or non-achievements of political

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Ogweze-Ndisika and Tejumaiye, 2015; Olayiwola, 2016), by observing citizens' political engagement during the elections (Mustapha and Mustapha, 2017), examining voters' voting behaviour (Ojekwe, 2015; Abubakre and Oyewo, 2015; Ezeigwu, Etukudo, and Akpan, 2015) as well as political advertisements and election campaign expenditure (Alawode and Adesanya, 2016; Salman, 2015).

Nevertheless, literature is lacking on exploring how media shapes the agenda envisioned by political office-holders after they assume political office which is a major key to holding politicians accountable to the people. This paper is especially relevant because public support is often a necessary precondition for the implementation of governmental policies and the role played by the mass media in this regard cannot be underestimated (Druckman and Holmes, 2004). Therefore, the current study seeks to address this gap in the area of media research, politics and communication, by contributing to the burgeoning research area in journalism and political science in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Political System, Media, and the 2015 Presidential Election

The alliance of major opposition political parties, coming together to work for their collective interest by forming the All Progressive Congress to dislodge the former ruling party marked a critical turning point in the history of the country's political system. Among reasons advanced by pundits which contributed to the emergence of and the ultimate realisation of the central objective of the Coalition, was the decision of the then incumbent, Goodluck Jonathan, to seek re-election in the 2015 presidential election. Over the years, particularly after the restoration to civilian rule, the trends of electoral outcomes in Nigeria have always been a two-way race between an established dominant ruling party and major opposition parties fragmented along regional lines with other smaller political parties forming an informal bond with either the ruling party or the major opposition party. In this circumstance, elections at the Federal level have always been in favour of the incumbents and the ruling party, however, the 2015 presidential election is an exception to this, given the significant impact of the APC coalition.

Adibe (2015) highlights some issues which drove the 2015 presidential elections among which included the North-South, Christian-Muslim Divide vis-à-vis the truncation of the unwritten zoning and power rotation arrangements by the Jonathan administration and the former ruling party, PDP. Owen and Usman (2015, p.466-467) however, advanced four factors which made the incumbent lost the 2015 presidential elections and these factors were:

1. The fragmentation of the ruling PDP as the main platform for elite coordination;
2. The government's dismal record in economic management, addressing human development challenges, tackling corruption and securing lives and property;
3. Divergent election campaign tactics employed by both parties; and
4. Better preparation by the electoral commission, in particular in its use of biometric voter cards.

Furthermore, the role played by the Nigerian mass media in setting agenda during the 2015 elections cannot be overemphasized. Even though some scholars like Ibraheem, Ogweze-Ndisika and Tejumaiye (2015) had contended that media ownership in Nigeria is driven more by political motives rather than profit, it can also be argued, however, that Nigerian media institutions are also essentially capitalistic organizations, because they are motivated by profit and to the extent that they are propelled by profit, this will also have implications on the coverage and quality of news content and the information they render to members of the public in the shaping of public knowledge.

Thus is why, Pan and Komicki (2001, p.36) explained that public deliberation is not a harmonious process, rather, it is "an ideological contest and political struggle" where actors in the public arena struggle over the right to define and shape issues as well as the discourses surrounding these issues. Thus, election campaign messages designed to

persuade undecided voters by encouraging them and their supporters to turn out on Election Day to vote for a particular candidate are also carefully crafted by media experts and politicians to highlight the strengths of such candidate, shield him/her against potential negative attacks while simultaneously playing up the flaws and weaknesses of the opponent and rival political party (Arbour, 2014) like some media organisations such as the *Nigerian Tribune*, Africa Independent Television (AIT), played up the pro-democratic antecedents of the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari.

For example, in examining the 2015 election campaign expenditure, *The Nation* newspaper (whose proprietor is an influential Chieftain within the opposition coalition) gave more advertising spaces to the APC presidential candidate (284) than the PDP candidate, who had 72 (Selman, 2015). In another study, Abubakre and Oyewo (2015) further showed that, *The Nation* newspaper gave more supportive coverage to the APC and its presidential candidate who is widely seen as not corrupt. In examining the framing of the APC *Change* campaigns during the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election, Ojima (2015) established that both *The Punch* and *The Guardian* newspapers used more positive frames to present the 'Change' mantra of the APC albeit in varying proportions. The bottom line from the foregoing is that, both political and economic motives, influenced media content during the 2015 presidential election campaigns.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the framing theory. More specifically, the present study is concerned with emphasis framing. Although the theoretical concept has overlapped with other similar but distinctive theoretical constructs like agenda setting and priming (McCombs and Chansins, 2001), the concept of news framing has been incorporated in media studies for over four decades (Aaroe, 2011). It has been conceptualized in several ways - as a strategy for social construction (Pan and Kosicki, 1993) as well as processing of news based on journalistic routines (U'Angelo and Kuypers, 2010; Reese, Candy and Goert, 2001; Druckman, 2001). It is the manner that a particular news item or news story is produced. The present study is concerned with how five different national newspapers (*Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Guardian*, *The Nation* and *The Punch*) framed the Buhari administration's first year in office by focusing on themes of the coverage in a general context.

Entman's definition of framing highlighted four functions of frames in the media which included defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Tankard (2001, p. 101) proposed eleven ways by which we can identify frames in a news report. They are headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, as well as concluding statements and paragraphs.

Segvic (2005, p. 472) content analyzed three well circulating Croatian newspapers to examine how politics was framed in that country for a period of eleven years. It specifically examined how the papers presented the Croatian Government from 1990 to 2000, by examining the adopted frame categories along Croatian government performance, economic situation in Slovenia, Bosnian war, Serbian government performance, international reaction and others. Results from the study indicated that *Vjesnik* newspaper presented the Government favourably in its reportage than the *Vece* *Tribune* which was highly critical of the Croatian Government.

In Nigeria, Okoro and Odoemelam (2013, p. 86) also examined the print media framing of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria using *The Guardian*, *Laila*, *sun*, *Vanguard* and *This Day* newspapers using content analysis. Findings from the study showed that Nigerian newspapers reported the Boko Haram insurgency in a predominantly policy response frame that were conceptually manifest in *The Guardian*, *This Day* and *Vanguard* newspapers, as against the *Daily Sun* which emphasized ethnic and

religious frames. According to the researchers, "it was clear that Nigerian newspapers reported government interventions in positive terms. Such positive framings are germane to minimizing insurgencies like that of Boko Haram, while on the other hand coverage which emphasized ethnic and religious frames are negative and are detrimental to peace initiatives in a secular and multi-cultural State like Nigeria." The researchers therefore recommended "the optimization of positive frames to promote the peace media initiative which forms the critical plank of positive media interventions." The concept of framing has also been applied to election campaigns. Abubakre and Oyewo (2015, p.141) elaborated in their findings that *The Nation* newspaper used 'Ineffective Governance' and 'Corruption' frames as leitmotif to negatively present the PDP in the 2015 presidential election. On the other hand, the country's oldest daily newspaper, the *Nigerian Tribune*, employed 'Democratic Profile' frame to positively present Goodluck Jonathan, while emphasizing the dictatorship past of Muhammadu Buhari.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study which sought to examine how the Nigerian media has framed the Buhari administration's first year anniversary in office using five national dailies: *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Guardian*, *The Nation* and *The Punch* published from 23-29 May 2016. The total number of editions used for the study is 35 (*Daily Sun* = 7, *Daily Trust* = 7, *Guardian* = 7, *The Nation* = 7 and *The Punch* = 7). As earlier stated in the body of literature, a census was conducted for the corpus in order to ensure that critical aspects of media coverage of the administration were not lost in the process of sample selection. The focus on these newspapers was based on the fact that they were always reviewed on the nation's leading electronic media (both television and radio stations) platforms, such as *Channels Television*, *AIT*, *Starfish*, *Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)* among others, and *Radio Nigeria*, *Raypower FM*, and many others across the country.

Investigating themes of news articles of the Buhari administration on the cover pages of the selected dailies in the period under study, three content categories emerge. These content categories are, corruption, state of the economy and security. After the elimination of articles unrelated to the three content categories in the coverage, a brief quantitative analysis of the corpus show that, there were a total of 144 articles and these were analysed for the study. Of these (N=144), 53 (36.8%) were about Security; 43 (29.8%) about State of the economy and 48 (33.4%) on Corruption. The articles were the units of analysis for this study. Under the Security category, three major issues stand out and these are: the issue of militancy in the Niger Delta region, the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflicts and the rescue of the Chibok girls/ Boko Haram insurgency. On the State of the economy, two issues were distinct; first, was the industrial action embarked upon by the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) which was caused by the increase in the fuel pump price from N86 and N86.50k to N145.00 by the Buhari administration and, second, the exchange rate policy which marked the threshold of the country's slide into recession. Reportage about corruption under the Corruption content category was classified in terms of 'exposure', 'consequence' and 'accountability'. Two graduates of Mass Communication from the University of Ilorin assisted the researcher in the coding process.

Since this study is concerned with emphasis framing, the next step was ascertaining the level of prominence accorded to the three content categories in the five dailies; this was done by ascribing to front page major headlines/stories- 5points and front page minor headlines/stories were credited with 3points. This data is captured in Table 1. This was done because newspapers report in an order of significance and this has implications on the framing of such issue(s). This was then followed by performing a close textual analysis of the words used in the headlines of the stories. Takahashi, Hartman, Amara, Johnson and Ash (2017, p.119) submit that, newspaper headlines are "designed to catch readers' attention with the goal of having them read the text of the article; they serve as relevance optimizers. Because the headline is typically the first

element read, it also frames the topic and influences readers' perceptions of the news article." Through the presentation of factual accounts of burning issue(s), newspaper editorials constitute an extremely vital part of the print media genre which usually, is the position endorsed by the newspaper organization that seeks to galvanize, persuade and influence the opinions of members of a society. Editorials of the selected dailies published in the period under study were used to also buttress the analysis in the study.

This study adopts a qualitative comparative approach to answer the research question by providing results that are rich and detailed. Palmberger and Gingrich (2014, p.95) wrote that the qualitative comparative approach draws attention to both the "differences and similarities, to consider endogenous as well as exogenous factors, and to carve out diversity as well as similarity." As the scholars puts it: "Qualitative comparative methods are well equipped to tackle questions that require complex and combinatorial explanations" (2014, p.95).

Findings

Table 1: Categories, front page major & front page minor headlines/stories: overall results

Dailies	Categories	Front page Major Stories	Front Page Minor Stories
Daily Sun	Corruption	7	3
	Economy	2	3
	Security	6	2
Daily Trust	Corruption	3	4
	Economy	10	0
	Security	2	9
The Guardian	Corruption	1	4
	Economy	4	2
	Security	5	3
The Nation	Corruption	6	8
	Economy	7	4
	Security	6	9
The Punch	Corruption	11	1
	Economy	9	2
	Security	6	5

Source: Researcher's computation of data from content analysis of the *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Guardian*, *The Nation* and *The Punch*, 2016

Analysis of Findings

Table 1 shows the level of prominence accorded to the three content categories in the five dailies on the Buhari administration's first year anniversary.

Pattern of Coverage

1. Security

The most frequently coded category among the selected dailies was the issue of security, 36.8% of the corpus. The issues of reportage under this category are classified along the lines of militancy in the Niger Delta region, the Fulani herdsmen-farmers' conflicts and the rescue of the Chibok girls/ Boko Haram insurgency which was particularly a major issue in the build-up to the 2015 general elections. As a presidential candidate and during his early months as president, Buhari pledged that

to appear with the group in the advertisement, and to appear in the advertisement and receive payment in the amount of \$100.00.

Abstract

In the 1960s, the headlines were often negative in the Niger Delta. The government was portrayed as the government through the destruction of the environment in the region was destruction. A more analysis of word usage and headlines in the news concerning the Niger Delta. Negative terms such as "disaster", "war", "violence", "the people and resistance" stories about military were common. Using front page major headlines while the enforcement agencies responsible for the region were covered using front page minor headlines. In contrast, the Niger Delta newspapers reported about the military in the Niger Delta in terms of the importance of the enforcement agencies in the theme of vandalism and the Federal Government. Headlines and word usage were usually covered using front page minor headlines. A more analysis of word usage in the headlines indicated terms such as, "fight", "war", "the people and resistance" the Niger Delta administration from the position of

The Toronto newspaper portrayed the Federal Government as seeking dialogue with the terrorists as a theme, consistent if word usage in its headlines show terms like 'plan', 'offer', 'demand'. Stories about militant attacks were usually covered using most page three headlines while the Federal Government reaction to the threat was covered using most page three headlines. While The Canadian newspaper on its part reported militant attacks using most page three headlines and used same in terms of the newspaper's own editorial opinion as well as from the Federal Government. Terms used in the newspaper's headlines were:

The Indian reported the news of military using both major and minor headlines in such a way proportionate. American reports in the paper tend to stress the consequence of military action in case of all out war and dismantling of the Federal Government programme which would have improved the lives of the citizenry. A micro analysis of each group is as follows collected news such as 'blow-up' 'crisis' 'derail' 'shock' 'collapse'.

On the other hand, the author feels that the millstream spectacles act of using the transportation & infrastructure in the larger Delta region which will greatly impact negatively on the oilfield - economy as an oil dependent economy to grab media attention (as evident in Italy and other places in the process under study) While the Federal Government must for action to recognize these issues of using a mix of violence, intimidation and negotiating a dealing with the millstream the law enforcement agencies on the spot must implement the author's point that use of force/ violence against the millstream, the exploitation of the violence of the millstream in the construction of oil facilities

1. The first part of the text discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions, including sales, purchases, and expenses. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for determining the correct amount of tax liability and for defending against potential audits.

[illegible]

36, 2016, cover page). The *Guardian* employed a non-conflict inflammatory approach in its reporting of the issue while the *Daily Trust* chose to highlight the challenges confronting pastoral life characterized by cattle rustling and sectarian violence. The Nigerian media had also set agenda on this issue as they queried the Federal Government's silence on the conflict. The *Vanguard* newspaper which is widely read in the South-South region of Nigeria published an editorial on the issue when it stated that Buhari's silence was "not golden." And when the medium undertook a review of the President's first year in office, a news analysis written by Ugoji Egbogu, with the title: "Rampaging herdsmen, bloody massacres and a bias President", had accused the Buhari administration of indifference to the spate of massacres allegedly perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen across the country. The report reads: "The herdsmen are predominantly Fulani and Buhari isn't just an ordinary Fulani. He was once a patron of the herdsmen and their vocal advocate on herdsmen/farmers disputes. After the Agatu massacre, Federal Government agents spoke in manners that suggested that they were conflicted. But more depressingly, no meaningful arrests were made, no declaration of serious intent by government to find and punish murderers. After Nnamdi Enugu the presidency fell into an embarrassing and dangerous silence. Why would the president find the loss of many Nigerian lives in an incident that had such potentially inflammable consequences so trivial that the president would not an immediate statement? (*Vanguard* May 28, 2016, p.13).

Although The *Nation* newspaper had used front page news headlines to report the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict, the paper accorded priority to this matter by publishing two editorials (see: The *Nation*, May 24, 2016, p.17; The *Nation*, May 25, 2016, p.17), within a week, on the issue to counter the establishment of grazing reserves for herdsmen, a proposed measure by Government to curb the bloody clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers. The paper argued strongly in both editorials that, "cattle rustling is private business."

Chibok Girls and Boko Haram Terrorism

The Nigerian media has placed emphasis on the rescue of the abducted Chibok girls. The *Daily Trust* newspaper and The *Guardian* newspapers stood out in this regard as they have consistently put the Government on its toes. In every edition of both papers, they continued to commendation to the number of days the Chibok girls have spent in captivity of the terrorist group Boko Haram. Even though the Nigerian President had been commended generally in his fight against Boko Haram, the *Daily Trust* newspaper framed the issue in such a manner that the efforts of Buhari in this matter continued to diverge from the role played by his immediate predecessor, who took immediate action in his editorial on the day Buhari checked into his new office. The paper had stated: "Nigerians need him a deal in gratitude for checking back to remember the great offences forged by his predecessor in order the help of foreign friends in his fight against terrorism" (*Daily Trust* May 29, 2015, p.14; The *Guardian*, 29 May 2015, p.14).

4. Role of the Economy

The state of the economy can be viewed in light of the President's official inauguration and the following foreign exchange rate policy.

4.1 Industrial Action

When the economy was in the limelight of the President's official inauguration, the *Daily Trust* newspaper and The *Guardian* newspapers stood out in this regard as they have consistently put the Government on its toes. In every edition of both papers, they continued to commendation to the number of days the Chibok girls have spent in captivity of the terrorist group Boko Haram. Even though the Nigerian President had been commended generally in his fight against Boko Haram, the *Daily Trust* newspaper framed the issue in such a manner that the efforts of Buhari in this matter continued to diverge from the role played by his immediate predecessor, who took immediate action in his editorial on the day Buhari checked into his new office. The paper had stated: "Nigerians need him a deal in gratitude for checking back to remember the great offences forged by his predecessor in order the help of foreign friends in his fight against terrorism" (*Daily Trust* May 29, 2015, p.14; The *Guardian*, 29 May 2015, p.14).

While Nigerian appears to have accepted the necessary adjustment for the increase in the pump price of petrol in 1983, Nigerians appear that the same income would have been the only option for a government, believing that President Abacha's policy was consistently approved without withdrawal or was relinquished its position to accept the income and without withdrawal.

Priming device employed in the editorial includes 'only option for government' and 'compelled by reality' which were used to point out steps and advice the government of responsibility in the fuel pump price increase while that in fact made.

There is a growing feeling of betrayal among the population that the A.P.C. has abandoned when the economy was down. Nigerians have shown that they accept that petrol price had an increase because of a sharp decline in government's revenue, but its cashed money and depleted foreign reserves. And another government must be blamed for this.

The priming device as identified by the researcher in the Fourth editorial which discussed the failed strike as 'unorganized and uncoordinated' is the growing feeling of betrayal of Nigerians by the A.P.C. before the paper's leading argument which maintained that there was no alternative to the increase in the fuel pump price policy. Furthermore, four dailies (Daily Sun, Daily Trust, The Nation and The Punch) reported the affected strike as a front page major story while only The Guardian reported it as a front page minor story. Thus, on this aspect of the economy, the Buhari administration got the support of the media in fostering affect an unpopular policy on the public effectively with seemingly approved unanimity.

• Exchange Rate Policy

All the selected newspapers reported the adoption of the flexible exchange rate policy as front page major stories; however, the Daily Sun, The Guardian and The Punch stressed warnings on imminent recession in their respective headlines. Discouraging the economy against the backdrop of the introduction of the flexible exchange rate policy, the media set agenda on the issue. The Guardian, in particular, carried an editorial entitled 'For a realistic exchange rate' on the policy. The paper pointed that the Federal Government has taken the 'worst option' regarding the exchange rate policy issue while the paper also led in news reports of generally unfavourable themes of the Buhari administration as regards the exchange rate policy by drawing attention to the absence of safety net by the government. Priming device used by The Guardian included 'unleash' southward trend 'negative rating' to portray the unfavourable themes against the Buhari administration. An example is drawn from the lead in a front page major story which stated that the Nigerian economy was on the brink of recession as a result of the 'low level of economic activities in the country occasioned by the late passage of the Federal Government budget for the current administration which has made the country to suffer two consecutive negative quarters' (see The Guardian, Wednesday May 26, 2010, see Daily Sun, same date, cover page & p 47).

constitutions. The Nigerian media appears to after give Babangida a bad review. It is quoted as saying that the nation's economy is in a volatile situation as a result of cash in use process (see *Daily Trust*, *The Punch* Thursday May 19, 2011) and as point page major stories. The impact of this administration does not generate feelings against the administration as it was simultaneously and temporarily postponed of its in front page major reports in the following edition (see *Daily Trust*, *The Punch*, *The Nation* Thursday May 26, 2011) as they demonstrated the Federal Government's capability and its commitment towards alleviating the situation as evidenced from both the Federal Government and the NLC's constitution of a panel on minimum wage and palliatives, stability in the naira and gains recorded by the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). Furthermore, when the researcher compared the programmes given to the exchange rate policy to that of the NLC strike, findings showed that *The Guardian* played down on the generally favourable theme of the Babangida administration. The paper noted that it 'remains unclear' the economic policy thrust of the Babangida administration after one year in office, while *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* quoted Babangida as admitting that the Nigerian economy is in a volatile situation in its cover pages. However, it was also observed that even though *The Punch* and *The Daily Trust* offered cheering news generally favourable to the Babangida administration in reporting the gains recorded by the NSE, there was a disparity in the figures published by *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* as the former reported that the NSE gained N160b while the latter reported a N100b gain.

1. Corruption War

The major plank that brought in Babangida and the APC government into office was the anti-corruption war (Abubakar & Oyewu, 2013). Issues in media repertoire about corruption are classified in terms of exposure, consequence and accountability. Exposure refers to media repertoire on corruption. In the period under study, we also identify exposure of actors: both institutional (such as NNPC) and individuals (key players of the immediate past administration of ex-President Goodluck Jonathan). Consequence in terms of allegedly accused infractors being held liable and subjected to sanctions such as declaring them wanted, 'remand' in the custody of the EFCC and freezing of assets.

Accountability in terms of publishing Federal government budget expenditure in feature report by *The Guardian* evaluating the score card of the government puts it this way that, 'compared to the expenses of the previous administration, Babangida government has cut down heavily on the cost of governance' (see *The Guardian* May 17, 2011).

The study also finds that selected newspapers also covered corruption cases differently. A case study which is worth mentioning here is that involving the role of a Managing Director of Fidelity Bank, Nnamdi Chikwendu in the distribution of funds allegedly acting under the instructions of former Petroleum Minister, Mr. Olukeni Olukeni. Although *The Punch* and *The Daily Trust* both reported the 'unexplained' money from EFCC (see *The Punch* Daily report of 17 January 2011, and 18 January 2011) *The Punch* newspaper reported the case from the angle of the government's financial distribution of the funds while *Daily Trust* reported the same case from the angle of corporate transparency of funds. In so doing, the latter which has been the 'lead' reported that Chikwendu 'threw the money' (see the fourth edition of the 'Lead' on 17 January 2011) and EFCC 'confiscated' while the former reported that Chikwendu 'threw the money' (see the fourth edition of the 'Lead' on 17 January 2011).

The study finds that *The Punch*, *The Nation* and the *Daily Sun* accorded the highest prominence to the President's anti-corruption war as it recorded more points on front page major and minor headlines/stories. In a feature news article written by the Deputy Political Editor, Raymond Mordi, published a day to when Buhari's administration would clock one year in office, a pull quote for emphasis reads: "the fear of Buhari and his anti-corruption crusade has also produced panic in the obscenely and opulently rich homes. Billions of dollars are galloping back into the national coffers as their illegal keepers are making returns in fearsome panic. Even the anti-corruption agents are revving their operational engines back to life. A good number of persons believed to have collectively stolen billions from taxpayers have also been arrested and are facing courts. (See, *The Nation*, May 28, 2016, p. 2)

Other superlatives used to describe the President in the same article are that he was viewed as "very forthright, full of integrity, and a man who stubbornly clings to causes he believes in. His no-nonsense and incorruptible posture is widely regarded as a benchmark for members of his cabinet. Given the President's Spartan lifestyle, his ministers have been under intense pressure since they came into office to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them."

Daily Trust gave prominence to reportage about corruption with front page minor headlines/stories than front page major headlines/stories concerning corruption news. *The Guardian*, which had the least number of articles on corruption, gave prominence to these reports using more of its front page minor headlines than its front page major headlines. When the points are aggregated and evaluated cumulatively in a descending order of significant proportion, this study finds that *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* had generally supported the Buhari's administration anti-corruption war. This is because the government frames dominant public discourse in terms of the fight against corruption as the media had adopted and absorbed the line of argument put forth by the Buhari-led government that successive PDP led administrations, particularly, under the leadership of Goodluck Jonathan, had plundered the nation's commonwealth.

However, it has not always been a smooth sail for the establishment. The media has also been critical toward the Buhari administration particularly about issues on the state of the economy. An instance of this is taken from *The Punch* editorial published on May 29, 2016, with the headline, "Buhari: Still waiting for the real change." The editorial reads: "while he inherited a disarticulated economy, Buhari has exacerbated our economic misfortune with his legendary and studious vagueness. The lack of a concise, practical economic strategy, even till now, is glaring."

The paper, on the same date, also used an illustrative chart to project a score-card on the Buhari administration where it rated the government as poor on the indices of oil and gas, roads, aviation, education, health, sports, economy, manufacturing and tourism while evaluating it as fair in the areas of railway, security and agriculture.

Beyond the foregoing comparison, the role of the main opposition party, *Progressives Congress* (APC) during this period, is also worthy of study. However, this is beyond the scope of the present research. Nevertheless, it is important to mention here that, the PDP, due to its intraparty squabbles, was greatly distracted by the internal power brokers within its party since it lost the 2015 Nigerian presidential election. Consequently, it could be argued that the main opposition political party failed to effectively fulfil its role and mandate of checkmating the ruling APC as expected by democratic norms and ideals.

Conclusion

The bottom line from the foregoing exploratory analysis is that the Buhari administration's attempt towards ensuring security, improving the state of the economy and the anti-corruption war, are portrayed by the Nigerian media in such a way that endorses and propagates specific meanings in defining the President's first twelve months in office. Through news framings of the identified content categories, the media has supported the Buhari government in building legitimacy of the process in the fight against corruption. Though critical of the Government's handling of the economy, the media framed the Nigerian President as a 'victim' while his immediate predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan was portrayed as a 'villain'. In terms of security, the Nigerian media framed the coverage more in terms of conflict inflammatory headlines/stories especially with regards to the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflicts while unsavourily setting agenda on the abducted Chibok girls' rescue.

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