Hijab/Church Garments Controversy in Osun State: Exploring War and Peace Journalism in the *Punch* and *Daily Trust* Coverage

Abubakar A. Bukar & Abubakar Shehu

Abstract

Conflicts precipitated by religious discords have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people and destruction of property in Nigeria. It brews mutual suspicion among its heterogeneous citizens. Ultimately, their cordial coexistence and progress in most facets of life are affected. In all these, the media is a stakeholder whether as a promoter of peace or exacerbater of tension and division. This research therefore explored 122 editions of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* to ascertain how these national dailies are responding to the tenets of peace journalism enunciated by Johan Galtung and other scholars in their approaches and overall coverage of the Hijab/Church garments controversy in Osun state. Using content analysis, census, framing and agenda-setting as methodological and theoretical frameworks respectively, the study found that these newspapers framed their articles more in line with peace journalism (55.5%) than war journalism (44.4%). But the selective emphasis on differences-oriented frame in *The Punch* (45.4%) and victim-villain frame in the *Daily Trust* (60%) confirmed the widely held belief that Nigerian newspapers cleave to regional and religious sentiment with regard to significance attached to issues and events in their coverage. All these are arguably a corollary of political-economic and professional factors detrimental to peace.

**Keywords:** Controversy, Osun State, War, Peace, Journalism, Coverage, Exploring

Introduction

A BBC poll in 2004 found Nigeria to be the most religious nation on earth. Instead of religiosity to translate to spirituality, sobriety, sublimity, emotional symphony and harmony for the cause of humanity even in diversity, it has, ironically, been one of the greatest presages of tension, violent conflict and discrimination among the people inhabiting the country, thereby shipwrecking cordial co-existence, mutual trust, unity and overall progress of its various strata. Even conflict precipitated by political, economic or ethnic factors often ultimately take religious coloration, so much so that one is left to grapple with the grim impression of a country ‘dancing on the brink’, ‘a society precariously balanced on a razor’s edge’ as a result of deaths and destruction occasioned by ‘religious’ violence. While the country is struggling, since 2009, to restore peace and security following the torrents of mayhem unleashed by Boko Haram (one of the most deadly terror groups world over in the garb of religion), another religious crisis was fomenting in Osun state, South-western Nigeria,

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as a result of Hijab (a piece of cloth worn by Muslim women to cover their heads and chests). Religion here is not deployed to douse off depression as in Marxian maxim, rather to evoke emotion and becloud all sense of reasoning and mutual understanding.

The role of Nigerian press in covering ethno-religious conflict has always been contentious – often suspicious because of ownership and readership influences; relation with the location and people involved. From casual observers to astute researchers, Nigerian newspapers have been under enormous bashing for arguably being bias, inflammatory, misleading and sectarian in their coverage (see Yusuf 2002, Pate 2012, Shehu 2014, Jimoh & Abdul-Hameed 2017 et c for example). But there seems to be a paradigm shift from such style of coverage in respect of particularly Boko Haram as empirical researches (Ayoola and Olaosun 2014, Ngige, Badekale & HammanJoda 2016, Ita, Idiong, & Ita 2017 etc.) attested. It is on the basis of these, this research explored two Nigerian national dailies (Daily Trust and The Punch) to assess how a section of the press is contributing to peaceful resolution of religious conflict using Galtung’s classical model of war and peace journalism as yardstick.

**Background of the Controversy**

The uproar over Hijab and Church garments slanted as “Hijab crisis” in the media, began when in February 2013, the Osun Muslim Community filed a legal suit against the state government and the commissioner for education protesting the molestation of their female children in public schools over the wearing of Hijab (a veil covering head and chest worn by Muslim women, Adamu 2015). On 3rd June 2016, Justice Jide Falola of the Osun state High Court, ruled in favour of the plaintiff – ‘that Muslim student should be allowed to wear hijab to school because it was part of their fundamental rights’ (Punch 15th June, 2016). This provoked the ire of the Christian Association of Nigeria, Osun state chapter, who consequently instructed Christian pupils to equally exercise such right by attending the schools in choir robes, vestments and other church garments they wish. On 15 June 2016, the Punch headlined that “Christian pupils wear church garments to schools” and “dares the Aregbesola” (Punch 16 June 2016,) to implement the court ruling. Punch’s June 18th interviews with the Osun CAN chair was titled “OUR CHILDREN’LL STOP WEARING CHOIR ROBES TO SCHOOL WHEN AREGBESOLA REVERSES HIJAB WEARING” (emphasis original). Later on, Daily Trust’s editorial of 20th June revealed that the state’s CAN and its chairman had joined the case voluntarily as respondents. “In his judgment, Justice Falola said religion was introduced when CAN joined in the suit. He said he went ahead to deliver the judgment after all pleas to settle the matter amicably failed”. The body raised eyebrow over the issue as a result of what it called “creeping Islamization of the state” orchestrated, arguably, by Arebegsola, the state governor. While on the other hand the Muslim community accused the schools in question of de-Islamising their children in the process of acquiring knowledge.

The remote cause of the conflict, however, dates back to 1975, when the then military government took over both private schools and those founded by the missionaries for charging exorbitant fee and operating under poor standard. In a bid to allegedly revamp the education
sector following the successive failure in WAEC, the governor of the state embarked on restructuring and reclassification programme in which a number of secondary schools were merged to form mega schools which could be easily equipped and monitored. One of such mergers where the Hijab/church robes uproar started is Baptist High School which is a fusion of five hitherto autonomous secondary schools, namely: Baptist Grammar School, United Methodist, St. Mary’s, BHS and St. Anthony’s. The Muslim students from some of these schools were allegedly wearing the Hijab prior to the merger which BHS insisted to be substituted with beret as that contradicts their school uniform and the values in which the school was founded by the missionaries. Hence the ensuing saga.

**Objectives**

Specifically, the research has the following objectives:

1. To compare and contrast the extent of the coverage of Hijab/Church garments controversy by the Punch and Daily Trust newspapers
2. To find out the various frames used in the coverage of Hijab/Church garments controversy by the Punch and Daily Trust newspapers
3. To ascertain whether it is peace journalism or its antithesis (war journalism) that is dominant in the framing of Hijab/Church garments controversy by the Punch and Daily Trust newspapers
4. To explore the likely factors responsible for the extent and frames used in the coverage of Hijab/Church garments controversy by the Punch and Daily Trust newspapers

**Literature Review**

Peace journalism is a departure from violence-as-news value orientation in journalism practice. It emphasizes on the context and background of a conflict rather than the violent scenes of ‘here and now’. Thus it disaggregates the parties involved into visible and the invisible ones with salience on common grounds, on peace initiatives and dialogue among the parties. From the surface, it seems to divorce journalism from its tradition of objectivity, but closely studied, it calls for in-depth, more analytic and nuanced coverage and reportage. For example, in exploring the consequences of conflict, it goes beyond such visible effects as deaths and destruction of property to uncover invisible ones like trauma, resentment, fear and desire for revenge. In the process of doing this, propaganda and demonizing language are eschewed to allow less tense platform for negotiation and change that will result in peace ultimately (Galtung 2013, Tumber, 2009, Hanitzsch, 2007, Lynch, 2007, Hackett, 2006, Tehranian, 2002, McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000).

Johan Galtung, a Norwegian Professor and pioneer in Peace Studies, is credited with the coinage and groundbreaking work in Peace Journalism. He observes that much of war reporting is akin to sports journalism where the focus is on contest between two parties each struggling, principally, for victory against the other which therefore tends to exacerbate
tension. This, he considers, a low road of looking at a conflict (Galtung, 2013). He consequently started deflecting attention towards what he called Peace Journalism (otherwise the high road) in the 1970s which he likens to Health Journalism that typically traces the causes of a particular disease, its effects on the body system, its cures and preventive measures. This started gaining currency among media scholars and practitioners with the turn of the 21st century (Galtung 2013, Tumber, 2009, Hanitzsch, 2007, Siraj, 2007, McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000). A schema which highlights the attributes of peace and war journalism respectively was subsequently presented by Galtung (1998) in Fong (2009:33):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War Journalism</th>
<th>Peace Journalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Approach:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reactive</td>
<td>1. Proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Waits for war to break out, or about to break out, before reporting</td>
<td>– Anticipates, starts reporting long before war breaks out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Visible effects of war</td>
<td>2. Reports also on invisible effects of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Casualties, dead and wounded, damage to property</td>
<td>– Emotional trauma, damage to society and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Elite-oriented</td>
<td>3. People-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Focuses on leaders and elites as actors and sources of information</td>
<td>– Focuses on common people as actors and sources of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Differences-oriented</td>
<td>4. Reports areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Focuses on here and now</td>
<td>5. Reports causes and consequences of the conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dichotomises good and bad, victims and villains</td>
<td>6. Avoid labeling of good guys and bad guys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Two-party orientation</td>
<td>7. Multiparty orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– One party wins, one party loses</td>
<td>– Gives voice to many parties involved in conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Partisan</td>
<td>8. Non-partisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biased for one side in conflict</td>
<td>– Neutral, not taking sides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One goal: to win

Many goals and issues, solution-oriented

10. Stops reporting and leaves after war
   – Stops reporting with peace treaty signing and ceasefire and heads for another war elsewhere

10. Stays on and reports aftermath of war
   – reconstruction, rehabilitation, and implementation of peace treaty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Uses victimising language that tells only what has been done to people – For example, destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Avoids victimising language – Reports what has been done and could be done by people, and how they are coping</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Uses demonising language – For example, vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, extremist, fanatic, fundamentalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Avoids demonising language – Uses more precise descriptions, titles, or names</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Uses emotive language – For example, genocide, assassination, massacre, systematic (as in systematic raping or forcing people from their homes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Avoids emotive words – Objective and moderate. Reserves strongest language only for gravest situation. Does not exaggerate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In-depthness is therefore a hallmark, a sine qua non to conflict coverage associative to peace journalism. In multiplicity of voices, the truth, however muzzled, will therefore emerge in full glare and regalia. When for example, the Iraqi war was covered in every thinkable material details by some 3000 journalists representing diverse media organisations (Tumber, 2009), it came to be realized that WMDs were just a hoax, a wool pulled over the unsuspecting Americans’ eyes to legitimize aggression on a foreign land. As a result of this intensive coverage (for ‘the rest of the world was not depending on European and American broadcasters and newspapers anymore…’, Lynch and McGoldrick, 2009:249) some media outlets, notably Aljazeera, became a victim of selective attacks by Euro-American troops ‘with the organisation’s offices hit in Kabul, Basra and Baghdad. A memo of a conversation between Blair and George W. Bush, leaked to a British newspaper, seemed to suggest that the American President wanted the station’s headquarters in Doha to be bombed’ (ibid).

Peace Journalism is therefore synonymous to what Howard (2009) called ‘conflict-sensitive reporting’, ‘better reporting,’ ‘…based on rigorous adherence to the essential core standards of journalism… violent conflict attracts intense media attention that requires greater analytical depth and skills to report on it without contributing to further violence nor overlooking peace building opportunities’ (pp. 13-14). McGoldrick and Lynch (2000:45) gave its equivalent as ‘holistic journalism, analytical journalism, solution journalism, constructive journalism, post-realist journalism; conflict-analysis journalism’ among several other appellatives.

War journalism, on the other hand, is the antithesis of peace journalism. It is naturally preoccupied with what happen in the battleground (violence, death and destruction of property with their attendant sensationalism). Constricted in time and space, war journalism reduces the parties in conflict to two entangled in tug-of-war each striving to win as the ultimate (if not the only) goal. The “grass” underneath is therefore stampeded not only by the actors but by such journalism which quickly moves on to the next flashpoint after the victor has emerged. It is thus not a win-win or solution-prone, nor does it stay to monitor the implementation of peace agreement or reconstruction of damages done.

According to Lynch and McGoldrick (2009), ‘Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices - of what stories to report and how to report them - that create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value nonviolent responses to conflict’ (p.256).

A number of empirical studies (Hussein and Lynch 2015, Shehu 2014, Ozohu-Suleman 2013, Raza, Jan, Sultan & Aziz, 2012, Fong 2009, Steien 2008, Siraj 2007 et c) have been conducted to ascertain the presence or otherwise of Galtung’s peace journalism indicators in media content using Goffman’s framing theory. Raza et al (2012), for example, explored two leading Pakistani newspapers (Daily Nation and Business Recorder) to find out how the ‘war on terror’ is framed, and concluded that both newspapers were generally more inclined to peaceful resolution of the conflict in their framing – in terms of details, context, language and tone of coverage. They ‘condemn and criticize the attacks and destruction (sic) activities of the Taliban in most of their news stories...(and) paid more time, space and focus on the social and economic impact on people and society whenever the bomb blast or suicide attack occurred’ (P.106).

Similarly, Ozohu-Suleman (2013) examined the coverage of Israeli-Palestinian protracted conflict in international television stations: BBC World, Aljazeera English, Press TV and CNN International in line with Galtung, Howard; McGoldrick and Lynch’s peace journalism
indicators. He found, on a general note, the prevalence of war frames over the peace ones in the content of these global networks. Specifically, he observed that only Aljazeera English coverage of the conflict within the period studied tilted significantly towards peace journalism (61.7%) - in comparison to CNN International (46.7%), BBC World (45.0%) and Press TV (32.3%) respectively.

Siraj (2007) used the same criteria to decode the various frames deployed by New York Times and Washington Post in the coverage of Indian-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir. Like Ozohu (2013), he (2007) too submitted that war journalism indicators dominate the coverage of these papers on the issues at hand. This, he said, also coincides with the findings of such scholars as Shinar (2004) who observed that even in covering peace negotiation, media prefers war frames, and Wolsfeld (2004) who claims that ‘the default mode of operation for the press is to cover tension, conflict and violence’ (p.3). This is because, as Tumber (2009) opines, ‘conflict sells and the emphasis on violence, and the simplification of the conflict, increases the value of their commodity’ (p. 396). Hence Owens-Ibie (2002) in Pate (2012:61) figuratively asserted that conflict is ‘the bread and butter of journalism’.

Moreover, Steien (2008) studied six Norwegian dailies (Aften, Aftenposten, Dagbladet, Dagens Næringsliv, Dagsavisen and VG) to discover how they covered the 2006 Prophet’s cartoon controversies in the country. At the end, the researcher found that nuanced frames (which combines the features of war and peace journalism on almost equal measure) and war frames outweigh peace frames significantly – each having 46%, 39% and 15% respectively. This is strikingly similar with the finding of Shehu (2014) who, after examining four Nigerian national dailies (Daily Trust, Leadership, Vanguard and Punch newspapers) in respect of Boko Haram insurgency coverage, submitted that ‘[w]hile war frames got the total frequencies of 1239, peace frames got only 470 in all the four sampled newspapers’. The dominance of war frames (95% against 5% neutral) is also found by Fong (2009) in Sin Chew Daily’s (a Chinese newspaper with the largest circulation in Malaysia) coverage of Sishammuddeen dagger-holding controversy in the country between 2007 and 2008.

Hanitzsch (2007) criticizes the idea of peace journalism as a compromise to the time-honored ethos of professionalism where the journalist is supposedly detached and objective in the coverage of his subject, and that it seems to subscribe to the discredited notion of all-powerful effect of the media. When peace journalism scholars accuse war reportage as stooping to negativities (violence, drama et c), he argues that it is out of economic expediency precipitated by audience preferences; that such scholars and advocates hardly even notice the gulf between media and journalism. But his argument that ‘a peaceful culture is the precondition of peace journalism’ appears lame, underrates the transformative role of journalism and erroneously present culture as if it were immutable.

I also think the nexus between peace journalism and magic bullet theory in his earlier essay is overstretched. From Galtung to Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick; to Howard and Tehranian, I am yet to read or derive the alleged impression that media can, on its own, prevent or end conflict. But it is reasonable to surmise that it can be a facilitator for peace or war – as it was in Rwandan genocide of the 1990s. In this vein, Mallam (2006) also argues that no matter what may be said on this discourse, one thing stands out: media does not precipitate conflict, although it can (and does) help in the escalation or de-escalation to a limited degree.
Plausible as his argument on detachment is, objectivity is still a concept mired in controversy – to what extent can a journalist be neutral, unaffected ‘automaton’ in dealing with his subject? Whether it is alright to take side with morality and conscience as in identifying with the victims? What are the forces behind the emergence of objectivity as a concept per se? Ad infinitum.

Theoretical Framework

This study combines framing and agenda-setting theories to find focus and justification. Goffman (1974)’s framing theory, which is an extension of agenda-setting, involves value-judgment through saliencing certain aspect(s) of reality. ‘To frame’, says Entman (1993:52), ‘is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicative text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation.’

The process of framing, as McQuail (2005) notes further, requires careful and deliberate selection of certain words, phrases, images, tone et c to define a problem, bolster a perception via moral judgement and suggest a cue for action. In this way, specific contexts are often generalized. The impression one derives from scholarly and literary exploration of framing is that of giving a dog a bad name in order to have the moral alibi of hanging it, as our Nobel Laureate, Soyinka, narrativizes in The Man Died (1978). Achebe (2010) too complains about systematic denigration of Africa(ns) in Western literature where the continent is subjectively portrayed as the household of weird negativities in particularly Conrad’s Heart of Darkness – the kind of racist narrative that ultimately justified colonial incursion and consequent subjugation of the continent. Although it is mostly used for negative end, Ozohu-Suleman (2013) argues that it can be deployed in the service of peace journalism. On the other hand, Azlan (2012) cited in Okoro and Odoemelam (2013) opines that two factors usually account for the selection of frame(s): ‘the accessibility of an issue, and the correlation between a subject and the audience’s pre-existing opinions’ (pp 89-90).

Maxwell Mc Combs and Donald L. Shaw’s (1972) agenda setting theory posits that the media is very successful in broaching and sustaining subject of discussion in the public sphere through the frequency of reportage and prominence given to the story, in case of print media. This is what is otherwise regarded as public agenda. Out of numerous issues and events unfolding daily, we all find ourselves focusing attention on the dominant ones in the media – from ebola, to election, to Dasukigate, to fuel subsidy removal and to the ‘billion naira’ expended to cure the President’s ear ailment, we find ourselves thinking about and debating what might have otherwise passed unnoticed (Asemah, 2011, McQuail, 2010, Folarin, 1998).

According to the propounders of the theory, “In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach in a news story and its position” (Asemah, 2011:176).

Since the media have this power, they are morally obligated to report issues that will enhance peace, unity and development of their audiences and the humankind at large (Asemah, 2011).

The theory, according to McQuail (2005); Baran and Davis (2009) tends to prove, empirically, the nexus that exists between the significance given to an issue by the media and the consequent
public attention which shape their perception of social and political realities, ultimately. But it is criticized for being too preoccupied with ‘news and political campaign’ in media content.

**Research Methodology**

The research used content analysis and coding sheet as method and instrument of collecting data, while tables, pie chart, and simple descriptive statistics were used in presenting and interpreting data. A census of 122 editions (from 1st June to 31st July, 2016) was taken from The Punch and Daily Trust to retrieve the articles on the Hijab/Church garments controversy. These national dailies were deliberately selected because of their ownership and readership. Daily Trust is owned by a Muslim northerner and the paper primarily targets northern populace despite its national claim. So also The Punch – owned by a South-Western Christian with southerners as its predominant audience. Since the conflict was precipitated by religious differences involving Osun’s Muslims and Christians in a tug-of-war of a sort, it will be interesting to explore these particular papers to ascertain, empirically, how religious affiliation and economic forces inter alia, reflect in the content and overall coverage of the issue at stake.

Prior coding scheme was used with Galtung’s schema as parameter of gauging war/peace inclination. Hence these two broad categories of journalism with 20 frames (10 for each side) were used to code the content of the 36 articles retrieved from both newspapers. Story types and frequency, on the other hand, were equally coded and tabulated to ascertain the extent of the coverage. A whole article was considered as unit of analysis wherein the tone, tenor and focus of the piece(s) – what they included and excluded – forming the basis of examination.

**Results**

**Table 1 reveals the extent of the coverage in terms of genre and frequency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STRAIGHT NEWS</th>
<th>FEATURE NEWS</th>
<th>COLUMNS</th>
<th>EDITORIAL</th>
<th>INTERVIEWS</th>
<th>VOX POP</th>
<th>LETTERS</th>
<th>FEEDBACK (SMS/ONLINE)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUNCH</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 100%</td>
<td>6 66.6%</td>
<td>1 50%</td>
<td>2 100%</td>
<td>3 100%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>3 75%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAILY TRUST</td>
<td>5 38.4%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>3 33.3%</td>
<td>1 50%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>2 100%</td>
<td>1 25%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13 100%</td>
<td>1 100%</td>
<td>9 100%</td>
<td>2 100%</td>
<td>2 100%</td>
<td>3 100%</td>
<td>2 100%</td>
<td>4 100%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that The Punch covered the controversy more extensively than Daily Trust with significant difference statistically – 24 (66.6%) and 12 (33.3%) respectively. This is further vindicated by specific story type. The Punch featured more straight news (61.5%), more opinion columns (66.6%), more readers’ feedback online & sms (75%), and exclusively carried vox pop, feature news and interviews on the subject-matter. Conversely, Daily Trust contains, exclusively, letters to editor. But the papers are on equal pedestal with regard to editorial. Why such differences in the coverage and what this portends for peace journalism tenets will be subjected to analysis latter.
Pie chart 1 revealing the diverse frames used and the amount of emphasis in percentages

From the pie chart above it can be observed that out of the 20 frames investigated, 13 received attention in the coverage of these newspapers. And differences-oriented frames which emphasizes differences rather than areas of agreement among the conflicting parties and which consequently is likely to worsen tension, was given the greatest attention by both newspapers – taking 17% of the total frames. It is succeeded by victim-and-villain, causes-and-consequences, and solution frames – each occurring 4 times, representing 11% of the total frames respectively. These are accompanied by proactive, partisan, and non-partisan frames – each taking 8% of the total frames. Multi-party frames carried 6% while invisible effects, here-and-now, zero-sum and two-party frames take 3% each of the total frames observed. On the other hand, elite-oriented frames, stays-after-war, and leaves-after-war frames were not accorded any attention. The selective emphasis on differences-oriented frames coupled with victim-and-villain frames, inter alia, on a controversy bordering on religion in a volatile country is a matter of concern in analysis. So also why some frames were completely muted; some prioritized over others et c.
Table 2 showing peace and war journalism categories with their respective frames

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAR JOURNALISM</th>
<th>PUNCH n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>DAILY TRUST</th>
<th>PEACE JOURNALISM</th>
<th>PUNCH n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>DAILY TRUST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences-Oriented</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>1 20%</td>
<td>Agreement-Oriented</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>1 14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here-and-Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>Causes-and-Consequences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim-and-Villain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3 60%</td>
<td>Avoids</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partisan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>Non-partisan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>2 28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero-sum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>Solution-oriented</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>2 28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Party-Oriented</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1 20%</td>
<td>Multi-party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>2 28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible-Effects</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>Invisible-Effects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite-Oriented</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>People-Oriented</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
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<td>Leaves-after-war</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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Broadly considered from the dichotomy, peace journalism received greater weight 20 (55.5%) than war journalism 16 (44.4%) in The Punch and Daily Trust taken collectively.

Specifically, peace journalism represents 54.1% while war journalism represents 45.8% of The Punch’s total frames. Similarly, Daily Trust too emphasized on peace journalism (58.3%) than war journalism (41.6%). On the individual frames basis, The Punch threw greater weight on differences-oriented frames (45.6%) and partisan frames (27.2%) while Daily Trust emphasized on victim-and-villain frames (60%) – all these typical of war journalism and significant for analysis on the issue at stake. Conversely, causes-and-consequences frames (30%) received greater attention in The Punch, followed by solution-oriented, multi-party, and agreement-oriented frames – 15.3% respectively. All these are useful in peaceful resolution of conflict. In the same vein, Daily Trust emphasized on solution-oriented, multi-party, and proactive frames (28.5% each) in its inclination towards peace journalism, while agreement-oriented received the least attention (14.2%).

Discussion

The dominance of peace frames over their antagonists may be a result of sympathy and empathy to the nation which has suffered incalculable visible and invisible damages due to religious or ethno-religious crises. The country is still grappling to contend the nemesis of Boko Haram which has proven to be one of most deadly terrorists’ organization world over, causing the deaths of over 30,000 people, destroying property worth $5.9 billion in Borno alone, displacing over 2 million Nigerians and above all, worsening suspicion, strangling the remnant of trust and cordial correlation among Nigerian citizens of different religious affiliation in addition to enormous damages done to the country’s image internationally (Pate & Idris, 2016). This is besides other frontiers of violent conflict in Niger-Delta, separatist movement in Eastern Nigeria and a host of other challenges bedeviling the country’s progress. So, no patriotic citizen or organization can deliberately add to these national woes. Similarly, this may also be due to the realization by the
papers that it is only in relative peace that they can stay in business. For where there is outbreak of law and order accompanied with pandemic violence, it is our survival as humans that will take precedence. Conversely, such coverage may be a corollary of increasing awareness, professionally, of the values, tenets and techniques of conflict-sensitive journalism which is receiving serious attention and advocacy among scholars, practitioners and development workers since the turn of the 21st century. It is in this regard that the extent of the coverage in particularly The Punch, can be interpreted partly as consciousness of peace journalism where in a conflict that seems to be a tug-of-war between Christians and Muslims of Osun state, the net of opinion aggregation was extended to traditionalists and agnostics in a bid to, arguably, find solution. Tacitly, it seems to say ‘this is our collective woes, all view matters’. Hence such headlines as “Traditionalists speak on the hijab crisis in Osun State” (Punch June 30th), complemented by causes-and-consequences, agreement-oriented, and solution frames.

But the specifics of these frames and extent of coverage in some respect, reveals factors quite detrimental to peaceful resolution of this, nay, any conflict in Nigeria. First, the frames (war and peace) compete closely in both newspapers. For example, peace journalism represents 54.1% while war journalism represents 45.8% in The Punch; 58.3% and 41.6% respectively in the Daily Trust. This is a cause for concern to peace and conflict researcher and can be attributed to a number of factors. But more disturbingly, the frames selectively emphasized by both newspapers expose their regional and religious biases despite their claims to national outlook. This has been the most notorious trait in Nigerian press since independence in contrast to their nationalistic fervor prior (Oso, Odunlami & Adaja, 2011). As instance, differences-oriented frame is the most prevalent in The Punch, representing 45.4% of its war frames. Stories with such headlines as “Hijab: Can files stay of execution…”, “Christian pupils wear church garments to schools in Osun” (Punch June 23 & 15 respectively) are bent on accentuating ‘we/them’ polarity and how irreconcilable the two parties are. Confrontational utterances from CAN leaders and the seeming drama involved in “Christian pupils wear church….” are susceptible to sensationalism which is beneficial to the sale of the paper. From each side of the divides, there may be leaders and followers who are disgusted with such frivolous controversy and averse to the effects of such on particularly the cordial coexistence of the unsuspecting children, but they are, to be euphemistic, downplayed in the coverage of the newspaper. This also explains the dominance of partisan frame in The Punch (27.2%) after the differences-oriented ones where especially some of the opinion pieces sound much like PR stuff for the governor or CAN (see Abimbola’s June 23rd and Akinnaso’s June 28/July 5th columns).

Again, the headline “Muslims storm schools as Aregbesola disclaims hijab order” (Punch June 21, 2016) sniffs of stereotype. In other words, it seems to suggest how violent Muslims are or can be, how different they are from ‘us’ and how ‘they’ are latently and manifestly hell-bent on Islamizing ‘us’ and ‘our’ institutions et c. All reminiscent of images in Euro-American media. Even the extent of the coverage can be associated to this. Comparatively, when the choir-robe wearing pupils were escorted by CAN leaders to ensure that they were not harassed by the school authority, Punch went aloof on “storms” and other details. This heralds the presence of zero-sum frame (9%) where the preeminent is winning by hook or by crook as failure is unthinkable in the battlefield of here-and-now (9%). Such coverage is primarily occasioned by economic factors than religious zealotry as a number of researches attested (see Aliagan 2015, Oso 2012, Pate 2012, Tumber, 2009, Hanitzsch, 2007 et c).
The reticence in the coverage of Daily Trust can also be associated to economic factors. The epicenter of the conflict, Osun state, is in the South-West and the newspaper is largely marketable in the north, hence what happen outside its jurisdiction was heralded with aloofness. Moreover, the pieces therein are inundated with victim-villain frames (60%) in an effort to whip up sentiment and justify that it is ‘our fellow Muslims’ that are victimized, disenfranchised from exercising their God-given and constitutional re-affirmed right due to CAN’s intolerance, ‘extremism’, and gang up against the court order to wear Hijab. Mohammed Haruna’s “Poor Aregbesola!” (Daily Trust June 22, 2016) is quite emotive right from the title and typical of such Goliath-David portrayal. Inherent in this is the separation of good and bad guys natural of the frame and detrimental to peace in which Daily Trust editorial of June 20th, 2016 is microcosmic. This validates a number of previous researches (Jimoh and Abdul-Hameed 2017, Aliagan, 2015, Okunna & Omenugha, 2006 et c) that argued that Nigerian newspapers stoop to ethnocentrism, regionalism and religious sentiment than national cohesion for economic expediency.

Collectively considered, it is not all grim. For, there are articles that passionately argue that Hijab (head covering) is a common feature in the dressing of both Muslims and orthodox Christians with clear-cut injunctions from the Scriptures; that Christians in the West are on the vanguard of defending their coreligionists against the infringement of such right; that there are more pressing issues such as low standard in education resulting in massive WAEC failure which should trigger concern and even outrage than a slab worn over head. These include those framed along causes and consequences, solution, agreement, multi-party, proactive and non-partisan frames.

**Conclusion**

The media business is a serious one, no doubt. They can’t afford not to be financially sensitive in this biting neo-liberal economy. But that shouldn’t surpass the humanitarian concern for peaceful coexistence in a plural, volatile society that is Nigeria. Scholars and practitioners across the globe are increasingly turning attention to the values, tenets and challenges in conflict-sensitive coverage. It is therefore time for our media organizations invested in the training of their particularly conflict reporters in the art and science of peace journalism through refresher courses, seminars and workshops, inter alia. This will hopefully reduce the amount of conflict-inducing frames, shallowness and inflammatory language in the coverage of conflicts in Nigeria.
References


