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Agenda- setting: The neglected role of some agents of power-propaganda (rumour,gossip,religion. .)

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PART ONE: Chapters 1-4.

Introduction, Methodology, review of relevant literature, and a conceptual framing of the problem and relevant issues.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction:

Most theories of mass communication up to recent times have concerned themselves with intended or unintended effects of the media on its audience. Accordingly, both early and more recent empirical research have cast doubts on generally accepted notions concerning the powerful effects of the mass media, arguing that a good deal of media content is potentially informative rather than persuasive. (McQuail & Windahl, 1981: 56)

One model of mass communication effects, the agenda-setting theory, offers a way of connection, between information and a possible opinion effect. The agenda-setting hypothesis as an effects theory of mass communication has not only survived its critics (see 3.4: A critique of the Theory) but also continues to flourish in its position that by simply paying attention to some issues at the expense of others, the media affects public opinion.

Indeed, the above is a proposition of great utility. However, this study takes the view that opinions, attitudes and behaviors of people may change or even be altered not necessarily because the media has caused an issue to be elevated in importance to the public; but rather, people, that is media or message sources, it can be argued, manipulate the media (media content) selectively for "a plurality of individual needs

and dispositions" (Langer, 1998:12). The above, I suggest, may be what interpretive experts of the expansive days of the media's stimulus-response theory interpret variously as media influence on its audience - attitude, behavior or opinion change (see Curran, Gurevitch & Woollacott 1982; McQuail 1969).

Another source of concern to this researcher is the fact that the agenda-setting process is said to have begun with the media without clarifying who sets the media agenda. Severin & Tankard, (2001:231) corroborate the above concern as they posit that researchers have sometimes ignored the important question of "who sets the media agenda?"

But, there are also alternative perspectives that insist that actors and institutions of power and resources (political, social and economic), that is, people with intimate knowledge of the workings of the news media and the political environment do influence the media agenda. This alternative perspective also points to personal attributes, organizational influences and attributes as well as the news media's inextricable reliance on individual/institutional news sources as effective influences on the 'mass media's' media agenda (see:Weaver & Elliot, 1985; Hess, 1986; Turk, 1986; Gurevitch etal, 1986; Hale, 1978; Jamieson & Campbell, 1988; and Megwa and Barber 1990).

Again, it is possible that an agenda is already in existence before the media agenda. Griffin (1991) suggests that it is possible, that media coverage is simply a reflection of public concerns that already exist; and Hoyer, (1991:29) observes that, "what was lacking specifically was a realistic account of what went on before the individual at the end of the media channel received the message----". So whose agenda is the media agenda? This researcher attempts an answer, taking cues from amongst others, political economy of the media, structures of community and personal experiences of the individual – i.e. information and experiences drawn from our day-to-day lives that create meanings for issues as they relate to our daily lives.

This thesis therefore focuses in part, on what this study proposes as the other *neglected agents of power,* that is, some specific tools/devices of propaganda such as rumour, gossip, language, religion, name-calling and testimonial effects with a view to ascertain their specific role in setting the media as well as the territorial agenda. The rational here, include the assessment of the influence of interpersonal communication in rural Nigeria. Rural Nigeria can be understood as broadly typical of rural sub –Saharan tropical settings (Mphahlele & Maepe 2003), that is, sparsely populated areas in which people are generally farmers or fishermen and depend on natural resources.

Rural areas are made up of villages, small towns as well as large settlements; they are usually poor, isolated and insulated from the city-centres and they lack the basic requirements of modernity vis-à-vis the effect of rumor, gossip and other constituents

of community life such as, religion (as in information from the church/mosque or other places of worship) in setting the media-agenda. This we propose allows for greater clarity in an issue being a rumor, commonplace gossip, up to when it becomes the media agenda. This is the perspective that considers the possibility of a media agenda that is urban, but equally complemented by other variables.

On the other hand, we insist as our major thrust of argument that, considering rural Africa's isolation and insulation from mainstream and conventional media, the generalized capabilities of the media in structuring issues, with particular reference to rural Africa, lacks impetus. The argument here is that agenda-setting deals with how the media and the public perceive the importance of an issue (salience); but there is a difference in the way rural Africans perceive and process information. The source of perception or what influences the rural dweller we argue is not main-stream media but largely people; fellow rural dwellers and put simply, the "established structures of community".

The rationale of 'mass' and 'public' as they relate to the agenda-setting process is scrutinized and that informs our initial point of departure that 'mass' and 'public' as ideas are rather loose.

Citing Baker (1990:168), Price (1992:2) observes that in conferring the title 'public' on opinion, enlightenment thinkers implied universality, objectivity and rationality; but

Inglis, (1990:113) puts it bluntly as: " there are no masses; only varying sizes of overlapping minorities". Thus this researcher takes the view that what may constitute a 'mass' or 'public' in a highly media accessible Chapel Hill, may be a group of nomads somewhere around the Numan County in Adamawa state (Northern Nigeria); or simply represent "varying sizes of overlapping minorities" in any of the oil producing Niger Delta states of Nigeria.

These groups of 'nomads' and the 'varying sizes of overlapping minorities' often makeup a majority of the people, who are concerned more with where the next meal will come from in their thoroughly shortchanged environment; rather than spare a thought for media influences that seem largely alien to their existence. Thus agenda setting by the media as it is originally conceptualized and measured carries with it, conceptual and methodological implications when it comes to agenda-setting effects in the media dense west as against effects in rural Africa. For many in the rural areas of Africa, exposure to modern media could be described as limited and perhaps non-existent.

Megwa (2002:8) confirms that, the more powerful media institutions become, generating more and more information as part of the world-wide information network, the less diverse and increasingly inaccessible they become to the ordinary people who constitute majority citizens in Africa.

The above view reinforces the argument that an urban public could be different from a rural public in different ways and further steer the discussion beyond the notion that media agenda-setting effect is universal or given; especially with regards to rural Africa. The media effect on a people set in their rural ways may not be the same as most urban dwellers whose opinions may be subjected to cumulative exposure to mainstream media. Even if the above be the case, some experts have argued that media coverage is possibly a reflection of public concerns that already exist.

For example, in South Africa, the death of Chris Hani (a major participant in the struggle for the emergence of a democratic South Africa) became a major political issue every election year and continues to be mentioned from time-to-time. According to gossips and the rumor mill, the killers of Chris Hani are yet to be arrested. Gossips say the president may know a thing or two about the killing. In the same breadth, some other high-ranking members of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) have been accused of plotting to kill the president. On the surface, the accusation and counter – accusations point to leadership conflict within the ANC; but in the context of setting the political agenda, one is tempted to ask: is agenda-setting not a two-way street that ends at the cross roads of public opinion? In other words, these accusations and counter accusations seem to be public concerns that already do exist and hence they re-echo every other election year.

However, our main concern here is the media's agenda-setting capabilities in Africa, especially rural Africa. The point of our final departure here therefore, is the establishment of a working symbiosis between the "established structures of community" i.e. - (Rumor, Gossip - oral tradition etc) and the media as an urban phenomenon on the one hand; and rural Africa (where the oral tradition still holds sway) and its set ways, partly due to its isolation from and insulation by modern media, setting its territorial agenda on the other. We are saying that, orality as an established structure of African community seem to lend credence to rumour or gossip as a fact of life in rural Africa. Indeed rural Africans may trust sources of rumour and gossip more than they trusts modern media and even their politicians when it comes to the political issue of who and what to vote for.

For example, in Nigeria, when the strong pull to break away from the constraints of colonialism became manifest and self-rule as an idea became ripe for diffusion, oral tradition dominated other sources of information exchange and rural Africa has not changed remarkably from its colonial days.

Ugboajah (1985:40-45); Ndolo, (1998:12) confirm that oral tradition dominated all other sources of information exchange in pre-colonial Nigeria and continues to be a very important means of handing over information from generation to generation in the present day Nigeria. According to the authors, these indigenous communication channels constituted as well as facilitated what Bohanon (1971) called the 'Bush

Telegraph'. They include smoke signals, the village town crier, age groups and oral narratives; talking drums, long brass horns and the open village market amongst others.

We take the view therefore, that, in an ideal democratic setting (the so-called 'developed' west/world), the media's agenda-setting capabilities to a large extent can be taken for granted, but that may not be entirely true for Africa, especially rural Africa where the people are set in their ways - i.e. - their own brand of democracy, ideas and information systems and deep-rooted culture that define their value judgment. Indeed for centuries, rural Africa had operated around its own social space for public dialogue.

With the above as a backdrop, the questions that readily come to mind include:
Is the agenda-setting theory an urban phenomenon? If it is, considering the various 'boundaries of the media' (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996); the political economy of the media etc (Mosco & Herman, 1981; Chomsky, 2004); 'the media monopoly' (Bagdikian, 2000); and agenda setting as a process (Megwa & Brenner, 1988) - i.e. who are the actual agenda setters?

Is an urban public not distinct from a 'typical' rural public, especially as it concerns the media's capability to 'structure issues'?

How workable and acceptable is the media's agenda setting theory in rural Africa? Especially, when considered against the background of rural Africa's isolation and insulation from modern media, its language and technology.

Can the theory be taken as given and universal?

The above, obviously, calls for a reexamination or reevaluation of how workable, acceptable and universal the media's agenda setting theory is in Africa; especially rural Africa.

With the above as a backdrop, this researcher is of the view therefore, that, the intellectual as well as practical interpretation of the socio-political behavior of the typical rural African in the face of the media's agenda setting 'capabilities' especially in agenda setting's emerging and evolving third stage (a stage recognized as that of 'surveyors' and 'explorers'. See Rogers, Hart & Dearing, 1997) may prompt diverse opinions and approaches; but in the end, we also may have created another thoroughfare, a new conceptual approach in the agenda setting continuum.

1.2 Focus/Aims

This thesis focuses on electoral politics in Nigeria between 1985 and 2005, with special reference to the rural dweller and the effects of media agenda setting on the one hand; and the investigation of whether the other neglected agents of power prepare the grounds for an issue and then gets promoted to a dominant height by the media on the

other. That is, investigating media and media agenda setting capabilities at two levels (or territories preferably) – the urban and the rural.

Our aims include the investigation of the media's capability in raising the importance of an issue in the public's mind; as well as verify the roles played by (what this study calls) the other neglected agents of power/structures of community in setting the territorial agenda and the formation of 'public' opinion.

To investigate, with a view to establishing if the other neglected agents of power (a proposition of this study) functions in conjunction with the media, to set an agenda and accordingly influence what people think about and perhaps form or shape public opinion or it is simply what the media treat or consider important that set the agenda and thus influence what we think about.

To argue that, in the context of mass media poor cultures like in Africa, the media cannot set the territorial (or otherwise) agenda for a people to whom gossip and rumor are not only a major source of information but also a binding force. Therefore, this study proposes that, agenda-setting capacity or function in our African context is largely mediated by these "neglected agents of power"; that is, "the established structures of community".

To argue further that, the socio-economic conditions of most of Africa's peoples, the inaccessibility of modern media of communications to most of rural Africa, and amongst others, the nature of our communities, significantly question the generalization and the applicability of the media's agenda-setting hypothesis in Africa; especially rural Africa.

To attempt a location of the boundaries of agenda-setting theory and some other models of mass communication effects studies. These models include:

Gate keeping.

The 'two-step flow' (and its later elaboration – i. e. 'the multi-step flow' model).

TheSpiralofSilence.

The aim here is to ascertain the existence of conceptual complement, theoretical convergence or overlapping claims between the media's agenda-setting hypothesis and some other models of media effects studies (this is further elaborated in 3.5 and demonstrated in 9.3 with the concept of **"buying the news, not the paper"**).

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1.3 Notes On The Title

The title of this study [Agenda Setting: The Neglected Role of some Agents of Power – i.e. Propaganda (Rumour, Gossip, Religion …) As Structures of Community] ostensibly seems to have equated propaganda to power, and equally placed on the same

continuum the concepts of rumour, gossip, religion … This is not necessarily the case; and here we clarify things with a note on the title.

'The neglected role of some agents of power', here, refers to some specific tools/devices of propaganda, which in the context of our study becomes known as the 'established structures of community' in the Agenda Setting paradigm. These tools/devices include rumor, gossip, language (as it is best understood by masters of the tongue), and religion (as it relates to influences from places of worship and not necessarily the dialectics or the etymology of religion). Others include name-calling and testimonial effects. Our characterization of these "neglected agents" as propaganda tools is to clearly represent in them the quality of propaganda as something deliberate, disseminated with intention.

It is this researcher's view, that, in an African context, the above, as established structures of community are employed to diffuse information towards setting the territorial agenda, whose elements we propose, in turn, possibly constitute the media agenda. The word 'territorial' here is to differentiate our approach to the subject of our study at the two levels or territories – urban and the rural.

Agenda setting, as the prime focus of our study and as a concept refers to the power to structure issues; a phenomenon conventionally studied in the context of electoral politics.Electoral politics is synonymous with 'power' and setting the media agenda is

in itself an exercise in power, that is, propaganda is a way of communicating power; hence the dominant position of power in the title.

Again, propaganda here is used as an agent of power; and is not necessarily equated to power. Albeit, the propaganda devices/tools - i.e. rumor, gossip, religion … are placed on the same continuum because, the context in which they are discussed makes it difficult to say when a dialect becomes a separate language.
All of the above is discussed in the tradition of critical scholarship – i.e. we prefer to take a more qualitative, analytical as well as philosophical approach that is in the same breath conversational.

Accordingly, in the next chapter the study outlines its methodological approach employed in its field work; all in readiness for reviewing the relevant literature in chapter three as well as rethinking the theory in chapter four.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Research Design and Methodology:

Methodology simply refers to the operational framework within which facts are placed in such a way that their meaning may become clearer. Methodology and data are inextricably interdependent, because data contain certain desirable facts which require extraction for their meaning; the process or approaches in extracting from the facts their meaning is what is "broadly termed among professionals the research methodology" (Leedy, 1980). Leedy emphasizes that a basic rule suggested with respect to the selection or choice of a research methodology is that the type of data required dictate the research methodology.

Conceptually, this researcher has argued consistently that what may constitute a 'mass' somewhere may be nothing more than an overlapping minority elsewhere and that media agenda-setting takes place with differential effects with regards to media rich and media poor environments; especially in predominantly oral/illiterate populations such as in rural Nigeria. Thus, we have in this study, considering rural Africa's limited media reach and presence, chosen the qualitative methodology and the triangulatory research techniques in conformity with the type of data required.

In designing our methodology, we have taken into consideration the fact that data can be defective and may affect the validity of research conclusions; we therefore, adhere to that axiom of research which advices that any research effort should be replicable.

The following methodological components are therefore employed in this study:

2.1 Research Design and Source of Data

Infante, Rancer & Womack (1990:411) advance that, the general purpose of research design is to isolate the variables of interest in a study. A research design is either experimental or non-experimental. It is experimental when the design involves manipulation of at least one variable. The research design is also said to be non-experimental where there is no manipulation of variables, but rather the variables are studied for relatedness or association (although, survey research or content analysis can also have experimental designs); the result of which is 'correlational data'.

A non-experimental research design can be either: investigative, field research and the survey research method most often used by communication researchers. (Infante etal, 1990:422) The research design and blue-print for data collection for this study is therefore the survey method - i.e., the structured or fixed-response questionnaire and personal interviews as instruments.

This study also CONSIDERS data that is historical as well as critical, using both primary and secondary sources of information. Key informants included:

- Media gatekeepers -i.e. (journalists, editors and some publishers) for example, Emeka Izeze of the *Guardian,* Ray Ekpu of the *Newswatch* and amongst others, one of

Nigeria's highly respected political commentators – Stanley Macebuh.

- Rural dwellers and local community leaders. Here, besides the sampling of the opinion of rural dwellers, we also spoke to some community leaders which include the respected lawyer, Speaker of the first Rivers State House of Assembly during Nigeria's second republic (1979); he is now, paramount chief of the Briggs 'war canoe' House of Abonnema.

- A cross section of urban dwellers which included students, lecturers (examples here include Nnamdi Azikiwe and Abuja Universities students and some of their lecturers), civil servants, employed and the unemployed, and professional people.

- Targeted individuals- i.e. legislators, retired as well as some serving military personnel including Senator I.S.Martyns-Yellowe, Air vice-Marshall Anthony Okpere (a minister for aviation during the military government of Babangida), a serving minister (as at the time of our interview) and a serving senior Police officer (who, like the serving minister requested anonymity).

The purpose/objective here, bearing in mind the media's agenda setting hypothesis, is to investigate, probe and possibly ascertain amongst others, the media's capability to structure issues, the universal applicability of this capability in rural Africa (Nigeria in this case) and the role of the 'established structures of community' in setting the territorial agenda.

2.2 Research Questions

These include:

- How does rumour originate? – i.e. when and where do rumour-mongers/peddlers first come by an item or issue that is ripe for the mill?
- How and when did this rumour turned commonplace gossip become a media agenda? What or who constituted the media source and how credible was the source? Indeed whose agenda is the media-agenda?

- What is the relationship between power dynamics and propaganda- i.e. rumour, gossip and the other established structures of community in governance on the one hand, and on the other, particularly, as they relate to the rural dweller?

- What is the universal applicability and acceptability of the media's agenda setting theory?

2.3 Sample Design, Procedures and Determination of the Sample Size

Apart from during censuses entire populations of interest are studied seldom. Instead, Infante etal, (1990:409) argue that a part of the population is examined in the hope that what is found will be valid for the whole. For Wimmer & Dominick (1987:69), a sample is a subset of the population that is taken to be representative of the entire population.

Nigeria by the last official census figures is inhabited by 120 million people; with six

geo-political zones made up of thirty-six states and 774 Local Government Areas. The country has a predominantly Muslim community in the north and in the south a predominantly Christian community. Given the sheer size of the country, as well as its logistical constraints and the political complexities, it would be very ambitious to study in detail even one of the thirty-six states (given the time on our hands).

The sample design for this research therefore is the 'non-probabilistic' methods of 'convenience' and 'judgemental' sampling for our urban respondents and the Cluster Sampling method in the case of our rural dwellers. Onwe (1998:17) confirms that Cluster Sampling method enables the researcher select a geographical area at random; it "can be applied in research situations where the population subjects are distributed in clusters of geographical or ethnic settlements. This sampling design is effectively useful especially if the researcher aims at ethnic or geographical representatives in his or her population of study", as we do.

For purposes of 'external validity' Wimmer & Dominick, (1987: 71) the procedure for choosing geographical location for the study is from the country's two extremes –i.e. randomly located rural areas outside the capital city of Abuja representing the Muslim north; and a similarly selected area for the Christian south outside the strategic oil city of Port Harcourt. The purpose for our choice of geographical locations from the country's two extremes of rural areas is to enable us test or at the least attempt a confirmation of the following: (i) the universal applicability of the media's agenda

setting capability in a rural setting; (ii) The role of the established structures of community in setting the territorial agenda, that is, how issues are structured in rural Africa's own space.

On the other hand, the research also included a convenience/judgemental sample of the opinion of urban dwellers with a view to answering amongst others the following research questions: (i) do people actually take as important whatever the media considers being so? Or is it that, simply, the media reechoes or reconfirms already existing opinions, feelings and even sentiments? (ii) Is the media not an urban phenomenon? And if it is, then whose agenda is the media agenda? Perhaps, all of the above is better summed up in the following ten words: Is there really a phenomenon called the media agenda?

The study used a finite target population of 1000 Nigerians –i.e.700 from the northern (325) and southern (325 [+50 from Amansea - SE treated as a special case]) rural areas of the country; and 300 urban dwellers from the commercial as well as administrative cities of Abuja/Nassarawa (The twin-Northern city-states representing the north of the country here. Abuja is Nigeria's new capital city but it is predominantly a northern territory), Awka, Enugu, Lagos, Port-Harcourt and Yenagoa (representing the West, East and the South-South geopolitical zones; but, for purposes of this study, simply referred to as 'South' (see breakdown of sample population in Table3).

A demographic breakdown of our targeted rural population of 700 respondents shows that, 56.5% (348) of those sampled were males while females constitute 42.7% (263). Seventy eight (78), which is 12.7% of the above, were below the age of 20 years, those between 20-30 years were 20.6% (127), and 40-50 years were 20% and those in the 50 years and above bracket, 23.1% (142).

Housewives make up 13.8% (85) of the sample population, fishermen/farmers 19.5% (120), petty traders were 8.3% (51) and those who are employed and their self-employed counterparts make up 22% (135). Students constitute 19.2% (118) of our rural population; those who simply said that they do "others" (other things) were 3.7% (23) whereas those who "don't want to answer" were 7.8% (48).

Out of our 118 students (19.2% of those sampled), 2.1% (13) were primary school pupils, 10.1% (62) were secondary school students; university students make up 4.2% (26) and "others" were 4.5% (28). (See appendices 4ai-iii).

Although our major targets are the two extremes of the country – i.e. north and south, for purposes of relatedness, comparative analysis or 'correlational data', the village of Amansea near the University town of Awka (in the old Eastern Region but presently the capital city of the newly created state of Anambra) was also sampled; for reasons given below in our brief description of 'fieldwork' sites. Below, is a list of our 'fieldwork' sites in the north and south of the country – Nigeria -:

North:

- Sheretyi
- Kawu
- Shere

South:

- Akakuma
- Ologoama
- Doguama
- Amansea (SE)

Our choice of the Gwari villages of Sheretyi, Kawu and Shere (in the north) is inspired by the rude discovery of the naked people of Koma during the visit of President Bill Clinton in August 2000. The Koma people reside so near to an urban community but they live centuries from urbane civility. They are in the territory of Nigeria's Federal capital city of Abuja but until they were discovered, paraded their nudity at the green foot of a rocky hill they call home. Visiting dignitaries witnessed them from the top of the hill as they went about their daily activities, some of them, their vital parts covered with a dress of green leaves. Their home, the lush green valley at the foot of the rocky country hill has neither a visible footpath nor a motor road. They are rural people who live in their own world, insulated from and isolated by modernity, they are the natives

of rural Africa referred to by the Africa Independent Television (AIT) cover story of November 28th 2004 (8p.m.) as "Koma people: victims of deprivation".

Worthy of **note** here, are the two limitations that prevented this study from surveying the Koma people as the quintessential rural, non-westernised rural population in the context of rumour and gossip; and perhaps, again, as a people whose life has negligible western influence and who can be considered to be nearly totally insulated from mass media messages. These limitations are: (1) the danger (dangerouse reptiles are said to be in abundance in the area) in attempting to reach a people without a visible footpath nor a motorable road; and (2) the difficulty in finding educated or English speaking native sons/daughters who understand the language of the people.

Our three northern survey target population – the Sheretyi, Kawu and Shere villages are generally known as Gwari people. Though not naked as the Koma people, they share a commonality with them in the sense that, like the Koma people, the Gwari people are also located near urban culture yet culturally live very far from it. Historically the Gwari are one of the two aboriginal tribes (Gbaji is the second tribe) who were relocated further into the hinterlands of the capital territory in order to develop Abuja into the new Federal Capital.

According to the *Sun* newspaper (page 32) of Saturday, July 19, 2003, the Gwari people like all typical rural Africans hold on tenaciously to their culture as a delightful

way of doing things which they believe is prescribed by God. They do not seem to be concerned by western civilisation or "other people's way of doing things".

For example, rather than carry their loads on the head, the Gwari woman, with her baby strapped to her back carries her load at the back of her neck and the Gwari man carries his on the shoulder because they believe that the head is meant for "thinking and reasoning" and could do without the burden of a load.

Sheretyi village is located 35 kilometres to the South West of Abuja, the Federal Capital city. Its inhabitants of about 500 people are mainly farmers who also breed goats and as such responsible for about 50% of agricultural produce at the Abuja municipal council weekly Karshi market. Though almost dilapidated, Sheretyi boasts of a community primary school.

Kawu is our second Gwari village. Located at the northeast extreme of Abuja, 12 kilometres from the Gwari Area Council headquarters and about the same distance as Sheretyi from the Federal Capital territory, Kawu almost shares boundary with Kaduna. Like Sheretyi, Kawu's populations of about between 500-700 people are predominantly farmers. Most of the inhabitants are the elderly and children; their young and energetic are either learning a trade or commercially engaged in some form at the nearby Gwari "town". In addition to a community primary school, Kawu also has a borehole, powered by solar energy and donated (recently) by the Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Shere has a common history and language with Kawu. About 8 kilometres adrift from Kawu, 20 kilometres from Gwari and about 42 kilometres from Abuja, the village has close to a thousand inhabitants who are, like Kawu, also farmers but with more petty traders. Perhaps because of its nearness to the area council headquarters – Gwari – Shere in addition to a community primary school and a solar powered borehole, also has a fenced secondary school.

It is worthy of note though that a common problem in all the villages is, depending on the season of the year, lack of access road to and from the villages, lack of adequate communication facility and quite often the schools are in names only as most teachers prefer commuting from the urban centres.

In the South, Akakuma, Ologoama and Doguama are in Nembe local government area of present day Bayelsa State (carved out of the old Rivers State). Our choices of these locations have historical importance and strategic relevance as oil was not only first found here in 1958 (Oloibiri) but the old colonial Akasa/Brass division to which the villages belong has served as the beachhead of British colonial occupation of the area (Akasa) by 1884 and Brass was about the same time an influential slave-trading outlet.

This is Nigeria's Niger Delta region, an area spanning more than 30,000 square kilometres of mangrove swamps and snaking waterways that stretches for hundreds of miles between the Benin River in the West and the Cross River in the East. This area,

according to the SABC Africa News (8.30 a.m., June 15th 2004) produces about 95% of Nigeria's (plundered resources) foreign exchange earnings; yet the people live in a desolate world of their own.

Until a few years ago when some canals were dredged to make way for speedier transportation by sea, a journey to the area could take as long as a week with all the inherent risks of sea travel by canoe.

Recently, as a result of youths restiveness leading to the incessant abductions of foreign oil field workers in the area (SABC Africa News, June 19th, 4 a. m, confirm that locals in the area abducted expatriate 'Shell" oilfield workers, demanding $20 million ransom) the Italian hydro-carbon 'exploitation' company – AGIP – had supplied the natives of the area with power generated source of light. Yet, the people are only superficially affected by modernity. They have community schools, but in name only. Nothing more. This is rural Africa, Nigeria's Niger Delta Basin where the discovery and production of hydrocarbon rather than improve the living conditions of the people had destroyed the ecology and left the natives more isolated and insulated.

On the other hand, Amansea village near the University town of Awka where we targeted a simple sample population of 50 rural dwellers has some visible signs of modernity (the residents are supplied with piped water and electricity). With the creation (out of the old Enugu State) of Anambra State, the development of Awka as

the new State's capital, the siting of Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) near the village and the Anambra political crisis (see Chapter six), this study attempted an assessment of how the people would react to political issues (like which party did you vote for during the April 2003 elections) compared to either, let's say Kawu or Akakuma. Not too surprisingly however, like typical rural dwellers, they were in a world of their own, using facial constructs and other forms of body language to communicate with each other, they would generally (as one enlightened villager put it) "not like to be dragged into what is not our business".

- **Administration of Survey Questionnaires and Personal Interview.**

  Survey questionnaires were generally administered in groups of three and in some areas four (made up of a supervisor and research assistants) responsible for the various research 'fieldwork' sites which were broken-down into zones. The groups and zones are as follows:

  Urban – the trio of this researcher, Dr E.T.M. Lawson and Adaye Lolomari (both General Managers in their respective organizations, utilized the resources of their offices) as **'Group A'** were responsible for **Zone A** – Abuja and Lagos.

  Selina Ngoa (Sociology graduate, then a final year student of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University) under the supervision of the researcher led a team of three of (research - assistants – '**Group B'**) her class-mates to take charge of **Zone B** – Awka and Enugu.

The duo of Inemo Daniel (Bayelsa State Director of Publications who died recently while attending a seminar near Ibadan) and 'Beks Royal' (an old colleague at the Rivers State Newspaper Corporation, now Publisher of the Yenagoa based *Crystal*) assisted (from their various offices came research assistants – '**Group C**') with **Zone C** – Port-Harcourt and Yenagoa.

Rural - The duo of this researcher and Dr Lawson supervised **'Group A'** (led by 'Cash' and three others –research assistants) for the administration of rural **Zone A** – Sheretyi, Kawu and Shere.

Selina Ngoa's urban 'group B' still functioned as **'Group B'** and administered Amansea as **Zone B;** while the researcher and Tim Yingifa (an Aironautics engineer) supervised **Zone C**. All research assistants here are community school Teachers from the old Nembe Division. They were led by Ms. Beredugo.

Language of administration for the urban areas is English; while it was a condition that almost all research assistants for the rural questionnaires administration speak the native language of the zone which are, the general **Hausa** or **Gwari** language for zone A, **Igbo** for zone B and **Ijaw (Izon)** for zone C respectively

Survey questionnaires were used to sample the opinions of both urban and rural dwellers. In administering survey questionnaires on rural dwellers, administrators

translated survey questions into the relevant local language while questions were being asked; and all survey questionnaires were administered between April, 2004 and February 2005.

All personal interviews, used to elicit the opinions of targeted groups such as 'media gate-keepers', top government functionaries etc were conducted by the researcher between May and September 2004.

Also, of the over 60 major (as well as not so major) newspapers and magazines of varying hues and opinions, about twelve were selected and scanned (using this study's qualitative approach) between April 2003 and January 2005. The papers and magazines were scanned for examples and illustrations of our argument as well as to demonstrate that, the established structures of community, such as, rumour and its sibling – gossip – serve as raw materials to the media; just as they play important roles within the political power circuit.

The newspapers and magazines so scanned include: the *Guardian, Thisday, Vanguard, Punch* and *Champion;* others are *Newswatch, Tell, The News, Encomium, Excellence, Fame* and *City People* all published in the Lagos axis. They are all national dailies and weekly magazines, most of which treat details of their circulation as "confidential" but claim to circulate 'more than' the 'others'. However, figures obtained from the *Guardian* and *Vanguard* indicate daily circulation figures of about

100,000 and 80,000 respectively; while the *Newswatch* posts 40,000-45,000 weekly. Electronic media news (for example – AIT – the Africa Independent Television in Lagos and the SABC - South Africa Broadcasting Corporation, Africa Service in Johannesburg) were equally monitored to buttress arguments where necessary.(see details of the Nigerian media in 5.3 - 5.6).

Finally, in pursuit of this researcher's intention to confirm if people take as important (all the time) whatever the media considers to be so, in the wake of a "breaking news" in Nigeria which Uwalaka, one of this study's respondents would describe as "hot", the opinions of another 100 Nigerians were sought at the two strategic bus terminals of Awolowo Road in Ikeja and the Iyana-Isolo in Isolo (all in Lagos) respectively. The rationale here is to ascertain whether people take as important whatever the media (in this case, the print) considers to be so; or indeed contrary to this view, consumers of the media product has other 'uses and gratification' for doing so. The result is: **"buying the news, not the paper …"** one of this study's contributions to theory building.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature Review:

In this literature review we will be considering the 'effects theories of mass communication' as well as assessing the relevant literature on the media's agenda-setting hypothesis. The chapter touches on the sensitive subject of public opinion and issues in agenda-setting, critiques the theory as well as attempting to locate conceptual complements or theoretical convergence of agenda-setting hypothesis with some other models of effects theories.

3.1 Effects Theories of Mass Communication

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Walter Lippmann is often quoted as referring to the media as the principal connector of events around us and the images of these events in our minds -i.e. "the world outside and the picture in our heads" (Lippmann, 1922; cited in Price, 1992). Indeed early 20th century media experts and mass communication researchers preoccupied themselves with theoretical thinking ranging from the general effects of mass communication on its audience to attitudinal; change, observed changes in behaviour and media effects on public opinion.

Thus Severin &Tankard (2001) confirm that, the effects of propaganda were the topic of a number of books between the First and the Second World Wars. It was the period (1927) when Harold Lasswell's doctoral thesis on the use of propaganda was published as a book and was referred to by some experts as a Machiavellian textbook, which

should promptly be destroyed. Propaganda was attributed with a rather strong effects theory of the media; and some of the first theoretical thinking about the effects of mass communication is said to have come out of the various analyses of propaganda (Severin &Tankard 2001:108).

One of the major issues of the 20th century with respect to history as well as media effects concern (without any doubt), especially in the USA, was corporate propaganda which had its goal from the beginning, perfectly openly and consciously to control the public mind (Chomsky, 1998). This goal was believed to have been achieved, as the general consensus of the time was that the effect of media could be likened to the effects of a 'bullet' or a 'hypodermic needle' (the bullet or hypodermic needle theory).

Defleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) refer to media effect of the period as the transmission belt theory. The magic bullet theory of mass communication effects was derived from the stimulus-response view of Lasswell, (1927) which posits that any powerful stimulus (such as mass media message) can evoke a uniform reaction or response from a given organism (like an audience).

According to Infante, Rancer & Womack (1990:344), the theory suggested that the mass media could influence an audience directly and uniformly by shooting or injecting them with appropriate messages intended to trigger a desired response.

One historical version of media effects research has it that while media experts concerned themselves with a heuristic approach to ad hoc studies of media effects, psychologists became preoccupied with attitude change research; with an approach that is essentially learning or a reinforcement theory. Severin & Tankard, (2001) confirm that the convergent style or approach of Carl Hoveland and his associates in the 1940s and 1950s, represent a major attitude change research that exemplifies the psychologists approach.

Hoveland began his research while working for the U.S Army during World War II, when the army used films and other forms of mass communicated messages for the training and motivation of soldiers. He believed that attitudes were learned and that they were changed through the same processes that occurred when learning took place. Hoveland's research in attitude change is what is today known as the Yale Communication and Attitude - Change Programme (Severin & Tankard, 2001:153).

Columbia University researchers, led by Paul Lazarsfeld, in 1940, carried out the first careful media effects study in Erie County, Ohio. Since Erie County reflected all 20th century presidential electoral voting patterns, the study sought to determine the effects of the media on people's choice in the November elections (Griffin, 1991). Lazarsfeld and his team also studied the 1948 elections by surveying voters in Elmira, New York. Like the Erie county study, the Elmira study also looked at the media as an important factor in the electoral decision of who to vote for.

Surprisingly, both studies found out that the media's role in election decision, compared to personal as well as group influence, was rather weak (Severin &Tankard 2001:190).

Hoveland's army studies and its like, culminating in Lazarsfeld et al's election studies showed that orientation films could be effective as a source of information but not in changing attitude; so also it was that only few people were affected by media messages in electioneering campaigns. The above seem to have set the stage for the limited effects model of mass communication effects theory.

Hope Lunin Klapper, wife of media effects researcher Joseph Klapper, referred to the limited -effects model as the "law of minimal consequences" (Lang & Lang 1968: 273); while her husband took the view that ordinarily, mass communication does not serve as necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through the structure of community or society -i.e. "nexus of mediating factors and influences" (Klapper, 1960). The mediating factors referred to here include selective perception, selective retention and Lazarsfeld et al's selective exposure; said to be responsible for the media's weak effect on the people in both the Erie County and Elmira studies. Furthermore, these mediating factors are such that 'they typically render mass communication a contributory agent but not the sole cause, in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions' (Severin &Tankard, 2001:263).

With the above as a backdrop, it is evident that early media effects studies were carried out implicitly to test widely held views that the media affect its audience through the classic stimulus-response principles. McQuail & Windahl (1981:49), argue that Erie county study revealed the inadequacy of media effects and its assumptions. According to them, it seemed that aggregate effects from the media "were minimal and was unable to represent adequately the social reality of a mass audience or the process of political information and opinion formation". Citing (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), McQuail & Windahl (1981), note that the result of the above was a theoretical re-evaluation of the original model as well as more focused research, which resulted in the two-step flow model of effects theory.

The two-step flow model suggests that contrary to the earlier argument of selective exposure being responsible for the media's limited effect, ideas often flow from the media to opinion leaders, who in turn pass on the idea or information to their less active counterparts (McQuail & Windahl, 1981). However, the two-step flow model has evolved gradually into a multi-step flow model that is often used in diffusion studies.

However, the limited effects model of effects theory is only one strand in a many sided argument; as the simplistic bullet theory which attributed quite strong effects to mass communication gave way to the limited effects argument, so did the later to the moderate effects model. Severin & Tankard (2001:267) advance that this model of mass communication effects theory is of the view that the minimal effects model goes

too far in minimising the effects of mass communication. The authors confirm that, eventually researchers began to suggest that the limited effects model "might have swung the pendulum too far in the other direction".

According to them, a number of topics including agenda-setting (see 2.2), effects of television violence (see Gerbner's cultivation theory below), the powerful effects model and the knowledge gap hypothesis "indicated that mass communication was having more than limited effects" (Severin & Tankard, 2001:267).

The knowledge-gap hypothesis dwells on the premise that as we have financial poverty so do we have information or knowledge poverty. This hypothesis was first proposed in an article titled: *Mass Media Flow and differential growth in knowledge* (Tichenor, Donohue & Olien, 1970). It asserts that there exists a difference in communication skills between those high and low in socio-economic status, because the very nature of the mass media system is geared toward persons of higher economic status. According to Tichenor et al, "As the infusion of mass media information into social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status tend to acquire this information at faster rate than the lower-status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease" (Severin &Tankard, 2001:246-7).

However the authors of the knowledge-gap hypothesis were quick to explore some of the circumstances and conditions under which a knowledge-gap may be reduced or eliminated. These include issues with immediate and strong local impact, where conflict is perceived over a local issue and within homogeneous communities (as against pluralistic ones) where communication channels are informal but common.

Yet, this researcher takes the view though, that the effect of mass communication as it relates to the above argument will depend on the nature of knowledge and belief being disseminated, as well as the individual's or people's dependence on the media as a source (McQuail & Windahl, 1981).

Thus, Genova & Greenberg (1981) observed in their National Football League Strike and Nixon's Impeachment studies that knowledge-gaps are not strongly related to education, social or economic status but more to audience interest -i.e. self-interest and social interest.

Hoyer (1991) seems to concur with the above when he lambasted media researchers and their media effects studies (especially those in the 1950's and 1960's); referring to the discipline as one in a hurry "to gain acceptance as serious research, and in a hurry to deliver vital evidence that the media had the power to change attitudes and behaviour on a grand scale" (Hoyer, 1991:29).

The above certainly did not mean much to the apostles of the all-powerful effect of mass communication. In the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, came the powerful effects studies. They include those of George Gerbner (1969); Noelle-Neumann (1973); Mendelsohn (1973); Moccoby & Faquhar (1975); Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach & Grube (1984) amongst others.

George Gerbner it is said did start the TV effect studies long before 1973. It is also argued that 'powerful-effects' theory of the media pre-date Noelle-Neumann studies. However, Severin & Tankard (2001:264) clearly state that, "it was first presented by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in her article 'Return to the concept of powerful mass media' (1973)". According to the authors, Noelle-Neumann's article suggests that the mass media, under certain circumstances can have significant effect on a large number of people. "Her spiral-of-silence theory" they insist "would fit under the powerful-effects model".

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory:

George Gerbner is reputed to have started the longest running media research in 1969 with his - "Towards Cultural Indicators: The analysis of mass mediated public message system". He developed the cultivation theory of mass communication to explain the effects of television viewing on people's perception, attitudes and values. Gerbner and his colleagues (Gross, Morgan and Signorielli, 1980) at Pennsylvania University's Annenberg School of Communication argue that television has become the central arm

of society (especially American) and as such " a member of the family, the one who tells most of stories most of the time" (Severin &Tankard 2001:268).

Gerbner, (1973, 1977) and Gerbner et al (1980, 1986) specify that repeated intense exposure to deviant definitions of reality in the mass media lead to perception of the deviant definitions as normal. The result is a reality depicted in the mass media (especially television), which can exert influence by altering the individual perception of reality (Ndolo, 1998:44) - i.e. individuals often confuse media-created or constructed reality with actual reality or what happens around them.

Noelle-Neuman's Spiral of Silence:

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, it has been said, was the first to present (or perhaps represent) the powerful effects model in 1973 with her article: 'Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media'. Noelle-Neumann (1973,1980) opined that the mass media do have powerful effects on public opinion but that these effects have either been underestimated or undetected in past times due to the limitations of research (Severin & Tankard 2001:272). She argues that public opinion is formed as interplay between the media, interpersonal communication and the individual's perception of his or her own opinion in relation to other members of society (McQuail & Windahl 1981:68). McQuail & Windahl (1981) further agree with an earlier social psychological thinking along the same line that an individual's opinion to a large extent depends on the thinking of others -i.e. the media often defines what the dominant view of the day is.

Severin &Tankard (2001:268) is of the view, however, that the powerful effects model will be much more subject to qualifications than the earlier bullet or hypodermic needle theory because "powerful effects do not occur universally or easily but only when the right communication techniques are used under the right circumstances".

3.2 Agenda-Setting:

Donald Wood (1983) observes that virtually all communication researchers and writers seem to agree that the media possess the power and prestige to determine for its audience what is important. The media does this in three distinct ways -i.e. establishing materialistic goals, status conferral and agenda -setting (Wood, 1983:254)

For our purposes, let us briefly describe the phenomenon known as status conferral, for it is closely related to the concept of agenda setting. Status conferral refers to the media's ability to confer or bestow prestige as well as enhance the authority of individuals, groups, organisations and even issues by legitimising their status in the public's eye.

Agenda – setting on the other hand, refers generally, to the media's capability of raising the importance of an issue in the public's mind. Dearing and Rogers (1992) who became involved in agenda-setting research with their presentation at the *American Association of Public Opinion Research Conference* in 1986 refer to the concept as an

ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain attention of the media professionals, the public and policy elites.

The idea that people desire media assistance to order their priorities, especially in determining political reality had been in existence for quite a while but without the name *agenda setting*. McQuail (1987) confirm that, the concept referred to as the power to ‘structure issues' (Lazarsfeld et al 1944) is a phenomenon that has long been noticed and studied in the context of election campaigns. Severin & Tankard (2001:221) also confirm that a rather direct statement of the agenda-setting idea had appeared in a 1958 article by Norton Long.

Earlier works known to be reflective of the agenda-setting concept include Lippmann (1922)), Lazarsfeld & Merton (1948:64), Cohen (1963) amongst others, but University of Chicago sociologist, Robert E. Parks (perhaps the first mass communication scholar) within 1915-1935 conceived of *media gate-keeping* and implied what is today known as agenda -setting (Dearing and Rogers 1992:8/10).

However, it seems the flurry of empirical investigations into agenda – setting function of the media was stimulated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw; the two North Carolina University professors who in 1972 carried out the first systematic study of the agenda-setting hypothesis. Severin & Tankard (2001:222) assert that agenda-setting

hypothesis came about during a period (1950s and 1960s) when researchers became dissatisfied with the limited effects model.

Agenda-setting therefore describes a powerful influence of the media -i.e. the ability to tell us what is important as in issues, events or people. Agenda setting refers to media audiences' acceptance as important those issues, events and people because the media has made it so for people to think and talk about. McQuail & Windahl (1981) observe that the media, by simply paying attention to some issues while neglecting others, will effect on public opinion; adding that the hypothesis would seem to have escaped the doubts which early empirical findings had on the powerful media effects view.

Thus political analyst Theodore White (White 1973) referred to the media's ability in shaping election campaigns (especially in America) as a primordial and sweeping political power unrestrained by any law (see also Griffin, 1991:333). The media sets the agenda of public discussion, and determines what people will think and talk about; an authority usually reserved for tyrants, parties and priests in other nations (see, McCombs & Shaw, 1990:75 in: *Media Power In Politics*; (ed) Graber). And Wood, (1983: 253) believes also that, how to 'behave' in twentieth century America was to "consume the mass media".

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, using the 1968 American Presidential campaign as backdrop to investigating the agenda-setting function of the Mass Media,

attempted an assessment of the relationship between what voters in one community regarded as important issues and actual content of media messages used during the campaign.

Using the interview technique, the researchers support their main hypothesis with result from the presidential race between Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey; having determined that the residents of Chapel Hill relied on a mix of nine print and broadcast sources (two Raleigh newspapers, two Durham newspapers, the out-of-state edition of the *New York Times*, *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines, and the CBS and NBC evening news) for political news.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) established position, and length of story, as the main criteria of prominence. For newspapers, the front-page headline story, a three-column story on an inside page and lead editorial were taken as evidence of significant spotlight on an issue. Magazines have the requirement of an opening story in the news section or any political issue to which the editors dedicated a full column. Placement as one of the first three news items on any discussion that lasted over forty-five seconds defined prominence in the television news format. Agenda-setting hypothesis deals with substantive issues, therefore, the researchers discarded news items about:

(a) Campaign strategy

(b) Position in the polls, and

(c) Personality of the candidates.

All other stories were sorted into fifteen subject categories and later collapsed into five major issues ranked in order of importance ranging from (i) foreign policy, (ii) law and order, (iii) fiscal policy, (iv) public welfare and (v) civil rights.

In order to measure the public's priorities, McCombs and Shaw (1972), further dropped people who were already committed to a candidate from the pool of respondents. Chapel Hill voters were then asked to outline what they considered to be key issues of the campaign, regardless of what the candidates might be saying. Specific answers to the same broad categories used for media analysis were then assigned and compared with aggregate data from undecided voters with the composite description of media content.

According to the researchers, the study revealed that, "the ranks of the five issues on both lists were nearly identical". The authors also pointed at the data suggesting very strong relationship between emphases placed on various campaign issues by the media and the judgments of the electorate as regards issue salience and campaign topics (Severin &Tankard, 2001:221).

In the summer (June) of 1972, five unknown men broke into the National Committee headquarters of the American Democratic Party, looking for undetermined information. It was the sort of story the *Washington Post* would ordinarily treat as local crime story. Yet the editor, Ben Bradley and his two reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein,

gave the story such high visibility treatment that by the end of the year, half the country became familiar with the word Watergate. Worthy of note here is the fact that the same public initially seem to regard the incident as trivial and President Nixon himself waved away the break-in as a "third rate burglary" (Griffin, 1991:332).

By April 1973, ninety percent of Americans became conscious of "Watergate" and when the televised senate hearings on the break-in started (a year later) almost every adult American knew the significance of Watergate. Six months into the hearing Nixon protested "I am not a crook" and six months later he was forced out of office as most citizens and their representatives concluded that Nixon was indeed a "crook".

"Watergate" to McCombs and Shaw is a perfect example of the agenda-setting role of the mass media (at least the newspapers). The researchers were not surprised of the outcome of Watergate after months of making the headline news, especially front page of the *Washington Post*; rather, they believe that the media have the ability to make people look to news media for cues on where to focus attention because people judge as important what the media had judged as important (Griffin, 1991; McQuail, 1987; Graber, 1990; Infante etal, 1990; Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Again, proponents of the media's agenda-setting capabilities readily would argue that, in 1980, President Jimmy Carter felt there were other important issues in the presidential election besides the American hostages being held in Iran. The media,

however, seemed to disagree and instead, for over a year embarked on counting the number of days Americans had been held hostage in Iran; with the story leading the daily evening news. Americans, they would argue, were seemingly not satisfied with the Carter government's inability to free its citizens. According to this view, Jimmy Carter lost the election in his bid for a second term in office, as a result of the media's influence on the American voter.

And more recently, perhaps, the release of America's Democratic Party presidential candidate, John Kerry's military records and the treatment given to it by some sections of the media (see the *Comet,* April 22nd, 2004:11 and *Thisday* - SA edition – August 30th op-ed page) may be an example of media agenda setting; though one can argue that in this instance there is an identifiable source of this agenda, that is, John Kerry himself, as evidenced by the *Comet's* title to the story – "*John Kerry releases military records"*.

In Nigeria, the *National Concord* newspapers (owned and published by the late M. K. O. Abiola) seem to have set the agenda for public discourse when the paper attacked the persona of the late Obafemi Awolowo, during the 1983 electioneering campaign. In that year, the newspaper's publisher, Abiola, was aspiring for a ticket to the presidency under the (then) ruling National Party of Nigeria-NPN; the late Awolowo was the flag bearer of the opposition Unity Party of Nigeria-UPN.

The *Concord* newspapers painted the late "Sage of Ikenne" (Obafemi Awolowo) as a pretender to the faith of purity and accountability and further alleged that he had been involved in a questionable land deal with a certain Oniru family.

Again, after the annulment of what most observers and participants saw as the most fair and free election ever held in Nigeria (1993), the media went to town agitating the de-annulment and revalidation of the elections. That, it appeared was also the agenda of majority of Nigerians.

The agenda -setting theory of mass communication seem to have been manifest in the unanimity among the media in Nigeria, in the agenda of pursuing from office the then military ruler, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (who tampered with the peoples collective will through his annulment of elections), Ernest Shonekan (for who Babangida "stepped aside") and the 'maximum ruler' – Gen. Sani Abacha (who toppled Shonekan). So visceral were feelings on the pages of newspapers and magazines that when Abacha died, the media celebrated and for once Nigerians, against their culture and tradition, celebrated the death of a man.

But, here may also lie the problems with the agenda-setting hypothesis that instead of a media agenda that truly reflects the public mood, people are said to judge as important what the media judge as important; and gives its audience what to think and talk about (McCombs & Shaw, 1977).

Agenda-setting as a theory of mass communication has become rather sophisticated and McCombs and Shaw have also fine-tuned their hypothesis by postulating a "need for orientation" (index of curiosity) as a crucial factor in peoples willingness to let the mass media shape their thinking; yet McQuail (1987) insist that, despite recent research on the theory, there is insufficient evidence to show causal connection between the public's ordering of priorities and the order of importance placed on issues by the media. McQuail notes that the doubts on agenda-setting as a theory stem not only from the strict methodological demands but also from theoretical ambiguities, and as such "agenda-setting theory remains within the status of a plausible but unproven idea" (Mcquail, 1987:276; Infante, Rancer & Womack, 1990:350).

Accordingly, agenda-setting theory is developing and expanding both in focus and in dimension. The latest development is a focus on a new level which McCombs and his associates refer to as second level of agenda-setting. The second-level-agenda-setting model views an agenda as an abstract notion and that many other things other than issues (may be sub-issues) could be items on the list. Severin & Tankard (2001:238) confirm that opening up the agenda-setting concept to include the second level has expanded the theory to now include even effective attributes or attitudes.

Lang & Lang (1983) has also suggested that, agenda setting as a concept be expanded into the concept of 'agenda building'; a collective process in which the media, public and the government influence each other in determining what issues to be considered

important. According to Severin & Tankard (2001:230/1), the Langs' concept of 'agenda building' is more complex than McCombs & Shaws agenda-setting hypothesis. Agenda building by Lang & Lang suggests that, 'the process of putting an issue on the public agenda goes through several stages'.

Citing and quoting McCombs and Estrada (1997), Severin &Tankard (2001:238) remind us that, "the media may not only tell us what to think about, they also tell us how and what to think about it and even to do about it"; but Griffin's (1991) caution, that procedural irregularities in the theory warn against the conclusion that the "agenda -setting function of the media is a 'done deal'", still seem valid (please see: A Critique of the Theory).

Components of the Agenda-Setting Process

There are three main components/traditions of the agenda-setting process. These are the media, public and policy agendas. The media - agenda is this researcher's area of major interest because it concerns issues deemed important by the media and is assumed that, social issues that are widely recognised in the 'media-agenda' often focus attention on the public agenda which in turn influences the policy agenda thus creating policy changes. Its (media-agenda's) dependent variable is issue salience, and has only been investigated in fairly recent years as the concern of media gatekeepers, and this researcher believes, as well as other parties external to the media but interested in the media.

The second tradition known as the *public Agenda-Setting* deals with issues that are considered salient by the public as influenced by the media. It is the concern of mass communication scholars and was set off by McCombs and Shaw (1972). It deals with a set of issues on the public agenda whereas the third tradition and component of the agenda-setting process is the policy agenda.

The *policy agenda* is mainly the concern of political scientists who believe more in the mobilisation of resources by groups of people to effect policy change. The policy agenda deals with policy actions regarding an issue in part, as a response to the media, as well as the public agenda (Dearing & Rogers, 1992). Thus "the agenda-setting process is an ongoing competition among the proponents of a set of issues to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and policy elites" (Dearing &Rogers, 1992:6).

3.3 Public Opinion & Issues in Agenda Setting Theory

Ideas, thoughts and writings about public opinion have been in existence for as long as it has occupied the inquiring minds of sociologists, psychologists, historians, political scientists, economists and especially communication research scholars. They can be found in 18th century philosophy, Renaissance literature, in the works of Plato and Aristotle and have spanned the entire landscape of social inquiry from the arguments and thoughts of reliable theorists and social critics (such as Rousseau 1762; Bentham, 1838; Bryce, 1888; Lowell, 1913; Lippmann, 1922) to the land mark works of late 19th

and early 20th century sociologists and social psychologist (like Tarde, 1890/1903; McDougall, 1920; Allport, 1924) and seminal empirical studies of mass media effects of Lazarsfeld et al (Price,1992:1).

However, in spite of the concept's currency, public opinion remains as controversial as its conceptual approaches and theoretical notions; and even in its definition. Efforts at defining public opinion found the concept vacillating between two viewpoints -i.e. the viewpoint that locates the concept in the collective realm and that which traces it to a reductionist viewpoint -i.e. the individual.

The idea of public opinion "as conceived during the 18th century was implicitly paradoxical", as a connection of the concepts public and opinion in itself, represented, according to Price (1992:2), a 'liberal - philosophical attempt to write, the 'one' and the 'many', to link the collective welfare to individual ideas and preferences".
Indeed very few concepts have triggered as much debate intellectually and even in applied settings as public opinion thus making it (perhaps) the most enduring of concepts in the social sciences.

Citing Baker (1990:168), Price (1992:2), argues that, in conferring or imposing "public" as a title on opinion, enlightenment thinkers implied 'universality, objectivity and rationality" whereas the concept itself suggested "considerable flux, subjectivity and uncertainty"; because as opposed to the sociological concept of mass, public as a

concept is viewed from the premise that it is a loosely organised collectivity that arises in the course of discussion surrounding an issue. Put simply the public is recognised or marked by the resolution of some problem or an issue (collectively) through discussion -i.e. argument and counter argument.

There also lies the problem; as Price (1992) observes that, there are implications in the concept that the public is a "loosely organised collectivity arising in the course of discussion". The notion of the public is also bound up with the idea of a political realm in which citizens enjoy both freedom and responsibility. In close societies there is neither a public realm, nor in consequence, public opinion.

Price (1992:30) clarifies that discursive publics represent only a rather small portion of the modern electorate and is also not a fixed entity as a public changes both in size and composition, as does an issue from recognition through disputation and eventual resolution; maintaining that public opinion is formed through a sequence of stages.

Foot & Hart (1953) identified five collective stages in the formation of public opinion. They include:

(i) The problem phase, - i.e., the stage at which too many ideas are raised and equally discarded; a phase this study would generally describe as not necessarily confused, but foggy.

(ii) The proposal phase: - Although still surrounded by many ideas, this phase is more clearly discursive than the problem phase. Citing (Foot & Hart, 1953; 313), Price (1992:30) confirms that these phases still involve some of the characteristics of collective behaviour such as 'groping movements, ephemeral emotions, sporadic waves of rumour and influence, disorganised clamour'.

(iii) The policy phase: - This is the phase during which the merits and demerits or strengths and weaknesses of alternatives are considered and actively discussed.

(iv) The programme phase: - This is the execution of approved action (could be referred to as decision time, for example, voting).

(v) The Appraisal phase: - This refers to the periodic re-evaluation of the effectiveness of action/decisions taken (Price, 1992:29-33).

Issues

McCombs and Shaw's (1972) original proposition is quite straightforward -i.e. the media has the capability to raise the importance of an issue in the public's mind.
It follows naturally therefore, that in the formation of public opinion, issues are crucial. Issues therefore are multi-sided and involve conflict -i.e. anything contentious constitutes an issue; issues represent "conflict between two or more identifiable groups,

over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of positions or resources" (Dearing & Rogers, 1992:2).

Like the identified stages in the formation of public opinion, issues also proceed through stages. Dearing & Rogers (1992:60) note that, the sociologist, Herbert Blumer in 1971, emphasized the importance of studying the time-ordered stages of problems being recognized before achieving legitimacy as bona fide issues. However, a much-cited article by political scientist Anthony Downs appeared a year later (1972). According to the authors, Downs in his article referred to an 'issue attention cycle' where issues rise and fall on the public agenda –i.e. " each of these problems [issues] suddenly leaps into prominence, remains there for a short time and then – though still largely unresolved – gradually fades from the center of public attention"

Down's 'issue attention cycle' include:

(i) Pre-problem stage

(ii) Alarmed discovery stage

(iii) Realizing the cost of problem solution stage

(iv) Decline of public interest

(v) Post problem stage (Dearing & Rogers, 1992).

The pre-problem stage:

In the words of Downs (1972), cited in Dearing & Rogers (1992:61), "usually objective conditions (real-world indicators) regarding the problem are far worse during the pre-problem stage than they are by the time the public becomes interested in it". For example, an undesirable situation that existed but did not capture the public attention on time, perhaps, could be the Rwandan genocide or even the issue of 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia.

Alarmed discovery stage:

This is the stage where a dramatic event suddenly creates an alarmed public awareness and its attendant "euphoric enthusiasm" from society to tackle or solve the problem. For example, the dramatic as well as alarming awareness created by renowned artistes ('We are the world') and society's response to the Ethiopian famine situation.

Realizing the cost of problem solution:

This refers to the stage where people – i.e. the public 'gradually' or begin to realize how prohibitively expensive it is to solve a social problem or issue. An example here is, America's 'war' on terrorism, and the social cost of returning Iraq to normality.

Decline of public interest:

Here, the high cost of solving the problem as well as the boredom created by extensive media coverage of the issue, leads to a fading public interest.

Post – problem stage:

At this stage, although the programmes, policies and even the agencies put in place to cope or solve the problem persist, the issue drops off, or at best remains obscure on the public agenda. Albeit, Dearing & Rogers (1992:61), observe that, 'an issue's life cycle may indeed have discernable stages over time'.

Issues can also be *primed* or *framed*; priming and framing, are two added concepts to the agenda setting discourse, a newer and added definitions to the media effects literature by Shanto Iyengar and a generation of second level/dimension agenda setting research scholars.

Priming:

Issue priming in the words of Fisk & Taylor (1984:231) refer to the effects of a prior context on the interpretation and retrieval of information, but Iyengar & Kinder, (1987:114) says, by lavishing news coverage on an issue while ignoring others the media draws attention to certain aspects of political life at the expense of the others (Dearing & Rogers, 1992:63). Iyengar (1991:133), Rogers, Hart & Dearing (1997:225), advance that, priming is the ability of the media agenda to affect the criteria by which individuals judge issues. Accordingly, Iyengar in his 'overview' of "Do the Media Rule? Politicians, Voters and Reporters in America", confirm that issues highlighted in the media become the standard by which media audiences judge politicians and elective office seekers – i.e. "if it is crime that dominates the media agenda, not only

does crime become public enemy number one, crime also becomes the principal yardstick for evaluating president's or congress's performance" (Iyengar & Reeves, 1997:213).

Framing:

Issue Framing on the other hand refers to a means through which an issue is given a particular meaning. Citing Iyengar (1991), Dearing & Rogers (1992:63) explain that, "issues framing are the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by making the media to make them more important and thus emphasise a particular cause of some phenomenon".

'Framing', according to Entman (2002:291/2), essentially involves selection and salience. It defines the problem, diagnoses cures, makes moral judgment and suggests remedies. Framing therefore means "the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described".

A further confirmation of 'framing' came from McCombs & Estrada (1997), paraphrasing Entman in a second level or dimension agenda setting language in which they describe framing as the selection of a small number of attributes for inclusion on

the media agenda when a particular object is discussed (see: McQuail, 2002:391; Iyengar & Reeves, 1997:246).

3.4 A Critique of the Theory

Entman, (1989); Iyengar, (1991); Salwen & Matera, (1992) etc, all agree that the media's issues salience, priming and framing suggest that the media in addition to setting the public agenda can also direct individuals on how to evaluate issues (Dearing &Rogers, 1992:64); but what the results of salience, priming and framing have not told us is how issues are included on the media agenda.

Causal order is an important question left bare in McCombs & Shaw's original Chapel Hill study. Much as the study seem to have found strong correlation between the media and public agendas, it could not show which was influencing which (Severin & Tankard, 2001:224); because, "there are certainly alternative models of this relationship, of which the main one will reverse the flow and state that underlying concerns of the public will shape both issues definition by political elites and those of the media, a process which is fundamental to political theory and to the logic of free media" (McQuail,1987:276).

McQuail (1987), referring to Davis & Robinson (1986) and Behr & Iyengar (1985), observe that, past agenda-setting research has been criticized for neglecting possible effects of what people think about – i.e., who is important? Where important things

happen and why things are important are, as a result questions for which most of the evidence is inconclusive. Correlation is not causation as Griffin (1991:335) declares, “a true test of the agenda-setting hypothesis must be able to show that a matching public agenda lags behind the media schedule of priorities”.

Indeed there is no definitive order of influence effect in the agenda-setting hypothesis. It is possible that newspaper and television coverage simply reflects public concerns that already exists (Griffin, 1991:335); just as it is possible that the media agenda ‘was influencing the public agenda “it is also possible that the public agenda may have been influencing the media agenda” (Severin & Tankard, 2001:224).

The above is aptly corroborated by Ray Funkhouser who, independent of McCombs & Shaw’s hypothetico-deductive (see Infante, Rancer & Womack 1990:350) approach to the media’s agenda-setting capabilities, carried out an exhaustive and retrospective search in news magazines between 1960 -1970. Although Funkhouser found a strong relationship between media and the public priorities, he was doubtful in the responses to his Gallup polls. He wondered whether, if really measured against the personal as well as emotional concerns of people, the results of the polls would be the same.

According to Funkhouser (in Griffin, 1991:336), the correspondence between news articles and public opinion may be nothing more than the “public’s regurgitating back to the pollster what is currently in the news, with little or no relation to what the

respondent himself feels is important". Thus McQuail (1987), Jensen & Rosengren (1990) advance that, mass-communication research owes "at least part of its very existence to sometimes exaggerated and misapprehended notions of the effects of mass communication".

McCombs & Shaw's Chapel Hill studies dealt more with 'who is going to win' and 'how is the candidate going to do it" – i.e. an analysis of the campaign itself rather than a devoted discussion of the major political issues; besides, the original theory directed attention to issue salience during political campaigns and later expanded to accommodate some political issues, it didn't seem to have considered the concerns of the voter to who the effects hypothesis basically applies (Griffin, 1991:338-340).

In addition, as a causal hypothesis, the theory doesn't seem to consider the time needed for agenda setting – i.e. how long it takes for media content to have an effect on the 'public's subjective rankings' (Severin & Tankard, 2001:229). Thus, the theory's findings are impressive but unequivocal and as such more "likely that the media do contribute to a convergence of the three 'agendas' but that is a different matter from setting any particular one of them" (McQuail, 1987:276).

Whereas McQuail (1987:276) argues and Infante etal (1990:350) opines that the media's agenda-setting theory 'at least for the time being' be left with the status of a plausible but unproven idea, because it is fraught with theoretical ambiguities and

methodological inadequacies. Griffin (1991:338) simply views the theory as 'an uncertain agenda' whose basic prediction, although straightforward, can be applied only in narrowly defined situations. Accordingly, this researcher also questions the legitimacy of the media's agenda setting capabilities in rural Africa.

The concept of intermedia agenda setting, calls to question whom the real agenda-setters are – i.e. whose agenda is the media agenda? Besides, one of the problems associated with agenda-setting is the monitoring of all media that an individual is exposed to and the actual determination of how the individual has been affected; as Wilson (1989:17) and Wilson & Wilson (2001:16), warn ' it is important to understand, however, that agenda setting can differ greatly from one news medium to another'.

However, it is worthy of note that a more dominant paradigm in the critiquing of agenda setting theory stems from the concepts of political economy of the media, gate keeping and media monopoly.

'The economic logic of the media' stems mostly from the fact that, the mass media – i.e. the commercial mass media are primarily "Mr. Delivery" of audiences to advertisers (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996:149), as well as the politico-financial weights behind them; and in addition tell stories, write or publish/broadcast articles, messages etc, favourable to advertisers and the owners or investors.

Writing on "Falsehood and Compromises" (*Guardian*: 53, Friday, August 5th, 2005), Yusuf Danesi, a staff of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), complains that "commercial motive" creates a "fundamental limitation in Journalism that gets me mixed up most of the times". According to Danesi, he had written what in his assessment remains a "very objective article" which he had expected a daily newspaper to publish; but, his article could not be published because the "powerful" advertiser on whom he wrote "had been criticized enough by the public …" Predictably, Danesi is worried that, "…media properties which usually bond media and their audiences, are now being surrendered by … editors and publishers to the caprices of those who pay the bills".

Croteau & Hoynes (2001:1), are concerned about the media and its significance for democratic societies as 'nearly all media companies are commercial corporations whose primary function is creating profits for owners or stockholders'; who measures performance of the media companies along the lines of sales volume, accruals from advertising and profits as opposed to, 'public interest concerns about creativity, independent thought and diversity'.

Noam Chomsky (2004), in a personal communication with this researcher confirms the concerns of Croteau & Hoynes. According to Chomsky, "the media typically have their own interest in determining which issues to raise in the public mind: typically, the

issues that conform to the interests of the power structures of which they are a part, and which they serve".

The above, seem to clarify the issues of the allocation of the colossal resources of the media and information industry and who controls this busy movement. A busy movement which Inglis (1990:111) observe enables us to understand why the media's forms and content are the way they are – i.e. a shift from analysis of consumption to production. In other words, what is done with the 'enormous power', of the media explains, ' how the structures of productive power themselves generate a momentum far beyond individual control'; because, the media is considered an 'elite power group'. A power group where ownership has become so concentrated that the integration of media, big business and government has enabled media elite to exert control over its own scrutiny and as such, has successfully resisted obstacles to greater profits (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996:231).

Unlike the folklore of capitalism in which giant firms, corporations or even multinationals forcefully compete against each other, mass advertising has resulted in media monopoly where there is 'mutual cooperation, interlocked directors and shared partnerships in media operations'; which Bagdikian (2000), described as 'more like a cooperative cartel'.

The lines between traditional forms of media ownership – people are either publishers of newspapers and or magazines, proprietors of radio and or television organisations, owners of movie houses and producers of television programs etc - have become blurred. These days, people or those with economic muscle now seat atop financial empires, mining concerns or a multinational information technology corporation and complements these with media chains or cross-ownerships ranging from newspapers to http:// www.com.

Bagdikian (2000: xv) confirms that, by owning all these media, a few large corporations have mass communication power that far exceeds the capabilities of smaller firms, social action organizations and individuals. Thus, the media's capability in ordering priorities or structuring issues is surrounded by various boundaries, which equally influence mass media content. Media content is determined and guided by the concept of 'gatekeeping'.

A gatekeeper or gatekeeping in this context, traditionally, refers to all those involved in the news processing, selection and production process. Examples of a gatekeeper will include the reporter, news editor, sub-editor, the over-all editor himself amongst others.

Shoemaker & Reese (1996:119), advance that, the term *gatekeeping* or *gatekeeper* suggests the adaptation to physical limits – i.e. it is difficult if not impossible for any media or communication system to report or publish, broadcast or transmit all covered

or available stories at any given point in time. Thus, the media need to be selective in the choice of stories and articles. However, the problem here, as some experts have pointed out are, the principles involved in the selection process – i.e. who and what determines the selection process.

In addition, gatekeeping as an idea, according to Shoemaker & Reese (1996:106), is influenced at the levels of ideology, extramedia, organization, media routines and the individual.

Referring to the famous formulation of Marx & Engels (1846/7), Inglis (1990:78), reminds us that, 'in any epoch the ruling ideas are those of the ruling class – i.e. the class which is the ruling material force is at the same time its ruling intellectual force'. The ideological implications here are that the media do not only satisfy organizational goals but also its hegemonic requirements. Hegemony in certain circumstances may simply represent a disturbing label for the USA's foreign policy; the term may also mean the domination of the Hausa Fulani of the Muslim north in Nigerian politics (thus the Hausa Fulani hegemony).

However, in our context, hegemony is a key cultural studies view of the media (see Stuart Hall's 'Critical Theory' in Griffin, 1991:310). It refers to the means by which the ruling order maintains its dominance – i.e. 'media institutions serve a hegemonic function by continually producing a cohesive ideology, a set of commonsensical values

and norms that serve to reproduce and legitimate the social structure through which the subordinate classes participate in their own domination' (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996:237).

Gitlin (1980:253), Shoemaker & Reese (1996:237), equally define hegemony as the systematic (but not necessarily or even usually deliberate) engineering of mass consent to the established order – i.e. a further confirmation that ideologically, the media agenda after all, may just be an agenda of the 'established order'; a confirmation of hegemonic fulfillment which, Griffin (1991), simply refers to as 'subtle sway of the haves over the have-nots'.

3.5 Agenda Setting: Conceptual Complements/Convergence with some Other Models of Communication Effects Research

A flurry of arguments exists as to whether there is a conceptual complement, theoretical convergence or overlapping claims between the media's agenda-setting hypothesis and some other models of media effects studies. Some argue that Gerbner, Gross, Signorelli, & Morgan's (1980, 1982, 1986) cultivation theory – i.e. that the mass media, especially television, exerts tremendous influence on people by altering their perceptions of reality, constitutes media agenda-setting. Others argue, that even the uses & gratification approach (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974) which is a shift from traditional media effects research of what the media do with people, to what people do with the media, is a media agenda approach of some sort.

However, for our purpose, we attempt a location of conceptual complements/convergence between agenda setting as an idea and the concepts of gatekeeping, two-step flow (and its later elaboration – i. e. the diffusion of innovation) and Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence.

'Gatekeeping', as an idea has been and is most frequently used in studies of the mass communication process; especially, as it relates to the collection, collation, selection, production and the dissemination of news or information. Between 1915-1935, University of Chicago Sociologist, Robert Parks used the phrase 'media gatekeeping' to imply what is today known as the agenda-setting process (Dearing & Rogers 1992:10); but, McQuail & Windahl (1981:100) confirm that the concept was originated by Kurt Lewin in a 1947 work dealing with decisions about household food purchases. According to Lewin's study, information always has to flow along certain channels containing 'gate areas' where decisions are made based on some impartial rules or personally by the 'gatekeeper'. It is worthy of note though, that, the decision idea which was invoked in a comparison with the flow of news in the media, usually, have to do with whether information or goods should be allowed in, continue or remain in the channel.

The idea was adopted and applied by White (1950), in the study of a telegraph wire editor of a non-metropolitan paper, 'whose decision to discard many items was seen as the most significant gatekeeping activity' (McQuail & Windahl, 1981:100). Other

gatekeeping studies or models include, Gieber (1956), McNelly (1959), Galting & Ruge (1965), Bass (1969); most of which, McQuail (1987:162), refer to as 'restricted in scope to the activity within newsrooms of choosing from among numbers of incoming wire telegrams and pictures from news agencies for the content which makes up or governs the bulk of news in a typical paper'.

The above, Shoemaker & Reese (1996) simply note as 'media routines', which help to fit the flow of information into a manageable physical limit. 'Media routines', the authors advance, do impose their own social logic on the resultant product, because, they provide a perspective that explains, often, what in the first place can be defined as news. Shoemaker & Reese (1996:119-120) observe that, news organizations or media systems are not just passive recipients of a continuous stream of events lapping at their gates, rather, before an item even gets to the first gate, news workers 'through their routines, actively construct reality' – i.e. they are at liberty to explain what gets defined as news, because 'news workers 'see' some things as news and not others'.

Gatekeeping, or media agenda-setting?

The other theory of mass communication, which seems to have some conceptual complement with the media's agenda-setting hypothesis, is the 'two-step flow' model. It has its origin embedded in the first rigorous study of media effects in an election campaign. Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet (1944), using the American presidential

election of 1940, showed the inadequacy and assumptions of the earlier view that the mass media operated on the basis of a classic stimulus-response principle.

Rather, the researchers argued that aggregate effects from the media were minimal and did not 'represent adequately the social reality of a mass audience or the process of political information and opinion formation' (McQuail & Windahl, 1981:49).

Findings of the relative failure of mass media to influence voters as widely acclaimed, compared to influence from interpersonal relationships led to the suggestion that, ideas and information flow from the media first, to more active members (opinion leaders) in a community; and then, from them (opinion leaders), to less active members of the community or population.

A theoretical re-evaluation of the above in a more focused research (McQuail & Windahl, 1981:49), which recognised that many other 'variables intervene to modify the effect of messages on audience response' (Ndolo, 1998:41), was advanced by Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955) as the 'two-step flow' of ideas and information.

McQuail (1987:271) confirms that the concept of personal influence in media effects studies has acquired such a high status that it has become a 'dominant paradigm'; and Ndolo (1998:42) stipulates that mass media messages move in two distinct stages – i.e. 'first, individuals called opinion leaders receive' the message and then pass it on to

others with additions or subtractions. These 'opinion leaders', according to the author, 'are generally well informed and respected people within the community' who pass on these informations as well as their personal perceptions and interpretations, usually, through informal interpersonal channels; with the result that, in the end, the message passed on may not be the one received. This, Ndolo (1998) explains, could be 'why media campaigns may have failed to alter audience attitudes and behaviour'. Opinion leaders setting the agenda?

However, the two-step flow and personal influence theory is not without critics. One criticism stems from the observation that, with modest personal contact intervention, the media is capable of spreading directly major news stories – i.e. there is no clear demonstration that personal influence always acts as strong independent or 'counteractive' source of influence on the matters, usually or normally affected by the media (McQuail, 1987:272); because, it is highly likely that personal influence may reinforce the effects of media as it is probable to counteract same.
Whereas McQuail (1987) takes the view that the roles of 'leader' and 'follower' varies from topic to topic – i.e. the roles are interchangeable and that there are many who can neither be classified as one nor the other; Ndolo (1998), declares that some opinion leaders are self-nominated and therefore not seen as such by supposed followers.

Perhaps, the most striking of the criticisms of the two-step flow theory is the probability that the flow is as likely to be multi-flow as two-step; and the eventual

elaboration of this is the 'multi-step flow' theory, often described as the 'diffusion of innovation, theory (see Rumour as multi-step flow in action in chapters 5, 6, 7 & 9).

Yet, despite all these qualifications and comments on the personal influence thesis, McQuail (1987:272) asserts that there are circumstances where interpersonal influences are indeed stronger than media. Citing the *Teheranian* (1979), he provides the overthrow of the Shah of Iran as a 'well documented case in point'. Put simply, rather than a media agenda, the people's agenda of removing from office the Shah seem to have held sway.

So far, what we do know about the effects of mass media consumption is scattered, fragmented, and often contradictory and confusing (Wood, 1983:240). But German Sociologist, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1973, 1980) argues that, the mass media do have powerful effects on public opinion but that these effects, in the past, have been underestimated or undetected due to the limitations of research (Severin & Tankard, 2001:272).

Noelle-Neumann maintains that, public opinion is formed through a process known (in her theory) as the 'spiral of silence' – i. e. the increasing pressure people feel to conceal their views when they think they are in the minority (Griffin, 1991:342). The media, especially the television, Neumann believes accelerate the spiral, but that the role of the media in this process is aided, first, by peoples' extraordinary sensitivity (in a quasi-

statistical sense) to what society will tolerate or accept as standard. Neumann's position here is in consonance with the research findings of the psychologist, Solomon Asch – i.e. people will usually ignore the plain evidence of their senses and yield to perceived pressure, associated with embarrassment or isolation. This is further corroborated by Griffin (1991:434) as he notes that, the fear of isolation is the centrifugal force that accelerates the spiral of silence

Perhaps, the closest conceptual complement/convergence of the spiral of silence to the agenda-setting hypothesis is McQuail's (1987:281) confirmation that the underlying logic of the phenomenon known as the spiral of silence holds that the more a dominant version of the opinion consensus is disseminated by the mass media in society, the more will contrary individual voices remain silent, thus accelerating the media effect – hence a 'spiraling process'. McQuail (1987) 'can mention', among the scarce empirical details, two Swedish studies comparing trends both in newspaper editorial opinion and public opinion, one of which 'showed a very close relationship between Swedish public opinion on the Middle East … and that of the Swedish press…' (see McQuail, 1987:281).

CHAPTER FOUR

Rethinking the Agenda Setting Theory:

Besides reviewing the theory, chapter three has thrown-up quite a number of pertinent observations – i.e. what we know seems to be unsustainable, incomplete and unrepresentative, especially from our perspective; Just like Wood (1983:240) advanced that, what we do know about the effects of mass media consumption is scattered, fragmented and often contradictory and confusing; especially in our context.

All of which point to the need for further investigation and exploration of new frontiers and horizons to enhance what we already know. Here, we are rethinking the agenda setting theory therefore, with a view to laying the foundation to a conceptual theory or at the worst a paradigm shift in the agenda-setting continuum.

The Other Neglected Agents of Power – i.e. The Established Structures of Community

Agenda setting is all about issues; issues are usually contentious -i.e. issues involve conflict and, hence, agenda setting is inherently a political process. The political process is embedded in what Dearing & Rogers (1992:2) refer to as "procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of positions or resources". The above is the stuff issues are made of, symptoms of the political environment, which is synonymous with power. Thus we have chosen for the other variables at play in agenda

setting, the title - ***the other neglected agents of power*** or *the established structures of community* in the agenda-setting paradigm. **'Structures'** here may as well have been mediums, but it is 'structures' in the sense that we use the word anthropologically, if not sociologically, to emphasise the basic relationships that lie underneath these communal mediums of information exchange.

The other neglected agents of power here refer generally to propaganda and specifically to some tools and devices of propaganda. These tools and devices are g***ossip, rumour, language, religious discourse (as in influence from the church or mosque) name-calling*** and t***estimonial effects***. It is this researcher's view, that in Africa, the above as established structures of community are employed to diffuse information towards setting the territorial agenda, whose elements we propose in turn, could, constitute the media agenda (as we attempt to explain in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 9). Accordingly, we have here, treated propaganda a little more detailed than you may consider necessary. Our reason being that in the end, it is some of its devices and tools, not as conventionally understood and used by mainstream practitioners, but as it is used by the natives of Africa, rural Africa in particular, as a way of life, which we propose as, 'radio wahala'.

4.1 Propaganda

Propaganda as a concept has existed since 'primates' were sufficiently articulate to use it. Its origin was distinctly religious as Kotler (1976:323), confirms that, propaganda in

its earliest stage was practiced by princes and religious leaders who saw the task of winning converts as one of manipulating words, feelings and experiences. Pratkanis & Aronson (2001:11) also confirm that the use of propaganda goes back to the birth of human civilizations.

Another historical version of the origin of propaganda informs us that the systematic design of propaganda and counter-propaganda appears to have begun in the Greek city-states about 500BC. It is also argued that a number of parallel developments appeared after 400BC in other civilisations. For example, the *International Encyclopedia* (1968:580/2) reminds us that Kautilya, purportedly Chief Minister to the Indian Emperor, claimed to have used propaganda as his "principles of politics".

However, Pratkanis & Aronson (2001:11) assert that the first documented use of the word 'propaganda' occurred in 1622, when, the Roman Catholic Pontiff, Pope Gregory XV established the "*sacre congregatio de propaganda fide*" i.e. sacred congregation for the propagation of faith. This was during the Protestant Reformation, when the Roman Catholic Church engaged in the use of arms to forcefully re-establish Roman Catholicism. It was an unsuccessful 'holy war'; thus Pope Gregory XV established the papal propaganda office to coordinate efforts "to bring men and women to the voluntary acceptance of church doctrines".

Jackall (1995:1) confirms the distinctly religious origins of propaganda; declaring that Pope Gregory XV (1621-23) established the Papal office of propaganda and issued the *"Papal bull instrutabili Divinae"* on June 22, 1622 establishing the *sacre congregatio de propaganda fide*.

Quoting the *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. vi, No.4: 480 (January, 1921), Jackall (2001:9), reveals, that the original name of the "Sacred commission" was "*Sacred Congregatio Christiano nomini propagando*" whose members consisted of thirteen Cardinals and two prelates. Some forty years earlier (about 1582), Pope Gregory XIII (1572-85) had begun under the same name, the "Cardinal Commission".

Perhaps the difference between the Cardinal Commission (1582) and the sacred congregation (1622) was in the approach to converting and conquering souls. The Cardinal commission engaged in the use of arms to forcefully re-establish Roman Catholicism. It was a failed holy war. The Sacred Congregation on the other hand had as its *mittere* -i.e. mission, a "sending forth" "to conquer by spiritual arms, by prayers and good works, by preaching and catechising, the countries..lost to the Church in the debacle of the sixteenth century and to organise into an efficient corps the numerous missionary enterprises for the diffusion of the gospel in pagan lands.." (Jackall, 1995:1).

Roman Catholic effort at propagation of the faith did not end with the Cardinal Commission and the Sacred Congregation. In 1627, a college named after Pope Urban VIII (1623-44) - i.e. Collegium Urbanum was established. It was "an international seminary for the education and socialization of young priests of all lands....", and for the worldwide 'Counter Reformation' against the protestant revolt.

Contemporary *Propaganda:*

Despite the great efforts of the Papal Order in the use of propaganda and Counter Reformation, church influence waned as was the case with traditional forms of domination. Put simply, the Church's grip on the masses and on society itself loosened, with the emergence of modern economic, social and political democratic institutions; but the real catalysts according to Jackall (2001:2), were, institutional milieux and marginal public spaces that gave rise to new publics. "Coffee houses in England and Germany, salons in France, reading societies and lending libraries" along with many other similar institutions, organisations, societies and the printed word, helped lay the foundation for public opinion as well as relatively cohesive publics.

However, Pratkanis & Aronson (2001:9) advance that it was not until the full force of the Industrial Revolution was felt in the 19th century that the organisation of what can be referred to as the new age of propaganda began to take shape. The Industrial Revolution, which saw the invention of many new devices such as steam engines, cotton gins, power looms, railroads, telegraphs and assembly lines, resulted in the

manufacture of not only consumer items but also more and more material goods for the mass market.

The result of the above is that within a few generations, almost everyone aspired to possessing goods once considered an exclusive preserve of only the rich in the society. As we are familiar with, mass production leads to mass market; and that, led to the need for guiding the consumer in the choices he has to make. We have entered the age of modern day advertising and marketing.

Pratkanis & Aronson (2001) picked a rather obscure event on a specific date to represent the beginning of the modern age of propaganda. According to them, it began in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the USA in 1843 when a young man named Volney Palmer opened the first advertising agency. Palmer's agency by today's standards was but a primitive shop, which brokered advertising space between newspaper publishers and advertisers. Volney Palmer's brokerage shop helped lay the foundation stone on which was built modern day advertising agency, marketing research firms, publicity agencies, opinion pollsters and all the various titles; all in the service of what "modern critics have referred to as mind - control, brainwashing and hidden seduction…" and possibly, media agenda-setting.

The academic community was not left out in this race to 'control' the human mind as courses ranging from the 'principles of Advertising', to 'salesmanship' began appearing

at universities, just as academic textbooks with exotic titles on the subject were being published.

According to Pratkanis & Aronson (2001:10) “it did not take long for the principles of advertising and marketing developed to sell consumer goods to be applied to the 'sale' of political ideas and candidates”. The ‘marketing’ of the First World War (WWI) was one of the first applications of such principles.

Jackall (1995:137) confirms that, within one week of the congressional declaration of war on Germany on April 6, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI). “The CPI brought together, under one organisational roof, leading journalists, publicists and advertising men, along with novelists, academic intellectuals, moral crusaders and muckrakers of every sort from the entire land. A whole generation of what might be called experts with symbols, opinion-shapers, image-makers, interpretive geniuses, and storytellers of every sort – honed their already sharp skills”. Their mission was to sell America's crusade to the American people and the idea of America to the world.

George Creel, described as a one-time Kansas City “muckraking journalist”, (Jackall, 1995:137), was chairman of the CPI. In “How We Advertised America”, a book published first in 1920, Creel proudly divulged how he and his committee used the principles of advertising to convince Americans to go to war with Germany. Creel's

success inspired a lot of people, most notable of which was Adolf Hitler who thought the “allies” effective use of propaganda was ingenious.

Hitler did not waste time in creating the ministry of Public Enlightenment and propaganda as soon as his Nazi party came to power in Germany. The Nazis, along with other extremist social movements of the 1930s, gave propaganda a bad name. According to Jackall (1995), other well-established groups also used the term without any hint of defensiveness until well into the 1950s.

Hitler's Nazi Germany elevated propaganda to an unprecedented height both in terms of the efficiency of methods used and in the totality of the kind of mind sweeping objectives, which they achieved, especially in respect of the German community in various countries in Europe at that time.

Today, the ancient art practiced by a few skilled men and the papal 'order' has become the quasi science of opinion management, employing among others socio-psychological and scientific techniques and methods. Propaganda has taken a much broader meaning, generally synonymous with deceitful manipulation of symbols etc, for the affectation of opinions and attitudes, mostly, through the elitist view of mass media influences on its audience; but, the native people of rural Africa, also have their own versions of propaganda tools and devices with which they function and meet the requirements for their political decision making (see 4.6: Sunshade, bowl of water…).

Propaganda *Defined*:

Different human relationships have different definitions for propaganda. For example, the military (it could be argued) may understand propaganda as any form of communication in support of national objectives designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes or behaviour of any group in order to benefit the sponsor either directly or indirectly. For some others, propaganda is any technique, be it in writing, speech, music, film or other means; any association, plan, activity etc for the spread of principles and opinions especially to effect change, reform, or that attempts to influence mass public opinion.

The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968) defines propaganda as the "relatively deliberate manipulation by means of symbols (words, gestures, flags, images, monuments, music etc) of other people's thoughts or actions with respect to beliefs, values and behaviours which these people (creators) regard as controversial".

Lenin, in a collection of writings published in 1929 as *Agitation and Propaganda*, presented propaganda as the reasoned use of arguments from philosophy, history and science to influence the educated and reasonable few. While 'Agitation', is the use of emotional slogans, "Aesopian" parables and half-truths to influence the uneducated, the semi-educated and the unreasonable.

For Roman Catholic priest, Matthew Hassan Kukah (former Secretary-General, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria), and currently, post-doctoral researcher at Harvard, the definition of propaganda is simple. Propaganda, Kukah says, is the skill employed to persuade, communicate and market or sell an idea or a particular vision. "As a political marketing tool, it has been persuasive in very many ways depending on the circumstances or the environment", he adds.

Dr. George Obiozor, former Director-General of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Nigeria's Ambassador to Israel and currently that country's Ambassador to the USA, defines propaganda as "a profession of experts of PR. They have something to sell; they go out and sell their products. Propaganda is a virile tool for projecting a positive course. It could work for and against its creator or user" (Ngoa, 2003) as well.

For the not so educated or enlightened, for whom Lenin said 'Agitation is used to influence, surprisingly, propaganda is treated with not just disdain but fear and skepticism. "Propaganda is full of lies. When they want us to vote for them, they tell lies about their opponent, even their mother. Propaganda is evil," says one respondent.

It does appear the definition of propaganda means different strokes for different folks; but consensus is that - propaganda is a technique or skill for persuading and (or) influencing people (Ngoa 2003).

Stanley Macebuh, City College, New York, Professor of English and until recently, the Senior Special Assistant (Special Duties) to President Olusegun Obasanjo, aptly captures propaganda thus: the general objective of propaganda has always been to convince as many people as are targeted about the viability of a given idea and getting them to act in accordance with what the propagandist wants; to that extent therefore, we could argue that propaganda is as old as civilization (Ngoa, 2003).

Propaganda, no matter whether it is religious, political, racial or ethnic, has in this researcher's view only one objective. That objective is to seek, change or alter the minds of people, to get people to see the world or to see a particular issue from a particular point of view. Usually, that simple idea or point of view is very economical with the truth. It tends to be quite simple, the kind of simple idea or point of view that can sink into the heads and the minds of people without their having to think too much about it.

Harold Lasswell's doctoral thesis on the use of propaganda during WWI was published as a book in 1927. Lasswell's classic work titled “Propaganda Technique in the World War” is seen as one of the first careful attempts at defining propaganda. Severin & Tankard (2001:109) confirm that Lasswell in 1927 defined propaganda as referring “solely to the control of opinion by significant symbols, or to speak more concretely and less accurately, by stories, rumours, reports, pictures and other forms of social communication”.

About 10 years later (1973), Lasswell presented a slightly different but broader definition. “Propaganda in the broadest sense is the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations. These representations may take spoken, written, pictorial or musical form”. Lasswell's definition of propaganda i.e. “…to speak more concretely and less accurately” as well as “the technique of influencing....” is corroborated by Pratkanis & Aronson (2001).

According to them, “propaganda was originally defined as the dissemination of biased ideas and opinions, often through the use of lies and deception”. However, they were quick also to remind us that propaganda is also a technique of mass persuasion, which often consists of more than just clever deceptions. The word propaganda they insist has “since evolved to mean mass 'suggestion' or 'influence' through the manipulation of symbols and the psychology of the individual”. Contemporary propaganda, Pratkanis & Aronson (2001:11) insist, involves the “dexterous use of images, slogans, and symbols that play on our prejudices and emotions. It is the communication of a point of view, with the ultimate goal of having the recipient of the appeal come to ‘voluntarily' accept this position as if it were his or her own”.

Types of *Propaganda:*

Although propaganda typology is not as topical and popular as 'propaganda devices' and ‘tools of Propaganda’ etc., this researcher takes the view that the various human relationships, organizations, individuals, even countries and the interpretive experts

who apply the technique of propaganda must as of necessity have their mind on not just the reason but also the circumstances that call for propaganda. Accordingly, Ngoa (2003) attempted a description of what he considers to be:

(I) Wartime propaganda

(II) Political propaganda

(III) Social/Educational propaganda

Wartime *Propaganda:*

This refers to the use of any form of communication designed to whip up sentiment in favour of, say, a country's act of war and/or aggression while presenting the enemy as a devil, a monster and the aggressor. This form of communication is usually in the form of stories of atrocity whose objective as it were is the mobilization of hatred against the enemy. Stories of atrocities were mostly false but they did a great deal to make WWI propaganda effective. True or false, people usually believe wartime propaganda because they are packaged for easy acceptance. For example, WWI stories about German soldiers in Belgium cutting off hands of Belgian children became part of speeches given in American public places (movie theatres, drinking pubs etc); "four-minute men", whose words were carefully chosen and timed to last four minutes, usually delivered these speeches.

The Nigerian civil war brings nearer home the two sides of wartime propaganda. While the Federal Government in Lagos sang, "To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be

done', the Biafran propaganda machine in Enugu saw the civil war as a war of "genocide" from which Biafra must be free. Thus: "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, Biafra, be vigilant." Biafra's atrocity stories of 'genocide', train loads of butchered bodies and the trampling on a peoples' liberty seemed more readily and easily acceptable (at least to the outside world) than the call "to keep Nigeria One is a task..."

Political *Propaganda:*

Politics in its entirety is controversial and multifaceted; so also is its communication. Perhaps, one of the finer ways of defining political propaganda is to assume Aristotle's definition of Rhetoric (communication): the search for "all the available means of persuasion". Political propaganda therefore, can be referred to as the use of all the available means/techniques to convince as many people as are targeted about the viability of a candidate, an idea, policy, party, group or a cause etc. Political propaganda tends to be quite simple, often so simple an idea or point of view that it sinks into the heads and minds of people without their having to think too much about it.

Political propaganda seeks to alter or change the minds of people against an opponent - i.e. a candidate (for elective office/appointment), political party, policy or cause. It presents one-sided issues from a specified point of view, which could be economical with the truth.

Although Severin & Tankard (2001:109) listed Harold Lasswell's four major objectives of propaganda as:

1. To mobilize hatred against the enemy

2. To preserve the friendship of allies

3. To preserve friendship and if possible, to procure the co-operation of neutrals

4. To demoralize the enemy… they were also quick to declare that, "these are obvious wartime objectives that would not apply to advertising or other peacetime types of persuasion".

Yet, this researcher takes the view that political propaganda has effectively utilized Lasswell's four major objectives of propaganda. Much as politics is a 'war' aimed at winning the minds (consent?) of people, political propaganda substitutes "enemy" (as used in the war with dangerous weapons), for "opponent" (as it is used in the war/play on our emotions). Thus we can argue that the objectives of political propaganda include dislike and distrust or hate for opponent, as well as to preserve friendship of allies and where possible procure and reinforce the co-operation of neutrals. It can also be argued that the most important objective of political propaganda is to demoralize the opponent.

In its search for all the available means of persuasion, political propaganda attempts to influence human action through what Lasswell generalised as manipulations. Manipulation evokes in people fear, dislike, distrust etc. (Please see examples of the

above in chapter 6 – i.e. ***Trends in the agenda-setting paradigm: The African Context).***

Social/Educational *Propaganda:*

For purposes of clarity it is prudential that we understand the distinct nature of propaganda education from this study's proposition -i.e. social/educational propaganda. The prime responsibility of propaganda education is the creation of awareness on the dangers of propaganda; which by implication is equally dangerous because it is counter propaganda to an earlier position; in the sense that one propaganda principle is being applied to counter another.

According to Severin and Tankard (2001:110), Propaganda education became a major concern in the United States in the period prior to World War II. “Perhaps, some Americans were worried that the techniques the United States has used so effectively in World War I were about to be used against them”.

Propaganda Education to a large extent deals with infusing fears into the minds of people on the possible dangers in propaganda. This is amply expressed in Hitler's success with propaganda and the German nation and confirmed by the emergence of Nazi rallies in New York's Madison Square Garden and other parts of America in the 1930s. The above, led to the establishment of the American Institute for Propaganda

Analysis, whose recorded success in this researcher's view was not in teaching people how to think; but "how not to think" (Ngoa, 2003).

Social/Educational propaganda on the other hand, is seemingly for the general good of most of the people. It puts into effective use the mass communication theories of the Diffusion process and, to some degree, agenda-setting function of the media (more on the informative role). Diffusion refers to the widening communication of new idea over time, through the social structure of community. Everett Rogers, the prime agent of Diffusion studies views the "Diffusion of Innovation" as essentially a social process in which subjectively perceived information about a new idea is communicated. The meaning of an innovation is thus gradually worked out through a process of social construction.

4.2 Rumour

Rumour as a propaganda tool, especially in politics, represents a sad commentary on its victims and sometimes for the promoter too. Irrespective of the purpose of the message, it works like a double-edged sword. Rumours are often associated with false and damaging accusations against an intended victim. It used to be said that seldom has rumour been used for the public good and therefore simply dismissed as bits and pieces of lies interjected with half-truths, but rumour today is laced in suggestive language, carefully timed and filtered to whom it may concern, as in the case with the Minna Hill-top residence of Nigeria's former military president (General Ibrahim Babangida);

rumours have it that the house has fifty rooms. The rumour here is simply suggestive of the accusations of impropriety some members of the public may have against the army general. The house is large, but it does not have fifty rooms. However, it is believed in the African context that, behind every rumour there is some element of truth as demonstrated in the case with ‘Speaker’ Salisu Buhari.

The Speaker and “Toronto” Certificates:

Alhaji Salisu Buhari, a rather young man (he was then in his early thirties) from the northern city of Kano, was the first speaker of the House of Representatives in post-military Nigeria (1999). Buhari's political enemies did not consider him worthy of his exalted position and as such it was a subject of commonplace gossip that something was not right with the speaker; and the rumour rounds began.

Long before it made the headlines in the media it became no longer rumour but commonplace knowledge that the speaker was a 'Toronto graduate'. As a requirement, all elective office seekers are expected to file with the electoral commission copies of their academic credentials; Buhari had in his file a degree from Toronto University, an institution that never existed.

The speaker bragged and threatened to sue but, Buhari finally owned up to forgery. He not only lost his position, he also left the House and was sentenced to prison with an

option of fine, and later given a presidential pardon. Meanwhile, a sizeable number of the media spoke up for Buhari but the peoples' agenda seem to have been set.

Since the early twentieth cenury, rumour has been a subject of interest to scholars representing diverse areas of inquiry, equaled by diverse viewpoints. These diverse viewpoints, may have also led to the diverse opinions on the affective value and worth of rumour. In the words of Rosnow & Fine, (1976:9) "some argue that it is a vital curative for society; others maintain that it is harmful, vile, and distasteful"… but rumours are obviously a form of communication, traditionally defined as products of face-to-face encounters.

However, the news value or importance placed on a rumour as well as the level of ego-involvement of the audience moderates the diffusion process and the level of arousal. According to Rosnow & Fine, (1976:32) 'the greater the news value of an event, the more rapid the diffusion process'; adding that while some rumours occur spontaneously, others are carefully constructed by propagandists and other manipulators (Rosnow &Fine, 1976:5) to serve their purpose.

Using a broader set of parameters to define rumour, Rosnow & Fine, (1976:11) confirm that rumour first of all is a process of information dispersion as well as a product of that process (a process that could be more easily started and its product also more easily disseminated than it could easily be stopped); and a communication constructed around

unauthenticated information. This assertion corroborates the classification of rumour as hearsay, which, remain synonymous with rumour as long as they are not yet verified. Another distinguishing feature of rumour Rosnow & Fine, (1976) observes, is that rumour is normative evidence –i.e. rumour is suspect evidence.

Yet, some rumours eventually turn out to be not just part of the truth but accurate and as such (in our context) a vehicle for community or territorial agenda setting. Ellis (1989) confirms that rumour provides a voice for the poor and powerless; we may therefore in our context also refer to rumour as deviant communication. For example:

The Senate President, the Mace and the Cave-Python:

Nigeria's erstwhile senate president Dr Chuba Okadigbo and the president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo seem to have hated each other with passion. The president considers Okadigbo confrontational while the senate president views Obasanjo as a dictator. This cat and mouse state of affairs led to the Okadigbo camp accusing the president of an agenda to impeach the senate president; the result was the disappearance of the senate president's symbol of authority -i.e. the mace.

The police searched the senate president's official residence for the mace to no avail and when questioned, Dr Okadigbo explained that the mace had been taken to his home-town (Ogbunike) and kept for custody in his ancestral place of worship. The

ancestral place of worship turned out to be a cave by the river – “Oyi” - , allegedly occupied by a king-sized python.

Okadigbo may have been bluffing but the media went to town with stories that painted the Senate President as a Pagan, heathen, idol worshiper etc; but the gossip and the rumour mills were also at full throttle. To the ordinary Nigerians (who are of course in majority), the media was just making an issue out of a non-issue. It really did not matter where the mace was kept as far as they were concerned, the all important question of where the mace was and Okadigbo's mode of worship was all part of the presidency's agenda to impeach Okadigbo and control the senate; for those familiar with him (as I do too) would attest to the fact that the quintessential Okadigbo believed in God as he probably believed in his “Ikenga”. Okadigbo survived this episode; but was eventually impeached for what he in his characteristic style referred to as slipping “on banana pills”.

Shortly after that, Okadigbo, whose Doctoral thesis sought to examine the meeting point between the physical and the esoteric decamped from the PDP to the opposition – ANPP where as in this instance, oil and water became co-terminus; that is, with all his known disrespect for certain categories of the military class, he accepted to run as a vice-presidential candidate to retired General Mohammadu Buhari during the 2003 elections.

Again, about five months after the elections which he didn't accept that his former party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), won fairly, William Wilberforce Chuba Okadigbo died on September 25th, 2003 at the National Hospital, Abuja; about one week after he attended a post-elections rally of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Kaduna where he was said to have been teargassed by the police (he was an asthmatic).

Although Rosnow & Fine, (1976) harped on the evolution and devolution of rumour as ranging from *birth, adventure and death,* the authors were quick to note that the best known attempt at functional classification or the predominant motivations which give rise to rumour was made by Robert Knapp. According to Rosnow & Fine (1976:23), Knapp, during World War 11 classified rumour into three broad categories –i.e. *pipe dreams or wish, the bogie and wedge-driving.*

Pipe dream or wish rumour expresses a person's hopes or wishes. For example, a rumour such as "Mandela, will be returning for next year's elections to fix the country right".

A *'Bogie'* rumour mirrors fear and anxiety. For example, "Osama Bin Laden has bought over North Korea's nuclear plant".

The *wedge-driving* also known as aggression rumour divides groups. For example, "a Hindu temple has been set on fire by a group of young people suspected to have come from a neighbouring Muslim Mosque".

4.3 Gossip

Gossip and rumour are like Siamese twins; they go together thus if talk had feet and could walk, gossip has wings and flies. Gossip is the guilty pleasure of talking about other people; but it is more than just idle talk.

Nicholson (2001) opines that, gossip is also how people arrange their world as social animals; as humanity becomes a beehive of communication, gossip sometimes illuminates while at other times "it just burns".

Gossip is the human equivalent of social grooming among primates and as such essential to our "social, psychological and even physical well-being". (Fox, 2001: 1) Gossip is a deep-seated human instinct which today has acquired some pejorative connotations, but its origin derived from the neutral if not positive term-'God-sibb' simply referring to "a person related to one in God, a close friend or companion" (Fox, 2001: 3). Fox asserts that, whatever may be the moral status of gossip, there is some

evidence to show that far from being a trivial pastime, it performs a function that is vital as well as socially therapeutic.

Thus this researcher's earlier proposition that, in our context, gossip is not only a major source of information but also a binding force. It “facilitates relationship-building, group-bonding, clarification of social position and status, reinforcing shared values, conflict resolution and so on.” (Fox, 2001: 3).

Although (Nicholson, 2001) opines that fragmented lifestyle, pervasive competitive striving and rampant individualism can drive gossip as well as rumour down a poisonous channel, the author’s observations confirm our position concerning rumour and gossip in the African community. In the words of the author, “...anyone who has lived in a small community knows; gossip is something that people who share a collective identity do naturally”. (Nicholson, 2001:1)

Gossip which Rosnow & Fine, (1987) simply describe as a transitory behaviour, small talk or tattling about someone and a pre-occupation with the ‘nonessential’ (which may or may not be factual), when practiced by women remain as gossip, gabbling, or an exhibition of the female loquaciousness; but when engaged in by men it becomes ‘shop talk’ or ‘shooting the breeze’.

Gossip is the synonym of rumour. This is confirmed by Rosnow & Fine (1976:87), because, in that shadowy area between gossip and rumour, where the significance of the message is unclear or debatable, either will suffice. Like rumour, gossip, is characterized by many people as trivial; yet, like rumour it has value as a social resource. In the words of Rosnow & Fine (1976:87): "ideas about the functions of gossip are as varied as those of the functions of rumour".

Gossip for our rural dweller, helps to preserve unity; for them, gossip is no mere idle talk, but talk with a social purpose in which they also find security from the inequality of stratified class system which equally isolate and insulate them with its modern technology and language of mainstream media.

4.4 Language

Language as we know is the instrument for human action and expression. It is an organized, agreed upon and yet arbitrary system of symbols for communication. Peoples perception of reality, is guided by the language they speak; and through language we define social roles, rules and behaviour -i.e. our behaviour is regulated more by words than by physical force. Language therefore, is a form of social behaviour.

To that extent, language is not just a powerful tool for persuasion; it is precise, facilitates thoughts and creativity and links the past with the present, -i.e. we can record

our thoughts and plans for future generations. Within the context in which we look at language here, language plays a precise role and is used in a manner that it is best understood by masters of the tongue; as in most cases, it is riddled with folkloric idioms. For example, Chinua Achebe's 'Aneke' the bird and its significance for the Igbos of Nigeria, and the Kalabari's of Nigeria's Niger Delta region with 'Tatakrita' in critical times demonstrate the importance of the use of the native language to the typical rural African.

In Africa, language, especially of the native variety, usually spiced with idiomatic expressions is invested with ritual qualities and dignifying when appropriately used; more so when the delivery of such happen to come from those who are considered to be masters of the tongue. The Igbos of Nigeria uses their gift of language creatively. For every occasion, they have an idiom to express with or a saying that is significant; thus Chinua Achebe, an Igbo himself, narrates in his famous novel – 'Things fall apart' – Aneke the bird's answer to hunters. The pristine clarity of the rich and deep Igbo language in which Aneke's position is delivered even in translation is manifest. According to Aneke - the bird-, "since men have learnt to shoot without missing, birds have also learnt to fly without perching".

"Tatakrita akwa kiri poko fiete", a critical idiom of the Kalabaris, is another example of how crucial language is to the people. The above, when translated literarily means 'reverse from or with your rear; because, there is a different sound in the music'.

Language is such a serious matter to the Kalabaris that, this war time warning is usually delivered through the native xylophone – an equivalent of the Yoruba 'talking drum'.

4.5 Name-Calling

Name-calling is a propaganda device designed to make people reject or condemn an idea, person, policy etc., without examination of the evidence. A typical description of name-calling will be giving an idea or person a bad name i.e. as in 'giving the dog a bad name in order to hang it'.

Examples of name-calling will include the situation in which the late Chuba Okadigbo found himself during the saga of the missing Mace. He was painted in the colours of an idol worshiper, even an anti-Christ. Yet, it was a known fact that he was not only a Roman Catholic Christian by faith (at least in public), but also he was at some point the only black adviser to the late Pope John Paul II.

Also, perhaps the story of the gubernatorial candidate (as we shall soon see in "*The priest, the goat and the Guber*"- under Religion) could pass for a case of name-calling. Taking into consideration the peoples sensitivity to religion and the abominable act of naming a goat, a bearded one at that, after the name of a prominent family in the area, Christians there will feel offended; and it is obviously quite possible that the people may have made decisions of choice based on a name-calling that is anti-Christ.

4.6 Testimonial effect

Testimonial-effect is closely related with the source credibility theory of communication which simply suggests that if a respected or trusted person (as in a member of the community in our context but conveniently referred to as 'opinion leader' in the two-step/multi-step flow theory of communication effects studies) says that a given idea is good, the message is more likely to be accepted, than if said by an untrustworthy person. Testimonial is a technique used abundantly in political campaigns and religion of the fanatical hue; a potent tool in rural Africa's information exchange process. For example, in Nigerian politics certain community/political leaders are not only respected but are treated as God's gift to mankind especially in their local communities. They have a cult- like followership and whatever they say holds as those who believed in them consider their word law. Even in death they command a saint-like presence. These include the late Sadauna of Sokoto – Ahmadu Bello - and his influence on the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria, the late Mallam Aminu Kano and the belief of the 'Talakawas' (the poor and ordinary people) of Kano in him and the respect and high esteem with which the Igbos regard the name and person of the late 'Owelle' of Onitsha and Nigeria's first president – Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. Others include the late Obafemi Awolowo and his mesmerizing effect and influence on the Yorubas of Nigeria's western region.

One living example of testimonial-effect in politics is perhaps that of Dr Olusola Saraki (the 'Turakin' of Illorin) and the stranglehold he has maintained in the politics of

Illorin and the people of Kwara State for decades. He at will installs and removes political office holders in his territory and the people believe in him to the extent that even when he allegedly told them that he was going to replace governor Lawal (whom he installed in 1999) with his own son to serve them better in 2003, they seem to have believed him. Today, his son Bukola is the governor of Kwara State.

But, perhaps, the most striking example this study would give as a testimonial-effect is that of the late 'Sage of Ikenne', Obafemi Awolowo, the God-essence in human form in the eyes of the Yoruba and the messianic figure who continue to rule over Yoruba politics from his grave. His home in his absence is a Mecca for political office seekers and his wife – Hannah, the 'jewel of inestimable value' – is 'mama' to all who seek political relevance. All a political office seeker need to do is to appear in public with 'mama' or announce one's political intentions adding that 'mama' had given her blessing and then invoke 'saint' Awo or 'papa's' name, and it is done.

There were and still are, so many myths around Awolowo, to the extent that when he died, it rumoured that he died giving the 'V' – victory – sign thus 'Awoist' (as they fondly call themselves) at campaign rallies and other political events often give the 'V' sign. Others make identity statements by either wearing his (Awolowo's) type of eyeglasses or his hat style, and some make statements, ensuring that every sentence is punctuated with 'papa said… according to papa' and some others simply rent the air with "up Awo..o..oo". Below is one example of the testimonial-effect 'Awo' had on the

Yorubas during the 1979 electioneering campaign in which he vied for the presidency.

Sunshades, Bowl of Water and Awo… in the Moon

Awolowo, since 1945 when the 'Egbe Omo Oduduwa' was founded as a cultural organisation in London by him and other Yoruba students, had carried with him the image of an icon and a legend in the eyes of his fellow yorubas and had always been seen by them as a man of uncommon ability.

Since the politics of Nigeria's First Republic (in the early 1960s), the Yorubas belief in Awolowo may (by watchers of the Yoruba in Nigerian politics) be likened to that of the Israelites in God. They believe, (according to Rueben Abati in a *Guardian,* March 25th, 2005 article) that Awolowo represent a messianic figure sent to protect and defend them "in a tough and dangerous place called Nigeria". And so to them, he could do no wrong and was capable of all things; he even appeared in the sky during electioneering campaigns of the First Republic, they would argue and Abati confirms that the Yoruba electorates "even before the elections in 1979 … were already behaving as if they had been hypnotized".

Sunshades, **Bowl of Water and Awo… in the Moon:**

And so it was that on a certain day in 1979, word went around Yoruba land that the defender of the Yorubas was going to appear in the moon at a certain time in the evening of that day. All they needed to do in order to see him was to wear a pair of

sunshades and in the case of those who do not have a sunshade as prescribed, a simple bowl of water positioned outside under the gaze of the moon. They must not look up towards the moon but rather into the bowl of water; and there would be Awolowo, smiling at them with the legendary "V" sign *(Source:* Legends; also, see Abati in the *Guardian* of March 25th, 2005*).*

The information, which was passed through "radio wahala", traveled quickly through the ancient town of Abeokuta and its environs and before long, the entire community was agog with preparation for the moon watching and sky gazing exercise.

According to Abati whose most striking memory of the late politician was during this incident, nobody questioned the wisdom of using sunshades at night or "the chemistry of water as a reflector of images or even the possibility of anyone appearing in the moon". But they moved from one end of Abeokuta to the other chanting "up Awo-o-o-o" until as predicted a full moon stood out in the sky. Word has also been passed around that the people of Ibadan and Ilesa among others had seen Awolowo in the moon as was predicted.

Abati who joined the sky gazing exercise confessed that he "looked and checked" and did not see any human form in the bowl of water and as such was not convinced that 'Awo' had appeared in the moon, but did not have the courage to say so. According to Abati, as soon as someone announced that he had seen Awolowo and that "the man

was waving at us and smiling, and toasting his admirers with his famous victory sign", all others joined by confirming that they too had seen the man in the moon.

4.7 Religion

Closely linked to the above is religion, which as it were has become "opium of the masses". That is why the preacher man and the Imam will turn an otherwise puritan sermon into a political speech, an agitation or even a revolutionary platform. Ngoa (200:3) observes, that, "on Sunday's Christian worshipers come out looking dazed, thoroughly bombarded with information and ideas that evoke love or hate; their Muslim counterparts on the other hand come out of the 'jumat' prayers on Fridays sober or charged for "Jihad". They all do play roles in the agenda-setting process. Take for example:

The Priest, the Goat and the "Guber":

In 1998, during the electioneering campaign to return Nigeria to the fold of democratic nations, an anti-Christ campaign was mounted against a gubernatorial candidate in one of the south-south states. The candidate who belongs to a white garment religious sect was rumoured to have named his male and bearded white-goat after a prominent family in the area, with the prefix "Elder" -i.e. an elder of the sect or church.

The same goat was rumoured to have died just before elections and was given a befitting burial by its owner and the sect, as a "church elder". Rumours of the church

'Elder', and his befitting human burial (true or false), transformed into gossip item no sooner than it became a political issue. The agenda it seems has been set and the outcome of the anti-Christ campaign was reflected in the election results and the rest is history -i.e. a distillation of rumour, but it all has to do with religion as an established structure of community.

4.8 Theoretical Framework

Media research in the 1950s and 1960s has been described by Hoyer (1991), as a discipline in a hurry to gain acceptance as well as deliver evidence that the media had the power to change attitudes and behaviour on a grand scale. The 1950s and 1960s era of the limited effects model of mass communication as we have said earlier, was the time when researchers became dissatisfied with the model as a dominant theoretical paradigm.

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw with their 1972 agenda-setting hypothesis therefore provided one of the few paradigm shifts in the field of mass communication. Their hypothesis shifted media research from the 'limited', to a rediscovery of the 'powerful' effects of the media; and also shifted media research focus from effect of media on peoples' perceptions to attitudes.

What was lacking in all of the above however was a realistic account of the state of affairs or specifically what went on before the individual at the end of the media

channel received the message that eventually changed or confirmed his or her attitude change (Hoyer, 1991).

Ever since, there had existed a flurry of studies, findings, revelations, theorisings as well as strong criticisms of the agenda-setting approaches and techniques. Most of the critiquing usually range from theoretical ambiguities to methodological inadequacies, while the studies though a proposition of great utility, essentially carry the made in USA label.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) from the launch of their hypothesis advance that the media's agenda-setting function is responsible for the almost perfect correlation they found between the media and the public ordering of priorities -i.e. media agenda = Voters agenda. But Griffin (1991) argues that, a possibility may be that media coverage may simply be a reflection of public concerns that already exist and as such “the findings are impressive but unequivocal”.

Accordingly, it is this researcher’s view that, the Chapel Hill study could be interpreted as reinforcing already existing sentiments and concerns in Chapel Hill. It is possible that what the Washington post did with 'Watergate' was actually a reflection of the public mood at the point in time. It may also be that by 1980, when Jimmy Carter was seeking re-election, the American voter was already showing signs of frustration with the Democratic Party and so needed a change -i.e. America needed a John Wayne but

settled for Ronald Reagan in the absence of John Wayne. This can further be explained by the fact that the media treatment of the hostage issue may obviously not be the sole reason for Reagan's victory.

In 1984, while Reagan was seeking a second term, seven Americans, were also being held hostage in the Middle East, yet, Reagan won. Some might argue that the media did not consider it important and so the masses took a cue, but this researcher is of the view that the media simply read the public mood and reacted accordingly. After all, for eight years Bill Clinton ruled America, the media in that country, most notably, the media with 'Republican' sympathy, did everything within its powers to remove him from office, but that did not work because, it didn't seem to fit the public agenda. The media was also perhaps, simply reflecting and re-enforcing the public mood and feelings in the Nigerian situation of Babangida, Shonekan and Abacha rather than, simply, setting the agenda.

For example, though it seemed as if there was almost a perfect correlation between the media and the Nigerian public's ordering of priorities, the refrain on every Nigerian lip, young and old, was: "On June 12 We Stand" which turned out to be the media's daily sermon. Yet, there was insufficient evidence to show causal connection between the orders of importance placed on the actualisation of 'June 12' and the significance the generality or seeming majority of Nigerians attached to 'June 12'. After all, some media houses continued to portray the issue on either ethnic lines or as externally influenced.

It seems obvious from the above fact that, individual media organisations may have their individual agenda, which may not necessarily influence or be the territorial agenda for people. It appears that the peoples' agenda existed before the media agenda came on and heightened its relevance or 'salience'.

This apparently is also the point of departure which forms the theoretical framework for this thesis -i.e. the media is unlikely to set the territorial agenda for a people whose predominant illiteracy level and distance from urban centers have denied access to modern means of information exchange.

African elder statesman Julius Nyerere once observed that, while other continents are striving for the moon, we in Africa are struggling to reach our villages. Indeed just over half of the continent's population still resides in the rural areas where poverty and illiteracy do not only abide but for whom gossip, rumour and other structures of community are also major sources of information exchange as well as a binding force.

Whereas the West is communication dense, rural Africa is under-communicated and by UN standards not yet a media public, despite the proliferation of more easily accessible communication technology, including cell-phones. This thesis, therefore, works from the premise that the media may set the agenda in urban centers where people are cumulatively exposed to mass mediated messages, but these messages that constitute

the media agenda do have an origin; it is this origin and perhaps the point at which they become the media agenda that this study strives to explain.

The socio-economic conditions of many of Africa's peoples and the nature of our communities and the inaccessibility of modern media of communications to most of rural Africa which is illiterate, unemployed, insulated and isolated from modern forms of communications (as we have said earlier), significantly limit the media's agenda setting capabilities in rural Africa (see Ugboajah, 1985; Anokwa & Salween, 1986). Besides, the language of modern media, not only constitute a barrier by keeping most people outside direct contact with mainstream media, but determine rural Africa's prism on the world to be mediated by rumours and social networks.

The above may not be true when we examine the agenda-setting effects on Africans who live in the cities; but that also leaves us with the theoretical question of whether, there are empirical indicators that support the assertion that, rural Africa has accepted the legitimacy of modern media as reliable sources of political information.

Our theoretical argument here is that, even if media does set the agenda, it does so with trends from an African perspective in the agenda-setting paradigm, using as cases, the African oral tradition of information exchange; which is more dominant in our context than any other source.

The above, underlies the methodology employed in the study itself as well as the proposition and emphasis on the existence of the established structures of community - i.e. 'the bush telegraph' and the other neglected agents of power in setting a territorial agenda. The determined and predominant existence of the above in rural Africa is what this researcher proposes, in the final analysis, as “Radio Wahala” in the agenda-setting continuum.

The Nigerian open market is the equivalent of a ‘bush telegraph’ and Ndolo (1998), equates the Nigerian open market as a non-technological approximation of modern day television. Though serving as an economic nerve center for their people, the Nigerian open market has not changed from its pre-radio functions -i.e. it originates and disseminates news and information as people come and go from far and near places.

Ugboajah, (1985) paraphrased in Ndolo (1998), confirms that the Nigerian open market “serves as a natural infrastructure for multi-directional dissemination of news, opinions and rumours and is important for the purposes of agitation”.

'Wahala' is a Nigerian ‘broken or Pigeon English or slang’ word for trouble or problem; 'Radio Wahala' therefore represents a trouble medium. It can be equated to what Ellis (1989), described as an attempt to describe and define an African phenomenon for which there is no one satisfactory term in English language. Ellis (1989) calls it “Pavement Radio”; it so often reports malicious stories about politicians and is a means

of self-defense for the poor and powerless. The concept is the archetypal purveyor of rumour, gossip and their associates and as such “Wahala”. Conventional media can lay claim to setting the agenda by raising the importance of an issue in the public's mind but ‘Radio Wahala’ plays an equally important role in placing an issue on the agenda - i.e. an issue for debate or discussion during electioneering campaign may have started as a gossip or a rumour before eventually finding its way into the media.

In the words of Nicholson (2001) “...gossip sometimes illuminates while other times it just burns”; so does rumour, usually laced in suggestive language, carefully timed and filtered to whom it may concern, usually a targeted audience and in this case, the electorates. Though not all stories from ‘Radio Wahala’ carry equal weight, in part, their credibility depends on the source and in what context. Over time pavement radio selects the most credible rumours and repeats them, helping to form popular consciousness (Ellis, 1989).

PART TWO: Chapters 5-8

Trends in Agenda Setting: A Proposition.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Nigeria: a brief overview:

This chapter gives a brief but necessary historical background of pre-colonial Nigeria, post-colonial, independent and present-day Nigeria; the country's media landscape and communication context in rural Nigeria as a precondition for framing our argument and proposition – **'trends in agenda setting'** in chapter six.

Although our thesis remains the fact that most of rural Africa is isolated and insulated from modern media, its language and technological sophistication, and as such not susceptible as urban Africa would to the media's agenda-setting capabilities, Nigeria, especially typical rural Nigeria serves as our unit of analysis for this study. Nigeria therefore, although with peripheral inputs from other parts of Africa where necessary, is our focus.

Much as the twenty years period 1985-2005 is central to our study, we consider it prudent for proper understanding and appreciation of our arguments, to provide first, a chronological view of historical evolution as well as political milestones in the land and lives of the people. Thus **Nigeria: 1899-2005.** The chronological history and the political milestone provided here, is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it is selective and designed to corroborate and assist the flow of references when and where necessary.

We therefore have as 'Appendix 1', Nigeria: 1899 – Today. This time line and the historical narrative below only serve as a backgrounder or better still reference material to the 'Nigerian Media' and 'Media and Communication Context' especially in rural Nigeria (5.3, 5.4 and 5.5) and subsequent chapters dealing with issues of historical importance.

For this purpose therefore, we are looking at Nigeria before the arrival of colonial rulers, colonial Nigeria, post colonial/Independent Nigeria and modern day Nigeria; signposting at every opportunity, how the rural dweller is alienated from the socio-political developments vis a vis modern mainstream media. This is to further highlight the fact that the mass media never operates in a vacuum but within historical as well as socio-political contexts, and if the rural dweller's alienation from these developments precludes him from this arena, then, it is preposterous to claim that the media sets the agenda and in this case, the territorial agenda for the rural dweller.

5.2 Nigeria: Before and after 1899

Most recorded history about the African continent (especially sub-Saharan Africa) written by Western Scholars of the colonial times puts a premium on the arrival of the continent's colonizers. And so it is, that most historical recordings about Nigeria from the above source, coincide with arrival (in the mid 19th Century) in the land (first, the Niger Delta region) of George Dashwood Goldie Taubman, a swash-buckling English adventurer who became known as the founder of modern Nigeria.

However, contrary to the above, it is on record that there exists (in the Ibadan School series, for example) a strong tradition of indigenous professional Nigerian history complemented by the oral history/ tradition handed from one generation to the other. Nigeria itself may be a modern political construction but Nigerians have a political and institutional history that predates its creation and for which intelligible records date back a very long time.

Apart from oral tradition, evidences from archeological finds, art history, and cultural patterns, along with Christian and Muslim records confirm that the area of present day Nigeria has been a drama stage of human developments and cultural differentiation dating back several centuries.

Uya (1992:14) confirms that, sedentary populations with reasonable large political structures had extensively inhabited the region as far back as 250 B.C. Indeed before the European conquest the Geographical region known today, as Nigeria was home to an estimated three hundred ethnic groups whose systems of internal rule, language and culture often differ.

Although its constituents had traded and often lived together for centuries, the region had never existed as one political unit; and so the various peoples gathered within its borders had different cultures and significantly unequal levels of development too.

To the north were ancient city states like the Kanem Bornu Empire and Kano, said to have been about 1000 years old; to the deep south, the Niger Delta, also existed modest settlements such as Bonny, Okrika, Brass, Akassa and new Calabar (settlements of the Kalabaris') all of which at some point were transformed into slave ports. In fact the Kalabari's of the Niger Delta region (specifically the people of Abonnema in 1983 and Buguma in 1984), who celebrated 100 years of existence in their new locations, had lived at the 'Old-shipping' (also known `as new Calabar') for centuries trading in palm oil amongst others, with the Portuguese and other European merchants.

Using palm oil trade as historical evidence of the long existence of the Niger Delta People that pre-dates the 'scramble for Africa' Maier (2000) confirms that, the land and people of the Niger Delta has existed more than a century ago before the gathering of Europeans in Berlin (1884-/1885) where arbitrary lines were drawn across the map of Africa to indicate whose colony is where; and Britain assumed control of the Niger River Basin (see Maier, 2000:10,11, 118, 119).

By 1899, the region known toady as Nigeria were three separate entities - i.e. the Lagos Colony, the Niger Coast Protectorate and the Royal Niger protectorate which by 1900, came under the direct governance of Britain as a part of the Colonial Empire and became known as the Lagos Protectorate, Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the protectorate of Northern Nigeria. The Protectorates of Lagos and Southern Nigeria

came under a single administration in 1906, and in 1914, the Northern and Southern Protectorates were amalgamated.

As a result of the above, Nigeria is arguably one of the most complex and deeply divided societies; but counterfactual arguments exist too. Yet, Osaghae (1998:4), insists that, the arguments are no better than what they are, because, it is most unlikely that anything similar to the present state of Nigeria would have evolved without external intervention; advancing further that, "the relationships - trade, conquest, political association and familial ties based on myths of common origin – among the pre-colonial groups tended to be limited to the geographical regions".

Nigeria therefore, is the by product of a series of a number of historical process (Uya, 1992:12), both internal and external, spanning centuries and culminating in the country's emergence on October I, 1960, as an independent nation.

The roots of Nigeria's post-independence politics is entrenched in her colonial history; a history most experts and commentators easily refer to as the mistake of 1914 - i.e. the decision by the British colonial authorities to amalgamate the south and north whose people, have just little in common. However, Uya (1992:16) observes that "pre-colonial Nigerians did not live in splendid isolation from one another", for in the course of their migration the people intermarried, engaged in long and short distance trading and borrowed mutually from each other's cultures. Whether this economic as well as

socio-cultural interactions of the various peoples of the region substantially showed the exclusive identities of the counteracting groups is a different matter; as Uya (1992:17) himself declared that, “the bulk of the many groups in pre-colonial Nigeria whether in the savannah or forest regions, … characteristically, lived in small scale societies varying from a few hundred people to the large compact village type” where “the prevalent idiom of association” was the kinship idiom defined territorially or genealogically.

Lineage was the basic unit of socio-political relations and religion and secret societies in most of these groups played rather prominent roles in putting governance on a balance between power and authority on the one hand and service and accountability on the other.

According to Uya (1992:19), rulers were judged and continued in power on the basis of how well they served the ‘public good’. “Even divine kings whose actions were judged to compromise the welfare of the people were overthrown, sometimes, as in the case of old Oyo, by being asked to commit suicide ".

Maier (2000:9) confirms the above that, “ the old Oyo monarchy ruled through a complex system of checks and balances that involved a council of notables, the Oyo Mesi, and the secretive Ogboni society made up of eminent political and religious figures. The Oyo Mesi could despose the Alafin, the King, when their Prime Minister,

the Boshrun told him: ‘The gods reject you, the people reject you, the earth rejects you’. At that point, the Alafin was required to commit suicide ".

Nigeria therefore was a colonial construct designed in 1914 to serve the interest of Britain; but at independence in 1960, was regarded as the ‘showcase for democracy’ in independent Africa.

As a republic in 1963, the country’s population figure stood at 55.67 million and Uya (1992:14), Osaghae (1998:IX), Maier (2000:XXI), all agree that, because of its geographical space, immense human and material resources Nigeria was considered the ‘giant’ and hope of Africa capable of providing leadership for Africa and indeed the black world. But the consideration as the ‘giant of Africa’ and hope for providing leadership was short lived as the country’s new leaders, in their euphoria and excitement set the stage to turn the newly independent state into a tool of plunder; and what Maier (2000) refers to as a “typical Third World basket case”.

Beginning from the morning of January15, 1966 (operation ‘Damisa’ - i.e. the leopard), Nigeria had known no peace until recently (1999). Within the above date and January 1970, the country witnessed more than one million deaths in what was (before Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leon and Burundi) considered to be Africa’s most gruesome civil war; and had celebrated about 30 of her 45 years of independence under dehumanizing military dictatorships and distrust filled contention for power best described by Ake

(1985) as: ‘contending groups struggle on grimly, polarizing their differences and convinced that their ability to protect their interest and to obtain justice is coextensive with their power. In this type of politics, there is deep alienation and distrust among political competitors. Consequently, they are profoundly afraid of being in the power of their opponents. This fear in turn breeds a huge appetite for power, which is sought without restraint and used without restraint’ (Ake, 1985; Osaghae, 1995).

The carry-over of the mistakes of 1914 -i.e. amalgamation of the south and the north, the imbalances in socio-economics and political developments and the differences in orientation between the various groups resulted in the creation of states from the four regions in 1963 to 12 states (1967), 19 states (1976), 30 states (1991) and 36 states (1996); but Osaghae (1998:7) notes aptly that, rather than states creation to replace or destroy regionalism and foster national unity, it resulted in the emergence of “ ancillary and more particularistic form of discrimination – statism” (see Appendix II for maps of Nigeria showing the country as four regions in 1963, through to today as 36 states).

Today, Nigeria bounded to the north by the republics of Niger and Chad; Benin to the west, to the east by Cameroon and the Atlantic coast to its south is an ethnic mosaic of over 250 tribes and tongues. This ethnic mosaic manifesting in ethnicity -i.e. a function of colonial antics and policy of ‘divide and rule` Uya (1992:15) admits, pose problems for development of national consciousness. Indeed Nigeria is a vast land which Maier who worked in Nigeria (during the turbulent days) described as, stretching from the

dense mangrove swamps and tropical rain forests of the Atlantic Coast to the spectacular rocky outcrops of the interior and the wide belt of Savanna that finally melts into the arid rim of the Sahara desert.

Toady, Nigeria, predominantly Muslim in the north, Christian in the south, an official census figure of 120 million people (the world's largest concentration of blacks and Africa's equivalent to Brazil) with its vast and diverse mineral resources (6^{th} world largest producer of crude oil) is the world's 146^{th} out of 174 poorest countries going by the 1999 UN Human Development Index.

The above is as a result of widely acknowledged mismanagement of the country's resources by what the late Bisi Onabanjo, a one time governor of Ogun state in Nigeria's second republic would refer to as a 'cabal of native' imperialists. "Top government officials and the business elite enjoyed the good life while the collapse fell hardest on urban poor, who suffered soaring unemployment and inflation of up to 50 percent per year" observes Maier (2000:16).

Perhaps, the effect of all of these on the rural dweller (as it relates to our subject of discourse) as we shall see in media/communication context and the Nigerian media is best summed up in the Nigerian version of "The Lord's prayer":

The Lord's Prayer: a Nigerian Version

Our father, who art in Lagos/Abuja

Praise be thy Name for thy struggles

To bring peace To Nigeria!

May the Naira come to us, non rulers,

As it has come to them, the rulers!

Thy will be done in rural areas,

As it is being done in the urban centres!

Give our villages pipe borne water,

Medical facilities, tarred roads and mini NEPAS (electricity).

.That the village youth may not to the townships drift,

And suffocate for the sake of national development.

Give us the education that is functional,

That creates the climate for home made thinkers ,

That ambushes the culture of non productivity,

That arrests the shortages in the midst of plenty,

That liberates us from poverty and experts borrowing,

And rescue us from living big in borrowed naira,

We ask these for the sake of national security!

Forgive us our creeping mutual mistrust,

As we forgive those who daily hijack prices,

Lead us not into epidemic Udojititis (Udoji awards),

That causes darkness at noon in cities,

And deliver us from the mysterious fuel shortages,

And the increasing anxiety of no gari, no soup days

We ask these for the sake of national survival,

For yours is the power to make all the difference:

To move away from gari-less and soupless days,

To three square meals a day.

To that state of an average Nigerian!

That we may truly in brotherhood stand,

We ask these things in thy name's sake. Amen

(Source: Kuhah (1993) Religion Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria. Alhaji Ali Munguno: Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, Official Report, Vol.1, 1977:632-3).

5.3 The Nigerian Media (1859 -): A Historical Background – i . e. The Press

The Nigerian press was one hundred and forty years old in 1999 and celebrated it in Abeokuta where the first newspaper was published in 1859. The press in Nigeria therefore was one hundred years old when the country became independent. The Nigerian media, historically, especially the print and to a great extent the electronic, was midwifed by foreigners and the colonial administration; but, Akinfeleye (1985:32) argues that, despite the early British influence in Nigerian journalism, its exact origins are somehow unclear.

For Akinfeleye (1985), it therefore becomes 'a very dialectic phenomena to argue that the Europeans brought Journalism to Nigeria or that Nigerians had some Journalism before the arrival of the Europeans in about 1551'; however, one would have thought that by any conventional definition of journalism this might be untrue but Akinfeleye

further argues that "evidence exists of irregular newspaper publishing ventures before 1859".

However, the consensus among scholars and experts of varied backgrounds is that the first printing press founded in Nigeria (Calabar, 1846) was owned by the Presbyterian Mission while the Rev. Henry Townsend in 1859 also founded and published *'Iwe Irohin',* the first newspaper in Nigeria and Africa's first and oldest vernacular newspaper, in Abeokuta (see, Omu, 1978; *Nigeria yearbook, 1973-76;* and Dimkpa 1997).

Townsend, a Christian Missionary from Exeter, England, who spoke the native language of the Egba people among who he had settled earlier in 1848 (Akinfeleye, 1985), is 'today still remembered as the father of Nigerian Journalism'.

A fortnightly, *Iwe Irohin,* was from its inception published in Yoruba and started an English language supplement six years later in March 1860. The paper sold for about one penny (120 cowries) a copy and two shillings for annual subscription.

According to Omu (2000:53-4), the image many people have of this pioneering effort is that of a religious tract pre-occupied with religious teaching and preaching and keeping a safe distance from the distractions and confusions of politics; but "the truth of the matter is that the *Iwe Irohin* exerted its greatest influence as a political weapon.

Information, enlightenment and literary education were the advertised motive, but politics and propaganda became the dominant force". In October 1867, a popular uprising in Abeokuta (the 'Ifole' or house-breaking) led to the expulsion of Europeans, looting of the mission building and the destruction of the Abeokuta press; but despite the abrupt end of the paper, *Iwe Irohin,*Townsend and the year 1859, today, still define the nature of Nigerian journalism (Omu, 2000; Dare, 2000).

Dimkpa (1997:19-20) confirms that, 'the second key owners of the media were foreigners who immigrated to Nigeria during the colonial days. These foreigners were mostly Sierra Leonians and Liberians who has access to western education before Nigerians'; and Omu (1978:19) contends that, the first of these foreign dominated newspapers was the *Anglo-African* founded by Robert Campbell.

On the demise of *Iwe Irohin,* Robert Campbell, a Jamaican educationist, set up the Anglo-African in 1863; but two years after its establishment, the Anglo-African collapsed. By 1880, Omu (2000:57) notes that, many people in Lagos began to feel the need for a newspaper to fill the gap created by the collapse in 1867 of *Irohin* and the Anglo-African (which was more like a flash in the pan) in 1865.

Besides, educated Africans showed frustration in the absence of a voice they required to sooth the temperament of the times; it therefore, was 'not a surprise that a wealthy businessman, Richard Beale Blaize, brought out the first truly Nigerian newspaper in

November 1880. He called it the *Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser*'. The paper however was unable to compete and had to be closed down in 1883.
In 1890, persuaded by the Liberian businessmen, John Payne Jackson, Blaize revived the *Lagos Times* under a new title – *The Lagos Weekly Times*; again, financial problems arose between Blaize and Jackson, who was managing the paper; and Jackson's response was the launching of his own newspaper – *The Lagos Weekly Record* - in 1891.

John Payne Jackson, who was dismissed as a bookkeeper at the *Lagos Times* because he was fond of drink, had an extra-ordinary career with the *Lagos Weekly Record* and was for twenty-five years the most outstanding journalist in West Africa. Jackson was a major influence in Nigeria journalism. He created the vibrant tradition of fearless journalism, fostering seriousness of purpose and a spirit of enterprise in the newspaper industry.

The Lagos Weekly Record continued its tradition of erudite and combative style under John Payne's Son – Thomas Horatio Jackson. Its readership was mainly the steadily increasing Lagos and Gold Coast Colony elite and its contents were political, ranging from the activities of the movement towards African nationalism to what Omu (1978:33) described as: "exemplified in the bellicose enthusiasm of public opinion"

Like most newspapers of the period (1880 – 1930s), circulation was small as individual newspaper sales ranged from 200 – 9000 annually; readership of a leading newspaper such as the *Record* would at best represent an increase of about 4000 to 9000 during the period. But Jackson's *Lagos Weekly Record* seems to have surpassed that estimate. Omu (1978:81) confirms that, the greatest circulation during the period under review was 700 a week and that was attained by the "Record and the Standard" around 1919.

The collapse of the *Lagos Weekly Record* in 1930 and the death of Thomas Horatio Jackson in 1936 drew the curtain on an era in the history of the Nigeria press. An era, Omu (2000) described as not only of service and sacrifice of innovation and experimentation but also the era of transition from the society of "European Africans" or "black Englishmen" to that of educated Nigerians "who had no roots in British guardianship and were not tied up with humanitarian loyalties" (Omu, 2000:60).

The curtain fell for an era and another generation arose. This new generation had new approaches to journalism and was anxious to create opportunities for greater democratic participation. This new era was epitomized in Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and his *West African pilot*. The *pilot* launched in November 1937 announced its mission as the "Sentinel of popular liberty and guardian of civilization" with the "supreme task" of making assertions in unequivocal terms (Omu, 1978:69).

The P*ilot* indeed heralded the revival and revolution in Nigerian journalism. Zik brought with him essential components of the new journalism, and his paper immediately became the major forum for the now ever-increasing nationalist consciousness which was in desperate need of an outlet for expressing the mode of the times. The *Pilot* sold about 9000 copies daily and ended the circulation supremacy of the *Daily Times*, which then had a circulation figure of about 6000 (see details of the *Daily Times* below).

In the words of Omu (2000:61): "Azikiwe's impact on the Nigerian press was significant. Among other things, he widened the social basis for the profession of journalism, which lost its traditional elitist and aristocratic definition". Evidently, the period 1880 to 1937 marked the birth of a radical press (newspapers having no affiliation with the church) in Nigeria.

Omu (2000) in his chronicle of the Nigerian press highlighted "five milestones in journalistic service" – i.e. *Iwe Irohin* (1859), *Lagos Times* (1880), *The Lagos weekly Record* (1891), *The West African pilot* (1937) and the *Guardian/Newswatch* (1983/85); and Dare (2000:12) notes too that, between the period 1859 and 1937 (*Irohin* to the *pilot*) there emerged newspapers that became the "spearhead of a nationalism that was at once cultural and political". According to Dare, by 1937 no fewer than 51 (also Omu, 1978:76) newspapers had been established in Nigeria constituting in effect the rise of the first indigenous industrial enterprise. Most of "these newspapers", Dare

(2000:13) observes, "were founded by men in all sorts and conditions of distress, people who according to Obafemi Awolowo … himself a member of the second generation of pioneers of the press were regarded as the "flotsam and jetsam" of the growing community of Nigeria's intelligent".

Though John Payne Jackson's *Lagos Weekly Record* was described as an "arsenal of ideas from which opponents and the government took their weapons" (Omu, 1978:35), Dare (2000:13) regard Blackall's *Observer* as the most successful of the 19th century newspapers.

Worthy of note though is the emergence of the *Daily Times* (later, 'of Nigeria') in 1926. The *Daily Times* was a different kind of newspaper in the sense that it was founded (by a Nigerian and four Britons) as a commercial paper, with most of the trappings of a typical 'London Daily' and as such was not considered that much part of 'the struggle'; but served as a training ground for what could be described as some of the best hands in Nigerian journalism. The paper, which had a circulation figure of 3000 in 1930, and rose to 5,900 by 1937 is believed by many to have been Nigeria's first daily newspaper; but this is technically not the case.

Before Nnamdi Azikiwe set up the *West African pilot* (and its sister titles) and introduced 'slick' and stylish (if not sophisticated) American techniques, there appeared on the newsstands on November 9th, 1925, a tiny daily newssheet proclaiming

itself 'West Africa's first daily newspaper'. It was the *Lagos Daily News*, founded by a bookseller, Babamuboni, who hurriedly came out with the publication obviously to checkmate the plan of the *Daily Times* coming out as the first daily newspaper. Herbert Macaulay, credited with wielding a rather deadly pen, took over the *Lagos Daily News* in 1927. Macaulay, developed the *Lagos Daily News* into a "ferociously anti-government" newspaper and a political springboard as well as organ of his political party (The National Democratic party); but it died like many before it.

In 1939, the colonial authorities, under the auspices of the Northern Literature Bureau, set up the first newspaper north of the Niger. The paper was the Hausa–language *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo.* The Northern Literature Bureau in 1945 became the Gaskiya Corporation and added to the *Gaskiya Ta fi Kwabo* an English-language fortnightly – *The Nigerian Citizen* in 1948.

In 1949 the late Obafemi Awolowo established the *Nigerian Tribune* as a voice and vehicle for his political party – The Action Group (AG). Within this period and 1959 when there was the crucial election that was to lead Nigeria into self determination from Britain many newspapers were launched while others went into partnership all in preparation for 'INDEPENDENCE' (see Dare, 2000:13-17).

The early years of independence were not a story of glory for the Nigerian press. According to Omu (2000:62), "political partisanship and overzealous parochialism

served to reinforce primordial prejudices and to heighten inter-group tensions and animosities"; and Dare (2000:18), also notes that, with the attainment of independence and the exit of the "common enemy" in 1960, cleavages that had been hidden by the struggle for nationalism came into the open. The organized political parties, ethnic groups, and regions turned inwards and played "black-on-black". So intense was the bitterness and rivalry among contending groups that the Nigerian press became an "instrumental press".

In the words of Omu (1978:247) and Dare (2000:18), "Editors and staffers working on newspaper of different political persuasions, were hardly on speaking terms" and veteran journalist Anthony Enahoro adds: "whoever and whatever ruined" Nigerian's first Republic, "did so with the active collaboration of the greater section of the Nigerian press".

However, Omu (2000:62) observes that the advent of military rule in the 60s aroused a mood of self-criticism and regret as new loyalties were affirmed; as was the tradition and legacy of the pioneer press. Thus the seventies witnessed some recovery of moral authority as the press played an active role in the projected reform of society. It was in this new climate of stimulated enthusiasm and quest for new values and directions that the *Guardian* and the *Newswatch* came into being.

The *Guardian,* Omu (2000) says: "calls itself the flagship of the Nigerian press and so it really is. It has been indisputably the best newspaper ever produced in Nigeria and its brand of journalism has had a profound and provocative impact on Nigerian journalism". The *Guardian* brought with it new standards, penetrating and persuasive analysis, poise and polish of language and above all stands out as the best of the Nation's media Institutions.

Newswatch on the other hand, broke new grounds in investigative journalism, encouraged debate, lucid and simple like the style synonymous with American quality magazines. For its style of investigative journalism, the magazine's founding Editor-in-Chief, the ebullient Dele Giwa lost his life in 1986, courtesy of a letter bomb; the first of its kind in the country.

Today, the Nigerian press industry is bustling with other quality newspapers and magazines like the *Concord* (now defunct), *ThisDay,* the *Comet*, *Punch*, Sam Amuka's *Vanguard*, *National Interest*, *Examiner, Post-Express, Trust and Anchor* amongst others. In the magazine category are *Tell,* the *News* and numerous others.

A point of clarification however, is the observable fact that the history of the Nigerian press, its personalities and activities all seem to center around the then Southern Protectorate, especially around the metropolitan city of Lagos and environs (Abeokuta for example where it all seem to have started) where the newspapers are produced and

largely consumed. This was the case and had remained so due to the fact that, irrespective of the fact that the news papers had their origin in the south, the gap in western education between the south and the north of Nigeria was very wide and still seem to be so relatively. It is largely so because most of the schools in the country were established by Christian missions who, as it were, also started the presses in Calabar and Abeokuta.

By 1912, there were only 34 primary schools in the north compared to the 150 primary and 10 secondary schools (the first secondary school in the north came in 1922) of the south. Although by 1957 when most of the restrictions on missionary activities were relaxed in the north, especially in the middle belt areas, the number of schools up north increased to 2,080 primary schools with about 185,000 pupils and 18 secondary schools with a student population of 3,643, this was nothing compared to the southern figures of 13,473 primary schools and its 2,343,317 pupils; and 176 secondary schools with a student population of 28,208 (see Ngou, 1989:84; and Osaghae, 1989:5). Comparatively in terms of the availability of newspapers between the north and the south, the north had its first newspaper in 1939 with the introduction of the *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo,* by which time there were more than 16 newspapers in the south (11 in the Lagos area and 5 in other parts). The implication of the above statistics as it relates to readership and circulation of newspapers in the two areas of the country is that, by 1950, the north had only one University graduate compared to the scores of hundreds of professionals and University graduates in the south.

Again it is worthy of **note** here though, that the historical background of the Nigerian press given above is by no means exhaustive. Rather, we have only attempted a chronicle in which this study is trying to highlight that in all of this, the rural dweller seem to be non-existent as it was, and still is, largely an urban affair.

The activities and personalities of the pre-independence, independent and military era media had been that, punctuated by struggles. It was the struggle for independence (anti-establishment journalism), and then with the military the struggle to be free from dictatorship; and today the struggle for survival in the 'dog eat dog' politically suffocating environment. All of which had left little, if any time, for development-based journalism that incorporates the preoccupations of rural dwellers.

Below is a brief but instructive account of the Nigerian press and its various struggles spanning from colonial to present times. The idea for the Nigerian press and its various struggles is inspired by the late veteran journalist, M.C.K. Ajuluchukwu who proudly announces that, he was in February 1946 "admitted into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the noble profession of journalism, under the extra ordinary tutelage of none other than Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe himself".

Ajuluchukwu who edited the West African Pilot (1951-1953) and also the General Manager/Editor-in-Chief of the Nigerian Outlook (between 1954 and 1970) in his presentation at the Abuja (2000) 'Media & Democracy' Workshop, admitted that over

half a century ago, he participated "actively, and sometimes militantly" in shaping the course of Nigeria's history.

In his presentation at the workshop, the late veteran journalist, for purposes of comparative categorization divided into six 'distinct epochs' fifty-four years of (1946 – 2000) the Nigerian press, part of which we interpret in this study as the various struggles of the Nigerian press.

5.4 The Nigerian Press and Its Various Struggles

The Liberation Struggle (1900 –1960): This was the period during which *Iwe Irohin, Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser, The Anglo-African, The Lagos Weekly Times, Weekly Record etc.* existed and played their various roles. But worthy of attention here was Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* and Nnamdi Azikiwe's *West African pilot*. Although John Payne Jackson's *Record* was described as the "arsenal", the two were the spearhead of a nationalism that was 'at once cultural and political'. This marked the era of transformation from 'European Africans' to "educated Nigerians".

Independent Nigeria (1960-1966): This period marked the birth of democracy in Nigeria – i.e. a post-colonial milestone that experienced a bewildering transition from repressive colonial government to an environment of newfound freedom of expression.

Yet it was a period of history not glorious to the Nigerian press who had become instrumental to rivalry, ethnicity etc.

1st military Intervention (Jan. 1966 – Sept. 1979): This period represents the first serial period of military governance in Nigeria. It was a period of 13 long years of bondage for Nigerians. A period when the military's imposition of self on the people was rather repugnant and the people themselves became so polarized between those for and against the military to the extent that, the media too became bifurcated along those lines.

Like the period before this, the media still did not have a glorious story to tell. It was a press divided amongst itself and so was weakened to fall. Of the era, veteran journalist M. C. K. Ajuluchukwu says, "the media was unarguably in no position to fight for the restoration of democracy" without which the media, like the people were left under the jackboot of their soldier masters.

2nd Taste of Democracy (1979-1983): Nigerians enjoyed a second taste of democracy on October 1, but the media again seem unable to adapt to the new environment of 'freedom' as they became very partisan. It was a period of democracy under siege punctuated by Foreign exchange jugglers, import licenses without imports, rice importation experts and the government of the second Republic became afflicted with treasury looters and certified pen robbers; and some media practitioners found

themselves in a consuming dilemma- i.e. they were either in the employ of military apologists or they work for a government owned newspaper. The result of all these was that again, Nigeria witnessed a short–lived second Republic (four years and two months) and the military struck once more on 'New Year's Eve'.

However, in February of 1983, the flagship of the Nigerian press - The *Guardian* arrived with an open 'wound' as its 'conscience' which 'only truth can heal'. The entry of the guardian into the Nigerian newspaper industry accelerated the recovery of moral authority by the press and encouraged the search for new values and directions.

The *Newswatch* magazine and its team of professionals led by the ebullient journalist – the late (courtesy of a parcel bomb) Dele Giwa entered next. *Newswatch* reflected careful judgment and great courage; and together with the journalistic achievements of the *Guardian,* the struggle for democracy began in earnest.

The Heart of the Struggle (1984 –1999): This era lasted 15 years, spanned four coercive military regimes, one interim administration and represented the most agonizing period in the history of the Nigerian press. Major Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon (January 1, 1984 –August 26, 1985), had an extensive repressive style epitomized in the jailing of Tunde Thomson and Nduka Irabor of the *Guardian* under Decree No. 2 in 1984; but the Babangida administration (August 27, 1985 – August 27, 1993), dealt a lethal blow on the Nigerian press. Babangida's

government, besides unnecessary proscriptions of newspapers and magazines, imposed on the Nigerian press the offensive Newspapers Registration Decree 43 of 1992. In place of Decree 2, the government initiated Decree 4 and for the first time in the history of Nigeria, a journalist was killed via a parcel bomb – i.e. all during the administration of Babangida.

However, the Nigerian press was yet to face its worst nightmare. In August 1993 when it was time for Babangida to 'step aside', as a result of mounting public opinion and agitation by the Nigerian media, he put in place a security threatening arrangement against his own initiated 'Interim government'.

Babangida left office in favour of an interim substitute with whom he left behind General Abacha as a predestined minister of Defense (who in the case of any problem should "take-over" as the "most senior minister"). Abacha did not seem to be answerable to Shonekon and so naturally, struck on November 17, 1993; there after, Nigeria and the Nigerian press was never the same.

According to Ajuluchukwu (2000), the last phase of the second military epoch saw the emergence of General Sani Abacha on November 17, 1993. His administration was repulsively notable for many acts of brutal repression of the independent media. First he threw the president of the newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigerian (NPAN), Bashorun M. K. O. Abiola into detention and left him there to die.

Incidentally Abacha passed out on June 8, 1998 one month before M. K. O. followed to the great beyond on July 7, 1998 under mysterious circumstances. Abacha did not stop at picking on Abiola. He arranged to have Chief Alex Ibru, publisher of the *Guardian* title murdered and the newspaper house torched. But thanks to providential intervention both the publisher and his newspapers escaped destruction. A number of other newspaper houses received varying degrees of inhuman treatment from the Abacha regime.

Yet, the Nigerian press fought on and worthy of special mention here are the magazines ***Tell*** and the ***News***. They it can be said pursued Abacha to his "timely" death with their virulent agitation for the revalidation of the peoples collective will.
The interim military administration of General Abdulsalam Abubakar (June 8, 1998-May, 29, 1999) did not enjoy any respite from Nigerian journalists either. Abubakar's government had no choice but to return Nigeria to a democratically elected government.

Thus on May19, 1999, General Abdusalam handed over to a duly elected president Olusegum Obasanjo who himself 20 years earlier had handed over to Shehu Shagari.

Citing media scholars, Peter Golding and Phillip Elliot, Dare (2000:16) notes that, 'Nigerian journalism was born of anti-colonial protest, baptized in the waters of nationalist propaganda and matured in party politics'. It (the Nigerian press) doggedly

vigorously, resourcefully, creatively and courageously fought in the face of tyranny and seems to be at its best whenever faced with a struggle. Thus it continues to defy, "any hurricane of official intolerance and persecution" (Omu, 2000:64); but remains basically an ethnic media after the 'struggle'.

Ethnicity has been at the heart and soul of Nigerian society as the struggle for power and space is reproduced, virtually in all aspects of the people's national life. Abati (2000: 89) clarifies that, in many ways the Nigerian press mirrors the ethnic phenomenon and helps bring "to light the many dimensions of the ethnic game" as it "acts as the ears and mouthpiece of the ethnic groups".

According to Abati (2000), ethnicity has served as an emotional tool in the hands of Journalists as individual preferences gets mixed up with that of a group(s); and this has comfortably reflected in the ownership structure of the Nigerian media.

With the exception of the *Daily Times* and the *New Nigerian, which* has been under government control (with periodic threats of privatization), the ownership pattern of the Nigerian media from its early history has subsisted. Abati (2000:91/2) observes that, "the ethnic identity of a Nigerian newspaper can be established in two ways – i.e. first by looking at the ethnic identity of the publisher and second, by looking at the main market that the paper seeks to cultivate and patronize".

In spite of the conflicts of loyalties, ethnic tensions and rivalries, deep seated distrust and mutual suspicion all seeking some form of national remedy, the "individual publisher's search for a place, for relevance is all things considered tied to the aspirations of his own ethnic group" Abati (2000) further observes.

With the ethnicised nature of the Nigerian media, we can safely reiterate then that, the media's capability in structuring issues even with the urban African has limitations in the commonality of affectation – i.e. depending on the ethnic 'coloration' of the medium. In rural Africa, indeed rural Nigeria, the territorial agenda is ethnic based and not necessarily as set by mainstream media.

5.5 The Electronic Media (Radio & Television)

Britain, Nigeria's colonial masters' through the 'Empire Broadcasting' project (which later in 1948 became External Service of the BBC) introduced radio broadcasting to Nigeria in December 1932. The 'Empire Broadcasting' project also known as the 'Empire Service' with its signals originating from Daventry in England, was designed primarily for settlers in British colonies and dominions; the later day Commonwealth – i.e. Anglo-phone Africa, Australia Canada and India.

In the beginning, radio was an imperial asset, very important to white-men and women in tropical Africa as it provided for them, a new and living link with 'events and ideal at home'. Matheson (1935:387) confirms that for the white-men and women in tropical

Africa, the ‘Empire Service’ provided a new bond of interest between isolated settlers and officials and also ‘counteracts loneliness’. Matheson’s evidence seems to have prompted Nwuneli’s (1985:240) conclusion that in the early days “it was not intended for the Nigerian audience”.

However, not only the settler community enjoyed the Empire Broadcasting experiment, as even the natives seemingly were attracted to this magic talking box. It became clear by the close of 1934 that, the Empire Service carried with it the potentials of commercial as well as technical viability; especially when viewed against the background of the recorded success and technical competence of the engineers at the Post and Telegraph department whose responsibility it was to monitor the radio signals from England, on the ‘short-wave’frequency signal.

Accordingly, government ordered that, a Rediffussion Service be established in the high population areas of Nigeria (with Lagos as a pilot scheme); and so, came into being the Radio Distribution Service (RDS). According to the broadcast Journalist Segun Aderiye, by December 1935, more than 500 people were on the subscription list of the RDS and by 1939, the subscriber level has increased and service expanded to Ibadan and thus signaling the birth of the first broadcasting network in the country.

Aderiye (2003), Bourgault (1995) and Nwuneli (1985) all confirm that by 1944, RDS services had arrived the northern city of Kano and by 1949, had established stations in

Abeokuta, Enugu, Ijebu-Ode, Jos, Port Harcourt, Sokoto and Zaria amongst others; with nine thousand subscribers and about 12,000 licensed radio sets.

Earlier in 1948, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act has been passed by the British parliament and funds also provided for development projects, including broadcasting in the colonies. This, led to the commissioning of the Turner Byron's Report in which the recommendation was also made that broadcasting services be developed in the colonies; thus Nwuneli (1985), Bourgault (1995) and Aderiye (2003) are united in the fact that by 1944, the RDS has metamorphosed into or was 'upgraded' and converted into what became known as the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS); commonly known as Radio Nigeria.

The NBS however, was seen as an extension of the colonial government's public relations office. According to Nwuneli (1985:243), "in Nigeria the audience has little say and essentially no control over what it gets from the broadcast media", adding that, "the government basically views Radio Nigeria as a public relations arm of government"; and Bourgault (1995:69) concurs that 'in British colonies, radio was seen as an arm of colonial policies'. Unlike the print media, broadcasting remained an exclusivity of government, first, the central and later, regional governments, courtesy of the October 1954 Lyttelton Constitution.

The birth of NBC:

With the NBS, broadcasting structures merely served as megaphones for the colonial administration and as such seem to have lacked the Nigerian bite and temperament of the times (the struggle for self-determination) which Aderiye (2003:24) observes as the colonial administration's lack of commitment in developing broadcasting. According to Aderiye, "the entire broadcasting plan was faulty".

There was public outcry for a change to suit the times, and following the calls for a proper public oriented broadcaster to take over the functions of the NBS, the National Assembly in 1956 passed the Nigerian Broadcasting Act which led to the NBS formally becoming the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in April, 1957. The NBC in 1963 established its television arm (NBC-TV), which we can safely argue, was in fulfillment of the whims of politics of the day (as the coalition government of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa may have thought: if a regional government can reach her people via the technology of television, why not the central government?). Aderiye (2003:25) puts it thus: it would appear that the establishment of the NBC-TV in 1963 was motivated by a feeling of jealousy that a regional government (the then Western Nigerian Government) had taken the shine out of the Federal Government by beating it to the establishment of television stations.

Earlier in 1959, the first television station in Nigeria and indeed Africa (the Western Nigeria Television/Broadcasting Service – WNTV/BS) has been established by the

Obafemi Awolowo led Action Group (AG) government of Western Nigeria. The WNTV and its later addition – the radio broadcasting service – (thus WNTV/BS), Aderiye (2003:19) citing Lasode (1994) confirms that, "looking back, it is now quite certain that this incident which occurred in 1953, may have directly led to the establishment of WNTV/BS in the Western Region in 1959"; and by extension the birth and spread of regional or ethnic broadcasting stations.

For purposes of clarity, let us recall the 1953 incident referred to that may have led to the establishment of the WNTV/BS.

In 1953, Anthony Enahoro, an AG backbencher in the central legislature (please see appendix 1) introduced a private member's bill demanding self-governance for Nigeria; but, the bill was opposed by the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and consequently could not go-through because of the NPC's numerical strength (50%) in the 'House'.

As a result, AG members resigned their appointments with the central government, an action that was condemned on the country's main broadcast channel (NBS) by Sir John Macpherson, the then governor of Nigeria. Consequently, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the AG demanded from the Director of the NBS a right of reply to state the AG's side of the story, but he was refused the right of reply.

Lasode (1994) and Aderiye (2003) recount that Awolowo was so furious that he accused the NBS of being manipulated by government. Thus the regional Western Nigeria Government had to acquire a voice.

Indeed, the history of broadcasting in Nigeria like the print media is also steeped in politics but of a different kind. The kind of politics manifest in the peoples desire for self-governance on the one hand while equally seeking regional and ethnic autonomy on the other; as aptly represented in the various political associations whose word served as law in the pre-independence three regions of the country.

For example, the NPC reigned supreme in the predominantly Hausa speaking Muslim north, ditto for the AG in the Yoruba speaking western region while the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (which later became the National Council of Nigerian Citizens –i.e. the NCNC) was very popular in the multi-ethnic old eastern region. Each of these ethnic groupings or regions also clamoured badly for what they refer to as their own voices, perhaps due to ethnic, tribal or regional and religious rivalry.

Thus as soon as the WNTV/BS came on stream at Ibadan in 1959, the east launched the Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service (ENBS) at Enugu in 1960; and of course the north followed with Radio Kaduna Television (RKTV) in 1962 at Kaduna, the traditional administrative capital of northern Nigeria.

Bourgault (1995:85) seem to have read this researcher's mind that Nigeria's broadcasting history is steeped in politics of a different kind – ethnic or regional rivalry - as she observes that, "music from Southern Nigeria's prolific and well-known pop industry is hard to come by in Northern Nigeria, either on radio or in the kiosks where tapes are sold. It could well be that the orientation of radio producers and distributors is too elitist and too extraverted. Or perhaps the near absence on Northern Nigeria airwaves of Fela Ransome-Kuti, Ebenezer Obey, I. K. Dairo, and other Southern Nigerian pop stars is evidence of deep-seated regional rivalries and cultural differences of Nigeria".

On the colonial administration's strangle-hold on the NBC and its television arm, it is worthy of note that up until 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence and became a republic in 1963, the corporation was still being manned by the British. Olu, Adefele & Lasekan (1979), Lasode (1994) and Aderiye (2003) agree and confirm that the Rev. Victor Badejo was the first indigenous Director-General (appointed in October, 1963) of the NBC. He was later followed as Directors-General by two professional broadcasters – i.e. Christopher Kolade and George Bako; thereafter, appointments to that office became the private initiative of whoever was the top brass in government, reigning and ruling political players and later their military counterparts who saw the NBC-TV as an avenue to create 'job for the boys'.

It is instructive though that the colonists who saw the broadcast media in Nigeria as an extension of colonial policies set the stage for the new rulers of the land to follow suit. But perhaps the difference is in the fact that whereas the colonial administration saw the NBC as an arm of the public relations office, the new 'leaders' turned 'rulers' who Bourgault (1995:77) refer to as "unusually charismatic" who crave the creation of personality cult saw the corporation as their personal address systems.

Thus Directors-General of the country's broadcasting institutions never lasted long in their posts. When it pleases the power that be (especially in Nigeria's experience with many years of military assault called governance) they are given higher offices such as the information portfolio or some 'mass mobilisation' related agency; and when they incurred the displeasure, wrath or fall out of favour with the 'boss' they are demoted, rendered redundant or disgraced out of office. These constant power shifts of men at the top according to Bourgault (1995:78) "have caused havoc in broadcast organizations riddled with patronage, for which each new appointment, staff members have needed to form new alliances".

These constantly-shifted men at the top are usually men from the 'Ivory Tower', "political jobbers" and in most cases simple cronies of those in positions of authority; and herein lies the genesis and root of the seemingly sycophantic performances and the reason that so much airtime has been filled with the words, deeds, smallest movements and activities of presidents (Bourgault 1995:77).

The NBC was not significantly different from the NBS in its criticism of being manipulated by government. Nwuneli (1985:242) confirms that in criticizing the 1961 Amendment Act, which gave the government or its Information Minister control over the NBC, a Nigerian Journalist with the pseudonym '*Aiyokoto*' asked the NBC to "fold up … once it is known that the programmes and news are doctored to suit a political party or an individual".

Perhaps, the national workers strike action of June 1964 will show further the NBC's role as a megaphone of government. During the strike, it was alleged that in order to break-up the workers action, government asked its mouthpiece – the NBC - to broadcast news that was inaccurate; the result of which was a public outcry, and condemnation of the NBC for distortion and misinformation (see Nwuneli, 1985).

Participant observers' account of events during the strike action has it that a number of Nigerian newspapers including the *Daily Express* and the *Nigerian Outlook* also condemned the 'radio house' for its misrepresentation of fact.

However, it is interesting to note that Radio Nigeria retaliated by excluding from its compilation of newspapers editorial review of the day, that of the *Daily Express*. Nwuneli (1985:243) confirms that "as a result of the information distortion by Radio Nigeria on the strike, the Eastern wing Joint Action Committee on the strike

subsequently passed a resolution asking its members to turn off news broadcast by Radio Nigeria". The government mouthpiece status of the NBC remained according to the structures of its foundation and was exacerbated by the entrance of the military into national politics; and the military did not only act to type but also executed to the letter the papers incorporating Radio Nigeria.

Section 29 (1) of the NBC's Charter or incorporation papers specify that the corporation "shall whenever so requested by an authorized officer in the service of the Federation or an authorized Police officer, send a Federal programme, at the corporation's own expense, any announcement …" that may be requested by the officer.

The new military rulers became self-authorised officers of the Federal Service and simply 'took over' Radio Nigeria; and Nigeria and Nigerians knew nothing – except for a 'time-out' in 1979 – but the sounds of marshall music until as recent as May 29th, 1999.

At the declaration of hostilities between Nigeria and the Igbo speaking section of old Eastern Nigeria (the then newly declared Republic of Biafra), the ENBS became Radio Biafra; and later, East Central State Broadcasting Service (ECBS) at the end of the thirty month (1967 – 1970) old war which the federal authorities in Lagos declared: "no victor, no vanquished".

In 1967, the Nigerian Government under the leadership of General (then a youthful Lt. Col) Yakubu Gowon had divided the country's erstwhile powerful and dominant three regions into twelve states; thus at the cessation of hostilities the Igbo speaking areas of the old Eastern Region became East Central State and automatically the ENBS changed to ECBS. Meanwhile, all the newly created states where there was no electronic media presence benefited from NBC-TV's network expansion programme.

By 1975, the NBC's sister television was re-organised and became known as Nigerian Television (NTV) and the NBC itself metamorphosed into an octopus Radio Nigeria with a network of stations (including an external service station – i.e. Voice of Nigeria), expanding each time Nigeria increases her number of states (see Appendix 2, a b & c)

In 1977, the military government by its Decree 24 turned NTV into the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA – which it is till today) as the only body authorised to broadcast television signals in the country.

Nigeria returned to democratic rule (briefly though) in 1979 and the NTA equally matched Radio Nigeria in the race to multiply and duplicate stations but seem to have kept faith as 'the masters voice'; to the extent that Nwuneli (1985:257) referring to the observation made by the Nigerian Guild of Editors at their Calabar (1980) meeting lamented:

"The use of the media as exclusive propaganda organ of incumbent governors and their parties is a serious misuse of power and abuse of office".

Bourgault (1995:133) also notes that on Nigeria's return to democratic rule (1979 – 1983), states whose governors were not members of the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) had to lobby the Shehu Shagari led government to establish television stations in their respective states; the result of which was twelve new television stations not affiliated with the NTA.

According to Tony Momoh, who served respectively as Nigeria's Information Minister, General Manager (Publications division) of the *Daily Times* Group, and Editor of the *Daily Times*, the 1990s witnessed the arrival of privately owned radio and television stations aside of the proliferation of foreign satellite stations. The military government of General Ibrahim Babangida promulgated Decree No.38 (1992) establishing the National Broadcasting Commission with powers to deregulate broadcasting by examining and approving application for private broadcast licences; as well as oversee the operations of private broadcasting institutions.

In the wake of this deregulation came the licensing of privately owned electronic media and the first of these to start operations was Raymond Dokpesi's Raypower 100.5 fm in September, 1994; at Alagbado, an outskirts of Lagos metropolis. Raypower's sister television, African Independent Television (AIT), also commenced operations at a later

date. Others that benefited from this burst of approvals for private broadcast licences include Eko 89.7 fm, Rhythm93.7 fm, Cool fm, Star Radio, Channels Television, DBN, Muhri International Television (MITV), Galaxy-TV, Minaj Broadcast Systems and Silverbird TV amongst a host of others.

Today, there are so many radio and television stations that their number is somewhat controversial. Some people had used their privileged positions and 'connections' to secure licences that were redundant or at best not yet operational but would carry around with them 'business cards' of radio and television stations that existed only in name.

Bourgault (1995:133) counted 100 broadcast stations including 34 television channels (22 of these are owned by the federal government and 12 by state administrations), Momoh (2000:75) stands by "46 television stations and 35 radio stations, most of them owned by government"; and Aderiye (2003: 25) adds "the country boasts of about a hundred stations of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and state-owned TV stations spread across Nigeria's 36 states and Abuja". According to Aderiye, this figure does not include the privately-owned radio and television stations "licenced in the mid 90s which from the records, as of the year 2000, are close to twenty".

How has the multiplicity of these radio and television channels impacted on the typical rural dweller? Can we confirm the universal applicability of the agenda-setting capability of the media?

Nwuneli (1985:103) argues that after decades of research on the relationship between various media of mass communication and socio-economic variables, it is a generally held view among development communication scholars that the broadcast media (especially the radio) "could be the most effective media for transferring on various social change programmes from the government and other institutions to the masses living in the developing nations of the world".

Radio could be and ought to be when considered against the background that the medium of television "tends to be an elite and urban phenomenon" Bourgault (1995:103). The argument also holds when equally viewed from the angle that a major problem of most developing countries like Nigeria remains how to reach the significant majority of her people (who are largely poor, illiterate and rural) with developmental information, bearing in mind that radio had broken the barriers of illiteracy as against the print media whose audience could be considered as, "limited, being restricted exclusively to the educated who live in the urban areas" (Nwuneli, 1985:104).

Yet, as Bourgault (1995:103) would agree, Nigeria's radio and television industry presents the two faces of contradiction by responding on the one hand, to elitist

pressure to privatize and commercialize (to capitalize or 'cash-in' on the abundant but sophisticated telecommunications services from the west) while on the other, also making efforts as exemplified in Radio Nigeria and NTA (not necessarily with the aim to reflect divergent views, hues and shades of opinions) to simply produce and present "popular entertainment programming for the masses".

For purposes of this thesis this researcher is uncomfortable with the usage 'masses', for as I have been saying, the 'masses' of Africa nay Nigeria are poor, illiterate and functionally rural; therefore good as the intentions may be to reach the 'masses' the effort has been compromised. The effort was compromised (and still is) by Decree No. 25 (1988), which established the Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation. The establishment of the Committee, Mbachu (1992) and Bourgault (1995) concur, led the stations to increase their advertising efforts and to charge for news coverage of events or items featuring non-governmental personalities (Bourgault, 1995:101; also see Mbachu's (1992) 'Owners and Censors' – Index of Censorship).

Indeed privatization and commercialization of broadcast media in Nigeria arrived with its own hazards and consequences one of which seems to be the disappearance of decency in programming. Also, with privatization and commercialization, the emphasis seems to be on urban-oriented broadcasting with programmes targeted at consumers

with huge advertising budgets while news and features focus on big business and government.

However, our argument remains that, even with the popularity of radio, the typical rural dweller may just at the best constitute a listening audience. Listening for various reasons (as the functionalist theory of the uses & gratification proposition confirms) arising from the "(1) social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; Severin & Tankard, 2001:295; McQuail & Windahl, 1981:75).

The rural dweller has no huge advertising budget; he is not only isolated and insulated by modern media, its language and technological sophistry; but equally by big business and government. He is attracted to radio, his own radio, and a radio with a difference (as we shall see towards our closing chapters).

5.6 <u>Media/Communication Context:</u>

In the beginning was the word

And the word was made flesh.

The world's communication machine and its direction of information flow have always been between and among the economic and political centers of the world where equally, most of the news is generated and also consumed.

Africa, indeed rural Africa if and when it does contribute to the world information machine, does so as a rather insignificant fraction; which quite often, turns out to be news about high crime rate, unemployment, natural disasters, political instability and the like.

This situation obviously negates the libertarian philosophy of the mass media which African media Scholars Opubor & Nwuneli (1985:46) admit, accepts the need for unimpeded access and flow of information across national as well as cultural boundaries. This situation in the words of Opubor (referring to a 1975 Regional Workshop Key Note Address) 'is a very dangerous state of affairs indeed that a small group of people, concentrated in four countries can arrogate onto themselves, and preempt, the management of our image of the world through controlling what they called news'. Opubor's position here sounds urban and elitist as a confirmation of the media being an urban phenomenon (at least for now until proven otherwise).

Even so, Ekwelie (1985:25) argues that vast majorities of urban Africa's working population were born outside the city limits. "Most of them" he observes "grew up outside a technological culture. To complicate the picture further, new inventions keep coming their way, sometimes by choice but at other times as an affliction". Ekwelie seems to have read this researcher's mind when he referred to colonial and especially post-independent newspapers as 'supposed' to be vehicles for opposition to colonialism and a medium for agitation and political leadership and as such, "served no race purpose; and when their career ended there was on the part of thinking Natives rather a sign of relief at their disappearance than of regret for their extinction" (Ekwelie, 1985:10).

Northern Michigan University Professor of Mass Communication Louise Bourgault who has worked in fourteen African countries for twenty years in recent times suggests that, the dominant mode of communication in a society has a profound effect on the thought patterns of its people and the cultural style they acquire. These cultural patterns Bourgault (1995:7) confirms, in turn influence amongst others the 'ethical value orientation' and 'cosmology' of the given society.

For the rural African (Nigerian), a specific cosmology from which he derives a conception of man, his existence and a philosophy of life exists. For him life represents a totality where there is no distinction between things religious, economic and political. Uya (1992:20) describes the native Nigerian as one who "had a profound historical

consciousness informed by this cosmology and expressed in his traditions, folklore, proverbs, songs, arts and other ethnographic data. This worldview emphasized the inseparable links between past, the present and the future, which were viewed as a basic continuum. History served to emphasize continuity and change, purpose and order and was thus a morale anchor to society. This explains the tremendous investment of time, expertise and resources in the codification, conservation, preservation and transmission of historical information through oral traditions in the community".

Bourgault (1995) confirms that within the rural community knowledge and wisdom is said usually, to reside in those persons with the gift of transmitting information and ideas with 'artistic flourish through accepted stylistic conventions'. The convention for the rural dweller is the 'Oral-Media' (Oral Tradition) through which reality is constructed and presented in gossips, rumours, narratives, proverbs bards, town criers, storytellers and native historians (all, usually accompanied by the 'ogene' or local gong in the case of the Igbos, talking-drums of the Yorubas, long brass horns of the Hausas or the 'ekere' or 'kpokpo' of the Kalabaris of Nigeria's Delta basin) who "used stories to recount the genealogies of people, to tell of their histories and their struggles, to recount stories of the gods and to impart morale lessons" (Bourgault, 1995:8).

Morale lessons, stories, genealogies and critical information are usually handed or passed on with or in proverbs. Proverbs according to Okafor (2001:v &1) are 'wisdom

tablets' and 'oil for eating talk'; they are short clever sayings that often tell or sum up a message effectively. For example, 'Aneke' the bird in Achebe's (1958) award winning title –i.e. "Things Fall Apart" warns:

Since men have learnt to shoot without missing

Birds have learnt to fly without perching.

In Rural Africa therefore, 'oral-media' is the convention, part of what we propose as the 'established structures of community'; because, indigenous African societies, that is, rural Africa had no newspapers (and still do not have) but it had (and still do have) instituitions and agencies through which it addressed the needs of communication and information exchange. For example, as a measure of news dissemination, rural Africa announces the death of important personalities (as well as the warning of imminent danger) through the booming of guns. Smoke was also used as a medium of communication, with different thicknesses signifying different things; but Omu (1978:4) advances that, "most extensively used of all was the drum … when some of these drums are expertly sounded, they are capable of conveying specific meaning; in other words, 'they talk'".

Based on the number of pertinent observations made in chapter three (while reviewing relevant literature and critiquing), chapter four had to do a 'rethinking' the theory (media agenda-setting) whose effects on consumers of media products, according to Wood (1983:240) is fragmented, often contradictory and confusing. In doing this, the

chapter explored the role of some neglected agents of power, that is , this study's proposition as the established structures of community which are, as this researcher had maintained, specific tools/devices of propaganda – rumour, gossip, language, religion, name-calling and testimonial effects.

As an effort of this thesis to expand the knowledge and better understanding of the roles of the established structures of community in agenda setting studies, lucid anecdotal examples (the 'Speaker' and 'Toronto' certificates…etc) were given; while a contribution to theory-building, that is, the proposition of **'social/educational propaganda'** as a communication tool for the general good of most of the people is also made.

Thus chapter five, gives a brief but necessary historical background of pre-colonial Nigeria, post-colonial, independent and present-day Nigeria; the country's media landscape and communication context in rural Nigeria as a precondition for framing our argument and proposition – **'trends in agenda setting'**

CHAPTER SIX

Trends In Agenda Setting: The African Context:

In this chapter we extrapolate what we consider a more fundamental explanation of trends in agenda setting (especially in an African setting or context) by deviating from agenda setting's original proposition. In this undertaking we will keep in mind Protess & McCombs' (1991) contention that leading theories must go through cycles of recreation and rebirth; and for a theory to continue to thrive, Conant, (1951); Severin & Tankard, (1992); Burns (1998) agree that new areas must be explored. And, while Kaplan, (1969:229) wrote that theories have "explanatory shells" that holds the variables, terms and situations that must be present for a theory to be successfully tested, Burns (1998) reminds us of one of Wicker's (1985) suggestion that taking a theory outside of its domain is one way of "generating new perspectives on familiar research".

In assessing the impact of media on its audience so far, we have reflected on the socio-political and economic conditions that would see 'media agenda' as something originating quite often from outside of the media itself and thus a "process" involving the media and a source/s on the one hand and the media and audience on the other (Megwa & Brenner, 1988). We call this process 'source oriented' and this is explained in detail in subsequent chapters on the one hand, and questioned on the other (as we shall soon see); in the sense that, in an African setting, the people have become weary

of media sources. In Nigeria, for example, they have become suspicious of pronouncements in the media by many people who ordinarily were looked up to as pro-democracy activists but who have turned out to become influential cabinet ministers of the Abacha regime (we shall see more of this with Abacha's penetration of the pro-democracy groups such as NADECO – the National Democratic Coalition which at some point was a focal point in Nigeria's march to democratic rule).

In this chapter, we look at trends in agenda setting in urban and rural contexts; by reviewing and analyzing events and issues of the time. At the urban level, within the context of our time-line, 'debates' initiated by Nigeria's various military dictatorships are considered as trends; so also are 'transition' programmes, rumours of coups, attempted coups, counter coups, and failed coups. Others include criticism (considered an 'agent of destabilization' by the ruling junta), co-option of the intelligentsia, state terrorism and pressure groups.

In the rural areas, the established structures of community seem to a large extent to be responsible for setting the territorial agenda but perhaps with some touch from the 'urban' agenda as those 'terrorised' and traumatised from the city, arrive with their stories embellished and garnished, so also do those co-opted; bringing with them their stories of 'hope' and 'join us for a better Nigeria'. The likely effect of the above on rural residents, this study proposes, is 'fear and suspicion' of modern media or mainstream media and media sources.

6.1 Debates as Trends:

At the end of Nigeria's 30 months old civil war, the Yakubu Gowon led military government initiated the 'Diarchy' (a combination of military dictatorship and civil democracy as a form of governance). A suitable hand-over date debate occupied the political space within 1970 – 1974. This debate was not necessarily because the military was interested (as we will see later) in abdicating political power to civilians but rather for reasons, part of which this thesis advances as an instrument of transition. Political transition programmes are typically expected to be a long haul; thus debate as an instrument of transition becomes a bate in the satisfaction and justification of the desire of its authors to hang-on to political power longer than necessary.

In Nigeria, debate as an instrument of 'transition' according to Onuoha and Fadakinte (2002) was largely a dimension of power struggle in the country's politics. Thus after the elections crisis of 1964/65 and fresh from the civil war declared 'no victor and no vanquished' the Nigerian media engaged itself with debates (what we here consider to be a 'source' agenda of the military) of what and when constitute a suitable hand-over date and whether military dictatorship, civil democracy or a combination of both as a form of governance was best for Nigeria.

Although the political formula for power sharing between the military and political or civilian elite – that is the 'Diarchy' - debate was associated with the late Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria's first and only ceremonial president, we take the view that the debate

may have been initiated by the Yakubu Gowon administration as evidenced and demonstrated by the activities and utterances of some (if not most) of that government's top functionaries and most notably the 'super permanent secretaries'.

For example Allison Ayida, one of Yakubu Gowon's 'super-permanent secretaries' (Dudley, 1982; Osaghae, 1998:70) in a 1973 defense of the military-civilian power-sharing proposition revealed that: 'Nigeria no longer has a ceremonial army. We are building a large modern army of well-trained, self-conscious and intelligent young men who will not be content to be relegated to the barracks'. In Ayida's view, the 'constitutional settlement' must take into account the 'new and crucial factor' of the military leadership who 'in the new set up is of necessity obliged to conceive an interventionist role for itself'. The population of Nigeria's military Osaghae (1998:70) puts at about 10,000 before the war but had swelled to about 250,000 at end of war. Indeed the 'Diarchy' and its associated debates, clearly, was an agenda of the military which did not only oblige itself an interventionist role but became an army of occupation until as recent as 1999 when General Abdulsalami Abubakar negotiated political power into the hands of Olusegun Obasanjo, himself a one time military head-of-state, now a retired general with democratic credentials as the country's president.

Perhaps one may not be entirely wrong to suggest that crediting Azikiwe with the 'Diarchy debate' was one of Gowon's government's ways of attempting to achieve a testimonial effect for its 'agenda'; for, as Osaghae (1998:70/71) rightly observes, the

Azikiwe Diarchy proposal generated considerable debate and was "well received by top-ranking military officers…" One wonders how Diarchy could have been a proposition of Azikiwe (a man with rather impressive democratic credentials) when Ayida, a serving 'super-permanent secretary' had matter-of-factly stated that the military will not be content to be relegated to the barracks.

Compared with the Babangida years (1985 – 1993), the Gowon era represented an elementary stage in debates as trends in agenda setting. The Babangida era celebrated debates which included the debates to determine the type of constitution suitable for Nigeria, the length of stay in office of the Babangida administration and the acceptance or otherwise of the International Monetary fund (IMF) Loan. Even the funding of Babangida's test-tube political parties – i.e. - the SDP (Social Democratic Party) and the NRC (National Republican Convention) was "widely debated in the national dailies, by the public and by the political actors themselves…" (Onuoha, 2002:135). In Babangida's dream of a new social order, everything (short of when and how often people should sleep with their spouses to produce the recommended maximum of four children) was a subject of debate.

When Babangida came to power in August 1985, he came as a redeemer; a populist 'general' who's argument and reason for ascension to power appealed to the public and so won their support. In his explanation to Nigerians as to why he over-threw the government of General Muhammadu Buhari in which he served as Chief-of-Army

Staff, General Babangida accused Buhari of a failure to produce or articulate a return to civil rule programme, a poor human rights record and high-handedness. He also accused the Buhari government of failure to arrest the decline in Nigeria's economy as well as the lack of progress in negotiation with the country's creditors; an accusation Osaghae (1998:189) views as "obviously calculated to win the support and confidence of western creditors".

Thus Babangida threw 'open' for debate virtually everything under the sun; but interestingly, irrespective of the outcome of these debates, Babangida and his intellectual friends seem to have reached a decision (as to, for example take or not to take the IMF loan) and seem to have designed one debate after the other as a flow-chart to the next agenda in their new social order project which the media enthusiastically publicised quite convincingly that, sometimes, it could be mistaken for a media agenda. In other words, the Babangida government ignored the debates themselves and simply made their own decisions regardless of any consensus that may have emerged in the media.

The various military governments (although Gowon didn't seem to have any clear transition programme) were, to a large extent, seemingly successful in influencing the media to concentrate coverage around 'debate' and other programmes, deceitful as they turned out to be, in the hope of persuading the civil populace that plans were being accelerated towards returning the country to civil democratic rule.

They were successful through their continuous connivance with certain members of the civil society, to organize and stage these media events ranging from the political debates to rather elongated transition to civil rule programmes; and simultaneously running alongside these, some programmes with the semblance of community interest. Examples of such 'in the interest of the people' programmes include the DFRRI (the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure) and the Better Life for Rural Women, a project of Maryam, Babangida's wife.

Debate as a trend in agenda setting is more manifest in Babangida's manipulative ability to achieve desired goals through debate. In the debate for length of stay in office of his regime, the General used as against the majority submission, a minority report of the Political Bureau, which gave his administration a life span of up to 1992.
The Professor S.J. Cookey led Political Bureau was an early institution General Babangida set up to engineer his new social order project. Osaghae (1998:188) confirms that, the Political Bureau's report provided the "blueprint for the regime's transition programme" and its "members later formed the core of intellectuals who devised and implemented the transitions sundry experiments…"

6.2 Transition Programmes as Trends

Here, we are looking at the various transition programmes of Nigeria's many military dictatorships as trends in the agenda-setting continuum. At inception, every military dictatorship is quick to pledge the eagerness, willingness and readiness to hand over

power to duly elected representatives of the people; an admission as it were that military incursion into politics is wrong and unacceptable but a circumstantial necessity aimed at correcting the ills of erring political class, civilian and military alike. Each time such confessed willingness to hand-over power is made, Onuoha (2002:19) notes that whether or not such hand-over is made at all or whether it takes a decade to make, "such declaration may appear to confer on the military coup plotters" some legitimacy; and to drive home their point they usually set a timetable "or programme of structures and processes which will bring about the military's understanding of transition programme to a civilian government".

By the standards of Nigeria's multiple coup makers the process described above, whether successfully implemented or not and whether desired objectives attained, achieved or not is in Nigeria's political lexicon known as 'transition' whose primary objective according to its authors and 'intellectual' designers is to lay a solid foundation for an emergent or evolving democratic, political culture (see Table 1: 34 years of endless 'transition').

But, that is far from the truth as a single or series of such acts fraught with apparent discrepancies between set objectives and what is visibly on ground do not qualify such acts or exercises as 'transition' to civil rule. Reflecting on the 'transition' programmes of Nigeria's different military governments, Onuoha (2002:20) declares that there was "no transition going on, and the concept does not empirically assist us in understanding

political developments in Nigeria during the period of transfer of political power from the soldiers to civilians", hence the concept, 'transition', as used by "agents of state may be applied minimally and functionally".

Elsewhere, Onuoha (2002:34) suggests that transition proper begins with the inauguration of the civil democratic government as an end product of a 'transition' programme (which happened briefly in 1979 - the installation of the Shagari administration – and recently in 1999 with the inauguration of the Obasanjo government by which time it may not be completely out of place to suggest that civil society has been thoroughly stretched and stirred). As against 'transition' programmes mounted, supervised and conceived to be a learning process in a political laboratory, Onuoha explains, "transition goes on in the process of governing the people; in the process of legislating, executing and adjudicating the laws on their behalf. It proceeds in a form of graph: low gains, high gains, crisis, dialogue, settlements, court suits, labour unrest and their solutions. These go on for a very long time".

Success in 'transition' of the above nature requires a democratic temperament which involves complex processes and rather a long time to attain; and so the various military authors of 'transition' programmes, in their insistence to 'execute' or implement successfully such programmes and endless introduction of similar schedules qualifies 'transition' as a trend in the agenda setting paradigm. The agenda in this case may be to frustrate their own programmes deliberately to further their coercive tendencies to

hang on to power or what Onuoha (2002:20) view as designed "more to make military rule acceptable and stable by keeping the politicians busy than the eagerness…to institute a stable democracy."

Indeed the propaganda of 'transition' programmes by the military, their pretences, intrigues, maneuvers, Babangida's machiavellian approaches and Abacha's self-succession strategies "at the highest level of abstraction" (Onuoha and Fadakinte, 2002:2) became politics in themselves and thus a trend in current agenda setting discourse.

Osaghae (1998:69) dismissed the Yakubu Gowon led military government 'transition' as 'the transition that never was", for shortly after the civil war, Gowon assured Nigerians of his desire to return the country to civil rule within two years (that would be 1972) but during his independence day (October 1) broadcast shifted the date - i.e. -, handover date to 1976 which he again in 1974 declared as "unrealistic" date.

Onuoha (2002), Fadakinte (2002), Nwabu (2002) Anifowose (2002) and Osaghae (1998) all agree that General Gown along with his three R's (Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation) announced to Nigeria a nine-point programme of activities that would midwife the birth of democratic rule but that was as far as his transition programme went. There was no clear-cut schedule that would lead to civil rule until Murtala Mohammed toppled him in a palace coup. Onuoha (2002:22) and

Osaghae (1998:71) both concur that with the exception of a controversial 1973 census, implementation of part of the second National Development plan (1970 – 74) which included the reconstruction of war damaged areas, Gowon failed to deliver on any other item of the nine-point programme.

Whereas the Gowon regime assumed the ruler-type interventionist government, the Muritala/Obasanjo group that toppled him came in as the arbitrator-type. They were more professional, imposed a time limit on their rule and successfully handed over the government to a civilian regime, true to the words of Mohammed (in his October 1st, 1975, broadcast) that his leadership "does not intend to stay in office a day longer than necessary" (Anifowose, 2002:81). The Muritala/Obasanjo regime (Muritala was killed in a 1976 failed coup attempt by Colonel Dimka but his deputy General Obasanjo who took over after his death kept faith with their transition programme) in 1979 and that of Abdusalami Abubakar in 1999 are the only exceptions in the military's transition programmes of handing over power to duly elected (though quite often selected) representatives of the people.

However, the Muritata/Obasanjo and the Abubakar 'transition programmes were not different in content with the other military transition programmes nor did they cost the tax payer any less but they were different in implementation and execution as well as in the trend of an agenda that keeps shifting the goal-post.

Year	Transition operator	Outcome of transition Programme
1966 – '75	General Yakubu Gowon	The Yakubu Gowon ruler-type government had no clear cut programme nor direction as hand-over dates shifted from 1972, 1976 and… until Gowon was overthrown by General Muritala Mohammed in a palace coup.
1975 – '79	Generals Muritala Mohammed / Olusegun Obasanjo	This was an arbitrator type government; they were business-like as they set a target date and even though General Mohammed was assassinated in the Dimka (1976) failed coup, his successor General Obasanjo kept fate and successfully handed over to Alhaji Shehu Shagari in 1979.
1979 – '83	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	The Shagari led NPN government was characterized by ineptitude and they wobbled and looted the public treasury until the military struck again December 19th, 1983
1983 – '85	General Muhammadu Buhari	General Buhari and his second in command Tunde Idiagbon clearly had no programme nor intended to create one. They were busy teaching Nigerians queue culture until another palace coup in August 1985
1985 – '93	General Ibrahim Babangida	The longest and most ambitious transition to civil rule programme that dribbled Nigerians until the 'general dribbled himself out of the play – field leaving behind the ING contraption
1993	Eanest Shonekan	Had a short transition to terminate February 1994, but had hardly settled down before General Abacha struck again
1993 – '98	General Sani Abacha	This government dusted up Babangida's programme with a clear intention to deceive Nigeria. General Abacha did not only frustrate Nigerians but his government jailed and assassinated them too, all in a bid to succeed himself. As a result he and his government were equally frustrated until he died a sudden death.
1998	General Abdulsalami Abubakar	Had no choice but to give the military a soft-landing or easy way out by ensuring a successful hand-over programme.
1999	Olusegun Obasanjo	Transition proper begins with the inauguration of the democratically elected civil government… high gains, low gains, crisis, dialogue settlements… (Onuoha, 2002:34)

Table 1: 34 years (1966-1999 except the brief break in 1979) of endless 'transition'

It can also be argued that in both hand-overs especially that of Abdulsalami Abubakar, they had no choice but to see to a successful hand over to civil rule as the easy way out for the military.

Military-style 'transition' to civil rule as a trend in agenda setting discourse is more vivid when we look at the similarities in the not-too-clear intentions of Babangida in his permanently shifting 'transition' programme and that of Abacha's self-succession positioned 'transition' programme. Comparison of the Babangida-Abacha 'transition' programmes (see below Tables 2a & b for the programmes) reveals that the latter was a hurried rehash of the former of which Abacha played a prominent role.

Indeed the Abacha programme was a hurried rehash of the (more articulate, though deceitful) version of the Babangida era. For example, the Abacha programme was in so many ways not just confusing but repetitive (see for instance in Table 2 (b), January – March 1997 and January – March 1998). Also, the March 1997 amendment to Abacha's 'Road to Democracy', reflected indecision, confusion and perhaps can best be dismissed as an after thought.

To further demonstrate the above observation, we present below the two transition programmes, that is, the Babangida administration's 'Transition Time Table' and the Abacha government's 'Road to Democracy'. The main point here is to further buttress our argument that the respective regimes developed transition programmes that lasted a

very long time that were, in our view, merely devices to legitimize their continued retention of power; and thus a trend in the agenda setting process.

Table 2 (a) – The Babangida Transition Time-Table

SCHEDELUS 1 SECTION 1 - PROGRAMME FOR 1987

3rd Quarter – 1987

Establishment of the Directorate of Social Mobilisation

Establishment of a National commission.

Establishment of a Drafting Committee.

4th Quarter – 1987

Elections into the Local government on non-party basis.

SCHEDULES 2 SECTION 2 - PROGRAMME FOR 1988

Establishment of National Population Commission

Establishment of Code of Conduct Bureau.

Establishment of Code of Conduct Tribunal

Establishment of Constituent Assembly.

Inauguration of Native Revenue Mobilization Commission.

2nd Quarter – 1988

Termination of Structural Adjustment Program(SAP).

3rd Quarter – 1988

Consolidate of gains of Structural Adjustment Program.(SAP)

4th Quarter – 1988

Consolidate of gains of Structural Adjustment Program.(SAP)

SCHEDULES 3 SECTION 3 - PROGRAMME FOR 1989

1st Quarter – 1989

Promulgation of a new constitution.

Release of a new fiscal arrangements.

2nd Quarter – 1989

Lift of ban on party politics.

3rd Quarter – 1989

Announcement of two recognized and registered political parties.

4th Quarter – 1989

Election into local governments, on political parties' basis.

SCHEDULES 4 SECTION 4 - PROGRAMME FOR 1990

1st and 2nd Quarter – 1990

Election into State Legislatures and State Executives

3rd Quarter – 1990

Convening of State Legislatures.

4th Quarter – 1990

Swearing – in of State Executives

SCHEDULES 5 SECTION 5 - PROGRAMME FOR 1991

1st Quarter - 1991

Census

2nd Quarter – 1991

Census

3rd Quarter – 1991

Census

4th Quarter – 1991

Local Government elections

SCHEDULES 6 SECTION 6 - PROGRAMME FOR 1992

1st and 2ns Quarters – 1992

Election into federal legislatures and convening of National Assembly

3rd and 4th Quarters – 1992

Presidential election

Swearing-in of new president and Final disengagement by the Armed Forces

Table 2 (b) - The Abacha Transition Time-table

(ROAD TO DEMOCRACY) TRANSITION PERIOD: OCTOBER '95 – OCTOBER '98

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 1995:

Approval of draft constitution

Lifting all restrictions on political actives.

Establishment of the National Electory Commissopn of Nigeria

(NECON)

Creation of:

Transition Implementation Committee

National Reconciliation Committee

Federal Character Commission

Appointment of panel for creation of state, local government;

Boundary adjustment

JANUARY – MARCH 1996

Election and inauguration of local Government Council on non party basis

APRIL – JUNE 1996

Creation of States and local government

Commence process of political party registration.

JULY – SEPTEMBER ’1996

Registration of political parties

Delineation of constituencies

Production of authentic voters register

OCTOBER – DECEMBER ’1996

Election of State governors

Sitting of state elections tribunals and conduct of bye-elections.

JANUARY – MARCH 1997

Inauguration of state assembly and state governors.

Party primaries to select candidates for State Assembly elections

National Assembly election campaign.

APRIL – JUNE 1997

Party – state primaries to select candidates for state Assembly and governors.

Party primaries to select candidates for National Assembly elections

National Assembly election campaigns.

APRIL – JUNE 1997

Party – state primaries to select candidates for State Assembly and governorship elections.

Screening and approval of candidates by the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON).

JULY – SEPTEMBER 1997

State Assembly elections.

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 1997

Elections of state governors.

Sitting of State Election Tribunals and conduct of bye-elections.

JANUARY – MARCH 1998

Inauguration of State Assembly and state governors.

Party primaries to select candidates for Presidential elections

National Assembly election campaigns.

APRIL – JUNE 1998

National Assembly elections.

Primaries to select candidates for Presidential elections.

Commencement of nation-wide campaigns for the Presidential elections.

JULY –SEPTEMBER 1998

Presidential elections

1st OCTOBER 1998

Swearing in of newly elected President and final disengagement.

March 1997 amendment to Abacha's transition

3RD Quarter, 1997

JULY 1997: Local Government bye-elections arising from wards adjustment and litigations;

JULY – AUGUST 1997: Recruitment and training of all electoral personnel;

JULY – SEPTEMBER 1997: Construction and rehabilitation of legislative and related physical structures;

AUGUST 1997: Registration for the up-date of voters' register;

SEPTEMBER 1997: Up-date of voters' register

4th Quarter, 1997

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 1997: Continuation of construction and rehabilitation of legislative and related physical structures;

THURSDAY 2/10/97 – FRIDAY 10/10/97: Distribution of the list of state Assembly/Fedral Constituencies and senatorial Districts to the five political parties.

MONDAY 13/10/97 – SATURDAY 1/11/97: Party primaries at state level for thee nomination of party candidates for the State Assembly elections.

MONDAY 3/11/97: Last day for the submissions to NECON of the list of duly nominated candidates for the State Assembly elections

THURSDAY 6/11/97 – THURSDAY 20/11/97: Screening/clearances of nominated party candidates and the substitution of disqualified candidates for the Sate Assembly elections

FRIDAY 21/11/97 – MONDAY 1/12/97: Filling of Nomination papers by cleared candidates.

SATURDAY 6/12/97: State Assembly elections; Filling of elections petitions.

1st Quarter, 1998

MONDAY 2/2/98: Party primaries at federal Constituency/Senatorial District levels for the nomination of candidates for the National Assembly elections.

SATURDAY 28/2/98: State Assembly bye-election arising from decisions of Elections Tribunals.

MONDAY 2/3/98: Last day for the submissions to NECON of the list of duly nominated party candidates for the National Assembly elections.

THURSDAY, 5/3/98-THURSDAY 19/3/98: Screening/clearance of nominated party candidates for the nomination party candidates for the National Assembly elections.

FRIDAY20/3/98 – MONDAY 30/3/98: Filing of nomination papers by cleared candidates.

2nd Quarter, 1998

SATURDAY 25/4/98: National Assembly elections; Filing of election petitions

MONDAY 8/6/98 – SATURDAY 20/6/98: Party primaries at state and national levels for the nominations of Governorship and Presidential candidates.

TUESDAY 23/6/98: Last day for the submission to NECON of the names of duly nominated party candidates for the Governorship and Presidential elections.

FRIDAY 26/6/98: Screening/clearance of nominated party candidates for the Governorship elections begin.

3rd Quarter, 1998

FRIDAY 10/7/98: Screening/clearance of nominated party candidates and substitution of disqualified candidates for the Presidential and Governorship elections ends.

MONDAY 13/7/98 – WENESDAY 22/7/98: Filing of nomination papers by cleared Governorship/Presidential candidates.

SATURDAY 25/7/98: National Assembly bye-elections arising from decision of Election Tribunals.

SATURDAY 1/898: Governorship/Presidential elections; Filing of election petitions.

SATURDAY 15/8/98: Run-off Governorship/Presidential elections.

SATURDAY 29/8/98: Bye-election arising from decisions of the Election Tribunals.

MONDAY 2/9/98: Swearing in of elected Governors and inauguration of state assemblies.

4th Quarter, 1998

THURSDAY 1/10/98: Swearing-in of the President and inauguration of the national assembly.

SOURCES: Transition to Civil Rule (Political programme) Decree No.19, 1987; Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, Abuja, Nigeria; Onuoha & Fadakinte (2002) – Transition Politics in Nigeria; Olagunju, Jinadu & Oyovbaire (1993) – Transition to Democracy in Nigeria.

As we have said elsewhere (in 9.3), it is possible that the media can and do set agendas especially where certain interests involved or associated with certain or specific media exist. For example during the days of the Abacha regime, some Nigerian newspapers and magazines including the *Guardian* newspapers, the *News* and *Tell* magazines respectively championed the course of democracy by being quite often anti-military, anti-establishment and pro-'June 12' to the extent that whereas the *Guardian* was torched and its publisher's life nearly wasted by what turned out to be state sponsored

assassins (more of this later), the *News* and *Tell* went underground and embarked on what some commentators referred to as 'guerilla operations' - that is - in their news gathering style, printing and circulation. But it is also known (at least now) that owners, publishers, associates and even promoters and admirers of some of these media organizations were either pro-democracy activists, radical academics, people with political interests of sorts and even people in the thick of the movement for the actualization of the annulled 'June 12' presidential election. We are saying in effect that media agenda is often 'source' oriented and the 'source' of the agenda in the 'transition' programmes is the military (a corroboration of Megwa & Brenners' (1988) argument that interest group, the media and audience constitute and "play active but unequal roles in the media agenda-setting process") whose trend in setting their agenda of deceit is to try as hard as possible to carry the media along to convince a skeptical public in the sincerity of the 'transition' programme and just as people were beginning to think that this could be real, not only are the goal posts shifted but quite often the entire playing field. That is the 'trend' we have been trying to make whole, coherent and verifiable sense out of.

As an agenda to hang on to power deceitfully, from the moment they arrived in the corridors of political power and experienced the gratifications of office-holding, the military while pretending to work in the interest of civil society, became a group with what Nwabueze (2002) describes as somewhat clearly separate set of interests, motives and orientation from the civil population.

According to Nwabueze (2002:71), General Ibrahim Babangida has been quoted to say that one of the reasons the June 12th, 1993, presidential election (considered to be fair and the freest so far in Nigeria) was annulled was for the simple reason that "some sections of the military did not want the winner, Chief M. K.O. Abiola, in spite of his being the overwheming choice of the civil electorate"; but Nwabueze was not done as he notes that "the transition exercise then acquires a unique sensitivity in line with the military versus civilian divide of our society" and indeed Tolofari (2004) knows better.

Sowaribi Tolofari who presently lives in Sweden (on political asylum) until April 1990 was a captain in the Nigerian army. He refers to himself as a member of the "gang of April 22". April 22, 1990 witnessed and represents one of the most horrific coup attempts right in the thick of General Babangida's 'transition' which in the words of Tolofari led to a "vampire fiesta" because of the number of people executed by firing squad in the aftermath of the coup despite its lack of success.

Tolofari (2004:167) confirms that the military government's transition programme was deceitful as "Ibrahim Babangida" was "determined to stay put" adding that the 'General' practically called on the military to declare war on the populace because he (Babangida) considered the May/June 1989 anti-SAP (structural Adjustment programme) riots to have been orchestrated by "detractors (who) want to humiliate and

disgrace the military out of office and destroy the credibility of the military as a group."

Another way of looking at 'transition' as a trend in agenda setting considering the country's ethnic/tribal divides is military 'transition' to civil rule as an ethnic agenda of the Hausa-Fulani hegemony. It is interesting to note that none of the coup d'etat military heads-of-state came from the south of the country but all from the "house of Arewa"; and these ever 'transiting' programmes of the military (usually headed by northerners) have not only heightened but also increased the consciousness of Nigeria's various ethnic nationalities about the fragility and the oneness of the country.

Our main concern here though, is not the success or otherwise of these 'transitions' but to demonstrate that against the agenda setting hypothesis' claim that the media has the capability to make people accept as important what the media considers to be so lies the argument that there is a pattern, approach or trend in setting the media agenda, in this context, by military rulers – even in an urban setting.

For example, as we have suggested earlier, the various military governments in Nigeria seem to have found it easy to set the political albeit media agenda by (i) deepening the suspicion and distrust within civil society by their co-option of certain 'preferred' members of the elite (some of who would rather die than let pass an 'opportunity' to enrich themselves as well as remain 'relevant') into their illegal governments, (ii) by deliberately planting in the air rumours they consider attractive to the media (such as

we shall see in the example of Babatope – a rumour that seem to question not only his democratic credentials but one designed to equally cast doubts on his credibility as a member of the opposition and personal conduct while he served as Abacha's cabinet minister); (iii) introduction of fear into the populace by the use of compulsive coercion such as incarcerations. Others include (iv), unwarranted arrests and the assassination of perceived 'enemies' and (v) amongst other tactics, the proscription of media organizations perceived to be in the opposition.

On the other hand, whereas the above seem to set the agenda by the government, we propose that the formation of opposition groups such as, in this instance, NADECO (National Democratic Coalition), G18 (Group of - 18 which later metamorphosed into the Group of – 34), Human rights organizations and some NGO's also seem to set the opposition agenda.

6.3 Rumours of Coup D'etat … etc. as Trends:

Military operated 'transition' programmes in Nigeria (especially those of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha) represent a trend in setting a deceitful agenda to hang on to power used rumours of coup d'etat, frame-ups and detentions, and assassinations to silence its opponents. Media organizations critical of the governments and their 'transitions, were, proscribed; and individuals critical of the government were, either simply branded enemies of the state or agents of destabilization and incarcerated. In the same vain co-opting some elites for purposes of

credibility or testimonial effect and thus deepen the distrust and suspicion within civil Society.

Rumours of coup d'etat took the life of Major-General Maman Vatsa not long after Babangida assumed power. Vatsa, a soldier-poet, was the Federal Capital Territory Minister and a close friend of Babangida. Tolofari (2004:169) says Vatsa 'was simply nipped in the bud' as the public did not even know of the alleged '1987 coup attempt…'

Also, in 1987, the *Newswatch* magazine was proscribed for six months. Its offence then, some sources suggested, was quoting the radical Marxist ex-governor of Kaduna state in a story where he - Balarabe Musa - had amongst other things observed "what is existing" as "just a balance of Tyrants"; but more informed sources including a *Newswatch* executive seem to be certain that, the proscription has more to do with an early April 1987 'cover story' titled, "The Third Republic: A new political agenda" (see more of this in chapter six). A *Daily Champion* (February 11,1996) article by Biodun Sonowo also recalls that, in May 1991, Raji Rasaki (then an army colonel and military governor of Lagos State) "ordered the closure of the *Guardian* for annoying him with a report that later proved to be true" (see: Abati & Dafinone, 2002:108).

Earlier in 1986 (Sunday, October 19) Nigeria witnessed her first letter-bomb assassination with that of the founding Editor-In-Chief of *Newswatch*, Dele Giwa. Rumours have it that Giwa was investigating the purported death in Kano prison of a

certain Gloria Okon, an alleged drug courier for 'people in high places'. Giwa, it was said had interviewed Okon in London after she had been reported dead (more of this in the Ray-Ekpu interview – in Rumour as Raw Material of the Media and The politics of Rumour). Another notable assassination during the Babangida 'transiton' was that of Chief Amuda Olorunosebi, the Ashipa of Oyo, in November 1992.

During his 'transition' programme, Babangida was able to co-opt and involve some of Nigeria's best academics who previously would rather have nothing to do with military government. Prominent among other intellectuals so co-opted and involved were academic political scientists. Such recruitments helped Babangida's acquisition of credibility or testimonial effects. Jinadu (1997); and (2002:191) confirms that it is the "…practice of the military administrations to seek wider constituencies within civil society to legitimize themselves…"

Ironically, while co-opting this elite to fulfill the above, some other members of the political class, especially those who damn the consequences to be vocally critical of the governments become agents of destabilization and detained under the obnoxious 'Decree No.2' (Abacha's equivalent of Buhari's Decree No.4 [done away with by Babangida in the early days of his popularity] which gave the semblance of legal teeth for the military to arrest and detain at will). Tunji Braithwaite, the now tiring radical Lagos lawyer, for example, was incarcerated for "59 days for advising that under no pretext whatsoever should the April 22 gang be killed" (Tolofari, 2004).

Abacha on his part, on dislodgement of the ING (Interim National Government) led by Ernest Shonekan (of which this researcher was a participant observer) stood the risk of incurring the wrath of civil society, as Babatope (2000:79) reveals that "there was no doubt that the military team led by Abacha arrived at some agreement with M.K.O. Abiola before having the courage to face Nigerians with the news of their taken the reins of power"; so, as a first step they opted for the agenda setting trend of promises and co-option.

On June 27, 1994 (this researcher was in attendance) while inaugurating 'his' constitutional conference, Abacha had promised: a speedy and unimpeded transition to civil democratic rule in which he and feelow members of his government would not be participants.

Earlier, about the period of Babatope's revelation of "some agreement" between Abacha's military team and M.K.O. Abiola (alleged winner of "June 12" elections), General Abacha had penetrated the opposition, especially the die-hard NADECO camp and left a dent by appointing a sizeable number of its advocates as cabinet ministers. The same NADECO had earlier boycotted the constitutional conference elections proposed by the Abacha junta on their ascension to the reins of political power; the same NADECO that instantly became a thorn in the flesh of the Abacha gang and as such a ray of hope on the issue of the revalidation of the illegally annulled "June 12"

elections. Abacha's co-opting and involving members of the opposition left civil society completely confused when Alhaji Babagana Kingibe's (M.K.O. Abiola's running-mate in the 'June 12' annulled elections) name featured as Abacha's Minister for Foreign Affairs (and later Internal Affairs).

Thus Ebenezer Babatope who served as Abacha's Minister for Transport and Aviation in his account of what went wrong during the Abacha years laments that, contrary to the generally accepted notion, the Abacha government on inception did not have a 'hidden agenda' to perpetuate itself in power but that people who were entrenched within the military and had links with "powerful interests outside the regime" effectively changed the course of events and changed the regime's direction.

According to Babatope (2000:87) those 'powerful interests outside the regime…were initially instrumental in the annulment of June 12 and would stop at nothing to sustain the status quo of the political power equation in the country, even if that would require the military to perpetuate itself in power;" and it did not take long for the opposition to scream 'fraud' at Abacha's transition of which Abiola himself had referred to (the Constitutional Conference) as a 'smokescreen'.

Rumours (as we shall see later) were rife that Abacha would succeed himself. As early in the life of the regime as June 1994 (less than a year), Debo Akande resigned his appointment as Secretary as well as Member of the Constitution Conference

Commission. About three months later, Dr. Olu Onogoruwa, a strong member of the opposition who was co-opted as Abacha's Attorney General and Justice Minister, resigned and then the regime unleashed a reign of terror as a trend in setting the agenda for Abacha's self-succession plan.

According to Babatope (2000:95) "the political class could not unite against Abacha, some for fear of their lives, others for sheer opportunism and while others had very high stakes in the Abacha-for-president project which they found suicidal to abandon at the time".

The reign of terror as we have stated earlier came in the form of rumours of coup d'etat, frame-ups and incarcerations running simultaneously with assassinations of perceived 'dissidents' and generally anybody who disagreed with the now obvious agenda of Abacha's government.

Rumours of coup d'etat against the Abacha junta were in the air late in 1994 and one notable casualty of that rumour was General Ahmed Abdulahi who was compulsorily retired from the army. Abdulahi probably knew enough to be retired. He was once the Director of Military Intelligence.

In February 1995, General Abdulsalami Abubakar (then Chief of Army Staff) announced a coup attempt that sent to jail Colonel (retired) Lawan Gwadabe as the

arrowhead of the plan. Lawan Gwadabe was at a point General Abacha's Principal Staff Officer (PSO) and an ex military Governor of Niger State under Babangida. Also jailed for life as a result of this allegation were Generals Olusegun Obasanjo (presently, President of Nigeria) and Shehu Yar'Adua, a former Chief-of-Staff Supreme Head Quarters under Obasanjo as military head of state. Shehu Yar'Adua is today post-humously recognized as Nigeria's greatest political mobiliser whose political machine – PDM - (Peoples Democratic Movement) still holds sway in the affairs of the country. Sadly enough, he died in 1997 under mysterious circumstances in Abacha's jail.

Rumours of attempted and planned coup d'etats climaxed with the arrest on December 20, 1997 of General Oladipo Diya, the number-two man in Abacha's government. Diya, it was rumoured perpetually disagreed with Abacha over the latter's self-succession agenda. There had earlier also been rumour of a plan to 'frame' Diya in conversation with a female informant which failed and about a week before his arrest a bomb speculated to have been planted for him exploded at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Abuja. The incidence recorded one soldier dead and another injured.

The assassination list of the Abacha 'transition' era is a rather long one, as many are not recorded; but a quick compilation of some of the prominent ones across the country but mostly in the Lagos area runs thus.

1995:

- Chief Alfred Rewani
- Rear Admiral Omotehinwa
- Admiral Muftau Elegbede
- Bishop Hayford Iloputaife
- Captain Tunde Ashafa; and Dr. Femi Oyewo

1996:

- Alhaja Kudirat Abiola
- Dr. Sola Omosola
- Attorney, Toyin Onagoruwa
- Chief (Mrs) Bisoye Tejuoso
- Alhaja Suliat Adedeji
- Evangelist Jonathan Agboola
- Mr Emmanuel Ishola Ikotun
- Alhaji Yisa Alubankudi

1997:

- Rev. Abimbola Odunlami

Unsuccessful Attempts.

- Alex Ibru
- Prof. Pat Utomi

- Chief Abraham Adesanya; and perhaps many more unknown. *(Sources: see Babatope, 2000; Abati & Dafinone, 2002; Tolofari, 2004).*

Of the above, we here briefly discuss the relevance in the assassination of Rewane (October 1995), Abiola (June 1996), Onagoruwa (1996) and the unsuccessful attempted assassination of Ibru (February, 1996) as possible trends in setting an agenda perhaps designed to confuse and infuse fear and widespread suspicion among the general public.

- **Chief Alfred Rewane** by 1975 when gunmen broke into his Ikeja residence and shot him dead at point blank range was 79 years old. He was a very wealthy staunch member of the opposition movement and an active participant of the 1940's nationalists struggles. Early in the 1990's, Chief Rewane started writing articles in newspapers, especially the *Vanguard*, raising issues as they affected the polity, but perhaps his greatest offence during the Abacha years was the suspicion by the Abacha government that he funded the opposition movement – NADECO.

- **Alhaja Kudirat Abiola** until she fell to the assassin's bullet on June 4, 1996 in Lagos was the second wife for the undeclared winner of the 'June 12' presidential election – Chief M.K.O. Abiola. When her husband became incerrated, she became the activist wife who spear headed the campaign for the revalidation of her husband's 'mandate' to the dismay of the Abacha junta but amusingly upon her assassination, from Abuja (the

seat of power) came a government delegation to commiserate with the deceased's family in Lagos.

- **Attorney Toyin Onagoruwa** was the son of Abacha's first Attorney General and Justice Minister Dr. Olu Onagoruwa – another strong member of the opposition co-opted and involved by General Abacha but who stood by his principles. The senior Onagoruwa resigned his appointment as Attorney General and Justice Minister after he publicly denied knowledge of signing into law some decrees giving legal teeth to Abacha in dealing with pro-democracy activists. Babatope (2000: 144) suggests that those who killed Toyin Onagoruwa must have "believed that a greater and everlasting pain would have been inflicted on Dr Olu Onagoruwa if it was his beloved son that was murdered in his place."

Biodun Sonowo of the *Daily Champion* (February 11, 1996) in his "How Ibru cheated death" sums up assassinations under the Abacha terror reign thus:
"…On January 20th this year seven intruders burst into the Iju suburban home of Kayode Awosanya, Public Affairs Adviser of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited; and pumped him full of bullets, snuffing out his life.

In October 1995, another dance of death had been enacted. Five determined young men invaded the Ikeja Lagos, home of Pa Alfred Rewane, businessman and elder statesman, lucked up other members of the household and shot the 79-year-old citizen to death. On

Christmas day, gunmen trailed Dr. Femi Oyewo … dragged him out and shot him dead in the full view of his wife and five children. Like in the Rewane and Awosanya incidents, the assailants stole nothing, indicating clearly that the killing was more to their taste than robbing"

- **Alex Ibru** scion of the Ibru business dynasty, Publisher of the authoritative *Guardian* Newspapers and first Internal Affairs Minister of the Sani Abacha's 'transition' to civil rule government was greeted with a hail of bullets in his car in the early evening of February 2, 1996 after the day's work from his Victoria Island office. Ibru's paper, the *Guardian* had been biting at the flesh of the Abacha junta and speculations were rife that one of the reasons for co-opting Ibru into governance was for Ibru to bring along with him, the *Guardian* to be the regime's official mouthpiece. But, the management of the newspaper thought differently. No sooner than its publisher was appointed, management of the *Guardian* issued a categorical statement that the appointment of their publisher as a cabinet minister would have no influence on neither the 'house-style' nor editorial policy of the newspaper whose motto remain 'conscience Nurtured by Truth.'

Barely ten months into the Abacha regime's life, the *Guardian* had been proscribed for its 'sin' in an (about) August 14, 1994 publication with a revealing front-page headline: "Goings on inside Aso Rock". After a series of interventions, the *Guardian* was

allowed to return to the streets in 1995; but in or out of government Ibru has become a marked man.

If journalists on the *Guardian* suffered temporary unemployment as a result of the proscription of their source of livelihood, some other journalists, such as Chris Anyanwu (Publisher of the *TSM* magazine), Ben Obi (Editor of *Classique* magazine), Kunle Ajibade (Editor of the *News*) and Gerogre Mbah of *Tell* Magazine were actually sentenced to long years of imprisonment; along with Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti (Leader of the CD - campaign for Democracy). The Major-General Patrick Aziza led "phantom coup" (Mbeke-Ekanem, 2000:71) military Tribunal in handing down sentences put their offence as "accessory before or after the fact of treason".

Interestingly, whereas Babatope (2000:87) is full of praise for the media, particularly the "independent press" for being exceedingly vocal, providing sustained articulation of facts, constantly exposing the Abacha regime for its real intentions and for keeping "a close watch on the transition programme", Tolofari (2004) has no tears for the media as he equates what befell the media as 'to be burnt by the fire that one has kindled'. Tolofari (2004:17)) is angry with the Nigerian press because in his words, the Nigerian press "aided the propaganda of abundant food when we were buying five seeds of pepper for =N=10. They told the masses the massive lies about the huge success of the mass transit project when millions of people trekked to and from work each day. It was the press that lied about the provision of imaginary electricity and water in every

village" while people in villages, the rural areas, drank coloured water from stagnant ponds shared by frogs. Tolofari has more scores to settle with the press but for our purpose, he seemed to have made the point that the press carried and enunciated the campaigns or a 'source agenda', in this instance a deceitful one pushed forward by the military. The real media agenda in Tolofari's opinion ought to have been the stories about "hungry, dying Nigerians" and the "innocent poor who died in tens and hundreds in police cells".

As a participant observer during the period under review, this researcher would like to note that indeed the 'independent press' with its guerrilla tactics and under-ground operations did frustrate the General Sani Abacha military junta and its 'transition' programme. From the moment it became clear that Abacha's 'transition' was a programme for self-succession the 'independent press' seem to have made its agenda one of driving the dark goggled General out of 'Aso Rock' (where political power in the land reside); if not to his timely grave. One example of the 'independent press' seeming agenda include the publication of 'all-things' considered negative about the Abacha junta.

Even so, we argue that the independent press' seeming agenda to either frustrate the military out of office or pursue General Abacha to his 'timely grave' remains a 'source agenda'. 'Source agenda' as per by our usage here simply refers to the origin of or place, quarters or person from where/who the matter/issue for public discussion or

attention starts or comes from. Put simply, we mean the origin of the matter or issue for public discourse or attention.

We are saying in effect that, the seeming agenda to frustrate the military out of power or to pursue Abacha to his 'timely grave' may not have been an independent agenda of the press, for the agenda had identifiable sources.

According to Babatope (2000:87), the "… independent press was exceedingly vocal and had substantial international backing …" In addition, we take the view that the seeming 'independent press' agenda may also have been a combination of 'source agendas' of the various opposition groups – i.e.- NADECO, Afenifere, G18 & G34, CLO (Civil Liberties Organisation), CD (Campaign for Democracy), MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People) amongst other opposition as well as humanitarian groups; some of which also embarked on the formation of ethnic militant groups such as OPC (Odua Peoples Congress) and the 'Egbesu' cult with the claim of protecting the ethnic interest of their peoples.

Again, we argue that the situation today is not that different when compared with the military 'transition' days when it comes to the media's claim of an overwhelming capability to structure issues, and in this case political issues. It is worthy of note that what may ordinarily look like a media agenda may indeed be the planned and sustained

campaign of blackmail, calumny or witch-hunting exacerbated by 'voodoo politics' of political opponents.

As the election year of 2007 draws near, political opponents are checkmating themselves with lurid details of their past as well as the present, and dry bones are already flying out of the closets. For example, it is speculated that by 2007 Nigeria's next president will have to emerge from the northern part of the country (which automatically leaves the vice presidential slot to the south), as a result, especially in the south, both aspiring and 'hopefuls' stop at nothing to paint their likely opponents in lurid colours and the media is seemingly awash with that agenda.

It is also anticipated that, if the speculated 2007 northern president materializes then the oil bearing Niger Delta region of the country could have a shot at the vice presidency. The result of this anticipated possibility is that for some governors in the Niger Delta area and some of their counterparts in the eastern axis angling for a possible Igbo presidency the 'destruction' campaign had began in earnest. This game of destruction of the opponent played by political opponents (that grace the pages of newspapers and magazines) ordinarily, will seem like a media agenda set for an 'expose', but, we view this as a trend in setting that which becomes the media agenda.

Here, we demonstrate our position with just three (out of the lot of them) governors from the Niger Delta region who fairly regularly make the covers of newspapers and magazines for one or the other destructive allegation (or is it agenda?).

- **Donald Duke** is the governor of Cross River State who by virtue of his nativity of the Niger Delta region is eligible for a vice presidential ticket. For quite some time now, Duke had not had a respite from the press for a questionable certificate scandal. To mention just two of the many covers he had made, the *Excellence* magazine issue of Tuesday, May 11th, 2004 had on its cover page the smiling picture of Governor Duke with the lead caption: "Governor Donald Duke in Messy Certificate Scandal".

Of the many newspapers and magazines cover stories that this allegation has made, the most striking one seem to be that cast in 'pidgin English' (Nigeria's equivalent of the West Indian creole). With a rather sober looking picture of the governor on the cover (one of the cover stories of the day) page of *Thisday* edition of Sunday, November 28th, 2004, the paper directing readers to pages 36-37 for the story proper dramatizes President Obasanjo's rather 'mischievous' joke at the governor: "Donald dem say you no go school"; which literarily translated means 'Donald the rumour is that or they say you didn't go to school'. If governor duke feels subjected to unfair media 'mugging' by his desperate political opponents, this is the story of another governor.

- **James Ibori,** governor of Delta State has been in and out of courtrooms for allegedly being an ex-convict. Even after judgment had been given in his favour by an Abuja High Court on the grounds that some truck driver owned up to being the 'James Ibori' that was convicted, *Tell* magazine with two identical photographs of the governor on its cover-page of August 23rd, 2004 called its story: "The cloning of Ibori"; and followed with: "Ibori: Beyond the victory" on its November 22, 2004 issue.

Although **Peter Odili** the medical doctor turned politician governor of the oil rich Rivers State may have made many a negative cover stories, April 4th, 2005 edition of the *Insider* magazine became his turn. The magazine in a sentence of eight words ("The story of Marcel Semaan, Odili's money launderer") told its story and added the kickers:

-*'How he was nabbed in theUSA'*

-*'Spills the beans on Rivers Gov.*

-*'America targets Odili family'*

6.4 A Rural Perspective: "Soldier-go, Soldier-come"

So far, we have been considering trends in agenda setting from the perspective of the city. Let us here, again, look at 'trends' from the rural perspective. In doing so we consider trends in setting the 'territorial' (rural) agenda in times of military 'transition' programmes and as we did with analyzing the urban trends, we will also refer to current trends in setting the political agenda in typical rural Nigeria.

Rural Nigeria may hardly be affected by the media's capability to structure issues. Rural Africa has its own political space and concerns. Its concerns are shaped by rumour, gossip and the other established structures of community. Thus Onuoha (2002:255/6) argues that the "transition programme has no positive impact on the poor in their political participation, political recruitment, political articulation or political trust".

Statistics make our points clearer. The Federal Office of Statistics 1990 demographic and health survey indicate that 75.1% of Nigeria's total populations are in the rural area which by implication means that only 24.9% live in urban areas. In 1985 and 1992, rural Nigeria accounted for 73% and 73.4% respectively for the total number of poor Nigerians. Only 3.3% of rural people by the 1990 survey had access to pipe borne water whereas 31.1% of urban dwellers had access to pipe borne water (FOS, Socio-Economic profile of Nigeria [1996]; Enemuo, 2002: 309/11). By 1994, 82.4% of urban people used electricity while only 8.6% did so in rural areas; and Enemuo (2002:309/10) laments that the rural areas where the majority of the people live are considerably disadvantaged and remain spatially distant and procedurally excluded from decision making.

Again, 'transition' programmes in themselves constitute the process of democratisation and democratisation programmes as Fadakinte (2002:41) rightly notes are by necessity a class project, that is, a project of the dominant class 'by its nature, purpose and

objective'. But rural Africa is cocooned in its space; space made up of what we in this study quite often refer to as the established structures of community. These established structures of community amongst others include modes of worship at the shrines of what are considered powerful deities. Shrines and deities that mean more to the rural dweller than any politician or modern media of information exchange could be.

Legends also have it that the rural dweller will rather consult the oracle (examples include: Ifa, Aro Long-juju and the Okija shrines) than any 'city' source for information in the choices he has to make. This information/advice (about the future) from the shrines or native places of worship often had a hidden meaning; usually interpreted by the shrine's priest or priestess through whom the 'gods' are said to give their message, advice and information.

Accordingly, during the days of military 'transition' programmes in Nigeria, rumour has it that due to the frequency with which one 'General' "over-throw" the other for the reigns of office, rural people consulted the 'gods' for information and advice regarding the length of occupation of the new 'General'. Thus during military transition programmes, for most of rural Nigeria an attitude that could be translated as the 'territorial' agenda remained that of "soldier come, soldier go".

Today, the role of the shrines and oracles (in conjunction with the other established structures of community) in setting the territorial agenda remain virtually the same as

rural people are now said to have devised the strategy whereby some public office-seekers are made to swear to oaths of allegiance to the 'people' at the shrines of 'gods' of the land.

Again, these shrines and deities arguably constitute the media agenda today as urban people invade the peace and quiet of the rural country, some in search of 'justice', wealth and yet others in search of 'power'. Political power that is 'voodoo' infested; as they go to consult the priests of the shrines and oracles of rural Africa.

For example, a better part of the second half of 2004 stories of otherwise considered successful businessmen and politicians visiting the shrines of rural Africa (Nigeria) adorned the pages of newspapers and magazines. It was also rumoured that a visitor's notebook at one of the shrines (the Okija shrine) contained names of governors, Senators and unimaginable number of prominent Nigerians (who are said to have used their privileged positions to block the contents of the visitor's book from becoming public knowledge).

The Okija shrine located in the forest of the popular native town of Okija in the south-eastern state of Anambra is one of the many shrines of rural Nigeria where believers go to worship their supposedly potent and powerful deities. Okija shrine had become a Mecca for power-seeking city-dwellers.

Tell magazine then seems to have made it an agenda to reveal more details of consultations and pledge makings and their consequences as the magazine's August 23rd, 2004 edition screamed (on its front cover page) "More Horror from Igboland" (the Okija shrine is in Igboland) with a decomposing cadaver in the background. The magazine followed with its January 17th, 2005 issue in which a former aid (Nnanna) to Orji Kalu, governor of Abia State alleges: "Kalu Took Us to Okija Shrine". Governor Kalu who has indicated his interest in contesting the 2007 Presidential election has since denied the allegation.

The allegation could be, and may not be true; but as they say in Nigeria, "there is no smoke without fire". It is also indicative of the role rumour plays in setting the media agenda (as we shall see later). We however, will like the following to be noted:

- Our account on rumours of coup d'etat and assassinations are by no means exhaustive as there are so many unknown cases of coup attempts and assassinations. So also is our account on current trends.

- Virtually all the assassinations, especially the ones we highlighted on and the attempt on Alex Ibru's life had a government angle to the rumour explaining the deed. For example, the attempt on Ibru's life was supposed to have been that of a business deal gone sour; but there was one constant from the public in all the cases of assassinations and that was the rumour that the assassinations were acts of state sponsored terrorism.

The verification and validity of the above, we shall attend to in ‘Rumour as Raw Material of the Media’ in more detail.

- Also, most of the examples we have used to illustrate the trends in setting the seeming media agenda had their roots in rumour, some of which we will explore in the next chapter as ‘raw material of the media’.

In the foregoing our argument has been that the way in which agenda setting happens in the countryside, using as specific example the oracles and shrines of rural Africa as an established structure of community, is different from those of modern media dominated urban centres; and I argue that, not only is the ‘territorial’ trend different but equally, has affected urban politics and urban political culture.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Rumour: Raw Material of the Media

We have already addressed the subject of rumour not only from the parameters of Rosnow & Fine (1976), primarily as a process of information dispersion as well as a product of that process, but, as raw material in the processing of media product.

From our introductory chapter, this study maintains that its focus is in part on the specific role of the other neglected agents of power, that is, the established structures of community such as rumour in setting the media agenda. The media may set the agenda in urban centres where people seem to be cumulatively exposed to mass mediated messages, but equally these messages that constitute the media agenda come from "somewhere" (Megwa & Brenner, 1988). This chapter explores the ways in which rumours shape the media agenda.

For some experts, rumour is vile and distasteful, but this thesis' working definition of rumour is that, rumours are a vital form of communication traditionally defined as products of face-to-face encounters and as such a prime agent of the diffusion process. Thus Stanley Macebuh (New York University professor of English, journalism teacher, former chairman of Daily Times Editorial Board, Pioneer Managing Director of *The Guardian*, *Sentinel* and the *Post Express* respectively, Deputy Chief of Staff to President Obasanjo and until recently, the President's Senior Special Assistant on

Public Communication) is quite certain in his opinion that "we ought" to begin to get to the point at which "shall we say … show a little more respect for what we call rumour".

Fielding questions from this researcher in a personal interview (2004. Monday, May, 3rd. Abuja), and using as one example, the specific case of the "speaker and Toronto Certificate", Macebuh explained that rumour as raw material of the media goes through a process. He explained that: "It began first as rumour that somebody somewhere said Ah! How could this 'gentleman' be our speaker? After all he is this and that. Are you sure about that? Oh yes. Go and check. The media (especially the print media) picked up on that and started spreading (and at the time) an unproved claim. Subsequently, because of the frequency of the references in the media, most people took it up… to go and check the facts; and they came to the conclusion that there is something to it." Macebuh concluded by saying, "Yes, I accept that first, it started as a rumour. A rumour that turned out in the end to in fact be very, very true".

Emeka Izeze, Scholar-Journalist and current Managing Director of the influential *Guardian* newspapers concurs that rumour plays a vital role in the spread of information and as a concept of communication; adding that he takes rumour as a "positive phenomenon" that "remains a means of communication in a very strange kind of way". According to Izeze, rumour and gossip are channels by which people spread

unverified information, which travels rather fast (personal interview, 2004. Friday, September, 24th. Lagos).

As raw material of the media, Izeze confirmed that "rumour in a society such as ours propels us in the media to see, to push our job a bit further either to authenticate that rumour, to prove that it is not just rumour but it is a real fact; to authenticate the gossip." Rumour, Izeze further asserts, is a spur on the journalists to work. "You hear it", he says "people tell it to you and then it makes you want to do what you need to do; sometimes you're definitely sent on a wild goose chase but at other times, you find that as we say here, there is hardly any smoke without a fire."

Tracing the genealogy of rumour that became a media agenda, *The Guardian* Chief Executive chose the death of Abacha as a case study. When Abacha died in June, 1998, the rumour spread like wildfire but remained "nothing but gossip and rumour" for most of the day; and authentication of the rumour became more difficult as Abacha's government was feared as it was resented. The result was that people spoke in hushed tones, asking "Is it true? Is it not true?" and the rumour that originated from no one in particular and from nowhere, spread into the newsroom to the extent that people started "calling us in the newspaper to confirm, thinking that we would know and we didn't know because we didn't know who to ask whether Abacha was dead, Abacha was alive" Izeze said.

Explaining the effects of the rumour of Abacha's death on *The Guardian*, the media Chief explained that, "all it did to us was that we dare not ask that question but we started preparing that this may well be true, but it may also not be true and just in case it turns out not to be true, nobody wanted to be caught in Abacha's trap; but supposing it was true nobody also wanted to be caught napping. So we started preparing discretely, preparing materials just in case it is true and this was what happened most of the morning that day".

By mid afternoon, there was still no word of confirmation form anywhere but the air was now thick with the rumour and the rumour, Izeze hints – became somewhat of a fact when they heard on – "of all places" – CNN that something was going in Abuja and that "there were some strange movements in Abuja …". Nobody seems to know exactly what has happened, as there were no visible military movements. Eventually, the same CNN channel confirmed later in the day that indeed Abacha was dead but the Guardian, based on the circulating rumour was already on standby in Abuja to "cover" the movement of Abacha's body out of Abuja to his native home of Kano.

Rumour in the assessment of the journalist "is so pre-eminent in terms of major events that occur around here that you no longer take rumour or gossip just as that … and then dismiss them outright; no, you never, you really want to find out whether there is anything behind them and most of the times you discover that there are things behind them".

Ray Ekpu is one of Nigeria's respected popular columnists, editor and media manager and the Chief Executive Officer of *Newswatch* Communications. He has edited the *Chronicle*, *Sunday Times* and *Business Times* respectively. He was also chairman of the *Concord*'s Editorial Board and has over the years been in and out of military detention cells for his acerbic essays on at least, twenty incidents. Ray knows the importance of rumour to the media's finished product as he gladly offers "… rumour is an important ingredient in news, it is the raw material for news because it 'gives you the tip-off' ".

According to the essayist, journalists and media organisations may follow the lead provided by rumour and it "doesn't lead to anywhere" just as they "may follow it and it leads to a story"; but the important thing he notes, is that rumour gives the journalist an indication of what people are talking about and the role of the media in selecting an agenda becomes that of verifying, cross-checking and confirming as to "get the story out which then changes the terrain of rumour into facts that can be published … something important that you can concretise and it becomes front page story" (personal interview, 2004. Sunday, May, 23rd. Lagos).

So far we have been exploring rumour as raw material of the media from the premise of what may be referred to as testimonial evidence. In the sections below, we use specific examples to demonstrate the above. In doing so, we are looking or relying on what we like to refer to here as derived evidence from the following:

7.1 Rumour as Raw Material of the "Gossip Journal"

'Soft-Sell journalism, Junk journalism or Rumour/Gossip journalism' as it is variously labeled has not only acquired notoriety but has equally attained the status of 'big business' in its own right. Some experts opine that 'Soft-Sell' or 'Gossip' journalism 'smells' but the truth is that it 'sells'. Thus in Nigeria you have 'Soft-Sells' such as *City people*, self acclaimed "Nigeria's largest circulating Soft-Sell". Others include *Encomium, Fame, and Global Excellence* amongst others who for want of a 'better' identity would prefer to be called 'Lifestyle' magazines. One such example is the *Treasure People & Life*, which parades as "Nigeria's Interview Lifestyle Magazine".

'Soft-Sells' have such a huge market that these days, most dailies have created gossip columns, which for want of a better name are called 'lifestyle' pages or 'lifestyle columns'. Interestingly, Nigeria's influential *Guardian* from inception in 1983 created and had maintained its "Cocktail Circuit" where 'news' (rumour of a different kind some people call it) about the high and mighty in society is quiet often on display.

Traditional news reporting style usually quote and credit sources of information obtained except where such a source chose to be anonymous in which case the reporter and the media organisations are obliged to protect the source or informants' identity. However, quite often, 'Soft-Sells' reveal their sources of information in languages suggestive of rumour and gossip. Examples of language suggesting their sources of information include: 'rumour mongers, gist merchants, squealing sources or squealing

birds, rumour mongers and tale bearers'. At other times they 'gathered' and some even clearly name columns 'Gist Café' and would use native language (remember the South African preference for *Vuvuzela* as against *The Trumpet*) such as 'Tatafo' and 'Olofofo' to describe their sources.

Between April 2003 and May 2004, this researcher went through the pages of about sixty issues of various Soft-Sell magazines in Nigeria and randomly picked some copies of *Fame, Encomium, City People* and *The Excellence* to demonstrate rumour as raw material of the media.

Fame edition of July 15-21, 2003 page 19 – obtained information for its story about Senator Khairat Gwadebe's 'auto-crash' from a 'gist merchant' and then "another gossip is here with the tale of her relationship with … Gbenga Aluko'. The story continued that a 'tale bearer swore' to how close the two were in each others arms, concluding that the story is "just a gist" … "but hardly can there be smoke without fire".

Encomium: Tuesday, July 22nd, 2003; page 24. Ben Murray Bruce is the immediate past Director General of Nigeria's Television Network (NTA). He is the President of Silverbird – owners of Rhythm 93.7fm radio, Silverbird Television (STV) and Silverbird Cinema. While he served as Director General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), the rumour mill beamed in on him with stories including that of an

alleged affair with the President's wife. *The Encomium* interviewed Mr. Bruce but based its questions in the personal interview on 'rumours' and claims by no one in particular. Encomium asked Mr. Bruce, "… there were rumours so to speak that you were having something to do with the First Lady?" and followed with, "it was even claimed that there was a photograph …" Our point here is to show that even in a one-on-one interview situation, *Encomium* dwelt on rumour.

On page six, its story on the then Inspector General of Police – Tafa Balogun – is based on 'our source also squealed' about stories being "bandied" while on page 10, Omisore (a former deputy Governor) "while he was a businessman/contractor was trailed by rumours…"

On page 12, the story on ex-governor Lawal of Kwara State is based on the "gist in town …", "gossip merchants" informed on the same page, "a bird squealed" on Pat Utomi on page 19 and stories made "the rounds" for Segun Arinze on page 29. Stella Dimoko Korkus, the 'Gist Café' (page 32) columnist's sources are, either "well schooled … Tatafo, Olofofos … or gist merchants".

Encomium's page 13 January 6, 2004 edition says "it is now being rumoured in Kano" that Abacha's son, Mohammed will declare for the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP); whereas for Vice President Atiku Abubakar "the story that swirled all over …" page 19 "was" for him to "make" Nike Oshinowo "wife number five".

Whereas *Fame* and *Encomium* regularly refer to 'gist merchants', 'squealing birds' etc, *City People*, the self-styled 'Nigeria's largest circulating Soft-Sell' in addition to 'gists', 'rumours' etc also 'gathers'. For example, the magazine 'gathered' on page 50 of its March 24, 2004 edition that ' professor Tiamiyu Belo-Osagie intervened …' just as it "gathered" on page 29 of its May 19, 2004 issue, the "real reasons Senators want Wabara out …".

City People (same issue) page 31 also "gathered" that a "new mafia" had "taken over at Aso Rock" but categorically states on page 5 that "rumour of Derin's romance …" has been in the air for months. Like *Encomium's* 'Gist Café', City People's version is the equivalent of rumours from the states. For example, "gists from Kwara", "gists from Edo/Delta" etc.

Finally, for rumour as raw material of the media in this section, *The Global Excellence* page 9 of its May 11-17 edition, contrary to denial of allegation of homosexual tendencies by an accused, the magazine apparently referring to its source says "but rumour mongers think otherwise …"

7.2 Babangida Era and Rumour as Raw Material

As we have indicated in chapter six), the Babangida military government on ascension to political power established the Professor S.J. Cookey led political Bureau to midwife the government's new social order project. The Bureau in turn, produced a report,

which served as the blueprint for the administration's 'transition' programme. Part of the recommendations in the Bureau's Report includes, a phased 'transition' programme, scheduled to commence in 1987. The Bureau Report's recommendation amongst others, also include the banning of certain categories of former political office holders from participating in the new arrangement.

Interestingly, the Bureau's Report, though not yet a "public document", some of its contents especially that of banning of participation in politics certain categories of politicians and office holders (now, past and present) conveniently made the rumour rounds; to the extent that the three core intellectual 'designers' of the Babangida 'transition' programme – Olagunju, Jinadu and Oyovbaire (1993) – confirm that by early April of 1987, aspects of the Bureau's Report had begun to be discussed in the press.

An article in the *Daily Times* edition of Friday, April 3 (1987), is one of many such examples. While the Bureau's Report still remained a 'classified document', the author of the *Daily Times* article, Chika Onwudiegwu had argued that the banning and disqualification of these certain categories of people from participation in the new political order (which sounds like part of the Bureau's Report) was controversial and unjustified.

During the same weekend (Friday 3 – Sunday 5, April), the *Newswatch* Magazine whose founding Editor-in-Chief – Dele Giwa – had earlier in October 1986 been assassinated courtesy of a parcel bomb was alleged to have gone to 'bed' with the cover captioned: "Third Republic: A new political agenda". *Newswatch* was proscribed for six months (before the edition even went into circulation) by Monday, April 6, for what the government referred to as 'illegally obtaining and publishing' classified document - the political Bureau Report.

Rumour as raw material for the media was aplenty in the Babangida era. The government encouraged Nigerians to form political associations of which on the last count there were no fewer than forty-eight such associations out of which about eleven (or thereabout) met the National Electoral Commission's (NEC) criteria for registration as political parties. But then came the rumour that, the government had its own ideas about formation and registration of political parties for its 'transition' programme. All said and done, the administration formed and funded two test-tube political parties (one, a little to the left of the centre and the other, a little to the right of the centre), the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republic Convention (NRC).

Here our focus will be on the relevance and importance of two distinct incidents in two respective years in Nigerian politics, rumour and the media. The two incidents and years are: The assassination of Dele Giwa in October (Sunday, 19th) 1986, and the

annulment of the 'June 12' elections, the 'stepping aside' of Babangida and the Abacha 'take-over', all in 1993.

Dele Giwa, as noted above, was the founding Editor-in-Chief of the authoritative weekly magazine *Newswatch*. He was murdered by a parcel bomb for what the rumour mill (which eventually became cover stories in newspapers) circulated as trying to rough-up feathers of highly placed individuals in society by interviewing Gloria Okon, the purported dead and buried drug courier. One version of this story have it that by interviewing Okon, Giwa in publishing the story was going to unmask the highly placed 'drug barons' instead of a mere courier and that the price will be too high for the highly placed drug barons hence Giwa was blown apart in his study, at breakfast, early that Sunday morning.

Reports which adorned the pages of virtually every newspaper especially in the Lagos axis – *The Guardian, Concord, Vanguard, Punch* and the *Newswatch* magazine amongst others – from Monday, October 20, 1986 and thereafter for a very long time went to town with the rumoured details of before and after his death. Some of these rumoured details in the papers include: that a day before his death, Halilu Akilu (he was then a Colonel in the army), the Babangida administration's National Security Adviser had telephoned the late journalist's wife asking for directions to the residence and when the parcel arrived it was marked "from the office of the C-in-C" (short for Commander-in-Chief) on receipt of which Giwa was said to have said his last words on

earth – "Ah, this must be from the President" – as he opened the package (as a friend of the late journalist who in company of others also carried Giwa to the first Foundation Clinic as he screamed in pain shortly before he gave up the ghost, Fumi, Giwa's wife confirmed to this researcher (much later) that actually Akilu did telephone her).

Karl Maier, the London based journalist who served as African correspondent for the *Independent* within 1986 and 1996 in his narration of his Nigerian experiences hinted that Giwa was murdered by a parcel bomb after he mentioned to his colleagues that the President's wife – Maryam Babangida – was involved in the drug trade. Maier who interviewed Babangida himself, said the President strongly denied having a hand in the killing but added, "the security services were widely believed to have been involved" but that, Babangida seems to have put squarely at the doors of the media as Maier quotes him saying "Yes … it was all blown out in this frenzy by you guys, the media."

Ray Ekpu, Giwa's deputy at *Newswatch* confirmed that there was a lot of "rumour about the Gloria Okon story and it is difficult to say which one was fact and which was fiction". Ekpu said it was partially true that *Newswatch* was trying to investigate the Okon story, as he believed "everybody was investigating … the story" but that Giwa was not in charge of the story yet. "The story was on our schedule" he said, but it was Dan Agbese, one of the founding editors, who chaired the meeting that discussed the subject. Dele Giwa according to his (then) deputy Editor-in-Chief "only saw it in the schedule".

Mr. Ekpu notes that rumour played a substantial role in the media's coverage of Giwa'a death, wondering "whether" some of it was "deliberate rumour fed by the security men into the system in order to achieve whatever they wanted to achieve …" According to him, Giwa before his death "used to say that he had a feeling that some people (some people in the security service)" who didn't like him were after him. Ekpu, who accompanied Giwa to honour an invitation by the military Intelligence two days before Giwa's death, wondered how the allegations against *Newswtch* and Giwa particularly by the "intelligence" people were almost identical with rumoured stories carried by some sections of the media. Ekpu recalling the events leading to Giwa's death and thereafter narrated as follows:

"The day we went to answer a call by the military intelligence … (October, I think it was a Friday, October 17 1986) he told the military intelligence people that they were concocting rumours against him; that the allegations were untrue.

The allegations were that, he was planning to publish another story on Ebitu Ukiwe … (Babangida's No. 2 who had been removed), that he was planning to import arms into the country, he was planning to start a socialist revolution and four, he was planning to employ Allozie Ogubuaja (the policeman who had problem with his employers … who was removed)".

Looking at the allegations "one-by-one" Ekpu continued: "… that he (the magazine represented by him) was planning a second cover story on Ukiwe I can tell you, there was no such thing; in the first place I should have known. The story about his planning

a socialist revolution, of course everybody in Nigeria knows that Dele was very far from being a socialist. That he was importing arms, he didn't have the money that he could import arms … and where would he start from to begin to import arms to effect a socialist revolution? Of course that was completely out.

Question about Alozie Ogugbuaja was true. He and I went to see Alozie Ogugbuaja and we didn't mention that we would employ him if it becomes … but it was actually something that we discussed on the telephone and we believe that our telephone was bugged … so you can see that rumour played a substantial part in the media coverage …"

In this particular example, it seems the media had ample material in rumours, gossip and possibly speculated as nobody ever came or is yet to come with the kind of evidence that in the nearest one could reasonably, justifiably conclude as convincing; but that, according to Macebuh, "did not stop the majority of Nigerians from thinking that government had something to do with" the killing.

The year 1993 was and remains a politically volatile historical date for Nigeria and perhaps for students and scholars of military 'transition' programmes too. It was the year; an election considered by many to be the freest and fair election ever conducted in Nigeria was annulled by the same government that designed the eight years torturous 'transition' programme which climaxed with the 'June 12' elections.

It was the year Ray Ekpu would refer to as, of "whispering rumour about the incumbent President (Ibrahim Babangida) wanting to elongate his stay in power and that, that, was the principal reason for the annulment of the election." Rumours they were, but they seemed plausible as every step being taken by the government pointed to substantial evidence in the rumour. According to Ekpu, the government did not make any policy statement that they intend to "sit-tight in office, but that the newspapers – the press – speculated based on rumours that they were picking up and did an analysis equally based on Babangida's body language and came to the conclusion that the President wanted to truncate the process in order that he could stay in office". The President and his aides vigorously denied the rumours but Ekpu observed that, "the fact that what actually started as a rumour" in the media "became a fact" tells a lot.

If the Babangaida era was fertile with rumour for the media, the Abacha era became a rumour factory that supplied the media. In the section below, we examine with physical evidence, rumour as raw material of the media beginning with the rumour of an Abacha "take-over" from the Interim National Government (ING) contraption left behind by Babangida while he "stepped aside"

7.3 The Abacha Era and Rumour as Raw Material

Abacha and his government chose brute force in place of communication. He and his government were neither interested nor were they anxious to persuade people to

whatever point of view (if any) that they may have had. As a result, there was a huge information or communication gap, which was filled by 'rumour and whispering gossips'. Interestingly, these rumours seem to have been fed into the system not only by anti-Abacha groups but also by some pro-Abacha elements.

A month or thereabout before General Abacha hijacked power from the ING contraption, rumour was rife, that certain 'influential' groups were negotiating for a military 'take over' (from the Earnest Shonekan led ING) with the aim of revalidating "June 12". The *Guardian's* Emeka Izeze says of the rumour: "in the circumstances, the rumoured negotiating groups or individuals are not faceless, reporters have to use a fine comb to get confirmation form those of them who are willing to speak-out"; and indeed some did 'speak-out' for the press to capture. Eddie Iroh, writing in the *Newswatch* edition of December 13, 1993 (An End to Delusion – page 38) confirms, "I heard the normally trenchant professor Bolaji Akinyemi call for General Sani Abacha to seize power and bring about June 12. Little did Akinyemi consider that Abacha could bring along his own agenda, not Akinyemi's. The learned Gani Fawehinmi urged "progressive (pro-June 12?) elements" in the army, to stage a coup d'état. These are voices of democracy mind you".

Then came the rumours of how Abiola, purported winner of the undeclared 'June 12' elections actually asked Abacha to 'take-over'. Rumours of how Abacha was going to be in office for a few days or months and then swear in Abiola as President and

rumours of how Abiola had traded in his 'mandate' in exchange for money owed him by the government and more contracts in compensation of election expenses rented the air.

The *Newswatch* issues of July 1 and July 12 respectively published interviews with Abiola fighting for his mandate and denying rumours and allegations as to why the election results were cancelled. But by December 13, 1993 rumours seem to turn to facts as the *Newswatch* edition for that week published on its front page the photograph of Abacha and Abiola in smiles, shaking hands with Bola Tinubu (presently governor of Lagos state) and others in the background. *Newswatch's* cover story captioned "June 12, How Nigerians were fooled" told the earlier rumoured stories of how Abiola's men scrambled to "board Abacha's boat" while Abiola himself and his running mate, Babagana Kingibe kept "an ungolden silence".

Ray Ekpu, writing in the *Newswatch's* Editorial Suit column (December 13, 1993) confirms (now, no more a rumour) that "Abiola has travelled abroad, having extracted a promise from the military government that debt owed him will be paid and new contracts given him on his return, to help him recover some of his expenses". According to the author, perhaps the greatest surprise surrounding rumours, 'June 12' and (in this instance) the media was that Abiola and his running mate Kingibe – "especially Abiola" – for a few days after Abacha struck went into hiding when "everyone expected them to fire the first salvo in defence of June 12". But they kept

"an ungolden silence" and thus confirming the rumours and the "view that they were tired of riding the tiger".

This researcher as a participant observer during the period under review can attest to the rumour, which later became a newspaper item that there was some sort of agreement between Abiola and the Abacha government, at least at the beginning. On the day of Abacha's coup – November 17, 1993 – this researcher, in the company of the late Senate President, Chuba Okadigbo, was at the reception hall of the Nicon Nuga Hilton Hotel Abuja, where some followers of Abiola in jubilation announced to whoever cared to listen that it will be a matter of days or months' before Abiola is sworn-in as President. Some of those jubilating that November evening became part of Abacha's first set of ministers; and they were branded "sell-outs" by Nigerians (in majority) who were opposed to the Abacha 'take-over'.

Lateef Jakande, a second republic governor of Lagos state was not among the jubilating crowd at Nicon, but he became Abacha's minister for works and was grouped in the 'sell-out' gang. Jakande kept dignified silence since after his stint with the Abacha junta but confirmed in a *Guardian* newspaper interview that the rumour (in 1993) about Abiola having a hand in the Abacha coup was a fact. In the *Guardian* (Sunday, July 20 2003) interview, the former minister explained that Abiola in the company of Bola Tinubu (now governor of Lagos State) visited with him to persuade him on the need to join the Abacha government. In the words of Jakande, "The first reply I put to him was:

what about June 12? Abiola answered: oh there would be a (national) conference where the issue would be resolved. The north, he said, had had their share and it was the turn of the west to rule the country and the issue of June 12 would be resolved. Then again I asked him when would the military go? He said six months but Tinubu said it may be twelve months. Tinubu is alive. My next question to Abiola was: Do you trust them? He said absolutely". Also, a *Washington Times* (January 30 1997) article culled by Tell (February 17, 1997) quoted Abacha thus: "When the crisis in the country started … civilians (and Presidential candidate M.K.O. Abiola was one of them) were calling upon me, upon the military to intervene. So we intervened …"

The rumour about Abacha's self-succession plan and its treatment in the press also deserve a mention. Ebenezer Babatope, Abacha's minister for Transport and Aviation aptly described the rumour thus: "The political scene was already abuzz with the rumour that Abacha will transform "from khaki to Agabada (from military to civilian dress) and contest the presidency" (Babatope, 2000:91). This rumour that was 'abuzz' became a *Thisday* exclusive story. *Thisday* publication of Tuesday April 14, 1998 revealed that a grand plan was in existence for all the political parties to unanimously adopt Abacha as the sole candidate for the presidential elections.

Rumour as raw material for the media equally featured prominently in the spate of assassinations that enveloped the land under Abacha. Amongst the innumerable

assassinations and attempted ones, as notede in Chapter Five was that of Alex Ibru, publisher of the *Guardian* newspapers.

Emeka Izeze, Managing Director of the *Guardian,* explained that the shooting of the publisher began as a rumour of armed robbery whereas another version 'spread' it as a case of business deal gone sour – "some deals he entered into either recently or previously … and someone decided to take out a revenge on him", and yet another version insisted it may as well be a government job. Izeze said that rumours described the colour of the peageout car, its occupants and the type of weapon (an Israeli Uzzi and Russian AK47) used in the dastardly act and it "became quite apparent" that nothing could warrant the "shooting to kill" the publisher and it wasn't a case of armed robbery. Thinking aloud, Izeze said, "armed robbers didn't come to try and set our premises on fire … and armed robbers didn't proscribe our newspaper. And so eventually it was very clear even though nobody could say … because of the very frightening era in which we lived" but the rumour continued.

The Daily Champion of February 11, 1996 reported (part of the report by Biodun Sonowo) the assassination attempt on Ibru's Life as follows:

"On Friday evening, February 2, 1996, the grim reaper came calling. The dark one came in the shape of several young, in the cold form of automatic weapons, and of death – dealing bullets. And the target was … Alexander Uruemu Ibru … News of the

attack began filtering out Saturday afternoon, but was dismissed by many as the usual Lagos rumour mill working overtime".

One interesting aspect of the Ibru failed assassination bid is that today, almost all the rumours of February 1996 turn ou to be accurate; the rumoured type of weapons used, colour and brand of the car involved in the shooting and the description of the assassins are all now confirmed to be accurate as per confessions and revelations made at the Justice Chikwudifu Oputa Human Rights Violations Investigations Commission (HRVIC) instituted by Obasanjo on his second coming as President of Nigeria.

Under cross-examination by defense counsels at the HRVIC, Sergeant Barnabas Jabila, also known as "Sgt Rogers" confessed being Abacha's 'hit-man' in many of the rumoured state-sponsored terrorist acts against helpless Nigerians. Jabila who testified killing the late M.K.O. Abiola's wife – Kudirat – with an Israeli Uzzi gun also confirmed attacking Ibru with a volley of bullets from a Russian made military AK47 rifle. Jabila who was cross-examined as a star state witness said he was asked to kill Ibru by Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, Chief Security Officer to General Abacha who considers Ibru "an enemy of the state".

The state witness who now claims to be a born again Christian also named and identified his co-travellers in the Abacha junta's "special force" – the assassination squad – of which he (Jabila) was the commander taking instructions from Al-Mustapha

and Mohammed the late Abacha's son. One of such identified members of the 'special force' is Mohammed Rabo-Lawal. A report by Olusegun Adeniyi in *Thisday,* December 14, 1999 sums it up: "The former Aso Rock officer in charge of mobile police (O.C. Mobile) Mohammed Rabo-Lawal has told police investigators how the attempted murder of the Guardian publisher, Mr Alex Ibru was executed.

In a lengthy account of how he got involved in the Ibru assassination attempt Rabo-Lawal said it all began in 1996 when the CSO, Al-Mustapha "nominated myself, Barnabas Mshelia (Sgt Rogers), Samaila Shuab and Sani Garba to proceed to Lagos on surveillance and monitoring of National Democratic Coalition (nadeco) *group…"*

7.4 Rumour, Okija Shrine and 'Ngigegate'

The Okija Shrine and the Anambra State crisis which some commentators prefer to refer to as the 'Ngigegate' (derived from the name of the medical doctor governor of Anambra State – Chris Ngige) both have their foundations in rumour. The Okija Shrine is one of the many shrines of the deities of rural Africa feared by its adherents and patronisers for its alleged and rumoured potent powers. According to the weekly magazine – *Tell* (August 24, 2004) – "fearful of the potent powers of many deities in some parts of Igboland, some adherents go in search of 'justice', others in search of power and money, ending up in a vicious circle of bondage and exploitation".

During the April 2003 elections that returned President Obasanjo and all but eight of Nigeria's 36 governors for a second term in office, rumour had it that political office seekers – especially gubernatorial candidates as well as aspirants to that office – were being taken to shrines of deities to swear to oaths of allegiance and pledge of loyalty by some of their sponsors (see "Ngige: Uba took me to a Shrine" – *Punch*, July, 19 2003) who rumour also said, made unbelievable demands from their political godsons. The demands made by some of these so-called political 'godfathers' (sponsors), if honoured by their protégés is capable of grounding the activities of most of these state government. Some of these demands include having a monopoly of state government contracts, appointment of their (sponsors) proxies into 'choice' commissionership offices and participation in the distribution of federal government allocation of revenue in their respective states. In turn, it was also rumoured that some of the elected (sorry selected) governors had to take their would-be appointees and those already appointed to the Shrines in order to extract (like some of their sponsors did to them) from their appointees and would-be appointees not only an oath of allegiance an pledge of loyalty, but also one of secrecy (see "Kalu took us to Okija Shrine" – *Tell*, January 17, 2005) and a post-dated resignation agreement as in the case of Chris Ngige of Anambra State.

Barely one month after the elections, *Newswatch,* May 26, 2003 went to town with the title: *The new godfathers - The governors they sponsored; the price they're asking for.* On the cover of the magazine, complimenting the title are six photographs of five known politicians and traditional rulers and that of a rather youthful Chris Uba.

According to the *Newswatch* story, the 2003 elections left in its trail new political godfathers (sponsors) and went on to highlight the role they played in installing the governors with the observation that if the rumoured demands of the godfathers is anything to go by, then "it is getting to pay-back time". The 'pay-back' requested for amongst others include ministerial position at the centre or a commissioners portfolio at the state level.

For example, the magazine reported that the Ooni of Ife, one of the powerful traditional rulers of the Yoruba Kingdom who campaigned in the various villages of Ile-Ife in order for Olungasoye Oyinlola to be governor of Osun state "is angling for his son to be made either a minister or at least a commissioner in Osun State". According to *Newswatch*, "… unconfirmed report indicated that Sijuade has also submitted a campaign bill of =N=300,000 million" (=N= is the symbol of the Nigerian currency of exchange of monetary transaction) to the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Osun State for payment. *Newswatch* July 28, revisited the rumour with its story – "Ooni Vs Oyinlola: A bomb waiting to explode."

In Anambra state, rumour had it that Chris Uba, the youthful 'godfather' in the state would breach protocol by arriving late at events long after the governor would have been seated or right in the middle of his speech. Uba would not only arrive the venue of an event late but invades the venue in a siren blaring convoy that would literally force

the governor to stop his speech and at other times, even hand over the microphone to Uba to announce his arrival.

Thisday (page 15) Monday, July 14, 2003 confirms one such incident at an event in Ihiala where the governor was in the middle of his speech. *Thisday* (page 15) which quoted Uba as saying "it is not just" the governor and his deputy that he sponsored but also "three senators, 10 members of the House of Representatives and 30 members of the" Anambra State House of Assembly, virtually held the governor and the state hostage.

Less than two weeks after he was sworn-in as governor of the State (May 200), rumour flew around that Chris Ngige was not going to last long as governor. Then less than two months after his swearing-in ceremony as governor, rumour spread again on Thursday, July 10, 2003 that he had resigned from office as governor of the state. For the rest of that day the rumour remained a claim and counter claim of Ngige's resignation; but by the next morning, Friday, July 11, 2003, the newspapers went to town narrating how Uba arranged with Raphael Ige, an Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of police to abduct the governor, present an either forged or the rumoured post-dated resignation letter (perhaps written during the rumoured days of oath-taking) to the state House of Assembly and compelled the members (30 of which, he allegedly sponsored) to swear-in the deputy governor, Okey Udeh, (who rumour say will do Uba's bidding) as the substantive governor.

According to *Thisday* (page 15) July 14, Ngige had before now denied a rift between him and Uba, but the July 10 coup had blown open the rumour that a rift exists.

Below is a sample of some newspaper stories and articles on the 'Ngigegate' monitored within Friday, July 11, and Monday, July 28, 2003.

- *The Guardian*

Friday, July 11 (front page) "Political crisis rocks Anambra"

- Deputy Governor, State Party, Assembly claim governor resigns
- Police whisk Gov. Chris Ngige away
- "I'd rather die than resign" says Ngige
- PDP sets up Probe committee
- "My ordeal by Ngige"

Page 5 – Ezeife, Ajuluchukwu decry crisis in Anambra etc

Monday, July 14, pages 2, 3, 4,5, 6, 7, 8, & 9 carried stories on the Anambra 'coup'. Example – "Ngige tells of govt. in bondage, wants foes tried for treason"; and "Why they tried to kill me" by Chris Ngige.

Tuesday, July 15, - "Assembly admits error, reverses self on Ngige ouster,"

"Governor swears-in new aides,"

"NBA demands trial of Ngige's abductors" and more stories on pages 2, 6, 8, 9, and 10.

Wednesday, July 16, (except for the picture of ex-President Mandela), all five front page stories were on Anambra crisis and had more on pages 2, 4, 8, 9 and 59.

Thursday, July 17, had the stories across six pages of the issue and a page 20 Editorial: "Treason in Anambra State".

Friday, July 18 had four of five front-page stories on Anambra and Ngige and had more across pages 2, 3, 23, 24 and 25.

Saturday, July 19, carried on the crisis two front page stories, one each on pages 3, 5, 14, 15 and three articles across B1-B5 respectively.

Sunday, July 20, published four stories and six articles.

Monday, July 28, carried five feature articles.

- *Thisday*

July 14, - Anambra: AIG Ige fired

- PDP report blames police
- Anti-Ngige forces regroup says aide … mob attack House member
- Ngige: The demystification of a godfather

July 16, - Ngige: Anambra speaker impeached

- Deputy Gov. served impeachment notice … 35 Govs want S' court Judge to head Inquiry
- Anambra coup: Any end to the crisis?
- When gangsters hijack Government …

July 18, - Anambra: PDP expels Dep. Gov, Uba, others

- Recommend trial of coupists
- Police can't locate AIG Ige, says IGP
- … Our story, by Udeh, six others. Stories and articles on pages 13, 22, 25, and 44 also dealt with the Anambra 'coup' and the abduction of Ngige.

July 21, carried a front page Editorial comment

- "As the clouds gather"
- Anambra: The sudden fall of a godfather

- *The Sun*

July 19, - In Anambra Merchants Masquerade as Politicians

- I weep for Anambra
- Anambra crisis: We are vindicated says CNPP

- *Punch*

  July 19 – Ngige: Uba took me to a Shrine

  The 'Ngigegate' took a fresh dimension when rumours started again that Uba is untouchable; "the President is behind him" and that he (Uba) has not finished with Anambra State yet. Chukwudi Nwabuko writing in *Thisday* (page 15) of July 14, 2003 comments that the Federal Government "has not uttered a word since this incident took place" but also notes – as if to confirm the rumour – that "there is the fear that the Presidency may not be totally unaware of the incident of last week in Awka" (Awka is the Anambra State capital city). The writer also added that, "Those who hold this view say that Uba has the ears of the Presidency and may not have secured the participation of the AIG without Abuja being in the picture".

  By July 19, 2003, *The Guardian* newspapers had quoted the immediate past governor of the State (Chinwoke Mbadinnju) accusing the Presidency of complicity. Page 38 of *The Guardian* says "Presidency is behind Anambra crisis – Mbadinnju" and page 3 of the Punch of the same day (July 19, 2003) concludes that "Anambra coup: In the end, this crisis will define who Obasanjo really is". Then the *Newswatch* unveiled "Chris Uba: Aso Rock Mercenary in Anambra …" in its July 28th edition but nothing happened amd the rumour of an Uba army continued until he struck again in what *Tell* magazine, November 22, 2004 described as "How Uba's Army Sacked Anambra"; on

Wednesday, November 10, for two days while the law enforcement agents were alleged to have looked the other way.

Tell (page 16/17) in its cover story titled "Day of the Jackalls" reported "Mercenaries and thugs of Chris Uba, godfather of Anambra politics, storm the State – destroying and looting property- all in a bid to seize power from incumbent Governor Chris Ngige".

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Politics Of Rumour – Rumour In The Power Dynamics:

In this Chapter, we attempt an examination of the role played by rumour, that unofficial, unverified, quite often factual and sometime invented piece of news or information in the activities of government and those who try to influence the way the country (in this case, Nigeria) should be governed. Accordingly, we are exploring rumour first as a factor in political manipulation and thus an important activity in the polity.

Rumour as we have elaborated in Chapter four as a propaganda tool is a double-edged sword which can be used for defensive as well as destructive purposes; manipulation on the hand, in our context can be referred to simply as trying to or an attempt to control a situation, opinions, attitudes and even emotions of other people to your advantage. Rumour as a political manipulative activity therefore can best be explored here in the context of objectives or intentions and circumstances or situations. In the sections below, we attempt an examination of (1) rumour as an objective or intentional manipulative activity and (2) rumour as a situational manipulative activity.

8.1 The Politics of Objective or Intentional Rumour

The politics of objective rumour will include the timed and careful release of appropriate rumour into the system, for example, amongst others, of impropriety,

credibility and personal conduct of individuals or groups with the ultimate aim being to discredit, ridicule, disfavour or simply put in disrepute or compromised position; especially where the victims are political opponents or considered threatening to the perpetrator's interest.

Iornem (1998: 73) recalling the 1982 rumoured foreign bank accounts of the late Aper Aku, second republic governor of Nigeria's middle-belt State of Benue said, "Godwin Daboh peddled the rumour which was later found to be false". Daboh who was a political "enemy" of the late governor spread the rumour that Aku, in foreign banks had whacking balances; and the rumour led to the resignation as commissioner in Aper Aku's cabinet Mvendaga Jibo because "he felt embarrassed serving under someone with such damaging allegations hanging over his head". The *Nigeria Voice* of September 28, 1982, investigated the rumour and came out with the story: "Alleged Foreign Accounts Are Those of Newsweek"; but Iornem (1998) notes that "before the truth was known, the rumour had done considerable damage to the reputation of … Mr. Aper Aku", the victim of a rumour planned with an objective in mind and intentionally executed.

During the 'June 12' annulled election crisis in 1993, rumours were timed and released into the system to coincide with the cancellation of the election results. These rumours which not a few Nigerians were tempted to believe, were intentional and 'official' in appearance and accused M.K.O Abiola, the undeclared winner of the elections, of tax

evasion, buying delegates votes at the party convention in Jos (where he won the primaries), a questionable source of wealth (because, according to the rumour, Abiola had no visible big business and surely *Concord* newspapers and a bread-baking factory would not have given him the billions he possessed) and involvement in military coup d'états and as such a beneficiary of coup d'états.

The "official" appearance of these rumours seem to have been confirmed by Babangida in an interview with Karl Maier – the Africa Correspondent for the *Independent* (see Maier 2000: 60, 64, 71 and 72) where he (Babangida) confirmed that Abiola had supported both coups against Shagari in 1983 and later that of Buhari in 1987 "with money and editorial support from his *Concord* newspapers". Babangida in his interview with Maier also accused Abiola of making promises to foreign interests in order to raise money for his campaign and added that although he (Babangida) was the single largest donor to Abiola's Presidential ambition, Abiola would have made a "lousy President" and would have been toppled by Abacha in a "violent coup".

Intentional rumour as a manipulative activity was equally manifest during the 'terrorist' government of Abacha. As we have narrated earlier, on assumption of political power, Abacha penetrated the opposition camps and appointed some of its leading lights as cabinet ministers. However, Abacha was to soon realise that many amongst his ministers remained nocturnally active members of the opposition; as a result of this and perhaps other reasons too the first cabinet was dissolved. But no sooner than they left

Abacha's government did some of them return to the 'trenches' with the 'Pro-June 12' groups and then, rumours questioning the democratic credentials, credibility and personal conduct of some of them started flying around (in conjunction on the other hand, with rumours of State sponsored assassinations).

One example then was the rumour of a 'dropped' minister who fleeced a parastatal under his supervision of $5 million (US Dollars) but who swiftly returned the money to government treasury on being threatened with a long jail sentence. This rumour eventually made its way into the *Champion* newspaper's March 10, 1996 edition. The story, which was published in a gossip format (by one Idon Mujiya), according to Ebenezer Babatope (Abacha's first Transport and Aviation minister), was a "ghost writing" from one of Abacha's various security agencies. Babatope (2000:157) who admitted that the rumour and the *Champion* story was meant to refer to him, said the intentional rumour that eventually became a newspaper story "was a deliberate falsehood meant to disparage my character"; almost one year after he had left the government. Babatope, who said that he reported *Champion* for publishing falsehood, started receiving life threatening calls when the rumour did not seem to have achieved its objective.

Babatope may feel the rumour intended to 'disparage' his character had not succeeded, but Macebuh says rumour is regarded as facts in societies and communities where most people do not have the means by which stories can be authenticated, "so, the one

whoever shouts loudest or makes the most noise" observes Macebuh, "is the one who is believed".

8.2 The Politics of Situational Rumour

Every situation in the context of our discourse requires and parades a different kind of information; as it were rumour. So in a situation where people in a society or community think it is as prudential as politic to be on the side of what, for purposes of convenience, may be called 'popular' or to be associated with the ruling junta; and hence, tags such as "government candidate ('government pikin' in the local patois), 'the General's man', 'the peoples governor or guber' (in particular situation or circumstance of gubernational aspirants or candidates) becomes fashionable and attractive.

During the Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha eras, elective political office seekers for offices of the President, governor, Senate and even local government councillors were either 'government candidates' or the 'people's choice' and quite often, 'government candidates' carried the day as they were simply announced on radio/television and published in the print media on instructions of the power that be.

This researcher recalls the particular incidence during which a young man was declared winner of a Senatorial seat contest that never was in favour of the 'old' former governor of the State in their senatorial districts during the Abacha self-succession

'transition' programme. The criterion for 'selecting' the young man it was rumoured was none other than his friendship with Abacha's Chief Security Officer.

And so it was, that it became current and vital that there was rumour about aspirants being either the 'government candidates', 'the General's man' or the 'Party choice' (the parties were of course the sponsored and registered political parties permitted by the regime).

Abacha, it was clear, was set on transforming from the army General's khaki uniform into the flowing robes of an 'African President'; but Babangida hesitated or 'dribbled' (Babangida is popularly known as the "Maradona" of Nigerian politics - during his reign -) everyone, especially at the level of Presidential aspirations until he dribbled himself 'aside' too. Most of the presidential aspirants then encouraged the spread of manipulative rumour to suit their circumstances and the political situation – which was that, in most instances, Babangida was rumoured not only to have assured some of the aspirants of his support by donating to their campaign purse but also quite often had taken them on a tour of what will become their future place of abode, the presidential villa. In the end, the different camps of the various presidential aspirants kept spreading the rumour that their candidate was the preferred one, the 'official candidate' but ended up being neither the 'official' nor 'peoples' candidate.

However, a situation manipulation rumour may have at least in one instance worked against the 'government candidate'. Iornem (1998: 65) though in a mildly different context from our position here, argues that manipulative rumours can be filtered into the system branding some candidates as 'preferred' or "government candidates" especially in situations where the electorates are biased against candidates of disliked or unpopular incumbent government. According to Iornem (1998), if being regarded as branded a "government candidate" can hurt the chances of a candidate, manipulative rumour that may affect emotions and sentiments of people can be filtered into the polity.

During the 1992 presidential primaries, Iornem (1998; 65) suggests that Senator Jack Tilley – Gyado may have suffered the above fate as a rumoured candidate of governor Moses Adasu whose "political opponents" instantly "ganged up against" Tilley-Gyado. According to Iornem, "since it is easier for people to agree on what they don't want than what they want", the tag of being a 'government candidate' alters the voter perception of such a candidate. "… Once an idea of 'government candidate' rubs on one, the attributes of the opponent become irrelevant. He becomes the preferred candidate" advances Iornem; and such is the potent nature of the politics of rumour.

Senator I.S. Martyns-Yellowe is the Senate Committee Chairman on environment and the ecology and represents Rivers West Senatorial District in the National Assembly. Martyns-Yellowe who in a September 2004 interview with this researcher said that he

has been caught in the web of politics of rumour a couple of times narrated the story of a rumour concerning his closeness to "certain highly placed persons" to the displeasure of "some other highly placed persons"; so much so that, in his own words, "in a setting where highly placed persons hold sway … I'm in big trouble" (personal interview, 2004. Wednesday, September, 22nd. Abuja).

Senator Martyns-Yellowe who acknowledges that "rumours split views … makes the rounds" also narrated his experience with a situation manipulation rumour – a situation where there were many interested parties in the race to occupy the Government House in Port-Harcourt, the Rivers State capital city. According to the Senator, just before the April 2003 elections, rumour flew around that he was trying to run for the governorship of the Rivers State and that not only has he started printing campaign posters but that the posters were everywhere "in a most unlikely local government area …" The Senator who confirmed that he "hadn't any plans at all" as at that point in time said that "… that really brought some trouble between me and people around the incumbent governor".

Martyns-Yellowe also narrated another situation manipulation rumour where he as a Senator representing the Kalabaris had called for a meeting in his house to try to forge a rapprochement "between some dissenting factions". That move to make peace among his people, apolitical as it may seem, spread as a rumour of an assembly of the Kalabaris to launch his (Martyns-Yellowe's) gubernational ambition. The Senate

Committee Chairman laments that these rumours were accepted as authentic by the power that be and he had to "explain myself several times over that I had no business …"

8.3 Rumour in the Power Dynamics

Rumour form all indications lubricates the power engine as President Obasanjo's immediate past Senior Special Assistant on public communications, Stanley Macebuh, is certain. According to him, rumours, "definitely play a role"; but he wonders whether the exact role rumour plays within the power circuit is measurable and quantifiable in any scientific way. "That", he ruminates, "is the big question" but adds: "generally speaking … I'm saying that yes, in an unsophisticated community rumour plays a very significant role in the process by which decisions are made".

Macebuh notes how most husbands will be hard put to claim that they are hardly ever influenced by the sentiments expressed by their wives at home. Quite often, such sentiments are derived from rumour. For example:

"The President is thinking of appointing so and so person to so and so job; in my privileged position, I'm aware of the process going on. I get home and my wife asks me "is it true that the President is thinking of this guy? And I say … I can't comment on that but why are you asking? "Well, I hope he doesn't" she says". As the narrative continues, Macebuh then asked his wife "why? Do you know him?" to which the wife responds "no, but I know people who know him"; and then the husband becomes more

curious, “what did they say he did?” and the final answer comes as “they say he treats his wife very badly and so for that reason he is not qualified to take-up the job”.

According to Macebuh, the husband could presumably afford to ignore his wife’s opinion or sentiment but confirms that “quite often it sticks”. Macebuh says, sometimes, the “husband comments on the attitude of the gentleman when he is out there and he is asked to make an input”.

Ray Ekpu insists that rumour is important in power – political power – dynamics because most people in positions of authority are ‘very, very’ sensitive to what is written or said about them but hardly do they create the time and cultivate the patience required to cross-check whatever information available to them; and that, he says, creates the fertile grounds for them to “react to rumours”.

Ekpu said that he recently – “a couple of days ago” (as at the time of our interview) – spoke to someone who “runs a very powerful government intervention agency” who told him (Ekpu) some of the rumours that “the President believes” when they get to him and “he reacts instantly”. According to the *Newswatch* Chief, the President reacts the way he does because he, the President, neither has enough time nor patience to cross-check these rumours; adding that, in a society such as Nigeria where “the worst is believed about people in certain positions, particularly where it concerns money … the

big man rises up and springs to action" even without doing the traditional checks that will tell him "no, this is not right, this is wrong".

Recalling his days as Chairman of the Editorial Board of *The Concord* newspapers published by the late rich and powerful M. K.O Abiola, Ekpu remembered how some people who "were in competition … and looking for higher positions" would go to the publisher and tell him that the leaders – the Editors of the newspaper – were doing "all the wrong things"; and Abiola would gratify them with cash gifts and "put them a few notches up in his own calculations of who are good enough for the organisation, who should assume higher position". Mr. Ekpu concluded by declaring that "people in authority are very vulnerable to rumour" and that to a large extent is responsible for the role of rumour in the decision making process.

Again, beyond the theoretical abstract of rumour as a neglected agent of power, this study in the foregoing chapter has demonstrated with specific examples the role and importance of 'objective and situational' rumour in electoral political agenda setting and perhaps what is quite often referred to as media agenda too. The chapter ultimately, contributed to the knowledge and understanding of agenda setting discourse by underscoring the relevance of rumour and gossip as agents within the political power dynamics; and thereby, further expanding the discourse space.

In the next chapter (nine), I present data from my field study and the analysis of same as further confirmations of the issues of theoretical importance raised in this study.

PART THREE: Chapters 9 & 10

Data Presentation, Analysis and Conclusions

CHAPTER NINE

Data Presentation and Analysis:

Data obtained from our field study is presented in tabular summaries of responses to the survey questionnaire; so also are some derived secondary data relevant to key research issues. In addition to the tabular demonstrations of frequency distribution, the study also utilised other tools of data presentation such as pie and bar charts (as we shall see in the analysis sections). Information obtained from respondents and where necessary, some secondary data has been collated and edited minimally and this has in no way affected the electronically generated output. Our targeted sample population of 1000 Nigerians, we believe, is a fair representation of the rural as well as various sub-groups within our urban target population. The above is complemented by personal interviews with some targeted individuals (as evidenced in Chapters 6, 7 & 8) as reference subjects, in the hope that, the reference subjects would have introduced into the work, the element of judgmental sampling.

This researcher has in presenting the research data, attempted to eliminate or at the least reduce the various errors – that is – numerical, inappropriate responses and omissions associated with field and central editing of research or survey data; while in the same vein, taking note of what the statistical analysis software refers to as "missing systems" - i.e. - the number of respondents who did not answer or respond to a portion – (or question in the survey questionnaire).

Working with a 1000 sample target population of Nigerians, we designed two sets of the structured or fixed-response questionnaire, with "questionnaire I", (a six pages and seventeen questions type, for rural dwellers) and "questionnaire II" (four pages and thirteen questions type) for urban Nigerians. Both questionnaires in some sections featured similar questions. For example, 'Section C' in 'questionnaire I' is same as Section B' in questionnaire II'. A breakdown of the target sample population is as represented in Table 3 below. (Note: SS =South-South; SE=South East)

RURAL AREAS (South=S/ North=N)	**TARGET**	**RESPONSE**
Akakuma (SS) =south-south	110	99
Ologoama (SS)	110	93
Doguama (SS)	105	100
Amansea Village (SE) =south-east	50	26
Kawu (N)	110	98
Shere (N)	110	100
Sheretyi (N)	105	100
Total	**700**	**616 = 88%**
URBAN AREAS		
Nnamdi Azikiwe University-Nau (Awka)	50	49
Abuja	40	28
Lagos	50	31
PH/Yenagoa	100	76
Senate	60	1
Total	**300**	**185 = 61.6%**
GRAND TOTAL	**1000**	**801 = 81%**

Table 3: A breakdown of targeted sample population showing cumulative response rate

This study, for purposes of clarity in certain critical research issues such as for example, the most vulnerable or likely group or segment of community or society to be influenced by the media, used as a unit of analysis, two Nigerian newspaper-publishing institutions. They are *The Guardian* and *The Vanguard* newspapers respectively from where a cumulative total of 20 journalists (that is ten each respectively) opinions were sampled.

During the course of my field study, this researcher also conducted another survey in which, four pages of four structured questions with fifteen multiple choice answers type questionnaire sought answers (from 100 Nigerians) to equally critical research questions such as: Do people have preferences or choices of what to read in the media or simply whatever the media – newspapers in this case – have to offer? This additional survey we call, "**buying the news, not the paper …**"

In all four questionnaires i.e. for the rural, urban, the two media organizations and the survey of opinions of 100 Nigerians respectively, the aim as we have maintained remain (though put differently at different times) to investigate, probe, question, explore, assess or authenticate the following critical research issues and questions: (1) Is there really a phenomenon known as the media agenda? (2) Is the media not an urban phenomenon? (3) The role of the established structures or mediums in the so-called media agenda? (4) The universality, applicability of the media's claimed capability to structure issues in typical rural Africa and the role of the other neglected

agents of power – i.e. – the established structures of community in rural Africa – Nigeria in this case -.

9.1 Data Analysis – Media: An Urban Phenomenon

Field study for this thesis recorded a cumulative response rate of 80.1% (801) from our targeted sample population of a 1000 Nigerians. A breakdown of the valid percentage (801) shows that 76.9% (616) responses are from rural Nigerians whereas 23% (185) are urban responses. In other words, 88% (616) of our targeted rural population of 700 responded to our questionnaire and 61.6% (185) of our urban target of 300 also responded. Bearing in mind a plus/minus (+ -) error margin of five percent (5%), this is indicative of a successful field outing (see Table 3).

This researcher has earlier argued that the assumption of media audience as 'mass' may at best be limited to a description that fits an urban phenomenon, bearing in mind that, the media, at least in Nigeria, seem to be urban centred and urban driven whereas the 'mass' of Africa's people are located in the rural areas. Even Livingstone & Bennett (2003), view agenda setting as the result of a negotiated consensus between the political elite and the media, that is, a process involving official information management and peripheral social circumstances; and thus giving the media agenda more of a semblance that is an urban phenomenon.

With the above as a backdrop, in 'question 7' of our field survey questionnaire II (see appendix 3b) we asked our targeted urban Nigerians if they believed that the media posses' the power to influence people's opinion and affect their attitudes and behaviour too?

Not surprisingly, a large majority of them, that is, 94.1% of our respondents said "yes", 5.4% said they are "not sure" and a mere 0.5% were "not interested" in the question. We also asked respondents in a follow-up question (question 8) which categories of Nigerians in their opinion were most likely to be influenced by the media? 'Anyone' can be influenced by the media is the answer of 31.4%, 29.7% agreed that 'the educated people who live in urban centres are the targets of media influence. This is followed by 23.8% who believe that "those commonly known as ordinary Nigerians" are vulnerable and only 7% of respondents would think that those who are illiterate/poor and dwell in rural areas" are most likely victims of media influence.

Question 7

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	174	94.1	94.1	94.1
	Not sure	10	5.4	5.4	99.5
	Not interested	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	185	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Urban respondents answers to question 7 – Do the media possess the power to influence peoples' opinion …?

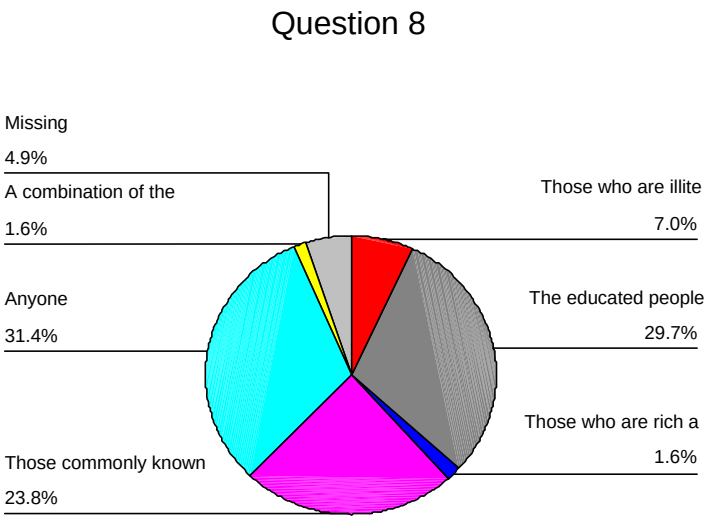


Figure 1: who is most likely to be influenced by the media?

Our twenty journalists answered the same question and as expected the answer was a resounding 100% 'yes', but in the following question (question 8) as to who is most likely to be influenced by the media, our observations are as interesting as they are instructive. Whereas 50% of the people at *The Guardian* opine that "those commonly

Question 7

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5: Our journalists' response to question seven.

known as 'ordinary Nigerians' are most likely candidates for media influence and 10% believe it to be the 'educated people who live in urban centres', journalists at *The Vanguard* think differently. *Vanguard* believe that the 'educated people' in urban centres are the prime candidates for media influence; 40% of them said so and 10%

believe it should be those commonly known as 'ordinary Nigerians'. Another 10% at *Vanguard* also voted for 'those who are illiterate/poor and dwell in rural areas' as the ones that are easily or mostly influenced by the media.

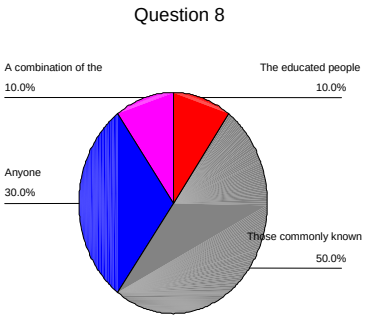


Figure 2a: *Guardian's* response to question 8.

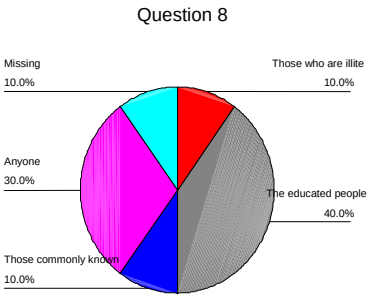


Figure 2b: Vanguard's response.

As noted above, the observation in the media people's responses to question 8 is as interesting as it is instructive because, whereas there is uncertainty in the media practitioners opinion and knowledge as to who the media makes to believe and accept as important what it (the media) considers to be so, both *Guardian* and *Vanguard* journalists agree, 30% respectively that "anyone" is subject to media influence.

In comparison, 94.1% of urban respondents and 100% of journalists both agree on the influential power of the media; 40% of *Vanguard* journalists as opposed to *Guardian's* 10% also tally with 30% (29.7) of urban people that, it is "the educated people who live in urban centres" that are most vulnerable to media influence; but both *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and urban respondents are united in their view that 'anyone' can be

influenced by the media. They agreed 30% (*Guardian*), 30% (*Vanguard*) and 31.4% (urban).

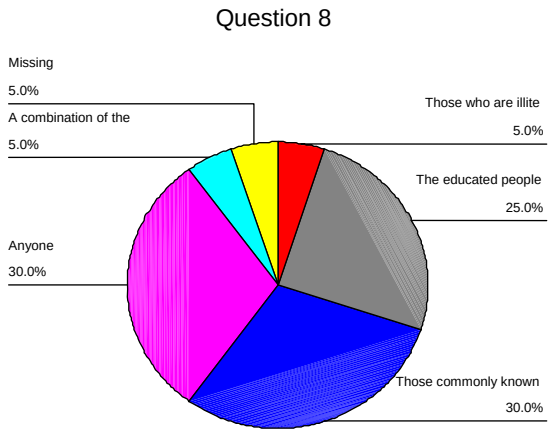


Figure 3: cumulative response of Journalists to question 8.

However, in question 14 of questionnaire I (for rural dwellers) we asked the same question put differently; but for us to achieve our purpose first we tried to ascertain the peoples familiarity with media and media products and again our findings are as revealing as they are instructive too. Questions 8 and 9 respectively inquired from rural respondents if they have ever seen their state governor or the country's president and if they have, how? That is, it may be in the media, campaign posters, in person etc (see appendix 3a), to which 76.9% were in the affirmative, 11.2% are not interested in the question, 8% said "no", just as well 3.1% 'don't know'; but interestingly enough, only

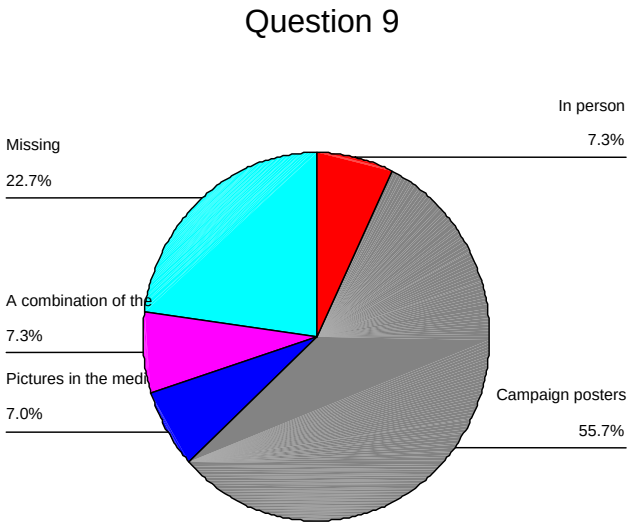


Figure 4: Only 7.3% of rural people have either seen their governor or the president in the media.

7.3% had seen either the governor or president in person, 55.7% did so in campaign posters, 7.3% also may have seen either their state governor or president in other ways and with 21.7% 'missing system' (a computer generated term for "no response"), 7% confirm seeing either of the two public officers in the media. Question 9 continued to probe further by wanting to know in which media respondents saw either the governor or president's picture but we recorded a larger 71.6% 'missing system' while 16.1% said they have seen the pictures either in television (TV) or print medium, 6.8% specifically mentioned TV and 4.7% said newspaper. Still in an effort to establish the existence of media influence in rural areas, in question 10 (a), rural dwellers were asked if they do read the newspapers/magazines and 46.9% answered 'no', 26.6% said 'yes', 14.8% are not interested and 11.7% couldn't be bothered but form question 10

(b) to 12 where rural dwellers were asked critical research questions pertaining to readership, purchase and purpose of purchase of newspapers, we observed a consistent widening of the "missing system".

In question 10 (b) the missing system is 71.8%, 84.3% in question 10 (c) 82.8 % and 83.8% in questions 11 and 12 respectively and even in questions 13 (a) where respondents confirm that 39.6% own a radio, 9.4% own TV, and another 8.0% own both, rural dwellers are quick to declare that (in answers to question 13 [b]) they either own a radio or TV for reasons ranging from " entertainment (36.4), "just for the fun of it" (14.4%), " for self education/enlightenment" (12.2%), "it makes me feel important within my community" (7.6%), "for personal reasons" (7%) and "others have it, so my son/daughter bought it for me too" (4.9%). The above stated purposes or reasons for ownership of electronic media such as radio and TV and the consistent widening of 'missing systems' in issues pertaining to readership, purchase and purpose of purchase of newspapers by rural dwellers is indicative in this study's view (as succinctly put by the enlightened Amansea villager) of the typical rural dweller's desire not "to be dragged into what is not our business".

However, the above could also be a reflection of the point made earlier in the study that, media access is limited and media reach is scanty in rural areas of Nigeria and indeed, the rest of Africa.

Question 12

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To be informed as to make wise political decisions	14	2.3	14.0	14.0
	To entertain myself	31	5.0	31.0	45.0
	For education	36	5.8	36.0	81.0
	Just for purposes of being able to read	10	1.6	10.0	91.0
	No reason	8	1.3	8.0	99.0
	A combination of the above	1	.2	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	16.2	100.0	
Missing	System	516	83.8		
Total		616	100.0		

Table 6: Eighty three per cent (83.8%) of rural dwellers do not see questions pertaining to the media as their business.

As we have clarified earlier, section B of questionnaire II (for urban centres) and C of questionnaire I (for rural dwellers) are the same questions. Responses to questions in these sections by both urban and rural people as well as those of the twenty journalists used as a separate unit of analysis confirm that indeed, until proven otherwise, the media remains an urban phenomenon.

Respondents were asked to recall (question 11 in questionnaire II and question 15 in questionnaire I) the story of a former speaker of the Federal House of Representatives (Salisu Bahari) and the "Toronto certificate", and also if possible, say how they first heard of the story. According to 88.5% of urban people, the media was their source of that information and 13.5 % attributed their source to "other" such as rumour, during conversation with a friend and through gossip" (see answer (iv) to question 11 in questionnaire II – appendix 3b). Ninety-five per cent of *The Guardian* (Journalists

polled) agree that the media was their source and 5% heard it through the 'rumour' mill; but 57.8% (2.1 + 32.8 + 22.9) of rural Nigerians in their response to the same question (question 15, questionnaire I – appendix 3a) either "never heard of it" or "can't remember" the story. On the other hand, only 10.9% of those who recall the story said they heard about "Toronto certificates" in the media and 31.3% (19.3 = rumour, 6% =gossip and 6% = conversation) said their source of knowing about the "speaker and Toronto certificate" were by rumour, during conversation with a friend and through gossip (see answers to question 15, questionnaire – appendix 3a).

Rural dwellers further demonstrated their isolation and insulation from modern media or mainstream media in questions 16 and 17. In question 16 – (see "The Priest, the goat and the Guber"), a very high 76.7% of them (53.6% and 23.1%) either never heard of it" or "can't remember" and those who may have heard and can remember, did so "through rumour" (5.7%), "other" (10.1%) and are told the story by "people who come from the city". Also, in question 17, (see "The Senate President, the mace and the cave python") 83.3% of rural dwellers (55.2% + 28.1%) are "not familiar with the story" and "can't remember the incident". If 83.3% of people in rural Nigeria, where majority of the people are located, are neither "familiar with" nor can "remember" a national incident such as the face-off between the country's President and the Senate President, it seems obvious to this researcher that the media is an urban affair.

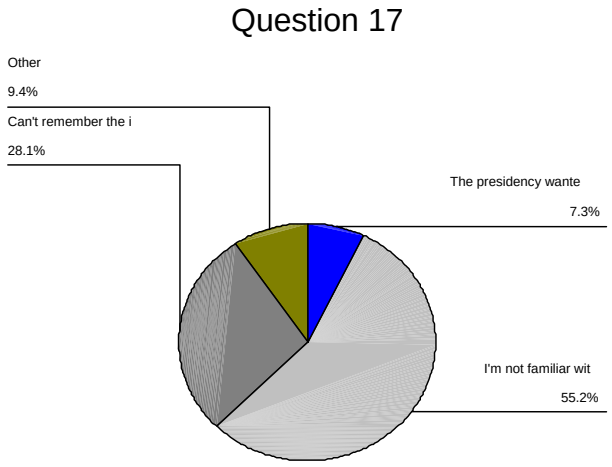


Figure 5: Eighty three per cent (83.3%) of rural dwellers are also not familiar with a national media event such as the 'Senate president, the Mace and the cave Python'

These same questions above (16 and 17) were presented urban people with as questions 12 and 13 in questionnaire II. In question 12, 69.7% of people in the urban centres have "never heard of it" (that is, the story of the gubernatorial candidate and his bearded white goat) and 7.6% "can't remember" while 5.4% was a "missing system". Those who said they have heard of the story did so either through rumour (5.9%), the media (8.6%) and "other" (2.7%). Our journalists (who are people living the urban lifestyle) response to the same question seem to be correlative with that of the urban. Sixty-five per cent of our journalists "never heard of it", 15% "can't remember", only 10% of them heard of it through the media, 5% through the rumour mill and another 5% were "missing system".

The seemingly correlative response of the twenty journalists and the urban dwellers is understandable when considered against the background of the location of this

particular incident, which took place in a far away "South-south" State of Nigeria; and this tells a story too. It tells the story of **underreporting** and **insensitivity** of the media in "**covering"** certain areas and locations away from the city centres of Africa.

But, back to where we were, question 13 (in questionnaire II) compared to question 17 (in questionnaire I) says it all. Here, as against the rural high percentages of not being 'familiar' and 'can't remember' responses, only 19.5% of urban respondents are not familiar with the Okadigbo story and 15 % of journalists "can't remember". Again the above is understandable as both incidences of the 'Speaker and Toronto certificates' and the 'Senate President, the mace and the cave python" were a sort of festivals of media events and as such an urban affair more than anything else.

Respected journalists Ray Ekpu and Emeka Izeze both agree that "yes", the media is an urban phenomenon and "remains an urban phenomenon" for a variety of reasons. Indeed the media in Africa are largely urban as the consumers of media products are also largely urban and the infrastructure that the media operates from and by, are also largely found in the urban areas. The average newspaper for instance, sells mostly in the urban areas and "sells very little if any in the rural areas". Even the channels of offer of information to the media itself, is urban in the sense that, information to the media tend to come from the urban elite and the activities that centre around them. Thus Izeze seem to justify that "… in our newspapers you find very little of rural news"; and Debo Adesina, editor/ deputy editor-in-chief of the *Guardian,* at the risk of

self-indictment confirms that, most Nigerian newspapers are supposed to be national, yet, "they are mostly based in Lagos". Adding that, Nigerian newspapers "whose correspondents venture out into the rural areas only when a government leader or official is visiting …" are simply, "too efficient communicators of everyday government information"; while neglecting the over 70% of Nigerians who are rural dwellers (see Adesina, in Idowu, 2005: 17-23).

Language is the other variable that seems to have confirmed for us the hypothesis that the media is an urban phenomenon. Most indigenous languages of the African peoples are widely in use in the rural areas where majority of the continent's citizen's reside, but these indigenous languages seem to have been down-graded as they neither serve (except in very rare cases) as the formal or first language of communication nor the official language of doing business. Rather, at the urban centres where the official businesses of commerce and politics are conducted, the official languages remain those of the colonial masters. These languages include English, French and Portuguese amongst others. Even the business of radio and television are conducted in these languages except perhaps for the limited times allocated to local language programme broadcasts; and so the media, particularly newspapers and magazines, are written and produced for an equally urban class who are trained and communicate in these languages. These urban characteristics of the media – urban production, urban consumption, urban infrastructure, urban language and a predominantly urban media

source leads us to the issues of what is media agenda? And whose agenda is the media agenda?

9.2 What Is Media Agenda? And who's Agenda?

The issue of who are the real media agenda setters, public and policy agendas has been a source of concern to this researcher. The concern stems from the fact as we have stated in chapter one, that the agenda setting process is said to have begun with the media without clarification as to who sets the media agenda which it is also claimed often focus attention on the public agenda which in turn influences the policy agenda. Severin and Tankard (2001:2003) in questioning "who sets the media agenda?" had also accused, 'researchers' of sometimes ignoring the important question; and Macebuh frowns at journalists who "tend to make all sorts of claims for themselves and their professions which no one is obliged to respect".

The former Managing Director of *The Guardian* declared that he had never believed, "speaking in general terms" that there is something called a media agenda which is separate from a public agenda or from the policy preferences 'of a given government at a given time" adding that, except in very "exceptional cases" there will be some difficulty "trying just by studying the records… to determine or identify a specific policy choice which could be said to have been initiated by the media".

Media agenda going by Ray Ekpu's definition could be referred to as "journalism's own brand of dictatorship" because according to him, rather than the public which is in a better position to define what it considers to be its interest, the media makes assumptions on behalf of the public; but that, he explains "really cannot be helped, because you're not going to do a sample of public opinion everyday before you put your paper out or… your programmes on radio and television; you make assumptions".

In the final analysis, it seems, it is the "gatekeeper" who determines what (he thinks) is good for the public – whether it is the reader or the viewer, but this researcher continues to hold the view that the media are only but a conduit, a mediating factor for variegated influences and inputs in the claimed media agenda. Taking into consideration the political economy as well as the various boundaries of the media, we argue that an assumption by a 'gatekeeper' on behalf of the public cannot simply be the media agenda; and Ray Ekpu agrees that, "the media agenda is set by so many people". It follows therefore, that it may as well be the gatekeeper's assumption of what he considers good for the public that is quite often mistaken for a media agenda when in reality the media had served as a clearing-house of agendas of different views, opinions and even sentiments which quite often may represent those of "he who pays the piper"; except in "very exceptional cases" as Macebuh would say.

Most journalists resent the above view and would rather insist that the media do set the agenda and possibly all the time too; but with the observation by *Newswatch's* Ray

Ekpu that “there isn’t a lot of interaction between the media and the mass of the population” it (media) claims having “the capability to structure issues” for, I argue that the media’s claimed role of being an agenda setting organ is circumscribed by its limited access to the majority of the people as well as its limited coverage of certain issues and certain areas.

Ekpu concurs that the media’s role as an agenda setting institution is circumscribed by the reasons advanced above but insists that the media do “set the agenda” although “only to limited extent”. The appointment of Soludo, a professor of Economics as governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Ekpu said, is “one of the few exceptions” of media agenda setting he can ‘think’ of in recent times.

Nigeria has until recently, appointed or always had as governors of the CBN what Ekpu refers to as mostly “hands-on bankers who ran the apex bank from micro economic and strictly banking points of view”, contrary to current world trends where well trained economists are saddled with the responsibility of being major policy enunciators; because of their knowledge and understanding of the macro economic dynamic environment. Mr Ekpu who cited the appointment of professor Soludo as an agenda of the media argued

that, “I do not know whether the government has some policy in the offing as regards the change of direction; but I do know that there was some discussion, some debate, in the press (before the appointment)…” making a strong case for the appointment of an

economist as the man who runs the Central Bank, who evolves fiscal and monetary policy rather than "just bringing a hands-on banker in this day and age where central banking has gone beyond having to control the commercial banks…"

However, Macebuh would rather interpret the "discussions" and "debates" in the media (before and even after Soludo's appointment) of the need for a trained economist to head the apex bank as, the media simply working on the basis of a general assumption within community; "the national community even" he says and added "and so to that extent I suppose that is what is referred to as a public preference". Macebuh who said he was speaking "form personal experience, of course of Nigeria … frankly do not believe …" that there is any significant category of intellectual analysis called "media agenda in Nigeria". Rather, it "seems" to him that, where the media has influence – that is, as it relates to agendas – is usually at the level at which the media responds or reacts to policy preferences initiated by governments or by institutions of governments. "That" he explains "is to say that it is at that level they make a choice, the choice which they then begin to sell or market to their consumer or audience".

Izeze, like Ekpu also opine that the media do set a limited agenda, but for a segment of the urban population he refers to as avidly in constant consumption of media product and also cited the rote of the media in the increase in pump price of petroleum products as a media agenda. The pump price of motor fuel – gasoline – has gone up three times, form about =N=20.00 to =N=53.00 since Obasanjo assumed office as President of

Nigeria. Before the last increase to =N=53.00, the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja gave judgment in favour of the government that petroleum products marketers were at liberty to fix the pump prices of their products. According to Izeze, long before the price increase came into effect the media started "trumpeting" the idea that the government may be setting the stage for another price increase "and it turned out, that was basically what happened". Izeze seem convinced that "to that extent you can say that the media sets agenda" but interestingly ended his sentence with the question "but agenda for who?" which he of course equally advanced as agenda for that segment of the populace who are 'avidly in constant consumption of media product'; and certainly not the rural populace who really are "not consumers of media product".

But like Macebuh, he also acknowledged that the trend in setting the media agenda "around here … is majorly one of seeking to explain public policy". Izeze explained that one hardly read any newspaper or listen to the news on the radio or television without the feeling that the news is dominated by politics, in government, what happens among politicians, what they do, what they didn't do, what they should do …". Is this an indication of a media agenda that is influenced? And, Izeze smiles, "not overtly, but sometimes covertly done… you know it" and I think I do "know it".

The Guardian Managing Director who confessed that he would not be telling the "whole" truth if he "concludes" that "no-one" attempts to influence or "influences our agenda setting functions when we do set agendas", likened the media particularly the

newspapers to a battle field of opinions and views where people go to canvass their views in an attempt to "convince you on some of the things you should do". He categorically gave as examples the labour or trade unions and the civic organisations – "the so-called Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)" – as some of those who proactively seek to influence the media agenda, nothing that this trend of NGOs attempting to influence the media agenda is not limited to the Nigerian or African media but a global phenomenon where the "rule of non-governmental organisations has grown mightily in recent years".

Apart from the political economy of the media – those who attempt or seek to influence the media seem to know and understand the things that the media thrives on, and so NGOs, for example, environmental campaigners for instance, would invite the media to outlets such as the oil producing areas of Nigeria's Niger Delta region under the guise of some media activity; when in reality all they intend to push is the fact that there is environmental degradation.

According to Izeze, the campaigners simply wanted the media to witness the abuse of the environment knowing that the moment the media sees this, it will go to town with stories of environmental population. This particular viewpoint which the media is "out there pushing" he explains invariably serves the interest and purpose of the environmentalist although it ordinarily may be understood to be a media agenda; and that in my view is one of the limitations of agenda setting functions claim by the media.

In the words of Izeze, "the limitations of agenda setting functions of the media even in our urban setting is extremely susceptible to manipulation and to convert control by external forces, forces alien to the media itself".

If Izeze thinks that the control of forces alien to the media is a worrying limitation to the media's agenda setting function, the *Newswatch's* Ray Ekpu is quite certain that the media agenda is not without the influence of proprietors; who he says sees to it that managers and editors are "compliance compliant" in translating the visions of their proprietors" or publishers.

Mr. Ekpu who recalled his days as Chairman of the *Concord* newspapers Editorial Board said that based on his knowledge of "proprietorial accommodation", he defines what he considers to be the position of the paper but also "ensured" that the reading "public is not short changed".

The then Chairman of the Editorial Board however reflected on one incident during which he submitted an Editorial opinion on "Restructuring" of the country. The Editorial opinion argued in favour of "structured" federalism as against the "Confederation suggested by an important Nigerian". M.K.O Abiola, publisher of the *Concord*, got to know about the editorial piece through the Editor-in-Chief who happen also to be one of the wives of the publisher. According to Mr. Ekpu, the Editor-in-Chief said to him (Ekpu), "you know the proprietor subscribes to this view point and if

you don't want to do an editorial on it, I think it is better for you to leave it completely". The Editorial was "left" because in the words of Ekpu "… the proprietor is the one who determines the opinion of the paper".

Public, Policy and Media Agenda:

In his theoretical explication of how issues are chosen for inclusion in the public policy agenda of some selected Sub – Sahara African countries, Kalu (2004) explains that in established constitutional democracies such as the United States of America for example, political or government powers are generally exercised within a framework of rules; that is, a constitution that defines the functions of government and its institutions, the limitations of the powers of government and the rights of citizens. Thus "issues in the public policy agenda" are dictated largely by what the author describes as a "policy process model" (PPM) – a "dynamic politics process" that does not exist in transitional democratic or non – democratic states (arguably, as in the case of Nigeria); the result of which is that issues on the public policy agenda are "recycled for rent – seeking purposes without clear plans for their implementation" – (Kalu, 2004:69).

Where the above is not the case, Kalu (2004) argues that non – mutually exclusive external as well as domestic "interests" dictate the issues on the public policy agenda menu.

The implications of the above argument seem to suggest that rather than a media agenda influencing the public policy agenda, even in established democracies, it is the "politics process model" (PPM) based on issues, actors and their *interests* as well as *resources* that constitute the dynamic process of social interactions that leads to anticipated and unanticipated outcomes; that is "outcomes with reward for some and loses for others" and in the case of transitional democracies and non-democratic states, "non – mutually – exclusive external" and domestic interests dictate the issues on the menu (Kalu, 2004: 69).

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) supervised Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in Nigeria under the General Babangida military government is perhaps one example of external (and domestic too) influence and interest in the country's public policy agenda. The argument here is that the programme was not an original initiate of Nigeria but imposed on the country as a supposedly viable route out of poverty and its associated economic woes. This supposedly viable "advice" from the West via its Breton Wood institutions was not because they loved Nigeria so much; rather, the "advice" seem to be in the exclusive interest of the West, the IMF and its associate institutes for, it can be argued that no developing country "advised" by the IMF is known to have easily escaped its debt trap.

Another example of non – mutually exclusive external and domestic interests dictating issues on the policy agenda as against the media agenda's 'capability' to structure issues is manifest in Sub-Sahara Africa's push for political pluralism.
According to Ihonvbere (1996) and Kalu (2004) Sub-Sahara Africa's race for plural democracy is Western in origin as it is an urge from the West for Sub-Sahara Africa to adopt and embrace political systems consistent with Western values, norms and interests as a condition for more aid and support; and to imbibe the culture of "good governance" (as against the earlier 'advised' transition programmes) to gain the benefit of debt-relief or "debt-forgiveness" by the West.

The urge by the West through its institutional agents for Sub-Sahara Africa to embrace the experiences of the developed social formations of the West, was promoted and advanced in the "interest of Africa"; but Kalu (2004:80) argues that it is all "…a well – orchestrated strategy to make Western interest seem African for the purpose of continued economic benefit for Western firms, banks and institutions".

Indeed the "well-orchestrated" strategy found ready and willing partners in some domestic interests – some members of the elite or political class who in the interest of their political future and career mobilize the masses, ordinary people, market women and members of the civil society for the 'actualization of democracy'. Thus Kalu (2004:84) advances that "structural adjustment policies and its twin of democratic transitions are agenda setting strategies …"

Even from the perspective of the policy analyst, it does appear that the media rather than set the public agenda, quite often, with its sophisticated in-built feed-back system, serves as a conduit or a market place for contending ideas, views, opinions and issues. Thus we submit that what is quite often referred to as a media agenda could be defined as a dynamic process of social interactions in which contending issues, ideas, values and opinions of varying interests find a voice.

NOTE: Please see flow chart next page (p.276a)

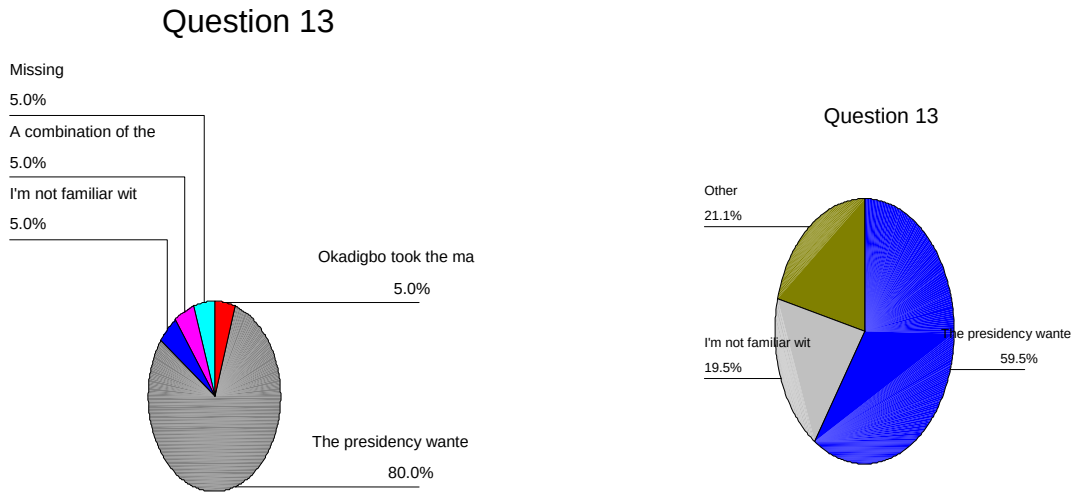
Whereas the 'masses' or general public is caught-up in the middle of these varying degrees of interests, opinions etc, as a process in the formation of public interest, opinion or agenda, the interest, opinion or view with stronger access to the media may have also started what could be described as the policy 'agenda in process'; that is, the process of penetrating the 'policy machinery' (policy makers, advisers, experts etc) with what they think should be on the policy menu.

The media on its part may in addition latch onto an issue, interest, view or opinion it considers worthy of propagation; and I argue that, the above may represent what quite often is commonly referred to as the *media agenda.*

During the face-off between the presidency and the then Senate President (now late) Chuba Okadigbo, some sections of the media – as we have narrated earlier – painted Dr. Okadigbo as a pagan or idol worshipper because the staff of office of the Senate President, the Mace, was said to have been kept in a python's care at the ancestral shrine of Okadigbo; in order to prevent the Mace form being used as the legal instrument of impeaching him (Okadigbo) form office.

This study, in its search for an answer to whether there is a media agenda distinct from that of the public, inquired from our urban respondents and the twenty journalists what the real issue was? From the way some sections of the media 'framed' and 'primed' the issue of the Mace allegedly being taken to the python's cave (some other views were

also expressed through), it seemed like that was a media agenda; but, 80% of the journalists sampled, chose (from our eight multiple choice answers to the question) option (c) which says that "the presidency wanted to control the Senate and Okadigbo refused". Only five percent seemed concerned with Okadigbo taking the "Mace to a python's cave", 5% also gave a combination of other reasons whereas another 5% are not familiar with the incident and a 5% "missing system". Our urban respondents' response to the question also revealed a correlative pattern with those of the journalists.



Figures 6a & b: both Journalists and urban respondents believe that, the issue, has more to do with the presidency's attempt at controlling the Senate and Okadigbo's refusal.

About sixty percent (59.5%) concur that "the presidency wanted to control the Senate and

Okadigbo refused", 21.1% gave other reasons including 1.1% who thought the issue had to be where the Mace was

However, the correlative responses of the journalists and urban dwellers, as this researcher had argued elsewhere in this study, did not indicate causation and thus confirming the possibility that media coverage of issues may simply be reflections of public concerns that already exists. This might be the case here, as rather than a test of the agenda setting hypothesis that shows a matching public agenda that lags behind the media schedule of priorities (see Griffin, 1991: 335), we find the opposite.

According to Senator Mastyns-Yellowe, the media orchestrated and painted a particular picture it sold to the public on the "singular issue of taking the Mace to a python's cave" but forget that the public had been aware before this incident, that, "for about two years the relationship with the with the presidency wasn't…" the best, "so the opinion of the public held".

The truth about the Okadigbo claim is that, much as he did say that he took the Mace to a python's cave, there was never any independent proof that he actually was telling the truth; and nobody checked. Our interpretation of the Okadigbo claim and the media's treatment of the issue is that, because we exist in a society that is only beginning to emerge from pre-modern cultural convictions and beliefs, anything having to do with magic or supernatural power is bound or likely to attract a great deal of attention; but there obviously was no observable linkage between this attention and the public's opinion on the issue.

Macebuh agrees with the above argument as he declares that majority of Nigerians who read or heard about the late Senate President's claim "at that time probably believed him, but whether in fact the believing of him had any effect whatsoever on their subsequent attitude is a different matter".

In the next section (9.3), we present the survey directed at seeking answers to critical research questions. Although primarily and initially directed at probing the reason for the rather unusual concentration of 'readers', remotely, we also needed to ascertain if what was responsible for this gathering of early morning consumers of media product represented a media agenda. In the end, we probably achieved more than we set out for.

9.3 Buying the News, Not The Paper

Buying the news and not the newspaper in which the news appears, as a concept may have been in existence for a long time but it is perhaps hardly ever noticed. However, in Lagos, on Friday, March 18th, 2005 during an early morning walk-out session which took this researcher to the over crowded Ikeja bus-stop at the southern end of the ever busy Awolowo Road, it was observed that most people, especially those around the newspaper vendors stand were intensely engaged in reading or perhaps even viewing pictures in one or the other newspaper of the day.

The scene at the bus-stop/news-stand can be likened to a public television viewing centres now acquiring notoriety in the Odunlami or Isale-Eko areas of Lagos Island;

especially during the UEFA (European Union Football Association) championship matches in which Nigerian football stars feature.

The difference between the Isale-Eko 'watchers' or viewers and the Ikeja bus-stop 'readers' is that whereas the former are noisy and would easily erupt into deafening screams on the grounds that their favourite (or the opposite) team or player had scored a goal or perhaps missed a penalty kick, the latter were simply absorbed, with eyes literarily glued to the papers in hands; except for brief eye movements away from the papers (for some) and moments of analytical arguments based on varying interpretations of what they seem to have read (for others).

The scene described above, aroused the researcher's curiosity and I set about asking questions like: (1) What is so compelling in the news today, (2) Why are so many people reading the newspapers at the same time with so much concentration, (3) Is this a regular practice or pattern, and (4) Why couldn't they take the papers home or to their places of work to read.

Primarily, our questions were directed at seeking answers that may explain the reason for this rather unusual concentration of 'readers' at the bus-stop/news-stand; more remotely however, we also needed to confirm whether whatever it was that people were reading that got them so absorbed was important because the media, in this case the newspapers, considered it to be so and thus represents a media agenda.

When I started asking questions, of course some people rebuffed me with suspicion; whereas some others also reacted with the kind of curiosity as to who this early morning intruder could be and what he needed the information for. As a result, quite a sizeable number of our respondents while honestly reacting to my questions either kept away from me their true identity or simply gave rather common or popular first names like Tosin, Rose, Uche, Peju, Ojo, Ade, Udo and Bobby amongst others. It is worthy of note though that two of our oral interview respondents – Tosin and Rose – confirmed their actual names with a business call-card and a work 'ID card' respectively.

Our investigation revealed that there are three categories of 'readers' at the Bus-stop/news-stand. They include:

(1) Workers caught-up in the early morning rush for work waiting for either of a means of transportation

(2) Unemployed young graduates, bored University students (bored due to frequent closure of Universities, as in this case of the University of Lagos which was under lock and key as a result of students rioting) and their counterparts newly engaged in commercial ventures such as Cyber Cafes, Pay-phone operators etc. The general characteristics of this group is that they are people who either reside, work or are visiting friends in the neighbourhood.

(3) Ordinarily, people who have come one or two notches down the social pyramid as a result of loss of their regular paid employments as well as shop owners would be classified or for our purpose categorized differently, but here, for purposes of ease of reference we have adopted Uwalaka's – the newspaper vendor's, categorization of his clientele (see Uwalaka's categorization of 'readers' next page). Our third category of 'readers therefore, is made up of people who had lost their jobs but now engaged in some other form of commercial activity like trading in second-hand cloths, Shop owners, market traders and amongst others commercial bus drivers and their conductors. Here, those literate enough to read and write in some circles usually read out loud while others listen and at the end engage in some sort of news x-ray and analytical exercise.

Of the three categories, our investigation also revealed that most members in category (1) usually buy the 'dailies' but confessed to "using them to kill time" while waiting at the bus stop. In category (2), a member in a group of two to four (or even more) friends sometimes buys a copy and they all read together or take turns; but the usual practice is that they pay a fraction of the cost to the Vendor, "read and return to the Vendor". Rarely (except in a few individual cases) do people in category (3) buy a newspaper, as it is normal here, to simply pay a fraction of the cost and return to the vendor after reading. The average cover price of a daily newspaper in Nigeria ranges from =N= 80 - =N=100 (about $.74 @ $=135), news-magazines generally sell for about =N=150

upwards, and 'readers' generally pay between =N=5 and =N=20 to 'read and return' (=N= is the sign of the Nigerian Naira, the currency for monetary transactions).

Uwalaka, one of the Vendors at the bustling Ikeja bus stop told us he became a newspaper vendor after he lost his regular paid job with "the Aswani Textiles along the Oshodi – Apapa Express Way". He categorized the 'readers' thus:

"There are workers going to work in the morning who buy and read as they wait for their transport. There are students, graduates and their friends who sometimes will buy and read together (like two to four people) but most times they just pay like =N=5 up to =N=20 to read and return. They can even pay up to =N=30 if the news is 'hot'. There are traders, shop owners and even 'agbero', you know, pickpockets. If you're not careful they take your purse".

'Agbero' is a Yoruba word used derogatorily around the Lagos metropolis (and generally by Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria) to refer to 'pick-pockets', street urchins and their like. We would like to add that, perhaps Uwalaka's inclusion of 'agbero' here underscores the nature of category (3) in our classification of readers.

According to Uwalaka, the news is 'hot' when there is a 'big' football match "like this weekend" and when there is sleaze and scandal "like the Balogun case". The big football match refers to the 2006 World Cup qualifying match in Port Harcourt (the

Rivers State capital city) between Nigeria's Super Eagles and their Gabonese counterparts; whereas the Balogun's case qualifies the disgraceful exit from service Nigeria's immediate past Inspector General of Police (IGP) on grounds of corrupt practices.

Uwalaka further explained that the 'reading' times differ too. He clarified that the traders and bus drivers "are very busy" with the morning rush but come out to "relax and read and eat" after the rush hour. The second group in our categorization of 'readers', begins to come out just as the bus stop is getting free of office workers.

Our Textile worker turned newspaper vendor was asked if the monies from the 'read and return' exercise are accounted for as part of total sales for the day and his answer was "we return the remaining" (meaning unsold copies) "but this five and ten Naira is my chop (meal) money". Emeka Izeze, Managing Director of the *Guardian* Newspapers, confirmed the trend but was quick to add: "it's not so serious as to threaten our existence".

Also, in pursuit of our intention to confirm if people take as important (all the time) whatever the media considers to be so (for example, lead stories are quite often considered to be relevant and so important by the judgment of editors), we asked our vendor what his clients like to read most and Uwalaka said "I think ladies like the *Sun*

or *Vanguard* and even *Punch* (popular tabloids). You know, fashion; but most people like Sports and they like to read things like the Balogun case".

Uwalaka is not far from the truth. Peju who works for a firm of Attorneys in the Lagos suburb of Surulere, confirms that on her way to work in the mornings she buys the *Sun* "to kill time at the bus stop" but that when she gets to the office or later at home she enjoys reading the 'Lifestyle' pages. So does Ade, reading sleaze and scandals. Ade who spoke on behalf of Bobby and two other friends (all claim to be students of the University of Lagos) says, "we look at the showbiz pages for fashion and gossip about celebrities and all that, but we always like to read the latest on stories like the Balogun one". Ade explained that they read such stories to confirm the rumours of corruption in high places adding that whereas millions of fellow countrymen are "looking for what to eat, Balogun has 16 bank accounts, houses all over the places and billions abroad"; questioning, "how much is his salary?"

Ojo, a bus driver simply smiled "na sports and people like Charly Boy we dey read"; literarily meaning that they read Sports and Celebrity pages. Charly Boy is the artistic son of retired Supreme Court Judge, Chukwudifu Oputa and the current President of the Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria (PMAN) who often appear on the Lifestyle pages of Nigerian popular tabloids – newspapers like the *Sun*, *Vanguard, Punch* etc (the South African equivalent of these are: the *Daily Sun* and even the *Sowetan* and perhaps The *Citizen),* and especially the soft sell. Examples of soft sell

will include gossip journals or magazines such as *Excellence* and *Encomium* amongst others (and these days quite a number of influential dailies (the *Guardian* and *ThisDay*, for example) have created gossip columns. The *Guardian's* 'Cock-tail Circuit' is one example.

The idea of 'read and return' was not different at the centrally located and equally busy Iyana – Isolo bus stop along the Oshodi – Apapa Express Way. Iyana-Isolo bus stop has as its next-door neighbour the Lagos State Polytechnic, Isolo Campus. It is within a five to ten minutes walking distance from offices of the *Guardian* Newspapers, the Daleko Market and the Isolo Industrial Area respectively. The reason for the rather detailed location description of Isolo bus stop is to highlight (as we shall see in the deductions from our survey, as in the case with the student population at Isolo) how different categories of 'readers' have preference and the need for certain types of news and information.

Here, we spoke to Uche (one of the vendors) who informed us that he carries with him his wares doing door-to-door sales during early hours of the day after which he joins his colleagues at the bus stop. Here according to him, some people come to 'read and return' the papers. Uche seem to understand the economy, which in his own word is 'biting' as most people do not have regular paid jobs and as such cannot afford the luxury of regular purchase of newspapers. He concludes that, it makes more sense for

people ‘to read and return’ rather than him returning the unsold copies without money in his pocket. “At least it is better” he smiled, than no sales at all.

To extend our understanding of bus stops/news-stands experiences and ‘breaking news’ (see details below) which Uwalaka would rightly describe as ‘hot’, we spent Tuesday, March 22nd and Wednesday, March 23rd sampling the opinions of 100 ‘readers’ at the two locations – i.e. Ikeja and Isolo bus stops respectively (please see Appendix 1 – Survey Questionnaire and Table 1b for ‘area ID’).

Indeed the ‘breaking news’ earlier on Monday, March 21st was ‘hot’. Nigeria’s President Olusegun Obasanjo had addressed the nation on the NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) and the FRCN (Federal Radio Corporation) networks at prime time (7pm) informing Nigerians of a =N=55 million bribery scandal involving the Senate President, Adolphus Wabara (he has since been forced out of office in disgrace), some members of the National Assembly, the now dismissed Education Minster, Prof. Fabian Osuji and some high level officials of the Ministry of Education and a parastatal under it.

Table 8a: Sample size, 'responses' and 'no responses' to survey questions expressed in absolute per centages.

Population area ID	Sample Size	Response to survey questions				Total average Response	Total average 'No response'
		q1	q2	q3	q4		
Ikeja	50	50	48	37	46	q1+q2+Q3+q4	q2 = 2
Isolo	50	44	50	50	50	= 375 ÷ 4	q3 = 13
							q4 = 4
Total%	100	94	98	87	96	93.75	25 = 6.25

Our survey questionnaire (made up of four pages, four questions and a total of fifteen multiple choice answers), which sampled the opinion of 100 'readers', recorded a cumulative response rate of 93.75% and a 6.25% 'no response' (see Tables [8a] and [8b]).

Of our four questions, Q1 (question one) recorded a total of about 94% response rate, Q2 =98%, Q3=87% and Q4 about 96%. A breakdown of these response rates shows that respondents from Ikeja are responsible for the following: Q1=50%, Q2 = 48%, Q3 = 37% and Q4 = 46%. On the other hand, Isolo respondents accounted for 44% in Q1 and 50% for Q2, Q3, and Q4 respectively. This we believe is a demonstration of success in the conduct of our survey – i.e.- a rating of 93.75%.

Answers to Q	**Ikeja**	**Isolo**	**Total**
1a	9	7	16
1b	26	28	54
1c	15	9	24
2a	29	26	55
2b	9	16	25
2c	3	2	5
2d	7	6	13
3a	7	10	17
3b	5	9	14
3c	17	20	37
3d	8	11	19
4a	28	21	49
4b	2	0	2
4c	9	17	26
4d	7	12	19

Table [8b]: Response to survey questions expressed in absolute figures.

Note: 1a – 1c represents answers to question one (q1) in the survey questionnaire

2a – 2d represent answers to (q2), 3a – 3d represent answers to (q3) and

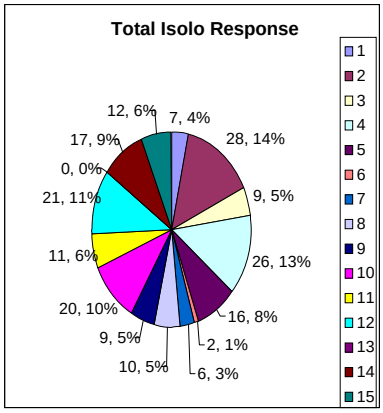
4a – 4d represent answers to (q4)

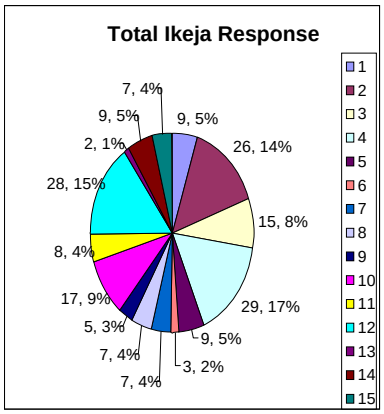
In Q1 we asked respondents why they chose to read their newspapers at the news-stands/bus stops rather than take them home or to their places of work. Sixteen per cent (i.e. Ikeja =9%, Isolo =7%) said they do so to occupy themselves ('to kill time') while

waiting for some means of transportation to work. Fifty four per cent (Ikeja =26%, Isolo =28%) said it was cheaper to pay a fraction of the cost and read at the news-stand than buy the whole paper and 24% (Ikeja =15%, Isolo =9%) believe it is not only cheaper to pay a fraction of the cost to 'read and return', but they also enjoy the 'reading' company, gossips and the rumours associated with the 'reading'.

Subsequent upon the 'breaking news' of Monday, March 21st, – the =N=55million scandal of corruption in high quarters - we also inquired to know from 'readers' what interests them most in the day's (Tuesday and Wednesday) dailies. A high 55% (Ikeja = 29%, Isolo =26%) of our 100 respondents put premium on the =N=55 million story which incidentally made the cover of most newspapers in the Lagos axis (the epicenter of Nigeria's Journalism); 25% (Ikeja = 9%, Isolo =16%) went for Sports and Lifestyle, only 5% (Ikeja =3%, Isolo = 2%) showed interest in other political stories and 13% (Ikeja = 7%, Isolo =6%) preferred 'other or generally everything'.

Besides the =N=55 million story, we inquired from 'readers' what else interested them among the items they may have read during that day. Just 17% (Ikeja =7%, Isolo =10%) indicated that they either would in addition to the 'hot' story read or have read political stories, 14% (Ikeja = 5%, Isolo =9%) chose 'Business/Economics', 37% (Ikeja = 17%, Isolo = 20%) were for 'Sports' and 'Lifestyle' pages and only 19% (Ikeja = 8%, Isolo = 11%) would read or read 'other' stories and articles or 'generally everything'





Figures [7a & 7b] show a comparative chart of total response from Isolo and Ikeja to research questions . **Note:** The boxes 1 – 15 in the chart represent the 15 multiple choice answers to questions 1- 4 (q1-q4). Therefore: 1-3 = answers to q1, 4 -7 = answers to q2, 8 –11 = answers to q3 and 12 –15 = answers to q4.

In Q4, we needed to test if the concept of paying a fraction of the cost of a newspaper to 'read and return' to the vendor to sell to other buyers was merely an occasional occurrence due to 'hot' news, an emerging trend or something that has assumed a pattern and as such has come to stay. Accordingly, we asked respondents if they will be out at the bus stops/news-stands the next day? Surprisingly, 49% (Ikeja =28%, Isolo = 21%) gave a resounding 'Yes' answer, a mere 2% (Ikeja =2, Isolo = 0%) categorically said 'No'; another 26% (Ikeja = 9%, Isolo = 17%) opted for a 'May be' answer whereas 19% (Ikeja = 7%, Isolo =12%) were 'Not sure'.

Deductions from our survey seem to confirm, if not, strongly suggest that contrary to the early (research findings of the 1940s and 1950s) view that the media has an all-powerful effect, that is, comparable to a hypodermic needle or a bullet directed at a passive audience and the more recent agenda setting theory's claim that people judge as

important what the media had judged as important (see McQuail, 1987; Graber, 1990; Infante etal1990; Griffin, 1991; Severin & Tankard, 2001), the media audience is infact not only quite active and deliberately making choices of media content to satisfy specific needs; but it also has expectations from and considerations for what it reads.

The differences in choices of what people read or would like to read in (again) a paper of their choice and the eventual response to such, that is, media content, is evident in the in the observation of our newspaper vendor, Uwalaka. As he noted "ladies like the *Sun, Vanguard* and even *Punch*" (all popular tabloids) for fashion whereas "most people like Sports and … read things like the Balogun case" on the one hand. Ade's view confirms that people like to read sleaze and scandal that arise from the rumours of corruption in high. The implication of these insights might be understood in the following ways:

[a] First, we can observe a reflection, in the differences in the social class (in this case, simple categories) of individual readers or groups, as revealed, in our categorization of the bus stop/news-stand 'readers' association. Here we seem to have three groups: (1) the office (most probably white collar job) workers caught-up in the early morning rush for work, most of who apparently were 'killing time' with the papers at the bus stop while waiting for a means of transportation to their various places of work (2) Unemployed young graduates and their bored still-at-school counterparts (some of who have been newly engaged in the neighbourhood) who by virtue of their haven had or

will have a university education, we can refer to as aspiring middle class members of society. (3) A combination of society's hoi polloi and amongst others those who had come one or two notches down the social pyramid as a result of loss of their regular paid employment.

Secondly, [b] Media audience quite deliberately make choices of media, media content and also have expectations as demonstrated (see 2a in Table 1b & Appendix 2b too) by the premium put on the =N= 55 million scandal story by a rather high 55% of our respondents. By extrapolation we could also suggest that President Obasanjo having broken the news the previous evening, 'readers' may have expected the newspapers to serve the news 'hot', fresh and in more detail the next morning. They might look forward perhaps thereafter to more follow-ups.

Though advocates of media agenda setting capabilities could read the media treatment of the scandal as a media agenda, this researcher would not consider it so; for even if it turns out to be a media agenda, the element of expectation in 'readers' the day after the 'breaking news' point to the possible fact that media agenda is not devoid of consideration for audience expectations and preferences too.

[c] Irrespective of the day's 'hot' news, respondents' choice of answers to questions indicates that different classes or categories (see our categorization of 'readers') do have preferences for certain type of information or news. For example, (see table 7b

and figure 7a for Isolo figures) it is observed that – perhaps due to the student population at Isolo bus stop (the Lagos State Polytechnic, Isolo Campus is close-by the bus stop) a larger percentage of respondents at Isolo are more interested in politics, business/economics, sports and lifestyle stories and had read or would like to read generally everything else in the day's paper. In q2, 16% (out of 25%) of Isolo respondents said besides the =N= 55 million story, Sports and Lifestyle stories (see answer 2b in table 7b) interest them most; so did they with q3 where 10% (out of 17%) said they would or also read political stories. Nine (out of 14%) have or would read business/economic stories, 20% (out of 37%) said same for sports and lifestyle and 11% (out of 19%) either read or have read other stories and articles or generally everything. The propensity to read (or would like to read) business/economics or other stories in the day's paper we could translate to mean an attribute of the educated class.

Interestingly however, more people from the Ikeja location (please see our category three as well as Uwalaka's definition of who and what constitute his clients), which include "even agberos …pick-pockets". This is by no means insinuation that there are no "agberos" at Isolo, rather their number seems to be more at Ikeja. Fifteen per cent (out of 24%) enjoy the company, rumours and gossip that accompany the 'reading' (see Table 7b, column 1c and also Figure 7b [3]) and 28% (out of 49%) gave a matter-of-fact 'yes' ([a]) answer to q4 (see Appendix 3c - Survey Questionnaire 3, Table 7b and Figure 7b for Ikeja figures).

[d] Readership of daily newspapers is influenced by economic and social considerations. This is reflected in the bus stop/news-stand 'readers' response to q1 (see row 1b 'Total' in Table 1b and Appendix 1, q1 – answer [b]) where 54% of respondents believe it is cheaper to pay a 'little money' to read the news than buy the whole paper; and in answer [c] where the 'readership' fulfills socialization needs (see Appendix 3c –answer [c] in q1).

Our survey findings and deductions seem to have thrown open for consideration the issue of relationships between Media Product and the reader on the one hand and that of the Media and Media Source on the other. We propose that our survey seemingly have clarified both relationships. The former as we have analysed and deduced from research data and survey findings respectively, and the latter we shall soon see in our concluding argument with the =N= 55 million story as a 'source agenda'. 'Source agenda' as per by our usage simply refers to the origin of or place, quarters or person from where/who the matter/issue for public discussion or attention starts or comes from. Put simply, we mean the origin of the matter or issue for public discourse or attention.

However, advocates of the media's agenda setting capabilities may want to argue that in the context of the media's ability to 'prime' and 'frame' stories, the =N= 55 million scandal story is a media agenda. This could be the case, but this researcher take the

view that causal order and definitive order of influence seem to be a stronger argument to 'priming' and 'framing' of stories.

Priming, Iyengar (1991:133), Rogers, Hart & Dearing (1997:225) concur, is the ability of the media agenda to affect the criteria by which individuals judge issues. Framing - that is of issues – on the other hand (please see Dearing & Rogers, 1992: 63) is the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue and make them more important and in the process emphasise a particular cause of some phenomenon. Framing essentially involves selection and salience (please see Entman, 2002:291/2) just as the concept of 'gatekeeping' deals with the issue of selection in the choice of stories and articles (please see Shoemaker & Reese, 1991:119). What Iyengar, Rogers etal, Dearing & Rogers and Shoemaker & Reese have not told us is how issues are involved in the media agenda.

Rather than a media agenda, our survey findings corroborates the claim by one area of Mass Communication research often referred to as the Uses and Gratification (U & G) approach which is, a functional shift of focus from the purposes of the communicator (the media) to what the audience (the receiver of the communication) does with the media.

Severin & Tankard (2001:239) observe that the U&G approach stresses the potential of the individual for self-realization as the approach fits-in "in at least one respect" with the libertarian theory of the press and John Mill's notions of human rationality.

The libertarian theory of the press is a by-product of the writings of 19th century thinkers such as Milton, Locke and Mill; and the general philosophy of rationalism and natural rights. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956:7) foremost agents of the 'Four Theories of the Press' advance that the purpose of the libertarian theory include to inform, entertain and sell but principally to help discover truth and to check on government.

By libertarian standards, ownership is mainly private and anyone with economic means has a right to use the media whose control is by the courts and a 'self-righting process of truth' in a 'free marketplace of ideas'. This, Severin & Tankard (2001:311) note, will enable individuals to discern between truth and falsehood.

The 'Uses & Gratification' approach to the media was first described in a 1959 article by the sociologist Elihu Katz who was reacting to Bernard Berelson's (1959) claim that Communication Research, as a discipline appeared dead. Katz in his article argued that, contrary to Berelson's claim the field or discipline that was dying was the study of mass communication as persuasion, which up to that time occupied itself with what the media do to people; suggesting that mass communication as a field of study should

save its-self by turning to the question of what people do with the media. The author in his argument cited some existing studies of what people do with the media one of which Severin & Tankard (2001:294) referred to as "curiously enough by Berelson (1965). It was his "What 'missing the Newspaper' means", a 1949 study conducted by interviewing people about what they missed during a newspaper strike".

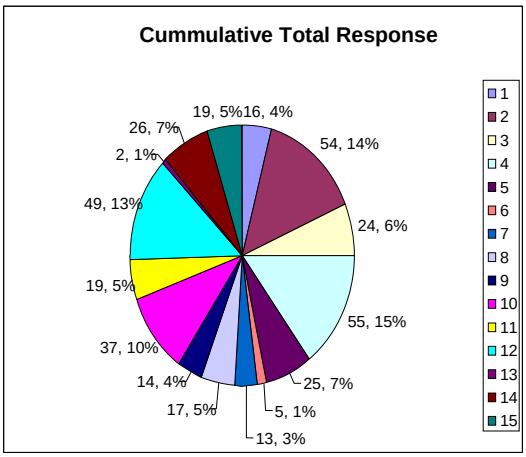


Figure 8 (above) : Show cumulative response to research questions in the survey.

The findings in that study seem to corroborate our findings too, a revelation that different people use the media for different reasons and with varying levels of gratification too.

This study continues to maintain therefore that, even as an urban phenomenon, the media do not completely possess the overwhelming capability to structure issues. For

example, we consider the =N=55 million scandal as a 'source agenda' heightened and propagated by the media.

It is on record that the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo from its inception in 1999 made public the war against corruption as one of its major projects. Thus we argue that the newspapers may have 'primed', 'framed' and selected their choice of a 'lead' story in the =N= 55 million scandal story; but we take the view that the story remains a 'source' agenda rather than a media agenda. This study take the view that the source in this case is Nigeria's President (Obasanjo) whose agenda it is to fight and possibly stamp out corruption or drastically reduce the monster; and not entirely as the advocates of the media's agenda setting capabilities will wish it accepted as a media agenda – i.e. the war against corruption in Nigeria.

We are not saying that the media cannot nor are we denying the fact that the media could and do 'set agendas' especially where certain media interests abound. Rather, we take the view that the media's capability to structure issues as it is advanced by its proponents lacks not only theoretical impetus but equally universal applicability.

As we have argued earlier, causal order and definitive influence seem to be stronger argument than the framing, priming, and possibly the selection of stories; we are saying in effect that, there is yet to be a demarcation line, a definitive clear line of which between the media agenda and the source is influencing the other.

Besides, as we have also argued elsewhere, the insulation and isolation of rural Africa by modern media, its language and technological sophistication calls to question the universal applicability of the media's agenda setting claim. What may be a rural settlement in the Chapel Hill area of North Carolina could possibly pass for a mini-modern city in typical rural Africa where according to Emeka Izeze "most parts have never, ever seen copies of certain newspapers".

We do acknowledge, accept and appreciate the various functions of the media, which includes its various uses by its equally large and diverse audiences, and the different levels of gratification it offers but a generalized capability to structure issues to the extent of setting, as in our example above, a 'rural' territorial agenda (as to what, which and who to vote for in times of election into political office) is unacceptable to this thesis.

9.4 The Role of the Established Structures of Community in Setting the Media Agenda

We have in previous chapters treated in a fairly detailed manner rumour (sometimes interchanged as gossip) as an established structure of our communities and its synergistic role within the information and news dissemination circuit. In further exploration of the significant roles played by the established structures of community (for example, rumour, gossip, the two/multi-step flow pattern of information transfer etc) in the news or information diffusion process and how these may in turn quite often

be classified as media agenda, this study investigated how respondents describe and define their sources of information; and how in their opinion an organisation like the police force which requires a large amount of information to function properly, gets such information. The significance of the above is well known and as such probably needs little or no introduction, for example, as in the issue of crime, media coverage of crime and the police as the clearing house of confirmations for crime reporters albeit media organisations.

One simple illustration of the above is with the Nigerian 419 scam syndicate and their operators or Kingpins. The media is aware of their existence individually and collectively just as many urban Nigerians can also put a name to the faces of these "419ers"; but only when the police moves in to arrest and possibly arraign them in a court of law do they become front page or cover story items.

As already argued in one of the sections above (9.3) one of the major projects of the Obasanjo administration form inception in 1999 remain a war against corruption and its allied fraudulent practices which includes the '419' scam and drug trafficking. Accordingly, the government set up the Nuhu Ribadu led Economic and Financial Crimes Commission – EFCC – with its Chairman promising to rid Nigeria of the '419' scourge. So it was that one early Saturday morning in or about early May 2003, the EFCC swung into action with the arrest of some of the notoriously popular and alleged fraudsters. Some of those arrested include Lagos lawyer Fred Ajudua and Ade Bendel

form their posh Victoria Garden City abodes; and then they immediately became front page and cover story items for the media, especially the weekly news magazines.

The News weekly magazine of May 26 (Vol. 20, No. 21), 2003, reported the arrest of the alleged 419 duo on its cover page as "$200 million Scam: End of the Road for Ajudua, Ade Bendel – Ribadu steps in, vows to wipe out 419". The magazine which in its introduction of the 419 cover story said it (represented by the magazine's deputy editor – Goodluck Ebelo) "… has been following the scent of the conmen and their con jobs", also featured on the same cover page "Akubueze: The Retrial of a Drug Baron" which gives the impression in my view of a media agenda of war against the 419 scourge and its allied drug dealers. Akubueze (Joe Brown Akubueze) who stupefied Nigerians with his import of heroin estimated at a street value of over =N=4 billion (about 600– 700 million Pound Sterling then) in December 1993, was sentenced to over 100 years jail term with hard labour by the Miscellaneous Offences Tribunal early in 1994; but he felt after serving a little over 10 years of his sentence that he was not given a fair trial by the tribunal that sent him to jail. Thus, "the retrial of a drug baron."

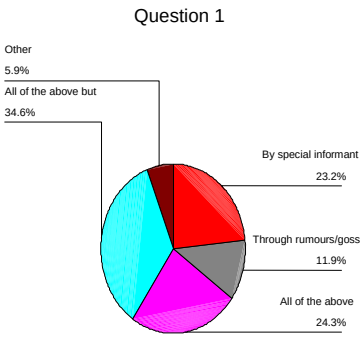
If *The News*' treatment of the war against crime simply gives the impression of a media agenda, *Newswatch's* priming, framing and selection of the 419 scam, its operators and their benefactors in the political arena, may certainly qualify as a media agenda for advocates of the theory.

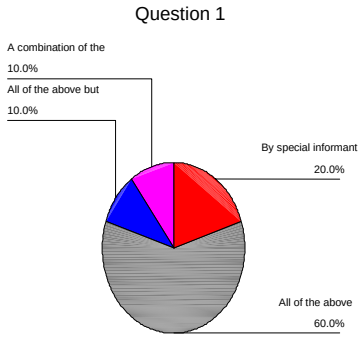
For three editions in a row, *Newswatch* in its schedule of priorities placed the above issue top on its agenda. Its July 14, 2003 edition, with the photographs and names of alleged '419ers' (Ajudua, Nwude, Anajemba, Ibekwe and Toyin Igbira), screamed "Nigeria's Richest Crooks – Their crimes, money and lifestyles". The magazine's July 21, 2003 edition also went to town with the pictures and names of Udenwa (Achike Udenwa is the serving governor of Imo State), Okoro, Igbokwe, Amadi and Onyeneke on its cover page with the caption "Governor Udenwa and his 419 Friends – How they helped his re-election – The crisis they are causing". And in its July 28, 2003 issue, the magazine had an interview with governor Udenwa that was titled "I'm Governor of the good, the bad, the ugly – Udenwa". Interestingly, governor Udenwa accused the press (see page 21 of *Newswatch*, July 28 2003) as the worst offender in singing the praises and "extolling the virtues of 419 people…"

As we have explained at the beginning of this section, in further exploration of the significant role of the established structures of community in setting the media agenda, we inquired from respondents how in their opinion the police (as maintainers of law and order) get the information necessary in the performance of their duties (see question I in questionnaire II – appendix 3b). For purposes of clarity, we like to note here that of our eight multiple choice answers to the question, option (e) – "all of the above" – and option (f) – "all of the above; but mostly…" - was designed for the latter to add value to the former with specifics; but respondents generally ticked, in both options, only the 'all of the above' bit. For purposes of convenience and more so for

the reasons given above therefore, the two options (e) and (f) are lumped together in our analysis. All of the above in this instance refers to amongst other options (a) by special informants, (b) through rumour/gossip and (c) friends. They did not include options (g) simply from the grapevine and (h) stories in the media – as these are distinct and stand separate from "all of the above". Although option (d) – different other sources – falls into the "all of the above" category, it is not so grouped because it is statistically appropriately represented in the systems generated option – "other" – where all variables below 5% are grouped.

Accordingly, 58.9% (34.6 + 24.3%) of our urban respondents said the police get their information from "all of the above" sources, 23.2% opted for answer (a) – by special informants – 11.9%categorically said option (b) – through rumour/gossip and a combined 5.9% said "other" sources. None of our respondent's chose option (h), which says – "stories in the media."





Figures 9a & b: Both urban as well as journalists who responded to the question agree that the police get their informations mostly from the established structures of community.

Also, 70% (60+10) of our journalists sampled said the police get their information from "all of the above" sources, 20% said "by special informants – (a) – and 10% believe that the police get their information through a combination of options (a) – (h). Again none of the journalists chose option (h) as a possible source of police information.

An Assistant Commissioner of police at the Alagbon close Criminal Investigation Department of the police force who spoke to this researcher (the officer insisted that his identity be kept private as he is a serving officer) revealed to the researcher that, the so-called police "special informants" are not alien but "everyday people like you and I" who also gossip and pick up information through the rumour mill which they then pass on to the police. According to the police officer, the police receive quite a lot of anonymous phone calls "as informantions" but do not rely on these calls "too much". Instead, he said, the police put their "ears to the ground" (meaning rumour, gossip and information from reliable or respected community members or leaders), usually, at drinking parlours, nightclubs, places of worship as well as other places of social gathering. He narrated the story of how information courtesy of rumour and gossip at a community social club gathering led to the arrest of a drug courier.

The information our friend narrated came in the form of a gossip/rumour of an unusually lavish party or celebration hosted by a suspected drug dealer for whom "things had not been easy of late". On investigation, the police suspected the party to be a celebration of a successful drug related trip abroad as well as for the recruitment of

two new couriers. Not long after this celebration, word came to the police that one of the newly recruited couriers "at their community social club gathering" bragged and boasted of how rich he will be very soon; "from then" our police officer said, "we monitored him till the day he was to travel and we nabbed him with the drugs in his stomach".

In question 4 of our questionnaire 2, we requested to know form respondents which political party they voted for during the April 2003 elections. We followed with "why did you vote for this party" in question five which eventually happen to be the question at the heart of the issue. The idea behind the above questions is to enable this study ascertain whether people took decisions as to what political party and which candidate to cast their votes for on the basis of information derived from the media or they were influenced by any of the established structures of community in their choice of political party and candidate.

Thirty four per cent (34.6%) of our urban respondents admitted voting for the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) – answer (e). the same 34.6% in question 5 (answer (d)) said they voted for the party because it was generally the favourite.

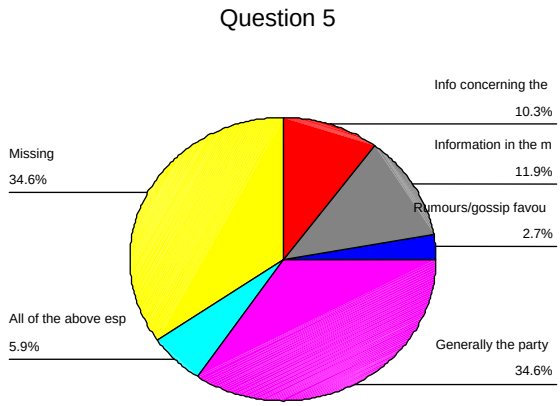


Figure 10: The established structures of community seem to be responsible for the choice of a party/candidate to vote for by urban people too.

Information from community/church/mosque or social club concerning the party/candidate (answer (a)) had 10.3%, 2.7% said their decision was based on rumour /gossip favourable to the party (answer c) and 11.9% said their decision was based on information form the media (answer (b)). The question (question 5) recorded a 34.6% "missing system" and 5.9% opted for the "all of the above" – (e) – answer.

When questions are answered in 'general' terms, this researcher believes that the answer carries with it elements of rumour, gossip, a testimonial effect and as in this case, concerning electoral politics, somebody is promising somebody something or somebody knows somebody (within the party) that is why the "party generally" becomes the favourite. Also, the answer – "All of the above…" (option (e)) - refers to none of the options in particular but all; we consider it prudential therefore to base our

analysis and deductions on the following variables: responses, answers or options (a), (b) and (c) to the question – question 5 (see appendix 3b for details).

"Information in the media" - (answer (b)) - was responsible for 11.9% of decisions to vote for a particular political party/candidate of respondent's choice, 10.3% voted on the strength of information from (within) the community/church/mosque or social club concerning the party /candidate (answer (a)) and 2.7% did vote as a result of rumour/gossip favourable to the party (answer (c)). Options (a) and (c) are among the variables this thesis defines as the other neglected agents of power (simply put, the established structures of community) in setting the media agenda. Together, both options and answers to question 5 are responsible for 13% of respondents' decision to vote for a party or candidate. Compared to the 11.9% of information in the media (answer (b)), there is an observable significant influence of the established structures of community even in our urban settings. Our deductions from the above, by extrapolation therefore, is that quite some proportion of the 13% of information from the established structures of community may have accounted for some of the 11.9% information in the media. Comparatively also, the response of our 20 journalists seem to tally with those of the urban respondents on the same issue.

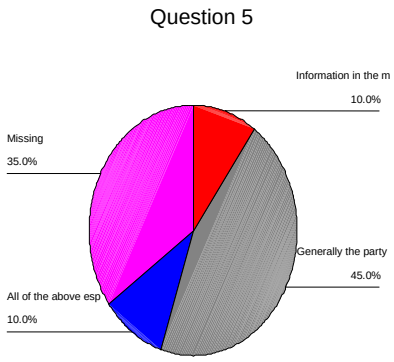


Figure 11: Journalists response tallies with that of urban respondents that, "all of the above" instructed their decision of a choice.

With a missing 35% (34.6% for urban respondents), 45% of the journalists said that their motivation for choice of a party to vote for was that the party was "generally" considered the favourite (34.6% of urban responses said same), 10% said that "all of the above…" was their reason (urban=59%) and 10% (urban=11.9%) did so based on information in the media.

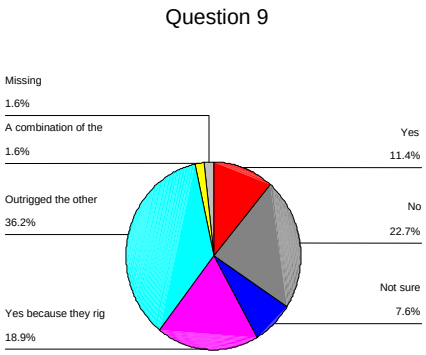
During and after the April 2003 general elections in Nigeria there was the widely spread rumour as well as gossip of large-scale electoral fraud. Particularly, the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was accused of massively rigging the electoral results; the PDP on its part also accused the opposition party – the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) – of electoral malpractices in some sections of the country, as in the case with Kano, where it (PDP) lost the governorship. Over all, the air was thick with the rumour of PDP's "landslide" rigging of the elections to the extent that in some locations there were more recorded votes than the number of voters in the voter's register; and in other

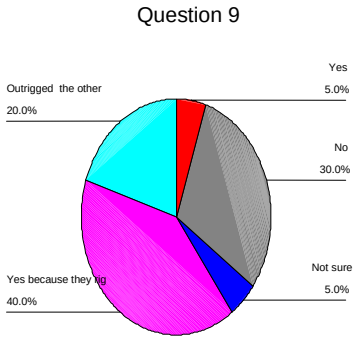
locations and instances as in that of Anambra, where people who did not contest were declared winners of Senatorial Seats.

Commenting on the PDP's rumoured allegation of election rigging and the Anambra crisis, *Thisday's* group political editor, Chukwudi Nwabuko laments (*Thisday,* Monday, July 14, 2003:15) that "that party has inflicted enough injury on the psyche of the people of Anambra. If they had not massively rigged the election, they would have saved the State this embarrassment".

Still in pursuit of our effort to establish which of the two agendas, that is, the media and the public, lags behind the others schedule of priorities. We asked urban dwellers and our twenty journalists if they believed that the PDP overwhelmingly (as the party and its faithful proclaims) won the April 2003 elections (question 9).

A combined 51.1% seem to confirm the rumoured allegation of election rigging against the PDP. Thirty-six percent (36.2%) believed (and still do) that the party won because the party out-rigged the other parties who also rigged and 18.9% seem quite certain that the PDP won by rigging the elections. Twenty-two percent (22.7%) categorically said the party did not win, 7.6% were "not sure" and only 11.4% of respondents believe that the party won.





Figures 12a & b: both Journalists and urban dwelles believe as rumoured that, the PDP rigged the elections.

Similarly, 60% of the twenty journalists also believed that the party won because it either out-rigged the other parties (20%) or PDP simply rigged the elections (40%). "No" was the answer of 30%, 5% were also "not sure" and only 5% believed that the party won.

However, when this study confronted respondents in question 10 with: if their answer is (d) – because they rigged – or (e) - …because they out-rigged… - how do you know? The following data below speaks for itself.

Missing System: Urban = 40%, Journalists = 35%

I witnessed it happen: Urban = 20.5%, Journalists = 35%

It was a commonplace gossip backed by the media: Urban = 25.4%, Journalists = 0%

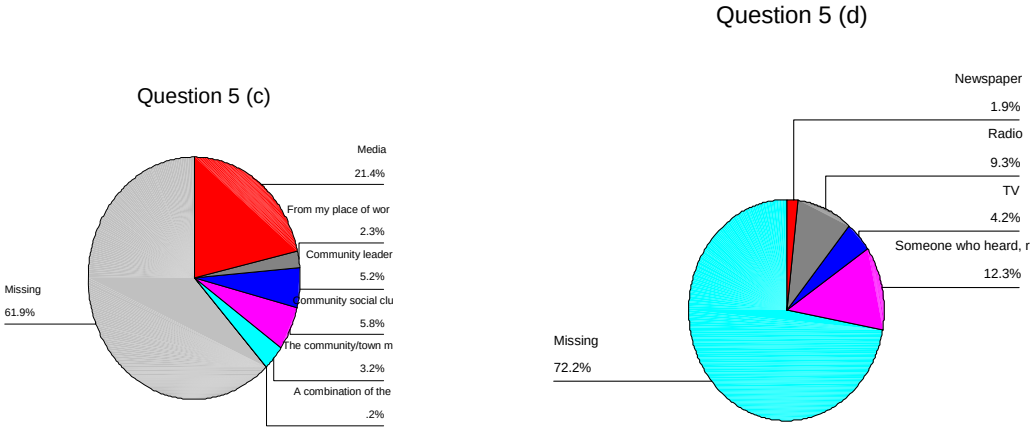
Rumours said so: Urban = 6.5%, Journalists = 0%

The media said so: Urban = 5.4%, Journalists = 5%

Authetication of the rumours of election rigging as reflected in our field survey also came from the *Vanguard's* edition of Friday, August 27th 2005 (monitored from the "Nigeria world" web-site on Sunday, August, 29th, 2005). According to the *Vanguard,* Nigeria's Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, while expressing his "fears for the 2007 polls", had confirmed that: "Most elections are rigged before they occur because candidates are eliminated through various methods. These include subverting party constitution and rules, the use of thugs, corrupting party officials to disqualify or annul the nomination of some candidates and other illegal methods of distorting the wishes of the electorate"

On the other hand in questionnaire 1, 'Section B', we approached the subject slightly differently with rural dwellers (considering their sensitivity to politics and its associated rumours of violence and the attendant fear and suspicion). In question 5a we inquired from rural dwellers whether they voted during the April 2003 general elections and 50.6% of them said "yes" they did. The rest (excluding a 1.1% missing system), either did not vote, were not interested or were too afraid to go out on Election Day. Of this last category, (18.7%) we inquired in question 5b why they were afraid to vote and they gave reasons ranging from rumours of violence (15.1%) personal reasons – which may still have to do with one or the other rumour – (4.1%), gossips had it that the election had already been rigged (3.2%)

The above being the case, the research questionnaire in question 5c requested respondents to indicate their source of the above rumours of violence etc. With 61.95% recorded as 'missing system', respondents indicated their sources as community social



Figues 13 a& b: Twenty one per cent (21.4%) of rural dwellers attributed their source to the media in question 5c, but owned up in 5d that a structure of community was as a matter of fact their source.

club/gathering (5.8%), community leader… (5.2%), community/town market (3.2%) form places of worship (2.3%), a mere 0.2% indicated a combination of the above sources and interestingly 21.4% (probably village school teachers, community health workers etc) named the media as their source. The 21.4% of rural people indicating their source as the media is interesting in the sense that curiously, when they were requested in question 5d to identify the specific media, only 1.9% mentioned the newspaper, 4.2% said television, radio had 9.3% and a majority – 12.3% - went back to a structure of community i.e. "someone who read, heard or saw the news told me".

Apparently, after the 'news' may have gone through what Izeze refers to as "garnished and embellished" along the two-step or multi-step flow process of diffusing the news.

Again in question 7 we needed to know from rural Nigerians what informed their decision as to what party to cast their votes for and clearly (with a 46.8% missing system and 9.9% "all of the above" answer) 31.5% of them revealed that their decisions were influenced by the established structures of community (information form within the community… = 17.5% and rumours/gossip favourable to the party = 14%). The media, according to 11.7% informed their decisions and again we asked for the specific media to be identified in question 7, option (a). As was the case in question 5d, only 1.3% mentioned the newspaper, 2.4% said television and 7% had their decisions informed by information from the radio and thus confirming our argument and proposition elsewhere in this thesis that indeed Africa, rural Africa may be a listening public, but not necessarily a reading public. In the following section, this researcher attempts an explanation of the theoretical ambiguity in the universal applicability of the media's agenda setting theory; that is, the media's capability to structure issues for its audience – a so-called 'mass' audience which we propose may not include rural Africa.

9.5 A Question Mark on the Theory's Universal Applicability

So far, the analysis of our field survey suggests that as climes in architecture determine patterns of design, so do environments dictate styles and mediums in communication

and modes of information exchange. Nigeria, as it relates to media agenda setting's basic predictions is peculiar in the sense that the country represents an under-developed or a developing country.

It is worth considering therefore, that some (and in other instances most) of the news stories carried in the formal media channels are matter-of-factly based on convictions, beliefs, suspicions and even sentiments that journalists pick-up form their various communities. The extent to which a rural community (like Akakuma etc in our field study) begins to in any way react to what the formal or mainstream media is carrying or saying, we propose, is to a large extent determined by whether or not the community actually has access to what it is the media is offering.

Perhaps, like the people in North Carolina (where the media agenda setting proposition first gathered momentum) it is true that more people in rural areas either possess or have greater access (as proven by respondents answers to question 13a of our questionnaire I where 39.6% of rural people own radio as against 9.4% television and a near non-existent newspaper readership) to radio than they do either with television or newspapers but unlike the people in North Carolina, the access to radio is also limited by the extent to which the radio stations themselves actually offer programmes in the local language of the recipient community.

Considering Nigeria's literacy rate which some experts presently put at "unfortunately quite low", Stanley Macebuh postulates that it is yet to be proven that programmes offered in English on radio command the kind of widespread influence it is assumed to possess. Any kind of such effects on the rural community, he notes, will "depend on the extent to which the medium of communication is one that is compatible with the language of the given community". The story of what we call a different kind of radio confirms Macebuh's position that, effects of radio on rural community will depend on the compatibility of the medium of communication with that of the given community.

Bomo Fm – A Different Kind Of Radio.

Bomo Fm is a different kind of radio. Its proprietor/announcer, Mustapha, is barely literate, he has no formal training in the art or science of repairing radios nor is he trained in radio programmes presentation; but Dickson Offre of *The News w*eekly magazine who reported on "a radio station with a difference" (The *News*, May 26, 2003) says the radio station with just one old Panasonic microphone and no furniture – the announcer sits on a mat… - wows audiences around the Zaria Emirate Council of Kaduma State.

Mustapha, the self-taught radio repairer told *The News* reporter that he did "not learn radio repairs from anybody" but found himself on the "air waves" through trial and error practices with transformers and transmitters. According to *The News* report, Bomo Fm is not known to the National Broadcasting Commission but it has become a

tool for “political, economic and social mobilisation” as local politicians as well as traditional rulers and their institutions not only invite Mustapha to cover local events but are delighted to hear the events broadcast in their native language.

Mustapha and his radio station does not possess what one may call a decent tape recorder, but people have started paying him =N=1 (less than a cent) per musical track played for the listening pleasure of loved ones. His programmes are broadcast or delivered in the language he and his community understands – their mother tongue – and he says “if anything is happening, including missing items, they tell me and I make a story for the people”. His greatest fulfillment so far seems to be the recognition he gets from the local elites and the traditional council, the head of which invites Mustapha to his palace for interviews to be broadcast to the people.
Again, Macebuh clarifies with the view that, in the final analysis what determines choices and preferences is not what is heard on some electronic or print medium but what is “directly communicated by individuals who are supposed or assumed or accepted as leaders, moulders of opinion, influential people within the community”.

Societies and communities are all at different or various stages of development, sophistication and even age and as such their attitudes, responses, convictions, beliefs and even sentiments are often dictated by their level of development and sophistication; which also determines the way they structure their communication.

Rural Africa is underdeveloped and as such, its information structure and diffusion process is equally determined by its socio-cultural background which affects the way the people think, the way they see themselves in the world, their interest and general approach to issues. To that extent, we take the view and argue (as we have often done) that the principles behind the agenda setting hypothesis considered effective in Chapel Hill may not be applicable in rural Shere or Ologoama. In Chapel Hill, residents relied on a mix of nine print and broadcast sources for political news and so they knew of Richard Nixon. In Gwari country, most residents have never seen a copy of the *Guardian* and knew nothing about the face-off between President Obasanjo and the late Senate President – Chuba Okadigbo.

In rural Africa – Nigeria –, only 9.4% of our survey sample regularly visited the semblance of a modern city, the media was the source of information as to which political party to vote for and just 10.7 percent (newspaper = 1.3%, tv = 2.4% radio = 7%) and just 7% have seen the picture of their governor or president in the media.

Ben Murray Bruce, immediate past Director-General of the Nigerian Television Authority – NTA – (currently Chairman of Silverbird Organisation – owners of Rhythm 93.7 fm radio, Silverbird Television – STV – and Silverbird Cinema) confirms that in Bayelsa State where he "comes from" (our survey sites – Akakuma, Ologoama and Doguama are in Bayelsa State), "they never had a television. Children grow up to be 15 and never saw a tv… they've never seen television in their lives. I gave them

television. Now they can see their governor, they can see their Senator and the President. They never knew what the President looked like. They've never seen him before. There is no newspaper there" (*Encomium*, July 22, 2003: 22).

With the above as a backdrop, I argue that, even as an urban phenomenon, the agenda setting theory of the media could be effective only in narrowly defined circumstances; besides, as a social sciences hypothesis, the theoretical assumption of the theory's universal applicability renders the claim suspect. Suspect in the sense that we are not dealing with a pure scientific situation but one of a social sciences where we can take a community or any unit of a community – no matter how large or small- and describe it (as this study has done with its field work locations). In the process, one may draw certain conclusions and there may also be a correlation between one community and another far away (but correlation is not causation); but in describing the second community, we also begin by describing its own reality.

For example, statistically, Nigeria's last attempt at a head count of her citizens put the figure at about 120 million people. Today, unofficially, Nigerians argue that if properly enumerated, they are about a 150 million strong. Whatever these figures may in the final analysis turn out to be, about seventy per cent of the people are still believed to live in the rural areas.

Osaghae (1998:15) suggests that by 1996 there were 100 tertiary institutions (37 of these were said to be Universities), but by simple observation one can guess that no fewer than 98% of these institutions like the media are situated around the urban centers. Also, statistics of circulation figures made available to this researcher by three chief executive officers of two national daily newspapers and a weekly magazine show that, the *Guardian* circulates about 100,000 copies daily; the *Vanguard* as at November 2004, circulated 85,000 copies daily too and the *Newswatch* weekly magazine does about 45,000 copies maximum. None of the above figures (going by the confirmations of Izeze and Ekpu respectively that the media in Africa is largely urban based and urban driven, as well as our research findings has proven) is consumed by up to 10% by rural dwellers. On the other hand, Ben Bruce's revelation (private communication February/May, 2005) of the target audience for his electronic media empire did not seem to have considered the rural dweller either.

Thus I argue and perhaps speculate that, the media's agenda setting hypothesis may be a relative thing and not a matter of universal application. Media and politics formed the basis for agenda setting theory's original (Chapel Hill) predictions but the continuous deepening in 'missing systems' or consistent unconcerned attitude of rural Africans towards issues bordering on politics and questions relating to the media – formal or mainstream media that is, seem to raise the critical question mark in the media agenda setting theory's universal applicability. Intuitive data as well as some results of our field analysis attest to this argument, speculation and observation; if not assertion.

For example, in question 5(d), questionnaire 1 (see appendix 3a), 72.2% of our rural sample population would have nothing to do with the question on media; so did 88% in question 7(a), 71.6% in question 9 (c), 84.3% in question 10 (c), 82.8% in question 11 and 83.8% in question 12 (see Appendix 6a).

Although Ray Ekpu advances that media agenda setting capability as an urban phenomenon is plausible, Stanley Macebuh who said he has spent "quite a few years" of his life teaching in Universities and "worrying about scholarship…" postulates that there is no social science theory that can "sensibly or intelligently" be regarded as universal. "None" he says; adding: "and, I do not see this as an exception".

In the foregoing chapter, the findings of our field study and the deductions there from include:

(1) The media could be an urban phenomenon and that what is often regarded as a media agenda is indeed 'source' oriented, that is, "news from somewhere" (Megwa & Brenner, 1988). In other words, the media serves as a conduit, a dynamic process of social interaction where contending issues, ideas, values and opinions of varying interests find a voice.

(2) There (is a relationship or) seem to exist a relationship between media product and the consumers of the product on one hand and the media and media sources on the other.

(3) Consumers of media products do have choices with economic considerations and varying degrees of expected gratifications as against the explanation that individuals tend to accept as important whatever the media considers to be so.

(4) One of the key findings of this study based on the data collected, is that, media availability in Nigeria, as is the case in most of Africa, is limited and as a result rural people in Nigeria may be making important daily decisions not based on media information but on other sources of information - the 'established structures of community'

(5) The universal applicability of the media's agenda setting capability seem to carry with it a question mark, and as such, open to scrutiny and further investigation.

CHAPTER TEN

The Media, Masses and Public Opinion:

So far, we have looked at the agenda setting theory of the media and its shortcomings. Here, we continue to highlight the failure (due to economic considerations – i.e. political economics of the media) of the media in its traditional role as the voice of the voiceless while its masses remain an urban phenomenon (see chapter nine); public interest is as defined by market/political standards and public opinion becomes opinion of the vocal minority.

The media, going by its etymological origins (from the Latin word 'medius'), holds the traditional logic of being the middleman between the feudal land owning class and the proverbial 'common-man'; operating in a social context as a two-way traffic, informing and receiving feedback, educating as well as entertaining its large and diverse audience.

The media hold a unique position in society, first and traditionally seen as voice for the voiceless – i.e. a public arena where all men are equal and free to promote diverse perspectives, independent thought and expressions. That is how the media was seen in the beginning and till date that has been the way practitioners portray themselves and the practice, a people's voice as well as a public interest role-player; and thus the

principal institution of the public sphere or in the rhetoric of 19th century liberalism, "the fourth estate of the realm" (Dahlgren & Sparks, 1993:29)

Croteau & Hoynes (2001:1), confirm that, in recognition of the above, the only business specifically protected by the constitution of the United States of America is the 'free press'. But, the ever-growing integration of big business and those who control economic and political power has turned the media into a cartel – an 'elite power group' engaged in the cross-ownerships of media systems as well as other power collaborations.

Thus, the dilemma, according to Croteau & Hoynes (2001:1) is the yardstick with which to measure (profit or public interest?) or assess the 'changing business of media and its significance for democratic societies'. The authors lament that the tradition of civic responsibility of the media, until recently was widely if not universally accepted; adding that, focus on profit and civic responsibility of the media 'are not either/or propositions'. Instead, they posit, 'the civic responsibilities of media have historically been met within the framework of commercial business' (Croteau & Hoynes, 2001:31).

The code of ethics for the practice of journalism the world over, and especially the United States of America from where most media theories emanate have public enlightenment as "the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy". The

code of ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists according to Croteau & Hoynes (2001), assert that:

The duty of the Journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious Journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty.

Equally, the Principles of the American Society of Newspaper Editors reinforce that, the primary purpose of gathering and distributing news and opinion is to serve the general welfare by informing the people and enabling them to make judgments on issues of the time; and also to ' bring an independent scrutiny to bear on the forces of power in society, including the conduct of official power at all levels of government'.

That is what it ought to be; but it is mostly not the case. Today, the media work in what McQuail (1987:141), calls a field of social forces, where media content is a reflection of practitioners and their organizations – i.e. content is chosen by identifiable individuals or groups, 'telling something of their intentions, attitudes and assumptions about the audience' as 'mass'.

The above forms one of the bases on which we take the view that, these assumptions about the audience as 'mass' may just be limited to a description that fits, to a large extent, an urban phenomenon; because, an urban population as we have said earlier, could be different in many ways and reasons from a typical rural population. Big

business, economic and political power plays are still considerably alien to rural Africa, where, illiteracy, poverty and unemployment reign. Rural Africa has no advertising budget to fit into the framework of big business, media and its cross-ownerships.

As a matter of fact, Africans, especially rural Africans, are by far less likely to read newspapers or watch television and also less disposed, from necessity and habit to take or make opinions from the media than people in any other continent. Ellis & ter Haar (2004:30), confirm the statistical fact. According to them, only 11 newspapers were produced for every thousand people living in Africa, compared with 96 per thousand for the world as a whole. Within the period 1995 – 2000, on the average, 198 people out of every thousand in sub-Saharan Africa had a radio and only 59 per thousand had a television set.

The bulk of the above, one can safely suggest are in the urban areas of Africa and not the isolated and insulated rural Africa where incidentally, majority of the continent's people are located. It therefore follows, that, until proven otherwise, the media's agenda-setting capabilities may for now remain an urban phenomenon. It is not only ambiguous to include rural Africa as a working statistics in the effects of mass media on its 'mass audience', mostly in the area of setting the territorial agenda; it equally lacks empirical impetus.

As already noted earlier in this work, referring to mass media audience as ‘mass’ is rather loose as an idea, for there are no masses but only varying sizes of overlapping minorities as Inglis (1990) asserts, and McQuail (1987:29), observes, the word ‘mass’ is almost impossible to elucidate on its own, because of its many connotations; yet, its ambivalence remain an essential feature.

However, of all the many connotations of ‘mass’, we, for our purpose, are more interested in the word from a social thought viewpoint where it had, and retains, ‘ both strong negative and positive meanings’. The negative meaning of ‘mass’ is derived historically from its use in reference to the ‘mob’ or multitude, especially as relates to (McQuail, 1987:29), ‘ the mass of unruly and ignorant people’. In its positive sense, ‘mass’ has to do with the strength and solidarity of the common-man when organized to achieve a common goal.

Thus this researcher proposes that rural Africa’s populations are, overlapping minorities that constitute the majority of Africa’s people. Rural Africa fits into Blumer’s (1939) classification of a group(s) – small communities if you like – where members know each other, share common values, are aware of their common heritage as well as a stable social relationships structure through which they function – i.e. the established structures of community.

Accordingly, our argument remains and maintains, that, if rural Africa can relatively and reasonably be excluded from the mass media's mass audience, the media may not after all, structure issues for rural Africa nor can it claim or generalize its capability to influence opinions; especially 'public opinion' as per our data, (that is, field/intuitive data,) of the rural African.

Issues of public opinion, rests on the shoulders of public interest; but it is indeed quite often easier for the media to describe, define or identify what by its routine is not in the public interest. By market standards, the economic principle behind modern media, public interest simply becomes what the public is interested in; while Croteau & Hoynes (2001:32) lament that, it is not a ' small task to define what the public interest means or how our mass media can serve in this capacity'.

Therefore, public opinion as presented by the media, it seems, represent the urban opinion of loud minorities in the midst of silent majorities; but conventional wisdom seems to accommodate this view. The elitist view about public opinion suggest that, opinions, wishes and intentions of the loud minority represent majority opinion whereas, those of the silent majority becomes a minority view.

Yet, John Stuart Mill, in his famous 1859 essay declared:

If either of two opinions has a better claim than the other, not merely to be tolerated, but to be encouraged and countenanced, it is the one which happens at the particular

time and place to be in minority. That is the opinion which, for the time being represents the neglected interest, the side of human well-being which is in danger of obtaining less than its share (Moscovici, 1991).

For now, rural Africa keeps her unadulterated opinion to herself, seemingly uninfluenced by modern media and its agenda-setting capabilities, because her neglected interest is not only in danger of obtaining less than her share of coverage and voice; she barely is heard nor seen as confirmed, even by Tichenor etal's (1970), information or knowledge gap hypothesis.

10.1 Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

As clearly stated in our opening chapter (see Focus/Aims in Chapter One) the primary focus of this thesis is electoral politics beginning with the General Ibrahim Babangida led military government days through to Nigeria's return to the rule of republican, democratic principles under President Olusegun Obasanjo. The time line for this study therefore is the period ranging form August 1985 when Babangida toppled in a military putsch the Mohammadu Buhari military junta under which he (Babangida) served as the Chief of Army Staff, all through the Ernest Shonekan led ING contraption, the frightening and excruciatingly painful five years of Abacha reign and the brief (less than one year) transitory rule of General Abdulsalam Abubakar and his subsequent hand-over of the reigns of political power to the sitting President, Obasanjo, in May 1999. The period put together spans twenty years, that is, 1985-2005. The time line

above has as its special reference the rural dweller and the effects of media agenda setting on the one hand and on the other also to investigate whether this study's proposition – the other neglected agents of power or the established structures of community - prepare the grounds for an issue and then gets promoted to a dominant height by the media.

The aims of this study as enunciated in our opening chapter included to investigate the media's capability in raising the importance of an issue in the public's mind, as well as verify the roles played by what this study calls the other neglected agents of power or established structures of community in setting (a) the territorial agenda and (b) the formation of public opinion. The usage of the word "territorial" to qualify agenda is deliberate and convenient; as its purpose is to enable us distinctly refer to the agenda's of the urban and rural dwellers respectively as agenda of different territories.

This study's investigation of the media's capability (using our qualitative approach) in raising the importance of an issue in the public's mind reveal that first of all, the media's "public" seem to be predominantly an urban public whose elites' agenda invariably becomes the media agenda (except in very rare cases). This is working from the premise that the media in most African countries are urban based and urban driven to the extent that the media itself becomes part of the urban elite and thus an urban phenomenon.

At the elementary level, the media's capability to raise the importance of an issue in the public's mind seem to have gained currency as a probable off-shoot of the heroic concept of the journalist, especially of the print variety who see themselves as representatives and voice of the public rather than those elected to govern and the elites of society as representatives: but strangely enough at the critical level, it is the opinions, wishes, interests and preferences of government and society's elites that the media quite often seem to advance as an 'agenda with the capability to structure issues for its audience'. Where this is not the case, then the media seem simply to be re-echoing or placing emphasis on public wishes and preferences that already exist, but made to look more like the media's original agenda.

Rather than a capability to structure issues for its audience overwhelmingly as the media and worshipers at its temple would want us to believe, we propose that there are general attitudes for which the media serves simply as a conduit to propagate by often times working on the basis of a general assumption within community or society. The Nigerian society for example, having had a bitter experience with governance of the military variety resents anything that scents or even remotely smells of tyranny, dictatorship or authoritarian tendencies and so a newspaper or magazine that comments on the issue in its editorial opinion column cannot claim to have invented or even be responsible for that attitude; nor can it claim to be raising in the public's mind the importance in the dangers of authoritarian tendencies. The media in most instances we believe are interpreting already existing attitudes, feelings, opinions expressed by the

public, the proprietor, the trade unionist, an important citizen or community leader or even the environmental campaigner, to which government sometimes reacts or responds.

On the other hand we believe that the media with its fast and wide outreach network could elevate to dominant height already existing attitudes and or opinions concerning an issue that begs for government attention or wider public discourse. Between these two – the media is either interpreting existing attitudes or it is elevating to dominant height existing opinions – there seems to be in existense a symbiotic relationship that brings about some response or reaction on the part of both the public and government.

Let us take the issue of the speaker and Toronto certificates for example. Ordinarily, it will seem as if the media treatment – 'expose' – of the issue demonstrates a capability to raise the importance in the issue; but the truth remains, the fact that the media was simply promoting to dominant height an attitude and opinion that resents a behaviour considered unacceptable and unbecoming of the holder of a high public office such as that of a speaker. Besides, this study proposes that this particular issue may have been the agenda of somebody somewhere who probably did not think that Salisu Buhari was worthy of the high office he occupied and so fed it into the system as rumour, beginning first as a common place gossip, which brings us to the next aim/focus of this study which is, to verify the role played by the other neglected agents of power in setting the territorial agenda and perhaps the formation of 'public' opinion.

(2) About thirty-one percent (31.3%) of rural dwellers, 13.5% of urban people and 5% of journalists sampled respectively said they first heard of 'Toronto certificates' courtesy of the established structures of community; only 10.9% of rural dwellers and expectedly 56.5% of urban people and 95% of our journalists respectively attributed their source to the media. Also, although over 31% of (understandable) rural people said their decision to vote for a party was informed by the established structures of community, just 5% of journalists and 5.4% urban respondents respectively admit that they heard of the alleged PDP electoral malpractice through the media. Twenty-five percent (25%) of journalists confirm that the allegation was a commonplace gossip backed by the media and an equally significant 25.4% of urban respondents also agree with them.

The above are confirmations from our field survey that not only do these other neglected agents prepare the grounds for an issue to be elevated to dominant heights by the media but equally, they function in conjunction with the media to set an agenda. This again seem to answer the question as to whether the other neglected agents or established structures of community is synergistic with the media in the formation or shaping of public opinion or it is simply what the media treat or consider important that set the agenda and thus shape our opinion – the third focus/aim of this study.

(3) Even as an urban phenomenon, the media works in synergy with the established structures of community in setting an agenda. This is amply demonstrated in our

chapter on rumour as raw material of the media or better still, rumour as a multi-step flow process of news or information diffusion as well as other examples obtained in the analysis of our field study in chapter nine where for example, information required by the police to function effectively are obtained mostly through sources of the established structures of community. This information when utilised by the police in turn become front and cover page stories for the media, especially of the print variety thus a "media agenda" in most cases.

As for the formation of public opinion, this researcher has argued and continues to argue that depending on who is defining public opinion or interest, it is quite often the opinion of the vocal minority that even conventional wisdom seem to accept over and above those of the silent majority. Even the media that assumes for the public complicates matters with the introduction of journalism's brand of dictatorship into the issue of opinion and public opinion formation.

That however is not to say that there is neither public opinion nor its formation. We are saying instead that, often, media induced or media generated public opinions are not in our context true reflections of public opinion, interests or preferences. For example, South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki and his now not only popular but seemingly adequate and comprehensive "mbizos" with the "people"; especially those in the native lands. "Mbizo" is a Zulu word that can be translated as pockets of meetings or gatherings of open discussions with the "people". These "mbizos" are of course

covered by the media; but one can arguably say that these "mbizos", to the "people", are probably more meaningful and useful than perhaps the media agenda of "HIV" campaigns. We, in this study take the view and place more premium on the formation of public opinion by informal channels of communications – the established structures of community – than any formal media would claim to do. This view is also premised on the facts from the results of our field survey on the "Senate President, the Mace and the Cave Python" as well as intuitive data.

Two years (or thereabout) before the incident, the atmosphere was thick with gossip and rumour of the Presidency's dictatorial tendencies and a will to control the Senate, which had not been successful due to then Senate President, late Chuba Okadigbo's uncompromising stance. During the incidence of the disappearance of the Mace from the Senate Chambers and Okadigbo's revelation of where he claimed to have taken the Mace to, the media seem to have treated and considered as important an angle to the story. The impression one got during that period was that the media seem to have "primed", "framed" and perhaps selected the angle of where the Mace was allegedly taken to. But according to Macebuh (and some indications from the opinions of the 1,000 Nigerians surveyed), that, did not seem to have had any significant influence or effect on the subsequent opinion of the public. Rather than the media angle – a seemingly media agenda – 59.5% of urban respondents put the issue at the Presidency's will or desire to control the Senate and Okadigbo's refusal. Eighty percent of journalists sampled said the same; and that leaves one wondering if indeed 80% of

our twenty journalists (limited as this may be) feel that the issue had to be the Presidency's desire or plan to control the Senate, then whose agenda was the staccato coverage of the Mace being in a python's cave?

The aim/focus of the study also included arguing that, in the context of poor mass media cultures like it is in Africa, especially rural Africa; modern or mainstream media may probably not set the territorial agenda for a people who operate from the prism of the established structures of community. Further we argued that the socio-economic conditions of the majority of the continents people and how isolated and insulated they are by and from modern media, question, significantly, the universal applicability of the media's capability to structure issues, even in rural Africa where the people did not seem to fit in totally as part of the 'mass' of the mass media.

Ben Murray Bruce, Chairman of the Silverbird group confirms that "rural Africa" is not part of his media's 'mass' audience. In a private communication with this researcher, Mr. Bruce explained: "Our target audiences for the radio stations are city dwellers between the ages of 15 to 45. For TV, it is between 2 and 45 and for the Cinema, all ages – middle class and above".

Evidently, Bruce's radio station is not the only one and it is arguable that Bruce's is urban centred, urban driven and commercially driven too; unlike many other government owned 'grass root-oriented' radio stations. It can also be argued that,

nothing in Bruce's statement show or indicate that, rural dwellers would refuse to or be incapable of tuning in and benefiting from Bruce's radio.

However, if our earlier argument in chapter five (5.5: The Electronin Media … see pages 154/55) that: … *Nigeria's radio and television industry presents the two faces of contradiction by responding on the one hand, to elitist pressure to privatize and commercialize (to capitalize or 'cash-in' on the abundant but sophisticated telecommunications services from the west) while on the other, also making efforts as exemplified in Radio Nigeria and NTA (not necessarily with the aim to reflect divergent views, hues and shades of opinions) to simply produce and present "popular entertainment programming for the masses"*, and if Ben Bruce's position, arguable as it is, is anything to go by, it appears that for rural Africa, the "Established Structures of Community" remain the predominant source of information exchange.

Gossip may carry with it certain negative connotation in Chapel Hill and rumour in its purest of meanings may not represent the best form of information exchange in Erie county Ohio or Elmira, New York (all these happen to be centres where media effects propostion/studies were conducted), but in Africa, especially rural Africa, they are neither called gossip nor rumour. They are simply communication, 'mouth-to-mouth' (person-to-person) communication, and the process of taking information from one source to another source. It is the determined and predominant existence of this mode

of communication and information exchange that this study proposes as: Radio Wahala (explained in 3.8 – theoretical framework – and proposed in 10.2).

4. To attempt a location of the boundaries of agenda setting theory with some other models of mass communication effects studies is another aim/focus of this study. Although the study attempted this conceptual complements/convergence with the theoretical concepts of gatekeeping, the two-step/multi-step flow and the spiral of silence in our literature review chapter, our survey of the opinions of 100 Nigerians seem to confirm and I propose that there is indeed some conceptually complementing and converging qualities between the media's agenda setting theory and the 'U & G' approach which is a functional shift in focus from the communicator to the recipient of the communication.

Deductions from our survey of the opinions of 100 Nigerians – "buying the news …" strongly suggest that contrary to agenda setting theory's claim that people judge as important what the media considers to be so, the media audience deliberately make choices of media content to satisfy specific needs and also has expectations from and considerations for what they read.

The above is not applicable only to our urban respondents but also our rural dwellers that own or possess modern media tools such as radio and television. Our survey respondents answers relating to media influence and what uses they put media products

into confirm Mcquail & Windahl's (1981) observation that a good deal of media content is potentially informative and we propose also, more entertaining than persuasive. For example whereas some of our urban respondents like Ade say that they like reading the newspapers to confirm stories of rumours of corruption in high places, most of our rural respondents confirm they own the radio/tv for entertainment and 'other' reasons than being persuaded by it.

Further deductions from "buying the news …" observes and I propose that the media even as an urban phenomenon do not completely possess the overwhelming capability to structure issues and accordingly I advance, with the =N=55 million scandal story as a backdrop, that quite often the media agenda is a "source agenda" simply heightened and propagated by the media. The media as we have argued elsewhere in this thesis is a conduit for the advancement and propagation of a variety of agendas and may in the process contribute to a convergence of the various agendas; but that, McQuail (1987:276) concurs is a different matter from the media "setting any particular one of them".

Perhaps one of the revealing and instructive findings of this thesis is that of people – urban people – not being able to or may be simply shying away form identifying a specific media source which they have earlier claimed as their source to particular information. The feeling that leaves one with, and I propose, is that quite often when people say the media is their source they have no specific media source and may have

picked up their information through an established structure of community but for whatever reason would rather attribute the source to a generalised "the media said so". Again that leaves this researcher wondering if the media's claim of affecting and influencing attitudes and opinions is not a little bit an exaggerated one. That is, considering the fact that respondents will claim the media as their "general" source to a news item or piece of information but when asked "which of the media?" the response becomes so insignificant when compared to the earlier overwhelming "yes" the media said so or "from the media" answer.

At least in the case of our rural people who claimed – 21.4% of them – that the media was their source of rumours of election day violence (question 5c in questionnaire II) but could not substantiate their claim, owned up – 12.3% of them – (in question 5d) that "someone who read, heard or saw the news" (thus an established structure of community) told them; but our urban respondents can't identify their source of media and as such recording an unusually high percentage of "missing system".

In questionnaire 2, question II, urban dwellers were requested to name their source of information concerning "the speaker and Toronto certificates", and 86.5% of them said "through the media". But when asked to identify the particular media – mainstream that is – (newspaper or magazine, radio, TV or 'other' such as the internet etc) in question IIa, 78.9% of respondents became "missing system", 13.5% said the newspaper was

their source, 2.2% went for TV and 5.4% ticked 'other'. What is more instructive however, is that, 95% of our journalists who responded to the same question mentioned the media as their source; but only 20% (15% = newspaper and 5% = other) identified a media. An entire 80% of the journalists were a "missing system". One wonders therefore, if indeed the media as a source of information exchange is capable of structuring issues for its audience and whether, the media's claimed capability to structure issues, especially for rural dwellers is not somewhat exaggerated? Even by its practitioners?

However, there may be some other dynamic taking place here though, that is, using the diffusion theory and multi-step flow of information theory, one could explain this influence dynamic as: those in this study who indicated that the mass media were their sources of information may have done so for ego reasons or may have gotten this information from some one who actually read or watched or listened to the news and told them they got it from the news media. This researcher is also aware of a possible recall issue here, that is, the difficulty in recalling the source of media information when that medium is non-existent.

Also, giving the culture of politics and cultural patterns in rural African towns and villages, it is possible that respondents, as the study has indicated, did not want to mess with the question. Perhaps, that pretty much accounted for the considerably large number of "missing data" recorded by the researcher in the survey.

10.2 Radio Wahala

With radio Wahala the concept of the opinion leader is more prevalent not in the sense of the formal media but in the sense of the informal where information given and received are trusted because they are given to and taken from people who share, believe and trust in their common heritage more than any formal media of information exchange. They do not depend or believe in formal or mainstream media for their information exchange and communication needs. They are part of the thriving media themselves as they place more premium on what they thought of from person-to-person at their different centres of congregation – the village or town square, community market, moonlight story telling sessions; community, village or family meetings, marriage ceremonies etc.

Radio Wahala brings with it a very strange but unique set of practices of information exchange. Strange in the sense that you have to belong to understand the process and procedure hence people from urban centres when found in this setting are often guided and directed on "what to say and how to say it" to flow along with the native practitioners of radio Wahala.

However, radio Wahala seems to be erecting a new hegemony. Hegemony of people we can in formal terms refer to as opinion leaders. They are respected, trusted and the political class it seems has started tapping into the unique and rich resources of rural

Africa's radio Wahala; with visitations to and oath takings at the shrines of rural Africa.

Last Line:

There is a need, not just to define the limits of the powers of the media but in fact to challenge the media to seek to redefine its whole existence and its role in society in order to perhaps begin to see its self differently than it sees it's self presently.

The media and its capability to structure issues is limited in scope and even by its definition as an urban phenomenon; and as such beyond serving as a conduit may be applicable in only narrowly defined circumstances. But the media sees itself differently. It sees it's self as an all powerful, omnipotent effect; with the capability to make its audience accept as important what it considers to be so.

What we have attempted in this study, like every research endeavour, is to redefine the frontiers of human activity, human conduct and in this case, as it were, the media. Perhaps it is when the media sees itself and its operations differently than it does now that its true powers and influence will be more manifest; in a media that is devoid of influences "alien to the media itself". That is, a media that has a 'certain agenda'. A media that defines the concept of public opinion within the collective realm, as it was in the beginning, in place of the media that links the collective welfare to individual ideas, and preferences.

For now, the media's capability to structure issues – that is – a media agenda seem plausible as a 'Chapelhill phenomenon' but an 'uncertain agenda' in Africa, especially rural Africa.

Recommendation:

The findings in this study has created opportunities for further studies, using, more of traditional agenda setting studies approaches such as, probabilistic research designs as well as more systematically exploring the relationship between 'source agenda', the "Established Structures of Community" and media agenda on the one hand and media agenda and public agenda on the other.

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Gossip journals, News magazines and Newspapers

Excellence, (May 11-17, 2004: 9)

For: "…but rumour mongers think otherwise…"

Encomium, (Tuesday July 29, 2003)

See: Pg.7 for stories being "…bandied about Balogun"

pg. 9 for "Our source also squealed"

Pg. 10 on Omisore – "While he was a businessman/contractor trailed by rumours…"

Pg. 12 on ex-governor Lawal – "the gist in town…"

Pg. 12 – for AIG Ige in the Anambra crisis

Pg. 19 – "…a bird squealed…" on Pat Utomi.

Pg. 29 "…story making the rounds…" about Segua Arinza

Pg.32 – GIST CAFÉ (by Stella Dimoko-Korkus) uses: "my well-schooled 'Tatafo', 'Olofofos', 'gist merchant' …".

- Tuesday, April 29, 2003. pg.12 "…gossip merchants…"

- Tuesday, July 22, 2003 (pg. 22) for Ben Bruce's comment on TV in Bayelsa and pg. 24 for question on rumour about affair with first lady

- Tuesday, January 6, 2004 "…It is now being rumoured in Kano…" that, Mohammed Abacha will declare for the ANPP – pg. 13

Pg. 19 "the story that swirled all over…" was for Atiku to make … wife No. 5

Fame

- Tuesday, July 15-21, 2003. For: – "'…a gist merchant' brought that story about Khairat Gwadabe's auto-crash, then another gossip is here with tale of how relationship with… Gbenga Aluko..." Then, 'tale bearer swore' to how close the two were in each others arms; and concluding that, the story was "justa gist"… "but hardly can there be smoke without fire…"

City People (Nigeria's largest circulating softsell)

- March, 24, 2004 pg.20 – 'Top 419 king pin kills brother over $15 000". Note: "what has really kept tongues wagging …", just as they "gathered" (pg. 50) that 'Prof. Tiyamiyu Belo-Osagie intervened…'

- May 19, 2004. pg. 5: "Lagos celebrity Lady, Derin Ogedengbe remarries" – "Rumours of Derin's romance with Kunle … has been in the air for months…" Pg. 12. "Gists from" the states - i.e. "Edo/Delta", "Kwara" etc. *City People* usually "gathered that" (e.g. Pg. 29 real reasons Senators want Wabara out…" pg. 12 – "pastor in sex scandal with Colleague's daughter" etc. just like they "gathered" in "New mafia takes over at Aso Rock" (pg.31) that the mafia "endeared itself to the president through its brilliant ideas…"

Guardian 2003

- Friday, July 11: "political crisis rocks Anambra" (F/P = front page and at other times, full page). pg.5: - "Ezeife, Ajulukukwu decry crisis in Anambra" etc

- Monday, July 14: "Ngige tells of govt. in bandage, wants foes tried for treason". Pg. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. F/P 8 & 9 - "why they tried to kill me" by Chris Ngige etc.

- Tuesday, July 15: "Assembly admits error, reverses self on Ngige's ouster. Governor swears in new aides". + More stories on the same issue – ("NBA demands trial fo Ngige's abductors, others" etc) on pages 2&3, 4, 5, 6. 8/9 (f/p), 10 too.

- July 16 – All 5 stories on the f/p (except for an eye-catching Mandela picture) dealt with the Ngige/Anambra issue e.g. "governor demands probe of treason in Anambra". "Ohaneze meets this week over Ngige's abduction crisis". "Senate … probe Anambra crisis". "Ige acted without IG's consent, say police"

"Anambra House removes speaker, may impeach deputy governor". Pages 2, 4. 8/9 plus three features articles on pg. 59, dealt with the Anambra crisis.

- Thursday, July 17: One of the five front page stories dealt with the Anambra issue. Parts of pg. 2, 3. f/p 8/9. pg. 20 Editorial ("Treason in Anambra State"), pg.77 and one feature article ("Dancing with the Devil" by Okey Ndibe).
- Friday, July 18: Four of the five lead stories which spilt over to parts of pages 2&3, pg 23, and f/p 24/25 were on the Ngige/Anambra crisis.

- Saturday, July 19: Front page = 2, pg. 3 = 1, pg. 5 = 1, pgs. 14 = 1, 15 = 1, and B1-B5 = 3

- Sunday July 20: About 10 = 4 stories + columns, comments

- Monday, July 28: Five feature articles

Note: Accusation of President Obasanjo as an accomplice in the Anambra crisis

- Sun July 19, 2003 pg. 38 – "Presidency is behind Anambra crisis –Mbadinju"
- January 9, 2004 – "Obasanjo shuns me – Ngige" Pgs. 4, 8, 20 too, same stories. "Ngige: Igbo Assembly accuses Obasanjo of … crisis" – pg. 8
- Monday, July 28 pg. 8/9 "Sao Tome coup as metaphor for Anambra Treason: read Obasanjo's life"
- Sunday, Oct. 17: Front page - "Achebe rejects honour"

Punch 2003:

- July 19: "Ngige: Uba took me to a shrine" (front page but story on pg. 10)

- July 19, 2003: "Anambra coup: In the end, this crisis will define who Obasanjo really is" (pg.3)

Vanguard

- Friday, December 3, 2004: Rimi, Tahir blast Obasanjo on Anambra mayhem.

The Comet

- Thursday, April 22, 2004: pg 11 "John Keni releases military records".

Thisday 2003

- Jluy 14: Ananbra: F/p - "AIG Ige fired. PDP report blames police. Anti-Ngige forces regroup, says govt. aide… mob attacks house member."

  Pg. 15 - Ngige: The demystification of a godfather (by the papers political Editor – Chukwudi Nwabuko. Note: pg. for Presidency's alleged involvement, PDPs rigging and Uba's sponsorship of 'everybody').

- July 16: "Ngige: Anambra speaker impeached. Deputy governor served impeachment notice … 35 Govs. want S'Court Judge to Head Inquiry". "Anambra Coup: Any end to the crisis?" and "When gangsters hijack government …"

- July 18: "Anambra: PDP expels Dep. Gov., Uba, others. Recommends trial of coupists. Police can't treat AIG Ige, says IGP …" "Our story, by Udeh, six others". Pg. 13 – all stories except one, dealt with the "Anambra coup" and the abduction of Ngige. Pg 22 - "AASDU condemns abduction of" the Governor. Pg.25 - "Traditional rulers of Anambra State …" pg. 44 – "Anambra State professional & Business group …" and ended with: "Mr. President must not sweep this under the carpet"

- July 21: Front page Editorial – "As the clouds gather…" pg. 64 - Anambra: The sudden fall of a God father.

2004:

- January 5: "Court orders IG to remove Ngige'. Bak page - "Anambra: An unending drama (by Chukwudi Nwabuko)

- May 9: pg 2 – 'Ngige flags – off =N=1b. Nibo-Mbaukwu 14km rd". pg. 7 – "Anambra: LG polls list intact – Okoye". NOTE: November 10 & 11 mayhem in Awka (Nov. 20, page 4…). Nov 28. Back pg "Suday comment – The Anambra challenge. Enib "Why Ngige should not live"

Tell

- July 7, 2003: Ekitu Governor: The face of fraud … he forged our certificate – Ibadan polytechnic.

- see page 27 of Tell July 14, 2003. Also see "the feuding Generals" on page 28

- Nov 22, 2004: how Uba's Army soaked Anambra

- January 3, 2005: Kalu took us to Okija Shrine – Ex-special Advisor

Newswatch

- July 14 2003: "Nigeria's richest crooks …" (with pictures of Ajudua, Nwude, Ibekwe, Anajemba & Toyin Igbira)
- July 21: "Governor Udenwa and his 419 friends" (pictures of Udenwa, Amadi, Okoro, Igbokwe …) "How they helped his re-election. The crisis they are causing"

- July 28: “I’m governor of the good, the bad, and the ugly – Udenwa”.

- May 26, 2003: “ The new godfathers: the governors they sponsored. The price they’re asking for” (with pictures of Sijuade, Saraki, Uba, Rimi, Anenih and Adedibu).

- July 28: Chris Uba: Aso Rock mercenary in Anambra

The Sun 2003

- July 19: pg. 10 – “In Anambra, Merchants masquerades as politicians” (by Kezie Ogaziechi).
- pg. 37 - “I weep for Anambra” (currents with Wale Sokunbi)
- pg. 38 - “Anambra crisis: We are vindicated says CNPP”

- January 9, 2004: front page Editorial – “Anambra: Enough of this madness”. Pg. 4 - “IG strips Uba”. Pgs. 8 - 9 & 10 too.
- Nov 28: pg. 11 - “Ngige, Uba are deceiving the people - Obi”. Pg. 17 f/p ad. By the ‘APF’ - “Time for a lasting truce in Anambra State”. Pg. 27 - “Chris Ngige versus Chris Uba” (by San Omatsaye). Pg. 40 - “Chris Uba and the rest of us”

- Nov 29: pg. 9 - “Ngigate: Obasanjo’s exit opportunity” – by B. Olasope

APPENDIX 1

NIGERIA: 1899 – today.

1899

Three separate entities – i.e.

- the Lagos Colony (under direct British rule);

-the Niger Coast Protectorate (under company rule by royal charter granted by Britain);

-Royal Niger Protectorate (under charter rule by the Royal Niger Company) existed in the area to be known later as Nigeria.

1906

Protectorates of Lagos and Niger Coast brought under single colonial administration.

1914

The southern and northern protectorates of the colony, was amalgamated.

1941

Demise, of Nigerian Youth Movement founded in 1936 over leadership crisis with ethnic undertones generated by party nominations for legislative council elections; Nnamdi Azikiwe was said to be involved in the controversy.

1943

Bauchi Improvement Association founded by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Aminu Kano and others.

1944

Founding of National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC), it became known from the 1960s as National Council of Nigerian Citizens, following excision of Southern Cameroon from Nigeria. Herbert Macaulay was its president and Nnamdi Azikiwe the secretary.

1945

March 2:

The 'Egbe Omo oduduwa', was founded as a cultural organization by Yoruba students (including Obafeni Awolowo) in London; and Constitutional proposals also made by colonial Governor Arthur Richards.

1947

January1:

Richards Constitution comes into effect; creates regional legislative councils for the north, East and wes

1949

Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) founded as cultural organization.

March – September:

Conferences held at divisional, provincial and regional levels on a new constitution.

1950

Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) founded by Malam Aminu Kano.

1951

March:

Action Group (AG) founded by prominent Yoruba politicians, including Obafeni Awolowo, largely by transforming 'Egbe Omo Oduduwa' into a party.

October:

Northern Peoples Congress transformed into a party.

1951 –1952

Nigeria's first general election held with NCNC, AG and NPC participating as major political parties.

1952

January:

New Constitution takes effect.

1953

April 1:

Anthony Enahoro, AG backbencher in Central Legislature, introduces private member's bill demanding self–governance for Nigeria; move not supported by northern leaders, who were booed by Lagos crowd.

1954

New Constitution officially adopts federal framework of governance for Nigeria.

1956

May 15-19:

Riots in Kano, in which 36 Southerners, mainly Igbo, are reportedly Killed and 277 wounded; Northern leaders demand dissolution of Nigeria.

October 1:

Nigeria gains independence from Britain.

November:

Treason trial involving Chief Obafeni Awolowo and 24 others begins in Lagos.

1963

August 8:

Mid – Western Region created.

August 13:

All– party interim government set up: for the Mid – Western Region.

September 11:

Chief Obafeni Awolowo and 18 other leaders of action Group convinced on treason charges.

October 1:

Nigeria becomes a republic.

November:

Fresh census figures put Nigeria's population at 55.67 million.

1964

March 10:

The dissolution of Akintola's party (UPP), and the emergence of NNDP.

June 3:

UPGA (United Progressive Grand Alliance) formed from NCNC, AG, and NPF.

August 20:

Nigerian National Alliance is formed from NPC, MDF (Movement for Democratic Congress).

December 12:

Post – independence parliamentary election and its crisis began.

1965

January 7:

List of Ministers in a broad – based government of Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa released.

February 16:

Major – General Aguyi Ironsi named Head of Nigeria's Army.

October 11- December:

Election to the western House of Assembly ends in violence and disorder; and the political crisis deepens.

1966

January 15:

First Military coup in Nigeria: Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa and Finance Minister Okotie-Eboh, killed .

January 16:

Acting President of the Senate, hands over power to the army.

May 29:

Riot in Northern Region resulting in the killing of Ibos .

July 29:

A counter coup: Aguiyi – Ironsi and Adekunle Fajuyi killed.

July 31:

Lt Col Yakubu Gowon assumes offices as head of state.

August 2:

Awolowo, Enahoro and four others released from jail.

September-October:

National Conference to determine Nigeria's future form of government opens in Lagos - i.e. Ad Hoc constitutional conference.

1967

January 4:

Meeting of Supreme Military Council in Accra: Lt Cols Gowon and Ojukwu meet for the first time since armed revolt of 29 July. Others present at the meeting include Adeyinka Adebayo, David Ejoor, Hasan Katsina, Joseph Wey, Mobolaji Johnson, Kam-Selem and Omo-Bare. This was the Aburi meeting aimed at forestalling an imminent civil war.

March 9:

Another meeting of Nigeria's Military rulers: (first since Aburi Summit) held at Isiuwa village near Benin. All members were present except Ojukwu.

May 27:

Twelve new states creation out of the existing four regions.

May 30:

General mobilization of troops throughout the country ordered, by the head of state.

May 30:

Ojukwu, then Military governor of the East Central State declares former Eastern region a Sovereign State: the Republic of Biafra.

July 6:

Fighting begins, between Nigerian and Biafran Armies at border towns between Benue-Plateau and East Central States - i.e. Nsuka (the start of civil war).

1970

January 11:

Ojukwu escapes at dawn: flies to Ivory Coast on exile.

January 12:

Biafra surrenders: signaling the end of hostilities.

October 1:

Gowon announces return to civil rule in 1976.

1973

November/December:

Nigeria's population figure given as, 79.76 and later annulled.

1974

October 1:

Gowon postpones indefinitely the return to civil rule.

1975

July 29:

Nigeria's third Military coup: Murtala Mohammed overthrows the nine-year old government of General Gowon who was absent in Kampala, Uganda.

October 1:

Mohammed announces return to civic rule in 1979.

1976

February 3:

Seven new stats and a decree on new Federal Capital created and announced.

February 13:

General Murtala Muhammed assassinated in abortive coup attempt; Lt General Olusegun Obasanjo appointed as new Head of state and Commander-in chief of the Armed Forces.

May 5:

Yakubu Gowon declared wanted person: accused of complicity in the failed coup.

1977

July 26:

Federal Government orders Permanent Secretaries and heads of Department to take immediate disciplinary action against any Public officer still a member of any secret society.

1978

September 21:

Ban on politics lifted; new Federal Constitution adopted.

September 22:

Unity party of Nigeria (UNP) and Nigerian People's party (NPP) founded in Lagos.

September 23:

National party of Nigeria (NPN) formed in Lagos.

December 22:

Registration: UPN, NPN, GNPP, NPP and PRP as the political parties eligible, to run for the 1979 general elections (return to civilian rule).

1979

February 1:

New Federal Capital sited at Abuja.

July 7:

Senatorial elections held.

July 17:

House of Representatives elections held.

July 21:

State assembly elections held.

July 28:

Gubernatorial elections held.

August 11:

Presidential elections held.

October 1:

Nigeria returns to civilian rule after 13years of military regime: Alahji Shehu Shangari, sworn in as the country's President; State Governors sworn in too.

1980

February 27:

Ban lifted on *Newbreed*, a fortnightly newsmagazine.

May 24:

28 suspects interrogated for a foiled coup attempt.

December 22:

Fundamentalist muslim (Maitatsine) riots in Kano: over 250 killed.

1981

July 10:

Another major religious riot in Kano.

1982

July 14:

Chief M.K.O. Abiola, Chairman of Ogun state branch of the NPN, announces resignation from partisan politics.

October 29:

Major religious riot in Kaduna.

1983

January 17:

Federal Minister of Internal Affairs, Alhaji Ali Baba, gives illegal aliens 14 days notice to leave the country.

December 31:

Shagari's civilian Government toppled in Nigeria's fifth military coup.

1984

January 1:

New military Government bans political parties in Nigeria.

January 2:

The new Military Government announces the composition of a Supreme Military council (SMC) with the new Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Major General Muhammadu Buhari as Chairman.

1985

August 27:

Nigeria's sixth Military coup announced early in the day by Brigadier General Joshua Dogonyaro, Major-General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief of Army Staff in the overthrown military regime, becomes the new military President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

December 20:

Government announces uncovering of an attempted coup; Military officers, including Major-General Mamman Vasta Federal Capital Territory Minister, arrested.

1986

January 1:

Return to civil rule debate begins.

October 19:

Dele Giwa killed by a letter bomb.

1987

March:

Christian-Muslim clashes in northern cities of Kaduna, Katsina, Kafanchan and Zaria.

April 8:

Government proscribe *Newswatch* magazine.

June 29:

Military Government inaugurates Religious Council: Leaders pledge to keep peace.

July:

Government releases White Paper on political debate and announces 'Handover' date of 1992.

September:

Two new states of Katsina and Akwa Ibom created, bringing the number to 21.

September 7:

Government announces banning of all convicted former public officers from participating in politics.

1988

January 21:

Lagos High Court orders the Attorney-General of Lagos State to initiate criminal proceedings against Director of Military Intelligence, Col. Akilu and Deputy Director, State Security Service, Lt Col A.K. Togun, over the murder of Dele Giwa.

November 28:

Federal Government halts the Sharia debate at the Constituent Assembly, indicating that assembly members exceeded their brief.

December 7:

The Constituent Assembly endorses the secularity of the Nigerian State.

December 12:

Local Government election held on non-party basis.

1989

May 3:

Government lifts ban on party politics; politicians asked to form parties.

October 7:

Two-party system adopted and two Government-formed parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) also named.

1990

April 22:

Nigeria's eight military coup (though abortive) led by Major Gideon Okar.

December 8:

Local Government election on party basis held.

1991

April:

Muslim-Christian conflicts in northern state of Bauchi.

August 27:

Nine new states created, bringing the number of states to 30.

December 12:

Federal capital moved to Abuja.

December 14:

Governorship and State House of Assembly elections held.

1992

January 2:

Date of presidential election shifted to December 5; while handover date is now January ’93.

July 4:

Election into Federal Legislative Houses held. August 1, Presidential primaries in both parties begin.

October 16:

Government cancels presidential primaries over alleged irregularities.

October 16:

Government dissolves executive committees of both parties for complicity in the cancelled presidential primaries; caretaker committees set up to oversee party affairs.

November 17:

Shift in handover date to August 27, 1993.

1993

February 6:

Presidential primaries begin at the ward level.

March:

National conventions of both parties held to elect presidential candidates: Chief M.K.O .Abiola for SDP and Alhaji Bashir Tofa for NRC chosen by their respective parties.

May 5:

Government convenes National Assembly, which plays subservient role to unelected National Defense and Security Council (NDSC).

June 10:

Abuja High Court restraints the national electoral body from conducting
The Presidential election scheduled for 12 June.

June 12:

Presidential election held nationwide without disruptions.

June 15:

Abuja High court restrains Electoral commission from announcing the results of the presidential election.

June 23:

Military Government announces the annulment of the presidential election.

August 26:

General Babangida 'steps aside' and installs an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan.

November 10:

A Lagos High Court declares the Interim National Government illegal.

November 17:

General Sani Abacha, Minister of Defence, takes over power in Nigeria's ninth coup plot.

1994

June:

Undeclared winner of June 12, elections, Chief M.K.O. Abiola,, declares self, winner and goes into hiding.

July:

Abiola arrested and detained.

July:

Labour strike over June 12, annulment; the strike paralyses country.

1995

March:

Former Head of State, General Olusegum Obasanjo, and his Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquaters, Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, arrested on allegation of plotting coup against Abacha's Government.

October:

General Abacha announces three-year transition programme.

October 6:

Elder statesman Chief Alfred Rewane, murdered in his house by unidentified gunmen.

October 11:

Generals Obasanjo, Yar'Adua and four journalists convicted for complicity in a coup plot.

November:

Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni minority rights activists executed.

1996

February:

Alex Ibru, publisher of The Guardian and former Internal Affairs Minister in the Abacha Government, shot in Lagos.

April:

Dasuki, the sultan of Sokoto dethroned.

June:

Wife of acclaimed winner of the June 12, 1993, presidential election, Kudirat Abiola, shot dead in Lagos.

October 1:

Six new states created, bringing the number of states to 36.

1997

December:

General Yar'Adua dies at Abakaliki Prison while serving a 25-year jail term for alleged coup plotting.

1998

March 22:

Visiting Pope John Paul II meets with General Abacha on the political situation in Nigeria.

June 8:

General Abacha dies in Abuja.

June 9:

General Abdulsalami Abubakar moves in as new Head of state.

June 15:

Jailed General Obasanjo and some other detainees freed.

June 29:

United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan and his Commonwealth counterpart, Emeka Anyaoku, meet with Chief Abiola (still in detention) to discuss the political crisis.

July 7:

Abiola dies in detention.

July 20:

Government dissolves the five political parties.

July 20:

General Abubakar announces a May29, 1999 date, to hand over power to a democratically elected government.

November:

Former Head of State, General Obasanjo, joins the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

December 5:

Local Government elections held nationwide.

December 15:

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recognizes three political parties – i.e. the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All People's Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD).

1999

February 27:

Presidential Elections held.

March 1:

General Obasanjo declared winner of the election.

May 5:

General Abubakar signs the 1999 constitution into law.

May 29:

Nigeria returns to democratic rule, after 15years of Military rule.

June 3:

National Assembly inaugurated.

June 10:

92 army generals retired.

July 22:

Speaker of House of Representatives, Alhaji Salisu Ibrahim, steps down after admitting to forgery of his educational credentials and birth certificate.

October:

Muhammed (son of Abacha) charged with murder.

October 23:

Former Army Chief-of-Staff, Ishaya Bamaiyi, charged in court for attempt on the life of Alex Ibru (Publisher of the *Guardian*).

2000

February 4:

Senator Joseph Waku suspended for advocating military take-over of government in a media interview.

February:

President Obasanjo puts late Head of State, General Sani Abacha's loot at $US 4.3 billion.

February:

About 50 people die as violence erupts in the Northern city of Kaduna between Christians and Muslims over anticipated introduction of the Islamic law, Sharia; Military deployed to curb the violence.

February:

Christians in the Northern state of Kaduna demand own state to end incessant conflict between Christians and Muslims.

February:

Violence in Eastern Nigerian town of Aba (Abia State): residents revenge the killing of their kinsmen in Kaduna.

March 22:

Northern state of Zamfara amputates the hand of a cow thief under the new Islamic Sharia law.

May 29:

Government pardons Nigerian soldiers who fought on the Biafran side during the civil war; dismissal commuted to retirement.

June:

Presidential pardon for former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Salisu Ibrahim, earlier convicted for perjury.

August:

Senate President, Chuba Okadigbo impeached.

August:

President Bill Clinton of United States of America visits Nigeria.

October 1:

APPENDIX 2a (i-iv).

Map of Nigeria showing the country as four regions in 1963, twelve states in 1967, 19 states in 1976 and 30 states in 1991.

APPENDIX 2b

Map of Nigeria today (36 states)

APPENDIX 3a (Research Questionnaire1)

SECTION A:

Please tick good [ ] in any of the boxes you consider as appropriate answer or response to the questions below:

I. What is your sex?

(a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]

II. What is your age bracket?

(a) Below 20 years [ ]

(b) 20 – 30 years [ ]

(c) 30 – 40 years [ ]

(d) 40 – 50 years [ ]

(e) Above 50 years [ ]

3a. What is your occupation?

(a) Housewife [ ] (b) Farmer [ ] (c) Petty trader [ ] (d) employed [ ]

(e) Self-employed [ ] (f) Unemployed [ ] (g) Student [ ] (h) others [ ] i.e. …….. (i) Don't want to answer [ ]

3b. If (g), i.e. student, please indicate type:

(a). Primary School [ ] (b) Secondary School [ ] (c) University [ ]

(d) Others [ ]

4a. Which of the cities below have you visited?

(a) Port Harcourt [ ] (b) Abuja [ ] (c) Awka [ ] (d) Enugu [ ]

(e) Kaduna [ ] (f) Other [ ] (g) None of the above [ ] (h) Can't remember [ ]

4b. If (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e), how often?

(a) Regularly [ ] (b) Couple of times [ ] (c) Once [ ]

(d) Long time ago [ ] (e) Can't remember [ ]

SECTION B:

5a. Did you vote during the April 2003 elections?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ] (c) Not interested [ ] (d) Too afraid to vote [ ]

5b. If your answer to the above is (d), (i.e., too afraid to vote,) please indicate below why:

(a) Rumours of violence [ ] (b) The mood of the community [ ]

(c) Gossips had it that the elections have already been rigged [ ]

(d) For personal reasons [ ] (e) others [ ]

5c. If your answer to the above is (a) or (b), where and how did you get the rumor/ gossip?

(a) Media [ ] (b) from my place of worship, e.g. Church/Mosque/other [ ]

(c) Community leader/those who make decisions in our community [ ]

(d) Community social club/gathering [ ] (e) the community/town market [ ]

5d. If your answer is (a), which of the media?

(a) Newspaper [ ] (b) Radio [ ] (c) TV [ ]

(d) Someone who heard, read or saw the news told me [ ]

6. You voted during the April 2003 elections, which of the following political parties did you vote for?

(a) APGA [ ] (b) ANPP [ ] (c) AD [ ] (d) NDP [ ] (e) PDP [ ] (f) NCP [ ]

(g) other [ ]

7. What informed your decisions to vote for party?

(a) Information from the media [ ]; and if so, which ?

(i) Radio [ ] (ii) Newspaper [ ] (iii) TV [ ] (iv) Others [ ]

(b) Information from within the community/church/mosque/social talk concerning the party/party's candidate [ ]

(c) Rumours/gossip favourable to the party [ ] (d) All of the above [ ]; especially, (a), (b) or (c).

8. Have you ever seen the governor or the president?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ] (c) Don't know [ ] (d) Not sure [ ] (e) Not interested [ ]

9. If yes, how?

(a) In person [ ] (b) Campaign posters [ ] (c) Pictures in the media [ ]; and if so, which?

(i) TV [ ] (ii) Newspaper [ ] (iii)other [ ]

10a. Do you read the newspapers/magazines?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ] (c) Not interested [ ]

10b. If yes how often?

(a) Regularly [ ] (b) sometimes [ ] (c) Whenever I see one [ ]

(d) Only when people from the city visit [ ]

10c. If yes and regularly, which?

(a) Any newspaper [ ] (b) Any magazine (c) particular newspaper (.....……) [ ]

(d) Particular magazine (.....……) [ ] (e) other [ ] e.g. .....

11. If you do read newspapers and regularly too, do you buy? How often?

(a) Yes, regularly [ ] (b) Yes, sometimes [ ] (c) Only when I see one [ ]

(d) Only when I have money to buy and it is available [ ] (e) Don't buy [ ]

12. If you do buy, for what purpose?

(a) To be informed as to make wise political decisions such as, who to vote for [ ]

(b) To entertain myself [ ] (c) For education [ ]

(d) Just for purposes of being able to read [ ] (e) No reason [ ]

13a. Which of the following do you have in your house?

(a) Television [ ] (b) Radio [ ] (c) None of the above [ ]

(d) None of the above, but I listen to/view my neighbours' radio/television [ ]

(e) None of the above, but I use the community listening/viewing center [ ]

13b. If your answer is (a), (b), (d) or (e), for what purpose do you (i) own it?

(ii) Listen to/view your neighbours' radio/television? (iii) Use the community listening/viewing center?

(a) To be informed as to make wise political decisions [ ] (b) For entertainment [ ]

(c) It makes me feel important within my community [ ]

(d) Others have it, so my son/daughter bought it for me too [ ]

(e) Just for the fun of it [ ] (f) For self-education/enlightenment [ ]

(g) For personal reasons [ ] (h) Others [ ]

14. The newspapers you have read, the TV you watched/viewed and the radio you listened to so far, has it influenced your decision in voting for any party/candidate?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ] (c) Don't know [ ] (d) Somehow [ ] (e) Maybe [ ]

(f) Never thought of it [ ] (g) Not necessarily; but I'm better informed [ ]

SECTION C:

15. Do you remember the story of the former speaker of the House of Representatives and "Toronto certificate"? If you do, how did you first hear of it?

(a) Through the media [ ] …i.e. (i) Newspaper (ii) Radio (iii) TV (iv) Other [ ]

e.g.…

(b) By rumour [ ] (c) During conversation with a friend [ ] (d) through gossip [ ]

(e) Can't remember [ ] (f) Never heard of it [ ]

16. During the 1998 electioneering campaign, a governorship aspirant in one of the south-south states who belongs to white garment religious sect was said to have named his male and bearded white-goat after a prominent family in the area, with the prefix 'elder'. The same goat was rumoured to have died shortly before the elections and was given a befitting 'human' burial by its owner and the sect, as a 'Church Elder'. True or false, the 'Church Elder's' story soon became a political issue whose outcome was an anti-Christ campaign against the aspirant. If you recall this story, how and where did you first know of it?

(a) Through rumour [ ] (b) Gossip at the church (c) At the community/town market [ ]
(d) In a public transport [ ] (e) at a social/community gathering [ ]
(f) In the media [ ] (g) people who came from the city told the story [ ]
(h) Can't remember [ ] (i) Never heard of it [ ]

17. During the face-off between the presidency and the then Senate President, (now late) Chuba Okadigbo, some sections of the media painted Dr Okadigbo as a pagan or idol worshiper, because, the 'Mace', was said, to have been kept in a python's cave. What in your opinion was the issue at stake?

(a) Okadigbo took the mace to a python's cave [ ] (b) the president was a dictator [ ]
(c) The presidency wanted to control the Senate and Okadigbo refused [ ]
(d) Okadigbo was arrogant and disrespectful to the president [ ]

(e) Okadigbo was right in the public's eye irrespective of what the media said [ ]

(f) Media opinion or not, the presidency was right in wanting Okadigbo out [ ]

(g) I’m not familiar with the story [ ] (h) can’t remember the incidence [ ]

APPENDIX 3B (**Research Questionnaire 11)**

1. The police as maintainers of law and order, and as protectors of citizens' lives and properties are credited with having a good knowledge of who the criminals are in any given society. How do you think they are able to identify such criminals?

(a) By special informants [ ](b) Through rumours/gossips [ ]

(c) Friends [ ] (d) different other sources [ ] (e) All of the above [ ]

(f) All of the above [ ]; but mostly (a), (b) ,(c) or (d)

(g) Simply from the grape vine [ ] (h) Stories in the media [ ]

2. If your answer is (b), where mostly do you think such information is got?

(a) At drinking palours [ ] (b)The church/mosque/places of worship [ ]

(c) Anonymous phone calls/messages [ ] (d) Taxis/public transport systems [ ]

(e) All of the above [ ],but mostly (a) ,(b) ,(c) or (d)

3. Legislators present for discussion or debate on the floor of the national or houses of assembly, issues as they affect their respective constituencies. How, in your opinion, did your representative come by the information concerning an issue that affects your community?

(a) By consultation [ ] (b) Through rumour/Gossip [ ]

(c) Concerns expressed at town/community meeting [ ]

(d) Issues raised at the church/mosque [ ]

(e) A few individuals influenced his/her choice of an issue [ ]

(f) News items in the media [ ] (g) All of the above [ ]; especially, (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) or (f)

4. Which of the following political parties did you vote for during the April, 2003 elections?

(a) APGA [ ] (b) ANPP [ ] (c) AD [ ] (d) NDP [ ] (e) PDP [ ]

(f) NCP [ ] (g) Other [ ]

5. Why did you vote for this party?

(a) Because of the information from my community/church/mosque or social club concerning the party/candidate [ ]

(b) Information in the media [ ] (c) Rumours/gossip favourable to the party [ ]

(d) Generally, the party was the favourite [ ] (e) All of the above [ ]; especially (a), (b), (c), or (d).

6. If your answer to the above is (b), which of the media? i.e.:

(a) Radio [ ] (b) Television [ ] (c) Newspaper [ ] (d) Internet [ ]

(e) Someone who read/heard/ saw the news, told me [ ]

7. Do you believe that the media posses' the power to influence peoples opinion and affect their attitudes and behaviours too?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ] (c) Not sure [ ] (d) Not interested [ ]

8. If your answer to the above is (a), Which of the following do you think is most likely to be influenced by the media?

(a) Those who are illiterate/poor and dwell in rural areas [ ]

(b) The educated people who live in urban centres [ ]

(c) Those who are rich and influential in society [ ]

(d) Those commonly known as "ordinary Nigerians" [ ] (e) Anyone [ ]

9. Do you believe that the PDP overwhelmingly won the April, 2003 general elections?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ] (c) Not sure [ ] (d) Yes, because they rigged [ ]

(e) The party won because they out-rigged the other parties; who also rigged [ ]

10. If your answer is (d) or (e), how do you know?

(a) The media said so [ ] (b) Rumours said so [ ]

(c) It was a common place gossip backed by media [ ]

(d) I witnessed it happen [ ]

SECTION B:

11. Do you remember the story of the former speaker of the House of Representatives and "Toronto certificate"? If you do, how did you first hear of it?

(a) Through the media [ ] …i.e. (i) Newspaper (ii) Radio (iii) TV (iv) Other [ ] e.g.…

(b) By rumour [ ] (c) During conversation with a friend [ ] (d) through gossip [ ]

(e) Can't remember [ ] (f) Never heard of it [ ]

12. During the 1998 electioneering campaign, a governorship aspirant in one of the south-south states who belongs to white garment religious sect was said to have named his male and bearded white-goat after a prominent family in the area, with the prefix 'elder'. The same goat, was rumoured, to have died shortly before the elections and was given a befitting 'human' burial by its owner and the sect, as a 'Church Elder'. True or false, the 'Church Elder's' story soon became a political issue whose outcome was an anti-Christ campaign against the aspirant. If you recall this story, how and where did you first know of it?

(a) Through rumour [ ]

(b) Gossip at the church (c)

At the community/town market [ ]

(d) In a public transport [ ] (e) at a social/community gathering [ ]

(f) In the media [ ] (g) people who came from the city told the story [ ]

(h) Can’t remember [ ] (i) Never heard of it [ ]

13. During the face-off between the presidency and the then Senate President, (now late) Chuba Okadigbo, some sections of the media painted Dr Okadigbo as a pagan or idol worshiper, because, the ‘Mace’, was said, to have been kept in a python’s cave. What in your opinion was the issue at stake?

(a) Okadigbo took the mace to a python's cave [ ] (b) the president was a dictator [ ]

(c) The presidency wanted to control the Senate and Okadigbo refused [ ]

(d) Okadigbo was arrogant and disrespectful to the president [ ]

(e) Okadigbo was right in the public's eye irrespective of what the media said [ ]

(f) Media opinion or not, the presidency was right in wanting Okadigbo out [ ]

(g) I’m not familiar with the story [ ] (h) can’t remember the incidence [ ]

APPENDIX 3C (Questionnaire 111)

(1) Why are you reading the newspapers here instead of taking it home or to your place of work?

[a] To occupy myself ('to kill time'), while waiting for transport.

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[b] It is cheaper to pay a 'little money' to read the news than buy the whole paper.

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() ()

[c] It is cheaper and I enjoy the company, gossips and rumours that accompany the 'reading'.

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(1) What interests you most in today's paper?

[a] The =N= 55 million scandal story.

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[b] Sports, & Lifestyle.

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[c] Politics.

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[d] Others stories or generally everything.

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(2) Besides what interests you most, what else would you (or did you) read today?

[a] Politics.

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[b] Business/Economics.

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[c] Sports, & or Lifestyle.

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[d] Other stories & articles, or generally everything.

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(4) Will you be here tomorrow?

[a] Yes.

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[b] No.

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[c] May be.

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[d] Not sure.

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<u>NOTE:</u> The zeros in-between structured answers and the next question represent our 100 respondents.

Appendix 4a (i): Rural Area Demographics.

Appendix 4(aii): Frequency Table (Questionnaire 1, questions 1-3)

Question 1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	348	56.5	57.0	57.0
	Female	263	42.7	43.0	100.0
	Total	611	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	5	.8		
Total		616	100.0		

Question 2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20 years	78	12.7	12.7	12.7
	20-30 years	127	20.6	20.7	33.4
	30-40 years	143	23.2	23.3	56.8
	40-50 years	123	20.0	20.1	76.8
	Above 50 years	142	23.1	23.2	100.0
	Total	613	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.5		
Total		616	100.0		

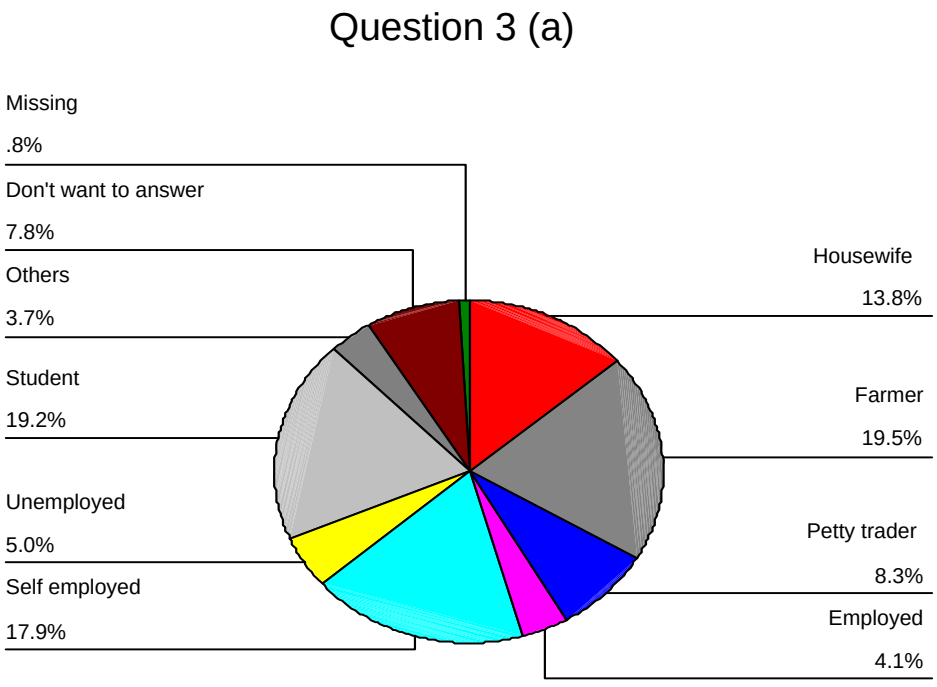
Question 3 (a)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Housewife	85	13.8	13.9	13.9
	Farmer	120	19.5	19.6	33.6
	Petty trader	51	8.3	8.3	41.9
	Employed	25	4.1	4.1	46.0
	Self employed	110	17.9	18.0	64.0
	Unemployed	31	5.0	5.1	69.1
	Student	118	19.2	19.3	88.4
	Others	23	3.7	3.8	92.1
	Don't want to answer	48	7.8	7.9	100.0
	Total	611	99.2	100.0	
Missing	System	5	.8		
Total		616	100.0		

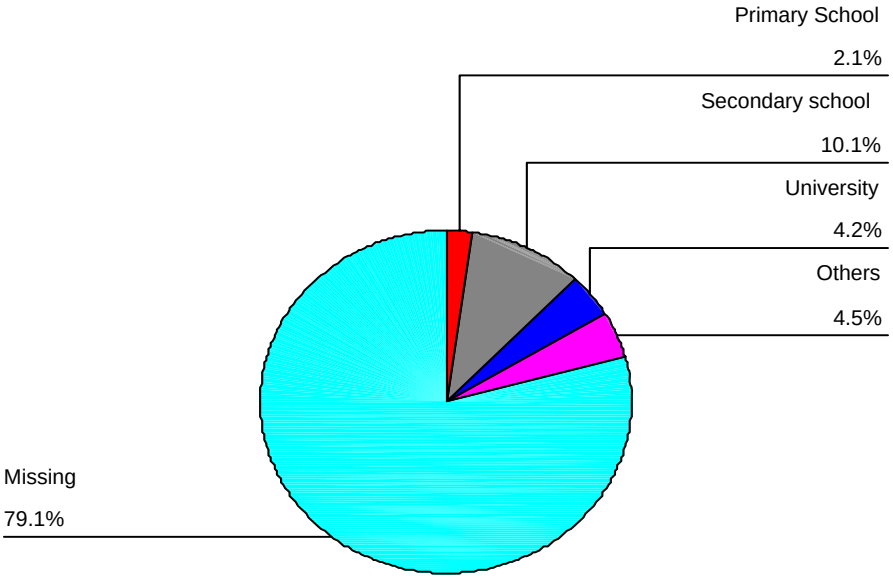
Question 3 (b)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary School	13	2.1	10.1	10.1
	Secondary school	62	10.1	48.1	58.1
	University	26	4.2	20.2	78.3
	Others	28	4.5	21.7	100.0
	Total	129	20.9	100.0	
Missing	System	487	79.1		
Total		616	100.0		

Appendix 4 (aiii): Pie-charts (question 3)



Question 3 (b)


Primary School
2.1%
Secondary school
10.1%
University
4.2%
Others
4.5%
Missing
79.1%

Appendix 4b: **Rural Output.**

Appendix 4c: Urban Output